

Lake Como Walking Tour

(7days / 6 nights - \$2090 per person b&b or \$2250 per person with dinners included)

***5% discount when 4 people or more book and deposit together**

Lake Como is the most sophisticated and interesting of the Italian lakes, it is also the most beautiful. A deep glacial lake surrounded by soaring mountains, Lake Como stretches from the Swiss Alps to the Po River and has drawn visitors since Roman times. Wooded mountain slopes protect the lake from extremes of temperature and lush gardens abound. Regular ferries buzz across the water linking the small towns and ports.

You'll spend the first four days based in a delightful little town with a Roman port and wide views across the lake towards Switzerland. From here you'll take a ferry to spend two nights in Bellagio, the jewel of Lake Como and considered the most beautiful town in Italy.

The walks:

This is a Grade 3 Walk. It follows marked routes along a combination of paved stone paths and unsealed roads. As the paths are above the lakes there are long climbs to get to the start of each one. The walks are three and half to four hours but all of them can be shortened by using the very efficient local transport (ferries or buses). Each walk reveals a different side of this fascinating area's history and traditions: a beautiful lake side route that follows a stone medieval trading path through forests and villages above the eastern shore; a loop walk that follows an old smugglers' routes above the western side of the lake up through oak forests to open farmlands with breath-taking views into Switzerland; an interesting walk through the villages that surround Bellagio; and, as a grande finale, an extraordinary walk in the mountains above Bellagio with endless views.

The accommodation:

Hidden Italy uses the best accommodation available. On Lake Como this means excellent centrally located, family-run, romantic hotels, with whom we've been working for years. All rooms have lake views, en suite bathrooms, air conditioning and generous breakfasts served on the hotels' terraces overlooking the lake.

The food:

Generous breakfasts are included each day (you'll need them for your walks). With notice, the hotels will be able to prepare a cut lunch for the walk. Dinners are not included in the standard however, if you select the 'Dinners option' (which we recommend) this will include 3 course meals alla carte (ie free choice) in some of the lake's finest restaurants. The dinner option also means you'll have a guaranteed booking each night.

What's included in this walk?

- Six nights accommodation in excellent lake-side hotels
- all breakfasts
- lunch recommendations and dinner recommendation
- reading lists and historical and cultural notes
- maps and detailed walking instructions
- 24 hour backup from local manager

Lake Como Walking Itinerary

Day 1

Arrive in your base, a charming town on the shores of the lake. Fast ferries run regularly from Como city and take approximately 1 hour.

Day 2

This morning you'll take a lakeside walk heading north along the western shore towards Switzerland. Starting with a steep climb up to the town's ruined castle, the path levels out, passing through forests and villages, following a stone medieval path that winds above the lake with breathtaking views over the lake and the mountains on the eastern shore. The walk finishes in a pretty lake side town, where you'll be able to have lunch and get either a train or ferry back to your base. 4 hours. (It's possible to shorten the walk by breaking at an earlier village and taking the train or ferry back to your base from here. 2.5 hours)

Day 3

Today we will provide you with details (opening information, ferry timetables etc) to visit two of the finest villas and gardens on the lake that can be easily reached by beautiful short ferry rides (25 minutes). The first villa was built in the 17th century and hosted Napoleon but is most famous for its spectacular lawns and rhododendron gardens. The second (2 ferry stops further on) is on the tip of forested promontory surrounded by English gardens and enormous views up and down the lake - it was built around a 14th century abbey and is famous for the extraordinary collections of its last owner, a man of great wealth who was also the first Italian to climb Mt Everest. It is a very pleasant 45 minute ferry ride back to your base from here. *Please note, an extra walk is included for this day, if you prefer to keep walking.*

Day 4

Today's walk is a loop walk up into the mountains on the eastern of the lake. This spectacular walk follows old smugglers paths and takes you up into oak forests that open on to farmlands and orchards filled with grazing cows with bells, with breath-taking views across Lake Lugano. You take an ancient cobbled path back down to the lake where you started from. 4 hour.

Day 5

Today you transfer to Bellagio, a 10 minute ferry ride across the lake (your bags will be privately delivered to the second hotel), your base for the next two nights. In the afternoon you can do an interesting walk takes you around the Bellagio promontory visiting the two branches of the lake, passing through fishing villages and past handsome 8th and 19th century villas before returning to Bellagio, finishing at the beautiful gardens of Villa Melzi that graces the edge of the town. 2 hours.

Day 6

Today you do a loop walk around Mont San Primo, the mountain that forms the backdrop behind Bellagio and from where you'll enjoy the best and most extensive views of Lake Como. You'll be taken up to the start of the walk by taxi and picked up again at the same point at the end of the walk. 3 hours. (It is possible to do a shorter version of the walk and avoid the steep climb to the top of the mountain: 1 hour)

Day 7

After breakfast you'll be transferred to Como city, which is well connected with national and international rail links.