

VITORITALY[®]
Italy with Italians

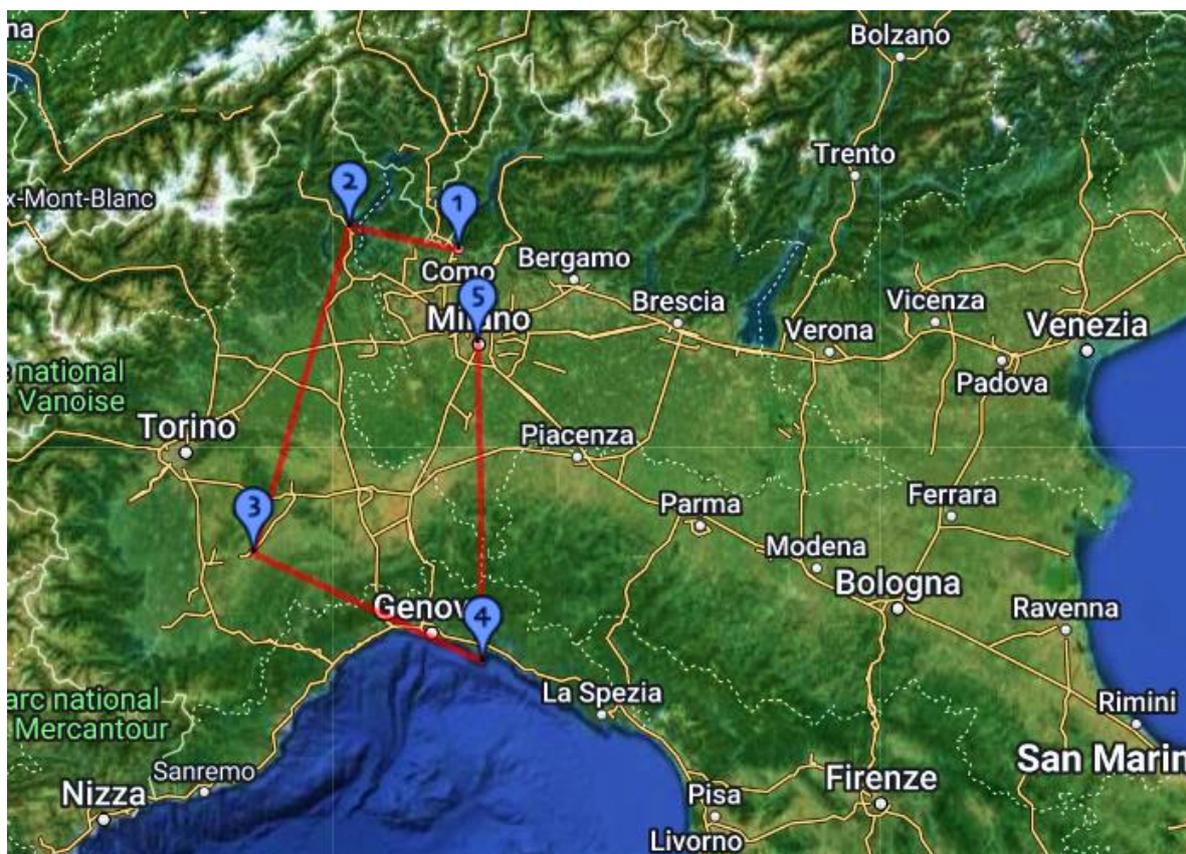
BRAMANTE TOUR

Lake Como, Lake Maggiore, Langhe, Portofino
and Milan in 5 days

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY



From gorgeous Lake Como and charming Lake Maggiore to elegant Milan, from the flavour and aroma of the Langhe wine to the scent of rosemary and basil of the Riviera Ligure. Around Northern Italy at the discovery of beautiful landscapes and spectacular cities.



TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Lake Como, a scenery for movie lovers
- Lake Maggiore, where art and nature come together in perfection
- Le Langhe, vineyards and castles
- Portofino, the classy hot spot of the Italian Riviera
- Milan, the 2,000-years-old trendy capital of Northern Italy

ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAY	ACTIVITIES INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAM
Day 1 Lake Como	- Full-day excursion of Lake Como area - Admission to Villa Balbianello OR Villa Carlotta <i>Overnight in Lake Como area</i>
Day 2 Lake Maggiore	- Full-day excursion of Lake Maggiore - Admission to the Borromean Islands Isola Bella and Isola dei Pescatori - Drop off at your accommodation in Langhe area <i>Overnight in Langhe area</i>
Day 3 Langhe	- Full-day excursion to Barolo and Barbaresco area - Visit of a Barolo wine cellar and a Barbaresco wine cellar with tasting <i>Overnight in Langhe area</i>
Day 4 Portofino	- Transfer to your accommodation in Portofino - Free time <i>Overnight in Portofino</i>
Day 5 Milan	- Transfer to your accommodation in Milan - 3-hour private walking tour of Milan city centre with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> - Admission to the Duomo Cathedral <i>Overnight in Milan city centre</i>

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- **Accommodations in Double Room with Continental Breakfast (*):**

- Day 1: 3* to 5* Hotel on Lake Como area
- Days 2 & 3: 3* to 5* Hotel in Langhe area
- Day 4: 3* to 5* Hotel in Portofino
- Day 5: 3* to 5* Hotel in Milan city centre

(*) The Hotel list is available upon request

- **Transfers (**):**

- Day 4: Transfer to your accommodation in Portofino
- Day 5: Transfer to your accommodation in Milan

(**) All transfers by private car (2 pax)/ minivan (3 to 6 pax)/ minibus (7 to 10 pax)

- **Private Guided Visits / Tours (***) / Activities:**

- Day 1: Full-day excursion of Lake Como area
- Day 2: Full-day excursion of Lake Maggiore area – Drop off at your accommodation in Langhe area
- Day 3: Full-day excursion to Barolo and Barbaresco area – Visit of a Barolo wine cellar and a Barbaresco wine cellar with tasting
- Day 5: 3-hour private walking tour of Milan city centre with an Authorised Tourist Guide

(***) All tours by private car (2 pax)/ minivan (3 to 6 pax)/ minibus (7 to 10 pax)

- **Admission Tickets to:**

- Villa Balbianello OR Villa Carlotta on Lake Como
- Isola Bella and Isola Madre on Lake Maggiore
- Duomo Cathedral in Milan

- **Full emergency assistance 24 hours/day by our Back Office**

- **List of recommended restaurants along the itinerary**

- **All taxes**

NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

- All transfers and other services not specifically mentioned in the above program
- Meals, wine and beverages
- Porterage fees at every accommodation
- Camera or Video fees
- Tipping for local guides and drivers
- Laundry, telephone calls and other expenditures of personal nature
- Travel / Vacation insurance

OPTIONS

- Pick up at Milan Airport /Railway Station at the start of the tour
- Drop off at Milan Airport /Railway Station at the end of the tour
- Visit of WiMu Wine Museum in Barolo Castle
- Private boat tour of Portofino and Golfo del Tigullo area
- Other options upon request

TOUR MAIN FEATURES

LAKE COMO

Benvenuti in Italia, welcome to Lake Como!

The magnificent scenery of Lake Como (also known as “Lario”) has enchanted artists and travellers for centuries: from French novelist Flaubert to musicians of the calibre of Gioacchino Rossini, Giuseppe Verdi, and Vincenzo Bellini; it was here that he composed his opera Norma. Today, Lake Como continues to attract members of the international jet-set and celebrities who appreciate the Lake’s evocative beauty and surroundings.

The Lake (one of Lombardy’s several incomparable lakes) is of a characteristic upside-down Y-form. The town of **Como** is situated on its southwestern arm, **Lecco** on the southeastern arm, and **Colico** on that northern. From the Lake’s shores, one can enjoy multiple fascinating views: suggestive “Borghi”, splendid villas and lush gardens await visitors searching for charm and relaxation or a little culture and contact with nature.



Breathtaking villas, one after the other, encircle the lake, a resort destination of the nobles of Lombardy since the 16th century. **Cernobbio** is the site of Villa d’Este (1600s), the location of Alfred Hitchcock’s celebrated film “The Pleasure Garden”, and of Villa Erba, one of the most important Italian lake villas from the 1800s - today, it is an internationally-known convention and expository complex. In nearby **Lenno**, you will not miss Villa Balbianello, where “Star Wars: Episode II” and James Bond’s “Casino Royale” were shot. You’ll be amazed by its gardens, which are the perfect scenery for movie lovers.

Along the coast is **Tremezzo**, famous for its Villa Carlotta, with terrace gardens and a museum boasting works by Canova, Thorvaldsen, and Hayez. It was built in the 17th century for a powerful Milanese family. In the second half of the 19th century, Princess Marianne of Nassau bought the villa and gave it to her daughter Carlotta as a wedding present, hence the name. Her husband was a keen botanist and, over the years, turned it into the lush garden we see today.

Where the Lake’s three arms meet, you will visit **Bellagio** and Villa Melzi. The Villa, built in 1808, is much sought-after for its botanical park, with sculptures and a garden renowned for its beautiful azaleas and rhododendrons.

LAKE MAGGIORE

It has the magnificent vintage air of old-fashioned vacations but never goes out of style. Lake Maggiore is the second largest in Italy in size (the biggest is Lake Garda) but the largest—that's why it's called Maggiore—of the lakes closest to the Alps. Geographically, it straddles two Italian regions, Lombardy and Piedmont, and a small part juts into Switzerland's Canton Ticino.

Since the 19th century, Lake Maggiore has been a top vacation and weekend destination for wealthy families from big cities, who built some of Northern Italy's most stunning villas on its shores. The secret of Lake Maggiore's success is its position just under Mount Rosa, a varied landscape, easy accessibility from Milan and Piedmont and a climate that allows very distinctive vegetation to thrive. The blossoming of azaleas, rhododendrons, camellias, lemons and magnolias in spring rightfully attract plant lovers.



The jewels of the lake are the **Borromean**

Islands: anyone who has seen a postcard of Lake Maggiore is familiar with their outline. The archipelago is one of the biggest attractions for travellers, and Isola Bella, Isola Madre and Isola dei Pescatori have plenty of charm. The archipelago is named after the Borromeo family, which acquired the islands in the 14th century and still owns two. The noble palaces on the islands, with their rooms filled with antique furniture, paintings and priceless porcelain, and the enchanting gardens are open to visitors and are a must on your list of things to see.

LANGHE

You will be startled by the beauty of Piedmont, the region where the landscape changes colours according to the rhythm of the seasons! Because of its outstanding landscapes, the Langhe-Roero and Monferrato area has recently been

recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Think of rolling hills, quaint villages struck on cliffs, prized vineyards and gastronomic traditions; this is Langhe.



Alba is the most important town in Langhe area and is famous worldwide as “La Città dei Tartufi” (the City of Truffles), as the most precious truffles grow in the hills surrounding it.

Barolo is known above all for its beauty and incarnates its most noble Piedmontese wines' essence (Barolo, what else?). Tucked into the hills, Barolo was a Medieval borgo belonging to the Gonzagas and Savoias; it is dominated by the Castello Falletti, the seat of the Comune's Enoteca and of the Museum of Peasant Life, a collection of antique objects and instruments.

During your stay, you may go up and down the hills among castles and vineyards and reach one of the Italian historical wine estates to visit the ancient cellar with hundreds of barrels, casks and barriques. In Barolo, you may also see **WIMU**, Italy's most innovative wine museum and one of the world's most important. It is set in the halls and rooms of a castle with a thousand-year history. Ultimately, you will have a superb wine tasting of *Barolo* and *Barbaresco* Wine.

So, what about food? Taste gorgeous tagliatelle, locally called “tagliolini” or “tajarin”, served with meat ragout, sausage ragout, or melted butter and grated truffle according to the season. Then, try veal meat in any version, especially “brasato”, cooked in Barolo wine. The typical dish par excellence is “Bagna Cauda”, a garlic, anchovy and olive oil sauce into which seasonal raw vegetables are dipped. Hazelnut cake, soft and served with a good glass of Moscato d'Asti, is the traditional ending to every lunch and dinner!

PORTOFINO

“A small village, Portofino, stretches crescent-shaped along the edge of this calm bay.” Thus, Guy de Maupassant describes Portofino, a tiny sea village on the Italian Riviera circumscribed by the green of the Natural Regional Park and Marine Reserve. With its lux Mediterranean personality, this splendid sea resort also boasts an ancient marine culture. Of course, it is another one of those spots beloved by artists, famous personages, and writers who have long sung its praises.

The “**Piazzetta**,” meeting-up point for the international jet-set, is the symbol of Portofino. At the same time, the port, with its characteristic, brightly-coloured houses, is the icon of this borgo’s maritime traditions, whose inhabitants were called “delfini” (dolphins) by the Greeks and Romans, so apt were they at sea navigation.



You may visit the **Church of Portofino’s Patron Saint, San Giorgio**, a construction from the 12th century; inside are relics brought back by sailors after the Crusades and a breathtaking panorama from parvis (churtyard). Nearby, **Castello Brown** (the Brown Castle) is a fortress smack-dab in the middle of a hanging garden, which is characterized by partitions with lovely bas-reliefs and architectonic embellishments in marble and slate. The lighthouse is accessible from here and is situated on Punta del Capo (aka Punta Portofino), imposing itself over the entire bay.

You will surely not miss a trip to the evocative **Medieval Abbey of San Fruttuoso**, just a few miles inland from the coast and surrounded by lush vegetation. According to the legend, five Spanish monks fleeing from Arab-invaded Tarragon built the Abbey. After a long and dangerous journey, the monks brought the relics of Bishop Fruttuoso. Do you prefer a little adventure out in the open? Take an excursion to Monte di Portofino for a slight adrenaline rush, or navigate the Gulf of Tigullio in a boat for close contact with the beautiful Mediterranean Sea.

With the guidance of an expert skipper, you may also experience the great appeal of sailing at its best, in very close contact with the sea and the magnificent landscape of Portofino Coast.

But before dinner, make sure you do as the locals do: head back to the Piazzetta for 7 o’clock aperitivo, where you can snack on Genoese focaccia and sip some Giancu de Purtufin, a wine that combines several of the territory’s grapes, and that is only produced locally.

MILAN

Milan is, first of all, the Fashion Capital of Italy! The showrooms of all Italian manufacturers are located in the city, and here buyers from worldwide distribution find the one and only “Italian Style”! But Milan is not only fashion, it is also and above all art, beauty and culture! **Piazza del Duomo** is the geographical and historical centre of the city. Palaces surround it with arcades; in the middle, you can see the Duomo, one of Europe’s biggest Gothic cathedrals, whose construction started in the 14th and ended in the 20th century. And on the Gran Guglia, the cathedral’s highest spire, the Madonnina, a symbol of Milan, stands. On the left of the square, the 19th-century **Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II** links the grand Piazza del Duomo with Piazza della Scala, featuring mosaics and a wrought iron and glass roof.



Then stroll down the streets of “**Quadrilatero D’Oro**”, the heart of the fashion industry, admiring the shop windows of Prada, Armani, Versace, Ferragamo, Dolce & Gabbana and Valentino. The multi-concept store by Giorgio Armani, Spazio Armani, in the elegant Via Manzoni, extends for 6,000 square meters and offers fashion showrooms, furniture, flowers and hi-tech Sony equipment. After shopping, enjoy an aperitif or a coffee at the Emporio Armani Cafè upstairs or book a table at the Japanese restaurant Nobu. Or taste a gorgeous cappuccino at Pasticceria Cova, as locals often do via Montenapoleone, “Montenapo” for the Milanese!

At dinner, what about a tasty yellow “Risotto alla Milanese”? According to an ancient tradition, the Duomo is where Risotto alla Milanese was “born”, invented by a boy who worked for the stained glass artist Valerio di Fiandra, nicknamed “Zafferano” for its habit of adding spices to his colours. One day, he also put some saffron in the rice, and the result was a great success!

The tour is over, but the memories of a fantastic journey will accompany you for a lifetime!

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Ciao da Vitor



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VITOR s.r.l. - Via A. Moro 16 - 25124 Brescia - Italy
Tel +39 030 2055874 - info@vitor.it