

Rail holidays of Italy

Expressions



Lake Como by rail
through the Alps on
the Bernina Express



Lake Como by rail through the Alps on the Bernina Express

6 NIGHTS / 7 DAYS

Zurich

Chur

Bernina Express

Swiss Alps

Italian Alps

Lake Como



The Bernina Express

In this rail holiday to the Italian Lakes, you take in some of the most spectacular scenery of the Swiss Alps viewed through the panoramic windows of the Bernina Express. Your train journey starts out from the UK by Eurostar to Paris where you change to a high speed TGV train to Zurich. Following a night or more in Zurich, you travel onwards to Chur for another night. Then, board the famous Bernina Express through the very heart of the Alps. The four hour journey on the Bernina Express from Chur to Tirano is truly spectacular. The train travels mostly at low speeds giving time to take in the snowy mountains, pine forests, pretty villages and mountain lakes. The line crosses 196 bridges and 55 tunnels. At its highest point at Ospizio Bernina, the route reaches 2,253 metres before dropping 1,800 metres down to Tirano on the Italian border. In Tirano there is time for lunch before taking an onward local train to Lecco on Lake Como. This is an attractive route, at first passing vineyards perched precariously on hillside terraces, and then travelling along the eastern edge of Lake Como. At Lecco, you will be met at the station and taken by a private driver to Bellagio and your hotel.

PRICES

From £2,525 per person

Price based on two sharing a double or twin room.

1st class rail travel can be added for a supplement.

DATES

This rail holiday can be arranged throughout the year. Timings can vary depending on the month and day of the week. For more information regarding rail services to and within Italy, view our train guide.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Train travel on all trains including the Eurostar (first class can be booked at a supplement)
- 1 night's bed and breakfast in Zurich
- 1 night's bed and breakfast in Chur
- 4 nights' bed and breakfast on Lake Como
- Private return transfers from train stations to your hotel

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Optional extra nights
- Transfers in Paris
- Meals other than breakfast at the hotels
- Early check in or late check out at hotels - though we can arrange this on request
- Supplements for alternative route options
- Any services not mentioned

DAY ONE: Travel to Zurich by rail

Your rail holiday starts with a journey by Eurostar from London St Pancras to Paris Nord station, leaving at about 7.00 am. On arrival in Paris you change stations to Gare de Lyon where you may be able to have lunch at the famous Train Bleu restaurant. From Paris Lyon, the high-speed TGV service takes you across France and into Switzerland arriving into Zurich at about 4.30pm. Spend one night in Zurich at the Hotel Ambassador a l'Opera. The hotel is located close to the Opera House and near the lakefront. It is well situated if you wish to explore the city.

DAY TWO: Zurich to Chur

Spend this morning taking in this historic and enchanting city, perhaps stopping at the Grossmunster church and climbing the Karlstrum tower. We recommend taking the train to Chur around lunchtime and spending the rest of your afternoon here. Chur is Switzerland's oldest city and acts as the gateway to the Bernina Express railway. Twisting streets, historic buildings, restaurants, bars, museums, galleries, boutiques, and a pedestrianised Old Town provide plenty of cultural entertainment to fill your time here. Stay at the Romantik Hotel Stern, a traditional boutique property located in the town centre.

DAY THREE: Chur to Bellagio using the Bernina Express

Return to the train station to meet the iconic Bernina Express at 8.30am for the stunning four hour journey through the Alps to Tirano. Notice the sheer white cliffs, hilltop towers, and gorges of the Ruinaulta as you traverse the area around the pretty ochre village of Tiefencastel. The train now sweeps back round to Filisur, passing through the railway towns of Bergun, Samedan and Celerina. The Bernina Express then takes you around the Montebello Curve, the most photographed section of the journey, which prolongs the breath-taking views of the Morteratsch Glacier. From here, gain altitude until you reach the highest point on the Rhaetian Railway at Ospizio Bernina at 2253m above sea level, with its picturesque, isolated station house. The Bernina Express then takes you to a restaurant that can only be accessed by train, past the grand houses of Poschiavo, through idyllic villages, across a spiralling viaduct, to Tirano, surrounded by vineyards and orchards in Italy. Upon arrival in Tirano you will have time for lunch in one of a number of restaurants and cafes near the station. Then, continue by train to Lake Como, arriving late afternoon in Lecco before being taken by a private chauffeur to the Villa Serbelloni in Bellagio, where you stay for the next four nights.



Lake Como

DAYS FOUR TO SIX

Lake Como has the most variety of all of the Italian Lakes with pretty villages, ports and villas in exotic gardens. Bellagio occupies a stunning location on a promontory that divides Lake Lecco from the southern side of Lake Como. Littered with its lakeside cafes, ancient chapels, winding lanes and peerless Renaissance gardens such as those at Villa Melzi, Bellagio tends to steal the brochure headlines, and rightly so. Dubbed The Pearl of the Lake, Bellagio is one of the most beautiful towns not just in Lombardy, but in Italy itself. From Bellagio, you can even take kayak tours of the lake to gain spectacular views of the Amalfi-like, cliff-hugging villages, as well as the mountains crowning the water. All around the lake, Neoclassical villas, belle époque houses and erstwhile fishing villages tumble right down to the water's edge, with Varenna, Cernobbio and Tremezzo in particular worth as much time as you can spare. As for its towns, the 2,000-year old walled city of Como is often overlooked, but has a superb medieval centre dominated by a magnificent Gothic cathedral. Best of all, car ferries and vaporetti criss-cross the lake throughout summer, so just getting around the lake itself becomes a thrillingly panoramic pleasure cruise.

OPTION 1 - DIRECT DAY TIME TRAINS

DAY SEVEN: Rail to London via Milan

You will be collected early from your hotel by a private car and driven to Milan Porta Garibaldi station. Here you take the TGV to directly to Paris, leaving at around 8.45am and in Paris around 4pm. You end your rail holiday by catching the Eurostar back to the UK where you arrive at about 8.30pm.

OPTION 2 - RETURN VIA LAUSANNE

DAY SEVEN: Rail to Lausanne via Milan

If you wish to take a more scenic route back to the UK, it is possible to see the Swiss lakes on your way home. A private car will take you from your hotel to Como train station around 9.30am where you board a regional train heading south to Milan. Here, you catch your train to Lausanne, travelling through the stunning Simplon Pass emerging into Switzerland and following the river down to Lake Geneva. Spend the afternoon and evening exploring the lakeside city before checking in to Hotel Angleterre et Residence for one night.

DAY EIGHT: LAUSANNE TO LONDON

End your rail holiday by travelling on a midday train from Lausanne to Paris. Change stations here and board the Eurostar to London where you arrive just before 8pm.

OPTIONAL

It is possible to add extra nights in any of these destinations.

HOTELS

Details of the hotels in Switzerland and Italy can be found below.



ZURICH

Hotel Ambassador a l'Opera 4 star

The Hotel Ambassador a l'Opera is a historic boutique hotel located opposite Zurich's Opera House, set just back from the lakeside. This is a highly luxurious and unique option for a one or two night stay in central Zurich. The hotel has just 45 rooms and is renowned for their gourmet restaurant which is just as popular with locals as hotel guests.

CHUR

Romantik Hotel Stern 4 star

This timeless townhouse is situated within each reach of Chur's famous Old Town. White shutters frame the tall windows, and the combination of pink and white stucco gives this building a very pretty aspect. Guests here are treated to a real taste of authentic Switzerland, in the light, yet rustic bedrooms, and in the 'stubli' restaurant, which serves a range of Alpine delicacies.

LAKE COMO

Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni 5 star deluxe

The Villa Serbelloni is one of the oldest and most elegant hotels on Lake Como and offers incredible panoramic views of the lake from its privileged position in Bellagio. In its lush gardens Mediterranean and subtropical plants flourish in the pleasant microclimate around the lake. There are 95 rooms and suites furnished in a traditional style, all of which are fitted with air conditioning and free wifi. The hotel boasts two good quality restaurants, the Mistral and La Goletta, or guests can choose to eat locally in Bellagio.

LAUSANNE (OPTION)

Hotel Angleterre et Residence 4 star

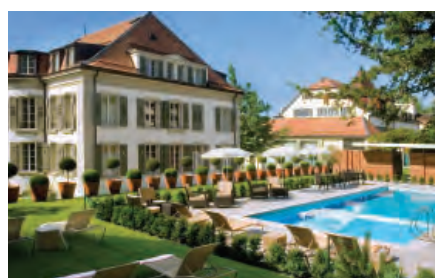
On the shores of Lake Geneva with stunning view of the Alps, this hotel comprises of five different buildings surrounding the main Reception. The hotel offers contemporary style in a historic setting with parts of the buildings dating back to the 18th century. The 75 bedrooms and Junior Suites are scattered between four buildings, each with their own distinct styles, but all guests will benefit from the same high standards of care from the friendly, professional staff.



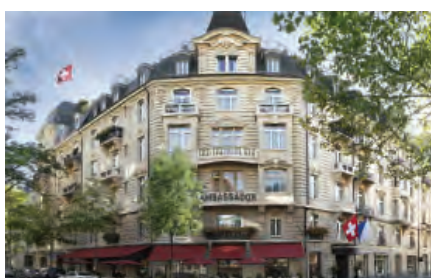
Villa Serbelloni, Bellagio



Villa Serbelloni, Bellagio



Hotel Angleterre et Residence, Lausanne



Hotel Ambassador a l'Opera, Zurich



Villa Serbelloni

MAP OF TOUR LAKE COMO BY RAIL THROUGH THE ALPS ON THE BERNINA EXPRESS



The map below illustrates the route outlined in this touring itinerary, with overnight stops and places of interest highlighted.



GENERAL INFORMATION

This tailor-made touring holiday is one of several suggested touring holidays we can offer you exactly as it is but also with any alterations you might want including extra nights in one or more places or adding in extra places. All our tours can be extended so that you can include a longer stay in one mountain or lake resort too, perhaps at the end of the itinerary. Do call to discuss the options with our travel consultants.

OUR TOURS

Our rail tours are for individuals travelling on their own or in their own family group. You do not join a group and you are not escorted.

FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENTS

Our arrangements are very flexible in that you choose to travel on any day you want, subject to availability of trains and hotels. As mentioned above, additional nights can be added at any point.

EUROSTAR

A rail holiday to Italy starts with a journey by Eurostar from London St Pancras, Ebbsfleet or Ashford stations in the UK to either Paris Gare du Nord or Lille Europe. In summer months there are direct trains on Saturdays from London St Pancras to Avignon with no change required.

Eurostar offers almost hourly departures every day, allowing you to travel from the centre of London to the centre of Paris on the same train in three hours. Not all trains stop at the Ebbsfleet and Ashford stations in Kent, but parking is plentiful at both stations and it allows you to avoid London.

Check-in is 30 minutes prior to departure, customs formalities are completed before boarding and there is no limit to the amount of baggage that can be taken on board. The Eurostar trains themselves have 8 coaches which are split into Standard Class, Standard Premier and Business Premier as well as 2 cafeterias. Standard Premier customers are served a light cold meal and enjoy a more spacious environment than Standard Class, while Business Premier customers receive a hot meal and unlimited beverages as well as lounge access.

TRAIN TIMES

We have planned our itineraries based on train times that work day by day at the time of planning which can be up to a year before you travel. Usually train times stay more or less the same every day, season by season. The times we have planned will be discussed with you at the time you enquire about the holiday and they are detailed to you in your written holiday quotation. It may be that the timetable changes between the planning of the itinerary and when you come to book but we can always adjust the itinerary to suit the actual train times and any requirements you have for particular times of travel.

FIRST OR SECOND CLASS

We will automatically include travel in second class but lots of our clients do upgrade to first class service. On Eurostar this is called Premier Standard for leisure travellers as it gives you an upgraded on-board service and more spacious seating but without paying for the fully-flexible business tickets. On the Inter-city trains, upgrading to first class gives you more spacious seating with increased legroom. The price of upgrading varies from route to route but is something that is not always proportionately a lot more on the price of the overall holiday, so well-worth considering.

TRANSFERS

Transfers in Paris between stations and from the station to each hotel are not automatically included in the price of the holiday. In Paris most clients choose to take a taxi between the stations rather than go on the Metro but we can arrange a private car with driver to take you in between. This is quite useful if you are a family group that can't fit into one Paris taxi.

PRICE INFORMATION

This tailor-made touring holiday is one of several suggested touring holidays we can offer you exactly as it is but also with any alterations you might want including extra nights in one or more places or adding in extra places. All our tours can be extended so that you can include a longer stay in one mountain or lake resort too, perhaps at the end of the itinerary. Do call to discuss the options with our travel consultants.

OUR PRICES

The sample prices mentioned in this leaflet are generally a 'from' price based on the cheapest season of travel. However, train fares and hotel rates can change (up and down depending on offers), so we give you an accurate price for your holiday when we provide you with a quotation. Our sample prices should be used as an indication of how much a particular combination will cost and to show the differences on average between the hotel categories on offer.

PRICE INFORMATION IN MORE DETAIL

First class rail travel from £2,845 per person in low season or from £3,210 per person in high season.

Second class rail travel from £2,525 per person in low season, or from £2,890 per person in high season.

Prices based on two sharing a double or twin room with rail back in one day. There is a supplement if you take option two as described with an overnight in Switzerland on the way back too.

What's included in this touring holiday?

Accommodation on bed and breakfast as below:

1 night's bed and breakfast in a Classic room

at the Hotel Ambassador a l'Opera in Zurich

1 night's bed and breakfast in a Standard

room at the Romantik Hotel Stern in Chur

4 nights' bed and breakfast in a Deluxe lake

view room at the Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni

in Bellagio

First or second class travel on all trains (as

above) including Eurostar

Transfers from Lecco station to your hotel, and

from your hotel to Milan station.

What's not included?

Meals other than breakfast at the hotels

Supplements for alternative itineraries

Any services not mentioned above

Expressions

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Our booking conditions apply to all holidays. A copy can be found on our website and a copy is also sent to you with a written quotation and when you make a booking.

FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Expressions Holidays offers full financial protection for all holidays you book with us. If your holiday includes a flight, the ATOL (3076) covers the costs of the holiday. If the holiday does not include a flight, it is the ABTOT bond that protects the cost of the holiday. We are also members of AITO (the Association of Independent Tour Operators) and ABTA.



Expressions Holidays

Lynx House, Pynes Hill, Exeter EX2 5JL

HOW TO BOOK

To make a booking, just phone us on

01392 441275

and we can take you through the details we need and start the booking process. A deposit is required to confirm the arrangements and this can be paid by debit or credit card over the phone. The level of the deposit will be confirmed at the point of booking and will depend on the ticketing deadlines of the rail tickets involved in your booking.