

Walking holidays in Europe



Walking holiday at Lake Como



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7 NIGHTS / 8 DAYS

HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 self-guided walking itineraries
- Lake Como Greenway
- Tremezzo
- Cadenabbia
- Mendrisiotto vineyards
- Bellagio and Monte San Primo
- Monte Generoso
- Varenna



Lake Como

This seven-night self-guided walking holiday invites you to explore the area around Lake Como in northern Italy. Placed to the south of the Alps and to the north of the Po Valley, the Italian Lakes naturally possess a charming mixture of the vibrant coolness associated with the Alps but enlivened by the warmth of the South. This walking holiday takes you on a journey of discovery through a landscape of deep blue waters surrounded by greenish-blue tinged mountains, often snow-capped. Each walking route takes you to a different area of the lake offering pretty villages of gaily painted houses, grand villas with magnificent gardens, luscious vineyards and historic castles. Return to your luxury hotel each day to relax in the grounds and enjoy a delicious dinner. Dining is usually al fresco in the summer months and a magical atmosphere is created with the lapping of the waters and the twinkling of the lights around the lake and in the hills above. This holiday is suitable for travel from May to October with the summer months being preferable for better weather and regular public transport options around the lake.

HOTEL INCLUDED

Grand Hotel Imperiale, Moltrasio 4 star

PRICES

From £2,170 per person including air and hire-car

Sample prices are per person based on two people sharing a double or twin room for 7 nights.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Scheduled flights with British Airways from London to Milan return, economy
- 7 nights' on half board in a comfort double room with village or garden view at the Hotel Grand Imperiale in Moltrasio, Lake Como
- Group B hire car for the duration of your holiday, and parking
- Route notes for self-guided walking itineraries in Lake Como
- Concierge service and Expressions Holidays regional helpful hints

THE JOURNEY AND HOW YOU GET THERE

There are flights with British Airways from London Heathrow to Milan Malpensa several times a day. From here it is a 45-minute journey by car to the hotel. Flights are also possible into Milan Linate airport.

DATES

Although this holiday can be arranged throughout the year, we recommend travelling between June and early October for the best trekking conditions.

HOLIDAY CODE

FHIT24

DAY ONE Arrive at Lake Como

You start the holiday by flying from London to Milan, then you collect your hire car from the airport and drive for about 45 minutes to reach your hotel Moltrasio. Spend the rest of the day exploring the hotel and its vicinity.

DAY TWO The Lake Como Greenway

Your first self-guided walking day is a low-level route exploring the eastern shores of Lake Como between Colonno and Cadenabbia. Much of this itinerary follows the Lake Como Greenway, a pleasant hike which passes the towns of Sala Comacina, Ossuccio, Lenno, Mezzegra and Tremezzo. Points of interest along the route include ancient villages, beautiful churches, grand villas and historical buildings. Add long stretches of waterfront promenades, charming parkland and wooded hills to the mix with the ever-present views of the shimmering lake and you have a recipe for the perfect introduction to Lake Como. We recommend leaving your car at the hotel today and using the local bus to travel to Colonna and back from Cadenabbia.

DAY THREE Walking in the Mendrisiotto vineyards

Your second day takes you across the border and into the Swiss region of Ticino. Despite being a different country, the journey to the small village of Seseglio where you start your walk only takes around 25 minutes by car. The Mendrisiotto is the southernmost vineyard in Switzerland and you skirt the Swiss-Italian border as you wind your way uphill through vineyards and woods to your high point at Dosso Pallanza. The remainder of this 10-kilometre route then steadily descends through the trees and into the small town of Pedrinato. Take time to look around here before continuing westwards through the vineyards to the small church of St Stefano and perhaps stop here to admire the view from this small hilltop before returning to your car in Seseglio.

DAY FOUR At leisure

We include two rest days within this walking holiday, although of course you can choose to swap the days around as you please. We suggest using one of these days to visit some of Lake Como's villas and gardens. You will have strolled past several of these properties on your first walking day and now is a fantastic opportunity to explore them more thoroughly. Villa Balbianello might be your first stop today and sits on the Lavedo headland in Lenno. This is a secluded setting of terraced gardens with pines, cypress and oaks as well as flowerbeds. The villa is a popular venue for weddings thanks to its beautiful views of the



Lake Como

Isola Comacina and western shore of Lake Como. It is possible to visit both the garden and the house although the property is closed on Mondays and Wednesdays. Perhaps have lunch in Lenno and then continue to the Villa Carlotta at Tremezzo where you will find sunny terraces with climbers, ferns, giant magnolias and imaginative planting giving a very different feel to your morning visit. Return to your hotel to relax by the pool before dinner.

DAY FIVE Monte San Primo and Bellagio

Your third walking day invites you to visit the centre of Lake Como. Enjoy breakfast at your hotel and then make the hour's drive to Monte San Primo. Your route today is about 8 kilometres and takes you to the summit of San Primo at 1,660 metres above sea level. There is a fairly steep climb to reach this point, but it is soon rewarded by fantastic panoramic views over the region. Looking southwest you can see the western arm of the lake leading past Moltrasio to Como, whilst to the north are the towns of Tremezzo and Lenno – the peninsula of the Villa Balbianello clearly visible. Let the northern arm of Lake Como lead your eye further north and a clear day is likely to reveal the snowy peaks of the Swiss Alps on the horizon. From the summit you follow a clear track along the top of the grassy ridge to the Cima del Costone and continue eastwards from here, often passing horses roaming freely along the path. Drop steadily down the hillside through green woodland and then turn right to take a final loop around the Monte Forcella, arriving back at the car park where you left your car. There are a couple of restaurants here where you can stop for lunch before

driving down to Bellagio to spend the rest of the day exploring. We recommend using the car ferry from Bellagio to Cadenabbia on the return journey back to Moltrasio.

DAY SIX At leisure

There are plenty of options to fill your second rest day on Lake Como. Enjoy a relaxed breakfast at your hotel and perhaps spend the rest of the morning relaxing here. Activities at the hotel include a swimming pool, tennis court and golf facilities as well as the possibility to walk into the centre of Moltrasio. Those wishing to explore more of Lake Como may instead choose to take a hydrofoil via Bellagio to Varenna on the eastern side of the lake. This traditional village is one of the most picturesque spots in Lake Como and is particularly known for its historic town centre where you will find the 14th century church of San Giorgio, colourful houses and the Riva Grande – the village's charming lake promenade. Beautiful gardens include the Villa Monastero, Villa Cipressi and Castello di Vezio which are worth a visit for any nature lover.

DAY SEVEN Monte Generoso

Your last full day of this walking holiday is spent high above the lakes visiting the lofty peak of Monte Generoso which marks the border between Italy and Switzerland. The 360-degree panorama from the summit at 1,701m stretches all the way from the Apennines to the Alps and information boards help visitors to identify the valleys, lakes, villages and peaks. On a clear day you can admire the lakes of northern Italy, Gran Paradiso mountain chain and even

the Matterhorn. Monte Generoso has two restaurants, the iconic “stone flower” building, interesting cave where bears lived some 60,000 years ago and traditional ice pit. The summit of Monte Generoso is easily reached via a rack railway from the town of Capolago on Lake Lugano, however we recommend walking there from the Italian hamlet of Orimento to make a 10-kilometre walk. Follow the Sentiero Alto path through woodland to gain the ridge at Cima della Piancaccia and follow the upper slopes to reach Monte Generoso. The return journey then takes you along the Sentiero Basso which takes a more easterly route past several small mountain huts to return to Orimento. Drive back to Moltrasio for your final dinner at the hotel, getting a good night’s sleep before your return journey tomorrow.

DAY EIGHT Travel back to the UK

You enjoy a final breakfast at your hotel before starting your journey home. There are regular flights throughout the day between Milan and London giving you plenty of time to drive back to the airport before heading back to the UK.



Menaggio on Lake Como

HOTELS

In this walking holiday we include a seven night stay on Lake Como. Other options on Lake Como are available on request, and additional nights can be added here or in other destinations.

Expressions

GRAND HOTEL IMPERIALE

4 star

The Grand Hotel Imperiale Resort & SPA in Moltrasio is a four-star hotel of great charm and historical character, set amidst a luxuriant garden looking directly on to glorious Lake Como. Dating back to 1926, the Imperiale, originally the Hotel Regina, was built in late Art Nouveau style and whilst it has been extended and refurbished over the years, it has retained its period atmosphere. The Imperiale has 120 rooms and suites including 11 deluxe rooms in the exclusive Villa Imperiale, a hotel within a hotel. Many of the rooms overlook the village of Moltrasio and Mount Bisbino, whilst a select few face directly on to the lake. Elegantly styled and furnished, the rooms feature a wide range of amenities and some are particularly spacious, rendering them ideal for families or longer stays. Rooms in the Villa Imperiale offer additional seclusion and privacy with the Regina Lakeside Bar situated on the ground floor offering views towards the pool. Ristorante Imperialino enjoys a refined gastronomic reputation serving innovative interpretations of traditional Italian dishes. The Garden Restaurant serves Italian cuisine with Mediterranean flavours whilst the Regina Bar boasts original period furnishings and overlooks the inner courtyard garden. A newer addition to the hotel is a new wing where the SPA building resides, with its Deluxe spa rooms and I-SPA, the wellness and beauty centre. As well as the seasonal outdoor swimming pool set in the middle of the garden, the Grand Hotel Imperiale also features a tennis court, nine-hole putting green, two driving ranges and a variety of water sports available nearby.



Grand Hotel Imperiale

Facts in brief

Official star rating 4

Location The hotel is in the lakeside village of Moltrasio, with grounds by the lake

Closest airport Milan

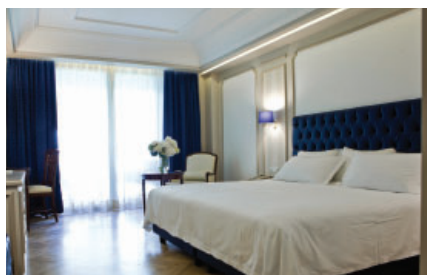
Distance from airport The hotel is about 80 minutes' drive from Milan Linate airport

Hotel facilities and services

Ristorante Imperialino, Garden Restaurant, Regina Bar, Regina Lakeside Bar, Outdoor Panoramic Swimming Pool (open May to September), I-Spa, Tennis Court, Nine-hole Putting Green, Two Driving Ranges, Garage Parking, WiFi.



Grand Hotel Imperiale



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OUR PRICES

The sample prices mentioned in this leaflet are generally a 'from' price based on the cheapest season of travel. However, transport 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.

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 441250

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.