

EXPLORE!

Self-Guided Trails of Como and Lugano

8 days

Italy, Switzerland - Trip code WSCL



Self-Guided Trails of Como and Lugano

Beautiful lakes Como and Lugano have been a popular holiday destination since Roman times. Lavish villas and sumptuous gardens line their shores. Away from the lakeside, you can hike numerous trails to explore quiet forested valleys, mountain tops and traditional villages which have retained their unique character. You will also have time to visit beautiful villas, churches and castles, and enjoy the region's excellent cuisine.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Mountain trails** - Enjoy hikes high above Lakes Como and Lugano
- ★ **Lavish villas** - Visit the famous villas and their beautiful gardens
- ★ **Menaggio** - Beautiful town with fabulous views of Lake Como
- ★ **Roman road** - Walk along the Antica Strada Regina to Rezonnicco
- ★ **Lake Lugano** - Stay in Porlezza and hike by the lake

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

WALKING GRADE:

Moderate

For those who are fit and active, these moderate walks are normally on good paths and tracks at low altitude. Days may include some fairly demanding ascents and descents, so previous experience is preferable but not essential.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Trip starts in Menaggio

Your accommodation for the first four nights of your holiday is in the pretty town of Menaggio. Nestling on the shores of Lake Como and long-associated with poets, artists, world leaders and, lately, film stars, Lake Como is surrounded by the Southern Alps which are often still snow-covered until May. On arrival you can explore the town and take in the views of the rugged mountains across the lake. During the following days it is worth taking your time to explore the small towns, viewpoints and forests on either side of Lake Como, the beautiful gardens of Villa Carlotta in Tremezzo and Villa Melzi in Bellagio.



Accommodation: Hotel Bellavista (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Ferry across lake; walk from Varenna to Dervio

The first walk of the holiday contours the shore line on the opposite side of the lake. After breakfast you take the ferry boat across the lake to Varenna, a village of picturesque lanes and old fishermen's houses. You then follow the east side of Lake Como along the Sentiero del Viandante - the Wayfarer's Path. Along your route you will see many buildings built in the traditional regional style and enjoy outstanding views of Lake Como and the foothills of the Alps. Just above Varenna it is worth making a short detour from the walking route to visit the medieval castle in Vezio. From Dervio you can catch a local train back to Varenna and another ferry back to Menaggio. You can expect today's 12.5 kilometre walk to take approximately five hours. There is a cumulative ascent during the walk of 937metres and descent of 924 metres.



Accommodation: Hotel Bellavista (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Walks on the western side of Lake Como

Today and you have a choice of two different walks. You can hike from Menaggio on a circular route that will take you into the Val Sanagra Nature Reserve, a little visited area that is rich in history. The trail passes through Loveno, a village with many grand villas, then on to Pianuro a vast area of pasture where livestock graze. You then follow the course of the Sanagra, an alpine stream lined by several ancient mills and iron foundries. Over the passage of time the stream has carved out an impressive gorge. The route then continues through Barna, a lovely hamlet where time seems to have stood still, before returning to Menaggio. Another option is a hike to climb two of the most significant peaks on the western side of the lake, Monte Grona (1736m) and Monte Bregagnino (1905 m). The route starts with a climb through the pastures above Breglia, a small village above Menaggio that can be reached by bus.

From the top of Monte Grona you have one of the best views of the Pre- Alps. You can see three different lakes; Como, Lugano and Piano, and the peaks of Monte Bregagno, Legnone, Pizzo di Gino and Grigne. If the conditions are clear you will be able to see the Alps stretching all the way from Monviso to Bernina. There are three different ways to get to the top of the Monte Grona from the Rifugio Menaggio. The walk into the Val Sanagra is 14.5 kilometres and will take you approximately five hours with a cumulative ascent during the walk of 696 metres and descent of 695 metres. The Monte Grona and Monte Bregagnino hike is 13 kilometres and will take you approximately seven hours with a cumulative ascent and descent during the walk of 1346 metres.



Accommodation: Hotel Bellavista (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Hike in the Grigna Regional Park

Today you can return to the eastern side of lake, taking the ferry from Menaggio to Varenna and a local bus or a taxi to the start of the walk in Esino Lario. Your route passes through the landscapes of the Regional Park of Northern Grigna. This mountain range has a spectacular landscape of pinnacles, steep-cliffs and sheer valleys carved deep into the rock. The route brings you to Porta di Prada a striking rock arch caused by the natural erosion of the limestone. The hike from Esino Lario is 20 kilometres and will take you approximately 6 hours with a cumulative ascent during the walk of 1144 metres and descent of 324 metres.



Accommodation: Hotel Bellavista (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Roman road walk to Rezzonico

Another walk straight out of from Menaggio leads along cobblestoned paths on the west coast of Lake Como to Rezzonico on the Antica Strada Regina, an old Roman road. The Antica Strada Regina was an important road connection between Como and the alpine passes and the old trail was used until the end of the 18th century when the current lakeside road was built. From the top of the hill there are great views of the lake and the surrounding mountains. After the walk you can return to Menaggio by local bus. Today's is nine kilometres and will take you approximately three hours with a cumulative ascent during the walk of 530 metres and descent of 493 metres.



Accommodation: Hotel Bellavista (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Taxi to Cavargna; panoramic descent to Porlezza

Today you will move base to the pretty village of Porlezza on the shore of Lake Lugano. In the morning a private transfer takes you to the start of today's walk, the hill top village of Cavargna. (Your main luggage continues on to your hotel in Porlezza). From Cavargna, a spectacular climb takes you to the Church of Saint Lucio, right on the border between Italy and Switzerland. A panoramic footpath leads you on a descent of over 1550 metres through woods and meadows down to Porlezza, situated at the northeast end of the Lake Lugano, and very close to the Swiss border. You can expect today's 16.5 kilometre walk to take approximately five hours. There is a cumulative ascent during the walk of 698 metres and descent of 1502 metres.



Accommodation: Hotel Europa (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Cable car to San Salvatore; hike to Morcote

This morning you can catch a public bus to Lugano in Switzerland from where you take the cable car to the top of Monte San Salvatore (912m). You hike along a forest footpath to the end of the peninsula with some spectacular views of Lake Lugano and the mountains all around. It is possible to make a short detour to reach the baroque Church of Madonna d'Ongero. The walk ends in Morcote from where you can catch a bus back to Lugano and then on to Porlezza. You can expect today's ten kilometre walk to take approximately three hours. There is a cumulative ascent during the walk of 433 metres and descent of 1039 metres.



Accommodation: Hotel Europa (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Trip ends in Porlezza

The trip ends after breakfast in Porlezza.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Walking and Trekking information

Walking grade

Moderate

Trek details

On this holiday you walk 82.5 km over 6 days (an average of almost 14 km a day). The routes are along well trodden footpaths, forest trails and cobbled paths and there are some short sections on quiet country lanes. Ascents/descents average around 800 metres a day with the walk ascending of Monte Grona and Bregagnino totalling 1346 metres.

Max walking altitude (m)

1905

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7



Transport

Bus
Ferry
Taxi



Accommodation

7 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

Italy Holidays & Tours

Climate

April/May and October/November are pleasantly warm. June/September are the hottest months. Showers are common in Autumn.

Time difference to GMT

+1

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Roman Catholic

Language

Italian

Switzerland Holidays & Tours

Climate

Summers are generally warm, or even hot, with a three-month period when rain rarely falls. When it does rain in this season, it is heavy and often accompanied by thunder. There are as much as eleven to twelve hours' sunshine a day in summer, but as with anywhere in mainland Europe it can occasionally be cold and wet. Early and late summer is generally the best times to visit this region.

Time difference to GMT

+1

Plugs

3 Pin Round

Religion

Catholic

Language

German

Budgeting and packing

Clothing

You will need light layers of clothing for walking during the day and a fleece and waterproof jacket as temperatures can drop in the mountains. A sunhat is essential.

Footwear

We recommend you bring walking boots. Some of the paths are a bit rocky underfoot and so you could twist an ankle if not wearing boots. Make sure that your boots are worn-in and comfortable before the start of the trip. We recommend that you wear/carry your walking boots as hand luggage on the international flight; should your luggage be delayed, your well broken-in boots will be irreplaceable. Bring trainers and sandals for relaxing and other sightseeing.

Luggage: On tour

You will need one main piece of baggage and a daypack sufficiently large enough to take everything needed for your walking day, such as your water bottle, snacks, spare clothing and camera. Your main luggage will be transferred to your next accommodation on day 6. Please clearly mark all your belongings with your name and the name of the next accommodation and have your bags ready and at the reception by 09:00 on the morning of your departure.

Luggage transfer

Included between the hotels in Menaggio and Porlezza.

Equipment

You should bring a two litre water bottle, sunhat, sunglasses and sunscreen. Trekking poles are recommended. Maps - Along with the destination manual and route notes you will be sent a set of maps that have been created specifically for this trip to help you navigate. The route is marked on each map together with a series of numbered waypoints which correspond with instructions in the route notes. Should you wish to purchase a more detailed commercially produced map we recommend the following:- General maps Lombardia 1:200.000 TCI Touring Club Italiano, ISBN: 9788836548316 Topographic maps 1:35.000 Lago di Como, Global Map, ISBN:9788879143233 1:50.000 Lago di Como-Lago di Lugano, Kompass, ISBN: 9783850261692 Lago di Como e Lugano, Global Map, ISBN:9788879144834

Tipping

Local fees

A local city tax is required to be paid in cash upon check-in to each accommodation - approximately 3 Euros per person per night Ferry from Menaggio to Varenna - approximately 4.60 Euros one way Train from Dervio to Varenna -- approximately 1.80 Euros one way Local buses to start and end of walks - approximately 2.20 Euros one way Cable car to San Salvatore - approximately 21.00 Euros one way

Country Information

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Dinner price

£10.00 - 14.00

Beer price

£2.00 - 4.00

Water price

£1.00 - 2.00

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Euro.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

GBP.

Where To Exchange

We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

ATM Availability

Major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance

Larger hotels and restaurants.

Travellers Cheques

Only in major towns. Please note, the exchange rate for cash and Travellers Cheques is poor.

Switzerland Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£16

Dinner price

£23

Beer price

£5.2

Water price

£1.5

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Swiss Franc.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Euros.

Where To Exchange

Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival

ATM Availability

Local currency can be obtained using credit cards in ATM's.

Credit Card Acceptance

In major restaurants.

Travellers Cheques
Not recommended.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Ferry, Taxi

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Visas are not required by UK citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer click [here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Maximum altitude (m)

1905

Italy Holidays & Tours

Vaccinations

Nothing required. Tetanus recommended. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

Switzerland Holidays & Tours

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory; Tetanus recommended. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.
