

Luxurious Italian Lakes, Switzerland & Austria



Day 01 Depart for Milan D
Depart home city for our **Luxurious Tour of the Italian Lakes, Switzerland and Austria**.
Dinner on board our overseas flight to Milan..

Day 02 Milan D
Afternoon arrival in **Milan**. Meet your tour manager and enjoy a panoramic city tour including the Duomo (the Cathedral) - a marvel of white marble, admire **La Scala**, world famous **Opera House**, the Church of Our Lady of Grace (Santa Maria delle Grazie) featuring the world famous "**Last Supper**," painted by **Leonardo da Vinci**. Afterwards continue to your final destination **Stresa, Lake Maggiore** .

Day 03 Stresa - Isola Bella (BD)
Morning sightseeing of **Stresa** - considered the gem of **Lago Maggiore**. You are now in the **heart of the Italian Lakes** District. Enjoy the unspoiled rustic, simplistic Mediterranean mood with its Palm shaded plazas, outdoor cafés, sunbathed promenades with Mimosa and Camellia flowers sending exotic scents into the air. Enjoy a tour along the lake shore with the many delightful resorts including **Beveno**, a town well known and built in two tiers... lakeside and hillside. The lakeside winds past villas, *gelaterie* and, Castello Brance, **Queen Victoria's** headquarters in the summer of 1879. Continue our way up to the northern part of the lake which is actually in Switzerland. Not to be missed is a short **boat ride** to the **Borromean Island of Isola Bella**. In the evening try the ruby red Merlot or dark Nostrano wines, local specialties of the **Ticino** region of Italy.

Day 04 Lake Como - Bellagio - Lugano (BD)
Full day to enjoy beautiful **Lake Como** and fabulous **Bellagio**. No, not in Las Vegas with the dancing waters, but the original in Northern Italy. Mild Mediterranean climate allow red azalea blossoms and purple and blue hydrangeas to grow in the beautiful **Villa Carlotta**, known for its monumental gardens and art treasures. On Lake Como there are two constant breezes blowing the "Tivano" and the "Breva" making it ideal for water sports such as sailing and wind surfing. Continue to the Swiss part of the Lake and **Lugano** - here the feeling is Latin, the language, Italian wrapped in Ticino dialects, palm covered cafés cascading over sunbathed piazzas and promenades below the ancient hillsides.

Day 05 Lago Maggiore - Zermatt (BD)
Early departure from **Lago Maggiore** heading north along **Alpine roads** entering **Switzerland** to Simplon Pass (6.000 ft.) where you can enjoy a beautiful view of mountains and glaciers before driving down into the **Rhone Valley**. Here we will board the narrow gauge train which will bring you, in 20 minutes, to the fashionable mountain resort of **Zermatt**. Enjoy the afternoon in this picturesque " traffic free" village.

DAY 06 Zermatt (BD)
Leisurely day to relax and enjoy the Swiss countryside. Weather permitting, enjoy an optional excursion to Gornergrat, with an outstanding view of the famous "**Matterhorn**" or take an optional train ride to "Sunnegga" mountain. Late afternoon return to **Zermatt**, for an outstanding Swiss dinner at our hotel.

DAY 07 Zermatt - Lucerne (BLD)
After breakfast, we begin our drive to Goppenstein, along Loetschberg Lake Thunersee to **Interlaken** where you will enjoy an awesome view of Jungfrau and Eiger mountain. Traveling along Lake Brienz - Bruenig Pass through lovely Swiss countryside, we will get our first glimpse of the lovely picturesque city of **Lucerne** . Later this afternoon, city sightseeing tour of the famous **Chapel Bridge** and **Lion Monument**.

DAY 08 Lucerne - Innsbruck (BLD)
Morning departure for **Maria Einsiedeln**, the most famous Swiss **Basilica** with the altar of the "**Black Madonna**." Scenic drive along **Lake Zurich** and Lake Walensee to Feldkirch where you will enter **Austria**. Early afternoon arrival in **Innsbruck** with a delightful lunch at the "**Goldener Adler Restaurant**" right in the heart of the city. Afternoon walking tour of the Old Town known for, among other things, its famous "**Golden Roof**" and **Swarovski** crystal. Amazingly scenic drive as we depart Austria and enter Italy again at **Brenner Pass** through **Bolzano** and Trento to arrive at beautiful **Lake Garda**, Italy's largest lake. Around its shores are some of Italy's best-known holiday resorts including the spa resort of **Sirmione** (which Catullus, the Latin poet loved so much) with its **Roman ruins** and imposing 12th century **Castle**.

Day 09 Innsbruck - Verona - Lake Garda (BD)
Morning excursion to **Verona**, one of Italy's most fascinating cities with a wide variety of monuments and historic buildings. Your sightseeing includes visits to Piazza Bra with its Roman Arena - second only to the Coliseum in Rome (site of the Summer Opera Festival, July & August), **Castelvecchio** built in the 14th century by Cangrande della Scala. Of course, we cannot leave Verona without visiting the places associated with **Romeo and Juliet**. Afterwards visit the beautiful pilgrimage area of **Madonna della Corona** north of Verona. Late afternoon or early evening leisurely **Cruise on Lake Garda**. **Optional:** possible operetta on the lake or musical performance - schedule to be advised.

Day 10 Lake Garda - Padua (BD)
Morning transfer to **Padua** for overnight. Our visit to this medieval well kept "walled city" includes a city tour including the **Basilica of St. Anthony** built in 1232 in honor of **St. Anthony**. Marvel at the many works of fine art; the **Shrine and burial place** of St. Anthony and the high altar with splendid bronze art works by **Donatello**. Continue to the **Scrovegni Chapel** to admire the famous frescoes by **Giotto**, the Gattamelata Monument - an equestrian masterpiece by Donatello, the palazzo della Ragione and the **Basilica of S.Giustina** featuring a painting by Veronese

Day 11 Padua - Venice (BD)

Full day excursion along the Veneto plains to the magical and truly romantic city on the water... **Venice**, "the **Pearl of the Adriatic**". Enjoy a city walking tour starting with a private water taxi on the **Grand Canal**, filled with **gondolas**, motorboats and peppermint stick moorings. Admire the splendid interior of the **Basilica**, famous for its Byzantine and Gothic design, mosaic, marble and precious sculptures, **St. Mark's Square** (the drawing room of Europe) with its thousands of pigeons, strolling musicians and minstrels. View the 15th century clock tower, **Doges Palace**, **the Bridge of Sighs** and the prison from which Casanova made a daring escape. Remainder of day **at leisure** to wander and discover Venice on your own. Perhaps a Gondola ride or a short cruise across the calm lagoon to the quaint island of **Burano** - famous for its exquisite lace works, or **Murano**, famous for the exquisite glass blowing techniques, or stop for a Campari at the fashionable **Florian Café** right there in St. Mark's Square. Returning late afternoon to your hotel in **Padua**.

Day 12 Padua - Como - Valeggio sul Mincio (BLD)

Morning leisure departure to **Como** with a visit to **Valeggio sul Mincio** and **enjoy an Italian gourmet lunch**. Panoramic tour of **Como**, noted for its Silk and Silk products, the Torre del Commune, Broletto the 13th century former city hall. **Farewell dinner with wine and music**.

Day 13 Departure for airport and return home (B)

This morning we **depart Como** for our short drive to the **Milan airport** for our return flight home with fond memories of **Bella Italia**, the beautiful **Swiss and Italian Alps**, and the warmth and kind hospitality of the **Austrian** people.