



Lake Como & Around

Includes →

Como	104
Triangolo Lariano	109
Abbazia di San Pietro al Monte	112
Lake Como West Bank	113
Lake Como East Bank	119
Lake Lugano	122
Bellinzona (Switzerland)	129

Best Places to Eat

- Albergo Silvio (p111)
- Gatto Nero (p114)
- Ristorante La Vista (p121)
- Locanda dell'Isola (p115)
- Osteria del Gallo (p108)
- Sale e Tabacchi (p122)

Best Places to Stay

- Avenue Hotel (p199)
- Hotel Silvio (p200)
- Hotel La Perla (p200)
- Hotel Gabbanini (p201)
- Albergo Milano (p201)

Why Go?

In the shadow of the snow-covered Rhaetian Alps and hemmed in on both sides by steep, verdant hillsides, Lake Como (aka Lake Lario) is perhaps the most spectacular of the three major lakes. Shaped like an upside-down Y, measuring around 160km in squiggly shoreline, it's littered with villages, including exquisite Bellagio and Varenna. Where the southern and western shores converge is the lake's main town, Como, an elegant, prosperous Italian city.

Among the area's siren calls are some extraordinarily sumptuous villas, often graced with paradisiacal gardens. The mountainous terrain means that opportunities for taking bird's-eye views of the lake and its towns are numerous. And with a fraction of the visitors drawn here compared to Lake Maggiore or Lake Garda, Lake Como and its surrounding area offer the traveller the chance to enjoy a real sense of discovery.

Road Distances (KM)

Bellinzona	91			
Como	31	60		
Lecco	27	92	28	
Lugano	63	29	32	60
	Bellagio	Bellinzona	Como	Lugano

Getting Around

The SS340 more or less shadows the western and eastern shores of Lake Como, bypassing many of the smaller lakeside villages which are served by smaller roads. Narrow mountain roads climb up from Varenna, Gravedona, Cernobbio, Argegno, Bellagio and elsewhere. Buses run from Como to most of the lake's towns, passing through smaller villages en route, while public ferries connect most lakeside towns (except those south of Varenna along the East Bank) with regular departures.

3 PERFECT DAYS

Day 1: Como & Above

Take an early funicular up to Brunate to catch views of Como and the lake under the rising sun's rays. Back in Como, explore the old centre, making time for the Duomo and to see the remarkable frescoes in the Basilica di Sant'Abbondio. It's then time for lunch at Osteria del Gallo, after which you can head 7km around the lake to Cernobbio, to admire the pretty lakeside villas, followed by a drive up to Monte Bisbino, arriving in time for sunset views over the lake. You could finish with a splendid meal at Gatto Nero.

Day 2: Bellagio & Villa Carlotta

Catch a ferry from Como to Bellagio, where you could take a room and spend the morning discovering the gardens of two fine villas and the topsy-turvy beauty of the town itself. Lunch at Albergo Silvio before taking a car ferry to Cadenabbia for an afternoon visit to nearby Tremezzo's Villa Carlotta. Car ferries returning to Bellagio run late into the evening.

Day 3: Varenna & the East Bank

From Bellagio, jump on another car ferry to Varenna, a rival in beauty to Bellagio. You could spend the bulk of a day here, especially if you include a walk up to the Castello di Vezio to gaze back down on Varenna. Those with wheels can easily head north for the medieval hamlet of Corenno Plinio and, just further on, the lovely Abbazia di Piona, where you can stay if you don't want to turn back.

Where to Stay

Finding vacant rooms around Lakes Como and Lugano can be problematic in key places (including Como, Bellagio, around Tremezzo and Varenna especially) in July and August and, to a lesser extent, at Easter. Not surprisingly, these also happen to be the most desirable places to stay along the lakeshore, although Lugano is also lovely. Bookings should be made at least a month (and sometimes even further) in advance.

DON'T MISS

The view down to Varenna and across the lake from Castello di Vezio.

Best Lake Views

- ➔ Castello di Vezio (p122)
- ➔ Monte Bisbino (p114)
- ➔ Cima Sighignola (p116)
- ➔ Monte Brè (p125)
- ➔ Monte San Salvatore (p125)
- ➔ Sacro Monte di Ossuccio (p115)
- ➔ Brunate (p107)
- ➔ Peglio (p118)

Best Escapes

- ➔ Val d'Intelvi & Erbonne (p116)
- ➔ Corenno Plinio (p120)
- ➔ Valtellina (p119)
- ➔ Valsassina (p123)
- ➔ Dorsale (p110)
- ➔ Rifugio Menaggio (p118)

Resources

- ➔ **Bellagio** (www.bellagiolakecomo.com) Everything you need to know about lovely Bellagio.
- ➔ **Lago di Como** (www.lakecomo.org) One-stop portal for Lake Como's attractions and services.
- ➔ **Lugano** (www.lugano.tourism.ch) Comprehensive tourist office site on Lugano and its immediate surrounds.
- ➔ **Ticino** (www.ticino.ch) Region-wide information on Switzerland's corner of the lakes region.