



Walkway over Lake Como, Varenna (p76)



# WELCOME TO THE ITALIAN LAKES

From the snowy slopes of the alpine Milky Way region to villas framed by gazebos and mould-breaking art and architecture, northern Italy is as action-packed as it is artful. The glacial lakes of Lombardy – where fishing boats bob in tiny harbours while palaces float in the Borromean Gulf – have been a popular spot since Roman times. Meanwhile, artists, celebrities and moneyed Mitteleuropeans have been lured here since the days of the Grand Tour, by world-class art, an embarrassment of culinary riches, cult wines and a slew of sophisticated cities.

While Venice's city of palaces dazzles and Milan's Golden Quad rapidly helps to relieve you of your hard-earned cash, you're never far from a rural hinterland that still moves with the rhythm of the seasons and seems largely untouched by modern tourism.