

CINQUE AQUAE

Italy's Lake District

ITINERARY

TOUR PREPARATION

PRICING & ACCOMMODATIONS



Date

September 6 - 15, 2020
Extend to Cinque Terre
September 15 - 19

Price

\$4,700

Duration

10 DAYS

Availability

Open

[BOOK NOW](#)

About This Tour

One of Italy's most beautiful regions is Lombardy on Italy's northern border with Switzerland. The region has long been a target for invaders. Its position, with travel through the Alps limited to a few narrow passes, made it both strategically important and an economic goldmine, with the majority of those passing to or from Italy having to cross through the region. With medieval pilgrimages to Rome (and that would mean thousands of foot travelers each year) there was a ready supply of money to pay for bed, board, food and drink. Based on this foundation, and with absolutely stunning scenery, Lombardy became, and remains to this day, the country's preferred vacation spot.

Writers, artists and composers have flocked to the Lake District for millennia. American novelist Henry James wrote that "One can't describe the beauty of the Italian lakes, nor would one try if one could." John Keats was one of many romantic writers who came here to for inspiration. And Italians were equally besotted, with Bellini, Rossini and Verdi among the composers who took lakeside homes, the better to inspire their art. This tour allows you to drink deep of the same inspiration. Each of the five lakes we visit has its own unique character. The lakes make this a perfect tour already, but Toto Tours adds an optional extension to the nearby Liguria region and its postcard-ready five seaside towns on the cliffs known as Cinque Terre.

Tour Highlights

- Stresa
- Lake Maggiore's historical past
- Lake Orta's picture-perfect setting
- Sirmione
- Lake Garda's many lovely resorts
- Como
- Lake Como's magnificent villas
- Lake Lugano's mountains

MAIN TOUR ITINERARY

Sunday, September 6, 2020

Arrive in Stresa / Welcome Dinner

Please arrange your international flight to arrive at the Milan Malpensa Airport (airport code MXP) this morning. Before departure we will send you instructions about how to transfer from the airport to Stresa by train. If you prefer to arrive one night early (September 7) and stay in downtown Milan, our tour guide will assist with the Stesa transfer from Milan. Indicate your preference on your reservation form. Stresa is famed for its lush gardens and mild climate. It soared in popularity following the construction of the Simplon Tunnel through the Alps in 1906, and Ernest Hemingway used the Grand Hotel des Iles Borromees in his 1929 novel A Farewell to Arms. On arrival, enjoy a relaxing walk along the lake shore. One possibility would be to ascend the Mottarone Mountain by cable car. Our group convenes this evening for our Welcome Dinner. *(Dinner included)*



Tour Map - Click to Enlarge

Monday, September 7, 2020

Lake Maggiore

Despite its name, Maggiore is not the largest lake in Italy, but it is certainly the most famous. Visit the Borromean Islands, named after the family who owned the lake in the 15th century. A barren rock until developed by Count Carlo III Borromeo in the 17th century, Isola Bella was named after his wife Isabella, embellished with grottoes, gardens and white peacocks. After touring the palace continue to the fisherman's island, Isola dei Pescatori, and enjoy free time for lunch before returning to Stresa. *(Breakfast)*



Stresa and Lake Maggiore

Tuesday, September 8, 2020

Lake Orta

Take a private vehicle for a three-quarter day excursion to Lake Orta, perhaps most beautiful of all the Italian lakes. After some time in the town of Orta San Giulio, we visit the island of the same name, just 328 yards long and 175 yards wide. See the Basilica of San Giulio, dating from the 4th century, when San Giulio, a Christian preacher from Greece, spread his cloak on the waters of the lake and floated across to the island. We return to Stresa for a free evening. *(Breakfast)*



Lake Orta

Wednesday, September 9, 2020

Verona / Transfer to Sirmione

We transfer by private vehicle to Verona, one of the richest and most elegant cities in northern Italy. It was a Roman colony, and several historical sites from that time, including the Arena where the yearly opera festival takes place, are well preserved. William Shakespeare set both *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Romeo and Juliet* in this city, the latter based on a true story from the year 1302. Enjoy a guided tour of the old town, built in a bend of the river Adige, full of historic buildings, attractive squares and beautiful shops. In the late afternoon, we continue to Sirmione on Lake Garda. Enjoy dinner at our hotel following check-in. *(Breakfast / Dinner)*



Juliet Balcony Verona

Thursday, September 10, 2020

Lake Garda

Garda is the largest of the Italian lakes, covering nearly 150 square miles, surrounded on three sides by mountains, including the Dolomites to the north. The southern end features many resorts, including Salò, where Benito Mussolini was set up as head of the Salo Republic in 1943 by the Nazis, after having been overthrown by the Italian people. Enjoy a day on the lake, first visiting Salò, before crossing the lake to Garda town for time for lunch (on your own) before returning to Sirmione via Lazise, a small comune with a well preserved old town and city walls. *(Breakfast)*



Sirmione

Friday, September 11, 2020

Sirmione Free Day

We have a free day to explore Sirmione, where our hotel is located. Sirmione is situated on a peninsula which juts out from the southern shore of the lake, combining a medieval old town with luxurious vegetation. Visit the Castello Scaligero, built in the 13th century, or the remains of the villa of the Roman poet Catullus (neither included). This evening, we reconvene at our hotel and walk the short distance into Sirmione town for an included dinner. *(Breakfast / Dinner)*



Free Day in Sirmione

Saturday, September 12, 2020

Lake Como

We depart Sirmione for Lake Como, Italy's most prestigious lake since the earliest days of the Roman Empire, when Pliny wrote of the luxuriant beauty surrounding the villas on the shore. Later the lake enraptured Verdi, Rossini, Bellini and Liszt, while Shelley and Wordsworth were regular visitors. More recently, George Clooney bought a villa on the lake in Laglio, where he and his wife entertained Barack and Michelle Obama in 2019. You will have time after our arrival to explore the area surrounding our hotel on your own. After an included dinner, the evening is free. *(Breakfast / Dinner)*



Como

Sunday, September 13, 2020

Lake Como Sightseeing

We have a full day guided tour of Lake Como, beginning with a morning boat cruise north along the lake to Tremezzo, visiting Villa Carlotta. Built in 1747, the villa takes its name from Princess Carlotta of the Netherlands, who received it as a wedding gift from her mother upon her marriage to the Duke of Saxony-Meiningen in the 1850s. She laid out the magnificent gardens, while the palace itself is a neo-classical joy. We cross the lake by boat to Bellagio, and enjoy a short walking tour before free time for lunch. The inspiration for the hotel of the same name in Las Vegas, Bellagio (bi-lacus in Latin) is a beautiful village which occupies a promontory where the lake branches in two. We return to Como by boat in mid-afternoon. The evening is free to relax or explore on your own. *(Breakfast)*



Cruising on Lake Como

Monday, September 14, 2020

Lugano, Switzerland

We take a three-quarter day excursion to Lugano, Switzerland, in the Italian speaking canton of Ticino. The city, situated on the lake of the same name between Monte Salvatore and Monte Bre, has a lovely old town and a beautiful lakeside promenade. Enjoy a guided tour before shopping for Swiss specialities or taking the funicular up Monte San Salvatore (not included) for magnificent views of the surroundings. This evening, Toto Tours hosts a Farewell Dinner. *(Breakfast / Dinner)*



Lugano

Tuesday, September 15, 2020

Departure

The tour officially ends after breakfast this morning. Milan's Malpensa airport is conveniently situated about 40 minutes from Como, and transfers can be arranged. Or you will continue on to Santa Margherita Ligure if you are taking the Cinque Terre extension. *(Breakfast)*



Farewell to the Lake District

OPTIONAL CINQUE TERRE EXTENSION

In northwestern Italy, the Liguria coast is a stunning treasure with a dramatic chain of hills cradling a series of five small villages—the Cinque Terre—in a wash of colorful houses spilling down the hillsides to the sea. It is a perfect place for an active walking/sightseeing holiday. A scenic pathway, the Via dell'Amore, connects the towns, winding along terraced hillsides through olive groves and vineyards. Best of all, these picturesque villages are all off limits to automobiles!

Tour Highlights

- Cinque Terre National Park *
- Riomaggiore & Manarola
- Corniglia, Vernazza & Monterosso al Mare
- Santa Margherita & Portofino

UNESCO World Heritage Site *

ITINERARY

Tuesday, September 15, 2020

Transfer from Como to Santa Margherita Ligure

We depart Como by private vehicle, crossing the mountains to the resort town of Santa Margherita Ligure, situated on a secluded bay at the beginning of the Portofino peninsula. We check into our beautiful hotel with sea-view rooms. Enjoy the rest of the day at leisure before reconvening for an included dinner. *(Breakfast / Dinner)*



Santa Margherita Ligure

Wednesday, September 16, 2020

Lovers Way

We take the train from Santa Margherita to Riomaggiore, most southerly of the Cinque Terre, a rugged portion of coast meaning "Five Lands." The coastline, the five villages, and the surrounding hillsides are all part of the Cinque Terre National Park and comprise a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Over centuries, people have carefully built terraces on the rugged, steep landscape, right up to the cliffs that overlook the sea. Part of its charm is the lack of visible corporate development. Paths, trains and boats connect the villages, and cars cannot reach them from the outside. We will walk the Lovers Way between Riomaggiore and Manarola, and then continue along the coastal path to Corniglia, Vernazza and Monterosso al Mare. In late afternoon, we catch a train for the trip back to Santa Margherita. The evening free is free at leisure.

(Breakfast)



Via dell'Amore

Thursday, September 17, 2020

Portofino

We walk across the hills behind Santa Margherita through olive groves and hidden paths, enjoying spectacular views, before arriving in Portofino, one of Italy's most elegant resorts. It was named Portus Delfini by the Romans due to the large number of dolphins seen offshore. The harbor, populated in the past by fishing boats, now welcomes luxury yachts, and is surrounded by restaurants, while the town itself has many boutiques. Above the harbor is the fortress, which protected the harbor in days gone by, while the nearby church of San Giorgio contains relics of St. George. Enjoy time for lunch and shopping before returning to Santa Margherita by public bus or on foot. Our Farewell Dinner is included at our hotel this evening. *(Breakfast / Dinner)*



Portofino

Friday, September 18, 2020

Return to Milan

After a leisurely morning, we take breakfast and then check out of our hotel. We transfer back to Milan for a final afternoon and evening at leisure. Overnight in Milan. *(Breakfast)*



Il Duomo Milan

Saturday, September 19, 2020

Departure

The Cinque Terre extension ends this morning after breakfast. Taxis can be arranged for airport transfers, although the location of the hotel near the Central Station makes bus or train an easy option. Please let us know on your reservation form if you would like to extend your stay in Milan. ***(Breakfast)***



Depart Italy

Entry Requirements-- U.S. and Canadian citizens do not need visas for entry into Italy, or any other country in the European Union. A valid passport is all that is required.

Immunizations & Health— No immunizations are required, but we remind you to make sure that your tetanus booster is current.

Exit Requirements -- There is no departure tax currently required other than what is included with the cost of your airline ticket.

Making Travel Arrangements to Italy

On this tour, international airfare is not included. You will need to get your international air to and from Milan Malapensa Airport (code MXP). We encourage you to work with Steven Goldberg at Frosch Travel in Chicago, who can find the best flights to get you to Milan. You will need to arrive in Stresa (by train) by 4:00 pm on Sunday, September 6, 2020. Departure from the main tour is from Como to the Milan Airport on Tuesday, September 15, 2020. If taking the Cinque Terre extension, you depart from Milan on Saturday, September 19, 2020.

Steven Goldberg / Frosch Travel

Toll-Free in USA: 1-800-323-1276

International guests, please call +1-312-371-9686

Email: steven.goldberg@frosch.com

When calling, please identify yourself as a Toto Tours participant. If you leave a message on Steven's voice mail, he will return your call promptly. He will be happy to discuss your travel plans and help you decide when to purchase your ticket for the best rate.

NOTE: The recent trend in travel is for travelers to finalize their plans much closer to departure time than was customary in the past. While we try to be as flexible as possible, we often must turn away last minute registrants because we relinquish hotel space 8 – 12 weeks prior to departure! Please keep this in mind when making your travel plans.

WHAT TO BRING

Temperatures in the areas visited could range between 55 degrees F during the night to the lower-70s during the day. For the Cinque Terre extension you can expect temperatures about 8 to 10 degrees warmer, ranging from 65 - 78 F. Pack light and try to limit yourself to one suitcase and a carry-on bag. Pack medications in your carry-on just in case your suitcase doesn't arrive when you do. We suggest leaving expensive jewelry at home!

Suggested Packing List:

- Proof of citizenship. Passport required.
- Nice casual wear for dinners.
- Lightweight long pants & long-sleeved shirts for sun protection.
- Shorts for warm touring days.
- Socks, underwear for 9 days.
- Sweater or lightweight jacket for cool evenings.
- Personal toiletries, and bug repellent
- Comfortable walking shoes.
- Camera, lots of digital memory, extra batteries.
- Ziploc Bags (sandwich size for documents, gallon size for wet items or toiletries).
- Electrical Adapter. The electricity supply in Italy, like all of Europe, is 220 volts, 50 Hz. You will need an adapter with two round prongs. [Click here](#) to see a picture of the kind of adapter you need to bring.
- A good book for your flights and free time.

MONEY MATTERS

Italy uses the standardized European currency, the Euro (EUR). Exchange rates between the U.S. dollar and the Euro changes almost daily, so check www.oanda.com for the most current rates prior to departure.

Tipping in Italy: As in most of Europe tipping isn't expected in Italy. However, if you receive exceptional service, which meets or exceeds your standards, tipping would be appropriate. People in the service industry may refuse your generosity at first, but they are just being polite. If you want to leave a gratuity, insist. We will provide a group tip to drivers and guides, and more information about this will be sent prior to departure.

THE TOTO SPIRIT

Toto Tours provides Adventure Travel Experiences as differentiated from tours in the traditional sense. Adventure Travel allows (even encourages) you to be an active participant. Adventurers can be identified by certain traits. They are

- fun-loving optimists who have a sense of humor and accentuate the positive;
- good natured realists who are willing to accept situations as they exist;
- undaunted by the unexpected, like occasional delays or bad weather;
- willing to forego some of the amenities we normally take for granted;
- eager to try new things & test limits;
- punctual;
- not whiners!

These five lakes and five villages are simply a must-see for all who want to discover the best of Italy. If you have any questions, please email us at: tototours@gmail.com.

Travel Insurance

We recommend you purchase travel insurance with Travel Guard to cover for unforeseen events prior to and during your trip. Please follow the link below or call us for more information.

Travel Guard®

LEARN MORE

Cover your trip with a Travel Guard
travel insurance plan.



PRICING – MAIN TOUR

(tour prices per person)

Price: \$4,700 in double occupancy hotel accommodations.

Private Room: \$1,300 additional, for a total tour price of \$6,000.

(Paying a single supplement is not required. Toto Tours will try to match you with a roommate if you are traveling alone and prefer to share a room. If this is not possible, a single supplement will be applied to your reservation before the final payment date.)

Guaranteed Lake View Hotel Upgrades: \$400 double / \$600 private **Deposit:** \$600.

(Due at time of registration for the tour. May be paid with a credit card.)

Remaining Balance (main tour): \$4,100 double / \$5,400 single

Remaining Balance Due: June 18, 2020 (80 days prior to departure)

(Full payment required with reservation form if enrolling after this date.)

Note: The tour price does not include bank service charges for processing credit card payments and assumes that the balance of the tour price will be paid by check. If you would like to pay the final balance with a credit card, a 4% service charge will be applied to cover bank fees. Let us know if you wish to pay by credit card, and we will adjust your invoice accordingly.

Included: 9 nights hotel accommodations; hotel breakfasts daily plus Welcome & Farewell Dinners; other meals as listed in the itinerary; ground transportation in climate controlled motorcoach; sightseeing activities and entrances as listed in the itinerary. This is a fully escorted tour, with guides added during tours.

Not Included: International airfare to Milan (MXP); hotel transfers; ground transportation for sightseeing on your own (taxis, local guides, etc.); meals and optional activities not specifically listed in the itinerary; camera fees; alcoholic beverages; insurance; laundry, telephone calls, faxes, or any other expenses of a personal nature. Tips to drivers and guides and other conveyance attendants are not included; tipping guidelines for our group tips will be provided prior to departure.

PRICING – CINQUE TERRE EXTENSION

(extension prices per person)

Price: \$2,200 in double occupancy hotel accommodations.

Private Room: \$700 additional, for a total extension price of \$2,900.

Additional Deposit: \$300, totaling \$900 for main tour plus extension (Due at time of registration for the tour. May be paid with a credit card.)

Remaining Balance (extension): \$1,900 double / \$2,600 single

Remaining Balance Due: June 18, 2020 (80 days prior to departure) (Full payment required with reservation form if enrolling after this date.)

Note: The tour price does not include bank service charges for processing credit card payments and assumes that the balance of the tour price will be paid by check. If you would like to pay the final balance with a credit card, a 4% service charge will be applied to cover bank fees. Let us know if you wish to pay by credit card, and we will adjust your invoice accordingly.

Included: 4 nights hotel accommodations; hotel breakfasts daily plus Farewell Dinner; other meals as listed in the itinerary; ground transportation in climate controlled motorcoach or taxis; sightseeing activities and entrances as listed in the itinerary. This is a fully escorted tour.

Not Included: International airfare to Milan (MXP); hotel transfers; ground transportation for sightseeing on your own (taxis, local guides, etc.); meals and optional activities not specifically listed in the itinerary; camera fees; alcoholic beverages; insurance; laundry, telephone calls, faxes, or any other expenses of a personal nature. Tips to drivers and guides and other conveyance attendants are not included; tipping guidelines for our group tips will be provided prior to departure.

ACCOMMODATIONS – MAIN TOUR

Click hotel name to read description

- Milan (Optional pre-tour September 5) – [Hotel Hyatt Centric Milan Centrale](#)
- Stresa (3 nights) – [Hotel Regina Palace](#)
- Sirmione (3 nights) – [Hotel Ideal](#)
- Como (3 nights) - [Hotel Metropole Suisse](#)

ACCOMMODATIONS - CINQUE TERRE EXTENSION

Click hotel name to read description

- Santa Margherita (3 nights) – [Hotel Continental \(Sea View Rooms\)](#)
- Milan (1 night) - [Hotel Hyatt Centric Milan Centrale](#)