

CULTURE + WALKING

ITALIAN LAKES

Como, Maggiore & Orta



Classic
JOURNEYS



“Classic Journeys provides unbeatable access to experiences around the globe.”

—Travel + Leisure

A Retreat to the Lake District

A Renaissance mirage, the villa floats on a mirror-smooth lake. It's morning. The mountains that slide into the water are still hidden in deep blue shadows, except the peaks high above that are tipped in apricot alpenglow. Italy's lake district always makes us poetic, and this Classic Journey visits the most inspiring lakes: Como, Maggiore and Orta. Since the Roman emperors, these gracious waterside resorts have drawn visitors. The climate is mild, loaded with the vibrant colors of alpine wildflowers and lush semi-tropical gardens. Our footpaths sometimes traverse mountaintop meadows and often hug the crystal clear waters. We spend generous parts of several days on leisurely cruises and visit fine villas, palaces and fishing villages. Nowhere else does stunning scenery, mellow air and rich history come together with such romantic results.

DAY 1

BELLAGIO

- Meet your guide in Milan for a seamless start to your trip
- Explore Villa Serbelloni's gardens

You meet your guide in central Milan and transfer to Bellagio, sometimes called the prettiest town in Europe and always seeming to be flag-bedecked, with geraniums ablaze in every window and bougainvillea veiling the staircases, or *montées*, that thread through the town.

Your first stop is a visit to the Italian-style gardens of Villa Serbelloni, complete with fountains, statues and lush flower beds. These luxurious grounds boast an array of Mediterranean and subtropical plants and flowers that bask in the year-round sunshine. Following your visit, there's ample time to roam the narrow streets that lead down to the lake or stop at a café.

Later in the afternoon, you return to your lakeside hotel, named in Italian for "beautiful view". You're welcomed by our friend, Tiziana, whose family has owned the hotel since 1880.

You have time to relax and explore the lovely terraced gardens that have replaced the vineyards that once surrounded the villa before you enjoy a welcome dinner of local specialties, such as freshly-caught fish with risotto and ravioli.

OVERNIGHT: BELLAGIO
MEALS: D

DAY 2

BELLAGIO

- Meander through the cobbled streets of the lakeside village
- Walk through scenic countryside to a lakeside villa for a wine tasting
- Sample the local gelato overlooking the lake

You follow your guide on a scenic loop walk today that leads you directly out of your hotel, into the countryside surrounding Bellagio, and ultimately back on foot. Throughout the day your walk links a great variety of activities that immerse you into the history and culture of the region.

You begin your morning explorations by meandering through the cobblestone streets of Bellagio. Here, your local guide shares historical anecdotes and stories about the town's significant place in the history of silk weaving in the Lake District. After visiting the Romanesque church of San Giacomo, a leisurely stroll leads from the picturesque lakeside town to nearby Villa Melzi, whose magnificent gardens boast more than 500 species of exotic plants and 14 acres of flowering azaleas and rhododendrons.

You continue on foot a short distance to lovely Villa Crella. Your reward is a wine tasting, and often the opportunity to talk with Lorenzo, the owner and your host, who has restored the family estate. Sometimes you linger here for lunch. But you're also flexible, and so other times you prefer to stretch your legs after the wine tasting. On these occasions, you continue along a scenic footpath a short distance to visit with a friend at his trattoria for lunch and the

chance to sample the locally made polenta *uncia*—polenta, butter, cheese and roasted garlic.

As you return on foot to Bellagio, there's time for gelato while you enjoy the afternoon sunlight on the lake. If you find yourself with excess energy after your gelato, your guide is happy to lead an hour-long hike through the beautiful countryside hamlets that surround Bellagio, where small villages and beautiful gardens are carved between the lush green hillsides.

OVERNIGHT: BELLAGIO
MEALS: B, L

DAY 3

COMO / BRUNATE

- Explore the village of Como, including time to shop for famed silks
- Ride a funicular to a countryside walk above olive groves
- Relax or choose to join an optional afternoon walk to a fishing village

Awaking at your lakeside home, you decide to escape to the quiet of the hills surrounding the lake for a portion of the day. Fortified with a breakfast of local specialties, you take a short boat ride to Como where you stroll through the historic town and admire the incredible architecture—a mixture of Renaissance Italian and 19th century British—and then on to the funicular station. A scenic ride on the funicular takes you to the mountain village of Brunate, situated above century-old olive groves. As you amble along your footpath, you pass through a grouping of beautiful private villas dating to the end of the 19th century. From this panoramic lookout, you are treated to an astonishing view of the lakes below, and on a clear day, across to Switzerland and the neighboring mountains.

You return along the same path to Brunate and the funicular. Descending to Como, it's your choice to explore its fantastic architectural and artistic tradition, or perhaps search the local shops for shirts and scarves made of the famous Como silk. For lunch, you can sample delicious salami and cheese, prosciutto, olives and fresh bread, complimented by beautiful views of the lake.

Back in Bellagio mid-afternoon, it's your option to relax in town or join your guide for a scenic walk of under an hour to the fisherman's village of Pescallo on the lakeshore below the hotel. This evening you join your local friends at a nearby hotel for dinner arranged on an enchanting private terrace with breathtaking views of the lake and mountains.

OVERNIGHT: BELLAGIO
MEALS: B, D

DAY 4

LAKE LUGANO

- Follow the lakeside past wildflowers to several charming villages
- Linger over lunch in a rustic *osteria*
- Arrive at your home in Stresa

Bidding good-bye to Tiziana and her staff, you leave your lovely waterside home and transfer west through the scenic Lake District toward your final destination for the day in Stresa. Nearby Mount Bre is perched above Lake Lugano in Ticino, the Italian speaking area of Switzerland. This morning begins with a walk of discovery—a privately guided stroll through the cobbled streets and pastel-

colored neoclassical palazzi. The highlight is a visit to the most famous ornate church in Lugano, *Santa Maria degli Angioli*. Here, there is a chance to view great work created by Bernardino Luini.

After, you start a scenic lakeside walk that offers a profusion of color from March to October from the quaint village of Castagnola. As the season progresses, narcissuses and May-lilies give way to azaleas, rhododendrons and camellias, then finally roses, oleanders and hydrangeas.

You finish your walk in Gandria, a charming lakeside town and historic fishing village. Following lunch, you cross back over the border into Italy and continue to Lake Maggiore. Your home for the next three nights is in Stresa. In town this evening, you enjoy dinner in a fine local trattoria.

OVERNIGHT: STRESA

MEALS: B, D

DAY 5

LAKE ORTA / SAN GIULIO

- Boat to San Giulio and its 1000 year-old basilica
- Walk through mountain villages and hamlets

A short drive will take you to the quaint village of Orta San Giulio, one of the most picturesque corners of Italy. With your guide and fellow guests, you follow the narrow, cobbled streets through Orta as they wind up and past colorful houses with ornate balconies. By motor launch, you travel to the islet of San Giulio for a visit to its 1000-year-old basilica and exploration around the charming island.

As you return to the mainland, your guide leads you on an exploration of Sacro Monte—a collection of chapels dedicated to Italy's patron saint, St. Francis of Assisi, and set in a beautiful park. You move to a hillside location on the mainland for a relaxing lunch in a quaint trattoria with a magnificent view.

After lunch, you enjoy locally made organic gelato, then you continue on a beautiful walk with stunning views of the lake around the promontory of Orta San Giulio, or if you are up for a more challenging walk, embark with your guide on a longer hike through mountain villages and hamlets.

Later, you return to the hotel with some time to rest. Enjoy dinner at one of the charming local restaurants, relax with a glass of local white wine in the hotel garden, or take a dip in the pool. Following dinner, you may want to enjoy a *passaggiata* (or "evening stroll") along the lake.

OVERNIGHT: STRESA

MEALS: B, L

DAY 6

BORROMEAN ISLANDS

- Visit with a cheese-maker and try their local specialties
- Wander in the baroque gardens of Isola Bella

Leaving your lovely hotel on Lake Maggiore this morning, you ascend into the mountains where you stop for a visit with a local cheese-maker. Here you have the opportunity to try the local specialty, *La Toma del Mottarone* ("mountain", or "country cheese"), and to see the process of cheese making. With your appetite satiated and your senses peaked, you drive to Mount Mottarone, which separates Lake Orta from Lake Maggiore. From the village of Levo, you follow a scenic downhill path through small villages and woods full of birch, lime and hazelnut trees. Along the way, you see Someraro, a village that clings like a balcony overlooking Lake Maggiore. Descending to Stresa, you board your private boat for a ride out to Isola Bella ("beautiful island"). It's one of the Borromean Islands, where one of Italy's wealthiest families built a series of palaces and gardens in the 17th century.

After lunch, you join your guide at Palazzo Borromeo, set amid perfectly preserved baroque gardens. This afternoon, you return to Stresa for some shopping, exploring independently or just relaxing at the hotel garden and pool before your farewell dinner.

OVERNIGHT: STRESA

MEALS: B, D

DAY 7

LAKE MAGGIORE / MILAN

- Enjoy a morning at leisure in Stresa
- Transfer back to Milan seamlessly

Sleep in. Or use the time this morning to stroll through Stresa's historic center. Enjoy some time on your own to relax and discover last minute keepsakes before you continue on to Milan where you part company at Milano Centrale Train Station in the early afternoon.

MEALS: B



Tour Hotels



Belvedere Bellagio Hotel

A lovely lakeside hotel that has been owned and operated by the Martinelli Manoni family since 1880. Then, it was known as 'La Vignetta', because of the grape vines that surrounded it and the incredible views of the water and mountains.

OVERNIGHT: BELLAGIO | NIGHTS: 3



Grand Hotel Des Iles Borromees

Built in 1863, Grand Hotel des Iles Borromées overlooking Lago Maggiore is rich in history and traditions, while still boasting modern comforts and the latest facilities.

OVERNIGHT: STRESA | NIGHTS: 3

Tour Dates & Prices

Tour Dates	Price per Person	Price per Person
	Double Occupancy	Single Occupancy
Apr 26-May 2, 2020	\$5,195	\$5,990
May 17-23, 2020	\$5,395	\$6,190
June 14-20, 2020	\$5,395	\$6,190
July 12-18, 2020	\$5,395	\$6,190
September 6-12, 2020	\$5,395	\$6,190
October 4-10, 2020	\$5,395	\$6,190
Apr 25-May 1, 2021	\$5,595	\$6,390
May 9-15, 2021	\$5,495	\$6,290
June 13-19, 2021	\$5,395	\$6,190
July 11-17, 2021	\$5,395	\$6,190
September 5-11, 2021	\$5,395	\$6,190
October 3-9, 2021	\$5,395	\$6,190

Want a different date? Or your own date? Visit [CLASSICJOURNEYS.COM/PRIVATE](https://www.classicjourneys.com/private) to learn more about private journeys.

Trip Essentials

TRIP LENGTH: 7 Days, 6 Nights

START: 11:30 AM Lobby of Hotel De La Ville, Milan, Italy The address of the hotel is Via Hoepli 6, Milan 20121.

END: 2:00 PM Milan Central Train Station, Milan, Italy

TERRAIN: Moderate on good valley, mountain and lakeside trails, utilizing cable cars and boats as backup support. Vans are used on the days we transfer between lakeside locations. At your option, 2 to 4 hours of walking per day.

What's Included

- Memorable accommodations for 6 nights
- All breakfasts, 2 lunches and 4 dinners
- Full-time experienced guide(s) who are with you throughout the trip and handle behind-the-scenes logistics
- Admissions to tastings, historic sites and other scheduled events as noted in the detailed daily itinerary
- Gratuities for hotels, meals, and baggage
- All land transportation during the trip

Above & Beyond Benefits

- **Privileged Access Events**
- **Perfect Pairings Dinners**
- **Wine on Us**
- **Invisible Check-In**

READY TO BOOK?
CLICK TO MAKE A RESERVATION

Or give us a call

1-833-387-1210

Mon-Fri 8:00AM – 5:00PM PST

moreinfo@classicjourneys.com



TRAVEL WORRY-FREE!

It's easy with insurance from Travel Guard. Your policy can cover trip cancellation, travel delays, lost luggage, medical emergencies, and more. If you are traveling with kids, add them to your policy at no extra cost. [Click here](#) or call 800-826-4919 for details.

AMBASSADOR CLUB

As a Classic Journeys guest, you are invited to join the Ambassador Club after your first Classic Journeys tour. As a member, you'll have access to a [whole suite of Ambassador benefits](#) you can use immediately and as often as you like.

ENJOY THE UNEXPECTED

When you travel with Classic Journeys, you can expect handcrafted surprises built into every trip, but some things just can't be anticipated. Unusual weather, a once-a-year festival or an unscheduled site closing will inspire us and your local guide to improvise and modify this itinerary. Likewise, the hotels named here are used on the majority of our trips, but occasionally one of them can't accommodate us. If that happens, you can count on us to let you know before departure and make sure you're in a hotel of equal or better quality. It's our goal to make your trip exceptional!

**Any discount offered cannot be combined with other offers, and only applies to published (regularly scheduled public) departure dates in our catalogs or on our website.

THE Classic Journeys Difference



HANDCRAFTING TRIPS OF A LIFETIME.

At the end of the day, we fundamentally believe that every guest on every departure of every trip should have a trip of a lifetime. We're fortunate to play the role of well-connected friend, linking our guests with amazing guides, artisans, winemakers, hoteliers, restaurateurs, naturalists, and too many others to list here.

That's what motivates me and our team — in our La Jolla HQ and around the world — every day. Join Us!

President & Founder



You can expect the highest standards:



Luxurious Lodgings:

Ours include coveted properties that appear in "World's Best" and "Gold List" rankings.



Included Activities:

You'll never be surprised with add-on fees on your activities that include snorkeling to cooking lessons.



Local Guides:

Your guides are locals who are always at your side like well-connected friends.



Small Group Travel:

With an average of just 10-12 guests, it's a small footprint that guarantees you access that's off-limits to larger groups.



Amazing Cuisine:

From Michelin-starred restaurants to lunch in a farmhouse kitchen, you'll have a seat for the region's signature dishes.



Unmatched Value:

"Excellent value" and "unbeatable access" are two of the reasons that Travel + Leisure has consistently voted us a World's Best Tour Operator.

You'll enjoy these handcrafted travel experiences in the Italian Lakes...

- Personal guided visits to a 1000-year-old basilica and the chapels of Sacro Monte
- Meeting a local cheesemaker and sampling his specialties
- Walking scenic paths through alpine meadows, extravagant villa gardens and mountain villages
- Relaxing over three nights at the 5-star Grand Hotel des Iles Borromees in Stresa on Lake Maggiore
- Getting the inside scoop from local guides who are happiest when they get you away from the beaten path and into the countryside they love

"I loved exploring on foot visually attractive and historically/culturally significant areas slightly 'off the beaten path,' away from the crowds and without having to hike/backpack to get there."

—Patricia B., Huntington Beach, CA

Let's Go!

TO RESERVE: 833.493.5038 | [CLASSICJOURNEYS.COM/RESERVATIONS](https://www.classicjourneys.com/reservations)

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Culinary

PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Testing mouthwatering recipes in friendly cucinas
- Strolling through vineyards and sampling their wares
- Seeing premium olives pressed into oil and sampling the results

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/tuscanyculinary/>.



Amalfi Coast

Positano & the Isle of Capri

Culture + Walking

PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Wandering the ruins of legendary Pompeii
- Enjoying incredible hotels in Positano and Capri
- Walking seaside trails past magnificent villas

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/amalfi/>.



Amalfi Coast

Positano & the Isle of Capri

Culinary

PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Wandering the ruins of legendary Pompeii
- Balancing top-notch instruction with breathtaking walks
- Pausing to learn how limoncello is made

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/amalficulinary/>.

You might also enjoy...



Puglia

Matera to Lecce

Culture + Walking

PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Rambling green hills and seaside landscapes
- Treading gently on mosaic masterpieces
- Relishing lunch on a 17th century farm

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/puglia/>.



Tuscany & the Cinque Terre

Chianti, Florence & Seaside Villages

Culture + Walking

PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Wine-tasting on the grounds of a castle
- Traversing the streets of towering hill towns
- Jumping to the head of the line to see Michelangelo's David

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/tuscany/>.

“Enthusiasm is Contagious”

AS TRAVEL + LEISURE NAMES CLASSIC JOURNEYS THE WORLD'S BEST TOUR OPERATOR FOR 2019, FOUNDER EDWARD PIEGZA REVEALS HOW IT FEELS. ENTHUSIASTICALLY.



EDITOR'S NOTE: Just before publication of this issue, Travel + Leisure magazine announced that its readers have voted Classic Journeys the World's Best Tour Operator for 2019. It's the second time Classic Journeys has won that recognition and the 14th consecutive year the company has been in the Top 10.

Congratulations! How did you get the news?

I received a top-secret email and phone call from the editor of *Travel + Leisure* a few weeks ago with orders not to tell ANYONE. Friends and neighbors must have wondered why my smile has been so extra big lately. Now they know.

And how does it feel to be the World's Best Tour Operator again?

Awesome. Humbling. So, so satisfying. Deeply gratifying to learn that we have achieved what we set out to do which is to handcraft trips of a lifetime for every guest who travels with us. I'm known as long-winded, so I could probably come up with 10 or 15 more ways to describe it if you want me to keep going.

Why do you think *Travel + Leisure* gave you this recognition?

Actually, it isn't the *T+L* editors who make the decision. That's the best part. Their readers cast the votes. So the people who do the traveling, the guests who explore the world with us and our competitors — they are the ones who raised their hands to tell *T+L* that Classic Journeys is the World's Best Tour Operator based on their own experiences. Let me say it right here: "To all of you who voted for us, you are the World's Best Guests!"

What do you think makes your guests the World's Best Guests?

That's easy. They are curious. They care about connecting with people of different cultures and immersing themselves in the world. They treasure experiences more than things. Like the old ad slogan went, they go for the gusto and crave the chance to have one-of-a-kind moments. They are incredibly interesting and interested people, and all of us at Classic Journeys count it as a real privilege to share in their passion for travel. And we feel that way on the

other 364 days of the year when we're not celebrating recognition like this.

I guess this is what you meant when you told me that "Enthusiasm is contagious."

Absolutely. That's not our official motto, but it could be. We love what we do. We enjoy helping guests figure out how to invest their precious time and budget. I can honestly say that all of us feel that way — the Guest Services folks who interact with you while you're planning your trip, the Tour Operations team members who plan all of the logistics, the local guides who lead each one of our trips full time. There's just a huge amount of positive energy in what we do, and I think it truly is hard to resist. We'd climb into every one of our guest's suitcases and go along with them if we could. Because we can't, we call each guest while they're on tour just to be sure they are having a trip of a lifetime.

Has anyone ever called Classic Journeys obsessive?

I hope so, because we are. Everything is in the details. For instance, we've created a special tour for the total eclipse of the sun which is going to pass over parts of South America in 2020. We've already analyzed likely traffic patterns in the most remote areas and figured out how to structure our itinerary so that our guests will be in place in the path of totality while the people who don't plan ahead will be stuck in jams on remote dirt roads. We enjoy obsessing about details like that so that our guests never have to.



How can you top this?

Oh, we never let ourselves think of it that way. We just continue to approach every single guest on each and every departure like the most important guest we've ever had. It seems to be working! Of course, we keep looking for new ways to win more converts. For 2019, we've launched a new series of Classic Journeys that are based from

"I voted for you!"

We've heard that expression so many times lately from guests who registered their votes with *Travel + Leisure*. Given the results, we know it's true ... and you know that your votes really count!

STAFF AND GUIDES

"I always feel like I'm traveling with a best friend. I prefer your local guides to the ones that other companies fly in."

ITINERARIES AND DESTINATIONS

"If it's on my bucket list, you always seem to go there. Of course, with so many options you always seem to make my list longer and longer!"

ACTIVITIES

"On your trips, I've cooked with Michelin chefs, sung songs with Quechua schoolchildren, and walked on glaciers with the descendants of Vikings. Fun doesn't begin to describe it."

ACCOMMODATIONS

"How you manage so many 5-star properties on these trips shocks me. But please, please, please keep it up!"

FOOD

"I have never eaten so well so often so happily. When you people claim that you are foodies, you aren't kidding."

OVERALL VALUE

"We have never had a better vacation at any price."

river cruise boats. On a different note, seeing how many travelers can't always find as much vacation time as they really want, we have developed a series of 6-day or shorter quick trips that go as far afield as Iceland, the Galápagos and Morocco.

Final thoughts?

It's always an honor to win recognition. But, for all of us at Classic Journeys, the biggest privilege is to share the dreams of our guests and make those dreams come true. That connection is the best feeling of all.