

Old World Opulence

Experience the Italian Lakes

The Italian Lakes district is where elegance resides and Old World comforts abound. Set between the Alps and the Swiss border, legendary Lake Como, Lake Lugano and Lake Maggiore, along with their rugged alpine surroundings, have long attracted the world to their shores. Prepare for an active and inspired agenda as we negotiate this extraordinary landscape by foot, by private launch and even by cog railway. Along the way, enjoy the enchantments of the Lugano and Bellagio hotels, indulge in the region's stellar cuisine, and relish the surroundings knowing that this is truly one of the world's most compelling retreats.

THE B&R DIFFERENCE

"Our guides were wonderful and so accommodating. We didn't need to worry about a thing as they anticipated our every need."

*Lauren Lauderdale,
Italian Lakes Walking*

WHY TRAVEL WITH B&R?

We think the best way to experience the beauty and tranquility of Italy's Lake District is to travel by boat. From Maggiore to Lugano and Como and from Italy to Switzerland, we cross lakes and borders in the company of charming boatmen in beautiful crafts, engaged for the day for our exclusive use.



Other questions?
Call Distinctive Journeys
at 770 888 6677

the journey p.2 [view >](#) / notes from the road p.5 [view >](#) / the details p.6 [view >](#) / next steps p.7 [view >](#)





the journey

Days 1 & 2 Lake Como & Bellagio

WE RENDEZVOUS IN MILAN AND DRIVE TO BELLANO, AN ancient fishing village located on the eastern shores of Lake Como. After a quick stretch we begin our walk, traversing cobblestone streets and small pathways, enjoying spectacular views of the colourful houses dotting the lake. In short order we arrive to lunch at a cozy *trattoria* where we'll be introduced to the local cuisine before continuing by foot to Varenna. Here, our speedboat awaits for a memorable sprint across the crystalline waters with unforgettable views over the "legs" of Lake Como. Our evening continues on the shore of Lake Como with music and *aperitivos* waiting for us.

HOTEL

Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni, Bellagio

The Villa Serbelloni was one of the most famous stops along the 19th century grand tour of the lakes. Not much has changed today. Set in the Como Lake district, the hotel is decorated in a neo-classical style, with refined interiors.

THE WALKING

Day 1: A 8 or 10 km (5 or 6 mi.) walk along cobblestone paths and dirt trails.

Day 2: An 8.5 km (5 mi.) walk with many great stops along the way. There is a long option of 5.5 km (3.5 mi.) which includes some good climbs.

Often dubbed the pearl of Lake Como, Bellagio is a warren of narrow laneways and picturesque staircases, not to mention the Romanesque church of San Giacomo. Today is dedicated to exploring it all. We step out of our front door to meet up with our knowledgeable local guide, who walks with us through the different *frazioni* (quarters) of the town. Along the way she introduces us to everyone and everything, including a small maritime museum full of antiques, and a glass-blowing demonstration. Next we continue on to the Villa Melzi, one of the most spectacular properties on the lake; we can wander freely through the gardens (making sure to see the private chapel) or continue into town. After the walk, return to our great hotel for a lunch overlooking the lake at your leisure. This afternoon you will have time to explore the small cobblestoned streets, where the window-shopping is addictive, or perhaps you'll want to take us up on an additional walk, where you'll awe at the spectacular views from the church of San Martino. Time to learn more about Lombardy wines; our host Norberto takes us on a virtual tour around the Valtellina area, pairing wines with local specialties.



Days 3 & 4 Lake Lugano

We start the day with a quick speedboat ride from Bellagio across to Menaggio on the north shore, and a taxi shuttle up above the town. From here, the trail follows rolling wooded paths along the valley that links Lakes Como and Lugano. We have reserved a perfectly situated lunch spot in a local pizzeria, that is firing up their wood-burning oven just for us. The walk continues on to Porlezza at the northeastern tip of Lake Lugano, where we taste artisanal *gelato* before boarding a private boat to bring us to Switzerland and Lugano proper. While cruising the water's edge, we pass the old Swiss Customs House, now a museum, and several villages that have been exchanged between Switzerland, Italy and independent fiefdoms over the last millennium. After an hour of breathtaking cruising, we dock directly in front of our next hotel, where dinner tonight is *à la carte*, and arguably the best of the trip.

The classy city of Lugano graces the lakeshore with promenades, stately hotels and renowned museums. Above looms Monte San Salvatore, a stunning forest-green backdrop of steep woods cradling charming villages. In the centre of the town is the Piazza della Riforma, the main square, whose layout was designed on the scale of Italian grand opera, accommodating multiple ranks of café tables around an enormous outdoor chess game. Not far from the square is the church of Santa Maria degli Angioli, which boasts fine frescoes, including Bernardino Luini's *Christ's Passion*. This morning, we take the *funivia*, a cog railway built in 1908, up to the top of Mount Bré for a walk that takes in stunning views of the lake and surrounding Alps. Back in Lugano, enjoy a great lunch on your own, allowing plenty of afternoon time to

explore the city—including streets hiding the bank vaults that lie under the town centre—as well as its many shops, museums and *gelaterias*. Or opt for a deliciously flat stroll along the lakeshore path to the village of Gandria, whose narrow alleys take you back in time. Tonight you are free to explore the culinary options in this bustling town.



HOTEL

Villa Castagnola, Lugano *Small Luxury Hotels of the World*

On the shores of Lake Lugano, the Villa Castagnola is a luxurious property surrounded by sub-tropical flora. Our days of walking can be rewarded by time in the hotel's Turkish *hammam*. All rooms offer stunning views of the lake.

THE WALKING

Day 3: A 13 km (8 mi.) walk, moderate to challenging, with shorter options.

Day 4: Up to a 7 km (4 mi.) walk on Mont Bré, with an optional 3 km challenging addition down to Gandria. A lakeside option offers a 7 km (4 mi.) walk to Gandria & back.

Other questions?

Call Distinctive Journeys
at 770 888 6677

Day 5 Lake Maggiore & Stresa

Today we embark on our only drive of the week (under an hour in length) across the border to a tiny town in Italy for a delicious caffè. We then set out on a little tread trail, a mix of quiet roads and paths, until we come to the breathtaking views of Lago Maggiore! We'll stop for lunch in a cozy mountaintop spot among the birch trees, fueling up on hearty polenta, then descend all the way to the water's edge in the town of Maccagno. A boat will be waiting for us in the marina to take us on a private cruise following Hemingway's A Farewell To Arms route in reverse, south and west past Verbania and the stunning formal gardens of Villa Taranto. Our arrival in Stresa is heralded by the Borromean Islands, a small archipelago located just across from the town. Anyone wishing to explore them can do so right away—the palace on Isola Bella is especially interesting, as is the lively market scene on Isola Pescatori—or, if you prefer some downtime, remain aboard until we disembark at the hotel dock minutes later. This evening we savour the Belle Epoque splendour of our hotel: al fresco cocktails, a delicious dinner in a stunning private room, and musicians will serve as a fittingly elegant finale to our week at the Lakes.

Day 6 Homeward Bound

After breakfast, we transport you to Milan's central train station or Malpensa International Airport, from where you can head home or continue your adventures on your own. *Buon viaggio!* For those who decide to stay on in Stresa, we encourage you to explore this beautiful and lively small town.

HOTEL

Grand Hotel des Îles Borromées, Stresa

Overlooking Lake Maggiore with the splendour of a late 19thC resort, it is easy to see why this enchanting five-star hotel has welcomed famous guests from Leopold II and the Rockefellers to Ernest Hemingway and Clark Gable.

THE WALKING

Day 5: A 13 km (8 mi.) walk through forests, meadows and villages, ending with a good downhill to the water.



Your Own Grand Tour

By Dana Quinn

When I moved to Milan for work some years ago, the nearby Italian Lakes become my frequent and favourite weekend retreat. My first time there made me imagine that I was living in the late 1800s and on the Grand Tour of Europe with my chaperone. In the old world I wouldn't have been equipped with a telescoping walking stick hiking along small paths perched above the calm waters. Instead I would have been strolling along the lakeside for my daily passeggiata shaded by my parasol (and that chaperone!).

Many years and B&R trips later, this area still evokes something of the past to me. I think it is the never changing, beautiful and healing scenery enjoyed from our boat rides, or the invigorating hikes, combined with the old-world-style hotels we enjoy, still welcoming guests generations later.

What is different more than 100 years later is that B&R has relentlessly researched the region and made a lot of friends to give you a more intimate look into the region. You'll meet our Bellagio guide Rita, who could bring the dead to life, and be aboard Sergio's boat. We'll take



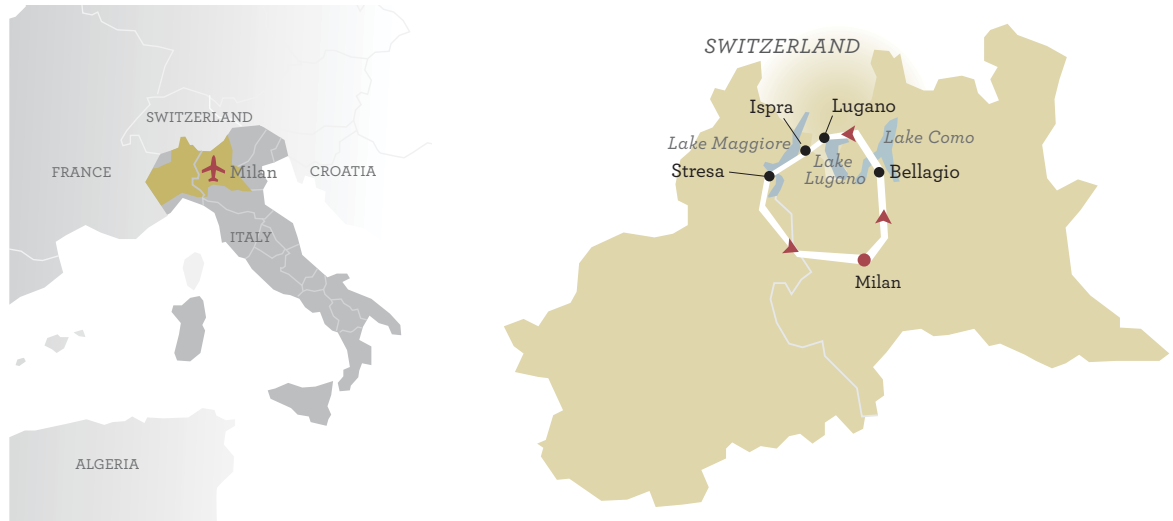
you on wooded walks and lakeside strolls, aweing you with scenes of mountains that shoot straight up from the deep water and whom the locals honour with their songs. And we'll feast you with this northern cuisine of delicate lake-fish, hearty polenta, mushroom risottos and cheeses such as taleggio and gorgonzola all washed down with a white merlot from Ticino or a hearty Valtellina nebbiolo.

Join us on our timeless journey by foot and by boat linking the lakes of famed Como, large Maggiore, and Swiss Lugano on our own mini "Grand Tour" and restore yourselves!

B&R GUIDE

Dana Quinn

After spending 10 years in the ultra dynamic world of insurance consulting, Dana started guiding for B&R as is still at it 10 years and over 120 trips later. Now—when she's not vacationing on a sailboat in the Caribbean—she can be found guiding biking and hiking trips around the beautiful terrain of Italy (and Greece, Ireland, Croatia, Vietnam...).



the details

2017 Price:

From \$6,295

(\$1,300 single supplement)

Single supplement is based on the most affordable rooms within B&R's allocation. Upgrades often available.

Duration

6 Days / 5 Nights

Please see our website for list of departures.

Start

Milan

Hotel Château Monfort
9:00 am

Finish

Milan

Malpensa Airport or
Train station
10:30 am or 11:30 am

HOTEL TYPE

Signature Hotels

Hotels on our Signature trips are unique expressions of the region. Oftentimes that means they've had a previous life as a monastery or a castle, but in every case it means they offer both an exceptionally comfortable stay and a taste of the region's culture. Best of all, we're friends with our hoteliers. (Translation? Preferential treatment for you.)

LEVEL OF ACTIVITY

Enthusiast

We cover a variety of terrain. Some walks are on mountain trails with strenuous ups and downs. A number of trails follow narrow footpaths through woods, while others are on well-surfaced small roads. Hiking boots are required for some days. Daily distances average 10 km (6 mi.), with options for easier or more challenging hikes.

CHÂTEAU MONFORT, MILAN

www.hotelchateaumonfort.com

Originally an Art Nouveau mansion, Chateau Monfort is a five-star luxury hotel in the heart of Milan's historic Porta Monforte district. Inspired by the concept of fairy-tale atmospheres, Chateau Monfort represents a new kind of hotel: that of the Urban Chateau. Drawing its inspiration from the worlds of fairy tale and opera, the atmosphere throughout the hotel is romantic and playful. It is a magical spot where dreams and reality merge in a nostalgic ambiance.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All hotel accommodation (suite upgrade available, call for details)
- All breakfasts, four lunches and four dinners, including wine
- Services of B&R guide(s) and support van
- Waist pack with water bottle and holder
- Use of two lightweight, telescoping walking sticks
- Detailed maps and route suggestions
- All special events and private tours
- All transportation from rendezvous to drop-off
- All baggage transportation
- All gratuities for baggage, porters and hotel service

MORE INFO

Evening Wear

Though "smart casual" is a good rule of thumb to keep in mind for B&R travel attire in general, the Old World grandeur of the Italian Lakes' hotels means that women could bring along a few dressier outfits, and that men might opt to bring a jacket and even a tie. Though not obligatory, dressing up on our first, third and final nights would nicely complement the surroundings and atmosphere. That said, if you prefer to keep it smart casual, by all means do so!

Other questions?
Call Distinctive Journeys
at 770 888 6677

The itinerary information may vary slightly for your specific departure as we continuously research and develop each trip. Inclement weather may also necessitate minor alterations. Prices are per person and in USD. © 2017 Butterfield & Robinson Inc.



your next steps

At Butterfield & Robinson, the guiding starts while you're still at home. We make sure you know everything you need to know before you've even left your living room.

READY TO BOOK?

- Call or email a Distinctive Journeys with any remaining questions, and to reserve your space. **1-770-888-6677 / Doug@Distinctive-Journeys.com**
- Reserve your flights to and from the region.
- Book your hotel accommodation for the night before your B&R trip.
- Make sure your passport is up to date.
- Enquire after travel insurance.

Once you are confirmed on a B&R trip, you will receive a Confirmation Email that contains tons of information to help you prepare for your trip. Then, about a month before you leave, we will send you a list of your fellow travellers, final rendezvous instructions and your hotel contact numbers.

Weather: Milan

month	high	low
Jan/Feb	45	33
Mar/Apr	62	45
May/Jun	78	61
Jul/Aug	85	66
Sep/Oct	72	56
Nov/Dec	46	36

FIND US ON FACEBOOK

www.facebook.com/ButterfieldandRobinson



Like B&R on Facebook and get the latest news and photos from the road, updates from guides and more.

EXTENDING YOUR TRIP

As Italy's largest and most business-oriented city, Milan is often regarded as a mere place to arrive/ depart the country, or to change trains. In fact, the city has a great deal to offer and is well worth a few days' stay. While not as renowned as Rome or Florence, Milan boasts a cultural patrimony that would be the envy of most cities around the world: the late Gothic cathedral; Teatro alla Scala opera house; the world-class Brera Gallery; the Sforzesco Castle; and Leonardo da Vinci's celebrated Last Supper at the church of Madonna delle Grazie. The lively downtown is criss-crossed with pleasant pedestrian-only areas, which in turn offer some of the finest dining in Italy. And of course the shopping, from designer clothing to artisanal wares, is second to none.

STAY IN TOUCH!

Sign up to receive *The Slow Road* our e-newsletter that is full of travel news, unique offers and B&R insider info.

In the meantime, if you have any questions about your B&R experience—big, small or downright quirky—please call a Travel Advisor, or contact your travel professional. We are always happy to help.

Other questions?
Call Distinctive Journeys
at 770 888 6677