



ITALIAN LAKES AND GARDENS

THE ENGLISHMAN ABROAD

THE
ENGLISH MANNER



TUESDAY, MAY 3RD

Departure today for US participants from your chosen international gateway city.

OVERNIGHT: PLANE

WEDNESDAY, 4TH MAY

PALACE

Your arrival at Milan's Malpensa Airport will be met for the scenic (and short) drive to our hotel in Stresa. After checking in there will be time to unpack and relax in our hotel with stunning waterfront views of Lake Maggiore. This evening we'll gather for drinks and enjoy a welcome dinner at the hotel. (D)

OVERNIGHT: STRESA, HOTEL REGINA

THURSDAY, 5TH MAY

We'll begin our first full day with a boat transfer to Isola Bella for a morning walking tour. Literally translated as 'beautiful island' this is one of the Borromean Islands of Lake Maggiore. Scenically divided by a fishing village and the Palace with surrounding Italianate garden, we'll enjoy the setting of historically sumptuous parties and theatrical events for the nobility of Europe. The palace, begun in 1632 by Carlo III, from the influential House of Borromeo, was to be dedicated to his wife Isabella D'Adda (from whom the island takes its name). We'll relax over lunch with wine at Ristorante Pescheria on Isola Pescatori before heading to Isola Madre. A walking tour will acquaint us with the largest of the three islands in the archipelago. We'll wander among the well-known English style gardens – the Giardini Botanici dell'Isola Madre – dating from about 1823, which cover eight hectares on the site of a former citrus orchard. We'll return to our hotel for free evening. (B, L)

OVERNIGHT: STRESA, HOTEL REGINA PALACE

FRIDAY, 6TH MAY

We'll begin our day with a drive through the spectacular countryside to Varese, where we'll visit the Villa Cicogna Mozzoni and enjoy a private tour with the owner of both the house and garden. The residence is a stellar example of Lombard Renaissance architecture and was first built in 1400 as a hunting lodge for the Mozzoni family, Milanese nobility who retired to the Varese area. The gardens, dating back to the 16th century, include a 'stairway' of water featuring a temple at the top and a grotto with tunnels. We'll relax over lunch in the nearby town of Induno Olona before continuing to our hotel in Bellagio. This evening we'll enjoy a Michelin-starred dinner with wine at the Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni. (B, L, D)

OVERNIGHT: BELLAGIO, GRAND HOTEL VILLA SERBELLONI

SATURDAY, 7TH MAY

This morning we visit the gardens at Villa Melzi d'Eril on Lake Como. Built between 1808 and 1815 for the Duke of Lodi, Vice President of the Italian Republic under Napoleon, and Chancellor of the Empire, Francesco Melzi d'Eril, the neoclassical villa, chapel and orangery occupy a significant position overlooking the lake. It was decorated and furnished by famous artists and sculptors of the period including Appiani, Bossi, Canova and Comoli. The 'English style' gardens include rare exotic plants, camellia hedges, azalea groves and enormous rhododendron, alongside sculptures and artefacts, including two Egyptian statues and a Venetian gondola (which was expressly requested by Napoleon). We walk into the center of Bellagio for a three-course lunch with wine followed by free time to enjoy this charming lakeside town. (B, L)

OVERNIGHT: BELLAGIO, GRAND HOTEL VILLA SERBELLONI

SUNDAY, 8TH MAY

This morning we transfer by boat across the lake to the Villa Carlotta. Originally built for the Milanese Marquis Giorgio Clerici in 1690, the villa features an Italian garden with steps, fountains and notable sculptures. In the early 1800s many artworks were added and the villa became a popular destination on The Grand Tour. In 1843 it was given as a wedding present by Princess Marianna of Prussia to her daughter Charlotte, Duchess of Saxe-Meiningen – the villa is named after her. We'll then have a leisurely lunch at a lakeside restaurant before visiting the Villa Balbianello with a private guide. Built on the site of a Franciscan monastery in 1787, Villa Balbianello is located on a peninsula overlooking the lake. Having fallen into disrepair, it was restored by American businessman Butler Ames in the early 20th century, before then being bought by explorer Guido Monzino, who filled it with collections from his expeditions. After his death in 1988 it passed to the National Trust of Italy. The villa is famous for its elaborate terraced gardens which form part of the Grandi Giardini Italiani. It has been used as a location for several movies in recent years including *A Month by the Lake*, *Casino Royale* and *Star Wars: Episode II*. We continue to our hotel in Cernobbio for a free evening. (B, L)

OVERNIGHT: CERNOBBIO, HOTEL VILLA D'ESTE

MONDAY, 9TH MAY

Today we transfer by boat to the town of Como on Lake Como, the 3rd-largest lake in Italy, and arguably the most beautiful in Europe. Lake Como has been popular as a retreat for wealthy people and aristocrats since Roman times and is popular with tourists due to its many villas, palaces, and cultural and artistic features. Former and current residents include Madonna, George Clooney, Gianni Versace, the soccer player Ronaldinho, Sylvester Stallone and Richard Branson. This morning we take a walking tour of the city of Como and visit the Duomo, one of the most important buildings in the region and regarded as the last Gothic cathedral built in Italy. Enjoy a few free hours for shopping in Como and lunch. Later this afternoon we'll meet up for the transfer by boat back to Cernobbio, where we'll enjoy a farewell dinner. (B, D)

OVERNIGHT: CERNOBBIO, HOTEL VILLA D'ESTE

TUESDAY, 10TH MAY

Morning transfers to Milan's Malpensa Airport for your return flight home. (B)

OVERNIGHT: HOME

Key to included meals: **B** - breakfast,
L - lunch, **D** - dinner