



THE ITALIAN NORTHWEST

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4TH - Departure from your chosen US gateway city. **OVERNIGHT: PLANE**

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5TH - Our morning arrival at Milan Malpensa Airport will be met for the transfer to our hotel on the shores of Lake Maggiore. Please arrange to arrive no later than 11.00 am. After time to unpack and rest up from the overnight flight, David will lead a short walking tour of the town and the neighborhood of our hotel. Free evening.

OVERNIGHT: STRESA

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6TH - The second-largest lake in Italy, Lake Maggiore reaches into the Alps and is home to beautiful villages and the famous gardens of the Borromean Islands. This morning we take a boat to Isola Bella's magnificent 17th-century Palazzo Borromeo and its unique sculpted gardens, before continuing on to Isola Madre's exquisite palace where azaleas, rhododendrons, and camellias flourish. Returning to Stresa, you might choose to take your evening passeggiata along the lakeside or sample one of the city's restaurants. **(B)**

OVERNIGHT: STRESA



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7TH - Today is a free day in Stresa to enjoy the hotel facilities and perhaps do a little shopping in the town. **(B)**

OVERNIGHT: STRESA

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8TH - Our journey today takes us southwest from Stresa, leaving the Italian Lake District and heading into the region of Piedmont. Along the way we'll make a short detour up into the Sacre Monte National Park at Biella, where we'll visit the Sanctuary of Oropa. The whole complex here arose from a 4th-century shrine to the black Madonna. We continue this afternoon to our hotel in Turin. **(B)**

OVERNIGHT: TURIN

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9TH - A morning walking tour of the city center with a local guide will include a visit to the Royal Palace, with its magnificent gardens designed by Andre Le Notre (the designer of Versailles' gardens). Time permitting we will also visit the church of San Lorenzo next door to the palace. We'll end the tour with a visit to the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, which houses the enigmatic Shroud of Turin. The afternoon and evening are free for personal exploration, but don't miss a visit to the Palazzo dell'Accademia della Scienza. This beautiful 17th-century palace houses two museums – the Egyptian Museum, with one of the finest collections of Egyptian artifacts in Europe, and the Galleria Sabauda, housing the art collection of the House of Savoy. **(B)**

OVERNIGHT: TURIN

MONDAY, OCTOBER 10TH - Leaving the city today, we head south through idyllic hill-top towns, such as Pinerolo, making our first stop in the unspoiled town of Saluzzo. We'll walk up through the medieval streets to the imposing castle, and take time for lunch before continuing south to the provincial capital of Cuneo. We'll take a walking tour of the town center, with its beautiful arcaded main square, the Piazza D. Galimbarti, and then head northeast from Cuneo through a region known as the Langhe. This is the heart of the wine country, where the great wines of northern Italy are produced – it is also the gourmet center of the region and the home of the famous white truffles, the tartufi bianchi. We'll stop for a wine tasting in Barolo before returning to Turin. **(B)**

OVERNIGHT: TURIN

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11TH - Our journey today takes us southeast to the Italian Riviera. We'll pass through Asti, known for its sparkling wines, and turn south to reach the coast at Genoa, famous as the birthplace of Christopher Columbus. Sightseeing introduces the historic city, capital of the region of Liguria and Italy's leading port and maritime center. From the city's hub at the Piazza de Ferrari, the streets radiate outwards with their riches: the Cathedral, the Doge's Palace, the many marble palazzos which give Genoa its epithet "la Superba," and, of course, the small and unremarkable Casa di Colombo. It's a beautiful drive along the coast from here to our hotel in Santa Margherita Ligure. **(B)**

OVERNIGHT: S. MARGHERITA LIGURE



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12TH - Today can either choose to spend the day relaxing in Santa Margherita or take an excursion to the Cinque Terre. The Cinque Terre (literally the Five Lands) is a stretch of coastline that is wild and isolated, but at the same time spectacularly beautiful and hospitable. Old traditions and customs live on here side by side with the modern tourism that the region's status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site has attracted. The five towns that make up the region (Riomaggiore, Manarola, Corniglia, Vernazza and Monterosso) are connected by walking paths and by train or boat – but not by road. Today we take a combination of a boat and the train and explore, returning to our hotel where we gather again for a free evening. **(B)** **OVERNIGHT:**

S. MARGHERITA LIGURE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13TH - Traveling along the Riviera di Levante, we make our way to two fabulous gardens just outside Genoa. The first is the romantic Villa Grimaldi, known as “Il Rosetto di Nervi,” and famous for its rose collection. We’ll have time for lunch and then visit the remarkable Villa Durazzo-Pallavicini. Its various features recall some of the main civilizations of the world – Roman, Chinese, Greek, Turkish – and the garden is full of symbolic mythology from the Grotto of Hades to the sparkling Temple of Diana. We return to our hotel for a free evening. **(B)**

OVERNIGHT: S. MARGHERITA LIGURE

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14TH - This morning we take the short ferry ride from Santa Margherita to Rapallo. A brief walking tour will introduce you to this magical little port town and will include a visit to the Castello sul Mare (the castle on the sea), built in 1551 to protect the port from pirates! The rest of the afternoon and evening are free to explore and you can return to Santa Margherita by ferry at your leisure. **(B)**

OVERNIGHT: S. MARGHERITA LIGURE

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15TH - Leaving the coast this morning we have a spectacular drive up and over the Apennine Mountains and down into the region of Emilia-Romagna, the flat and fertile valley of the Po River. We’ll make a stop in the city of Parma – famous for both its ham and cheese! We’ll stop for lunch and visit a Parmesan producer and then drive to our final hotel in the heart of the city of Milan. **(B)**

OVERNIGHT: MILAN

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16TH - Our morning city tour with a local guide will include visits to the spectacular cathedral and the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, where we’ll be able to view Leonardo’s *Last Supper*. The afternoon is free to explore or shop, or perhaps take a tour of the world renowned La Scala Opera House. **(B)**

OVERNIGHT: MILAN

MONDAY, OCTOBER 17TH - Morning transfer to Milan Malpensa Airport for returning flights to the U.S. **(B)**

OVERNIGHT: HOME

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

OPTIONAL LAKE COMO EXTENSION

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1ST - Departure from your chosen US gateway city. **OVERNIGHT: PLANE**

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2ND - Your morning arrival at Milan, Malpensa Airport (you should plan to arrive before 11.00 am) will be met for the transfer to our hotel in Bellagio, the Villa Serbelloni. The rest of the day will be free to unpack relax and enjoy this fabulous 5 star hotel. **OVERNIGHT: BELLAGIO**

MONDAY, OCT. 3RD - TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4TH - Two days to enjoy the Villa Serbelloni and the beautiful little town of Bellagio.

Alternatively David will lead a couple of trips across the lake: one to Cadenabbia, where it is a short stroll along the lakeside to visit the wonderful Villa Carlotta. The second possibility is across the lake in the other direction to Varenna on the eastern shore. On arrival the energetic might like to hike up to the Castello di Vezio – it’s quite a climb, but a visit to this originally Roman fort is well worth it. **(B)** **OVERNIGHT: BELLAGIO**

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5TH - A short drive this morning brings us to our hotel on the shores of Lake Maggiore. Here we will meet up with other arriving members of the group and, after time to check in and relax, David will lead an orientation tour of the local area. Free evening. **(B)** **OVERNIGHT: STRESA**