

Northern Italy

11 DAYS/10 NIGHTS - GROUP TRAVEL
SUGGESTED ITINERARY - CAN BE CUSTOMIZED



This trip offers a lesser-known side of Italy where the focus is on fashion, food and countryside. Investigate cutting-edge fashion in Milan, relax and marvel at the ethereal beauty of northern Italy's lake region, try your hand at cooking Northern Italian regional dishes, stroll through the renowned coastline and villages of Cinque Terre and finally concentrate on Parma's excellent prosciutto ham during a guided factory tour and food tasting.



DAY 1 ~ ARRIVE MILAN

Benvenuti a Milano, the financial and fashion capital of Italy. Upon arrival your group will be met by a local guide in the terminal's arrival hall. You will then travel to the center of Milan to have a relaxing, panoramic sightseeing tour en route to your hotel. This is a great way to get you're an orientation of such a large city. After checking in, you and your traveling companions are free until this evening's welcome dinner in the hotel.



DAY 2 ~ MILAN

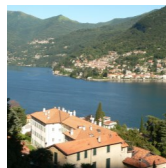
After breakfast in the hotel, meet a local guide in the lobby who will lead your group on a morning city tour of Europe's fashion capital by private bus. Milan is home to top designer flagship stores such as Armani, Versace, Prada and Gucci. This city is also extremely rich in history (particularly Medieval and Renaissance). During your tour, you'll visit inside the largest Cathedral in Italy, the "Duomo di Milano," which took almost 600 years to build.

This afternoon is yours to soak up Milanese culture. If you're an art fan - consider paying a visit to the Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie. This UNESCO World Heritage Site houses Leonardo di Vinci's 15th-century mural The Last Supper.

Alternatively, you could visit the Pinacoteca di Brera, one of the finest art museums in all of Italy. Inside you can see medieval & renaissance masterpieces by Raphael, Caravaggio Piero della Francesca.

History buffs should check out the Castello Sforzesco, and opera lovers can visit the museum of Milan's La Scala Opera House. Last but not least - shoppers can bargain hunt for great designer deals in one of Milan's several discount outlets!

Dinner is on your own this evening.



DAY 3 ~ COMO

After breakfast in the hotel, your group will check out and travel north by private bus. Enjoy this very scenic drive through Italy's Lombardy region to the Italian Lakes District. Writers from Hemingway to Goethe have immortalized the ethereal beauty of this area - even their words

INCLUSIONS

- 3 nights in Milan
- 3 nights in Northern Lakes Region
- 2 nights in Cinque Terre
- 2 nights in Parma
- Breakfast daily
- Lunch and dinner per itinerary
- Ground transport via air conditioned luxury coach
- English speaking assistant and guides
- Admission tickets as outlined in itinerary

HIGHLIGHTS

- Wine and olive oil tasting
- Prosciutto ham factory tour
- Hiking trip in Italy's lake region
- Regional cooking class
- Farm stay in hills of Parma
- Exploring Cinque terre

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cannot seem to do it justice!

Today you'll visit a 17th-century villa for a tasting of locally-produced wine and olive oil before arriving to lovely Lake Como. This is one of the many lakes that fan out across Northern Italy - and a favorite haunt of the rich and famous. For some amazing views, ride the funicular high above the town of Como or, if time permits, take a ferry ride on the lake to one of several other charming villages.

Group dinner in the hotel's restaurant.



DAY 4 ~ COMO

This is a day to get outside and experience the beautiful surroundings of Italy's northern landscape. Following breakfast, strap on your walking shoes and jump on your private bus with fellow travelers for a transfer to a local hiking trail for gorgeous views of mountains unfolding into low woodlands and sparkling lakeshore.

After soaking up the natural beauty and fresh air, transfer to the town of Bellagio where you have time on your own to enjoy a well-deserved lunch at a local cafe. Many consider this the most beautiful part of the lake. After lunch spend the afternoon exploring Bellagio before returning to Como by private bus with your group members. (Alternatively, should someone want to leave earlier or stay longer, there are ferry boats that run across the lake as well as public buses)

Dinner is on your own tonight.



DAY 5 ~ COMO

After breakfast in the hotel, today your group will learn all about Northern Italian cuisine during a private cooking class in a local restaurant. Although you can find delicious Italian specialties like pizza and

lasagna all over the country, you will discover there is a wide array of local dishes worth sampling! Follow along as your chef-instructor shares the subtleties of how to prepare Northern Italian cuisine and try to wait until the end of your demonstration before devouring this tasty feast.

Note: Regarding cooking classes, small groups can generally include these quite easily on itineraries. Simply because of classroom space, larger groups should either divide into two smaller groups – or elect to have a cooking demonstration instead (which is still very interesting).

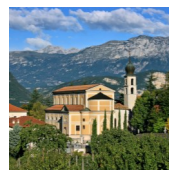
Depending on what time the cooking class finishes, if your group has time this afternoon – we recommend visiting either the town of Varenna or Menaggio with your private bus. Evening is at leisure.



DAY 6 ~ SANTA MARGHERITA LIGURE

After breakfast and check-out, transfer south by private bus to the famed Cinque Terre region on Italy's Mediterranean coast. Your first stop along this renowned stretch of coastline is Genoa, the birthplace of Christopher Columbus. Here a local guide will meet your group for a 2-hour tour of Genoa's historic Old Town, which a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Afterwards there is free time for lunch and shopping before your group re-boards the bus and continues to tonight's hotel in Santa Margherita Ligure, an old fashioned seaside resort offering easy access to other Italian Riviera coastal villages.



DAY 7 ~ SANTA MARGHERITA LIGURE

After breakfast, today is all yours to discover the five fishing villages that cling to the cliffs of the



Why Should You Encourage Your Travel Agent to Book Your Group Through Us?

Ease of Use

Experience

Flexibility

Peace of Mind



Cinque Terre coast and over the Mediterranean Sea: Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola, Monterosso al Mare & Riomaggiore. Walking along the footpaths is the most rewarding way to get from village to village. Alternatively, the train makes constant runs along that route and there's a seasonal boat that strings the villages together. The area of the five villages and surrounding parks form a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

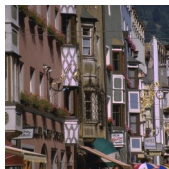
Group dinner tonight in a local seafood restaurant to try regional specialties.



DAY 8 ~ PARMA

After breakfast the first half of today is yours to relax by the sea or take advantage of some last-minute sightseeing. Take a morning water taxi to Portofino. The Duke and Duchess of Windsor honeymooned at the Hotel Splendido, and years later Richard Burton proposed to Elizabeth Taylor there.

Following your restorative stay on the coast, it's time to transfer by private bus to the Emilia Romagna region where your group will get to experience the agricultural side of Italian life by staying on a farm in the hills just outside of Parma. After check in and time to freshen up, tonight your group will experience authentic, local cuisine enhanced by the intimate surroundings of your farm accommodations.

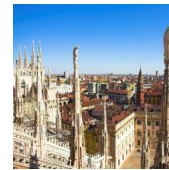


DAY 9 ~ PARMA

After breakfast, your group will head to the center of Parma for a walking tour of its beautiful architecture. In addition to its architecture and historic university, Parma is known as a culinary capital. Its parmesan cheeses and hams (prosciutto di Parma) are now appreciated all over the world.

After a break for lunch, your group will take a guided tour of a Prosciutto ham factory. See how this delicacy is processed and packaged, and (obviously) taste testing will also take place! Later this afternoon, enjoy a few free hours in Parma. Appreciate its art, architecture, and history by visiting one of several museums or historical landmarks around town.

Group dinner is included at the farm accommodation.



DAY 10 ~ MILAN

After a week of truly unique experiences (you've come and seen a side of Italy that many tourists never see!), it is time to travel back to Milan by private bus for one last day and night of celebration. Your afternoon is free. Tonight your group will meet for a farewell dinner in a local restaurant.



DAY 11 ~ MILAN

After breakfast in the hotel, your group will check out and transfer by private bus to Malpensa Airport for its return flight to the USA.



For information and reservations, please see your professional travel agent