



NORTHERN ITALY: A CULTURAL AND CULINARY EXPLORATION

Discover three of northern Italy's most evocative cities on this cultural and culinary exploration.

Tailor-Made Journeys, Suggested Itineraries



Europe, Italy



10 days from AU\$23,735 pp



Private

Journey Overview

Discover three of northern Italy's most evocative cities on this cultural and culinary exploration. Celebrate the region's rich flavours in restaurants, cafés, markets and trattorias. Visit country estates and vineyards where age-old methods are employed to deliver the finest local produce – yours for the tasting. And discover the palatial villas, breathtaking alpine landscapes and ancient charming villages of the Italian Lake District before diving into Italy's capital of style, Milan.

Journey Highlights

- Sample mouth-watering regional delicacies in medieval Bologna and learn the age-old secrets of artisanal food makers
- Savour unique Valpolicella wines and stroll the ancient streets of romantic Verona, the backdrop to Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*
- Take in majestic waterfront villas and the magical alpine scenery of Lake Como on an exclusive private cruise
- Visit the world-renowned botanic gardens of the Borromean Islands in Lake Maggiore
- Discover the creative genius of Leonardo Da Vinci in the finest galleries of Milan, the stylish city where he spent much of his working life



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Bologna, Italy

Arrive in Bologna, capital of the Emilia-Romagna region, where you are met by your A&K Guardian Angel and transferred to the city's oldest and most prestigious hotel.

Grand Hotel Majestic già Baglioni

Day 2: Bologna

Discover why Bologna is the gastronomic capital of Italy on an immersive half-day gourmet tour with your expert guide, stopping at the city's most vibrant medieval markets to sample regional delicacies such as mortadella, ciccioli and chocolate. Take in a pasta-making demonstration before trying your hand at folding your own tortellini. Enjoy the rest of the day at leisure exploring the palaces, cathedrals and museums of this historic university town or relaxing at your elegant hotel.

Grand Hotel Majestic già Baglioni / Meals: B

Day 3: Bologna

Drive to an artisanal cheese dairy and discover the venerable craft of creating the exceptional Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese. Then sit down to a mouth-watering lunch featuring gourmet produce from the Emilia-Romagna region. Later, witness the painstaking production of traditional balsamic vinegar, aged in barrels for many years.

Grand Hotel Majestic già Baglioni / Meals: BL

Day 4: Bologna - Verona

Travel to Verona today by train in business class comfort with A&K's Concierge Rail VIP service allowing you to relax on this unique and seamless rail experience. On arrival in this city of art and romance, you are met by your A&K Guardian Angel before being driven to the picturesque vineyards of Valpolicella outside the city. Taste the three red wines this area is famous for at a local vineyard before tucking into a sumptuous seafood lunch. Your evening is free to explore from your atmospheric hotel just a short walk from Juliet's balcony.

Due Torri Hotel / Meals: BL

Day 5: Verona

This small and ancient city is easily explored on foot and this morning you join your guide on a walk from the city's original Roman entrance to the iconic Arena, the third-largest Roman amphitheatre in Italy. Glimpse the 14th century Casa de Giulietta, said to be the family home of the ill-fated Juliet Capulet in Shakespeare's classic tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet*, and let your knowledgeable guide show you much more of this marvellous city – a UNESCO World Heritage Site – including the magnificent Piazza delle Erbe, which served as the forum in Roman times. The rest of the day is at leisure. An operatic performance at Verona's Arena comes highly recommended.

Due Torri Hotel / Meals: BL

Day 6: Verona - Lake Como

Travel to the peaceful town of Mennagio today, with a stop en route in Como, an elegant city steeped in history. A scenic trip on the Como-Brunate cable car offers sweeping views of magical Lake Como, flanked by palatial villas, rose-laden belvederes and rugged slopes. Your lakeside hotel is a stunning neoclassical villa, tastefully updated and designed to take advantage of the awe-inspiring views.

Grand Hotel Victoria Concept & Spa

Day 7: Lake Como

A private cruise takes you to the enchanting Villa Balbianello, which you might recognise as a setting for various blockbuster Hollywood movies including *Casino Royale*, *A Month by the Lake* and *Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones*. Learn about the villa's fascinating backstory before continuing on to the tranquil and rarely visited village of Varenna, home to the oldest church on the lake - the 10th century San Giovanni Battista. The rest of the day is at leisure.

Grand Hotel Victoria Concept & Spa / Meals: B

Day 8: Lake Como - Milan

After breakfast, another guided private boat excursion uncovers three gorgeous islands in the Borromean Archipelago. Visit the beautiful botanic gardens of Isola Madre and Isola Bella, with a stop for lunch in charming Isola dei Pescatori, whose cobblestone streets are lined with seafood restaurants and gift shops. Drive to the stylish city of Milan this evening and check in to your chic hotel located in the prestigious fashion district.

Casa Baglioni / Meals: B

Day 9: Milan

Milan was where Leonardo Da Vinci spent some of his most productive years as an artist. To get a better understanding of his life and work, your guided experience starts at the Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, an artistic treasure trove that holds Leonardo's 'Portrait of a Musician' and Atlantic Codex. Next stop: the Salla delle Asse in the Castello Sforzesco and later, Santa Maria delle Grazie, a Renaissance gem which contains Leonardo's 'Last Supper', a masterpiece of realism and perspective (subject to availability).

A canal-side sundowner aperitif in the city's chic Navigli district is a highly recommended optional activity to celebrate your final evening on this journey.

Casa Baglioni / Meals: B

Day 10: Depart Milan

Meet your driver and transfer to the airport.

Meals: B

Map



Accommodation

Grand Hotel Victoria Concept & Spa, Lake Como



A recent facelift brought this late 19th century architectural jewel at the edge of Lake Como into this millennium. Behind its elegant neoclassical facade, the Grand Hotel Victoria Concept & Spa is now a masterpiece of modern minimalism.

Rooms feature timber floors, crisp white bed linens and large windows overlooking either the water or the well-tended gardens that surround this handsome property.

With the historic fortified town of Mennagio right on your doorstep, there are a wealth of activities to keep you occupied during your stay. Tee off at a nearby golf course, enjoy some horse riding, take a cooking class or tour some of the many impressive churches and stately belvederes that dot the local area.

For an unforgettable dining experience, don't miss a meal at the restaurant where a team of renowned chefs showcase the best in local produce and wines.

The ERRE SPA is another highlight at the Grand Hotel Victoria Concept & Spa. This wellness sanctuary encompasses a remarkably wide range of facilities including a Himalayan salt room, steam baths, an ice room, a silent room and a fire room.

Dates & Pricing

From \$23,735 per person twin share (low season) and from \$25,895 per person twin share (high season). Solo travellers on request.

As this Tailor Made Journey can be personalised to your specific requirements, it is not available for online booking. Depending on your preferred dates and arrangements, final pricing will vary.

Please call A&K on 1300 851 800, send us a **booking enquiry** to book this journey or contact your travel advisor.

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