

The Arts Society Cranleigh & Friends

Presents

THE ITALIAN LAKES + MILAN Maggiore, Orta & Como

WHAT'S INCLUDED

7 days / 6 nights' duration

Wednesday 22nd - Tuesday 28th September 2021

Return flights London Gatwick - Milan

6 nights half board

3* Flora Hotel in Stresa (Maggiore)

Excursion package with guides, entrances and private transportation as detailed overleaf.

Local guide to accompany the group on excursion days



PRICES & SUPPLEMENTS

Price from **£1059pp Two share**

Single supplement **£109pp** -Limited availability

Deposit **£400pp**

(non-refundable/non-transferable)

Balance due in full by the **19.07.21**

Optional Travel Insurance **£45pp**

No upper age limit (conditions apply) Includes Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) @ 20%.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Borromean Isles - Bella (RHS), Madre & Pescatori
- Villas Cicogna Mozzoni & Balbianello, Como
- Centovalli Railway & Locarno
- Guided Tour of Milan
- Lake Orta & The Island of St Julius

HOW TO BOOK

Complete the revised booking form and return with your second non-refundable deposit to:-

Simply Groups, Dalton House,

1 Hawksworth Street, Ilkley, West Yorkshire, LS29 9DU

Tel: 01943 605999 info@simplygroups.co.uk

Any queries contact **Simply Groups** as above or **email:**

Gwen Wright at: outings@theartsocietycranleigh.org

SIMPLY GROUPS
Simply the best!



The Specialist Group Tour Operator

Proposed Itinerary

Day 1 – Check-in at 7am for your flight to Milan due to depart at **09.00hrs**. On arrival at Milan airport at 12.05hrs, you will be met by a local representative who will accompany you by coach to your hotel in **Stresa**, where check-in is from 3pm. Dinner is included this evening.

The town of Stresa dates back to Roman times and was first mentioned in historic documents in the 900's. It prospered in the 1800's with two noble families, the Borromeo and Visconti. When the Duchess of Genova bought the Ducal Palace, other famous travellers followed including Rockefeller, Clark Gable, Charlie Chaplin, George Bernard Shaw and Hemingway. Stresa became well known as a spa centre. The water front promenade offers excellent views of the surrounding mountains and the islands in the lake.

Day 2: Accompanied by your local guide, today is dedicated to visiting the **Borromeo Islands**, of which there are three which lie in a wide gulf surrounded by mountains. The islands take their name from the aristocratic Borromeo family, who took ownership of the land in the 16th and 17th centuries. The islands of Bella and Madre were transformed into grand, luxurious residences, while the third island, named “dei Pescatori” after its age-old fishing community, was left to continue its traditional way of life. Here, you will have free time to purchase your lunch locally. Isola Bella was completely transformed by its occupants, and its palace and gardens are the epitome of opulence and luxury. The exotic atmosphere of the lush and tranquil Isola Madre is due to the gardens that almost totally cover the island. A combined ticket to **Bella & Madre** is included, as is entrance to the gardens and palaces, other attractions (audio sets payable locally). Returning to **Stresa** and the hotel your evening meal is included.

Visitors who have walking difficulties or who rely on mobility aids are advised that there are steps between the ferry landing stage and the entrance and the main path on the island.

Day 3: Accompanied by a local guide, today's full day excursion is to Lake Como and the Villa Cicogna Mozzoni & Villa del Balbianello, a hidden Renaissance treasure. The earliest part of the building, constructed before 1440, served as a hunting lodge. Today the **gardens** and 12 frescoed rooms are decorated with furniture and ornaments from various eras. You will then take a boat across Lake Como to the **Villa Balbianello** located on a wooded promontory offering an enchanted view of the lake. An attraction guide will escort you around this elegant & romantic 18th-century mansion with its magnificent garden. Returning to the hotel dinner is included this evening.

Day 4: Accompanied by your **local guide**, we start by visiting the island of **San Giulio**, a tiny island that stands in the middle of **Lake Orta**, is a place of mists and devotion, ideal for a day out in search of peace and quiet. You will travel by boat from the hotel to Orta where you will then transfer to the island. Once you get there, the main path which circuits the island divides itself into two smaller paths: the **Way of Silence** and the **Way of Meditation**. The only people who live here are the **Benedictine monks** of the **monastery Mater Ecclesiae**. The walk along the path of silence or from the prestigious Basilica of San Giulio you can admire a breath taking lake view, dedicated to the saint that saved the island. Returning to Stresa the remainder of the **afternoon is free** to relax and enjoy your surroundings before an included hotel dinner.

Day 5: Accompanied by your guide, today is a relaxing day which begins with boarding a train in Stresa for the 30 minute journey to Domodossola, where you will transfer on to the **narrow gauge Centovalli Railway to Locarno in Switzerland**, travelling through the ‘hundred valleys’ region. This little train winds its way through the valley passing traditional villages and old stone houses. From the train you can enjoy the spectacular scenery of beech and chestnut woods, alpine pasture, mountains and waterfalls. During this 1¾ hour journey, you will cross 83 bridges and travel through 31 tunnels between Domodossola and Locarno. On arrival Locarno you will have free time to purchase lunch and explore the town centre or take a ride on the funicular to the Madonna del Sasso Sanctuary established in the 15th century (local cost). Despite being in Switzerland, Locarno is laced with Latin charm. All the cobbled alleys of the ‘old town’ lead to the colonnaded Piazza Grande which is well known for its annual film festival.

Late afternoon, you will join your **private coach** for the return journey to Stresa, stopping en route in **Cannobio**, the last town on the shore of Lake Maggiore before the Swiss border, which today it is a prime tourist resort. The dynamic character of the town is still visible today in the many 17th to 19th century buildings which line the streets and cobbled lanes of the historic centre. Arriving back in Stresa dinner is included.

Day 6 – Checking out of the hotel, today is dedicated to the **City of Milan**, Italy's second-largest city and one of Europe's most important tourist destinations and famous for its wealth of historical and modern sights. Accompanied by a city guide, visits here include the **Duomo** (with audio whispers), one of the largest and grandest Gothic cathedrals in the world, **La Scala**, one of the best established opera houses in the world and **Castello Sforzesco**, a grand medieval castle. Other places of interest (payable locally and time permitting) include the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, an ancient and glamorous arcaded shopping gallery, the Brera Art Gallery which houses some of the finest art works in Europe, the **Pirelli Tower**, a majestic example of 1960's modernist Italian architecture and **San Siro**, a huge and famed stadium and the. Returning to Stresa mid-evening, dinner is included.

Day 7 – Checking out of the hotel mid-morning, your luggage will be stored. You will have **free time** to explore **Stresa** and purchase lunch before departing for the airport, where check-in is at 16.40hrs with the return flight scheduled to depart at 18.40hrs, arriving into Gatwick at 19.30hrs where this tour terminates.

Simply Groups reserve the right to make minor changes to this itinerary due to circumstances beyond our control.