



Mountains of Lake Garda

*Alpine scenery & Italian lifestyle: a complete tour around
Italy's biggest lake, between Verona and Trento*



TRIP NOTES 2019

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INTRODUCTION

The great Lake Garda is Italy's biggest lake, and certainly the most varied. The southern shore is bordered by olive groves and vineyards in a pretty 'Tuscan' rolling hill landscape, while the northern part is a narrow 'fjord' bordered by high-rising mountains. And the atmosphere of the pretty little lakeside towns range from Venetian to Austrian. During this tour you'll discover this great variety of landscapes at Lake Garda and make some amazing and very diverse walks.

You start the tour from the charming little town of Garda, on the eastern shore, which gave its name to the lake itself. Garda is still very Mediterranean, a good start for your first easy walks. Upon arrival in Garda you first make a short relaxed afternoon walk onto the peninsula of San Vigilio, written about long ago by the Roman writer Catullus. The atmosphere of this small medieval hamlet is like a fairytale. The next day you make the first real walk, onto the 'Rocca' (fortified rock), complete with an abbey and the remains of a medieval castle. You climb up towards the abbey, a steep but short and pleasant climb, rewarded by beautiful views over the lake. You travel by boat to Sirmione, the 'Pearl of Lake Garda', dominated by its medieval castle. Here you also make a beautiful relaxed walk onto the peninsula, and you'll visit the remains of the aforementioned Catullus' villa.

You'll then enjoy some real mountain scenery, travelling up by cable car to Mt. Baldo, part of the great mountain range which runs alongside the lake. Here you make a beautiful roundwalk, with great views over both Lake Garda and the valley of the River Adige. Then you settle in at Riva del Garda, still on the same lake, but with a much more alpine character.

From here you discover the Brenta Dolomites, a lesser known, but certainly no less beautiful part of the Dolomites. You travel to Molveno, located on a beautiful alpine lake, one of the deepest in the Dolomites, and by cable car you make your way up onto the mountain range. Here you'll enjoy a beautiful, relatively easy roundwalk, a good introduction to what the Dolomites have to offer! You'll finish your trip in the charming little town of Trento, with its wonderfully decorated houses and impressive castle.

Those who wish to can make another daytrip from here: by cable car, crossing the River Adige, up to Monte Bondone. This is Trento's 'house mountain', with amazing views over the Adige valley, its castles and its vineyards. Or you could continue the trip into the majestic Dolomites, Italy's most beautiful mountains.

The premises where you will be staying are all special welcoming venues. The standard of the tour is 3-star hotels.



Please note: this is a moderately easy tour which is suitable for those who have some experience of walking and a good general physical condition. Most of the walks are on good paths, part of them waymarked. Average walking times: approx 5 hours each day.



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DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

Day 0 Verona

Arrival in Verona in case you arrive a day earlier. In this case you have the chance to explore this beautiful city, whose origins go back to ancient times. For example, you could pay a visit to the famous Roman amphitheatre and see the romantic 'Balcony of Romeo & Juliet'.

N.B. Verona can easily be reached by train. There are regular AV (high-speed), Eurostar and Intercity trains from Milan, Venice, Bologna, Florence and Rome. Verona also has an international airport. Several hotels can be booked for you in Verona, according to your wishes (either 'downtown' centrally located, or near the train station, ranging from 3- to 5-star).

Day 1 : (Verona) Garda

The starting point of your tour is the beautiful city of Verona, known for its Roman Arena, but also for the famous balcony of Romeo & Juliet. You will meet your tour leader and fellow travellers here at 3 pm, and travel by private bus to the charming town of Garda, the 'Pearl of Lake Garda', dominated by its 'Rocca' (rock) with an abbey and the remains of a medieval castle. Here you first settle in at your hotel and then we make a relaxed afternoon walk. This walk along the lakeshore brings us onto the peninsula of San Vigilio, written about long ago by the Roman writer Catullus. The atmosphere of this small medieval hamlet is like a fairytale. Here we have our 'aperitivo' and a short introduction on what lies ahead for the next week. We may then wish to spend some time here on the tranquil lake, have a drink, or relax in the park. In the late afternoon we either walk or travel back by bus to Garda. In the evening we go out for dinner together in a nice restaurant which offers the typical regional cuisine.

Accommodation: Garda, Hotel * - Meals included: 1 dinner.**

Total walking: approx. 1,5 hours.

Day 2 : Garda & its Rocca & the Peninsula of Sirmione

After a leisurely breakfast we make a wonderful roundwalk, a first test for your hill-walking skills. Garda is dominated by its 'Rocca' (fortified rock), complete with an abbey and the remains of a medieval castle. First we walk through the village and buy some picnic supplies. Then we climb up towards the abbey, a steep but short and pleasant climb, rewarded by beautiful views over the lake. After a visit to the abbey (which also sells very good chocolate!) we walk around the remains of the medieval town wall onto the 'Rocca', the mountain overlooking Garda and the whole southern part of Lake Garda. This is an ideal place for a picnic with a view. After lunch, we descend back to Garda again. (For those who want to opt out of the morning walk, there is the chance to wander around the medieval alleys or relax on the beautiful lake front, drink a coffee, have a full lunch here or simply grab some 'panini'.) Then, in the early afternoon, we go for a short, scenic boat ride across the southern part of the lake to Sirmione. Here we make a nice relaxed walk onto the peninsula. The walk brings us to the beautiful headland, where we will visit the remains of the aforementioned Catullus' villa. We may then wish to spend the afternoon in the 'old town', where tall buildings enclose narrow, winding cobbled streets, sprinkled with tempting cafes. Of course we can't miss out on the castle! Perhaps have a coffee or an 'aperitivo', or simply grab an ice cream, before boarding the boat back to Garda. In the evening you'll be free to make your own dinner arrangements.

Accommodation: Garda, Hotel * - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 lunch.**

Total walking: approx. 3,5 + 1,5 hours.

Day 3 : Along Malcesine and the Monte Baldo to Riva del Garda

Today we travel from the southern, 'Mediterranean' shore of Lake Garda to the northern, 'alpine' side. We pass many photogenic villages and then stop at the beautiful village of Malcesine, where the great German writer Goethe loved to stay at the castle. We will travel up by cable car, with rotating cabins to assure us 360° views, all the way up to [Mount Baldo](#), part of the great mountain range which runs alongside Lake Garda.



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Here we make a beautiful roundwalk, with great views over Lake Garda and the valley of the River Adige. We will either walk back down to Malcesine or take the cable car again. Then we travel on to your next base at the northernmost point of the lake, in the charming little town of Riva del Garda. We stay in the medieval town centre, with its colourful painted houses. Here we notice that we have passed a 'cultural border', which was also the border between Austria and Italy. In the late afternoon, those who feel like it can do a last stretch of a very scenic walk along the old 18th-century road, full of memories of the time the border between the Austrian Empire and Italy was located here, now a beautiful walkway and cycle path. Others can enjoy some relaxation at the hotel. In the evening we go for dinner in a nearby restaurant under the medieval arches of Riva, which offers the typical cuisine of the Italian Lakes region. A drink at the lakeside square is the perfect end to a beautiful day.

Accommodation: Riva del Garda, Hotel * - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner.**

Total walking time: around 4-5 hours. Total driving: around 1 hour.

Day 4 : Riva del Garda – Molveno/Andalò (Brenta Dolomites)

After breakfast this morning, we travel by private minibus to Molveno, located on a beautiful alpine lake, one of the deepest in the Dolomites, at the foot of the towering Brenta Dolomites, a lesser known part of the mountain chain. By cable car, we make our way up onto the mountain range, and then enjoy a beautiful, but relatively easy roundwalk, a good introduction to what the Dolomites have to offer! We will have a picnic lunch in the mountains, or, if you want, we can enjoy some local specialties at a 'rifugio' (mountain hut). After lunch we make our way back with a scenic walk downhill into the valley, but now we head to Andalò. We have a short stop for a drink, before our bus picks us up for a great journey, first through an alpine landscape, then through the amazing vineyards of the Adige valley, which brings us to your next base: the northernmost Italian-speaking city of Trento, located on the frontier between Mediterranean and Alpine cultures. And it seems to have taken the best of both worlds! We settle in at our centrally located hotel and then, before dinner, we enjoy some time wandering around the historical city centre, with its beautifully painted facades. The Castello del Buonconsiglio is definitely worth a visit too.

Accommodation: Trento, Hotel * - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner.**

Total walking time: around 4-5 hours. Total driving: around 1,5 hour.

Day 5 : Trento

This morning after breakfast, your journey ends. You can opt to spend some more time in the Dolomites, or travel down to Verona or Venice, which can both easily be reached by train. A transfer back to Verona can be arranged at any time.

Meals included: 1 breakfast.



TOUR DETAILS

ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

All nights are spent in beautiful, characteristic hotels, mostly historical buildings (generally 3/4-star; 5-star on some departure dates). All rooms have en-suite facilities.

Accommodation is mainly on a **half-board** basis. Most evening meals are included, for which we have selected the best available restaurants. On one night you are free to choose from the wide choice of restaurants in the area. Your guide can give you good tips for this evening meal.

Some (picnic) lunches are included in the tour price. On other days you are free to have your own lunch. Here you have the option of having your lunch in a nice restaurant, or purchasing supplies for a picnic lunch.

Nights 1 & 2: The first two nights are spent in the charming lakeside town of Garda, which gives its name to the lake itself. Your accommodation is a good 3-star hotel in the heart of the historical centre.

Night 3: This night is spent in a charming 3-star hotel in an ancient monastery, located right in the heart of Riva del Garda. A wonderful location, at walking distance from all main monuments and the lakeshore.

Night 4: This night is spent in a good 3-star hotel, located in the centre of Trento, at walking distance from all main monuments and the river.

INCLUDED

- Private English-speaking tour leader for 5 days
- Accommodation: 2 nights Garda, 1 night Riva del Garda, 1 night Trento, all in good ***/**** hotels
- Meals: all breakfasts, 3 dinners (good restaurants!), one lunch
- All private & public transfers as indicated throughout the entire itinerary
- Entrance fees of all sites along the itinerary
- All special activities as outlined in the day-by-day itinerary
- 24/7 assistance
- Luggage transport
- All gratuities for baggage, porters & hotel service

NOT INCLUDED

- Departure taxes
- Visas
- Travel Insurance
- Drinks and meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Optional additional tours or activities
- Tips



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LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Moderately easy (3): Mostly moderately easy walks, along well-maintained footpaths, with rough surfaces nonetheless. On some days some stretches are difficult for those suffering from vertigo (but NOT dangerous!). On these days alternative options are available. Extensions or shortcuts are also possible on most days.

Fitness: High standard of fitness is not necessary but you should be able to walk for up to 5 hours a day in hot sun on dusty or stony tracks.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Arrival:

The tour starts in VERONA (train station), a city with an international airport, and connected with Venice, Milan & Rome (and all other major Italian cities) by a frequent (high speed) train service. From the airport there are regular shuttle buses to the train station.

Departure:

The tour ends after breakfast in TRENTO on day 5. A short transfer brings you to the train or bus station (included), where you travel back by bus or train to Verona or Venice. Several taxi services are available to bring you directly to your next destination.

TOUR VARIATIONS

It is possible to include some extra nights before or after your tour. For those who have never been to Verona an extra day here is strongly recommended. Trento is definitely worth an extra night as well.

At the beginning or the end of the tour there is the opportunity to visit Venice. The tour can easily be extended with a few days here. Details and prices on request.

EXTRA NIGHTS

It is possible to include extra nights at the beginning or the end of the tour.

The tour can easily be extended with our Dolomites tour! This tour features a few days in Val Badia, a great stay in a mountain hut and a few days in Cortina d'Ampezzo. Another good suggestion is to add a few days in Venice (see below). Several good accommodations are available.

BESPOKE ADVENTURES

Many of these tours can be turned into Private '[Bespoke Adventures](#)' to accommodate private group travel. We can organise both "off the shelf" itineraries, as well as create custom itineraries to meet your special needs. Book the dates you want, with the family or friends you wish to bring along!

Longer and shorter versions of this tour are also available. Prices on request.

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