

The Best of Lake Maggiore Walking Member Breaks

Trip style: Member breaks

Destination: 📍 Italy

Trip code: MRT07-LML09

Grades: 1, 2 & 4



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Italy's second largest lake after Lake Garda, the shimmering Lake Maggiore is adored for its beautiful scenery, delicious food, and postcard-worthy towns. Highlights include taking lakeside strolls around Cannero and Cannobio, discovering the picturesque streets of Orta San Giulio, and venturing to the foothills of Mount Rosa and the Anzasca Valley. You can also take an optional boat ride to the Borromean Islands, the most famous of which is the enchanting Isola Bella, which translates as 'beautiful island.'

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Discovering Lake Orta
- Walking in the foothills of Monte Rosa, one of Italy's highest mountains
- The option to take a train to Milan or a boat to the Borromean Islands

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London Heathrow, including baggage and transfers
- A choice of 2 guided walks per day with local leaders (on walking days)
- HF Holidays Tour Manager
- 7 nights' accommodation in Gréoux-les-Bains
- 7 breakfasts and 7 dinners
- All sightseeing and entrance fees (as per itinerary)
- All in-destination transport

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

Welcome to the Hotel Bristol. Once you arrive, settle in and get acquainted with where you'll stay for the week.

Day 2: Belgirate to Stresa

Known locally as the chestnut route, this walk starts in a small lakeside village south of Stresa. Hop in a boat and we'll sail across the lake to Belgirate. Then following old mule trails, we'll pass by pretty churches, small hamlets, and the gardens of Villa Pallavicino on our way back to Stresa. Option 1 Chestnut Walk Distance: 5 miles (8km) Ascent: 800ft (240m) Descent: 900ft (280m) From the shore, we'll walk up to the Romanesque church of Santa Maria to see the views and the frescoes. Then following a mule track, you'll see how farming used to be before we arrive at the church of Saint Paolo. Step through a chestnut forest, passing the ruins of Sanin Albino, to the village of Passera and the gardens of Villa Pallavicino. Option 2 Chesnut Walk via Calogna Distance: 7½ miles (12km) Ascent: 1,300ft (400m) Descent: 1,150ft (360m) Taking the same route as option one until the church of Saint Paolo, we'll then venture off on another mule trail uphill to the hamlet of Calogna. Crossing moorland to a beech forest, we'll pass by old shepherd huts while glimpsing the lake down below. Once we reach the village of Magognino, we'll start descending through Passera to the gardens of Villa Pallavicino.

Day 3: Suna to Cavandone or Lake Mergozzo

Option 1 Suna to Cavandone Distance: 4miles (6.5km) Ascent: 900ft (260m) Descent: 1,150ft (360m) We'll take the bus to Suna from where we'll follow an ancient trail past the chestnut wood and medieval tower, climbing further for impressive views of Lake Maggiore below. At Cardavone, you'll see a 400-year-old yew tree. Option 2 Lake Mergozzo Distance: 7½miles (12km) Ascent: 1,200ft (360m) Descent: 1,200ft (360m) We'll take the train to Verbania to set off on a path that hugs the eastern shore, passing through chestnut woods and meadows that open out onto views over Lake Mergozzo. Stop for lunch in Mergozzo before taking the Sentiero Azzuro (Blue Path), pausing at Montorfano for far-reaching views of Lake Maggiore and the Toce River. We'll visit the Romanesque church before descending to Verbania where we'll catch the train back.

Day 4: Cannero Riviera to Cannobio

We'll head north to the town of Cannero Riviera. The village may have a slightly more Swiss feel, but the flora is distinctly Mediterranean thanks to the area's microclimate. Option 1 Cannero to Cannobio Distance: 5½miles (9km) Ascent: 1,200ft (360m) Descent: 1,200ft (360m) Following the lakeside, the path begins to climb gently through citrus groves to Carmine Superiore, a castle-like village carved out of the rock. Visit the church before continuing to the tiny hamlet of Molineggi and the pretty lakeside town of Cannobio. Time to relax with a well-deserved drink in one of the bars. Option 2 Cannero to Cannobio Distance: 7½miles (12km) Ascent: 1,700ft (540m) Descent: 1,650ft (500m) After leaving Cannero, we'll follow a short, steep descent mixing small country roads and mule tracks to the village of Viggiona. The views of the lake are spellbinding, and you can enjoy exploring the maze of small lanes and coloured houses. We'll stay on a ridge gently ascending to Molineggi - once a milling area for rye - passing shepherds' huts down into Cannobio for a drink.

Day 5: Free Day

There are plenty of things to see and do, from relaxing at the hotel pool and having lunch in Stresa's lively square, to taking the train to Milan, or jumping on a boat to visit the Borromean Islands. You could even head to Switzerland for the day on the boat and take the train back.

Day 6: Lake Orta

Today we head over to Lake Maggiore's little sister, Lake Orta. Both walks start in the hills above the lake and finish in Orta San Giulio, one of the most beautiful towns in Italy. Option 1 Armeno to Orta San Giulio Distance: 6miles (9km) Ascent: 450ft (140m) Descent: 1,150ft (360m) We'll start in the town of Armeno following trails through farms and meadows, crossing a Roman bridge, and entering another village called Armeno. We'll head down through lush parkland to Vacciago, once a rich retreat away from the lake. We'll descend to Legro and from here to the lake with time to explore Orta San Giulio. Option 2 Armeno to Orta San Giulio Distance: 8½miles (14km) Ascent: 700ft (220m) Descent: 1,450ft (460m) Following option one from Armeno to Armeno, we then ascend to Monte Mesma and the Franciscan convent of the same name. We'll get a wonderful view of Lake Orta, then after circling the small peak we'll head down into the village of Vacciago and onto the painted village of Legro. A final descent takes us to Orta San Giulio with time to explore.

Day 7: Anzasca Valley and Mont Rosa

Today we head into the mountains and the Anzasca Valley to Macunaga, home to the Walser people. This small region still has its own language and keeps to its historic traditions. After both walks, we'll take you to the village of Macunaga sitting below Mount Rosa. Option 1 Piedimulera to Castiglione Distance: 3½miles (6km) Ascent: 1,250ft (380m) Descent: 500ft (160m) We start in the pretty village of Piedimulera, which sits at the mouth of the Anzasca Valley looked over by Torre Ferreiro. Our path takes us out of town, through the valley, following the course of the Anza river. Passing chestnut woods, fruit trees, and old watercourses, we'll see ancient settlements and traces of old trades. We'll finish in the hamlet of Castiglione before heading to the Walser village of Macunaga. Option 2 Piedimulera to Molini Distance: 6 miles (10km) Ascent: 1,850ft (560m) Descent: 1,100ft (340m) From Piedimulera we'll follow the same route as option one. After the village of Castiglione, we'll head along the valley and into the deep forested hills as we follow the old road with occasional glimpses of the cobalt blue torrent. We soon enter the outskirts of the village of Molini, which clings to the hillside flanked by the river. Finally, we'll have time to explore Macunaga.

Day 8: Departure Day

We'll leave for Milan and our flight back home.

Grand Hotel Bristol, Stresa 4*

Set on the main lake road overlooking Lake Maggiore and the beautiful Borreмео Islands, this stylish, classic hotel has a bohemian-style interior and lush gardens where you can enjoy an aperitivo or after-dinner drink.

- Lounge
- Indoor and outdoor bars
- Attractive manicure gardens
- Outdoor seasonal pool
- Indoor spa area with small pool
- Hot tub