

## Hiking in the Orobie Alps; from Lake Como into the mountains and back to the lake again. 8 days / 7 nights or tailor made



The Orobie Alps, a high mountain range in Northern Italy stretching from Lake Como to Lago d'Iseo is a region of extremely varied countryside, with rugged rocky peaks, high valleys and alpine meadows, crystal clear springs and majestic forests.

This walk, starting and ending on the shores of the delightful Lake Como, leads through the craggy summits of the high mountains and an ever-changing landscape. With a new panorama at every stage of the way, you will find yourself traveling through entirely different environments within the space of a few hours.

### Routes

The hike begins in the town of Lecco, a small town that is easy to reach both by public transport and by car. Departing from Lecco, you will proceed on up into the mountains leaving the lake behind – and under – you. Most of the walk is through high mountains and accordingly, there are some tough climbs involved, making it ideal for well-trained walkers. However, cable cars are often available, so you can tackle the largest differences in heights without much effort. Thanks to these cable cars, transfers offered by the accommodations and alternative routes you can choose every day between walks that vary from 3 to 7 hours of walking time.

Although the paths usually are not hard going, some of them are along sheer drops and experience with mountain walking is preferable.

Please be very careful if the ground is wet or if there are strong winds. If the weather is extremely inclement, or visibility is poor, it might be advisable to take an alternative route; these are also described in the itinerary.

## Accommodations and meals

The accommodation on this walk varies greatly: in Lecco, you will stay at a three-star hotel situated on the lake side and looking over the town on the other side. Dinner is not included here.

By contrast, the next two nights will be spent in a tiny agriturismo in the mountains where the proprietor grows fruits, keeps ducks and donkeys and has an organic vegetable garden.

Once you are higher up in the mountains, you will spend two nights in a 'rifugio' (simple mountain hotel) where your luggage will be brought up by a 4 wheel drive." All these nights in the mountains dinner is included.

Finally, back in the civilized world, the last two nights will be spent in cosy B&Bs.

The penultimate in a house where the history of the family during the last centuries is kept alive through objects and stories and the ultimate that feels like an antiquary bookshop.

The latter has a panoramic view of the lake and on the terrace you can reflect proudly on your achievements! Dinner is not included in the B&Bs.

In all the lodgings services are ensuite.

On walking days you will be provided with a packed lunch.

## Period and price

The walk can be undertaken from early June to early September.

start: every day of the week, except in June and the beginning of September, when the tour can be started only on Thursdays.

Included in the price:

Accommodation based bed & breakfast (7x), luggage transport, packed lunches on walking days (6x), dinner on day 2, 3, 4 and 5 (4x),

description of the routes (in English or Dutch), maps, background information, the parking of your car in Lecco during the week you are hiking.

Excluded:

City taxes, getting there, dinner on the day of arrival and day 6 and 7, tickets for the cable cars.

## Travel schedule

1: Arrival Lecco

2: Lecco – Cassina Valsassina (from 4 to 7 hours , ↑410 / 1500m - ↓ 430m, B,L,D)

3: Mezzacca – Bobbio - Mezzacca (3 to 7 hours, ↑ 100, ↓ 145m / ↑↓ 940m, B,L,D)

4: Mezzacca – Valbiandino (3.30, 4 or 6 hours , ↑ 360m, ↓ 500m, B,L,D )

5: Valbiandino - optional walk (3 hours, ↑↓ 520m or 5 to 6.30 uur, ↑↓ 777m B,L,D)

6: Valbiandino - Margno (3.00 / 5 hours ↑ 430 / 510m - ↓ 450 / 1260m, B,L)

7: Margno – Bellano (3.10 / 5.10 hours, ↑ 200 / 580m - ↓ 630 / 1010m, B,L)

8: Departure Bellano after breakfast (B).

*Included meals are signed: B=breakfast, L=packed lunch, D=dinner.*

## Day to day

Day 1: Arrival in Lecco.

Lecco lies on the foot of the “right leg” of Lake Como; the town has a charming centre, but most of its fame stems from the fact that it is the birthplace of the author Alessandro Manzoni, “Italy’s Goethe” and that his most famous novel, *I promessi sposi* (The Betrothed, 1842) is set in this region. The town also serves as an operational base for mountain climbers, as it lies at the foot of the Grigna (2,408 m), internationally renowned for its large number of climbing walls.

You will be accommodated in a three-star hotel on the lake. There are dining facilities nearby (dinner is not included). If you arrive by car, you can leave it for free on the car park of the hotel during your hike.

Day 2: Lecco – Mezzacca.

Today, you can have yourselves transported up to Pizzo d'Erna, a rocky summit (1,345 m.) above Lecco, by using the bus and/or the cable car and start the walk from there. You can also choose for walking through town and the vigorous hike with splendid views for getting up to Pizzo d'Erna! This peak –depending on the weather of course – presents a fantastic view of the town below and the Padan Plain as far as Apennines and the surrounding mountains. From here, the walk continues through woods and alpine meadows around the Resegone, a mountain whose toothy ridge resembles an enormous saw (“resegone”=saw in dialect). The hike concludes in a valley further on in a small, pleasantly located agriturismo. Dinner is included.

Day 3: Mezzacca - Artavaggio / Piani di Bobbio - Mezzacca.

The route of the coming days will follow part of Sentiero delle Orobie, the path that traverses the Orobic Alps, reaching a height of around 2000 m. You will find yourself passing the steep, impressive sides of the mountain Zucco Campelli. The path first runs through beautiful rocky surroundings for then descending to Piani di Bobbio. Here you can take the cable car down or decide to walk back to Artavaggio, passing the other side of the Zucco Campelli. This path runs more or less at the same height, passing a steep mountain face and features a few chains and iron steps. Of course, this route should only be taken by walkers who are not afraid of heights, but your reward will be some stunning panoramas! You will spend the night at the agriturismo. Dinner is included.

Day 4: Mezzacca - Piani di Bobbio – Valbiandino.

Another day in the higher parts of the mountains: you start with a short walk (or transfer) to the cable car which you will take to Piani di Bobbio to continue the journey through the high peaks. From Piani di Bobbio, you will follow the ridges to Valbiandino. If the weather is fine, you will be able to enjoy a walk full of panoramic views of two of the summits of Orobic Alps: Monte Legnone and Pizzo Tre Signori. Halfway along the route, you will cross the Passo del Toro (“the pass of the bull”), a narrow pass with sheer drops on either side and the reason for an alternative route through the valley in case of bad weather. After the pass, you will start descending down to the magnificent Valbiandino. On arrival in Valbiandino, you will make your way to a classic “rifugio” (mountain resort) (1,510 m) where you will have a bedroom and a private bathroom. Dinner is included.

Day 5: Valbiandino.

Valbiandino is a well-kept secret! Few except the people who live in the area know about this enchanting valley. A crystal clear stream flows down through the valley, featuring a number of waterfalls on its course. In the summer, the dell is populated by cattle and goats, their bells tinkling perpetually. You will see marmots running about and hear their whistles as they sound the alarm to warn each other. A small mountain lake reflecting the Pizzo Tre Signori lies at the top of the valley. An extra day has been scheduled here to give you plenty of opportunity to explore this charming countryside. You will find a couple of round going hikes of different length and difficulty in the route book. Lunch and dinner are included.

Day 6: Valbiandino - Margno.

Leaving the valley, you will climb up to the edge of the ring of mountains and hike across the ridge towards Lake Como. Most of today's route will be higher than of 1,500 m too, but the way is easier and you will not encounter any real differences in height. If you prefer, you can descend by cable car. There are good views to the left and the right, and you may catch glimpses of Lake Como and Lake Lugano. As the landscape slowly changes, you can enjoy this walk with its varied scenery as you proceed to more cultivated surroundings. Your lodging place is a cosy B&B in the village whose proprietor is a warm and friendly lady. Dinner is not included in the price, but the village has a restaurants where you can enjoy an excellent dinner.

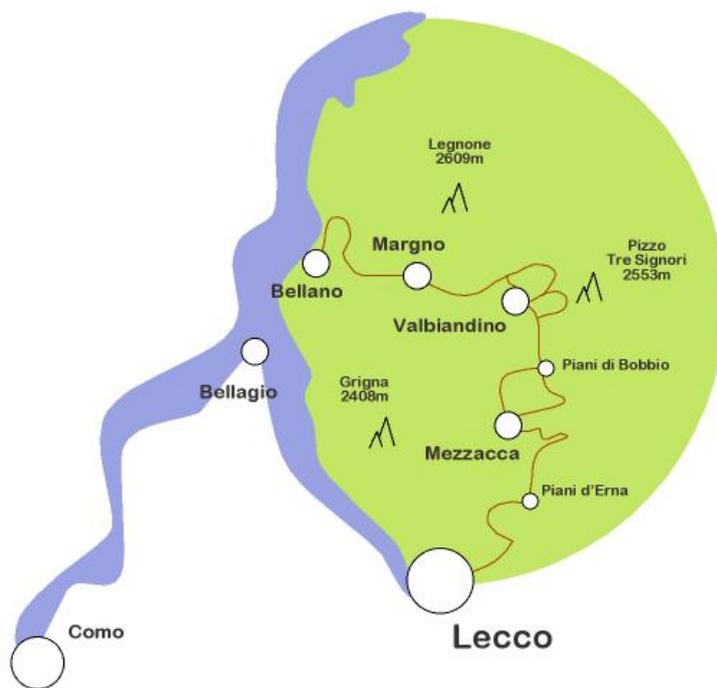
Day 7: Margno - Bellano.

Yesterday, you might have glimpsed Lake Como, but today's route will lead to its shores and for most of the walk, you will be looking down on it in all its splendour! The longer walk leads you high above the lake and then descends while the shorter walk starts the descent at an earlier point. The descent is long, but the villages, churches, ancient mule paths and of course the view of the lake makes this walk such a completely different experience to the previous days that time and distance will slip by unnoticed. Your accommodation is a B&B (though it looks like an antique bookstore... ) with a view out over the lake. From here, a path leads down to the water's edge, where you can enjoy a splash in the cool waters of the lake. The little town of Bellano is twenty minutes' walk away.

The B&B does not serve dinner but will accompany you to a restaurant in the village if you feel tired for walking.

Day 8: Departure from Bellano.

After breakfast, the landlady will take you to the station or to the port in Bellano, from whence you can travel by train (30/45 minutes) or by boat (via Bellagio, a journey of just over two hours) to return to Lecco. Of course you can opt for another night in the cosy B&B, for example for walking over the ancient "strade del viandante" to Varenna, situated south of Bellano on the shore of the lake.



### Tailor made

The standard tour is the best option for getting to know the different aspects and places of interest along the trail.

If you want a day of relax at the end of the tour we suggest an extra night in Bellano, near the lake.

For sightseeing and visiting renowned villa's and gardens in the center region of Lake Como we suggest booking extra nights in Bellagio.

For getting there from Bellano it's a short journey by train and boat. You have to carry your own luggage during that trip

Of course an extra night in Lecco (nice old city center near the lake) can be booked as well.

On request the tour can be shortened by skipping one of the two nights in Mezzacca and/or Valbiandino.

A 5 days / 4 nights tour is possible by interrupting the tour in Margno.

In that case you can get back to Lecco by bus or taxi.