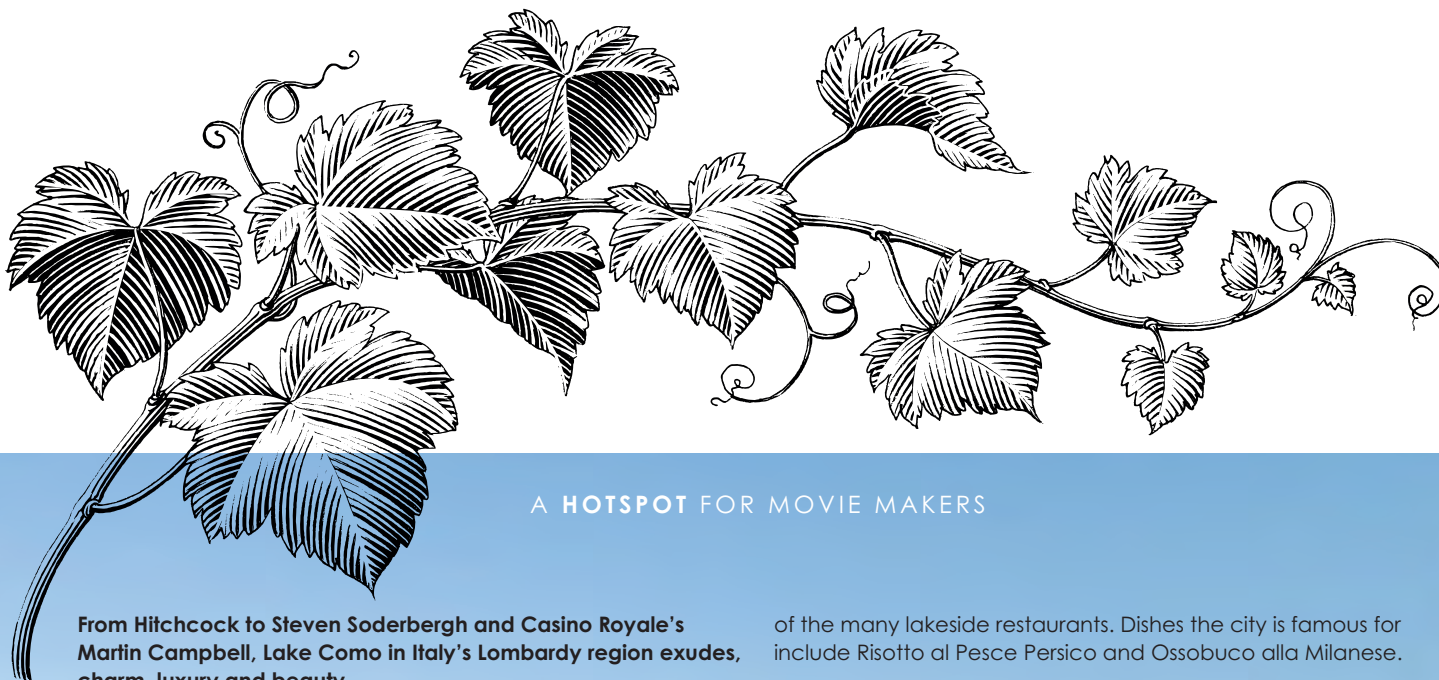


TRAVEL

Lake Como





A HOTSPOT FOR MOVIE MAKERS

From Hitchcock to Steven Soderbergh and Casino Royale's Martin Campbell, Lake Como in Italy's Lombardy region exudes, charm, luxury and beauty.

Today it's home to the likes of Madonna, George Clooney, Sylvester Stallone and Sir Richard Branson. But tourists too are drawn to the romance of waterfront villas, picturesque villages and stately mountain backdrops.

The largest of the lakeside locations in the Italian Alps is Como itself. This city, a one-hour drive from Milan, provides ferries to the various towns dotted around these crystal-clear emerald-green waters. All are worth a visit, if you happen to be time-rich.

Before embarking on that ferry trip though, it's worth a look around Como itself. History and religious lovers can admire the centuries old centre of town where you'll find the towering Duomo di Como cathedral and the Basilica of San Fedele. Walk along the waterfront and you'll encounter the 18th century Villa Olmo with its famous gardens. Stop and have a meal at some

of the many lakeside restaurants. Dishes the city is famous for include Risotto al Pesce Persico and Ossobuco alla Milanese.

A trip on the funicular takes you to the pretty village of Brunate, where you can enjoy a drink while admiring the view. Also worth a visit is the Silk Museum, silk weaving being a traditional craft in the city.

Some of Lake Como's most famous lakeside towns, which are approachable via ferry, include Bellagio, Varenna and Menaggio.

Often referred to as the 'Pearl of Lake Como,' Bellagio simply smacks of elegance and opulence. Pretty coloured houses of yellow, orange and pink line tiered streets as you wind your way along the ancient cobbled streets to the town's top point and where the views of the Swiss Alps in particular are simply stunning. Punta Spartivento, near the impressive Basilica of San Giacomo, is undoubtedly the most picture-perfect spot.

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Varenna's lakefront area, Riva Grande is perfect for dining. Afterwards take a stroll along the romantic promenade known as the Passeggiata degli Innamorati. Stroll languidly down the town's narrow streets and you'll encounter the breathtaking 13th-century Church of San Giorgio in all its Gothic and Romanesque glory.

Sitting on Lake Como's western flank, Menaggio is less touristy than Varenna and Bellagio yet it still offers those magnificent lakeside views. Via Calvi is perfect for some upmarket boutique shopping, while you'll find plenty of charming artisan offerings along the waterfront and in the Piazza Garibaldi.

Where to stay

Il Sereno. With its contemporary interiors of glass, wood and stone, Il Sereno is a far cry from the typical traditional five-star hotel in Como. Boasting a Michelin-star restaurant, wine tasting, cooking classes and a picnic-on-the-lake adventure, it's pretty much a must for those looking for an unforgettable luxury stay.

Grand Hotel Tremezzo. This beautiful, elegant hotel with stunning views across to Bellagio, was a favourite of actress Greta Garbo. With its own botanic garden, tennis courts, three swimming pools and luxury wellness centre, it offers plenty of options if you fancy a break from sightseeing.

Villa Cipressi. Located in Varenna, this beautiful 17th century villa offers guests the opportunity to stroll through its colourful terraced garden down to the lake with its stone steps and cast-iron gate (the hotel's private boat jetty).

When to visit

The best time to visit Lake Como if you plan on sightseeing is in May or at the beginning of autumn. That's because there's fewer crowds and the weather will be more manageable. Average day time temperatures are between 8 and 18°C in

May, and there's usually less rain. This is when many of the flowers are at their best too.

Beachlovers will prefer planning their trip from June to August, when they're pretty much guaranteed hot, sunny days and warm evenings.

How to get there

Get a flight into Milan or Lombardy from the UK. You can then travel by train or rental car from Milan to Como or Varenna. The ferries can take you to your lakeside vista of choice. It's also possible to travel by train from London to Milan, via Eurostar and Italo, the fastest time being ten hours, three minutes.

Getting around Lake Como itself is best by boat, whether that's via the public ferry, hiring a self-drive boat, or renting a private charter complete with captain.

Discover the magic of Lake Como with Lake Como Tourism!

Our platform is the go-to source for anyone looking to enjoy an authentic experience in one of Italy's most enchanting destinations.

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