

Italian Lakes and High Passes

12 Sept 2021 to 26 Sept 2021

A stunning mountain and lake route. We climb the two highest passes in Italy and spend time at the incredible Lake Como



Itinerary

Sun 12 Sept 2021. Bergamo Città Altà, arrival day

Transfer to Hotel, bike build

- No cycling
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (D)

Mon 13 Sept 2021. Città Altà to Lovere

We ride out of Città Alta, after 30km we arrive at Lake Iseo which we follow to our destination. Lago Iseo is very picturesque with islands and ferry routes across it.

- Route distance: 73.0 km
- Route altitude gain: 870.0 m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Tuesday 14 Sept. Lovere to Edolo

Follow the river Oglio cycle path to Edolo. The route is partly traffic free cycle path and follows the river.

- Route distance: 66.0 km
- Route altitude gain: 980.0 m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Wednesday 15 Sept 2021, the Mortirolo

Choice of routes: 1. Guided. Climb up to Aprica then descend. At the bottom follow the Sentiero Valtellina to the historic village of Mazzo. Follow signs to Passo Mortirolo. the top is at 1800m then down to the valley and back to Edolo.

2. Non guided. Follow the cycle path up to Passo Tonale, the path climbs two thirds of the route then proceeds on the road. The route back follows the road. Passo Tonale is at 1880m.

- Route distance: 72.0 km
- Route altitude gain: 2300.0 m
- Accommodation: hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Thursday 16 Sept 2021. Edolo to Bormio

Follow the cycle path, some gravel sections, to Ponte di Legno, then ride up the Gavia pass at 2620m above sea level. Descend to Santa Caterina Valcurva, then along the road to Bormio. We start climbing at Edolo but the actual pass begins at Ponte di Legno. The Gavia pass is stunning. The descent is fast to San Caterina di Valfurva then we turn off left towards Bormio.

- Route distance: 68.0 km
- Route altitude gain: 2000.0 m
- Accommodation: hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Friday 17 Sept 2021. Bormio, Stelvio, Bormio, Livigno

Leave Bormio, climb up Passo Stelvio, 2750m at the top. Turn round and descend and return to Bormio, lunch break. The alternative route through Switzerland is closed at this time. From Bormio head westwards over Eira pass to Livigno. Livigno is a hidden valley high in the alps.

- Route distance: 84.0 km
- Route altitude gain: 2700.0 m
- Accommodation: hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Saturday 18 Sept 2021. Rest day at Livigno

Livigno is at 1800m. Walks or gentle rides available, ride round the lake or walk up into the Livigno valley. Mountain walks also possible.

- No cycling
- Accommodation: hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Sunday 19 Sept 2021. Livigno to Chiavenna

The route leaves the Livigno valley and enters Switzerland, we ride through San Moritz, high up in the Engadine valley, past two small lakes Silvaplansersee and Silvasee then back into Italy. The route continues through small villages to the hotel.

- Route distance: 94.0 km
- Route altitude gain: 1150.0 m
- Accommodation: hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Monday 20 Sept 2021. Chiavenna to Lake Como

Route follows mainly quiet roads to Lake Como. Then it follows the lakeside using quiet routes where possible. Ride to Varenna, a very pretty lakeside village, then take the ferry to Bellagio. Stay 2 nights at Bellagio.

- Route distance: 60.0 km
- Route altitude gain: 280.0 m
- Accommodation: hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Tuesday 21 Sept 2021. Free day

Bellagio is on the tip of the middle section of the lake. It has amazing views to all northern parts of the lake. Free day to explore Lake Como and its famous villas. Ferries from Bellagio to many parts of Lake Como.

- No cycling
- Accommodation: hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Wednesday 22 Sept 2021. Bellagio to Como

Climb through the mountaineous central spine of Lake Como. Visit the famous cycling sanctuary of the Madonna del Ghisallo then drop down to the west side of the central spine and follow the lake to Como.

- Route distance: 60.0 km
- Route altitude gain: 1600.0 m
- Accommodation: hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Thursday 23 Sept. Como to Lecco

Short day round the small lakes that are in this area. The route follows the lakesides where possible. Meal at Pescarenico a suburb of Lecco on the lakeside. Possible train trip to the Moto Guzzi museum at Mandello di Lario. Stay overnight at Lecco.

- Route distance: 60.0 km
- Route altitude gain: 600.0 m
- Accommodation: hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Friday 24 Sept 2021. Lecco to Città Alta, Bergamo

Using as many cycle paths as possible we climb over the hills and back into Bergamo Città Alta.

- Route distance: 60.0 km
- Route altitude gain: 1600.0 m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Saturday 25 September. Bergamo Città Alta

Pack bikes, tour the old town of Città Alta. Well worth a visit. Then transfer to the airport or station.

- No cycling
- Meals: (B)



Dates and Prices

Cost

- Land only price: £1590.0

Payment Schedule

A deposit of £160 per person must accompany the Booking Form, with the final balance of £1430 per person (plus any supplement) to be paid ten weeks prior to departure, by 02 July 2021.

Price includes:

- Return minibuss transfer from Bergamo Orio al Serio airport or Bergamo station to the hotel in Città Altà.
- 13 nights hotel, sharing room.
- 13 breakfasts, 13 dinners.
- Vehicle support on cycling days.
- Ferry to Bellagio.
- Bikexplore costs.
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Price does not include:

- Travel to and from Bergamo Orio al Serio airport from your home.
- Drinks with dinner.
- Lunches or refreshments during the day.
- Ferry tickets on the rest day at Lake Como.
- Entry fees at any attractions visited.
- Other internal travel.
- Any other personal expenses.
- Travel Insurance.
- Single occupancy supplement (£250, subject to availability).
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Cancellations

Written Notice Received: Cancellation Charge

- 1st July 2021: £160 (deposit)
- 2nd July to departure: £1590 (full amount)



Holiday Information

Accommodation

- Accommodation is generally quite good, but sometimes we may have to adapt as some of the villages we are travelling to are quite small. It will usually be in 3-star hotels with local specialities on offer. Italy is good for vegetarians and they will eat well. Please put this down on your booking form. Lunches are generally down to you; café stops or picnics

Rooms

- Sharing

The nature of the holiday

- Cycling most days. Some quite hard climbs.

Rest Day

- There are two rest days mid tour. The first one is at Livigno and the second one is on Lake Como. There is an extra non-moving-on day before Gavia Pass, but I have set up a choice of two rides for that day.

Roads used

- Mainly quiet roads, some traffic free cycle paths. There will be a small amount of non-tarmacked cycle paths.

The area covered by the holiday

- The north of Italy is sadly neglected by holiday companies. Between the wars the Italian Lake district was hugely popular amongst travellers doing the Grand Tour. We spend time on the prettiest of the great Italian lakes as well as visiting a number of small ones.

The Gavia pass is one of the spectacles of the Alps as it is 100m lower than the Stelvio it is little visited. In my opinion it is vastly superior to the Stelvio. We climb up the long side, approximately 2300m of climbing that day. The road up was only tarmacked 10 years ago. Stelvio is just high. There is only one pass in France higher, the Col de l'Iseran. We return down the Stelvio to cycle to Livigno. (The lovely alternative route, through Switzerland, is unfortunately closed in September). Livigno is a gorgeous hidden alpine valley, it is tricky to access so not many tourists stay there. The day before the Gavia, we have the option of cycling the Mortirolo Pass, a notoriously tough pass, but well worth it for the sense of achievement and views at the top.

On the way to and from the high passes we use quite a few traffic free cycle paths along lakes and rivers. This makes the overall cycling quite easy, apart from the three long days over the high passes. There may be an option of uplift for some.

Route Sheets

- Route sheets and GPX details will be provided

Group information

- The maximum group size will be 18 plus the Tour Managers and driver.

Weather and Clothing

- The weather is usually good in Italy in September, but we will be travelling to the high mountains, some of which will be above 2000m. So, bring appropriate clothing. If you intend to do some walking around Livigno then bring appropriate clothing and footwear. It may snow in the high mountains and it has been known to close the highest passes in September.

Cycles / Equipment

- We recommend a good audax bike, though as no luggage needs to be carried you can bring your lightweight road-bike but as some of the cycle paths have limited tarmac it may cause problems to lightweight racing tyres. There is small amount of non-tarmacked cycle paths. You should ensure your cycle is well maintained, paying particular attention to wheels, tyres and brakes. Some climbs are long so a low bottom gear (e.g. small chainring the same size or smaller than the largest cog on your rear wheel) is recommended. If you are unsure about gears, please discuss with the Tour Manager. New tyres and tubes are recommended. Participants will be expected to carry sufficient spares and tools each day to deal with punctures and minor repairs. The support vehicle will not be far away in case of dramatic changes in the weather. You will not need to carry luggage, but a saddle, rack top, or bar bag may be useful for carrying wet weather gear, spare clothing needed for the day, camera, snacks and your map. Each participant is expected to bring and carry their personal items and spares. Helmets are your personal choice as there is no legal requirement in Italy.

Maps

- Although you will be provided with route notes and GPX files and there will be a support vehicle as well as the Tour Manager. Please be prepared. Take a map with you in case you get separated from the group. Touring Club Italy maps are good in Italy, the TCI regional map of Lombardia will cover all of the route.

Travel

- Travel to the start and from the finish is not included in this holiday. Thus it is very important that you note that neither your Tour Manager nor Bikexplore are responsible for you in any way until the appointed time at the designated meeting point. Should you fail to arrive at the appointed time for whatever reason, we will not be responsible for any additional expenses you may incur in order to meet up with the tour group. Before finalising travel arrangements, you should ensure that the tour is definitely going ahead, this is especially important this year due to the pandemic. Should there be insufficient bookings or pandemic travel restrictions are imposed, due to the pandemic we reserve the right to cancel the tour at any time. It is therefore recommended that you book fully flexible and refundable transport and accommodation or wait until you have been told

the tour will go ahead. In the event of the tour being cancelled we will not be responsible for any losses incurred outside what you pay us.

The following airlines fly to the following destinations:

- Ryanair flies to Bergamo Orio al Serio
- British Airways to Milano Linate.
- EasyJet to Milano Malpensa and Linate

There are regular train shuttles from both Malpensa and Linate airports to Milano Centrale station, and from there an onward service to Bergamo. Note that the larger Malpensa is about 50kms north of Milan whereas Linate is closer to the city. There is also a shuttle from Malpensa to Orio al Serio.

Another option is the overnight train from Paris to Milan. Bikes will need to be boxed. It will be possible to take some bikes from the UK to Bergamo in the van, but you will have to deliver your bike to the Tour Manager, and there will be a charge for this service.

Travel insurance advice

- Italy is in Europe, but Britain is not in the EU now. Your EHIC card is valid until the expiry date, it will not be replaced. Currently the government is looking at a GHIC card, but no further information is extant at the moment. At the moment Britain does not have a reciprocal health agreement with Italy, though this might change during the year. Travel insurance is vital, please check with your provider to see if they cover the revised conditions in Europe. Bikexplore has pandemic porcedures in place.

Tour manager

- Greg Woodford. I am an experienced tour leader having run tours though Europe and further afield. I have cycled in many countries throughout Europe and in the Americas and Africa. I can speak Italian fluently and some Spanish and French. I am also an experienced cycle trainer and tutor and coach. I run ride leader courses for Cycling UK and ride leader workshops for my cycle training company, Avanti Cycling.