



ACADEMY
TRAVEL

TAILORED
SMALL GROUP
JOURNEYS

Lake Garda

LOMBARDY & THE VENETO

FROM MILAN TO VENICE

OVERVIEW

Lombardy and the Veneto stretch across the north of Italy and the two regions share and enjoy stunning landscapes, an extraordinary breadth of history and much of Italy's wealth.

On this new 17-day tour, Dr Eireann Marshall takes us east from the cosmopolitan city of Milan in Lombardy through Bergamo and Brescia to Lake Garda where we cross into the Veneto, travelling through the cities of Verona, Padova and Vicenza before ending in the exquisite time capsule that is Venice.

Avoiding the usual tourist clichés, we focus instead on the region's fascinating history, including Milan's late antique basilicas and the rich Roman remains in Brescia and Verona, whose celebrated amphitheatre still rings to the cheers of crowds. Palladio's elegant transformation of Vicenza reflects the wealth, power and passionate patronage brought to the region in later medieval and renaissance times, and where better to end our tour than in La Serenissima herself, the city of Venice.

As we travel, we take time out to enjoy the lovely landscapes in the foothills and around the lakes for which Lombardy and the Veneto are justly famed, sampling the regions' notable wine and cuisine along the way.



TOUR LEADER

Dr Eireann Marshall was raised in the Veneto and studied Ancient History at Columbia University, gaining a PhD at the University of Exeter. She is an Associate Lecturer of the Open University.

TOUR DATES

November 6-22, 2024

TOUR PRICE

\$14,480 per person, twin share
\$2,980 single supplement

TOUR DEPOSIT

A **\$1,000** non-refundable deposit is required per person to confirm your booking on tour.

GROUP SIZE

Maximum number of **16** in group

ITINERARY

Milan (4 Nights), Brescia (3 Nights), Verona (3 Nights), Padova (3 Nights), Venice (3 Nights)

INCLUSIONS

16 nights' accommodation in centrally located 4-star hotels. All breakfasts, 4 lunches and 7 dinners. Services of an expert tour leader and an experienced tour manager throughout. All ground transport, entrance fees and tipping.



DETAILED ITINERARY

Start & Finish

The tour starts at 6.00pm on Wednesday 6 November, at the Hotel Manin, Milan.

The tour ends after breakfast on Friday 22 November, at the Hotel Al Codega, Venice.

Included meals are indicated with B, L, D.

Wednesday 6 November

Arrival in Milan

If you booked your air travel through Academy Travel, we will organise a transfer to our hotel. Please note that rooms may not be available until early afternoon. In the evening, meet your tour leader and fellow travellers in the hotel for introductions. Dinner follows in fine nearby restaurant. Overnight Milan (D)

Thursday 7 November

Ancient Milan & Early Churches

The thoroughly modern city of Milan has a fascinating past and this morning, after a talk in our hotel, we uncover its ancient history. We begin with the important collection of artefacts at the city's Archaeological Museum before making our way to the Basilica of San Lorenzo, whose origins date back to Roman times. After a light lunch together, we continue to the Basilica of Sant'Ambrogio, commissioned by Ambrose of Milan in the 4th century but reconstructed centuries later in Romanesque style with stunning mosaics from the medieval period. Returning to our hotel the evening is at leisure. Overnight Milan (B, L)

Friday 8 November

Da Vinci's Masterpiece

A viewing of Leonardo Da Vinci's *The Last Supper*, in the Monastery of Santa Maria delle Grazie, is a highlight of our tour and the perfect way to begin the day. After our visit we continue to the 13th-century Basilica of Sant'Eustorgio, built on the site of an earlier Paleo-Christian church, remains of which can be seen under the apse. Reputedly once housing the relics of the Magi, the basilica contains several chapels commissioned by wealthy Milanese families and a monumental polyptych depicting dramatic scenes from the Passion of Christ. After a break for lunch, the afternoon is yours to explore this amazing city at your leisure. Overnight Milan (B)

Saturday 9 November

Architecture & Art

The building of Milan's famous cathedral began around 1386 but wasn't completed until the mid-20th century. Admiring this enduring symbol of the city, we see how 600 years of construction has resulted in a feast of different architectural

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Da Vinci's Last Supper

Experience the grace and beauty of Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper*, a masterpiece which has astonished visitors since the 16th century, at the Cenacolo in Milan.

Roman Brescia and Verona

Explore the fascinating remnants of Roman occupation on archaeological sites and in museums in Brescia and at Verona's famous amphitheatre, built in 30 CE.

Padova's Frescoes

Admire the beauty and virtuosity of the World Heritage listed 14th-century fresco cycles in the churches and public buildings in Padova, including the extraordinary Scrovegni Chapel.

Palladio's Vicenza

Appreciate the ground-breaking architecture of Palladio in Vicenza, the city he made famous, including his most celebrated building – La Rotonda – with its subtle symmetry.

St Mark's Basilica

See the splendour of St Mark's, the private chapel of the Doges, lit up at night and truly understand the splendid effect of kilos of glittering gold and luminous marble on a private, after-hours tour.

Milan



styles and appreciate the thousands of statues, gargoyles and figures that adorn its ornate façade. Worship of a different kind is celebrated at the stylish Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, a dazzling shopping arcade connecting the Piazza Duomo to the Teatro alla Scala, Milan's world-famous opera house. In the afternoon we visit one of Italy's finest art collections at the Pinacoteca di Brera, before returning to the hotel via the Castello Sforzesco, an imposing fortress built for Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan. The evening is at leisure. Overnight Milan (B)

Sunday 10 November

Bergamo

Departing Milan this morning, we travel to the lovely hilltop town of Bergamo. Here we visit the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, whose exuberant interior is adorned with 14th-century frescoes, stucco, tapestries and marquetry and contains the tomb of its native-born son, the composer Donizetti. We also explore the impressive Cappella Colleoni, the shrine dedicated to the condottiere Bartolomeo Colleoni who conquered much of northern Italy for the Venetian republic. Following a break for lunch and a relaxed afternoon in the lively Borgo Santa Caterina district, we continue on to Brescia at the foot of the Alps. After checking in and time to freshen up, we meet for a talk in our hotel followed by dinner in a local restaurant. Overnight Brescia (B, D)



Monday 11 November

Brescia & Lago Iseo

Meeting our local guide this morning, we enjoy a walking tour through the historic heart of Brescia, visiting the Duomo Vecchio or old cathedral, one of Italy's most important examples of a circular Romanesque church. We then travel to a local winery producing some of the region's finest Franciacorta, a sparkling wine produced according to the champagne method. After a guided tour of the wine cellars, we end our visit with lunch in the restaurant complemented by a wine-tasting. We then continue to the nearby mediaeval town of Iseo where we have a relaxed walking tour around beautiful Lake Iseo, followed by free time to enjoy this lovely town. Returning to Brescia the evening is at leisure. Overnight Brescia (B, L)



Tuesday 12 November

Ancient Brescia

We head back to Brescia's ancient past today, starting with the Brixia archaeological park, named for the original Roman settlement on the site. We visit the Roman theatre, as well as the Temple of Capitoline Jupiter, where a massive bronze statue of Victory, now on display in the site museum, was found. A short walk away is the excellent Museum of Santa Giulia, where we explore the remains of two Roman houses, revealed in excavations on site, an ancient Lombard church and a renaissance chapel, along with the many priceless artefacts housed in the museum itself. The afternoon is free for you to explore Brescia at leisure. Overnight Brescia (B)



Sirmione

Wednesday 13 November

Lake Garda

Departing Brescia we continue eastwards, spending the day on the crystal-clear waters of Lake Garda. Bordering the regions of Lombardy, Veneto and Trentino-Alto Adige, it is Italy's largest lake. In the colourful Lombardy town of Sirmione we visit the Castello Scaligero, a medieval fortified castle built for the Della Scala family of Verona, as well as the churches of San Pietro in Mavino, decorated with beautiful 14th-century frescoes, and Sant'Anna, built to serve the community that developed around the castle. After time for lunch, we take the ferry to the charming town of Lazise in the Veneto, where we have free time to explore its graceful maze of medieval streets. Rejoining our coach we continue to Verona where, after checking in, we meet for a talk in our hotel followed by dinner in a local restaurant. Overnight Verona (B, D)



Verona

Thursday 14 November

Roman & Medieval Verona

The city of Verona is full of ancient and medieval splendours and our exploration begins this morning at the Arena, one of the largest and best conserved amphitheatres in Italy, famed today for its perfect acoustics and spectacular opera productions. Our guided tour then takes us to the Roman entrance gates and on to the lovely Piazza delle Erbe, whose renaissance character belies its origins as the Roman forum. We also visit the impressive monuments to the Scaliger or Della Scala family, including the Arca degli Scaligeri which commemorates this family of warlords who transformed the city. The afternoon and evening are free for you to explore the city at leisure. Overnight Verona (B)

Friday 15 November

Valpolicella & San Zeno

The Veneto region has been renowned for its viticulture since antiquity and the area around Verona is one of Italy's most celebrated wine producing regions. In the lovely hilltop town of Sant'Ambrogio di Valpolicella, we visit the mediaeval Pieve di San Giorgio, an ancient parish church offering spectacular views over Lake Garda, then continue to one of the region's premier wineries where we enjoy lunch with a wine tasting of their famous Valpolicella. Returning to Verona we visit the graceful Basilica of San Zeno, one of the most beautiful and best-preserved examples of Romanesque architecture in Italy, adorned with medieval frescoes and an exceptional 15th-century altarpiece by Andrea Mantegna. The evening is at leisure. Overnight Verona (B, L)



Valpolicella

Saturday 16 November

The City of Palladio

Departing Verona we make our way to Vicenza, a city which became prosperous under rule of the Venetian Republic, investing its wealth in palazzi and villas, many of which were designed by the neoclassical architect Andrea Palladio. Following the ancient decumanus maximus to the stunning

Villa La Rotonda



Piazza dei Signori, our walking tour takes us to Palladio's Basilica Palladiana, then to his Palazzo Chiericati, the spectacular Teatro Olimpico and finally to the Church of Santa Corona. Here we can see a chapel attributed to Palladio and one of the most important altarpieces of the Italian Renaissance, Giovanni Bellini's *Baptism of Christ*. After lunch we visit Palladio's most significant building, the classically elegant Villa La Rotonda, before continuing to Padova. After checking in and time to freshen up, we then meet for a talk in our hotel followed by dinner in a local restaurant. Overnight Padova (B, D)

Sunday 17 November

Padova

Located in the heart of the Po Valley, Padova can claim two UNESCO World Heritage listings – one for having the oldest academic botanic garden in the world, and the second for its extraordinary collection of 14th-century fresco cycles, painted by different artists for different patrons but united in style and content. Today we visit Giotto's masterpiece, the breathtaking and influential Scrovegni Chapel, then continue to the Palazzo della Ragione, a medieval meeting hall whose interior is covered with a series of frescoes by 15th-century artists influenced by Giotto. After lunch we visit the Palazzo Bo, the historic centre of the University of Padova, and home to the one of the oldest anatomical theatres in the world, where Vesalius famously carried out public dissections. Returning to the hotel, the evening is at leisure. Overnight Padova (B)



Scrovegni Chapel

Monday 18 November

A City of Saints

This morning we visit the stunning Baptistery of Saint John, whose interior is brought gloriously alive by stunning 14th-century frescoes by Giusto de Menabuoi. A short walk away is the Basilica of Saint Anthony, patron saint of Padova, where we find bronze sculptures by Donatello, traces of an early fresco by Giotto and Altichiero da Zevio's extraordinary frescoes depicting the Crucifixion. We see more of Altichiero's frescoes at the exquisite Oratory of Saint George, though these have suffered indignities over time, including being whitewashed during the Napoleonic period. The afternoon and evening are free for you to explore the city at leisure. Overnight Padova (B)

Tuesday 19 November

Asolo & Prosecco

Departing Padova we take the long way to nearby Venice, stopping first at the lovely hilltop town of Asolo. The town's rich history includes its gifting to the former Queen of Cyprus, Caterina Cornaro, by the Republic of Venice in 1489 but it later found fame as the home of artists and writers including Robert Browning and Dame Freya Stark, the indomitable travel writer whose villa, complete with Roman remains, we visit. Continuing on to Maser, we stop for a light lunch complemented by a glass of Prosecco, the lightly sparkling wine produced in the



Asolo

HOTELS

Hotels have been selected principally for their central location. All hotels are excellent four-star standard.

Milan, Hotel Manin

(4 nights)

www.hotelmanin.it

Brescia, Centro Paolo VI

(3 nights)

www.paolovi.it

Verona, Hotel Indigo Verona

(3 nights)

www.ihg.com

Padova, Hotel Majestic Toscanelli

(3 nights)

www.toscanelli.com

Venice, Hotel Al Codega

(3 nights)

www.hotelalcodega.com

WEATHER

Although it is increasingly unpredictable, the weather in Northern Italy in November is brisk in the day and cold at night. It sometimes rains and is foggy at night in Lombardy near Milan. We advise you to bring a warm coat and rain gear.

FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

Grade Two

This tour is designed for people who lead active lives. You should be able to:

- comfortably participate in up to five hours of physical activity per day, including walking at a regular pace, sometimes on uneven terrain
- keep up with the group at all times
- negotiate challenging historic sites, which are often uneven
- negotiate stairs and bridges
- stand for one to two hours in galleries and museums at a time without a break
- get on and off a coach, train, ferry or boat with steep stairs unassisted

region. We also visit Palladio's elegant Villa Barbaro, decorated with stunning frescoes by Veronese, before continuing to our hotel in Venice. There is time to freshen up before we meet again for a talk in our hotel, followed by dinner in a local restaurant. Overnight Venice (B, L, D)

Wednesday 20 November

Public & Private Venice

This morning we make our way to the Piazza San Marco, the city's beautifully arcaded main square, meeting our local guide for a tour of the adjacent Doge's Palace, an extraordinary architectural confection combining Byzantine, Gothic and Renaissance elements. After time for lunch, we continue to the Church of San Zaccaria, where we see Bellini's beautiful altarpiece as well as works by Andrea del Castagno, Tiepolo and Tintoretto; then to San Giovanni in Bragora, where Vivaldi was baptised, and the Chiesa della Pietà, where concerts are still held in the church where the composer first created and performed his masterpieces. We have an early dinner this evening before a very special, private visit to the Basilica of Saint Mark. Overnight Venice (B, D)

Thursday 21 November

Games, Theatre & Religion

Our walking tour this morning takes us first to Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, a restrained building whose dazzling interior includes Titian's *Assumption of the Virgin* and a triptych by Bellini, as well as the tombs of Titian and the sculptor Canova. We continue to the Casino Venier, once a "private club" where the Venetian elite congregated to gamble and explore various vices, before we tour the Teatro La Fenice, the city's famous opera house and the site of many great operatic opening nights. In the afternoon, we visit the Basilica of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, filled with artwork and the tombs of 25 of Venice's Doges, then conclude the day at Santa Maria dei Miracoli, a little Renaissance jewel of a church on the canal. This evening we celebrate our time in Venice, and the last night of the tour, with a farewell dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight Venice (B, D)

Friday 22 November

Departure

Our tour ends after breakfast today. Please refer to your travel documents for onward arrangements. (B)



ENQUIRIES & BOOKINGS

For further information or to secure a place, please contact **Sharon Williams** on 9235 0023 (Sydney) or 1800 639 699 (outside Sydney) or email:

sharon@academytravel.com.au