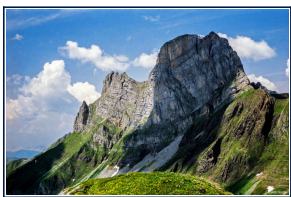




EUROPE - NORTHERN ITALY & SWITZERLAND - 11N/12D



ITINERARY

Day 1&2 : Lake Maggiore - sightseeing and attractions

Lake Maggiore has a stunning location with the Alps as a backdrop. Its setting is unique: the shores border Lombardy, Piedmont and Switzerland, and the top activities here are exploring the lake and the towns around it, as well as the lake's islands. Visit Stresa, a setting for Hemingway's 'A Farewell to Arms' and home to a stunning veilla. Explore the jewel-like Barromeian islands off the coast of Stresa. And, in Verbania, stop by the Villa Taranto, which has magnificent botanical gardens.



Day 3&4 : Lugano & Ticino - sightseeing and attractions

Lugano is a vivacious city with chic boutiques, bars and pavement cafes, huddling in the spaghetti maze of steep cobblestone streets that untangle at the end of the lake and along the flowery promenade. Stroll along the Lungalago -the lakefront promenade that twists along the shore of glassy Lago di Lugano, set against a backdrop of rugged mountains. See the Cherry Building - the Mario Botta office block that has a cherry tree planted on the roof and was designed by local artist, Mario Botta. And chomp in to some cocoa culture at the Museo del Cioccolato Alprose - a choc-crazy museum with some fascinating chocolate history.



Day 5&6 : Lake Como & Bellagio - sightseeing and attractions





The lake is shaped like an upside-down letter Y, and has a twisty shoreline that is scattered with villages including Bellagio. Lombard kings once took refuge from invaders on Isola Comancina, the sole island in this beguiling 146 sq km body of water. Head to Bellagio, one of the prettiest towns in Italy, with meandering cobblestone streets and romantic lakeside restaurants. Ferry to pristine villages nestled along the lake shore to visit lush gardens and elegant villas.

Day 7&8 : Lugano – sightseeing and attractions



Head to Bellinzona, capital of Ticino, to explore its picturesque Old Town and collection of castles. Climb one of the three peaks in the Lugano area, and walk along the promenade at Lugano, and take in as many museums as you can. Indulge in the local cuisine, which is earthy and centres on roasted game.

Day 9 : St. Moritz – sightseeing and attractions



St. Moritz is Switzerland's original winter wonderland and the cradle of Alpine tourism – it has been luring royals and celebrities since 1864. You will be taken in by its shimmering aquamarine lake, its emerald forests, and its aloof mountains. Stroll around the town and visit the Engadiner Museum, a reproduction of the traditional sgraffited home the museum has displays of furniture, tools and pottery in rooms that are decorated in styles from different periods.

Day 10&11 : Lucerne – sightseeing and attractions

Arrive in Lucerne whose waterfront is straddled by the picturesque Chapel Bridge, Europe's oldest. Enjoy the dramatic explosion of gilt, marble and baroque frescoes that is the Jesuit Church. And, towering over the city is the majestic Mount Pilatus – you can take a cable car or a cog railway up to the top of the mountain. Take a lake steamer cruise across pretty Lake Lucerne, and wander the city's Old Town that straddles the narrowed waters. Take a day tour to Engelberg in the Swiss Alps and a ride in a revolving cable car to the top of mighty Mount Titlis for some majestic views of ice boulders and crevasses. Get closer to the crevasses on the Ice Flyer chairlift and walk across Europe's highest suspension bridge for more spectacular views. Or relax on the sun terrace and have lunch overlooking the snow-capped peaks.

Day 12 : Zurich

Zurich is much more than a banking capital. From impressive churches to awesome art collections, the city has much to offer culturvultures. The Great Church is a 12thcentury structure with 18th-century updates - the core spans the Carolingian to Gothic styles with one modern touch - Giacometti's stained-glass window. The Stiftung Sammiung E.G Buhrie has a stunning array of Manets, Monets, and more (appointments only). And Zurich is a shopper's paradise - walk along the Bahnhofstrasse for high-end boutiques, or head for Niederdorf for the more trendy shops.