



Specially prepared program for the
Probus Club of Mississauga South

LAKE OF NORTHERN ITALY AND VENICE

SEPTEMBER 11 – 24, 2019

From Lake Garda, Italy's largest lake, to Lake Como, romantic Verona and fabled Venice, we welcome you to discover one of the most glamorous corners of Europe.



ITINERARY

DAY ONE / SEPT 11 / IN FLIGHT

Limousine pickup will be arranged from your home (within GTA area) to Pearson International Airport, for your direct flight to Venice.

Tentative flight schedule: Air Canada Rouge
Sept 11 / AC 1906 / Toronto – Venice / depart 7:00pm / arrive 9:10am on Sept 12

DAY TWO / SEPT 12 / ARRIVE IN VENICE, ITALY (D)

We have arrival at 9:10 am at “Marco Polo” Airport in Venice. We meet our coach and assistant before proceeding to the hotel for check in procedures and luggage drop off. Rooms will not be ready until later this afternoon. Free time for lunch on your own.

Early afternoon we meet our guide and walk to the pier to board a boat to take us to Murano Island for a tour of the island and glassblowing. Get an inside look into the centuries-old art of glass blowing with a factory tour on Murano Island, home to the world’s finest artisan glass. Tour the facilities at a famous Glass Factory and watch a master craftsman shape molten glass through a combination of heat, blowing and sculptural techniques. Visit the factory showroom to see beautiful finished works of art, and receive a special Murano glass souvenir to take home.

We return to Venice Island later this afternoon and spend the next two nights at the hotel Santa Maria Marina, located in the heart of Venice, on the island and just a short walk from the famous Rialto Bridge and St. Mark’s Square. This location is the ideal choice for discovering the most authentic Venice. Built on the ruins of an ancient convent, the Santa Marina Hotel Venezia, which is situated in the city’s district by the same name, features a beautiful terrace where guests can enjoy breakfast during the summer or relax while having drinks after a day spent visiting the city’s many architectural wonders. Here we enjoy comfortable rooms with irresistible charm, furnished in an original mix of styles that combine classic and contemporary details: quiet, romantic and all equipped with modern amenities, from satellite TV to free Wi Fi, making your stay in Venice a truly unique experience.

Welcome dinner at a local restaurant.

Accommodation: Hotel Santa Marina (2 nights)

DAY THREE / SEPT 13 / VENICE (B, D)

Breakfast at the hotel. At 9:30 am, meet your guide at the hotel for a 3-hour walking tour. St. Mark’s Square (Piazza San Marco), often referred to as “the drawing room of Europe,” is one of the most famous squares in Italy. Entrance fees are included for Doge’s Palace and the Basilica.

The geographic and cultural heart of Venice—with St. Mark’s Basilica and Doge’s Palace at one end, the campanile in the center, and the colonnaded arcade topped by the Procuratie palaces lining three sides—this elegant piazza is also steeped in history. We visit St. Mark’s Basilica, the crown jewel of Venice. This ornate cathedral blends elements of Gothic, Byzantine, Romanesque, and Renaissance architecture—testimony to the city’s political and economic dominance that spanned centuries. Topped by soaring domes and with an interior of astonishing golden mosaics, the church is so opulent it is known as the Chiesa d’Oro, or the Golden Church. Construction began in 828, when the body of St. Mark was smuggled back to Venice from Alexandria; the church has been rebuilt, expanded, and delicately restored over the centuries.

The Palace of Doges is a significant historical site in Venice, once the private chapel of the Doges, admire the many paintings by Titian, Tintoretto, and Veronese, and climb the narrow staircases to visit the Doge’s apartments and the prison cells, as well as the ducal notary. Outside the palace is the Bridge of Sighs and the beautiful columns along the piazzetta.



Venice – Burano Island



Venice – Tower Trevisan Noale



St. Mark's Basilica



Verona - Lazise on Lake Garda



Caves of Catullo, Sirmione, Lake Garda

As part of our walking tour, we visit the Rialto, one of the most famous landmark bridges in Europe, a popular and crowded Venice attraction connecting the San Marco district, home of St. Mark's Square, to the San Polo district, where Venice's famous fish market has stood for 700 years. The bridge is visited on nearly every walking tour through the "Floating City".

Settle in at one of the many coveted café tables and watch tourists (and pigeons) pose for photos while you sip a Bellini and soak in the square's Renaissance splendour and enjoy a leisurely lunch. Free time this afternoon to explore on your own.

Ah, the gondolas of Venice. Is there a more iconic symbol of this romantic city than the boats that take young lovers (and not-so-young lovers) through its many canals? What is a Venetian Gondola? While gondolas were once regularly used by Venetians, especially of the upper classes, today vaporetti have become the main form of water transportation in Venice. A couple hundred years ago there were about 10,000 gondolas but today there are only about 500. A gondola is flat and made of wood. Its 11 meters long, weighs 600 kg and is hand built in special workshops called squeri of which there are still a few today.

We have a 30 minute ride at sunset this evening (max 6 per boat). Following our gondola ride, dinner at a local restaurant.

DAY FOUR / SEPT 14 / VENICE – VERONA – LAKE GARDA (B, D)

Say farewell to Venice as we transfer by boat to Tronchetto then continue on by coach to Lake Garda. We wind our way through cypress clad hills to Verona – a city of Roman ruins, medieval buildings, Italian culture and the setting for Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. Our guided tour will show us Juliet's balcony and Verona's great Roman Arena – still used as an open-air opera house. There will be free time to explore after our tour and to have a relaxing lunch. Our destination today is Lake Garda. The beautiful surroundings of the Italian Lakes region have inspired artists and writers for centuries. Here every view and feeling is different... there are snow-capped mountains, stunning colourful buildings, welcoming bars with unbelievable food, swans, imposing castles, serene chapels, flamenco dancing and all the time, this seemingly endless azure stretch of fresh water, dancing at your feet. Just steps from Lake Garda, you find our home for the next four nights in the town of Desenzano del Garda.

Dinner included this evening.

Accommodation: Hotel Palace Desenzano (4 nights)

DAY FIVE / SEPT 15 / SIRMIONE (B, L)

After breakfast, we will take a short ferry ride across the lake to picturesque Sirmione. The town is situated on a thin peninsula jutting into the lake, and has narrow winding lanes and lovely pedestrian-only piazzas. Our walking tour will show us the castle surrounded by a large water-filled moat that dominates the Old Quarter of town and offers beautiful views over the lake from the ramparts.

We have a joint ticket to see the well cared for ancient ruins here and the Catullo Grotto's amazing view of Lake Garda as well as access to the little electric train as it is uphill to the entrance. This was the villa of a very wealthy noble and was built shortly after the year 70 CE. It was an immense structure three stories high and sits right on the lake. The views are impressive. Although there isn't anything left of the above-ground structure, the ruins of the grand entry-way and the basement and horse stalls are very interesting. There is an olive grove where the center common area used to be and you can still see the cistern and the swimmingpool with its heating vents. It's great to wander around this impressive ruin without having to drive down to Rome and beyond.

Lunch included today in a typical restaurant followed by time to explore at leisure. We return to our hotel in the afternoon.



Brescia – Salò, Lake Garda

DAY SIX / SEPT 16 / LAKE GARDA (B, L)

Exploring the western shore of Lake Garda as we head to Malcesine, a wonderful little town on the lake. Here a castle sits on a craggy prominence and one can get a good view of the lake from the top of the tower. The first castle built here was in the late 700s as part of Charlemagne's empire. We admire the panorama of Lake Garda from the Malcesine cable car, with its rotating cabins, as it climbs 1800 m up to the top of Monte Baldo. The ascent to Monte Baldo with the cable car is very attractive thanks to the cabin of the second stretch which turns 360 degrees during the ride. The landscape seen from the cabin is just amazing. Time for lunch (allowance provided by Tour Design) after our ride up Monte Baldo.

Web suggests – take a warm jacket as temp drops on mountain top – Views are fabulous – the Monte Baldo is the only one in Europe with a fully rotating cable car gondola – views are spectacular and will stay in your memory.

Then we drive to Riva Del Garda, a bustling Italian town located at the northern end of Lake Garda. This is the dramatic end of the lake, with mountains rising on both sides, and Riva sitting comfortably on the shore, with a backdrop of lake, valley and hills. The town was part of Austria until 1918 and there is still something sedate and un-Italian about the streets and architecture. After Desenzano, Riva is the second-largest town on Lake Garda, and it has a very different atmosphere from the other lake resorts: simultaneously alive yet staid. One of Riva's most striking buildings is the Torre Apponale, a tall clock-tower which dates to the thirteenth century. It looks down on Piazza III Novembre, the heart of town. The northern end of the lake is incredibly popular with windsurfers, who take advantage of the strong wind systems caused by the mountains and water. Opposite the waterfront there is a chain of cafes where you can indulge in that classic Lake Garda activity: sitting with an ice-cream or drink and watching the world go by.



Brescia – Lake Iseo

DAY SEVEN / SEPT 17 / LAKE ISEO (B, L)

Today we explore nearby Lake Iseo, Italy's last hidden gem. We will cruise the islands and enjoy some free time in the town of Iseo. Lake Iseo is one of the least known Lombard lakes. Shut in by soaring mountains, it's a magnificent sight.

In the middle of the lake is Monte Isola within easy access via the regular running lake ferry. Monte Isola is, as the name implies, a mountain on an island. One of "The most beautiful villages in Italy", Monte Isola is the largest inhabited lake island in Europe. It covers an area of 4.5 square km, a perimeter of 9 km and a height of 600 meters. There are 12 settlements scattered along the slopes and on the shore, connected by narrow streets used by the local council bus and motorcycles. Cars are banned on the island. The island is a special place for the Artisan production of Boats and Nets.

Allowance provided by Tour Design for you to have lunch on your own.

From here we proceed to the Franciacorta wine region, a charming area of vineyards on picturesque hills. A visit of a local winery is included with wine tasting. Like its Gallic inspiration, Franciacorta is made with the same methods as champagne (albeit with different grapes). Franciacorta's landlocked Alpine climate and glacially gouged soil produce distinct sparkling wines.



Como – Villa d'Este in Cernobbio, Lake Como

DAY EIGHT / SEPT 18 / LAKE GARDA – BERGAMO – LAKE COMO (B, D)

Breakfast. Then we depart by private bus to Lake Como. This morning brings us to Bergamo.

A great place to start an exploration of Bergamo is Piazza Vecchia, the heart and center of Città Alta, the medieval part of the city, which sits on a hill above the rest of town. For nearly 400 years, starting in the early 15th century, Bergamo was part of the Republic of Venice; it was the Venetians who built the stone walls around Città Alta. And indeed, the areas around the square look distinctly medieval, with narrow and winding cobblestone streets.

We visit the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, a 12th-century church with a stunningly ornate interior. Following a leisurely lunch, we wander to Palazzo Terzi, one of the city's several small palaces dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries. The palace is perched gracefully on the side of a hill overlooking the surrounding plains. When the writer Hermann Hesse visited Bergamo in 1913, he called the palazzo and the square that surrounds it "the most beautiful corner of Italy. It hasn't lost any of its loveliness in the years since."

We continue on to Como where we spend the next 4 nights at the Hotel Palace.

Dinner included this evening.

Accommodation: Hotel Palace (4 nights)



Lake Lugano in Porlezza

DAY NINE / SEPT 19 / CAMPIONE D'ITALIA / LUGANO (B, D)

Breakfast at your hotel. We meet our coach and guide and depart for a full day tour to Lugano, Switzerland.

Italian-speaking Lugano is tucked into the southernmost point of Switzerland, sprawled around the waterfront of Lake Lugano a stone's throw from the Italian border. The standout attraction of our guided tour is undoubtedly the simple, Romanesque church of Santa Maria degli Angioli; its interior is swathed in masterpiece frescoes of "The Passion and Crucifixion of Christ" by Renaissance master Bernardino Luini, and this Fresco covers the entire wall of the Nave.

After the tour, you will have some free time in for lunch and shopping on your own. You might enjoy a stroll along Lugano's leafy waterside promenade that extends the length of the city and provides breathtaking views across the sparkling lake to the mountain

In the late afternoon, we return to Como.

Dinner included at our hotel this evening.



Tremezzo – Villa Carlotta

DAY TEN / SEPT 20 / TREMEZZO / BELLAGIO (B, D)

After breakfast, at 9:15 am, meet your guide and bus at the hotel travelling to Tremezzo. Along the way you will stop in a couple of panoramic sites to take some pictures. Arrive in Tremezzo and visit Villa Carlotta (entrance included) and its masterpieces and gardens. Then take a short cruise by public ferry from Tremezzo / Cadenabbia to Bellagio. Free time for lunch.

Bellagio is known as the "Pearl of Lake Como". Few places are as romantic as Lake Como, and even fewer resorts as beautiful as Bellagio. The village is characterized by century-old buildings, stone lanes and picturesque cobbled stairways filled with shops showcasing the finest Italian wares.

After lunch your guide will take us, at 2:00 pm follow your guide for a short visit of the town centre then visit Villa Melzi d'Eril (entrance included). Return to Tremezzo by ferry and then by bus again to Como. The excursions end at about 5:30 pm. Dinner at hotel or local restaurant.



Verbania – Belgirate, Lake Maggiore



Panorama in Pigra, Lake Como



Milan

DAY ELEVEN / SEPT 21 / STRESA / LAKE MAGGIORE (B, L)

Breakfast at your hotel. Followed by a full day guided excursion to Stresa, where we meet your English speaking local guide for a half-day sightseeing tour on Lake Maggiore: you will visit Stresa, and then take a round-trip by boat to Isola Bella

Looking across from Stresa to Isola Bella today, it is hard to believe it was once a rocky island, home to a small community of fishermen. In 1630 Carlo III Borromeo took the first steps to changing the island. Carlo also decided to name the island after his wife, Isabella D'Adda, and it became known as Isola Isabella (later to be shortened to Isola Bella). In spite of Carlo's plans it was to be his sons, Vitaliano VI Borromeo and cardinal Giberto III Borromeo who really transformed Isola Bella. Their vision was that Isola Bella should appear to be a ship sailing across the lake. Visiting the palace today we will find sumptuous rooms filled with paintings and ornate furniture. Particular highlights of the palace are the domed "Salone delle Feste" (Party Room), the "Sala da Ballo" (Ballroom), the "Sala delta Musica" (Music Room) which houses valuable musical instruments and the six grottoes. After visiting the palace we will enter the spectacular gardens which are on ten terraces and include an open air theatre which has statues depicting the four elements. In the English style garden, the "Giardino dei Fiori" we will find lotus flowers. At the highest point of the garden we will see a great unicorn which is the symbol of the Borromeo family.

Entrance tickets to the Borromeo Palace on Isola Bella are included as well as lunch at local restaurant on Isola dei Pescatori.

Return to Como for the night.

DAY TWELVE / SEPT 22 / LAKE COMO – MILAN (B, D)

Farewell to the lakes of Northern Italy as we move to Milan where we start our guided tour with a leisurely stroll through Milan's city centre. Soak up the city's history as we see the Sforza Castle, (outside only) former residence of the Duke's family, La Scala Opera House, (outside only), one of the most famous theatres of the world and the celebrated Duomo of Milan, Italy's largest Cathedral. (entrance tickets are included). To complete our experience today we visit the convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie to see one of the greatest masterpieces in the world – The Last Supper, painted by Leonardo da Vinci on the refectory wall. (entrance tickets are included) Enjoy the view of this fragile but astonishing painting.

Accommodation: Hotel Visconti Palace (2 nights)

DAY THIRTEEN / SEPT 23 / MILAN (B, D)

Breakfast is included this morning. Milan is well known for the pure pleasure of shopping at Fidenza Village. A relaxed paradise of boutiques, spacious boulevards, attentive service and a friendly, unhurried atmosphere combine to offer a truly unique retail experience. There are more than 100 national and international fashion boutiques and as a non-European citizen, shopping in is tax-free. There is so much to enjoy here, whether it's browsing the stores for great-value buys, or sampling fine food and drink in the Village's cafes and restaurants. You will spend the morning shopping at Fidenza Village (return transfer included). Free time for lunch at Fidenza then return to your hotel.

In the evening you will enjoy a farewell dinner in the Navigli area. We will be visiting the recently restored Darsena and Naviglio districts. This is the area of the ancient dock of Milan and the Canal of Pavia. Here in the 600's – was organized a large port berthing of boats traveling along the canals of Milan, which remained active until the 60s of the last century. The "Darsena" (the dock) is located in "Porta Ticinese" and today it is a nice area to walk or eat, a small lake in the center of the city, a witness of the water past of Milan. Then return to your hotel.



Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, Milan

DAY FOURTEEN / SEPT 24 / DEPART MILAN (B)

After breakfast you will be transferred to Malpensa Airport for your departure flight.

Transportation: Air Canada

Tentative flight schedule: Sept 24 / AC 895 / Milan – Toronto / depart 12:10pm / arrive 3:00pm

END OF TOUR

B – breakfast, L – lunch, D – dinner

MAP



PRICING & TERMS

PACKAGE RATE (CAD\$, PER PERSON):

CAD \$6,995 per person based on double occupancy
CAD \$9,235 per person based on single occupancy

INCLUSIONS:

- Roundtrip flights from Toronto to Venice and Milan to Toronto
- Home pickup and drop off (within GTA area)
- 12 nights accommodation at hotels with daily breakfast
- 2 lunches and 8 dinners as per itinerary including water, coffee/tea, and 1 glass of wine
- 2 lunch allowances provided by Tour Design
- Tours and transfers as per itinerary
- Headsets during all guided visits
- English speaking local tour leader for the whole duration of the program in Italy
- Porterage at hotel wherever available (1 piece of luggage per person)
- All gratuities included for included meals, local Tour Managers, guides and drivers

EXCLUSIONS:

- Airport departure taxes. Currently \$630 per person
- Meals not included in the itinerary
- Optional travel insurance

AIR CREDIT:

If you wish to arrange your own air from Toronto to Venice and Milan to Toronto, an air credit of CAD \$400 per person will be deducted from the tour cost.

Please contact us for air deviation, premium economy or business class upgrade surcharges.

SPECIAL NOTE:

- Names provided at time of booking MUST match exactly your passport
- You must have a passport valid for at least 6 months after your return date
- If you wish to purchase optional travel insurance with us, it MUST be purchase prior to final payment date. Please contact us for a quotation.

DEPOSIT AND PAYMENT:

At time of booking:	\$750 per person
Second deposit:	\$750 per person due March 08, 2019
Final payment:	remaining balance due June 07, 2019

CANCELLATION TERMS:

Between time of booking & Mar 07, 2019:	\$750 per person
Between Mar 08 & Jun 06, 2019:	\$1,500 per person
Between Jun 07, 2019 & date of departure:	100% of total cost

PROGRAM DESIGNED IN CONJUNCTION WITH NEAL BLACK,

International Travel for Probus Club of Mississauga South.

Email: neal@jooey.com or call 905-279-9175.

To book this program, please complete the Booking Form and email, mail or fax to Tour Design.

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