

THE **TRAVEL CLUB**

Pre-Departure Itinerary **Swiss & Italian Charm** *Saturday, September 22- Sunday, September 30, 2012*

In Northern Italy's Lombardy province, where the Alps give way to Switzerland, you'll discover deepwater blue lakes, smart resort towns, ancient villages, fortified castles and lush gardens. For the first time, The Travel Club offers this delightful combination of Italian and Swiss charm. In **Baveno**, a popular resort on Lake **Maggiore** flanked by cypress trees, dotted with villas and beloved by Winston Churchill and Queen Victoria, you'll enjoy accommodations directly on the lakefront in a converted 18th-century villa. During excursions to **Isola Bella**, quiet and secluded **Lake Orta** and romantic **Bellagio** on **Lake Como**, you'll visit elegant palaces, terraced gardens and cobblestoned medieval squares while wandering along lakeside promenades. You'll have some time to browse along the famous **Via Nassa** in **Lugano**, Switzerland, see the highlights of Milan in a half-day tour and visit **Castello Masnago**, a castle-cum-art museum featuring architecture from the 12th–15th centuries, amazing frescoes as well as contemporary art. The highlight of this holiday may be the full-day excursion to three jewels of Alpine Switzerland: **Ascona**, with its charming old town and promenade overlooking Lake Maggiore; **Locarno**, which boasts the warmest climate in Switzerland, flourishing palm and lemon trees and a 12th-century castle; and **Bellinzona**, the “most Italian Swiss town” with picturesque squares and courtyards and a trio of castles listed with UNESCO

Includes

- Round-trip regularly scheduled Air France flights from Boston to Milan via Paris
- Seven nights' three--star accommodations Hotel Romagna, Baveno
- Fourteen meals: seven buffet breakfasts, seven dinners with wine
- Escorted round-trip, private airport/hotel transfers
- Services of professional local Tour Manager

Features

- Boat trip to Isola Bella and Palazzo Borromeo
- Excursion to Lake Orta
- Full-day excursion to Lake Como
- Full-day excursion to Lugano and Castello Masnago in Varese
- Wine tasting and snack at Cantina Bianchi
- Half-day tour of Milan
- Full-day excursion to Ascona, Locarno and Bellinzona

Rates

\$2,334 per person double occupancy

\$2,654 for single reservations

Includes \$375 fuel surcharge.

Triple accommodations may be available upon request. Add \$125 for air taxes and fees. Fuel surcharge, taxes and fees subject to change.

Passport required. Per person deposit is \$300.

DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1: Overnight Flight

Depart from Boston this evening on Air Frances. Dinner is served aloft along while crossing the Atlantic. Relax and enjoy in-flight entertainment.

Day 2: Arrive Paris– connecting flight to Milan – transfer to Lake Maggiore

Continental breakfast will be served on board before landing. You will clear immigration and proceed to your domestic flight to Milan. Upon arrival, you clear customs and meet your professional Tour Manager who will escort you to the Hotel Romagna in Lake Maggiore. After check-in and room assignments you'll have the balance of the afternoon to relax and get settled. In the evening you'll get acquainted over dinner at the hotel. **(D)**

Day 3: Lake Maggiore

After breakfast you'll depart for a full day excursion of Lake Maggiore. Nestled against the breathtaking beauty of the Swiss Alps, Lake Maggiore is known for its serenity and an abundance of flora and fauna. Enjoy a relaxing boat trip to Isola Bella, one of the famous Borromean Islands in the centre of the lake, to visit the exuberant Palazzo Borromeo. Dating back to the 17th century, this elegant palace boasts an array of spectacular fountains, imposing statues and landscaped, terraced gardens that gently cascade down to the tranquil waters of the lake. Return to the hotel in the late afternoon for dinner and overnight. **(B, D)**

Day 4: Lake Orta

Enjoy breakfast before you depart for an excursion to Lake Orta, one of Italy's best-kept secrets – an unspoiled gem that is quieter than nearby Maggiore. The lovely lakeside villages and surrounding green hills provide a truly romantic setting. The medieval centre of Orta town has pretty, cobbled streets and tucked away cafes and trattorias. A beautiful main square overlooks the ancient monastery on the island of San Giulio. This is a place to relax and enjoy the peace and tranquility of the lakes. Before returning to the hotel, stop at the Cantina Bianchi for a snack and wine tasting. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. **(B,D)**

Day 5: Lake Como

After breakfast at the hotel you'll experience one of the highlights of your vacation - a full-day trip to Lake Como. In Como you board a sightseeing boat and enjoy a trip across the wonderful lake passing many quaint villages and sumptuous villas. You will disembark in Bellagio. The town of Bellagio has been called the most beautiful town in Italy. With a promenade planted with oleanders and limes, fin-de-siècle hotels painted shades of butterscotch, peach and cream, and a hilly old quarter of steep cobbled streets and alleyways – to say nothing of its spectacular mid-lake location – it's easy to see why Bellagio has become so popular. Enjoy free time and lunch on your own before returning by boat to Como. After some free time in Como you'll return to the hotel for dinner and overnight. **(B, D)**

Day 6: Lugano, Switzerland

Today's excursion is to Lugano the biggest city in Ticino, the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland. It lies on Lake Lugano, and is surrounded by mountains. The Italian border lies about 8 km (5 miles) from the centre of town. Thanks to its surrounding mountains and the lake, and the fact that its situated south of the Alps gives it a milder climate than most of Switzerland. Lugano is a popular holiday destination, and tourism is an important source of income. You will have time to shop on the Via Nassa which is the most popular shopping street found right in the heart of Lugano. It offers a fantastic range of shops from famous fashion designer boutiques to delicatessens and bakeries. On the return ride you will have a stop at Varese to visit the "Castello Masnago" a castle-cum-art-museum featuring architecture from several different centuries. Each part of the castle corresponds to a different century from the 12th and 15th. The castle also houses a Contemporary Art Gallery featuring donated paints from the most well-known Italian Families. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. **(B, D)**

Day 7: Milan

Depart the hotel for Milan s a historic city, with a spectacular cathedral and enough ancient churches and galleries to keep you busy for a week, but there are also bars and cafés to relax in, and the contemporary aspects of the place represent the leading edge of Italy's fashion and design industry. In the morning enjoy a guided tour then have the afternoon at leisure. Return to the hotel for dinner and overnight. **(B, D)**

Day 8: Ascona, Locarno & Bellinzona

A full day excursion is in store for you today. You will visit the three jewels of Switzerland: Ascona, Locarno and Bellinzona. Ascona is famous for its Old Town and “Ronco sopra Ascona” one of the most delightful places overlooking Lake Maggiore, with an enchanting panorama of the lake and mountains and a picturesque footpath with over 800 steps leading down to the lakeside. Next is a visit to Locarno—the town with the warmest climate in Switzerland. It is located on the northern shore of Lago Maggiore. Southern plants such as palm trees or lemon trees flourish in Locarno and give the city special charm. Bellinzona is famous for preserved medieval castles that are listed on the UNESCO World Heritage and considered amongst the finest examples of medieval fortification architecture in Switzerland. Return to the hotel for dinner and overnight. **(B, D)**

Day 9: Return to Boston

Depart this morning by motor coach for the Milan airport for your return flight to Boston via Paris. **(B)**

Proof of Citizenship: *US citizens require a passport with at least six months' validity for entry into Europe. Passports are the responsibility of the traveler.*

PLEASE NOTE: *This pre-departure itinerary is designed to give you an idea of how this itinerary is structured. We reserve the right to make any changes to your final itinerary if deemed necessary, at any time prior to departure.*

PLEASE NOTE: *This is not your final itinerary. You will receive final documents (itinerary, tickets (if applicable), etc.) approximately 2–3 weeks prior to departure. Although we try our best to ensure that information is accurate at the time of publication, we are not responsible for any error, omission, misprint or liability that results from the use (or misuse) of this information.*