

Lombardy

Castello di Grumello winery

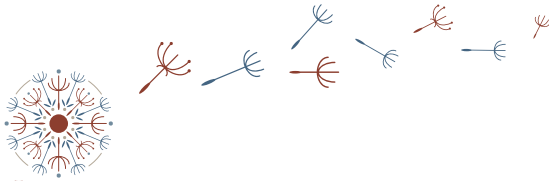


## Essence of Lombardy

While Lombardy is famous for its glittering lakes, it has much more to offer and much that's missed by the tourists who rush to its Lakes Garda, Como and Maggiore. Among them are quiet cobbled towns, quaint villages, trattorias serving age-old recipes, and the valleys of the Bergamasque Pre-Alps, where meadows and woods reign.

This tour casts the spotlight on this largely undiscovered corner of northern Italy: unfurling Lombardy's history, charms and rich cuisine over seven rewarding days. Based in Rota d'Imagna, time is spent exploring medieval jewels like Bergamo, sampling home-made delicacies and wines at family-run farms, discovering peaceful Lake Iseo, and enjoying a personal demonstration of local pasta-making from a master – your hotel owner, Giampiero and his mama!





## Where is Lombardy?



## Where are we staying?

### Miramonti Resort Hotel & Spa

★★★★  
Rota d'Imagna

This privately run 4-star hotel combines sweeping views over the Valle Imagna with top-notch service and a traditionally inviting Lombardian welcome. Set in the hillside village of Rota d'Imagna in the Bergamasque Pre-Alps, the hotel's family owners are passionate about ensuring guests enjoy a relaxed stay filled with warmth and hospitality, and connected with the local community.

The hotel's commitment to sustainable tourism is showcased in its restaurant, which serves excellent regional cuisine crafted using only local ingredients, so supporting the valley's farmers and producers. Most of the comfortable and spacious rooms benefit from a private balcony with valley views, while all feature a private bathroom, LCD TV, safe, minibar, Wi-Fi, and thoughtful touches like bathrobes. An undoubted highlight of the hotel is the stunning spa (additional charge), which offers a luxurious indoor pool extending outdoors onto a beautiful terrace ideal for unwinding and enjoying the surrounding panoramas.



# What are we doing each day?

## Day 1 Fly to Milan

On arrival we meet our tour manager and transfer to our hotel, the 4-star Miramonti Resort & Spa, in Rota d'Imagna - our base for six nights. On the way, we visit Cascina Carretto, an agritourism estate run by the Lamberti family. Sample some of the wines produced here alongside a delicious lunch. Once at our hotel, we enjoy a prosecco or non-alcoholic drink as a welcome followed by dinner in the hotel restaurant.

**Meals included: Lunch, Dinner**

## Day 2 Lombardy

Today we set our sights on both Lombardy's Imagna Valley, an oasis of green in the Alpine foothills which is rich in history, art, culture, and culinary tradition and Val Brembana, a picturesque region nestled in the Orobie Alps. We visit San Pellegrino, a gem of Val Brembana, a renowned town nestled along the Brembo River, world-famous for its water, the celebrated San Pellegrino brand. But San Pellegrino is much more than its water: it is a place rich in history, architecture and charm. We then experience a fabulous, authentic lunch at an historic eatery which specialises in using local ingredients to recreate ancient regional recipes. This evening we will enjoy a light dinner in the hotel restaurant.

**Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

## Day 3 Lake Iseo

Lake Iseo, north Italy's fourth-biggest lake and one of Lombardy's hidden gems is our focus today. Often overlooked by tourists, this idyllic, mountain-ringed lake is hemmed with medieval villages. We arrive in Sulzano for a brief time to enjoy a coffee and stroll before we embark on our private boat for a cruise along the lake with a stop in Monte Isola with some free time to explore and marvel at the wonderful views. We then cruise into Iseo, whilst viewing its impressive harbourfront and historic centre. Once we disembark, they'll be plenty of time at leisure to perhaps browse its market, enjoy a relaxing lunch and explore its narrow, cobbled streets filled with cafés, gelaterias and artisan shops. This evening we enjoy dinner in the hotel restaurant.

**Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner**

## Day 4 Brescia

A visit to Brescia awaits today. This underrated city bristles with artistic and archaeological treasures, including elegant piazzas, Venetian villas, Roman ruins, an 8th century monastery, two cathedrals, an astronomical clock and captivating museums. We discover the main sights and learn how this lovely place was recently honoured as a European Region of Gastronomy – a sure sign of quality of its cuisine. We then continue to the Redaelli de Zinis, a farm-winery in the Valtenesi hills, where we enjoy a wine-tasting session accompanied by a local earth to plate lunch and explanations of local history and prosecco-making. This evening we enjoy dinner in the hotel restaurant.

**Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

## Day 5 Bergamo

We travel to Bergamo for another day of discovery. This bustling city has a historic hilltop core divided from its lower city by Venetian walls that command spectacular views, and was named Italy's cultural capital in 2023. A guided walking tour of this Città Alta sees us wind through the cobblestoned streets to view its medieval houses, atmospheric churches, and picturesque piazzas, together with its fine museums and galleries. This afternoon, we delve deeper into the heart of Lombardy by tasting a selection of the region's most distinctive wines at Castello di Grumello. This evening we enjoy dinner in the hotel restaurant.

**Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner**

## Day 6 Cornabusa Sanctuary & Pasta-Making Demonstration

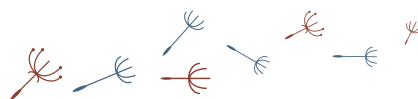
We begin with a visit to the pretty commune of Sant' Omobono for a morning stroll around the local shops before heading to the impressive and totally unique Cornabusa Sanctuary, a spiritual refuge inside a mountain cave. We then return to the hotel where we can perhaps enjoy the spa and swimming pool or sample the sights of pretty Rota d'Imagna independently. Later, we attend a cooking demonstration by our hotel owner Giampiero and his Mama, who shows us the techniques behind the region's beloved casoncelli – a generations-old sweet and savoury stuffed pasta redolent of Imagna's earthy home-cooking! This evening we enjoy dinner in the hotel.

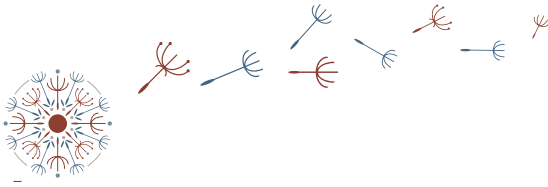
**Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner**

## Day 7 Departure

After breakfast, we begin our journey back to Milan airport, stopping en route in Stresa, a resort town on stunning Lake Maggiore. We'll enjoy an authentic farewell lunch before continuing to the airport to catch our return flight to the UK.

**Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch**





## Our handpicked highlights

### If it isn't included, it isn't worth it

- Relax in the lush Valle Imagna, a secret valley in the hills between Bergamo and Como
- Visit cobbled Bergamo and historic Brescia, Italy's joint Capitals of Culture 2023
- Dip into tiny rustic villages to see wonders like the mystical Cornabusa Sanctuary cave church
- Savour the spoils of Lombardy with wine and food tastings at hand-picked agritourism farms and wineries
- Enjoy authentic lunch at a superb village trattoria renowned for its local fare
- Enjoy a truly special culinary experience: learning to make local casoncelli pasta from hotel owner Giampiero



## Some of our unique artisan experiences

Immerse yourself into the centuries-old traditions, sustainable way of living and delicious cuisine of Lombardy on our 6-night Essence of Lombardy small group tour. Known for its high-quality ingredients and unique regional dishes, we introduce you to some authentic culinary experiences. The perfect way to get under the skin of this off the beaten track destination.



### Wine & lunch at Cascina Caretto

We enjoy a special Italian family atmosphere, as three generations host us at a relaxed Sunday lunch at a converted 17th century farmhouse surrounded by vineyards. The 25-hectare wine and agritourism estate set against the verdant Lombardy countryside is now run by Maria, Claudia, Francesco and Cristiana Lamberti who have a passion for cultivation and sustainability. Savour a mouth-watering lunch served with the finest wines like Franciacorta DOCG and Curtefranca red and whites.



### Cornabusa Cave Sanctuary

A spiritual experience, we immerse ourselves in the mystical wonder of this enchanting shrine carved out of a natural cave on the slopes of Monte Albenza, originating in the 1300s. Atmospheric and often candle-lit, for centuries, it has been a spiritual refuge for thousands of pilgrims. Pope John XXIII visited frequently and the room he stayed in can be visited along with a fascinating museum including inscriptions left by pilgrims as thanks. Afterwards, we enjoy local wines and cheeses in the small café and have time to take in panoramic views overlooking the Valley.



### Pasta making with Giampiero

Our home for our holiday, the family-run four star rated Miramonti Resort Hotel & Spa, is the perfect place for us to try our hand at making home-made pasta in the hotel's truly authentic kitchen. Hotel owner Giampiero is on hand to offer a little encouragement as we learn how to make the half-moon shaped ravioli of casoncelli, Lombardy's famed and traditional pasta dish. All helped along with a glass of delicious local wine. Just one of the wonderful experiences on our authentic journey through Lombardy.