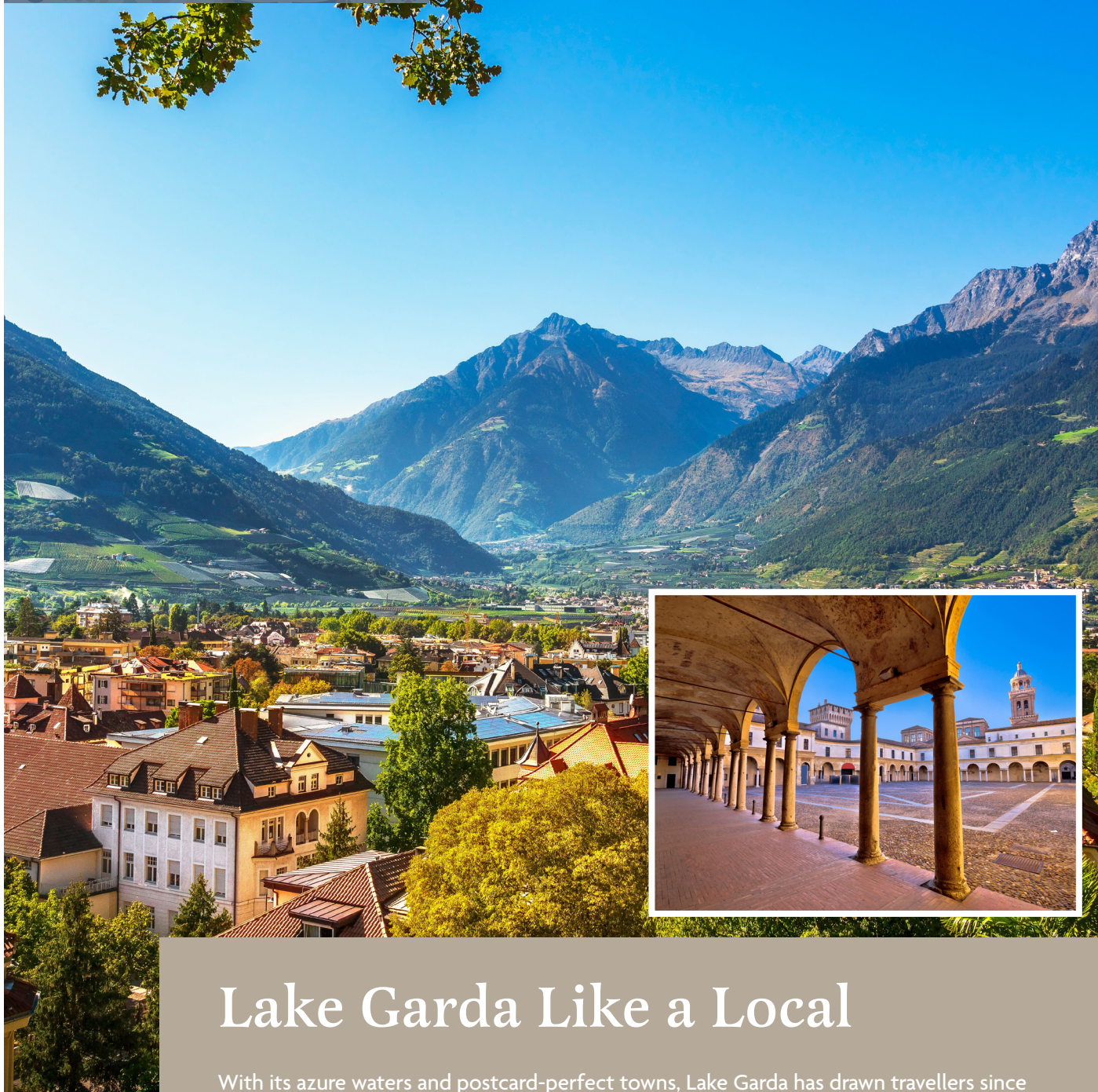


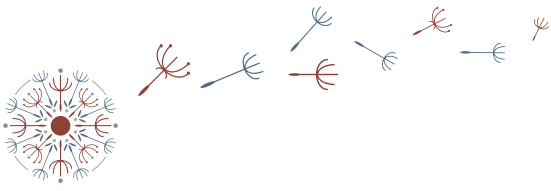
6 Nights Inclusive
From £1745 per person



Lake Garda Like a Local

With its azure waters and postcard-perfect towns, Lake Garda has drawn travellers since Roman times. Yet while visitors flock to lakeside towns like Sirmione and Malcesine, Garda's southwestern Valtènesi region is less-known and quieter. Here, charming villages and towns like Salò melt into sunny, green hills and traditional wineries and olive oil estates run by the same families for generations.

Based in the village of Montinelle, our 6 or 7 night tours uncover the hidden gems, forgotten history and hearty menus of this lovely area. We explore unsung cities like Mantova, discover the Tyrolean jewel of Merano, and taste fruity wines at Tuscan-like estates - all interspersed with flavourful north-Italian 'cucina' in simple, hand-picked trattorias.



Handpicked Highlights

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

- Unpack and relax: stay six or seven nights at the 4-star Splendid Sole in little-known Montinelle in Lake Garda's charming Valtènesi region
- Explore the morainic hills behind the lake where Italy's Second War of Independence took place and the Red Cross was born
- Tour the enchanting cities of lake-framed Mantova and Cremona, home to Stradivarius' violins
- Discover the handsome lakeside town of Salo, a headquarters for Mussolini in the last days of World War II
- Visit two wineries, including the Tuscan-like Cantina Redaelli De Zinis, to enjoy delicious wine tastings
- Experience the South Tyrolean spa town of Merano: bringing an Austrian twist to your Garda discoveries
- Feast on fresh, typically Lombardian specialities at simple, authentic trattorias favoured by locals



Cremona



Salo

Hotel Splendid Sole

★★★★

Manerba del Garda

Set in Manerba del Garda about 800 metres from Lake Garda's shores, the 4-star Splendid Sole overlooks olive groves near the scenic Rocco di Manerba promontory. Run by a local family dedicated to creating a relaxing and welcoming retreat, the hotel pays particular attention to eco-sustainability and enabling guests to feel at one with the beautiful natural surroundings of the lake and Valtènesi.

Guests can take advantage of an impressive array of amenities, including a seasonal outdoor swimming pool and spa with an indoor pool, whirlpool, sauna and wellness treatments. A contemporary lobby, bar with alfresco terrace and an appealing restaurant, where buffet breakfasts of fresh local produce like homemade cakes and breads are served, complete the attractions. The air-conditioned rooms offer soft tones ideal for relaxing, a balcony or terrace overlooking the olive groves, a private bathroom with shower, and flatscreen TV, safe and minibar.



DEPARTURE DATES

5 October 2024 (6 nights) 2 April 2025 (7 nights)

PRICE INCLUDES

Return flights London Heathrow
Fully escorted holiday
Meals as stated in itinerary
All Handpicked Highlights listed above

Contact your local travel agent

Your Day to Day Itinerary

Day 1 Arrive in Lake Garda

We fly to Milan and travel to the quiet village of Montinelle in Manerba del Garda, in the heart of Lake Garda's beautiful Valtènesi region. After stopping en route for a generous lunch served with wine, we check in at the 4-star Splendid Sole hotel. This evening, we gather for a welcome drink and a light buffet dinner at the hotel, a great chance to meet and get to know your fellow travellers and tour manager.

Meals included: Lunch, Dinner

Day 2 Montinelle & Lake Garda Countryside

This morning we travel through countryside to San Martino della Battaglia, where a monumental tower commemorates the 1859 Battle of San Martino, a key moment in Italy's Second War of Independence. We also visit Solferino, where the aftermath of another bloody 1859 battle inspired Swiss businessman Henri Dunant to establish the Red Cross. After a leisurely lunch at the Trattoria Da Arturo, we call at the Ossario di San Martino, a chapel lined with the skulls and bones of the soldiers killed in the battles. This evening is yours to spend as you want, perhaps dining at one of Montinelle's charming restaurants.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 3 Mantova

Another busy day awaits as we head to Mantova, a wonderful, but often-overlooked, medieval city. Circling by lakes, this charismatic city was the setting of Verdi's 'Rigoletto' and offers arcaded piazzas and the sumptuous Ducal Palace of the Gonzagas, one of Italy's most important Renaissance families. After a guided walk and visit to the Ducal Palace, there is free time to enjoy the shops and cafés. This evening brings dinner at a local trattoria

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 4 Salò & Valtènesi Cantina Redaelli De Zinis Wine-Tasting & Lunch

We visit lakeside Salò, the seat of Mussolini's fascist government in 1944-1945. This elegant town on Garda's shores is classically Italian and has a lakefront promenade flanked by cafés. After free time to stroll and absorb the views, we travel into the pretty Valtènesi countryside - a land of vineyards and olive oil farms sometimes described as the 'Tuscany' of Lake Garda. We stop at the private family-run Cantina Redaelli De Zinis estate for a cellar tour, wine-tasting and delicious lunch. Tonight, your evening is free to dine and relax as the mood takes you.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 5 Montinelle

Today is free to rest at your hotel or explore the area in your own way. Perhaps stretch your legs on a walk to the Rock of Manerba, a beautiful lakeside promontory with sublime views, or the Porto di Dusano, a pretty marina lined with eateries and cafés where you can watch the passing boats. Alternatively, take things easy at your hotel or stroll into Montinelle to visit its morning market (Fridays only) and shops. This evening we'll visit an off the beaten track venue for an authentic dinner.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 6 Cremona

Today brings an excursion to the lovely city of Cremona, once home to Antoni Stradivari, the famous 17th century violin maker. The well-preserved town is known for its Romanesque and medieval architecture, splendid Piazza del Comune, and stunning Duomo, notable for its frescoes and impressive Torrazzo bell tower. We see these sights on a guided walking tour, and explore the Violin Museum, which charts Cremona's 500-year-old history of violin-making and the masters of the craft, including Stradivari. Tonight, your evening is free to dine and relax at leisure.

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 7 Merano, Caldaro Wine Route & Cantina Martinelli Wine-Tasting

This morning takes us to delightful Merano, sitting in a wide valley backed by the towering Dolomites. Formerly held by the Hapsburgs and the one-time capital of the South Tyrol, this seductive spa town unfurls arcaded lanes, imposing churches and lush gardens. After a walking tour, there is free time to wander as you wish. This afternoon, we trace a scenic 'wine route' past historic vineyards to little-known Lake Caldaro, heart of the South Tyrol's wine production. We enjoy a tour and wine-tasting at the family-owned Cantina Martinelli winery. Tonight, we'll sit down locally for a farewell dinner.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 8 Departure

We begin our homeward journey by driving into the countryside for lunch at an authentic trattoria. After savouring memories of our trip over the classic regional cuisine, we continue to the airport for our return flight.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

For our 6 night stay, the itinerary is as above but without Day 5 in Montinelle.

