

FROM LAKE COMO TO LAKE LUGANO

An itinerary by car from Lake Como to the Italian shores of Lake Lugano, also called Lake Ceresio, through charming natural landscapes and ancient villages.

Route: Menaggio – Grandola ed Uniti – Cardano – Codogna – Velzo – Naggio – Gottro – Carlazzo – Corrido – Porlezza – Menaggio 30 km



Villa Bagatti Valsecchi

We depart from Menaggio and follow the road to Lugano in the direction of Lugano which winds its way up on the side of the hill in order to enter the Val Menaggio. On our left soars Monte Crocione 1670 m with Monte Grona 1736 m on the right. At Grandola ed Uniti (4 km from Menaggio) turn right onto Via Roma. Park straight away, and keeping to the right, continue on foot to visit the hamlet Cardano.

Follow the cobbled street veering left between old stone houses, to reach the entrance to the **Villa Bagatti Valsecchi** enclosed by beautiful gate work. This 18th century villa Villa Bagatti Valsecchi was largely refurbished in the late 19th century, gradually adopting its current aspect. Boasting a beautiful terraced park, the complex stands on a cliff carved out by the Sanagra stream.

Back in the car we head towards Codogna where we find **Villa Camozzi** (park in front of the villa).

The building looks like a traditional 18th-century residence with a square layout, a central atrium and rooms on three sides. It is currently the seat of the town hall and the **Ethnographic and Naturalistic Museum of the Sanagra Valley**, which houses some of the valley's historical and natural artefacts. It has rooms dedicated to palaeontology, ancient crafts and the former Menaggio-Porlezza railway, as well as dioramas representing the natural habitats, flora and fauna, of this vast territory. www.museovalsanagra.it.2

A 45-minute walk leads from the villa to **Rogolone**, a huge, centuries-old oak tree that has been declared a natural monument and is the symbol of the museum.

We continue by car along the provincial road SP8 past the **Parish Church of Saint Siro**, with its altars, frescoes and Baroque stuccoes, and the medi-

aeval village of **Velzo**. The road winds its way uphill through fields and after about 2.5 km leads to **Naggio** (550 m) a beautiful village with narrow cobble stone streets and a distinctly mediaeval feel.

At the church of Saint Antonio Abate turn left. Park the car in Piazza S. Antonio and take a stroll through the center of the village.

Back on the road after 50 meters you pass the deviation for the "Alta Val Sanagra" and Monti di Gottro (3 km – mountain road) where, at one of the "crotti", you can try the local cuisine and cheese produced at the close-by alpine pastures of Logone, Erba and Nesdale.

Continue on the road to **Carlazzo** and after 500 m the view opens on to the Lake Piano Nature Reserve, Lake Lugano and the plain of Porlezza. In the village Gottro park near the sign "Via per S. Giorgio". In ten minutes you can walk to the **Romanesque church San Giorgio** (12th century). Built in the Romanesque style, it conserves 15th century frescoes that are clearly visible through two gratings on the façade. The church can only be visited on very few occasions, but we still recommend stopping for the views alone.

Back at the car park, follow the steps to the old village centre of **Gottro** and the **Church of Saint Stefano**. Open only in conjunction with religious functions and concerts, the church houses a precious 19th Serassi organ.

Return to the car and in **Carlazzo**, leave the diversion for the Cavargna Valley on the right. Cross the village of Carlazzo and turn left at the roundabout. After about 300 metres cross the bridge, known as "**Ponte del Saltone**", which hangs 136 metres above the Cuccio River, to reach Corrido. The churchyard of the **Church of Saints Materno e Martino** affords spectacular views of Porlezza Plain and Menaggio Valley.

At the town hall, turn left and descend to **Porlezza**, a tourist resort on Lake Lugano, which is also known as Lake Ceresio. From 1885 to 1939 the town was the terminal of the Porlezza Menaggio railway line and served the many international tourists who arrived from Lugano by steam boat. The old route of the railway has been converted into a pedestrian and cycle path. We recommend a visit of Porlezza's centre and its lake side promenade.

From Porlezza you return along SS340 road to Menaggio. After 4 km at Piano Porlezza the view opens onto the small lake Lago di Piano. We recommend a stop at the "Casa della Riserva" where there are some pic-nic tables from where you can enjoy the view of this small gem.



San Siro