

# MENAGGIO



## HISTORICAL ITINERARY THROUGH THE TOWN AND ITS SURROUNDING VILLAGES

In this leaflet you will find the description of four walks to discover Menaggio: one historical itinerary leads through the town itself and the other three to its surrounding villages: Loveno, Nobiallo and Croce. In case there are children walking with you, the tourist office suggests the amusing puzzle tour you can do together with the itinerary through Menaggio. Ask for the leaflet!

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### HISTORIC ITINERARY THROUGH MENAGGIO

Total walking time 1 hour – ascent 50 m

Starting point: Piazza Garibaldi – point A

Itinerary traced out in blue on the map

The itinerary starts in **Piazza Garibaldi**. Pick up **Via Calvi** and half way up the street on the right you find the **church Santa Marta** ①. On the facade you can see the Roman memorial plaque of Minicio Exorato, a notable of the empire; above it the town-arms. Inside the church there are some interesting paintings of the 17th century.

At the end of **Via Calvi** is the parish **Santo Stefano** ②, of very ancient origins whose original Roman structures have however been lost; even the orientation itself is in the opposite direction of its primitive setting. The church has three naves which, in 1899, were covered with frescoes by a local artist named Tagliaferri. Quite noteworthy is the one of the martyr Santo Stefano located in the vault of the apse.

In the presbytery, two works by the painter Castelli from Menaggio. Above the altar of the Madonna, at the front of the left nave, you find a copy of a painting by Bernardino Luino depicting Maria with Jesus and an angel. The original work is now at the Louvre. The altar is surrounded by copper

## HISTORY OF MENAGGIO

The discovery of a few archaeological relics enables us to affirm that since early historical times people lived here. In 196 B.C., the Romans conquered the area. With the building of the road called "Via Regina" the Romanisation of the area started.

In the Middle Ages a castle was built in the upper part of the town and Menaggio was surrounded by walls. Because of its privileged position on the Via Regina, Menaggio was strategically of great importance. Already then the Via Regina was an important commercial and travel route which connected the Lombardy plain with the area north of the alps. In the 15th century a continual succession of war time events took place. The Graubundener, who had already conquered the Valtellina, kept Menaggio under pressure and in 1523 they succeeded defeating it and destroying its castle.

In 1525, the domain of Spain began and Menaggio crossed two centuries of poverty. This situation lasted till 1714 when the first Austrian domination started and quality of life rapidly improved. In 1805, after the creation of the Kingdom of Italy, Menaggio became the seat of the substituting Prefect and in 1859 centre in the Como region, of the insurrection movement "Risorgimento" against the Austrians.

Towards the end of the century, the tourist vocation of Menaggio began to develop, with the construction of the big hotels and villas especially at Loveno. Among these Villa Garovaglio-Ricci and Villa Mylius Vigoni, now owned by the German Federal Republic and seat of the German-Italian cultural foundation Villa Vigoni which organises high level meetings. The romantic park can be visited on reservation tel. 0344 361 232 on Thursday afternoon. At the beginning of the 19th century Menaggio was already a well known resort. Important for this development was the construction of the former railway station ⑦ of the train line Menaggio – Porlezza closed down in 1939.

You pass the Grand Hotel Menaggio, and the small harbor of Menaggio and then enter **Via Mazzini**. Under an ancient house with a typical portico, you often see a fisherman cleaning fish or preparing the nets for the next night. On the facade of the house there is a **fresco** by a famous local painter called Bruno Azzimonti. From here turn left in **Via delle Rose** and almost immediately right in **Via Pesci** that ends in **Piazza Garibaldi**.

In April 1945 the town witnessed Mussolini's brief stop at Menaggio on his way to Valtellina; he was captured though at Dongo by the Partisans.

representing the Annunciation, an example of popular art. Continue on the Antica Via Regina to **the "Santuario della Madonna della Pace"** ⑩, built in 1658.

The Antica Strada Regina, built by the Romans, was an important road connection to the alpine passes in order to reach the countries north of the Alps. From the Sanctuary it winds up over Sasso Rancio and leads to Rezzonico. It was in use till the end of the 18th century when the current lake road (also called Regina) was built. The itinerary is described in the leaflet "Walks – Menaggio".

From the Sanctuary you turn and retrace your foot steps as far as the small square of Nobiallo. On the right you will see the street called Mulattiera della Ghidolda. It is an old connection track between Nobiallo and Loveno. Historically it was also called the Via degli Sposi – the track of the newlyweds - because it was tradition that the young couples covered it after the wedding ceremony. At the moment the path has to be restored. Just before the square you go down the steps of **Via alla Piazza** which lead to the lake. You follow the lake side road to the right that leads past the old harbour, once the centre of the local economy, and new tourist dock. You then follow the same route you came back to Menaggio.

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### FROM MENAGGIO TO LOVENO

Walking time 1.15 (there and back) – ascent 100 m

Starting point: via per Loveno – point C on the map

Itinerary traced in green on the map

This itinerary starts in **Via per Loveno** that comes out onto **Via Leoni**. Follow it about 20 m to the left in order to pick up the continuation of **Via per Loveno** to the right. You cross an antique bridge where you see a small shrine dedicated to San Giovanni Nepomuceno, patron saint of the bridges, work of Enrico Vannuncini (1965).  
Via Loveno ends into **Via N. Sauro** that you follow to the right. Go up the steps on the side of the Hotel Loveno in order to cut off a bend. Back on the road follow it (to the left) another 30 m and at the next bend, pick up the continuation of **Via N. Sauro** to the left. You are now in the hamlet Loveno with its splendid villas.

Via Loveno ends into **Via N. Sauro** that you follow to the right. Go up the steps on the side of the Hotel Loveno in order to cut off a bend. Back on the road follow it (to the left) another 30 m and at the next bend, pick up the continuation of **Via N. Sauro** to the left. You are now in the hamlet Loveno with its splendid villas.

Many important families, since the 18th century, chose the hamlet Loveno as a favourite summer resort, attracted by the beautiful landscape and wonderful climate. To begin with, on the left in Piazza Wachs Mylius, there is **Villa Bel Faggio** ⑪ that hosted illustrious visitors such as Stikker, Adenauer,

Spaak. Slightly further in **Largo Vittorio Veneto** there is the entrance of Villa Bolza. The villas of Loveno were important cultural centres, in fact, apart from the illustrious visitors, most of them also had precious art collections. You continue left along **Via Garovaglio** and on the right you can catch a glimpse of the beautiful garden of villa Garovaglio-Ricci. You arrive at the parish **church of SS. Lorenzo and Agnese** ⑫, rebuilt between 1725 and 1738, which is a noteworthy example of baroque art. From here turn right into **Via Guido Vigoni** that leads into the antique part of Loveno. You pass the entrance of **Villa Mylius Vigoni** ⑬ left by Ignazio Vigoni to the German Federal Republic, and now seat of an important Italian-German cultural centre. It is the most prestigious villa of Loveno with a rich collection of paintings and sculptures prints and pieces of furniture which used to belong to the founder of the villa. It is surrounded by a marvelous park of 80 hectares. The villa can be visited on Thursday afternoons at 14.30 (tel. 0344 361232). In front is the not less impressive **Villa Garovaglio Ricci** ⑭, seat of the offices of the Italian-German centre.

Continuing along **Via Guido Vigoni** you reach **Piazza Giuseppe Vigoni** where there is a lovely fountain.

Continue along **Via Cariboni** and after a short stretch turn right into **Via Alessandro Volta**, named after the famous scientist, who invented the battery, whose family originated from Loveno. Note the fresco of the Madonna of the XV and the **memorial plaque dedicated to Alessandro Volta** ⑮

on the facade of the house n°6. You reach the entrance of Villa Govone now seat of the local health offices. You now retrace your footsteps back into **Via Monte Grappa**. After 200 m pick up **Via M. Poletti** to the right which crosses the neighbourhood Sonenga. At the end of the street go down the flight of steps and turn left and pass in front of the youth hostel. You end onto **Via IV Novembre** right in front of the **former railway station** ⑯ of the train line Menaggio – Porlezza closed down in 1939.

You pass the Grand Hotel Menaggio, and the small harbor of Menaggio and then enter **Via Mazzini**. Under an ancient house with a typical portico, you often see a fisherman cleaning fish or preparing the nets for the next night. On the facade of the house there is a **fresco** by a famous local painter called Bruno Azzimonti. From here turn left in **Via delle Rose** and almost immediately right in **Via Pesci** that ends in **Piazza Garibaldi**.

In order to reach **Largo Fossato** follow the blue itinerary till you reach **Via N. Sauro**, then turn left. From **Largo Fossato** (in front of Bar del Portech) cross the main road

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### FROM MENAGGIO TO CROCE

Walking time 1.30 hrs. (there and back) of which 10 min. on the main road with heavy traffic and without sidewalk – ascent 200 m

Starting point: Largo Fossato – point D on the map

Itinerary traced in purple on the map

In order to reach **Largo Fossato** follow the blue itinerary till you reach **Via N. Sauro**, then turn left. From **Largo Fossato** (in front of Bar del Portech) cross the main road

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### FROM MENAGGIO TO CROCE

Walking time 1.30 hrs. (there and back) of which 10 min. on the main road with heavy traffic and without sidewalk – ascent 200 m

Starting point: Largo Fossato – point D on the map

Itinerary traced in purple on the map

In order to reach **Largo Fossato** follow the blue itinerary till you reach **Via N. Sauro**, then turn left. From **Largo Fossato** (in front of Bar del Portech) cross the main road

Comune di Menaggio



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medallions representing scenes from the Madonna's life. In the middle of the right nave there is a large painting of San Giorgio but the artist is unknown. The altar of "Il Sacro Cuore" is embellished with stuccoes of the 17th century by the "maestri intelvesi" (famous sculptors and craftsmen of the Val d'Intelvi who passed their experience from father to son and worked all over Europe). When you come out of the church turn right into **Via Caronti**, then at the end of the street turn right into **Via Leoni**. After 30 m turn left into **Via Castellino da Castello**. This street leads to the upper part of town where the castle once stood. On the way you pass some beautiful portals. On the corner with Via Strecioum stands the native **house of di P. Gabriele Malagrida** 3, a Jesuit who was martyred in Lisbon in 1761 under the despotic regime of Pombal.

The “Castello” of today gives only a faint idea of how it was in the middle ages. It was in fact completely destroyed in 1523 by the Signori delle Leghe Grigie (Graubündener). Left intact are parts of its enormous perimeter walls which you can admire at various points. The houses in the upper part of Via Castellino da Castello follow the original contours of the castle. On the facade of house number 54 there are two medieval sculptures from the XI century, a winged feline and a bust. Above the ruins of the ancient castle you find **the church San Carlo** ④, which was built in 1614. The church has a characteristic Spanish style bell tower a reminder of the period of Spanish domination in the 15-16th century. The bell tower can be seen from the centre of town.

When you reach the end of the street continue to the left and follow **Via N. Sauro**. After only 20 m you pick up the street, just before a small parking lot, that runs right below the walls of the castle. Just past another small car park, you pick up **Via Fabbri**. At the beginning of the street, on the left, on the top of a gate, there is a sculpture of the 12th century representing the **head of the bull of San Luca** **5**. Then a bit further down on the left there is a **fountain called “Del Salvatore”** **6**. Above it there is a bust in relief of the 12th century which has unfortunately been damaged by time. At the end of Via Fabbri you end up again in **Via Castellino da Castello** which you follow down to the right for ca. 10 m and then you pick up **Via Strecioum** to the left. At the end of the street continue a few meters and you come to one of the most picturesque bridges over the river Sanagra.

In the middle of the bridge you can admire a **relief by**

**nuncini** 7 (1965), and on the right the chapel dedicated to the Madonna di Caravaggio. Turn back and then into **Via per Loveno** and left again into **Via Leoni** which follow to the end. Cross **Via Lusardi** passing in front the little church San Rocco, built in 1772, and pick up **Roma**, which leads along the entrance of the Lido of Menaggio built in 1934 with its big beach and swimming pools.

The walk continues along **Lungo Lago Benedetto Celi**. Here you find the **monument by Francesco Maini** 8 dedicated to the women silk weavers, donated by the town of Menaggio by the Mantero family, owners of local silk mills. It is made of Carrara Marble and represents a column to the weaving culture of Como, in which work, art and management ability are melted and mixed, following the centuries old tradition which has made Como one of the silk capitals of the world. You continue your way on the lovely lakeside promenade where you can enjoy the beauty of the landscape which has made the fortune of the area. You pass the Grand Hotel Victoria built in 1885 and then you'll find yourself back in **Piazza Garibaldi**.

M MENAGGIO TO NOBIALLO

**walking time 1.15 (there and back) – Ascent 15 m**

**Starting point: Piazza Garibaldi – point B on the map  
Itinerary traced in red on the map**

Piazza Garibaldi pick up **Via Camozzi** on the left side of the tourist office and after 20 meters take the first left (**Via Lago**). You are now in the medieval part of Menaggio, alleys with old mansions with on the ground floor commercial activities. At the end of Via al Lago turn and walk along **Via Lusardi** where the town hall, Villa Belgiosa, stands. You cross the bridge over the Sanagra and pass the little church San Rocco of 1772. Continue along **Via A. Diaz** and at the entrance of a tunnel up the walkway on the right. Here you will find the rock climbing face put up by the local Alpine Club. Back on the road cross it and continue on the sidewalk. Then follow the sign for the carabinieri station to the left and continue on the **Antica Via Regina** that crosses through the hamlet. You are now at Nobiallo, once a fishermen village, with small ways leading down to the lake. It is clustered around its **church of SS Bartolomeo and Nicolao** 9 with its Romanesque bell tower of the 13th century. In the square, on the facade of a house, you can see a fresco.

