

## Discover Lombardia

Eataly Magazine (November 06, 2019)



While this northern region of Italy might be known for its cosmopolitan cities and bustling industry, a journey beyond the urban centers of Lombardia reveals crystalline lakes, verdant valleys and breathtaking mountains, not to mention some of the finest food and wines that Italy has to offer.

### WHAT TO KNOW

Lombardia is the most populated region in Italy, with almost 10 million inhabitants across 12 provinces. Stretching over 9,000 square miles, the region borders Switzerland to the north, Veneto to the east, Piemonte to the west and Emilia-Romagna to the south.

Milano, the capital city and metropolitan area internationally renowned for art, fashion, design, food, and culture, is easy to get to with three international airports and historic central train station, providing a perfect starting point for anyone looking to explore the region. Lombardia is also home to the country's largest national park, Stelvio National Park. The glacial lakes that cascade down from the Alps, including Lago Maggiore, Lago di Como, and Lago di Garda, never fail to



enchant visitors with their breathtaking views and pure waters.

## WHERE TO GO

For breathtaking outdoor destinations, the height of Italian art and culture, and even UNESCO world heritage sites, Lombardia offers a variety of unique activities suitable for travelers of all ages and interests.

## CITTÀ D'ARTE

Lombardia is home to some of Italy's most treasured città d'arte, or "cities of art." Milano is home to some of the world's finest artistic treasures, including the stunning Duomo cathedral, Leonardo Da Vinci's The Last Supper. To the south, Mantova boasts a charming historic center – now a UNESCO World Heritage site – and jaw-dropping architectural sites, including the Palazzo Te, a Mannerist-style estate that hosts internationally renowned art exhibitions, and the Palazzo Ducale, home to stunning frescoes by Renaissance painter Andrea Mantegna. In Cremona, visitors will find the Violin Museum and over 150 ateliers crafting violins and other string instruments – an expertise that earned the city a UNESCO Intangible World Heritage honor.

Beyond these cities, Lombardia offers plenty of other cultural destinations off the beaten path. Bergamo, nestled in the foothills at the base of the mountains, boasts Venetian-era city walls now protected by UNESCO. Pavia is home to one of Italy's oldest universities; take a walk through the same arcades where famed poets like Ugo Foscolo studied. For those looking for a day trip from Milano, both Lodi, home to one of the most beautiful squares in Italia, and Monza, where Italy's Formula One Grand Prix races through the Autodromo, are just a quick train ride away.

## THE LAKES REGION

Just a short drive or train ride from Milano, and you'll find yourself enveloped by rolling hills and a series of stunning glacial lakes. While Lago di Como might be the most famous for its glamorous villas and residents, Lago Maggiore and Lago di Garda offer exceptional vistas, clear waters, and perfect conditions for boating.

A visit to Lago di Iseo in Brescia and Lago di Varese in Bergamo both offer pleasant, accessible bike paths for all levels of fitness and clean, calm waters for canoeing. In fact, you might even catch a view of the Alps on a clear day from Lago di Varese.

## THE MOUNTAINS

From cross-country and downhill skiing to breathtaking hikes across nearly 13,000 mountain trails, Lombardia's mountain ranges offer high altitudes for every season. The Parco Orobie in the province of Bergamo is Lombardia's largest natural park, rich in biodiversity, alpine lakes, and yes, plenty of slopes for winter sports! The Alta Valtellina boasts famous ski resorts, majestic Dolomite-style mountains, and even thermal baths. Here, the charming city of Sondrio offers a perfect gateway to the natural treasures that the Valtellina has to offer.

## WHAT TO TASTE

With verdant plains and foothills, long traditions of artisanal food production, and a moderate continental climate perfect for cultivation, it's no surprise that Lombardia is the home of some of Italy's most iconic dishes and wines, as well as 20 traditional DOP-certified products.

## SALUMI & FORMAGGI

When it comes to salumi and formaggi, the salty, crumbly Grana Padano DOP is perhaps the most well-known (nota bene: for the epicurious, the ancestor of Grana Padano cheese can be found in Lodi, where it is served shaved into flower petals called Rospadùra). Beyond this famed cheese, don't miss the opportunity to taste locally produced Gorgonzola, Mascarpone, Ricotta di Bufala, as well as Salame Milano and Prosciutto Cotto.

## PRIMI & SECONDI

Perhaps the most iconic dishes, Risotto alla Milanese made with golden saffron and Grana Padano is a favorite around the world. For a secondo, the breaded and fried Cotoletta remains a popular



choice, and for good reason – the hearty, satisfying pork chop is savory and decadent in flavor, yet simple enough to make at home.

#### PANETTONE & SWEETS

It's true – Italy's famed Christmas cake has its roots in a Milanese legend dating back to the fifteenth century. Beyond this iconic dessert, Lombardia is also known for its traditional Italian sweets like amaretti cookies and chocolate confections.

#### VINO

Lombardia boasts 27 DOC and DOCG wine regions, of which bubbly Franciacorta, fresh Lugana white wines made with Turbiana grapes, and elegant Valtellina reds made with Nebbiolo grapes are among some of the most elegant and exciting to taste.

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