

LAKE MAGGIORE e ORTA and LANGHE

Wine, rice and cheese tour

Code A 028 – 6 days

1 Day: ARRIVAL

Arrival at your hotel on Lake Maggiore and dinner.

2 Day: TOUR OF LANGHE WITH TASTING: ASTI, BAROLO, GRINZANE CAVOUR

After a buffet breakfast at the hotel, meet your guide and depart for **Asti** by private coach, about a 2-hour drive, for a short guided tour of the historic center of this beautiful city, known worldwide for its wines and cuisine, but unfortunately much less so for its artistic beauty. Discover the city by walking the narrow streets of the medieval center between towers and palaces and visiting still-intact 5th to 17th-century monuments, like the Collegiate Church of San Secondo and the complex of San Pietro; cross the famous Palio square and then take a walk under the Art Nouveau arcades lined with elegant shops and traditional cafés.

From Asti, move on to the charming village of **Barolo**, center of the production area of one of Italy's most famous wines, for a guided visit of an historical winery, followed by a tasting of the renowned local wines paired with cheese and cold cuts. Then a short walk to WIMU, the new multimedia museum dedicated to wine, housed in the Falletti castle, for a one hour tour. Transfer by private coach to the town of **Grinzane Cavour**, free time for tasting and purchase of local products (including truffles). Departure by private coach with photo stops along the scenic hills of the Langhe. Dinner and overnight in hotel.

3 day: STRESA: BORROMEO ISLANDS AND LAKE'S FISH TASTING

After a buffet breakfast at the hotel, meet your guide and transfer by private launch to Isola Bella, the most famous of the **Borromeo Islands**. Visit the 17th-century Palace, rich in history, art and culture, and its extraordinary park, a masterpiece of Italian gardens, laid out on ten stepped terraces descending to the water. Free time for shopping and exploring the island. Then on to Isola dei Pescatori, the centuries'old working fisherman's island, with its picturesque lanes and alleyways, typical dwellings and the small church dedicated to San Vittore. Free time for lunch to try lake delicious fish specialties at one of the island's many restaurants and explore the village. Afternoon transfer by private launch to Isola Madre to visit the largest of the Borromeo Islands, now an extensive botanical garden, where exotic peacocks and pheasants roam the grounds. Tour the 16th century Palace, with its reconstructed period rooms that recreate the atmosphere of yesteryear. Back to Stresa by private launch. Dinner and overnight in hotel.

4 day: VISIT AND TASTING: RICE, GORGONZOLA CHEESE, NEBBIOLO WINE

After a buffet breakfast at the hotel, meet your guide and transfer by private coach to **Casalbeltrame**, a small "Slow Food" town in the province of Novara, about halfway between

Turin (70 Km) and Milan (50 Km), and famous for the cultivation of rice since the end of the 1600s. This is the only area in Europe that produces Venere (Venus) Black Rice, a hybrid of an Asian and a local variety, small-grained and very fragrant that was developed in 1997 following years of research and experimentation.

Continue on to **Desana** to visit a well-known rice producer for a guided tour: walk along the rice fields and around the farm to learn all about this important agricultural product. At the end of the tour enjoy a tasting lunch, starring the traditional rice-based “Panissa”. Departure after the meal to meet a producer of the famous gorgonzola cheese and taste local wines at **Ghemme**, (about a 45-min drive), well-known for the production of the famous Nebbiolo-based DOCG wines: Ghemme, Gattinara, Sizzano, Fara and Boca. Guided walk around the Castello and explanation of the winemaking process followed by tasting of local wines paired with specialties of the area. Dinner and overnight in hotel.

5 day: LAKE OF ORTA, OSSOLA VALLEY, TASTING

After a buffet breakfast at the hotel, meet your guide and transfer by private coach to Lake Orta, the ancient “Cusius”, situated west of Lake Maggiore, and rich in history and monuments. Free time for lunch and shopping followed by a guided tour of this charming medieval village: Piazza Motta, on the lakefront just opposite the island of San Giulio, the heart of the town with its “Palazzotto” dating back to 1582, and narrow lanes lined with elegant sixteenth and seventeenth-century townhouses with their characteristic wrought iron gates and balconies, testimony to the local artisans of the period. The tour continues by small private motorboat across to the island of San Giulio, known for its Romanesque basilica founded, according to tradition, by the saint at the end of the fourth century. It was then enlarged several times and completely rebuilt between the XIth and XIIth centuries. The adjacent nineteenth-century building houses a community of Benedictine nuns.

Re-board the coach for the drive to **Oira di Crevoladossola**; after a short guided walk around the village to see the church, and the restored communal dairy and mill, visit a winery followed by a guided tasting of local wines paired with typical cold cuts and cheeses from the area. Return to Stresa. Dinner and overnight in hotel.

6 day :

After a buffet breakfast, check-out and departure

