



Italy's Lombardy region offers travelers with a long list of things to do, which includes taking a leisurely stroll on the cobblestone streets of Bergamo to see the city cathedral, Duomo di Bergamo, and the Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore.

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TRAVEL

7 must-do experiences in Italy's stunning Lombardy region

These insider tips reveal a local's way to experience the heart of Northern Italy, including world class skiing, renowned lake vistas, and Michelin-starred restaurants.

By Nneya Richards
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Lombardy is the region in Italy that strikes a balance between the Italy of centuries past and country's progression toward innovation. Lombardy may be known for its bustling city life in Milan (the region's capital and Italy's premier

business hub), but it also encompasses picturesque medieval villages, glitzy lakeside resorts, glacial lakes and stunning mountain passes.

Breathtaking natural landscapes with iconic vistas like Lake Como with the Alps as a backdrop are synonymous with *la dolce vita* (the sweet life). World renowned fashion and art--like Leonard da Vinci's "The Last Supper" and the Salone Internazionale del Mobile fair with Design Week--draw tourists and business travelers from all around the world. And in case you didn't know, Lombardy has the most UNESCO World Heritage sites of any Italian region as well as the most Michelin-starred restaurants.

Make the most of your time in Italy's wealthiest region with our list of must-do Italian experiences that will provide eager explorers with a real taste of life in Lombardy.

(*Gorgonzola: on the trail of Italy's most prized cheese in the Lombardy region.*)

Hike La Via Delle Sorelle Way

An 80-mile path for cyclists and walkers, La Via Delle Sorelle connects the cities of Bergamo and Brescia. The six to eight-day hike provides breathtaking sights along the way: Lake Iseo, the Franciacorta vineyards, and rural villages like Nembro in the Seriana Valley with preserved medieval architecture. Hikers can start or end their trek in Bergamo or Brescia.

With the city nestled in the foothills of the Alps, Bergamo's UNESCO World Heritage Venetian Walls are a must visit. They offer sweeping views of the surrounding valleys, and on a clear day, you can see Milan. On the other side of the trail, Brescia, the second largest city in Lombardy has a thriving arts and nightlife scene. Visit the city's historical center, which includes the ancient Roman ruins of Brescia's Capitulum and [the Santa Giulia Museum](#), home to almost 11,000 works of art and archaeological finds.



Once the entrance to Bergamo for those who came from Milan, the San Giacomo Gate is now the main entryway to the city's 16th century Venetian Walls, a UNESCO World Heritage site. For years, the gate would close at 10 p.m. to guarantee the city's safety.

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Tour a sustainable caviar farm

For an elevated cucina povera experience, visitors should consider taking a guided tour [Agriottica Lombarda](#) owned by Calvisius Caviar, an Italian caviar brand. “It's very important for us that the people can come and visit and see our sturgeon and how we breed them and take care of them because we started with sustainability a long time ago; it is in our DNA,” says Carla Sora, the director general for Calvisius Caviar.

The guided tour comes with a delicious caviar tasting lesson for \$78 (€70) per person. The company attracts a younger generation of caviar enthusiasts who are eager to learn about where the product is being made, and they are usually excited to [try inventive pairings!](#)

Flex your culinary skills with a pro

It's no surprise that the Lombards are passionate about food culture with 60 Michelin-starred restaurants in the region. Rice grown in the Po River Valley takes center stage on the famed creamy saffron *risotto Milanese* paired with *ossobucco* (oxtail). The traditional *cotoletta milanese*, the veal breaded cutlets like a schnitzel, highlights Northern Italy's Austrian influence.



Visit Lombardy to learn how to make regional dishes like *casoncelli alla bergamasca*, a traditional stu... [Read More](#) ✓
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Dive into the region’s culinary scene and take an authentic Italian cooking class. Prepare a traditional multi-course meal or dish, like the delicious stuffed ravioli, *casoncelli alla bergamasco*, [in the kitchen of Chef Maria](#).

A native of Bergamo, Chef Maria says, “The international love of Italian cuisine has elevated the country’s *cucina povera*—traditional cooking techniques originating from Italy’s peasant population of the past.”

[\(Dive deeper into Lombardy's culinary scene with our guide.\)](#)

Taste Italy's acclaimed Franciacorta wine

The perfect pairing for Italian caviar is a sparkling white wine. Lombardy is home to the Franciacorta wine region which produces a complex white wine often compared to France's Champagne. Situated near Lake Iseo, colorful lakeside villages with waterfront bars serve local Franciacorta as an aperitivo on their menus.

Try [Cocktail bar Darsena21](#) on a barge across from Monte Iseo, a mountain in the middle of Lake Iseo. It's the perfect place to watch the sunset on a warm summer evening. For an authentic vineyard experience, travelers take a [Berlucchi Vineyard tour](#) tour to explore the estate of the first *franciacorta* and the vineyard's centuries-old cellars.

Indulge in the luxury of Lake Como

Less than an hour away from Milan by train, Lake Como, third largest lake in Italy, is a popular stop for people visiting Lombardy. With the snowcapped Alps as its backdrop and the contrasting emerald-green waters of the lake; it's no wonder why celebrities such as George Clooney, John Legend, and Taylor Swift have frequented the postcard-perfect destination.

Spend the day or an overnight stay at the five-star luxury hotel [Grand Hotel Tremezzo](#), where guests can explore Lake Como in style. The hotel has a fleet of Rivas-Italian wooden boats or sailboats. Check with the hotel concierge who can arrange full-day trips visit Como and picturesque villages such as Varenna.



While visiting the glitzy celebrity haven of Lake Como, curious travelers can spend the day visiting quaint villages such as Varenna (seen above), Bellagio, Azzano, and Lenno.

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Set sail on journey around Lake Garda

Favored by European travelers, Lake Garda offers not only beautiful vistas, but also active sports such as windsurfing and sailing. [Book a boat and walking tour](#) and visit Sirmione, located on the southern bank of Lake Garda. The resort town features the [Scaligero castle](#), built in the middle of the 14th century by a Veronese family.

“Sirmione is one of my favorite places to visit. A great boat day, being able to view centuries old history and sunbathing? Very Italian,” says Bravo television star, [Andrea Denver](#).

Enjoy Jamaica Beach in the area for easy access to fresh lake water and beautiful turquoise views reminiscent of, well, the Caribbean. While you’re in the area, you may want to consider visiting [the town of Salò](#), known for its sun-drenched sorbet-colored city center and pristine lakeside promenade reminiscent of Cote d’Azur.

Hit the slopes in Bormio for Olympic skiing

Located in the Lombardy region, [Bormio](#) will host the alpine skiing and ski mountaineering events for the 2026 Winter Olympics. But visitors can hit the slopes year-round at the ski resort of the same name. Consider visiting in the summer to ski on Stelvio glacier. High altitude skiing on the summits of the Ortles-Cevedale range offer miles of skiing under blue skies from May to November.

Expert skiers choose the Stelvio glacier for their summer workouts! After a day on the slope, indulge in Bormio's 1000-year-old tradition of thermal baths. Bormio has nine natural springs that supply three wellness spas. Book some spa time at [QC Terme Bagni Vecchi](#) to experience the San Marino steam cave that leads to one of these thousand-year-old springs!

Getting around

Lombardy is well connected with three major airports servicing the area: [Milan Malpensa](#), [Bergamo Orio Al Serio](#), and [Milan-Linate Airport](#). Leading airlines like Delta, American Airlines and Emirates have flights leaving major US airports daily.

Many cities in Lombardy--like Brescia and Bergamo and some bigger lake towns like Como--are accessible by [Trenord](#), the regional railway. Train tickets are available for purchase at the station as well as via convenient sites and apps like [Trainline](#). However, if you looking to explore the region at your own pace, you may want to consider renting a car from Milan.

If you're considering biking the path between Brescia and Bergamo, [Moez eBikes](#) rental in Bergamo and [Dosso Alto](#) in Brescia are great options for renting e-bikes.

[\(Find out why Bergamo was recognized as the Italian Capital of Culture.\)](#)

Where to stay

If you've stayed in Milan, consider staying in a smaller city like Bergamo as your homebase to explore the Lombardy region. New charming boutique hotels like [Palazzo Santo Spirito](#) in the lower city or [Gombit Hotel](#), located on the picturesque via Gombito of the upper city offer convenient and centrally located stays. Visitors can go on day trips to most of the places mentioned in this article, making Bergamo a convenient location.

National Geographic also offers tours in Milan including [this special cascina tour](#), exposing visitors to a different side of Milan including a farm-to-table aperitivo experience.

[\(Explore more of Italy! Plan a trip to the country's Veneto region with our guide.\)](#)

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