



GT Experiences

A REALM OF UNFORGETTABLE TRAVEL

I Borghi Piu Belli d'Italia





Fontanellato Castle Parma, Emilia Romagna

I Borghi Piu Belli d'Italia

TOUR ORTA LAKE AND THE CASTLES OF DUCHY OF PARMA AND PIACENZA

Biella, Ricetto Di Candelo - Orta San Giulio, Pavia, Fontanellato, Parma, Vigoleno - 9 Days/8 Nights

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrive in Milan - meet tour escort and transfer to Biella. Some free time to relax and unwind.

This evening enjoy a lovely Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant. **(D)**

Day 2 Biella: Breakfast at the hotel. This morning we depart to enjoy a tour in the area of Biella including the visit to the Beer museum, the cheese factory with tasting and the old city of Biella Il Piazza. Lunch on your own and then we will continue the tour visiting the Viverone Lake and the Roppolo Castle. Return to the hotel for a dine around on your own. Overnight in Biella. **(B)**

Day 3 Biella: Breakfast at hotel. Departure for Oropa to visit the Sanctuary. The Oropa Sanctuary is located near Biella in

the northern part of Piedmont. It is a very important Italian pilgrimage destination with a reputation for providing relief to the sick and also now a UNESCO listed heritage site. More than 800,000 pilgrims visit Oropa each year. The statue of the Black Madonna, brought to the Sanctuary of Oropa by the founder of the sanctuary in the 14th century, is kept in a chapel that predates the current (17th century) church by several centuries. Other highlights at the Oropa sanctuary include the Royal Gate and Royal Apartments, while to the rear is a second, 19th-20th century church. After some free time at the Sanctuary, our next stop will be a local Grappa (liquor) Distillery for a tasting including their home made sweets. Return to Biella. Late afternoon we depart for Sordevolo, the village where, every 5 years, a Passion Play is performed, with all the actors being local village people. Dinner will be at a local restaurant before we attend this

remarkable performance of "The Passion of Christ". **(B, D)**

Day 4 Ricetto Di Candelo - Orta San Giulio: Departure from Biella area to Ricetto di Candelo (approx. 15min, 6km) Guided visit of the borgo Tasting of typical products (salami, chesees, red and white wine) Time at disposal for lunch (on your own) Departure to Orta San Giulio area (approx 1h, 54 km). Accommodation in 4* hotel Free time at your disposal Welcome dinner Overnight. **(D)**

Day 5 Orta San Giulio - San Giulio Island: Breakfast. Guided visit of the borgo of Orta San Giulio Departure by ferry boat to the Island of San Giulio. Lunch in a typical restaurant. Guided visit of the Island. Back to Orta San Giulio by ferry boat. Free time at your disposal.





San Giulio Island at Lake Orta

Optional: ferry boat cruise from Orta San Giulio to Omegna (round trip - approx. 50 min.) Back to the hotel. Dinner and Overnight **(B,D)**

Day 6 Pavia: Breakfast and check-out. Departure to Certosa di Pavia (approx. 1,40 h, 110 km) Guided visit of the Carthusian monastery of Pavia and of its museum Time at disposal for lunch (on your own). Departure to Vigoleno area (approx 1,30 h, 110 km). Accommodation in an ancient village of XI century Dinner and Overnight. **(B,D)**

Day 7 Fontanellato/Parma: Departure to Fontanellato (approx 30 min. 22 km). Guided visit of the borgo and of its castle. Lunch in a typical restaurant Departure to Parma (approx.30 min, 25 km). Guided visit of the city HD. Optional: possibility of a visit in dairy and tasting of the famous Parmigiano Reggiano Back to the accommodation. Dinner and Overnight. **(B,D)**

Day 8 Vigoleno: Breakfast. Departure to Vigoleno (approx 28 min, 18 km). Guided visit of the borgo and of its castle.

Departure for a farm and visit of the vineyards with wine tasting and local products. Time at leisure Optional: Departure to Fidenza Outlet village and time at leisure for shopping (approx 27 min, 23 km). Back to the accommodation.

Optional: time at leisure for wellness and relax in the Spa Center Dinner Overnight. **(B,D)**

Day 9 Airport: Breakfast and check-out. Transfer to the airport (Milano Malpensa Airport approx. 2h, 170km / Bologna Airport approx. 1,30h. 125km) end of services. **(B)**

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

RICETTO DI CANDELO

The Ricetto di Candelo is a fortified structure built between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by impulse of the local inhabitant in order to preserve and defend the most valuable assets of the community, a “castle” of the people built to protect the treasures of the earth, as wine and grains. Today

the Ricetto is considered the “medieval Pompeii of Biella’s area”. The borgo is an unicum in Italy: this is a cultural and tourist “place of excellence”, where the cultural itinerary will let you discover the authentic and exciting Middle Ages.

ORTA SAN GIULIO AND ORTA LAKE

The Orta Lake will enchant you with breathtaking and romantic views and its artistic and historical heritage of great cultural interest. The little borgo of Orta San Giulio has just over a thousand inhabitants, because of the characteristic lanes of the center and the banks surrounded by splendid buildings is considered a little jewel. In the heart of the lake rises the island of San Giulio, a mystical and cozy place, reachable in a few minutes by boat. It hosts a female monastery (in fact it is also called the island of silence).

CARTHUSIAN MONASTERY OF PAVIA

This is a magnificent complex, with a private chapel and a family mausoleum too. The foundation stone was laid in 1396 during the late Gothic period, but only in the mid- 15th century, the building was



achieved in its rich Renaissance decoration, which makes it one of the most prestigious monuments of the Italian art. Its façade is remarkably decorated with white and polychrome marble. It is worth visiting the ivory triptych in the old vestry, the superb frescoes by Bergognone in the transept, the amazing wooden carving in the choir and the rich terracotta decorations in the two cloisters.

FONTANELLATO

Fontanellato has preserved intact its original features and the typical low and narrow houses with multicolored facades which surround the wide square and seem built to protect the ancient fortress. The Rocca, which belonged to the Sanvitale family from the end of the fourteenth century to 1948, combines the austere and a rather rude appearance of its military origin with the elegance and sophistication of a stately home. The fortress of Fontanellato contains works and historical evidences of absolute value, among which the room decorated by the young Parmigianino before his departure for Rome in 1524 is worth noting.

PARMA

The guided tour of Parma, beautiful town built on the ancient route of the Via Emilia and crucial junction during the Middle Ages, starts with an itinerary into the heart of this elegant capital. The old town center of Parma is still livable and it can be pleasantly walked across. It's hard not to be fascinated by the elegance of its churches, squares and buildings, which evoke its ancient splendour, and the innate passion for food, wine, music and opera which is in the air. There are many surprises that this tour has in store for the curious visitor! A visit to Parma can not exclude the monumental complex of Piazza Duomo, where the Cathedral, the Baptistery and the Bishop's Palace cre-

ate a medieval corner of rare beauty.

VIGOLENO

Vigoleno is one of the most beautiful medieval villages in Italy, a castle-village which retains, despite the transformations undergone during the centuries, a great evocative power. What impresses most of the small village, perched on a spur, are the large expanses of stone, the defensive walls, the battlements, the towers, the ramparts and then the short and narrow streets, which make it similar to a labyrinth. The light reflected on this rock, during the various moments of the day, creates indefinable atmospheres. The castle of Vigoleno, with its fortified medieval village, dominates the valley of Stirone Park, offering views of nature of rare beauty.

PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- Bus for the whole tour
- English speaking tour leader for the entire itinerary
- 3 overnights in double/twin standard room in 4* hotel in Biella- HB treatment HOTEL AGORA' PALACE 4* OR SIMILAR
- 2 overnights in double/twin standard room in 4* hotel in Orta San Giulio area, HB treatment – HOTEL L'APPRODO 4* OR SIMILAR
- Guided visit of Biella
- Guided visit of Sanctuary of Oropa
- Dinner at local Restaurant on day of arrival in Biella
- Dinner in Sordevolo before the Passion Play performance
- Entrance ticket to the Passion Play – Gold Ticket
- Drink during the performance
- Cheese tasting in Biella
- Guided visit of Ricetto di Candelo (2 H)
- Guided visit of Orta San Giulio and of the Island of San Giulio (3 H)
- Ferry boat ticket Orta San Giulio/San Giulio Island (round trip)
- Lunch In a typical restaurant in Orta

- San Giulio Island (drinks not included)
- Guided visit of the Carthusian Monastery of Pavia (HD)
- 3 overnights in double/twin standard room in ancient village of XI century in Vigoleno area, HB treatment - Antico Borgo Di Tambiano Castello – Relais di Charme or similar
- Guided visit of Fontanellato and of the castle (2H)
- Entrance fee for the castle of Fontanellato
- Guided visit of Parma HD
- Lunch in a typical restaurant in Fontanellato (drinks not included)
- Guided visit of Vigoleno and of the castle (2H)
- Entrance fee for the Castle of Vigoleno
- Visit of a farm in Vigoleno with tasting of typical products

PACKAGE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- City tax (to be paid locally where applies- approx. Euro 1.5 per person per day)
- Drinks at meals
- Entrance fees (unless otherwise specified)
- Extra, tips and anything else is not listed under "Package includes"

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES (On Request)

- Ferry boat cruise from Orta San Giulio to Omegna (round trip - approx. 50 min.)
- Visit in dairy and tasting of the famous Parmigiano Reggiano and other typical products
- Fidenza outlet village and time at leisure for shopping
- Wellness and relax in the Spa Center

Legend

- B Breakfast
- L Lunch

