Como

Lombardy · Italy

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Como sits at the southern tip of Lake Como, where the lake meets a compact walled city. Inside the old Roman street grid you find a marble cathedral, Romanesque churches and quiet squares. Outside the walls, a lakefront promenade leads past villas and gardens, and wooded hills rise straight from the water.

The city works well as a base. Trains reach Milan in under an hour, and boats and buses leave from the waterfront for the lake villages. Como was the home of *Alessandro Volta*, the inventor of the electric battery, and of both *Pliny the Elder* and *Pliny the Younger*. It has been a centre of silk weaving for centuries, and silk is still made and sold here.

When to visit

September and October are the best months: days are still warm, the lake is calm and the summer crowds have thinned. May is warm. June to August is hot and humid, with frequent afternoon thunderstorms. Winter is cool and grey, and some boat services run less often.

The biggest annual event is the **Città dei Balocchi** Christmas festival, which runs from late November into early January. Light projections, an ice rink, markets and concerts fill the old town and the lakefront.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for sightseeing	7° / 12° Feels like 4°	0° / -8°	Dry air · Calm winds
February	Fair Fair for hiking	9° / 16° Feels like 6°	1° / -7°	Dry air · Calm winds
March	Good Good for hiking	13° / 19°	5° / -2°	Dry air · Calm winds
April	Good Good for hiking	17° / 23°	9° / 3°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
May	Good Good for sightseeing	21° / 27°	13° / 8°	17 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
June	Good Good for sightseeing	26° / 31°	18° / 12°	15 rainy days · Humid air · Calm winds
July	Good Good for sightseeing	27° / 31°	19° / 13°	Muggy, humid air · Calm winds
August	Good Good for sightseeing	27° / 32°	19° / 14°	Muggy, humid air · Calm winds
September	Great Great for sightseeing	23° / 28°	15° / 9°	Calm winds
October	Great Great for sightseeing	19° / 24°	11° / 5°	12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
November	Good Good for hiking	13° / 19°	6° / -1°	Dry air · Calm winds
December	Poor Poor for hiking	8° / 13° Feels like 5°	1° / -7°	Dry air · Calm winds

Best months: September, October

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Top sights



A Duomo di Como took more than 350 years to build, from 1396 to 1770. The result mixes Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque styles. Look for the statues of the two Plinys beside the main door, then step inside to see the tapestries and the high dome.

Next door, B Broletto was Como's town hall from 1215. Its facade is striped in white, grey and red marble.

The C Como-Brunate Funicular has climbed from the lakefront to Brunate since 1894. The ride takes about seven minutes, and the terraces at the top look straight down over the city and the lake.

D Villa Olmo is a neoclassical villa built between 1797 and 1812, now owned by the city. Its lakeside garden is free to enter, and the villa itself opens for exhibitions.

E Lino Gelpi Promenade is the lakeside path that links the city centre with Villa Olmo. It is flat and shaded in places, with views across the water to Brunate.

F Tempio Voltiano is a small domed museum on the lakefront, opened in 1928. It holds *Alessandro Volta*'s original instruments, including early versions of his battery.

G Basilica di Sant'Abbondio is a Romanesque church consecrated in 1095, a short walk south of the walls. Its two bell towers and its 14th-century apse frescoes make it the city's finest old church.

H ex Casa del Fascio is a key building of Italian Rationalism, designed by *Giuseppe Terragni* and finished in 1936. It is still used by the Guardia di Finanza, so you see it from the square behind the cathedral.

Within the walls, I Basilica di San Fedele is a Romanesque church in a small square, and J Porta Torre is the 40-metre gate tower of 1192 that once guarded the road to Milan.

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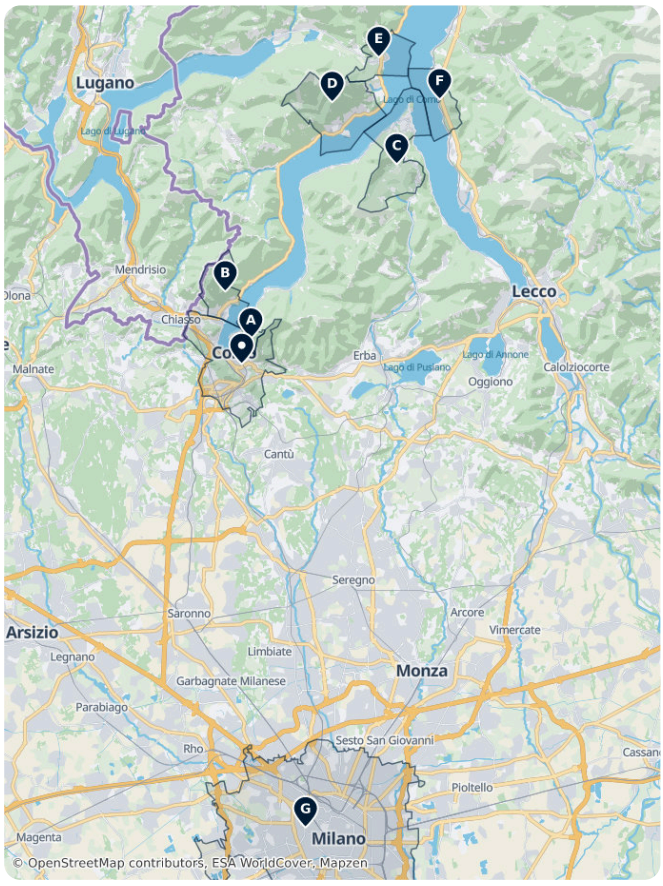
What to experience

Some of the best moments in Como happen on the water or above it.

- **Take a boat along the lake**: even a short trip to Cernobbio and back shows the villas from the water, which is how they were built to be seen.
- **Walk to the end of the breakwater**: at the end of the Diga Foranea pier stands The Life Electric, a steel sculpture by *Daniel Libeskind* in honour of Volta. The view back to the city is one of the best in Como.
- **Join the evening passeggiata**: in the early evening, local people walk the lakefront between Piazza Cavour and Villa Olmo, then stop for an aperitivo. Join them for an hour.
- **Skate at the Christmas festival**: from late November to early January, the Città dei Balocchi festival brings an ice rink, light shows and market stalls to the old town and the lakefront.
- **Hike to Castello Baradello**: a steep path climbs from the south of the city to Castello del Baradello, a tower rebuilt by *Frederick Barbarossa* in 1158, with wide views over Como and the plain.

Day trips

Boats, buses and trains from Como reach most of the lake and the nearby cities in an hour or less.



- Ⓐ Brunate is 7 minutes up by funicular. Walk about 30 minutes further to Faro Voltiano, a lighthouse built in 1927 for the centenary of Volta's death, with views over the lake and the Alps.
- Ⓑ Cernobbio is the first village up the western shore, about 15 to 20 minutes by bus or boat. It is known for its lakefront and for the grand Villa d'Este hotel.
- Ⓒ Bellagio sits on the point where the lake divides into its three arms. It takes about 45 minutes by fast boat or about 1 hour by the C130 bus, and longer by slow boat.
- Ⓓ Tremezzina, with the gardens of Villa Carlotta, and Ⓔ Menaggio are on the western shore. The C110 bus takes about an hour to Menaggio.
- Ⓕ Varenna is a pretty village on the eastern shore. Take the boat to Bellagio and then the short ferry across the lake; allow about 1 hour 15 minutes or more each way.
- Lugano, the Swiss lakeside city, is about 40 minutes away by direct train from Como San Giovanni. Bring your passport or ID card.
- Ⓖ Milan is about 40 minutes by train from Como San Giovanni, easily done as a day trip.

Where to explore

Como is the gateway to the lake and an easy base for the rest of Lombardy.

- **Lake Como**: Lake Como has its own guide. The villages closest to the city are Cernobbio and Laglio on the western shore, with Bellagio, Tremezzina, Menaggio and Varenna further north.
- **Cities of Lombardy**: Milan and Monza are south of Como, and Bergamo is to the east.

Getting there

- **By air**: Milan Malpensa is the most practical airport. Take the Malpensa Express to Saronno (about 18 minutes) and change to a Trenord train to Como Lago. Allow 1 to 1.5 hours in total. From Milan Linate, take metro M4 to San Babila, change to M1 for Cadorna, and take a Trenord train to Como Lago.
- **By train from Milan**: trains from Milano Centrale reach Como San Giovanni in about 40 minutes, roughly every hour. Trenord trains from Milano Cadorna reach Como Lago, by the lakefront, in about 50 to 60 minutes, about every 30 minutes. Trenord
- **By train from Switzerland**: regional TILO trains and EuroCity trains link Como San Giovanni with Chiasso and Lugano, about 40 minutes to Lugano.
- **Stations**: Como San Giovanni is about a 15-minute walk from the lake, down the hill. Como Lago is right by the waterfront.

Getting around

- **On foot**: the walled old town and the lakefront are compact and flat. Most sights are within a 15-minute walk of Piazza Cavour.
- **City buses**: ASF Autolinee runs the city and lake buses. Tap a contactless bank card or phone on the green validator when you board. A city ticket costs €2 for 90 minutes. ASF Autolinee – pay on board
- **Lake buses**: the C110 runs up the western shore to Menaggio, and the C130 goes to Bellagio. Buses leave from the bus station by Como Lago and from Como San Giovanni.
- **Boats**: ferries and hydrofoils leave from the pier in front of Piazza Cavour. On most boats you can tap a contactless bank card or phone on the validator on board, with no extra fee. Tell the crew first, and tap out when you leave the boat. Fast boats and reduced fares need a ticket from the office. Navigazione Laghi
- **Funicular**: the Como-Brunate Funicular leaves from Piazza Alcide De Gasperi, at the eastern end of the lakefront.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The walled old town and the lakefront are flat and compact; most sights are within a 15-minute walk of Piazza Cavour.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

The lakefront promenade is pleasant by bike, but the old town is pedestrian and the roads out of the city are steep and busy.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: not for the city. Trains, boats and buses cover the city and the lake well. The narrow lakeside roads are slow and crowded in summer, and parking in the lake villages is scarce.
- **Parking**: the walled centre is a restricted traffic zone (ZTL) watched by cameras. Leave the car in one of the large paid car parks just outside the walls, or at your hotel if it offers parking.
- **Restrictions**: do not drive into the ZTL unless your hotel registers your number plate. Fines arrive by post, even for rental cars.

Food & drink

Como's food comes from the lake and the hills. Look for **missoltini** (salted and dried shad, usually grilled and served with polenta), perch fillets fried in butter and sage with risotto, and polenta with local cheeses in the colder months.

The best area to eat is the old town inside the walls. The streets around Piazza San Fedele and Via Vittorio Emanuele II have many small restaurants, cafés and wine bars. Lakefront restaurants have the views, but often charge more for less. Aperitivo hour, from about 6 to 8 pm, is popular in the bars around the cathedral.

What to eat & drink

LUNCH

Pizza Margherita
Thin-crust pizza topped with tomato, mozzarella, and basil, invented in Naples and still best there.

DINNER

Spaghetti alla Carbonara
Pasta with egg, cured pork cheek (guanciale), pecorino cheese, and black pepper, a Roman classic.

Risotto alla Milanese
Creamy saffron-infused rice dish from Milan, often served alongside braised veal shank.

Lasagna · Lasagne al Forno
Layered baked pasta with ragu, bechamel, and cheese, a staple of Emilia-Romagna cooking.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Prosciutto and Cheese · Prosciutto e Formaggio
Cured ham paired with regional cheeses, a common antipasto plate found nationwide.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Gelato
Dense, slow-churned Italian ice cream, traditionally lower in fat and air than American-style ice cream.

Tiramisu · Tiramisù
Layered dessert of coffee-soaked ladyfingers and mascarpone cream, dusted with cocoa.

DRINKS

Espresso · Caffè
A short, strong shot of coffee drunk quickly, usually standing at a bar counter.

Wine · Vino
Italy is one of the world's largest wine producers, with regional styles from Piedmont's Barolo to Tuscany's Chianti.

Aperol Spritz
A bittersweet orange aperitif mixed with prosecco and soda water, a staple of the early-evening aperitivo.

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Safety & health

Como is a safe city. The main risks are pickpockets on crowded boats, at the funicular and at the stations in summer, so keep valuables in a closed bag.

The lakefront by Piazza Cavour can flood after very heavy rain. Paths to Brunate and Castello Baradello are steep; wear proper shoes. The lake water is cold and has boat traffic, so swim only at the official lidos.

History

The Romans moved Como to its present site in the 1st century BC and named it Novum Comum. The street grid of the old town still follows the Roman plan. You can see the remains of the Roman baths at Terme Romane, which sit under a multi-storey car park.

In the Middle Ages, Como was an independent city and a rival of Milan. After a ten-year war, Milan destroyed the city in 1127. Emperor *Frederick Barbarossa* then helped Como rebuild. The town added new walls and the gate tower Porta Torre, and Barbarossa rebuilt the hilltop Castello del Baradello. Broletto was built in 1215 as the seat of the free city's government.

From 1335, Como came under Milan's rule. In the 1400s the new cathedral rose next to the old town hall. In the 18th and 19th centuries, silk and science shaped the city. *Alessandro Volta* was born here in 1745 and invented the electric battery. Como's silk mills grew into one of the world's leading silk industries. In the 1930s, architect *Giuseppe Terragni* gave the city some of Italy's most important modern buildings.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Italy at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY



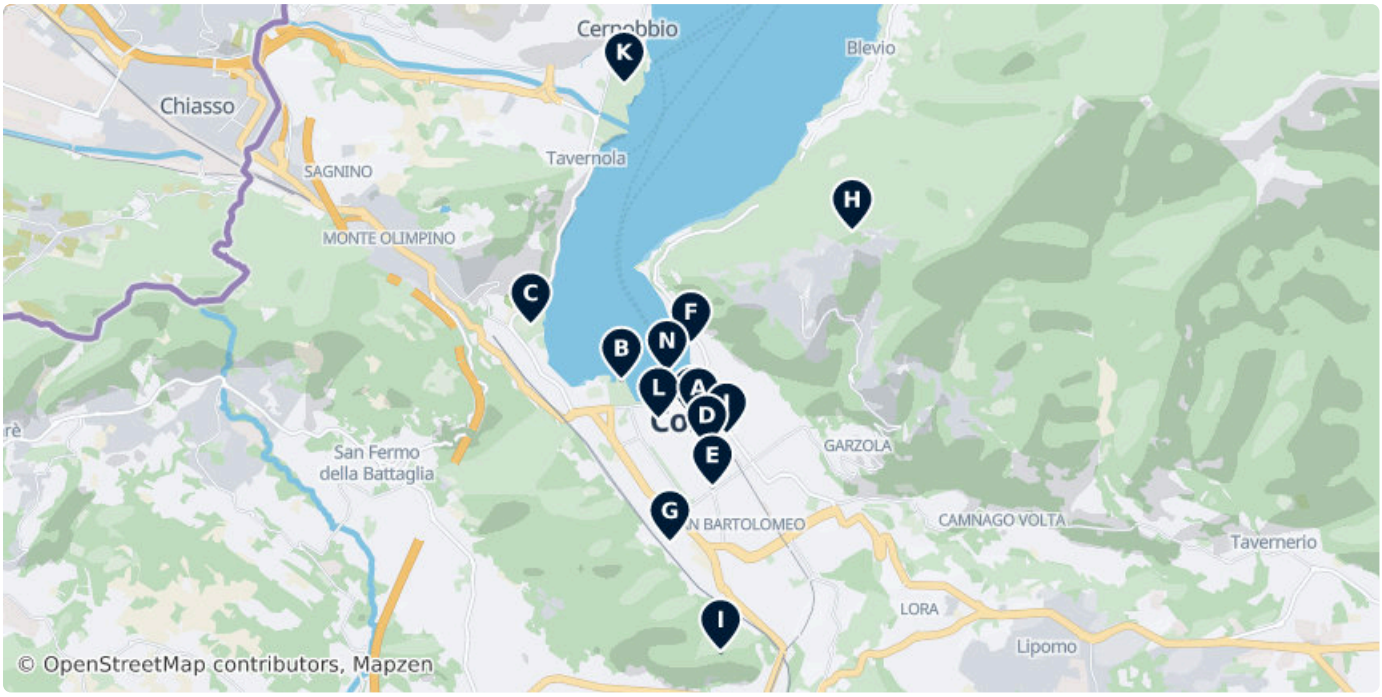
Type C / Type F / Type L
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
Italian

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Como Highlights

From the Duomo and Volta's temple to lakeside villas and the Brunate funicular, the essential sights of Como.





A Cathedral of Como

This Catholic cathedral is the seat of the Bishop of Como and the city's primary place of worship, located directly on Piazza Duomo.

Piazza Duomo, 6, 22100 Como, Italy (45.81178, 9.08368)

Mo–Sa	10:30–17:00
Su	13:00–16:30

cattedraledicomo.it/index.php/it/, +39 031 3312275



B Volta Temple

Set in a neoclassical lakeside building, this museum is dedicated to Como native Alessandro Volta, the prolific scientist and inventor of the electric battery.

Viale Guglielmo Marconi, 22100 Como (45.81478, 9.07528)

Mo	Closed
Tu–Su	10:00–18:00

oggiacomo.it/scoprire/musei/tempio-vol... , +39 031 574705



C Villa Olmo

This neoclassical villa on the shores of Lake Como serves as an exhibition space surrounded by parkland.

Via Simone Cantoni, 1, 22100 Como, Italy (45.81898, 9.06537)

Tu–Su 10:00–18:00

+39 31 571979



D Basilica of San Fedele

Located in the historic center, this Romanesque church dates from 1120 and stands as one of the city's significant places of worship.

Piazza S. Fedele, 22100 Como, Italy (45.80969, 9.08459)

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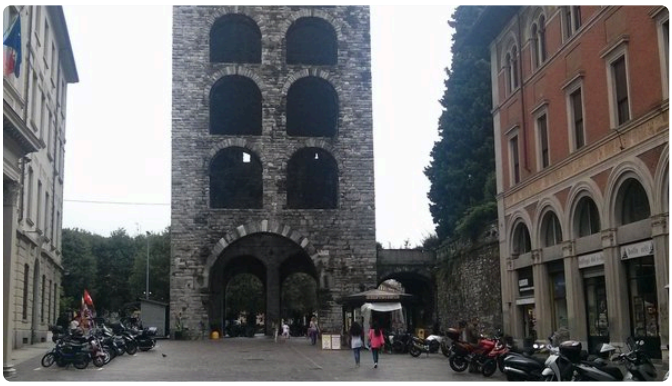
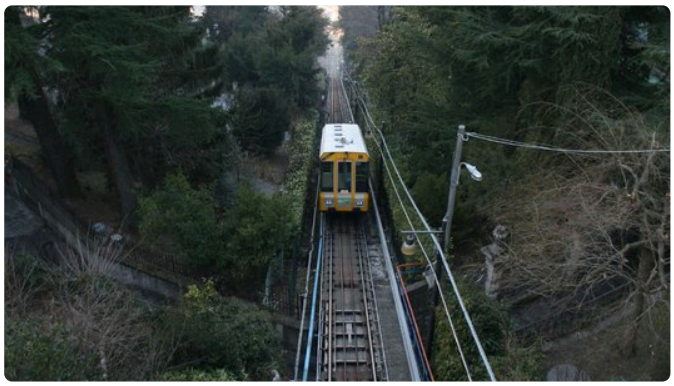


E Porta Torre

This fortified tower and medieval city gate once formed part of Como's historic defensive fortifications.

Via Cesare Cantù, 22100 Como, Italy (45.80666, 9.08520)



F Como-Brunate Funicular

Historic funicular railway that climbs from Como's lakefront to the hilltop village of Brunate in about seven minutes, with wide views over the lake.

4 Piazza Alcide De Gasperi, Como 22100, Italy (45.81755, 9.08286)

funicolarecomo.it



G Church of Sant'Abbondio

Dating back to the 11th century, this Romanesque-style Catholic basilica is one of the historic churches of Como.

Via Regina Teodolinda, 35, Como, Italy (45.80244, 9.08055)

diocesidicomo.it



H Faro Voltiano (Volta Lighthouse)

Situated up in Brunate overlooking the region, this monument and lighthouse tower is dedicated to Alessandro Volta.

Via Giacomo Scalini, 22034 Brunate CO, Italy (45.82608, 9.10045)

lombardiabeniculturali.it/architetture/schede/CO250-007...



I Castello Baradello

Perched on a 430-meter-high hill next to the city, this historic military fortification overlooks Como and the surrounding landscape.

22100, Italy (45.79416, 9.08609)



J Terme Romane

This central archaeological site preserves the remains of an ancient Roman thermal bath complex used from the latter half of the 1st century AD.

3 Viale Lecco, Como 22100, Italy (45.81064, 9.08674)



K Villa Erba

Located on the western shore of Lake Como in Cernobbio, this 19th-century villa with classic architecture serves as a park, exhibition space, and filming location.

Largo Luchino Visconti, 4, 22012 Cernobbio, Italy (45.83727, 9.07557)

lakecomotravel.com/villa-erba-lake-como/



L Monument of Alessandro Volta

Located on Piazza Alessandro Volta, this monument honors the renowned physicist and Como native.

Piazza Alessandro Volta, 22100 Como, Italy (45.81179, 9.07930)



M Broletto

Situated on Piazza Guido Grimoldi adjacent to the cathedral, this structure is Como's most significant medieval civic building.

15 Piazza Guido Grimoldi, Como 22100, Italy (45.81187, 9.08303)



N Life Electric

Completed in 2015 along the lake breakwater, this contemporary sculpture is dedicated to physicist Alessandro Volta.

Diga Foranea Piero Caldirola, 22100, Italy (45.81537, 9.08026)

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