

Sirmione

Lombardy · Italy

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Sirmione sits on a long, narrow peninsula at the southern end of Lake Garda. The old town fills the tip of the peninsula. You enter it over a drawbridge, past a medieval castle that stands in the water. Beyond the lanes, olive groves lead to the ruins of a large Roman villa and to flat white rocks in shallow, clear water.

Hot sulphurous water rises from a spring in the lake bed, and Sirmione has long been a spa town. The Roman poet *Catullus* wrote about the peninsula, and the opera singer *Maria Callas* later owned a villa here. Sirmione suits a short stay of two or three nights, a spa break, or a base for the southern shore of the lake. Day visitors crowd the old town from late morning, so evenings and early mornings are the calmest times.

When to visit

June, September and early October give warm weather with fewer crowds than midsummer. July and August are hot and humid, and the old town is very busy, especially at weekends. Spring is mild but often rainy. Winter is cool and grey, and some hotels and restaurants close until spring.

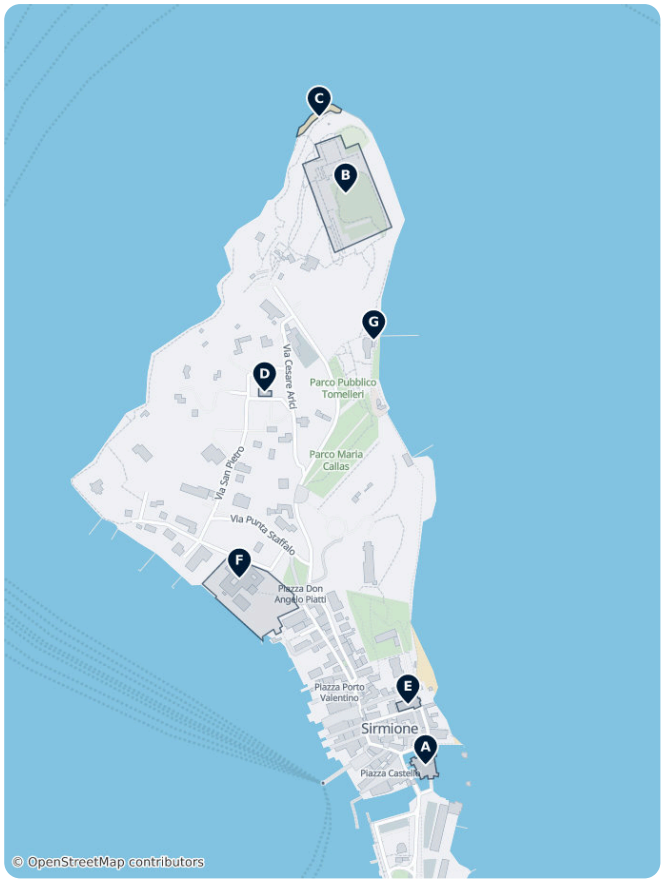
For a special date, plan around the Mille Miglia, the famous classic car race. It passes through Sirmione each year in June.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for sightseeing	7° / 11°	2° / -2°	Dry air · Calm winds
February	Poor Poor for sightseeing	9° / 14°	2° / -2°	Dry air · Calm winds
March	Fair Fair for sightseeing	13° / 19°	5° / 1°	Dry air · Calm winds
April	Good Good for sightseeing	17° / 23°	8° / 4°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
May	Good Good for sightseeing	22° / 27°	13° / 9°	15 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
June	Great Great for sightseeing	26° / 32°	18° / 14°	Humid air · Calm winds
July	Good Good for sightseeing	28° / 33°	20° / 17°	Humid air · Calm winds
August	Good Good for the beach	28° / 34°	21° / 17°	Humid air · Calm winds
September	Great Great for sightseeing	23° / 28°	17° / 13°	Calm winds
October	Great Great for sightseeing	18° / 23°	12° / 8°	Dry air · Calm winds
November	Fair Fair for sightseeing	12° / 17°	7° / 2°	Dry air · Calm winds
December	Poor Poor for sightseeing	8° / 12°	3° / -1°	Dry air · Calm winds

Best months: June, September, October

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land · 1996–2025

Top sights



A Scaliger Castle guards the only entrance to the old town. It is surrounded by water and keeps a rare fortified harbour inside its walls. Climb the walls and the main tower for the best views over the rooftops and the lake.

B Grottoes of Catullus are the ruins of a huge Roman villa at the tip of the peninsula. Paths lead through arches and olive groves to cliff-top views, and a small museum shows finds from the site.

C Jamaica Beach lies below the Roman ruins. Instead of sand, it has smooth slabs of pale rock in shallow, light-blue water, and entry is free.

D Chiesa di San Pietro in Mavino stands on the highest point of the peninsula, among cypresses and olive trees. It is the oldest church in Sirmione, and its walls keep frescoes from 1321.

E Chiesa di Santa Maria Maggiore is the 15th-century parish church, set right by the lake. Look for the portico with five arches in front of the entrance.

F Aquaria is the town's thermal spa. Its warm pools use the local sulphurous water, and an infinity pool looks out over the lake.

G Lido delle Bionde is a free beach in a small cove on the east shore, with a jetty and a bar. It is a quieter place to swim than the old town shore.

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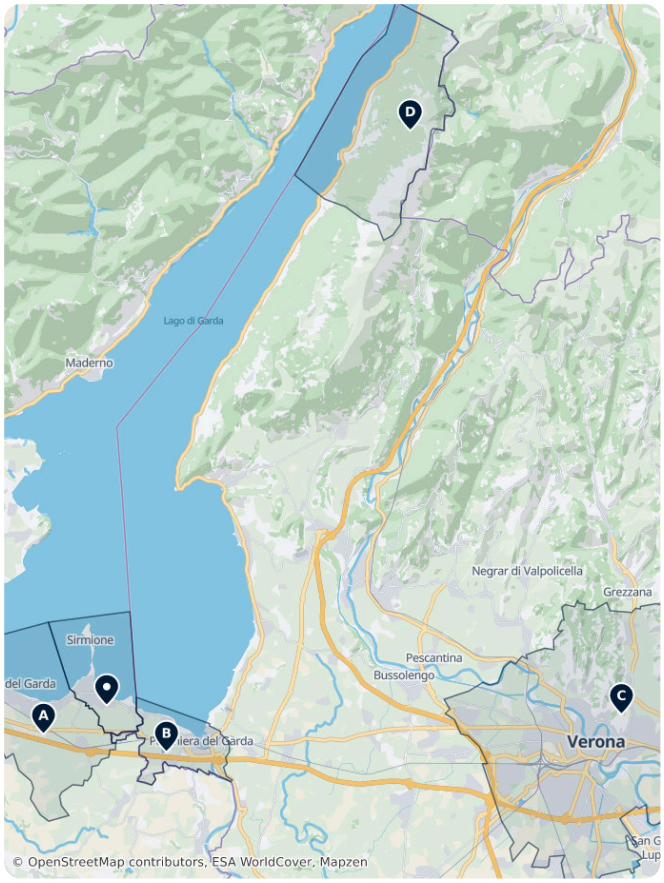
What to experience

Most of what makes Sirmione special happens on or in the water.

- **Circle the peninsula by boat**: Small motorboats leave from the jetties near the castle for a short tour around the tip. You pass the Roman ruins, the rock slabs and the villa where *Maria Callas* lived.
- **Soak in thermal water**: Spend a few hours in the warm sulphurous pools at Aquaria. An evening ticket is a good way to end a hot day. Book online in advance.
- **Swim from the rock slabs**: Go to Jamaica Beach early on a summer morning, before the crowds arrive. Bring water shoes, because the rocks are slippery.

Day trips

The southern shore of the lake is full of easy trips, and Verona and Mantua are close enough for a day.



- A Desenzano del Garda — about 20 minutes by boat or 15 minutes by bus. A lively lakeside town with a harbour, a castle and a Roman villa with fine floor mosaics.
- B Peschiera del Garda — about 15 minutes by car or bus. The old town sits inside star-shaped Venetian fortress walls, part of a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- Lazise — about 25 minutes by car, or longer by boat. A small walled village on the Veneto shore, with a castle and a lakeside promenade.
- Borghetto — about 25 minutes by car. A tiny medieval village of water mills on the Mincio river, in the municipality of Valeggio sul Mincio. The area is famous for handmade tortellini.
- C Verona — about 40 minutes by car, or by bus and train via Desenzano or Peschiera. See the Roman Arena, where an opera festival runs every summer, and the old town on the river.
- Mantua — about 1 hour by car. A quiet Renaissance city of lakes and palaces, listed by UNESCO.
- D Malcesine — about 1 hour 15 minutes by car along the east shore. A castle above the water and a cable car up Monte Baldo for mountain views over the whole lake.

Where to explore

Lake Garda has its own guide, with the whole lake and all its shores.

Nearby on the lake, Desenzano del Garda and Peschiera del Garda are the closest towns. Further north on the west shore are Salò, Gardone Riviera and Limone sul Garda. On the east shore, Malcesine sits below Monte Baldo.

For city breaks, Verona and Brescia are both under an hour away. Bergamo and Milan are a short train ride further west. Other lakes in the region include Lake Iseo and Lake Como.

Getting there

- **By air**: Verona Villafranca Airport (VRN) is the closest, about 40 minutes by car or taxi. By public transport, take the airport bus to Verona Porta Nuova station, then a train and a local bus. Milan Bergamo Airport (BGY) is about 1 hour 25 minutes by car. Verona Airport
- **By train**: Sirmione has no station. The nearest are Desenzano del Garda and Peschiera del Garda, on the Milan–Venice line. Regional and some high-speed trains stop at both. From Milan to Desenzano takes about 50 minutes by fast train or about 1 hour 20 minutes by regional train. Verona is about 15–25 minutes away. From either station, take a bus or taxi to Sirmione. Trenitalia
- **By bus**: Arriva line LN026 runs between Brescia and Verona and stops in Sirmione. It leaves directly from Verona Porta Nuova station. FlixBus also serves the town. Arriva Brescia
- **By boat**: Public ferries link Sirmione with Desenzano del Garda (about 20 minutes), Peschiera del Garda and other lake towns. Services are frequent from spring to autumn and reduced in winter. Navigazione Laghi
- **By car**: Leave the A4 motorway at the Sirmione exit. See the driving section for parking, because the old town is closed to most traffic.

Getting around

- **On foot**: The old town is small and car-free. The walk from the castle to the Roman villa at the tip takes about 20 minutes, mostly on a gentle slope.
- **Shuttle bus**: From April to October, a shuttle bus runs from the Colombare car parks to the old town. Buy tickets in the Arriva app, at machines at the main stops, or on board at a higher fare. On the shuttle you can also tap a contactless bank card or phone on the validator. Sirmione public transport
- **Cycling**: A lakeside promenade links the old town with Colombare and Lugana and is good for an easy ride. Do not cycle in the crowded old-town lanes.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The car-free old town and the path to the Roman villa are easy to walk; distances on the peninsula are short.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

The lakeside promenade to Colombare and Lugana is good for easy rides, but the old-town lanes are too crowded to cycle.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: Not for the old town, which you explore on foot. A car is useful for wineries and lake towns that boats and buses serve less often.
- **Parking**: The main car park for visitors is Piazzale Monte Baldo, just before the old town. In summer, the Colombare car parks are a calmer option, with a shuttle bus to the castle. Expect to pay, and the SirmioPark website shows free spaces in real time.
- **Restrictions**: The old town is a **limited traffic zone (ZTL)**. Only vehicles registered in advance may enter, such as cars of guests at hotels inside the walls. On some busy days the centre is closed to all traffic in the afternoon. Ask your hotel to register your car before you arrive.
- **Traffic**: The single road onto the peninsula gets jammed on summer weekends. Arrive early or come by boat.

Food & drink

Look for fish from the lake, such as whitefish (lavarello) and trout, often grilled or served with pasta. Garda olive oil is light and mild. The local white wine is Lugana, made from vineyards on the clay soils just south of the peninsula. Tortellini from nearby Valeggio sul Mincio appear on many menus.

Restaurants in the old-town lanes are busy and often expensive for what they serve. For better value, eat in Colombare or Lugana, just outside the old town, or at a wine estate in the Lugana countryside.

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

Sirmione is very safe. The main risk is pickpockets in the crowded lanes and around the drawbridge on summer days, so keep bags closed and phones out of back pockets.

When swimming, the rock slabs at the tip are slippery and the lake bed can drop quickly. Stay inside the buoyed swimming areas, because motorboats pass close to the shore. In July and August, carry water and avoid long walks in the midday heat. Mosquitoes are common on summer evenings near the water.

History

The Romans called the peninsula Sirmio. The poet *Catullus*, born in nearby Verona, praised it in his verses, and his family owned a villa here. The great villa at Grottoes of Catullus was built around the end of the 1st century BC. It is named after him, although no proof links him to this building.

In the 8th century, under the Lombards, Sirmione was an important local centre. Chiesa di San Pietro in Mavino dates from this time and is still the town's oldest church. The della Scala family, lords of Verona, began building Scaliger Castle in 1277 to control the lake. The small church of Church of Sant'Anna della Rocca stands beside the castle, at the old gate to the town.

Venice ruled Sirmione from 1405 to 1797, followed by Austria, before it became part of Italy in the 19th century. Later, the hot spring in the lake bed was piped ashore, and Sirmione grew into a spa town. In the 1950s, *Maria Callas* owned a villa here, and the town still celebrates her memory.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Italy at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY

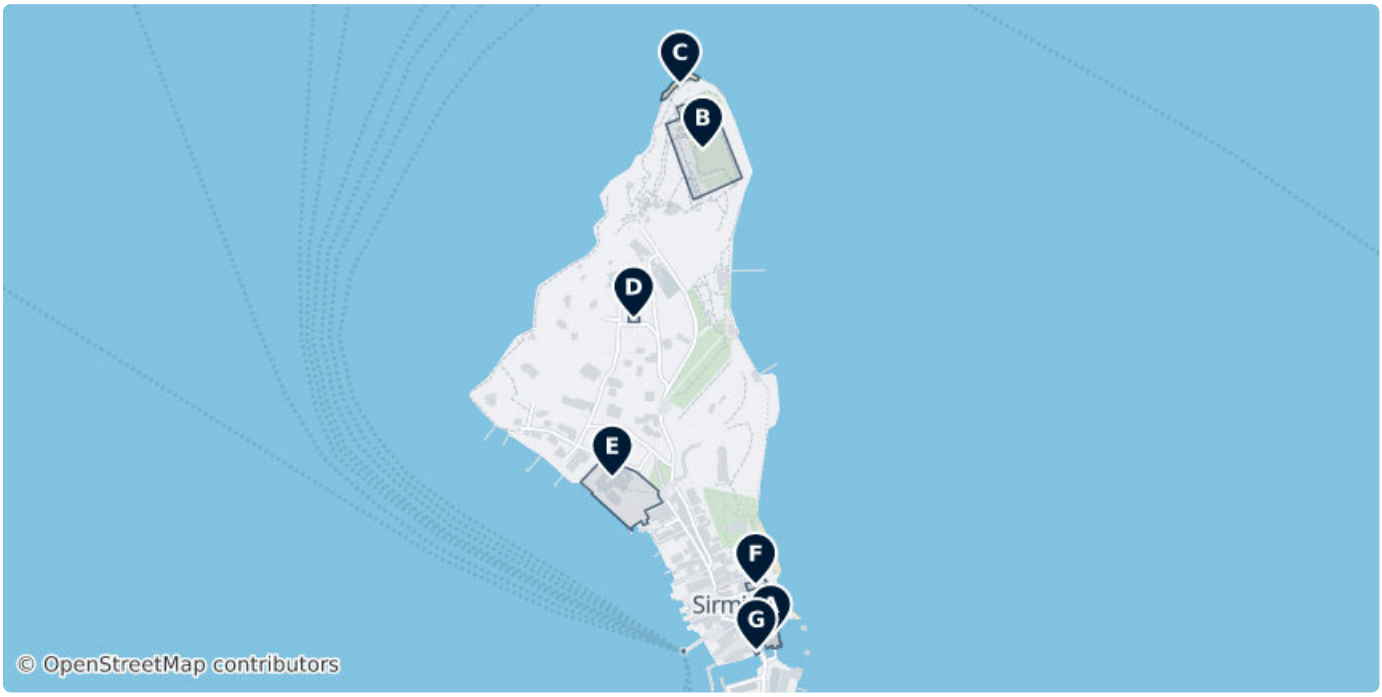
Type C / Type F / Type L
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
Italian

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Sirmione Unmissables

Sirmione occupies a narrow peninsula on Lake Garda, anchored by the Scaliger Castle and the Grottoes of Catullus, a vast Roman villa complex. The town's history is reflected in its churches, including the frescoed walls of San Pietro in Mavino and the 15th-century Santa Maria Maggiore. Beyond its ruins and churches, Sirmione is known for its sulphurous thermal springs and the flat rock slabs of Jamaica Beach.





A Scaliger Castle

The Scaligero Castle is a fortress from the Scaliger era, access point to the historical centre of Sirmione, on Lake Garda.

Viale Guglielmo Marconi 2, 25019 Sirmione, Brescia, Italy (45.49229, 10.60853)

Mo	Closed
Tu–Sa	08:30–19:30
Su	08:30–13:30

+39 030 916468



B Grottoes of Catullus

Grottoes of Catullus is the name given to the ruins of a Roman villa built between the end of the 1st century BC and the beginning of the 1st century AD, at the tip of the peninsula.

Via Catullo, Sirmione, Lombardy 25019, Italy (45.50133, 10.60673)

+39030916157

C Jamaica Beach

Located at the tip of the peninsula, this beach is characterized by large, flat white rock slabs submerged in shallow water, accessible via a path near the Roman ruins.

25019, Italy (45.50254, 10.60614)



D Chiesa di San Pietro in Mavino

Romanesque church dating back to the 8th century, rebuilt in the 14th century. It features a high bell tower and interior walls decorated with medieval frescoes.

15 Via San Pietro in Mavino, 25019, Italy (45.49819, 10.60491)

parrocchiadisirmione.it



E Aquaria

Thermal spa of Terme di Sirmione that uses the town's natural sulphurous waters, with indoor and outdoor pools and saunas overlooking the lake.

Via Punta Staffalo, 25019 Sirmione BS, Italy (45.49524, 10.60434)

Mo–Th	09:00–22:00
Fr–Sa	09:00–24:00
Su	09:00–22:00



F Chiesa di Santa Maria Maggiore

15th-century parish church by the lake, fronted by a portico of five arches, with side altars and frescoes inside.

32 Via Santa Maria Maggiore, Sirmione 25019, Italy (45.49325, 10.60814)

parrocchiadisirmione.it



Church of Sant'Anna della Rocca

Small 14th-century church beside the Scaliger Castle at the historic entrance to the old town, with a Baroque altar and fragments of frescoes.

2 Piazza Castello, Sirmione 25019, Italy
(45.49203, 10.60815)

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DATA SOURCES

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- Chiesa di San Pietro in Mavino — Lolita Kalnina, cc-by-sa-4.0
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