



HOTEL VILLA DELLE ROSE ****

Novara (Nuàra in the local dialect) is the capital city of the province of Novara in the Piedmont region in northwest Italy, to the west of Milan. With c. 105,000 inhabitants, it is the second most populous city in Piedmont after Turin and it is the second urban area of the Region Piedmont with 190,000 inhabitants. It is an important crossroads for commercial traffic along the routes from Milan to Turin and from Genoa to Switzerland. Novara lies between the rivers Agogna and Terdoppio in northeastern Piedmont, 50 km from Milan and 95 km from Turin.

Roman walls in Novara

Novara was founded in ancient times by the Romans. Its name is formed from Nov, meaning "new", and Aria, the name the Cisalpine Gauls used for the surrounding region.

Ancient Novaria, which dates to the time of the Ligures, was a municipium and was situated on the road from Vercellae (Vercelli) to (Mediolanum) Milan. Its position on perpendicular roads (still intact today) dates to the time of the Romans. After the city was destroyed in 386 by Magnus Maximus for having supported his rival Valentinian II, it was rebuilt by Theodosius I. Subsequently, it was sacked by Radagaisus (in 405) and Attila (in 452).



Under the Lombards, Novara became a duchy; under Charles the Fat, a countship. Novara came to enjoy the rights of a free imperial city. In 1110, it was conquered by Henry V and destroyed, but in 1167 it joined the Lombard League. At the end of the 12th century, it accepted the protection of Milan and became practically a dominion of the Visconti and later of the Sforza. In the Battle of Novara in 1513, Swiss mercenaries defending Novara for the Sforzas of Milan routed the French troops besieging the city. This defeat ended the French invasion of Italy in the War of the League of Cambrai.

In 1706, Novara, which had long ago been promised by Filippo Maria Visconti to Amadeus VIII of Savoy, was occupied by Savoyard troops. With the Peace of Utrecht, the city, together with Milan, became part of the Habsburg Empire. After its occupation in 1734, Novara passed, in the following year, to the House of Savoy.



The Ossuary of Bicocca, in memory of the Battle of Novara

After Napoleon's campaign in Italy, Novara became the capital of the Department of the Agogna, but was then reassigned to the House of Savoy in 1814. In 1821, it was the site of a battle in which regular Sardinian troops defeated the Piedmontese constitutional liberals. In the even larger Battle of Novara in 1849, the Sardinian army was defeated by the Austrian army of Field Marshal Joseph Radetzky von Radetz. This defeat led to the abdication of Charles Albert of Sardinia and to the partial occupation of the city by the Austrians. The defeat of the Sardinians can be seen as the

beginning of the Italian unification movement.

A decree in 1859 created the province of Novara, which then included the present-day provinces of Vercelli, Biella, and Verbano-Cusio-Ossola.

The city of Novara had a population of 25,144 in 1861. Industrialisation during the 20th century brought an increase in the city's population to 102,088 in 1981. The city's population has changed little in subsequent years.

Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, former president of Italy and Italian senator for life, was born in Novara in 1918.



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Main sights

Novara's sights can be divided into two groupings. The city's most important sights lie within its historic centre, the area once enclosed by the city walls. However, several important sights also lie outside the line of the former city walls.

Historic centre

The old urban core makes up the "Historic centre", situated in the district of the same name. Novara once had an encircling wall, which was demolished to permit urban development. Of the old wall there remains only the Barriera Albertina, a complex of two neo-classical buildings that constituted the gate of entry to the city, the required passageway for those who traveled from Turin to Milan. After their removal, the walls were replaced by the present-day baluardi, the broad, tree-lined boulevards that surround the Historic Centre.



The cupola of the Basilica of San Gaudenzio, symbol of Novara, is 121 metres in height.

The most imposing monument in the city is the Basilica of San Gaudenzio, with a cupola 121 metres in height, designed by Alessandro Antonelli and constructed in 1888. The bell tower is also of particular interest; it was designed by Benedetto Alfieri, uncle of the more famous Vittorio Alfieri.



Novara Cathedral



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The centre of the religious life of the city is the Novara Cathedral, in the neo-classical style, also designed by Alessandro Antonelli. It rises exactly where the temple of Jupiter stood in the time of the Romans. Facing the Duomo is the oldest building in Novara today: the early Christian Battistero (Baptistry).



The Broletto

Close to the Duomo is the courtyard of the Broletto (the historic meeting place of the city council), the centre of the political life of the imperial free city of Novara. Overlooking the courtyard of the Broletto are the Palazzo del Podestà ("Palace of the Podestà"), Palazzetto dei Paratici ("Little Palace of the Paratici Family"), site of the Civic Museum and of the Gallery of Modern Art, the Palace of the City Council, and a building of the 15th century.

Not far from the Piazza della Repubblica (formerly Piazza Duomo) is the Piazza Cesare Battisti (known to Novaresi as the Piazza delle Erbe, "Herbs square"), which constitutes the exact centre of the city of Novara.

In Piazza Giacomo Matteotti stands the Palazzo Natta-Isola, seat of the province and of the prefecture of Novara. The landmark feature of this palace is its clock tower. Extending from this square is the via Fratelli Rosselli, along which is the Palazzo Cabrino, the official seat of the administrative offices of the city. As it was a Roman city, the street network of Novara is characterized by a cardo and a Decumanus Maximus, which correspond respectively to the present-day Corso Italia and Corso Cavour. The two streets cross at the so-called "Angolo delle Ore" (Corner of the Hours).

The largest square is Piazza Martiri della Libertà (formerly Piazza Castello) dominated by the equestrian statue of Victor Emmanuel II, the first king of Italy. Overlooking the Piazza Martiri are the Castello Visconteo-Sforzesco, built by the Milanese dukes Visconti and Sforza, and the Teatro Coccia. The Castello Visconteo-Sforzesco, once much larger than the complex that remains today, is surrounded by the Allea, one of the largest public gardens in Novara.

Other important squares are:

- Largo Cavour, dominated by the statue of the same name, recently restored.
- Piazza Garibaldi, the square facing the Novara Railway Station, also recently restored and featuring the statue of the hero of two worlds and by a fountain.
- Piazza Gramsci, formerly Piazza del Rosario, location, after the restoration of 2005, of the landmark statue of Icarus.



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Outside of the Baluardi



Church of San Nazzaro della Costa

Places of interest situated outside of the belt of the baluardi include the Church of San Nazzaro della Costa, with its attached abbey, restored in the 15th century by Bernardino of Siena, and the Ossuary of Bicocca, in pyramidal form, which stands in the neighbourhood of Bicocca, in memory of the fallen soldiers of the historic battle of 23 March 1849, between the Piedmontese (Sardinia) and Austrians. Worthy of note are the Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie (Saints Martino and Gaudenzio), built beginning in 1477 by the Augustinians, whose interior consists of a single nave with lateral chapels and paintings attributed to artists of the 15th century, among them Daniele de Bosis.

Festivals and events

- On 22 January of every year, Novara celebrates the Feast of San Gaudenzio (Saint Gaudentius of Novara), the patron saint of Novara. Throughout the day, it is possible to visit the tomb of the saint and to obtain the typical roasted chestnuts, also known as marroni di Cuneo ("Cuneo chestnuts").
- 23 March: Re-enactment of the 1849 Battle of Novara, with period uniforms and weapons

On 25 April, Liberation Day, as in many other Italian cities, the Novaresi organise numerous initiatives to commemorate the Italian resistance movement, and in particular, the partisans who fought around Novara and in the "Partisan Republic of the Ossola".

- Since 2001, *Giovani Espressioni* ("Young Expressions") has been held in Novara. This is a musical festival for emerging young musicians, organised by Staff Millennium, a performance agency, of which Alessandro Marchetti is the artistic director. The "Espressioni Contest" is of special importance as a showcase for emerging bands that picks a winner every year. Among the noted artists who have participated are Negramaro, Caparezza, Finley, Vallanzaska, Extrema, and Blaze Bailey.
- Since 2005, Novara hosts the "Novara Gospel Festival", that is composed by workshops, local tours, and obviously gospel concerts in the main theatre of the city. It is probably one of the most important festival of this music in Italy, also because the main event is a concert of the most appreciated gospel's singers, such as Kirk Franklin, Donnie Mc Clurkin, etc.



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The History Of Lake Maggiore

Lake Maggiore, one of the largest of our peninsula, develops on a surface of 21 square kilometers, (13 square miles) long about 65 kilometers (40 miles) with a width between 1 to 4 kilometers, (.62 to 2,5 miles) located at 194 meters (636 feet) above sea level, with a maximum depth of 372 meters (1220 feet) (Ghiffa). Its shores cover a total length of 150 kilometers (93 miles) from Canton Ticino in Switzerland to Sesto Calende (Va), reaching with its waters two regions: Piedmont and Lombardy, and three provinces: Novara, Varese, Verbano Cusio Ossola. Wedged between the pre-alps, Lake Maggiore, of clear glacial origin, is framed in its lower section by the soft hills of the "Novarese" region, and in the upper section, by high mountain peaks, some of which with perennial snow. These features make it possible that in the coastal areas the climate is temperate, milder in winter than in the inner areas and cooled down in summer by the breezes that blow on the water's surface changing its color. Thanks to its mild climate it was possible for many species of flowers and plants typical to the sub-tropical climate to adapt in the coastal areas. The populations that inhabited Lake Maggiore were in the course of the centuries quite varied, from the Celts followed the Gaelic invaders, then barbarians and subsequently the Romans and finally governed by the lordships of the Visconti, Sforza and Borromeo. Commerce was the main activity, initially only by the lake, later by land due to the construction of the first section of the public road of the Sempione at the beginning of the XIX century. By the beginning of the 1900 with the launch of the Sempione railway commerce flourished along with tourism and hotels, these activities have protracted up to date.



Town of Arona

The old town of Arona. Ancient settlement of population native of the Liguria region. Today archaeological findings give evidence of the passing of many ancient populations among which the Celts, the Romans, and the Longobards. There are signs as a confirmation of this; when in 1162 Federico Barbarossa ransacked Milan Arona and its castle, today known as "Borromeo Fortress", became a safe house for many pilgrims. Today Arona is a beautiful city dedicated to tourism, and a favorite hang out for young people due to many popular nightspots. Its strategic position set in the lower (southern) section of the Lake Maggiore, highway and rail connections with Milan, and first important city on the piedmont shores of the lake make it the ideal base to start a tour of the Lake Maggiore area. From Arona the main road of the Sempione starts, passing all town and villages of the lake, arriving up to the neighboring Switzerland.

Statue of San Carlo Borromeo Route Lake Maggiore

Office information: Tel 0322-249669

The giant statue of San Carlo Borromeo is located on the hill of San Carlo near Arona (2 km). It dominates the lake with its 24 meters of height plus an approximately another 12 meters of base. The statue was built from 1614 to 1697, designed by Giovanni Crespi Batiste called the Cerano and built by Siro Pianella and Bernardo Falcon. The statue is made in large copper's sheets and joined together by large nails. Inside there is a steep stairway that allows to go up to the top from which is possible to admire the beautiful surroundings of Arona and Lake Maggiore.





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Park of the Lagoni di Mercurago (Route Lake Maggiore)

Info Phone Natural Park of the Lagoni di Mercurago 0322-240239

The park of The Lagoni di Mercurago located in the surrounding hills of Arona near the small town of Mercurago extends in an area of about 500 hectares is one of numerous humid zones of Piedmont. There are plenty of wild species of animals: squirrels, wild rabbits, deer, falcons, and a big variety of small birds. Also there are many local plants: oaks, wallnuts, chestnuts, beech, and the typical aquatic flora of the humid zones. In the middle of the park there are several small lakes that delimit the humid zones. These lakes have been theatre of archaeological discovery of remarkable importance, datable around to IV the century. Since cars are not allowed within the premises of the Park, it is necessary to leave any motor vehicle in the parking lot located at the entrance of the Park and continue by foot. There are many trails well indicated for hiking or mountain biking.

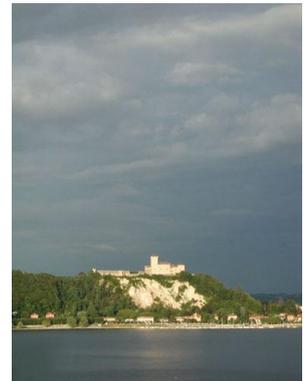
The Fortress Borromea di Arona (Rocca di Arona Lake Maggiore)

The Italian Fortress of Lake Maggiore called Fortress of Arona was once theatre of many battles, especially during the Napoleonic Wars. It dominates the lake from the cliffs above the town of Arona offering to the visitor an ancient feeling. The remainings of the fortress testifies its strategic position and importance of its location and of the many battles that took place to take control of it. It was destroyed by medieval battles with the rival Fortress of Angera located across the lake which can still be viewed in all its splendour from the site. The final stroke was given by the Napoleonic orders in the XIX century. It has now become a public park, ideal for children, nicely cared, with some small animal like ducks and geese, peacock. From its top is possible to have a nice view of the city of Arona and its surroundings, and the opposite coast of Lombardia where it is possible to admire the sheer cliffs of the Fortress of Angera.

Fortress Angera Castle (Angera Lake Maggiore Itinerary)

Office Information:0331-931300

It dominates the Lake Maggiore and it watches Arona, with its tower and its lakes. Going back to XII the century, with some successive fortification of the castellana tower in XIII the century, witness of ancient battles, is still in perfect state of conservation inside of the Castle of Angera there is also the Museum of the Doll, a thousand of dolls and games of tin, wood and of, valuable personal collection of one member of the Borromeo family.



Town of Meina

Small town on the piemontese coast of Lake Maggiore, bordering with the city of Arona. Meina has about 2600 inhabitants and a surface of 7,79 square km. It is known because the film "Hotel Meina" was filmed in (data???) inspired on the romance by Marco Nozza about the slaughter of 16 Italian Jews by hand of Nazi SS during the Second World War. Interesting the Parish Church of Santa Margherita with the bell tower and the apse with the 3 frescos of "Saint Ambrogio against the pagans" by Peracino (1817), "The glory of Saint Margherita and Saint Carlo" and "The Pestilence" both by Peretti, of the first half of the 1800th. To point out also Villa Faraggiana of the XIX century and Palace Bedone of the XVIII century.

Town of Lesa (Lake Maggiore)

Right after the town of Meina we find Lesa, a typical small coastal town locked between the lake and the hills. On the hills we find the administrative divisions of Calogna and Comnago. Lesa has about 2400 inhabitants, the city and the waterfront are preceded by the small administrative division of Solcio di Lesa where the painter Siro Penagini lived, and where there is the church of Saint Rocco, of the first decades of the XIX century. Lesa is also known as the vacation place of Alessandro Manzoni, during those vacations he met the blessed Antonio Rosmini of Stresa.



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To point out also the church of Saint Sabastiano, XII century, the church of Saint Martino, XIII century and the museum Manzoniano.

Town of Belgirate (Lake Maggiore Piedmont)

Town of 600 inhabitants – 199 s.l.m.

Belgirate is the first town in the province of Verbania just before the town of Stresa, it still preserves all the architectural features of the ancient medieval village. Belgirate is a typical coastal town, well kept with the looked after lakefront, that has seen illustrious visitors such as: Toscanini, Verga, Hemingway, Fogazzaro, Flaubert, Wagner and Stendhal. Interesting is the Romanesque church of Saint Monica, with the original bell tower of the XI century and its richly decorated interior frescoes, the work of unknown artists of Piedmont and Lombard schools. To point out baroque altar in gilded wood inlaid and decorated. The parish church with decorated baroque interiors, frescoes by Luigi Morgari (of whom are also present a series of 14 copper plates depicting the Via Crucis) and stuccoes by Luigi Secchi. Within the neighborhood of Belgirate, on the lakefront, there are several luxurious villas of the beginning of 900th owned by the upper classes of the epoch that feature beautiful and well kept gardens. To point out also the rural museum of the Baita della Libertà.

Stresa

Municipality of about 5000 inhabitants, 33 square km, 200 m above sea level. Stresa is divided between lake, hills, and mountains. It is part of the Mountain Community of the Cusio Mottarone. Since the mid sixties Stresa hosts the international centre of studies Rosmini and international events such as the musical weeks of Stresa. The beauty that sets Stresa apart, besides the renowned isles of the Borromeo gulf, Isola Bella, Isola Madre and Isola dei Pescatori, is also the presence of luxurious hotels set on the lake front. These Hotel 4 star or Luxury hotel 5 star built at the beginning of last century, during the Art Nouveau “explosion”, still maintain that style and flavour.

Beautiful Island Office Information: Beautiful Island 0323-30556

The Beautiful island (Isola Bella) is in the town **Stresa** is small island located in the Gulf of Borromeo, near Stresa a few hundred meters from the shores of Lake Maggiore. Beautiful island is characterized by the Borromeo Palace dating back to the XVII century, a place full of history and valuable artifacts and ntiques. It is considered one of the most appealing and fascinating place that Lake Maggiore has to offer. Inside the many magnificent rooms of Borromeo Palace are collected a heap of antique furniture, porcelain, rugs, tapestry. A real museum on water. Beautiful Island also features a splendid typical Italian garden built on terraces..

Mother Island Office Information: Beautiful Island 0323-30556

The solitary and luxuriant Mother Island is in the town of Stresa and is covered for the greater part of its surface by a botanical garden of remarkable interest. The Island is the largest of the Borromeo Gulf, not too far from Stresa and near Isola Bella. It was the summer residence of the noble family of the Borromeo. Apart from being luxurious and shaded the island is covered by tree-lined avenues along its shores. Inside of the Palace which dates back to the XVI century are collections of antiques books and pottery, and also a rare collection of ancient marionettes.

Lake Maggiore: Fishermen Island Office Information: Beautiful Island 0323-30556

The little Fishermen Island (Isola Pescatori) is in the town Stresa and is inhabited since the XVI century is practically a small village of fishermen on an island. Once called Superior Island is very characteristic and colorful with its small streets reminding of old times. It is still inhabited by local fishermen. During winter the island is often wrapped by the early morning fog and the small bell tower of the church of Saint Vittore seems to want to be a beacon for the boats.

The Fishermen Island is the ideal place to stop to have a meal to savour some of the many culinary delights of the lake in one of the numerous restaurants located in the typical streets that maintain their ancient characteristics.



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Stresa - Park of Villa Pallavicino Office information: Tel 0323-32407-31533

The Park of Villa Pallavicino is located in the city of Stresa on the Lake Maggiore. It is a large botanical and zoological garden of appealing beauty. Situated in a splendid park near the lake, characterized by a remarkable variety of plants and flowers cured and rich of heritage. Opened to the public after the second world war. It covers an area of 20 hectares and is a fantastic place for who wants to spend a day in relax, above all suited for the children, who will be able to see and above all to touch all the various species of animals and plants. The Park is equipped of a playground, Restaurant, Bar and various pic-nic areas.

Lake Maggiore Mountain Mottarone

Office Information: 0323-20432- Information for the skiers 0323-924172

The mountain of the Mottarone (1481 m) can be reached from Stresa through the panoramic road Borromea that climbs the hills around the lake offering great views of the Gulf of Borromeo and the outlying islands. When you reach the top a breathtaking 360 degrees view will enable the visitor to glance at the whole lake district comprising apart from Lake Maggiore also Lake Orta, and a few minor lakes all framed by the towering Alps that separate Italy from Switzerland.

All around a sequence of soft hills, covered by forests of pine trees, wallnuts, chestnuts, beech and wild cherries and a plentiful variety of flowers. The Mottarone can also be reached with the cablecar that departs from the Lido of Stresa. Its the ideal place for painters, hickers and trekking lovers, mountain biking and during the winter season the ideal location for snow skiing.



Baveno Lake Maggiore Town of Baveno (Lake Maggiore)

Following the coast of Lake Maggiore, after Stresa, proceeding toward Switzerland, we find Baveno, 205 m above sea level. The 19 June is the celebration of the town saint, Saint Gervasio and Protasio.

Baveno is no doubt a very ancient town, as it is its administrative division Feriolo, proved by the roman inscription on the facade of the parish church, built in the twelfth century, with pink granite skillfully chiseled by the stone cutter of Oltrefiume.

This pink granite comes from Baveno, the quarry of Candoglia.

This granite was used to built the Dome of Milan.

Town of Verbania - Intra - Pallanza (Lake Maggiore)

The town of Verbania is strategically located in a touristic position offering different and diversified itineraries either on Lake Maggiore but also in the near Ossola Valley, the mount Rosa and Switzerland.

Rich with gardens and parks, Verbania is the capital town for the province of Verbano-Cusio-Ossola and is the result of the union, at the end of the 1930ies, of the municipalities of Intra and Pallanza, which are the result of the union in the 1920ies of the municipalities of Trobaso, Zoverallo, Cavandone, and Suna. The National Park of the Val Grande, the wildest area of Europe, lies behind Verbania. To point out in the palace Viani/Dugnani in Pallanza the section dedicated the archaeology, and the one dedicated to paintings and sculpture, exhibiting works from Maestros such as Troubetzkoy, Branca Martini, Ranzoni, Gignous, Ferraguti e Tozzi.



Botanic Garden of Taranto Villa (Giardino Botanico di Villa Taranto Lake Maggiore)

Telefono e Fax +39 0323 556667 Biglietteria +39 0323 404555 Situated in Verbania a little town of Lake Maggiore and near the Swiss glaciers above the lake the Garden of Villa Taranto was bought in 1930 by a Scottish captain named Neil Mac Eacharn, when he acquired the property from mister Sant Elia. The park is a botanical garden with a great variety of plants and flowers. There are approximately 20.000 species of different and rare plants and flowers. A



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beautiful show during blooming and blossoming can be seen within the park's premises with its typical English gardens in cohabitation with worldwide species adapted to the temperate climate of Lake Maggiore.

How to get there

Highway A8 Milan - Lakes

Continue on A26 direction Gravellona Toce.

Exit Stresa Town and Verbania direction.

Town of Ghiffa (Lake Maggiore) Ghiffa is a typical coastal small town of Lake Maggiore, it has about 2500 inhabitants and is developed over 14 square km at a sea level of 201 meters. The town is located on the piedmont shore of the lake, in the province of Verbano-Cusio-Ossola a few kilometers from Canton Ticino in Switzerland. Apart from the sanctuary of the Trinity, XVI century, and the church of Santa Croce, XVIII century, the most important destination is the Sacro Monte of Ghiffa, located in a dominant position at 360 meters above sea level, from its terraces

it is possible to enjoy a spectacular view of Lake Maggiore. There are also many natural and archaeological itineraries. The Sacro Monte of Ghiffa has been included by UNESCO as World Heritage

Town of Oggebbio (Lake Maggiore) Oggebbio is a small town of 900 inhabitants developed over an area of 20 sq. km at 263 meters above sea level. Oggebbio is composed of 15 small villages distributed on the lake shores and adjacent hills. The particular climate and microclimate have favoured the cultivation of camelias, an example is Villa Anelli where in its gardens there are over 200 different varieties. To point out the small old port of Spasolo, an antique transit hub and smuggling centre with the near Switzerland, the oratorio of Saint Agata (Novaglio) of the XII century and the church of Ogiabio (so called since medieval time) in Gonte.

Town of Cannero (Lake Maggiore) Cannero Riviera is a small town of Lake Maggiore of old origin, it appears already in the historical documents around the year 1000. Cannero is part of the province of Verbano-Cusio-Ossola located between the lake and the mountains has a population of about 1000 inhabitants. Part of its territory are the Castles of Cannero, called Malapaga, that strikingly appear at water level not too far from the shore. The location, not too far from Switzerland and the Canton Ticino has plenty of antique villas dating the beginning of last century. To point out the small and picturesque harbour from where typical medieval streets depart, churches and votive chapels. In some parts are still visible the "Cadorna Lines", witnesses of military archaeology, trenches, and defensive forts, wishes of General Cadorna, but never used.

Castles of Cannero Witness of many battles and many raids, the Castles of Cannero in the homonymous town of Cannero, not too far from Switzerland, are ancient reminders of the past. Fortified on a rocky island not too far from the lake's shores, they seem to emerge from the lake's waters almost wanting to remind us of the harshness of life was during their times. Due to the vicinity of Switzerland, it is advisable to continue the excursion until the city of Locarno, where it will be possible to visit another country in a small time.

Town of Cannobio (Lake Maggiore)

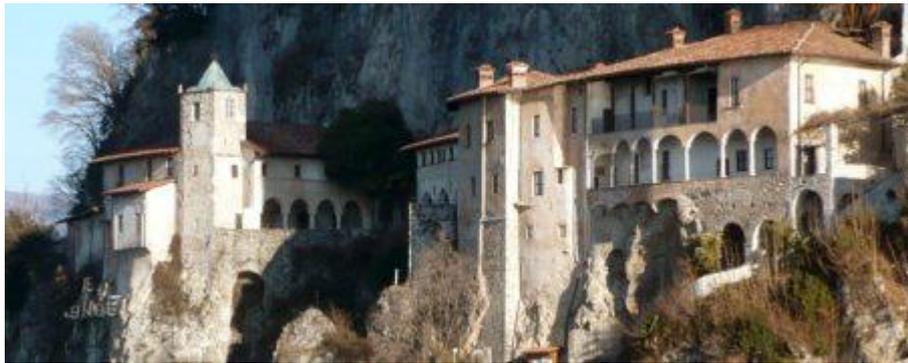
The town of Cannobio has very ancient origins, probably before the Roman time. Set in the northern end of Lake Maggiore, a few kilometers from the town Cannero, where there are the Castles of Cannero, and Brissago in Switzerland. Although Cannobio is a small municipality of 5600 inhabitants it is developed on an area of 51 square kilometres. Cannobio is well equipped, like all other towns on Lake Maggiore, to welcome the tourist in a quiet and relaxing environment, with its beach, playground for the kids, and excellent itineraries for bikers. For the art lovers there is the collegiate church of Saint Vittore of the XVIII century, the church of Saint Marta of the XVI century, and the sanctuary of the Piety of the XVI century. The town of Cannobio is located at the edge of the Cannobina valley, that is cut through by the beautiful Torrent Cannobino that forms the famous gorge of Saint Anna. From the Cannobina valley is possible to cut across reaching the Vigizzo valley, the valley of the Painters.



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The River Torrent Cannobino The gorge of Saint Anna is the end of a long trip that the Cannobino torrent covers in its homonymous valley. A show of the force of nature, sometimes calm, others wild and turbulent the torrent is a favourite destination for white water rafting and kayak passionate that love to descent its stream boxed within the rocky wall faces. The Saint Anna gorge is situated close to the Sanctuary, a small gorge with crystalline clear icy cold waters all year around. Although at the end of its stream, before entering the Lake Maggiore, this creek reaches depths of more than 20 meters in some of its parts. The Cannobbino starts nearby Arona and continues along Lake Maggiore's piemontese side and reaching the town of Cannobio where it finishes its voyage entering into the lake.

Church S. Caterina del Sasso Lake Maggiore Itinerary



Church S. Caterina del Sasso is much evocative one, it has been built up between the end of XII the century and the start of XIII the century, and widened in the centuries succeeded to you, founded from the merchant Alberto Besozzi after to be escaped to the shipwreck after a storm it has been constructed on the very high rocks on the lake Maggiore, whose cliff sinks in the dark of waters of the lake where it catches up the depth of 200 meters here. You can be arrived on foot or with a boat from the lake..

Brissago (Switzerland) Brissago is the first town in Switzerland on the Piedmont coast of the lake. A few kilometres before Locarno and after Cannobio (Italy) there is the border with Switzerland. Facing Lake Maggiore, Brissago offers itineraries on the lake, it has a beach with swimming pool, and children playground, as well as

mountains tours from which it is possible to reach the Corona dei Pinci, the Pizzo Leone, and the Ghiridone. The mild and temperate climate of the Lake Maggiore, opposed by the near Alps, has made it possible for interesting species of plants to develop, such as the ones present in the "Bosco Sacro" (Sacred Forest) Brissago is also known for the "Tobacco Factory" founded in the 800 and of the botanical gardens of the "Isles of Brissago" where over 1500 species of plants are grown.

Locarno (Switzerland) Locarno is a small Swiss town of about 15000 inhabitants located at the foot of the Alps, a few kilometers from Brissago and the Italian/Swiss border in the high lake Maggiore. For who passes by, or decides to spend the holidays in the northern section of the lake, a visit to Locarno is suggested, maybe proceeding up to Ascona, also in Swiss territory. Well kept town, enjoying a particular microclimate, quite active in tourism and rich of sport and cultural events among which, the most international, the Cinema Festival of Locarno.

Lago d'Orta, History

Longobard period

During the Longobard invasions (late 6th century) the episcopal power was replaced for a time by that of the lords and stewards set up by the invaders. The island of S. Giulio was chosen as the seat of the Dukes of Novara. It was here too that King Agilulfo had Duke Mimulfo beheaded (588) for failing to resist the Frankish invasion. It is likely that the Longobards yielded to the Bishops of Novara, who were certainly back in power under





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the Carolingians. From the 6th century on the strategic defence system of the entire region was under construction: castles and wall-fortifications, some on late-Roman foundations, were built on the island of S. Giulio, at Orta, at Carcegna, Buccione, Lortallo, Gozzano, Soriso, etc. The island of S. Giulio was one of the key positions of the doomed first Italian feudal kingdom: in 957 under Berengarius II, who surrendered to the son of Otto I of Saxony, and again in 962 under Villa, Berengarius' wife, who strengthened the island's fortification and valiantly fought against Otto's iron grip. Otto was so impressed by her courage that he saved the queen's life.

Otto I



An important document dating from the same year, 962, gives proof of the Bishop of Novara's jurisdiction over the island. On 25th July Otto I published a charter in Orta restoring to the Bishop of Novara the island which had been wrongfully taken from him by Berengarius II; he also gave land in the upper Novara district to the canons of the basilica of S. Giulio, and to the basilica itself he gave a precious silver eagle which was later plundered. In 969 Otto I conferred the title of City Count on the Bishop of Novara, thus creating a precedent for the similar recognition on the part of Henry II of Saxony in 1013 (it was Henry II who defeated Arduino, the feudal king of Italy, who had annexed the Riviera di San Giulio). Later concessions from Conrad II (1028), Henry IV and F. Barbarossa (1155) granted de jure power to the bishops of Novara not only over the island but also over the coasts of the lake and the adjoining hill country.

1100 - 1400

The victory of the Communes over Barbarossa in 1183 resulted in the bishops of Novara losing the title of City Counts as well as, for a short period, their sway over Orta, which became part of the Commune of Novara; but in 1219 the Commune itself fell in with the wish of Frederick II and formally restored the Orta region to its former overlords. Apart from a few unfortunate interludes (in 1275, in 1324 and, as

we shall see, during the first half of the 16th century) the sway of the bishops of Novara over the Riviera di San Giulio lasted until 1817 - that is, for about 900 years from the publication of Otto's charter. Their rule does not appear to have been very oppressive, either in authority or fiscal matters; there was a tendency to mingle the interests of the bishops and curia with those of his subjects, and these in their turn frequently showed that they preferred the bishop to other more oppressive form of authority. The bishop was responsible for making, enforcing and defending the laws. In the Riviera he was represented by the lord of some castle (who employed the services of a capitano and a segeant) whose duty it was to command the local army and to constitute the first appeal in law-suits; there was also a governor who exercised civil powers. The bishop had a residence at Gozzano and another on the island of S. Giulio.

1500

In the first half of the 16th century, between 1520 and 1530, the region around Lake Orta faced a number of several crises. These were the last years of the Sforza regime in Milan: in 1522 Francis I Sforza took advantage of a vacancy in the see of Novara and annexed the whole area. In 1524 Orta was sacked by Captain Anichise Visconti's troops in the service of the Sforzas: a heavy tax was imposed, but to no avail, until the wealthiest citizens of Orta were taken hostage and only restored to liberty after the payment of a ransom. In 1525 more hostages were taken and more ransoms demanded in exchange for their freedom. On 1st January 1528 Captain Bonifacio Visconti, who had been named Count of the Riviera di San Giulio by Charles Bourbon, deputizing for the

Emperor Charles V, ordered the collection of further taxes: the population hesitated, and then, on 31st January, the feast of St. Julius, marched against the Visconti. The Visconti, helped by allied soldiers, beat off the opposition and proceeded to punish Orta mercilessly. Early in February 1529 the Neapolitan Cesare Maggio, colonel of Charles V's army, ordered the payment of 4.000 gold crowns by the people of the Riviera who, following the advice of



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their bishop, Arcimboldo, withdrew from their lands and massed themselves on the island of S. Giulio, preparing for revolt. The signal for the beginning of the revolt was given, as agreed, by the bells of the tower of Buccione (still existing). Giacomo Giovanetti (1840) brought a legend to light according to which the person who sounded the alarm was a heroic woman of the Riviera, named Maria Canavesa, who, together with her little son, payed for her courageous deed with her life. The rebellion was led, according to the legend, by an enormous and extremely brave son of the people called Sappa, a native of Armeno; for a time it was successful - this is historical, but the interlude was brief, for in May of the same year, 1529, Viscontino di Massino (who had previously helped Bonifacio Visconti) attacked again and so harrassed the inhabitants of the Riviera di San Giulio that they finally arose in fury and in the course of a battle near Miasino killed their persecutor and drove out his followers. This dramatic series of events ended finally late in 1529 with Charles V's recognition of the rights of Arcimboldo, bishop of Novara, over the peoples of the Riviera di San Giulio.

1600

So began a comparatively peaceful period which lasted about two centuries, from the late 16th century to the middle of the 18th century, the period of greatest activity in the lake Orta region and that which witnessed the replacement of the Milanese government by that of the Spaniards (1535 - 1714). The peace was disturbed at the level of diplomacy by continual and never-solved controversy between the Spanish Senate and tax authorities on the one hand and the bishop of Novara on the other over certain political and tributary rights. The 17th century witnessed no events of particular importance in the region, except for the reaction of the people to the inordinately heavy taxes demanded by the bishop Gian Pietro Volpi. French troops at war with the Spanish overran the Orta countryside in 1636, sacking Gozzano, Bugnate, Pogno and burning Auzate, Soriso, Gargallo, etc. Later, in 1658, Giovanni Borromeo tried to occupy the Riviera di San Giulio with a corps of German troops. When Austria succeeded Spain in Milanese region (1715 - 1796) this had little effect upon the Riviera, except for a gradual improvement in the standard of living. The question of jurisdiction so long disputed between the Spaniards and the bishop of Novara was virtually ignored by the Austrians.

Later

Meanwhile the house of Savoy was inciting the people of the region to rise up against their bishop in the hope that this would enable it to annex the Riviera: in 1750 there was considerable rioting against Sanseverino, bishop of Novara, and bit by bit the Savoiards succeeded in gaining their ends. First in 1767 a convention was signed which asserted that: King Charles Emanuel III and his descendents possess supreme dominion over the Riviera di San Giulio, Orta, Gozzano and all the lands of Soriso. The bishop of Novara retained the title of Princes of S. Giulio and Orta, as well as temporal dominion over the Riviera. Secondly, in September of the same year, there took place the ceremony of swearing loyalty to the King of Sardinia by the population which in its turn was to enjoy special privileges. Much later came the convention of 18th July 1817, in which the whole territory was included in the State of Piedmont, ruled at that time by Victor Emanuel I. The bishop of Novara gave up all his feudal rights, keeping no more than the castle and palaces of Gozzano and the island of S. Giulio.

the Island of St. Giulio

According to the legend, the Island of St. Giulio was dominated by a big serpent that destroyed everything. But when St. Giulio, that had the power to command over the waves, the storms, the wild animals and the human beings, arrived near the lake, waving his hand he chased away the dangerous menacing animal. He reached the Island journeying over the water on his cloak guided by his staff. The big reptile disappeared and St. Giulio, tired and near to his death, thought that the island was the right place to build his hundredth and last church dedicated to the Holy Apostles. The Island of San Giulio is today a place of great mysticism. Here was born on 962 William of Volpiano, during the siege to Queen Willa by Emperor Otto, King Berengario II's wife, who had taken the Island from the Bishop of Novara. The big central building was a Castle. The island was the governor's seat that represented the bishop. On 1842 it was destroyed to build on it a seminary. Now there is a Benedictin monastery that helps giving more mystic power to a place that is by nature immersed in the silence. Between 1593 and 1615, a decisive role in the continuation of the project was played by the Bishop of Novara, Carlo Bescape; he was concerned that the complex should be a strictly organised centre of devotion, in line with the ideas which had inspired the Council of Trento, and more particularly with the interpretation of the



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Counter-Reformation given by Carlo Borromeo in the diocese of Milan. For example, he took pains to ensure that the episodes of the life of St. Francis of Assisi - the chosen theme of the devotional itinerary - were correctly illustrated, and to encourage the faithful in devotion and the elevation of the spirit, inspecting every stage of the work in progress and giving precise instructions as to the scenes to be represented inside each chapel. Furthermore, he set up a body, the *fabbriceria*, a kind of committee of works, to administer the funds which were donated or willed towards the completion of the project. The overall plan of work, including the choice of the site of each chapel and the lay-out of the paths and the vegetation, was made by the Capuchin architect Cleto of Castelletto Ticino, who worked in close collaboration with Bishop Bescapè. The first chapels were thus executed with small, intimate groups of terracotta figures representing simple people, and decorated with frescoes whose key characteristic was their descriptive tone, intended as a clear, easily understandable way of recounting to the faithful the story of the Saint who had modelled his life on Christ's. The Basilica of San Giulio was originally founded by St. Giulio in 390. During the siege of Otto 1st (956 - 962) the church was seriously damaged and only the central apse was saved. After year 962 the canons had the privilege on the territory of the Island signed by Otto the Great, so they dedicated themselves to the reconstruction of the church. The tower was added during the 11th - 12th century. In the Basilica the frescoes were certainly begun very early, and re-done at various times. Of the datables the oldest fresco is aged 1421. But the greatest work of art in the Basilica is the ambo. The pulpit is carved out of grey-green serpentine from the Oira quarry. The sculptures represent the Evangelists. The figure sculpted among the eagle and the lion is probably Guglielmo of Volpiano. The elegant houses on the lake were the canon's residences: In 1763 each of them was called after a Saint to recognise them easily. During the month of June, in Villa Tallone takes place the Festival of Ancient Music, now at its 15th edition. This prestigious event is organized by the Association "Amici della Musica" of Novara. During the Sundays of September take place the Piano Concerts of the "Settembre musicale di San Giulio".

The Sacro Monte of Orta was begun in 1590, in emulation of the Sacro Monte of Varallo, on the initiative of the community of Orta, as a result of the direct intervention and generosity of the Abbot Amico Canobio of Novara, who encouraged the citizens to undertake the project, and had the first chapel built at his own expense. Other rich patrons were to follow his example. Between 1593 and 1615, a decisive role in the continuation of the project was played by the Bishop of Novara, Carlo Bescapè; he was concerned that the complex should be a strictly organised centre of devotion, in line with the ideas which had inspired the Council of Trento, and more particularly with the interpretation of the Counter-Reformation given by Carlo Borromeo in the diocese of Milan. For example, he took pains to ensure that the episodes of the life of St. Francis of Assisi - the chosen theme of the devotional itinerary - were correctly illustrated, and to encourage the faithful in devotion and the elevation of the spirit, inspecting every stage of the work in progress and giving precise instructions as to the scenes to be represented inside each chapel. Furthermore, he set up a body, the *fabbriceria*, a kind of committee of works, to administer the funds which were donated or willed towards the completion of the project. The overall plan of work, including the choice of the site of each chapel and the lay-out of the paths and the vegetation, was made by the Capuchin architect Cleto of Castelletto Ticino, who worked in close collaboration with Bishop Bescapè. The first chapels were thus executed with small, intimate groups of terracotta figures representing simple people, and decorated with frescoes whose key characteristic was their descriptive tone, intended as a clear, easily understandable way of recounting to the faithful the story of the Saint who had modelled his life on Christ's. In each chapel, the terracotta groups were usually separated from the space where the faithful stood by artistic wooden grills with opening through which the figures could be viewed. This period in the construction of the Sacro Monte saw the participation of respected established artists from Milan and Novara, such as the sculptor Cristoforo Prestinari, the painters Giovanni Battista and Giovanni Mauro della Rovere, known as the "Fiamminghini", Morazzone, and craftsmen who had worked on the sacro Monte of Varallo, such as the statuary Giovanni d'Enrico. Towards the middle of 17th century a new style was introduced into the Sacro Monte: unequivocally Baroque, grandiloquent, theatrical, characterised by more highly-coloured paintings, rounded figures, statues in dramatic poses. Examples of this new taste are chapels XVI and XVII, which were again the work of artists established in Lombard cultural circles, such

as the Nuvolone brothers, Antonio Busca, the sculptors Dionigi Bussola and Giuseppe Rusnati. Some of the already-completed chapels were not exempt from this striking new interpretation of the Sacro Monte as a kind of sacred theatre, and were remodelled accordingly. Towards the end of 17th century, the Lombard painter Stefano Maria Legnani introduced early examples of the rococo style, which was to typify the additions of the 18th



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century: refined, airy, with colours softening into pale pastel shades. Later additions and alterations, from the New chapel built towards the end of 18th century to the reworking of some existing chapels, adhere to the taste for the neo-classic then current. From the late 18th century the role of Bishop in controlling the Sacro Monte declined in importance until, along with the old fabbrica, it ended at the beginning of this century, when the Burgh of Orta, with the help of the Franciscan friars who serve the sanctuary, took over the task of routine and exceptional maintenance of the complex. In 1980, the Sacro Monte of Orta was by Regional law declared a protected area with the title of Special Natural Park.

National Park of Val Grande on Lake Maggiore-Piedmont-Italy The National Park of Val Grande, located in the upper section of Lake Maggiore, is one of the most beautiful of Italy, maybe not as famous as other parks in the territory, but it's certain that within its boundaries, thanks to the fact that it's a wild area, there is a remarkable if not impressive variety of species, some of which very rare, on flora and fauna. It is for its morphological features, that it is suggested to rely of expert guides in order to engage in excursions, often offered free of charge by the Park's local government that can be reached by phone at: 0323-557960 Its name says a lot about this park (Grande meaning Big in Italian) of 12,000 hectares, surrounded by fifteen small villages, located in several valleys that outline its territory.

Its interior is today still wild and uncontaminated, thanks to the help of natural guardians such as the mountains surrounding it, harsh and impenetrable, as to protect the park. Beech, chestnut, pine tree, poplar forests coat the mountain sides, the rare badger can be found and climbing up towards the tops the forests have space to green pastures and fields. It is possible to admire rare plants such as the alpine tulip, the white rododendro, alpine aquilegia. The fauna is not less interesting with many rare species such as deer, buffs, weasels, foxes, badgers, vipers, groundhog, wild roosters, and the Fario trout, master of the pure and clear streams that run down the park, and to finish the queen of the park, the eagle. Looking today at Val Grande, so strict and severe, we understand the meaning of "force of nature", and is difficult to imagine it about half a century ago, populated by small villages, its interior busy with logging activities, and the log commerce down the streams and rivers. Nothing of it is now existing, except for a few ruins here and there to testify its past. Mother Nature has taken over and for once she has won a battle and seems like nothing can stop her.

Towns Street Markets on Lake Maggiore

Every weekday a different town around Lake Maggiore features a small market where you can find all, a wide variety of goods; from typical foodstuff to vegetables, clothings and souvenirs.

- Arona - Tuesday
- Meina Thursday
- Lesa - Thursday
- Baveno - Monday
- Verbania - Saturday
- Cannobio - Sunday
- Laveno - Tuesday
- Sesto Calende - Wednesday
- Orta San Giulio - Wednesday

