

10 ways to enjoy Lake Como, Italy in the less expensive off-season

Low season in Lake Como is a fine time to experience its authentic side



November 29, 2021 // By [Allison Tibaldi](#)

By [Allison Tibaldi](#)

NOVEMBER 29, 2021

Lake Como is one of Italy's biggest and most beautiful lakes. In warmer months, it buzzes with aquatic activities and 'dolce vita' flair. A combination of stunning scenery and chic style are a magnet for Hollywood celebrities, including George Clooney, who can be spotted zipping around in his Riva boat, as sleek and speedy as a Ferrari.

It's not just movie stars who flock here, though. Milan is only 90 minutes away, helping to explain why it's such a popular escape for fashionable urbanites who crave a refreshing lake breeze when it's steamy in the city.

As days turn cooler, crowds thin and pace slows. Cultural attractions and a natural environment of peaceful hillsides and serene woodlands draw attention. The pristine peaks of the snow-capped Alps add wintry allure.

Como is one of the many lovely towns surrounding Lake Como. With shops, restaurants, hotels and attractions open year-round, it's an excellent base for explorations. Low season lasts from mid-October until Easter, presenting an authentic experience with plenty of elbow room. Hotel rates dip along with the thermometer, making it easy to score a discounted room.

Here are 10 ways to enjoy Lake Como in the off season.

Ride the funicular to Brunate



Ride the funicular to snowy Brunate — Photo courtesy of Probrunate/Mario D'Alessio

With an eyeful of dramatic scenery, riding the [funicular](#) up the steep mountainside to Brunate is an attraction in itself. It only takes seven minutes to arrive in this picturesque village with Liberty style architecture, a lighthouse and breathtaking views of Lake Como and the Alps. While it rarely dips below freezing lakeside, Brunate's elevated altitude brings a suggestive winter sprinkling of powdery white snow.

Catch a ferry



The extensive ferry network is a great way to traverse the lake — Photo courtesy of Allison Tibaldi

Locals rely on an inexpensive network of year-round ferries for transportation. For tourists, ferries are a perfect perch for sightseeing, allowing ample time to soak in elegant lakeside villas built to blend with the natural scenery. Hop off where you please, stopping in storybook hamlets such as Cernobbio, home to Villa d'Este. This iconic hotel is closed in winter, though its imposing lakefront position, park-like grounds and architectural grandeur make it well worth a glimpse.

Gaze at public art



Contemporary sculpture Life Electric by Daniel Libeskind — Photo courtesy of Allison Tibaldi

Enjoy public art without a crowd. Daniel Libeskind's contemporary sculpture "[Life Electric](#)" honors the legacy of hometown hero Alessandro Volta. Volta invented the battery, hence the word voltage. Made of stainless steel, "Life Electric" daringly juts into the lake, brilliantly reflecting water, sky and mountains, elements of Como's striking landscape.

Snowy scenery



Deep snow in Piani di Artavaggio — Photo courtesy of Mauro Lanfranchi, Archivio Provincia di Lecco, Italy

Fresh air and a deep blanket of snow make Valsassina a favored spot with winter sports enthusiasts. Located east of Como in the province of Lecco, [Piani di Bobbio-Valtorta](#) has groomed trails for downhill skiers and snowboarders. Piani di Artavaggio's mountain pasture is a fine spot to savor the frosty panorama and unspoiled tranquility, perhaps on snowshoes.

Sleep like a royal



A stunning Lake Como view from the Vista Palazzo — Photo courtesy of Allison Tibaldi

An overnight stay at five-star [Vista Palazzo](#) is an aristocratic immersion. Its 18 palatial guest rooms and suites are lavishly decorated with Dedar fabrics, Italian marble and soaking tubs. Guests are personally pampered by butler Alberto, who presents perks like a pillow menu. There's a welcome drop in room rates during low season.

Head to the penthouse for an aperitif or a splurge-worthy dinner at Sottovoce, with sublime lake and mountain views. Barman Alessandro's noteworthy cocktails range from classic to creative, while talented chef Stefano Mattara's modern interpretation of Italian cuisine calls attention to seasonal products from nearby fertile fields and unspoiled valleys.

Shop to your heart's content



A colorful display of silk goods at A. Picci — Photo courtesy of Allison Tibaldi

Como was once a major producer of silk. Today, production has migrated to nearby industrial areas, though a small amount of high-quality silk is still produced here. Family-owned [A. Picci](#) is boutique in the heart of town. One glance at its colorful window display of scarves, ties and assorted accessories crafted from Como silk, and it will take willpower to resist making a purchase.

Sample hearty local food



Osteria del Gallo's owner freely pours local wine — Photo courtesy of Allison Tibaldi

Traditional valley cuisine dominates winter menus with fortifying dishes like polenta and meat stews reflecting Como's northern position. At [Osteria del Gallo](#), owners Giuseppe and Rosanna De Toma take pride in serving hyper-local products including rustic stoneground cornmeal, luscious wildflower honey and paper-thin slices of Valtellina Bresaola, air-dried beef.

Patrons order from a handwritten menu that changes daily. Hearty dishes are complemented by Terre Lariane, the local wine available in ruby red, golden yellow and blush pink.

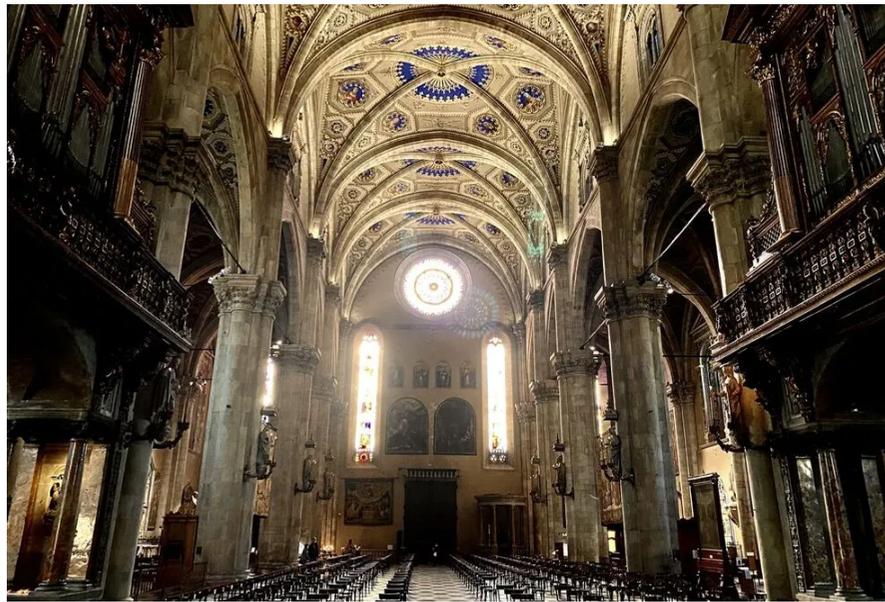
Visit the Christmas Market



Como's Christmas Market — Photo courtesy of Consorzio Como Turistica

From late November until January 6th, Como hosts [Città dei Balocchi](#), an Old World Christmas Market. Buildings and monuments are illuminated with twinkling lights, hot mulled wine perfumes the air and live music rings out. An ice skating rink adds festive fun, food stalls offer the opportunity to sample traditional delicacies and handmade crafts present a fine excuse to shop.

Sightsee without a crowd

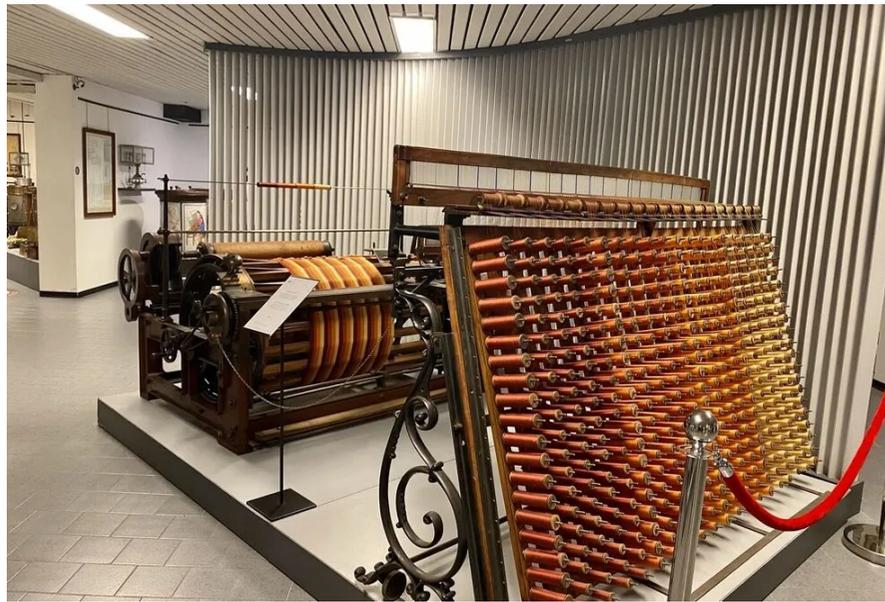


Como's Cathedral is an eye-catching blend of eclectic styles — Photo courtesy of Allison Tibaldi

Explore Como's Old Town, its pedestrian-only cobblestone streets lined with retail shops and restaurants. Marvel at [Cathedral Santa Maria Assunta](#), built starting in 1396 and taking over 300 years to complete. One of the most eye-catching cathedrals in Northern Italy, it's an eclectic mixture of Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque styles with an imposing dome, precious tapestries and an altar made of marble, onyx and bronze.

Legend says those who touch the tiny frog carved into the wall on the left side entrance will have good luck, adding a note of whimsy.

Museum of Silk



Como's silk museum is a window into its history as a major producer of silk — Photo courtesy of Allison Tibaldi

A century ago, Como's luxurious silk was in demand around the globe. A visit to the [Museum of Silk](#) highlights Como's historic and pivotal role in silk manufacturing and trade. Visitors get an in-depth look at each stage of production, from silkworm rearing to loom weaving to finished fabric samples, as well as an understanding of the impact this industry had on Como's economic and social development.



About [Allison Tibaldi](#)

Allison Tibaldi is a travel and food writer based in New York City. She has lived in Rome, Tuscany, Melbourne Australia, Toronto and Los Angeles. She studied early childhood development in graduate school and firmly believes that travel is the best education. She writes for numerous publications including CNN, Travel Channel, HGTV, am New York, Emirates Open Skies, Family Traveller and Travel Weekly.

Read more about Allison Tibaldi [here](#).

Connect with Allison via: [Blog](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#)

[Manage Cookies](#)

[Cookie Policy](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Terms of Service](#)

[Your California Privacy Rights / Privacy Policy](#)

A division of USA TODAY · Copyright © 2021 www.10best.com · All rights reserved.