

**DAY 1**

*At a glimpse:* Verona sights and food

*Travel agenda:* Welcome to the City of Love! Arrive in Verona and check into your hotel before heading out. Walk to the main square **Piazza Delle Erbe** and explore the markets and shops in the area. Just around the corner, grab lunch at **Amo Bistrot**, a stylish little restaurant with a charming courtyard just off of the main streets.

From there, it's a 12 minute walk over the **Ponte Nuovo Bridge** to the **Palazzo Giusti Palace and Garden**, which features a 20th-century apartment and impressive gardens with low hedges, cypress trees, fountains and grottoes designed by Agostino Giusti. In the evening, take one of the **food tours** that spotlights traditional Northern Italy classics and authentic local cuisine!

*Tip:* Check the Arena Opera calendar to see if there are any concerts, as this would be a once in a lifetime show.

**DAY 2**

*At a glimpse:* Verona landmarks tour

*Travel agenda:* Grab breakfast at a local pastry shop like **Pasticceria Cordioli** for coffee and zaletti, the Venetian biscuit. Once caffeinated, head to **Casa di Giuletta** or Juliet's Balcony. It will get crowded so best to do it early. From there, it is a 6-minute walk to **Sant'Anastasia** for a quick church pop in. Next, walk 14 minutes to the well-preserved **Arena di Verona**, essentially the Colosseum of Verona.

From there, wander through the **Piazza Bra** and get lunch at **La Botteghetta**. Finally, it's a 5 min walk to **Castelvecchio**, a medieval castle on the water. Walk through and over the **Ponte di Castle Vecchio** bridge.

*Tip:* You can also see the sights via a hop on hop off bus. Though it's not quite as authentic, it gets the job done! There are also walking and biking tours.

Head back to hotel to prepare for the evening festivities aka more Italian food. Take advantage of aperitivo at **Aquila Nera**. From there it's a 20-

minute walk or get a short cab to **Re Teodorico**, a modern Italian restaurant overlooking the city of Verona.

### DAY 3

\*\*If you're NOT coming from Lake Como, here's your 3<sup>rd</sup> day.

*At a glimpse:* Lake Garda and Dolomites

*Travel Agenda:* In the morning, board the train to the Lake Garda station **Peschiera del Garda**. Book a hotel for one night, and use this area as the home base. Take a 10-minute cab to **Sirmione** to explore the Castle and waterfront promenades. Grab a quality sandwich or panini to-go at the special **Marco e Daniela Time**.

Next hop on a **Bertoldi Boat**, a family run (and best in the business) option. Book a half day tour that includes at least one stop at a lakeside town and a ride to the northern part of the lake to take in the full beauty of the Dolomites. Get dinner at the cozy **Osteria Rivelin** and relish the peace and quiet before heading to Venice in the morning.

### DAY 4

*At a glimpse:* Train to Venice, exploring the floating city on foot and a pizza cooking class

*Travel agenda:* In the morning, take the 1.5-hour train from **Peschiera del Garda** to the main station in Venice **Stazione Santa Lucia**. Drop your bags off at your hotel and then walk 10 minutes to the **Rialto Bridge**. The early bird beats the crowds here! For an early lunch, try cicchetti or small tapas at several of the **Rialto Market** food stalls. This is also a chance to stop by the oldest wine bar in Venice: **Enoteca al Volto**. Then intentionally get lost, wander and shop along the canals. Head back to the hotel to take a break and get ready for the evening.

You're in Venice and the only thing better than pizza, is learning to make your own. **Mama Isa's Cooking School** was named "best cooking school in Italy for the art of making pizza in the real Neapolitan Italian style." To book, it's an old school email reservation: [isacookinpadua@gmail.com](mailto:isacookinpadua@gmail.com). After the best-pizza-of-your-life, save room for quality gelato at **La Mela Verde**. Enjoy at **St. Mark's Square**, while the dueling orchestras play in the courtyard.

**DAY 5**

*At a glimpse:* Venice culture and ferry to local island

*Travel agenda:* Start the day with coffee and pastry at **Pasticceria Da Bonifacio**, tucked away in St. Mark's Square and family owned. Then head back to **St. Mark's Square**, and be the first at the **Basilica** when it opens at 9:30AM! This is an absolute must in terms of landmarks. For a view of the whole city, stop at **St. Mark's Campanile Bell Tower**.

Next head to **Doge's Palace**, the residence of the Doge of Venice and an architectural marvel with masterpieces by Titian, Tiepolo, and Tintoretto throughout. For an extra dose of culture, walk to **Gallerie dell'Accademia**, one of the most impressive museums in the country.

Then it's time to escape the crowds and get a ferry to Murano or Burano. **Murano** is a 30-minute ferry and is famous for the hand blown artisanal glass that's been produced on the island for centuries. **Burano** is a 45-minute ferry ride that leads to a tiny island with distinct colorful houses. Historically Burano is also home to expertly handcrafted lace, which you can still buy on the island.

Just before sunset, take a gondola ride. Get dinner at **Osteria da Alberto**, a locals spot where you will have a truly authentic Italian meal with fresh seafood. Walk 8 minutes to gelato or tiramisu at **I Tre Mercanti** for the complete experience.

*Tip:* Gondola rides are pricey but don't book in advance! Expect to negotiate and a price of 50 euros for half an hour is on target.