



Vistas of Italy and Switzerland 2025

On this soul-stirring alpine tour, the journey is just as captivating as the welcoming communities and fascinating local traditions you'll encounter along the way. Watch the mirror-like water ripple as you glide across Lake Iseo towards fairytale Monte Isola. Marvel at the sunlight glinting off the snow-dusted Swiss Alps as you ride the iconic Bernina Express. With us, every moment's a memory waiting to be cherished long after you return home.





About your tour notes

These tour notes contain everything you need to know before your tour departs – from where to meet your fellow guests and local guide to what essentials to pack for your journey. We recommend you print this document out and bring it with you on your tour. Give a copy to loved ones at home so they can follow your adventure, too.

Important: please refresh this document as close to your departure as possible to ensure you're equipped with the latest information available.

Hotel Pesaro @ 18:00

Calle Ca' d'Oro, 3935, Venice, 30121

Hotel Adler Zurich @ 15:00

Rosengasse 10, Zurich, 8001



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Tour highlights

- ✓ Learn the traditions of authentic Italian cuisine with a cooking class in the Franciacorta region
- ✓ Experience scenic train journeys on two of the great alpine railways: the Bernina Express and the Glacier Express
- ✓ Observe a traditional mask-decorating demonstration in the magnificent floating city of Venice

More inclusions

- ✓ 8 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 dinners
- ✓ 8 nights in thoughtfully selected accommodation
- ✓ Luxury minicoach

Currencies you'll use

- Italy - EUR
- Switzerland - CHF



Included meals

Breakfast (B) is included daily.

Some of your lunches and dinners are also included, either in hotels or local restaurants. These are indicated by (L) and (D) in the itinerary.

Please note that drinks will not always be included.

We will do our best to accommodate any specific dietary requirements you may have. Please ensure to make these clear to us before your tour begins so we can communicate them to our hotels, restaurants and suppliers.

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Your itinerary

Day 1 | Venice (Italy)

Welcome to Venice – the magnificent floating city boasting unparalleled elegance, grandeur and romance. Meet your travel companions and Tour Leader at the hotel, before settling into a delicious welcome meal at a local restaurant. *Salute!*

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Pesaro (or similar)



Meals

+ Dinner

Day 2 | Venice – Sirmione

After breakfast, we'll acquaint ourselves with Venice's maze-like backstreets on an orientation tour with our Tour Leader, before meeting with a local artisan for a traditional mask-making demonstration. Enjoy some free time to indulge in *la dolce vita* (the sweet life) along the canal-lined streets and lavish piazzas before we continue onwards to the resort town of Sirmione. Located on the southern bank of Lake Garda, we'll have the evening to explore at our leisure.

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Ideal (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

Day 3 | Sirmione – Borghetto – Sirmione

This morning we'll make our way to a local farmhouse – where we'll be treated to a light lunch filled with fresh regional produce. Then: we'll learn a fact or two on a walking tour of the quaint village of Borghetto. Running through the heart of this picturesque destination is the mighty Mincio River – along which you'll find many ancient watermills and riverside restaurants dishing up delicious *tortellini*. Upon returning to Sirmione, the evening is ours to spend relaxing at the hotel, enjoying the local hot springs or seeking out a waterfront restaurant for some fresh local cuisine.

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Ideal (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

+ Lunch

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Day 4 | Sirmione – Monte Isola – Lake Iseo

Today, our road will carry us to the Port of Sulzano where we'll embark on a boat tour across Lake Iseo – docking at picturesque Carzano on the mountain island of Monte Isola. Enjoy some free time to explore this charming village and its lakeside cafes. Later, we'll round off the day with a relaxing evening at our hotel or seeking out some gastronomic delicacies in town.

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Capovilla (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

Day 5 | Lake Iseo

Rolling hills, charming vineyards and authentic Italian cuisine are on the cards today. Our first stop will be a local farmhouse in the Franciacorta region, where a guided tour of a traditional wine cellar awaits. Continuing our gastronomic discovery, we'll roll up our sleeves and get stuck into a rustic cooking class – where we'll learn some regional culinary secrets. And then? It's time to savour our creations and enjoy a wine tasting over lunch – before returning to Iseo for an evening spent relaxing at the hotel or exploring the array of local eateries.

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Capovilla (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

+ Lunch

Day 6 | Lake Iseo – Tirano – Engadin Valley (Switzerland)

Today our path will lead us to Tirano, one of the prettiest towns along the Switzerland-Italy boundary. We'll enjoy some free time to explore before embarking on a spectacular tour highlight: the Bernina Express. One of the world's most iconic railway journeys, our train will climb steadily into the Swiss Alps, with spectacular views of soaring mountain peaks and awe-inspiring glaciers in every direction. Our final stop of the day will be the Engadin Valley, where we'll be welcomed into Switzerland with an outlook of pristine scenery and warming local cuisine.

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Laudinella (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast



Day 7 | Engadin Valley – Andermatt – Interlaken

After feasting on a hearty breakfast, we'll board the famous Glacier Express train to Andermatt. Prepare for an experience unlike any other! Sit back and relax as we leisurely make our way through spiral tunnels, alpine villages and the Rhine Gorge – soaking up breathtaking panoramic views as we go. Upon arriving in Andermatt, we'll board the minicoach once again for the short journey to Interlaken. For dinner tonight, we'll have an abundance of sumptuous local menus to choose from.

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Krebs (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

Day 8 | Interlaken – Brienz – Interlaken

This morning we'll continue to Brienz – where we'll take a memorable journey along one of the oldest railways in Switzerland. Step back in time as we ride the chugging steam train to the top of the Brienzer Rothorn. From the top of the mountain, we'll enjoy a light refreshment overlooking panoramic views over the Emmental Alps. Following that, we'll travel back to Interlaken on a scenic paddle steamer cruise – before clinking glasses over one final dinner together. What a trip it's been!

Please note: During the summer season (June–October), we will visit the Brienzer Rothorn and enjoy a paddle steamer cruise as listed in the itinerary. In spring (March–May), we will take a cable car from Mürren to Schilthorn instead – with some free time to explore Mürren before we return to Interlaken.

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Krebs (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

+ Dinner



Day 9 | Interlaken – Lucerne – Zurich

For our last day together, we'll continue to Lucerne – where an indulgent chocolate tasting awaits. We'll have some free time to explore this lakeside city and enjoy lunch at our leisure – before moving on to our final destination of the tour: Zurich. We'll go our separate ways upon arriving later this afternoon.

Included today



Meals

+ Breakfast



Travel advice

Finances

Changing money

Cash: Foreign money can be changed at banks, airports, some railway and tube stations, and at major hotels (though at a less favourable rate).

Credit cards: Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted. American Express is only accepted in some larger establishments.

Cash machines: ATMS are widely available.

Tipping

Tipping is entirely at your discretion. If you feel you have received exceptional service, it is recommended that you tip £1-2/€ per day for Drivers and £4- 5/€ per day for Tour Leaders.

Insurance

Before travelling with Back-Roads Touring, it is compulsory for all guests to take out comprehensive travel insurance. Please ensure your insurance covers medical expenses (including repatriation), cancellation cover, loss or damage to baggage and personal effects, money and personal liability.

We recommend you carry your insurance details with you at all times. You may be asked to provide details of your medical insurance or a payment guarantee in some countries before medical assistance can be provided.

For more information, please see our [FAQ page](#).

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).

Passports and visas

Please ensure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your tour. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain



countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your tour's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling.

Please note: Some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure as requirements do change periodically.

We advise you to either carry a photocopy of your passport (and visa, if applicable) with you while abroad, or to ensure that you leave a copy with relatives back at home. This will enable the local embassy or high commission to arrange a replacement if the original should be lost or stolen. If you do take copies with you on your tour, please ensure that you keep these separate from your original documents.

Medication and mobility

Whilst on your tour, we want you to have the smoothest journey possible which requires x mobility conditions:

- You must be fit enough to get on and off the vehicle on a regular basis, and to walk around towns and villages or to attractions.
- You must be able to walk up and down stairs and use a shower over the bath.

Please note that, unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate mobility scooter or wheelchair users as we frequently stay in traditional-style hotels and the majority do not have lifts or ground-floor rooms.

If you take medicine for certain conditions, such as diabetes or heart problems, please carry it with you at all times.

Please declare any medical conditions you may have in advance of your tour. If you are in any doubt as to whether our tours are suitable for you, please contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).



Mental health and wellbeing

Culture shock, homesickness and periods of feeling down happen regardless of age. Be rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Tour Leader and Driver will do their utmost to make you smile.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call loved ones. Hearing a familiar voice whilst in an unfamiliar destination can help ground you and remind you you're not alone.
- Eat well. Nobody feels their best when they're hungry. There are plenty of nutritious culinary delights to be savoured along the road!
- Integrate with your fellow guests. The more you socialise with the group, the less likely you'll feel homesick.

Transport

We travel in premium mini-coaches equipped with comfortable seats, air conditioning and large windows for enjoying the view.

With far more flexibility than a standard-size coach, we're able to take the scenic route – winding through beautiful countryside to the heart of tiny villages and coastal towns.

Will I have regular access to Wi-Fi?

Most accommodation we stay in will offer free Wi-Fi as well as many restaurants and cafes you may visit. If you would like more regular internet access without large roaming fees, you can purchase a Back-Roads Touring eSIM [here](#).



What to Pack

Based on our experience, the following items are essential.

Please note, this is a general packing list for Back-Roads Touring tours. What you pack will depend on the countries you're visiting as well as the time of year you plan to travel.

Clothing

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ✓ Sun hat | ✓ Long-sleeved tops | ✓ Light jacket |
| ✓ Sunglasses | ✓ Short-sleeved tops | ✓ Waterproof jacket |
| ✓ Sleepwear | ✓ Shorts/skirts | ✓ Trousers |
| ✓ Warm jacket | ✓ Socks | ✓ Swimwear |
| ✓ Underwear | ✓ Smart casual evening wear | ✓ Walking/comfortable shoes |

Other essentials

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------|
| ✓ Multi-use adapter plug | ✓ Toiletries | ✓ Camera |
| ✓ Batteries | ✓ Sunscreen | ✓ Towel |
| ✓ Umbrella | ✓ Reusable water bottle | ✓ Insect repellent |
| ✓ Any personal medication | ✓ Basic medical kit (paracetamol, aspirin, plasters etc) | |

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How much luggage can I bring

As we travel in mini-coaches, luggage space is limited. Here's what you can take with you on tour:



1 x suitcase



1 x small carry-on bag
(backpack or handbag)

If you have more luggage, please make arrangements to store it prior to joining the tour. **We are unable to carry extra luggage on the mini-coach.**

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FAQs

Which type of hotels will we stay in?

Our carefully selected accommodation is full of charm and historic details – expect elegant country inns, grand town centre hotels and even the odd castle! For this reason, rooms vary in size, and most hotels don't have lifts – meaning you'll likely need to access your room via stairs. Porterage will be included wherever possible.

Although air conditioning is mostly unavailable in historic buildings, fans will be provided during hot spells. Most hotels have bathtubs with overhead showers (rather than walk-in showers), so you'll be able to enjoy a soak at the end of the day.

What's breakfast like in Italy and Switzerland?

A typical alpine breakfast spread is simple but wholesome. It usually includes a range of cold meats, cheeses and bread, buttery homemade pastries, plus freshly squeezed juices. You might also tuck into some crispy potato pancakes or a bowl of wholesome Bircher muesli in Switzerland. And a velvety espresso is essential to an Italian breakfast, of course! If you have any dietary requirements, we'll ask about these before you begin your tour and accommodate them whenever we can.

How long are the rail journeys on this tour?

The Glacier Express journey from St Moritz in the Engadin Valley to Andermatt takes approximately five hours, while the Bernina Express trip across the Italian Swiss border is around two and a half hours. Both are incredibly scenic, with every glimpse out of the window a true feast for the eyes.

You'll also board the historic Brienz Rothorn steam train which meanders for about an hour through fragrant alpine meadows and sun-dappled forests to the mountain's panoramic summit viewpoint.



Will we need to catch a ferry to the hotel in Venice at the start of the tour?

You can reach the first hotel (and our tour meeting point) via taxi, public bus or waterbus from the mainland – the choice is yours! If you're planning on arriving a day early, we can also arrange for you to stay in the same hotel for an extra cost.

That's everything!

We can't wait to welcome you on tour.