The Northern Route to Assisi

A jewel of a lake, an overlooked city, and a few very good detours.





Illustrated orientation map; road and lake shapes are simplified.
Hollow markers: optional outing, alternative stay or alternative lunch stop.

LAKE ORTA	BRESCIA	EMILIA
Three lovely options	*A city interlude*	*Bologna or Roncolo*
2 nights	2 nights	2 nights

Six nights before the wedding. Long lunches very much encouraged.

Google Maps: airport to Lake Orta

Google Maps: Bologna to Assisi



Lake Orta, Slowly

A small lake with an excellent sense of priorities



01 · LAKE ORTA · TWO NIGHTS

Land, exhale, order something

From Milan Malpensa, head straight to Lake Orta, about an hour's drive once you have collected the car. Settle into your hotel, then spend your first afternoon exploring Orta San Giulio's little lanes, with time for aperitivo and dinner by the water. A very civilised beginning.

The following day, explore on foot along the Passeggiata Lungolago, then take the ferry out to Isola San Giulio for a wander. For a longer walk, add the climb to the Sacro Monte, where wooded paths and chapels open onto beautiful lake views. Leave room for lunch. Always.

For dining, try Pan&Vino – Enogastronomia on Piazza Motta, or L'Ustaria Cà dal Rat, where you can request a table on the lakeside terrace.

THREE LOVELY PLACES TO STAY

Choose your version of lakeside life

Villa Crespi · Orta San Giulio. A Relais & Châteaux address in a wonderfully theatrical 19th-century Moorish villa, with gardens and Antonino Cannavacciuolo's destination restaurant. Choose this for an intimate, romantic stay with dinner very much part of the occasion. Reserve the restaurant separately and well ahead.

LAQUA by the Lake · Pettenasco. A contemporary lakeside retreat in the Cannavacciuolo collection, with suites, a lake-view restaurant and a wellness area. Choose this for clean-lined comfort and days arranged around the water. It is in Pettenasco, a short drive from Orta San Giulio, rather than in the old village.

Orta Paradise · Orta San Giulio. One of my personal favourites: a collection of beautifully designed apartments, each with its own character. A lovely option for a larger family group booking across several apartments, with space to gather and a little independence. Morning coffee in your own kitchen, then out to enjoy the lake.

Villa Crespi
LAQUA by the Lake
Orta Paradise · the apartment collection

Lunch, Then Brescia

A vineyard interlude and a city worth staying for

02 · FRANCIACORTA · LUNCH STOP

Lunch is part of the route

Leave Lake Orta after breakfast and head east, breaking the drive with lunch in Franciacorta, the vineyard country just west of Brescia.

Dispensa Franciacorta in Torbiato di Adro is a lovely stop: a modern osteria, wine bar and enoteca where food and wine receive equal attention. Book a table, settle into lunch, then continue to Brescia for the afternoon. If you fancy a winery visit as well, I can arrange a tasting and driver.

03 · BRESCIA · TWO NIGHTS

Brescia deserves a proper introduction. Roman ruins, beautiful squares, little streets opening onto somewhere you'll want to sit for a while—it's a city that rewards staying over.

Spend your first afternoon wandering between Piazza della Loggia and Piazza Paolo VI, with an aperitivo along the way. The following day, explore the Roman archaeological park and Santa Giulia museum, or walk up to the castle for views across the city. Leave plenty of time for the streets, shops and tables in between.

Lake Garda is also within reach for a day out. Head to Salò or Gardone Riviera for a waterfront wander and lunch overlooking the lake, then return to Brescia for the evening. With two nights, choose a full day in the city or a day by the lake.

For a small, central stay, consider Locanda delle Mercanzie, set in a restored medieval building. I can also suggest other hotels to suit your group.

Google Maps: Lake Orta → Franciacorta lunch → Brescia





Bologna, Come Hungry

Two nights in Emilia-Romagna, with a countryside alternative



04 · BOLOGNA · TWO NIGHTS

Come hungry

Continue to Bologna, where handsome porticoes, busy markets and a serious commitment to lunch make a persuasive case for staying a while.

This is Emilia-Romagna: the land of handmade pasta, Parmigiano Reggiano and proper balsamic vinegar. In Bologna, start with tagliatelle al ragù, tortellini and lasagne verdi. Two nights gives you an afternoon to arrive and a full day to wander, taste and perhaps learn to make pasta yourself. Research can be delicious.

Spend time around Piazza Maggiore, explore the food shops of the Quadrilatero, and follow the porticoes wherever curiosity takes you. I can arrange a food walk, cooking class or a visit to a cheese producer or traditional balsamic maker in the surrounding region.

TWO WAYS TO STAY IN EMILIA

City splendour or vineyard mornings

Grand Hotel Majestic “già Baglioni” · Bologna. A grand 18th-century palazzo in the historic centre, with richly decorated rooms and the frescoed I Carracci restaurant. Choose this for a classic city stay: step outside and Bologna is at your feet, with a rather lovely address to return to after dinner.

Relais Roncolo 1888 · Near Reggio Emilia. A beautifully restored country retreat on a wine estate in the hills of Quattro Castella. Vineyards, historic buildings and the estate’s wines and balsamic vinegar make this a lovely alternative for guests who prefer their Emilia stay in the countryside.

Choose Bologna or Roncolo as your two-night base. Roncolo is near Reggio Emilia, farther west along the route from Brescia. From there, explore the surrounding Food Valley and continue south toward Tuscany and Assisi; a Bologna visit can be arranged separately.

Grand Hotel Majestic “già Baglioni”
Relais Roncolo 1888

Drive: Brescia → Bologna
Countryside option: Brescia → Roncolo 1888



A Tuscan Lunch, Then Assisi

A medieval town, a long lunch, and the wedding ahead



05 · AREZZO OR CORTONA · LUNCH STOP

Choose your last detour

Leave Bologna after breakfast and head south through Tuscany, stopping for lunch in Arezzo or Cortona.

Choose Arezzo for beautiful Piazza Grande, little streets and an afternoon with an artistic bent. Choose Cortona for a hilltop wander and sweeping views over the Valdichiana. Pick one, settle into lunch, then continue to Assisi in time for the wedding celebrations.

Arezzo is our suggested stop on the map; Cortona is the alternative. If you have chosen Roncolo, the same Tuscan lunch options work on your journey south. I can choose and reserve a restaurant around your date, preferences and arrival time in Assisi.

RESERVATIONS & LOGISTICS

Let me take care of the details

I can help with all reservations and logistics: hotels, restaurant tables, car hire, private transfers, boat trips, winery visits and local guides. We can adapt the route to your arrival time, interests and the wedding schedule.
Christine Capano · Slow Travel Lab

Contact Christine at Slow Travel Lab

YOUR DRIVING ROUTES

Malpensa → Lake Orta
Lake Orta → Franciacorta lunch → Brescia
Brescia → Bologna
Bologna → Arezzo → Assisi
Alternative: Bologna → Cortona → Assisi
Countryside option: Brescia → Roncolo 1888
Roncolo 1888 → Arezzo → Assisi
Roncolo 1888 → Cortona → Assisi

Six nights before the wedding: Lake Orta 2 + Brescia 2 + Bologna or Roncolo 2. Choose Arezzo or Cortona for lunch on the final driving day. Confirm arrival in Assisi against the wedding events. Ask each hotel for parking and ZTL instructions. September 2027 availability, restaurant service, boat schedules and museum opening days should be reconfirmed.