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constructed including a series of watch towers - you can still see one of the towers today (The Baradello). After French and Austrian conquests, Como was eventually incorporated into the Kingdom of Italy in 1859. Today Como is a world renowned tourist destination and thousands of people flock here to explore the impressive Lake Como and the surrounding natural landscape. The city itself has a multitude of historical buildings, fine restaurants and important museums. Furthermore, surrounding the lake, there is a plethora of beautiful towns and villages such as Cernobbio, Menaggio and Bellagio. The following is a list of 15 of the top things to do in and around Como. 1. Como Cathedral Source: Lee Yu Tung / shutterstockComo Cathedral The cathedral in Como is undoubtedly the most impressive building in the city and is renowned for its beautiful architecture. This church is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and was constructed in the 14th century. It features a Gothic design and was not wholly completed until the 18th century. The front façade features a plethora of ornate stone work, stone statues and is topped with a series of small decorative towers. The interior is lavishly decorated and one of the main features is the central dome - this is covered with gold artwork and some simply beautiful decoration. Furthermore, the interior is vast and the various arches, columns and naves are all striking. When visiting Como, a visit must be given to this magnificent structure. Suggested tour to start your trip: Como Walking & Eating Tour 2. Como Archaeological Museum Source: FSosio / WikimediaComo Archaeological Museum Located in close proximity to the cathedral you can find the delightful Como Archaeological Museum. This museum is actually housed in the Palazzo Giovio and features a fantastic range of artefacts that have been found throughout the Como region. These artefacts and finds date as far back as the ancient Greek times and present a truly interesting look at the history of Como and its inhabitants throughout the years. You can expect to find a range of pottery, jewellery, stonework, agricultural machinery and more. Each display is housed with care and features an insightful range of information about the item and its history. 3. Museo Storico Giuseppe Garibaldi Source: ell brown / FlickrMuseo Storico Giuseppe Garibaldi This fine museum is also housed within a former palace and is also located on the Piazza Medaglia where the Archaeological Museum is situated. The historical museum of Giuseppe Garibaldi has a series of lavishly decorated rooms that have been restored to show traditional living from various eras in Italy. Furthermore the museum contains a plethora of artefacts such as furniture, lace and clothing from Como and the surrounding region. This collection and restored rooms are simply fantastic and together with the Archaeological Museum paint a fine picture of Como. 4. Basilica di Sant'Abbondio Source: Claudio Divizia / shutterstockBasilica Di Sant'Abbondio The Basilica of Saint Addondio is located a little out of the city centre, but it is a majestic church that is worthy of a visit. The original church was created in the 11th century and the current Romanesque church was created over it by the Benedictines. The front of the church is quite plain and features simple stonework and a huge main doorway. Alternatively, the interior features a set of huge stone columns and an ornately decorated main altar. The altar has a beautiful series of coloured frescos depicting various religious figures and a gorgeous blue and gold decorative ceiling. 5. Take the Funicular up to Brunate Source: Sergio Monti Photography / shutterstockBrunate Funicular Brunate is a small town that is located high up in the mountains surrounding Lake Como. If you travel to the eastern edge of the lake near the city of Como you can take a fantastic funicular train that scales the mountain and stops at Brunate. When you reach the top the views from this town are simply magnificent and you can see both the city of Como and the Lake in all their glory. There are several terraces and restaurants that offer stunning views and give you a place to relax and take in the clear mountain air. For the adventurous, there is a 2 hour hike that takes the intrepid to the summit of Mount Boletto for even greater views of this magical region. 6. Take a boat ride on Lake Como Source: Rene Hartmann / shutterstockLake Como There is possibly no better way to explore Lake Como and see the beautiful landscape the encompasses this body of water than to take a boat ride from Como itself. There is a wide range of tour companies and boat operators that provide trips on the lake. You can take one way boat rides from Como to visit some of the coastal towns such as Cernobbio and Bellagio, or alternatively you can take a scenic boat ride that simply travels on the lake while a guide points out different landmarks and explains the history of this region. Which either type of ride you choose, you are sure to see the majesty of Lake Como up close and personal. 7. Visit the town of Cernobbio Source: LaMiaFotografia / shutterstockCernobbio Cernobbio is a town that is located on the western shore of Lake Como only a short distance from the city of Como. This is one of the larger towns on the lake and features the amazing Villa d'Este which was originally built for an English Queen. Down by the shore of the lake you can find the Cernobbio Lido and the Piazza Risorgimento - here you can see some beautiful fishing and sailing boats and also grab a bite to eat in one of the fine restaurants or cafes. Cernobbio is also known as the starting point of the pilgrimage to Monte Bisbino - this 1310m road leads to the top of the mountain and the top offers panoramic views of the countryside. 8. Villa Balbianello Source: leoks / shutterstockVilla Balbianello Punta Balbianello is a promontory that sticks out into Lake Como near the town of Lenno. This promontory can be reached via a beautiful trail that winds from the bay at Lenno through some gorgeous woodland - this walk is a highlight and is perfect for those who enjoy hiking. Located on the Punta is the Villa Balbianello - this Baroque villa complex was constructed during the 18th century over the original site of a monastery. From this villa you are granted with some sublime views of Lake Como - the various terraces open out onto the lake and you can see for miles across to the opposite shore and the towns of Vergonese and Bellagio. Aside from the gorgeous views, the villa itself has some amazing architecture is an interesting complex to explore. 9. Visit the town of Bellagio Source: iryna1 / shutterstockBellagio Bellagio is regarded as one of the most beautiful and idyllic towns on Lake Como and it is easy to see why. This town can be found where the three arms of Lake Como meet therefore the views are unrivalled - you can see each corner of the vast lake and the promenade at La Punta provides one of the best photographic opportunities in the area. Within the town itself you can find a variety of high-end shops, several beautifully maintained gardens and some amazing restaurants. Consider taking a boat trip to Bellagio, walking along the promenades and admiring this picture-perfect place. 10. Villa Serbelloni Source: Konstantin Trozin / shutterstockVilla Serbelloni When visiting Bellagio, you cannot miss out on the spectacular Villa Serbelloni. This villa is one of the many historical complexes situated on Lake Como that once served as a lavish retreat for the Sfondrati Family during the 16th century. It is easy to see why this villa was constructed in this location - at the top of the promontory that the town of Bellagio sits; this complex has amazing views of Lake Como and of the Alps in the far distance. Although the villa is not open to the public, the expansive gardens are and guided tours are available - these Italian gardens feature a number of different enclosures including a Rose garden and several beautiful wooded areas. 11. Visit the town of Menaggio Source: travelpeter / shutterstockMenaggio Menaggio is another beautiful town on Lake Como and is situated on the western shore just above Bellagio. As with the other towns on the shores of Lake Como, Menaggio offers some amazing views and the ferry port in particular has a wide open square that is a perfect place to take some photos of the water and the mountains. Menaggio actually has a tunnel that passes through the entire length of the town that acts as a bypass for motorists looking to travel further afield. Within the town of Menaggio you can find some fantastic restaurants that overlook the lake, and for the adventurous there is also a boat hire service. 12. Try your hand at Canyoning at Porlezza or Lenno Source: twitter.comCanyoning Porlezza The varied landscape of Lake Como and the surrounding region offers itself to extreme sports. For those who want to try something different and test their skills, there are companies such as Lake Como Adventures that offer a range of sports and outdoor pursuits. Lake Como Adventures in particular offers the activity called Canyoning - this involves abseiling, jumping and sliding through a series of canyons and cliffs to reach the ground or water below. This is a really fun way to explore Lake Como and you can find some truly stunning settings such as the canyons at Porlezza and Lenno. 13. Try your hand at Rock Climbing Source: www.tripadvisor.comRock Climbing If you do not fancy Canyoning then why not try Rock Climbing instead? The mountainous region of Lake Como has many opportunities for rock climbing and has a myriad of fantastic routes for all levels of skill from beginners to experts. Companies such as Lake Como Adventures provide rock climbing trips from a simple afternoon exploring the likes of Grimsel and Furkapass. You can climb on a range of different surface such as granite and limestone and explore some truly stunning parts of Lake Como. 14. Enjoy a meal at Trattoria La Costa Source: www.tripadvisor.comTrattoria La Costa This gorgeous restaurant is located in the southern part of Como in the small commune of Albate. The hosts of this restaurant are extremely friendly and will ensure that your dining experience is a memorable one. The interior is beautifully decorated and has a traditional feel. You can choose from a variety of traditional Italian meals, all of which are created using locally sourced ingredients where possible. Furthermore, for those who enjoy a glass of wine, the patrons of Trattoria La Costa will take you into their wine cellar to select your very own bottle! 15. Enjoy a coffee at Caffè Mazzini Source: www.tripadvisor.co.ukCaffè Mazzini While exploring Como, you may want to relax in a quiet café and enjoy a fine coffee and a snack or a light bite. Cafe Mazzini is one such establishment and is located in the Piazza Giuseppe Mazzini near the harbour of Como. This café has a great selection of Italian dishes and light snacks together with a range of mouth-watering desserts and drinks. In the evening if you visit this café you can also taste a range of delicious cocktails and they sometimes have a happy hour too!