

11 JULY 2012 CATERINA POMINI 9460

ENJOY CULTURE, NATURE AND RELAX ON LAKE GARDA

Lake Garda is a wonderful place to spend time. Go and get the opportunity to try/engage in sports such as windsurfing, sailing, kayaking or simply relaxing on a beach fronting crystal clear waters. Located halfway between Venice and Milan, the largest of the Italian lakes also boasts countless towns and villages where visitors can enjoy both nature and culture...

This classic three-day itinerary takes you to **Sirmione**, **Manerba del Garda** and **Gardone Riviera**, all included in the province of **Brescia**.

Very well known for its imposing Scaliger Castle, Roman ruins and thermal springs, Sirmione rises on a peninsula at the southern end of the Lake, which is said to house the ruins of Catullus' villa: the so-called **Grottoes of Catullus**. As mentioned above, the town is also well worth a visit for its thermal establishments

, where you can relax and take advantage of a multitude of spa treatments. Surrounded by a moat, the charming 13th-century **Scaliger Castle** dominates the narrowest part of the Sirmio promontory and offers fantastic views over the Lake and the old town centre; the Fortress also houses a small museum with local finds from the Roman era and some Medieval artifacts.

We recommend that you spend the night in Sirmione and leave for **Manerba del Garda** (approximately 40 minutes drive) very early on the morning after. According to the legend, the town was established in honour of the goddess Minerva. The most famous attraction in Manerba is definitely the Parco Archeologico Naturalistico Rocca di Manerba del Garda, an archaeological park and nature reserve protected by UNESCO.

Set in a landscape of exceptional beauty, you will find quiet and peaceful paths to explore, the imposing ruins of a castle overlooking the Lake, a museum and some Bronze Age pile-dwellings. The shore around here also boasts **some of the best beaches on the Lake**.

In the afternoon (or the day after, it depends on your interests) you can head up north until you reach **Gardone Riviera**, an elegant tourist resort with a beautiful lakeside promenade, a little square sloping down to the Lake shore and hotels and restaurants for all budgets; famous personalities such as **Goethe**, **D.H. Lawrence**, **Stefan Zweig** and **Winston Churchill** came here to find peace and inspiration. Besides being a comfortable place to spend time, Gardone has also a couple of the Lake's great tourist attractions: the Vittoriale degli italiani (the monumental villa of the Italian poet **Gabriele D'Annunzio**) and the Heller Garden (a botanical garden established at the beginning of the 20th century by **Arthur Hruska**, with a collection of flora from all over the world and sculptures by **Lichtenstein**, **Keith Haring** and **Mimmo Paladino**).

We hope these tips will help you make the most of your time between Sirmione, Manerba and Gardone; enjoy your stay and beautiful Lake Garda.