

Why is Milan so special?

Milan is the 2nd largest city in Italy (after Rome, Italy's capital), and the country's financial, cultural, and fashion hub.

Milan has a long and complicated history which has shaped it into the dynamic city that it is today.

- Milan was founded around 590 BC by a Celtic tribe and then conquered by the Romans. It was originally called Mediolanum ("in the middle of a plain").
- It was the capital of the Western Roman Empire from 286 to 402 AD during which time the city's importance grew and it evolved into a free commune.
- During the Renaissance, Milan became a cultural center under the rule of 2 powerful families, the Visconti and Sforza families (hence the name of the famous Sforza Castle).
- In the early 19th century, Milan fell under Napoleon's rule and in 1859, it became part of the Kingdom of Italy after Italy was unified.
- During World War II, Milan was a critical center for anti-fascist resistance movements against Mussolini's regime and occupying Nazi forces, and although it suffered heavy bombing during the war, it quickly rebuilt and became an economic powerhouse during Italy's post-war industrial boom.

Check out these fun facts about the city:

- Milan is home to 2 world-famous soccer teams.
- Milan is home to the largest number of Leonardo da Vinci's works, including his famous mural, The Last Supper.
- The city sits in the Po Valley and is surrounded by mountains (the Alps to the north and the Apennine Mountains to the south) which makes it less windy.
- Milan is part of the Lombardy region which is named after the Lombards, a Germanic tribe that invaded and settled the area during the 6th century AD.
- The Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II is one of the oldest shopping malls in the world. Stop and grab a cup of coffee on your way to Duomo.
- Panettone, the famous Italian Christmas cake, originated in Milan.

Options for getting around



TAKE A CAB AND THE TRAIN (**Recommended)

- I suggest taking a 45 to 60-min cab ride from the airport to Milano Centrale, Milan's main train station. The ride should cost ~90 euros.
- Once at the train station, you can store your luggage at deposito bagagli (left luggage) on the ground floor of the station. It costs ~6 euros for 5 hrs.
- When you're ready to make your way to Lake Como, pick up your luggage and hop on a 40 to 60-min train ride. Trains run frequently and tickets are only ~5 euros.



RENT A CAR

- If you'll need transportation while in Lake Como, consider renting a car. Rental prices are inexpensive on [Expedia](#).
- While exploring Milan, you can either park on the street or in a public garage - [Garage Meravigli](#) is near major tourist sites like Duomo.

****NOTE:** You will need an international driver's license to drive a car in Italy, which you can easily do through [AAA](#). Also, even 2-lane roads off the main route can be narrow and windy, so drive with caution.



HIRE A PRIVATE DRIVER

- If you'd rather not deal with public transportation or driving yourself around, you can opt for a private driver to bring you to and from Lake Como.
- There are several companies that do this, including [Como Driver](#). They charge ~120 euros, one way.

1 Day in *Milan*



Click [here](#) for your interactive map.

Sun, Oct 13: Enjoy authentic Milanese cuisine and see some of the city's famous sights.

After landing, make your way to Brera for a traditional Milanese lunch.

- Brera is a charming art and design district known for its cobblestone streets and bohemian, creative vibe. It's close to many of Milan's famous sights, so it's a great place to stop for some food and a glass of wine prior to exploring.
- If you are coming from *Milano Centrale*, take the M3 (yellow line) ~15 min to Montenapoleone station.
- There are a ton of cafes and restaurants in Brera, but here are a few that specialize in traditional Milanese cuisine:
 - *Locando alla Scalla* - As described on its site, it's a hidden garden in the heart of Milan focused on traditional cuisine and love for hospitality.
 - *Ristorante Nabucco* - This popular spot may be a bit more touristy but it serves the classics in a classic setting with an outdoor terrace.

- **Osteria di Brera** – As described on its site, it's part French brasserie, part design venue, part trattoria, and part metropolitan bar. It reinterprets the authenticity of old taverns in a pop style, with flair and bright colors.
- If you'd like something other than traditional Milanese cuisine, try one of the following higher-end options.
 - **Sadler** – a Michelin-starred restaurant known for its contemporary Italian cuisine and artistic presentation
 - **DeRos Restaurant** – a modern dining spot with great reviews known for its Mediterranean and seafood-focused menu

***Try a Milanese staple like Risotto alla Milanese (saffron-flavored risotto), Ossobuco alla Milanese, or Cotoletta alla Milanese (breaded and fried veal cutlet).*

***I suggest making a lunch reservation ahead of time just in case!*

After lunch, stroll around the charming Brera and check out **Pinacoteca di Brera, one of Italy's most prestigious art galleries.**

- Pinacoteca di Brera was originally established by Napoleon Bonaparte. It houses an impressive collection of Italian Renaissance and Baroque pieces.

Head south to explore a couple of Milan's famous sights.

- Walk ~10 min to **Teatro alla Scala**, a historic opera house. You can either check out the museum or admire its architectural beauty from outside.
- From there, walk ~5 min to **Duomo di Milano**, one of Italy's most iconic landmarks and the largest Gothic cathedral in the world. It took almost 6 centuries to complete, with construction starting in 1386. [Buy tickets](#) in advance to access the rooftop terrace which offers panoramic views of Milan and the Alps (on a clear day).

If you have time and are feeling energized, head to **Castello Sforzesco.**

- The castle was originally built in the 15th century by the Sforza family and has evolved from a fortress to a royal palace to a collection of Milan's finest museums and art collections.
- To get to the castle, either walk 15 min from Duomo or take Tram 1, a line known for its vintage trams, 4 stops to Cadorna stop.

Eventually, make your way back to Milano Centrale via cab or metro and chill with a glass of wine at *Terrazza Gallia's* rooftop bar before grabbing your luggage and hopping on the train to Lake Como (if that's the mode of transportation you choose).

- Terrazza Gallia is located at the Excelsior Hotel Gallia, and it offers panoramic city views and a close-up look at Milano Centrale's impressive architecture.

Enjoy the rest of your vacation in Lake Como!