



Lake Maggiore, Lake Orta, Lake Mergozzo and the Ossola Valleys
PIEMONTE Italy

FROM SIMPLON TO LAKE MAGGIORE: GIRO D'ITALIA IS BACK!

On 20th May 2023 the top cycling race Giro d'Italia runs from Switzerland through the Ossola alpine region to Lake Maggiore. These piedmontese lakes and mountains are an ideal destination for outdoor sports.

Stresa, May 2023 – The 14th stage of [Giro d'Italia](#), scheduled for Saturday 20th May, arrives in the **Lake Maggiore region**, the upper corner of **Piedmont** that is increasingly becoming a not-to-be-missed destination for the sport world linked to the outdoors, especially for two-wheelers.

Cyclists in the race will come from Switzerland (Wallis Canton) to Italy via the **Simplon Pass** (2,005 m asl), an historic alpine access that marks the border point between the two nations as well as the **Italian Alps Pennine and Lepontine**. Once arrived in the **Ossola Valleys**, Giro d'Italia will then travel along the fascinating **Divedro Valley**, crossing the villages of **Trasquera** and **Varzo**, to then touch **Crevaladossola**, **Domodossola** and **Villadossola**. After passing the lower Toce river plain in **Piedimulera** and **Premosello Chiovenda**, the Giro will then continue along **Lake Mergozzo** and **Lake Maggiore**, crossing water side the well-known tourist destinations **Mergozzo**, **Feriollo** and **Baveno**, **Stresa**, **Belgirate**, **Lesa**, **Meina** and **Arona**, in the direction of Lombardy.

Giro d'Italia is an important chance to promote an **area in Piedmont increasingly suited to the practice of cycle tourism**. Just many of the localities mentioned above, which will be coloured pink for the passage of the important race, offer various **bike itineraries worthy of note and for all skill levels**. Here are some suggestions for cycling enthusiasts.

Starting from the **Ossola Valleys or the Alps**, in **Varzo** worth mentioning is the **mountain bike route Alpeggi di Varzo**, a part of the Divedro Valley located at the entrance of **Veglia Devero Nature Park**. It is a particularly suggestive circular tour from a landscape point of view, with a vertical drop of 1,300 metres, which starts from the medieval old village of Varzo and arrives at Alpe Quatè and Alpe Moiero, passing by the Crosta refuge.

For the **road bike**, on **Lake Maggiore** there is the ring **Anello Stresa – Arona**, which follows part of the route of the Giro on 20th May. An itinerary that runs along a large part of the Piedmont side of the lake, crossing the centres of **Belgirate**, **Lesa** and **Meina** and allowing you to admire unique monuments and wonders: the **Borromeo Islands** in Stresa and the **Colossus of San Carlo Borromeo** in Arona. The ring then covers the green hills of **Alto Vergante**, just above the lake, offering spectacular views and closing back down in Stresa.

The **cycle path Ciclovía del Toce** is a route that crosses the best production area of the **typical flowers of Lake Maggiore**. From Ornavasso to the Fondotoce Nature Reserve, on the same route of the upcoming



Giro, it is possible to admire the blooming of **azaleas**, **rhododendrons** and **camellias** which colour the lake landscape with different shades and hues.

This cycle path is truly unique in its kind, because it offers many interesting route possibilities **between the Ossola Valleys and Lake Maggiore**, combined in four thematic suggestions: [Ciclovía del Toce: along the rivers](#), [Ciclovía del Toce: around the villages](#), [Ciclovía del Toce: in the woods](#), [Ciclovía del Toce: through the flowers](#). The first one is a ring tour so called because it touches **five waterways** (Toce, Bogna, Diverna, Isorno and Melezzo), and starts from the Vigezzina Centovalli train station in **Domodossola** and crosses the villages of **Crevaladossola**, **Montecrestese**, **Masera** and **Trontano**. The second route starts from **Domodossola** and reaches the charming medieval town of **Vogogna**, which is listed among Italy's most beautiful villages "[Borghi più belli d'Italia](#)". The third route starts right from **Vogogna** and ends in **Ornavasso** crossing the central stretch of the Toce river plain, between fields and woods. Worth mentioning here is **Bosco Tenso**, the last remaining lowland forest in the whole Ossola central valley, that is a forest that has remained unchanged since the 10th century, when Northern Italy was extensively deforested. The fourth and last route starts from **Ornavasso** and stretches down to the protected area of the **reeds of Verbania Fondotoce**, crossing the cultivations of the **typical flowers of Lake Maggiore**. And it is precisely in the days of Giro d'Italia that this last stretch of the Ciclovía del Toce offers the most exciting scenarios when the blooms reach their peak.

The 14th stage of Giro d'Italia 2023 will also be an opportunity to "paint pink" some of the 12 **Italian Touring Club's Orange Flags "[Bandiere Arancioni](#)"** of the Lake Maggiore region. They are villages that dot these extraordinary lakes and mountains with their elegant architecture, a cuisine of excellence and a strong bond with local culture and traditions. Among them let's visit, for example, **Domodossola** (Ossola Valleys), the capital city of this stretch of the Alps also nominated "Borgo della Cultura"; **Vogogna** (Ossola Valleys) with the dominating tower of its majestic Visconti Castle; **Mergozzo** (Lake Mergozzo) with its tiny little historic centre and the monumental century-old elm tree in the main square; **Arona** (Lake Maggiore) with the 35-metre-high Statue of St. Charles Borromeo, but also a variety of charming shops and cafés.

Enjoy lake and mountain nature, culture, outdoor, food&wine and wellness. Get ready to live Your best Lago Maggiore Experience!

TEXTS by Local Tourism Board Distretto Turistico dei Laghi In partnership with MAILANDER Agency in charge of Outdoor focused communication for Distretto Turistico dei Laghi

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