

Press Release Ticino Tourism for A Taste of Lugano in LA

Ticino – a region to fall in love with

Ticino is like love – opposites attract! Palm trees and glaciers, la dolce vita and extreme sport, ancient churches, and modern architecture.

At the southern-most part of Switzerland, where there's always a hint of Italy in the air, opposites work in complete harmony. Imagine a place where you can hike across a glacier in the morning and nap under the palm trees in the afternoon. In the Locarno region with its Alpine hinterland, this is more than possible.

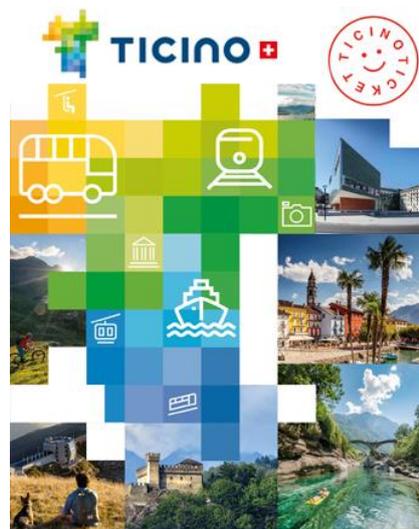
Outdoor lovers can hike the Ticino alpine world through quiet valleys and secluded villages. Once you're off the hills, you can stroll across the lively Piazza Riforma in Lugano with its relaxed atmosphere of Mediterranean dolce vita. A trip through time from the 1,500-year-old baptistry in Riva San Vitale to Mario Botta's avant-garde chapel on Monte Tamaro takes less than 30 minutes.

Be seduced by the many suggestive spots, the colours and the flavours of the "Dolce Vita" that make this land unique and unforgettable!

Public transport Free Travel with the "Ticino Ticket"

With the "Ticino Ticket", tourists will be able to use all public transport free of charge as well as being granted special rates for various leisure activities during their stay in the southern canton. This offer is for visitors who stay overnight in hotels, youth hostels and on camping sites. You are given the "Ticino Ticket" upon arrival and it is valid until the end of your day of departure.

www.ticket.ticino.ch



Our 4 Regions

Lugano Region



Switzerland's third-largest financial centre, Lugano is uniquely situated on the lake in the foothills of the southern Alps, overlooked by Monte Brè and Mount San Salvatore and enjoys a mild climate with lush vegetation. The town blends business, elegance and international status with a relaxed southern lifestyle. The parks, villas, churches, museums and shops invite visitors to take in the sights, soak up the atmosphere and enjoy the "dolce far niente" (the sweetness of doing nothing).



Highlight: not to be missed!

Grotti Lake Lugano tour

The mild summer nights in Ticino are really inviting for having an outdoor meal and simply relaxing and unwinding. The Lake Lugano shipping company offers its Grotti tour throughout the summer - there are several Grotti and restaurants directly on the lake's jetties. A successful idea for connoisseurs, because when the lights shine on the lake in the evening, the atmosphere is simply enchanting. The first two stops are Grotto San Rocco and the Grotto dei Pescatori, at the base of Monte Caprino, located amidst nature and with a

beautiful view to Lugano City and the sublime backdrop of the mountains surrounding them. The next stop is Cantine di Gandria, where two further Grotti tempt you to taste typical Ticino products. You then return to the point of departure in Lugano via picturesque Gandria. The evening tour costs 15 Swiss francs per person and takes place on Thursday, Fridays and Saturdays from 1st of June until August 25th 2018.

...or just a simple cruise on the lake

If you've already eaten enough, even a simple cruise will do the trick for you! A boat trip on Lake Lugano allows you to **discover places of rare beauty** and admire unique landscapes from a **charming and unusual perspective**. You can enjoy the view of picturesque villages on the lake shore as Morcote, Bissone and Gandria, which is an illustration of a small fishing village on the shores of Lake Lugano. You will also have the pleasure to admire the majesty of the mountains that overlook the lake of Lugano, like Monte Generoso or Monte San Salvatore, and the splendor of the nature that surrounds them!



www.lakelugano.ch

Lake Maggiore and Valleys



Lake Maggiore captures the hearts of visitors with its charm and the allure of *la dolce vita* (“the sweet life”), not to mention its spectacular natural landscape. Visitors are wooed by a combination of scenic Alpine landscape and Mediterranean atmosphere. This Garden of Eden was already known to ancient Romans—veteran legionaries—as a good place to live, so much so that they built a settlement on Lake Maggiore. Not surprisingly, Ascona and Locarno are well known to this day as oases of wellbeing. Locarno has the mildest climate in Switzerland. The region is blessed with almost 2,300 hours of sunshine each year and an average temperature of 15.5°C, which enables flora and fauna to flourish. The cultural highlight is the international film festival held each year in August.

No trip to Lake Maggiore would be complete without visiting the wild valleys to the north and west of Locarno and Ascona. Little more than a stone’s throw from the fashionable lakeside promenades, winding roads meander into the secluded valleys, the best known of which are the Centovalli, Maggia, Onsernone and Verzasca valleys.

This region is also beloved by hikers and cyclists, which appreciate the shady woods, the sunny river banks and the steep hiking trails. A unique outdoor-lovers paradise!



Highlight: not to be missed!

Valle Verzasca - the stone heart of Ticino

The river is the real star of the Valle Verzasca in Ticino, with its emerald-green water providing the name for the entire valley. Verzasca comes from a combination of the word pair “verde” and “acqua”, meaning “green water”. And you really do need to see it to believe it. For a long time, only locals had ever been lucky enough to enjoy the view – the Valle Verzasca was practically shut off from the rest of the world until 1870 due to what seemed to be an almost impenetrable entrance to the valley. Nowadays, the valley is overshadowed by a huge, 220-metre high

dam, which you might recognise as the backdrop for the James Bond film *GoldenEye*. The most daring visitors to the region can jump into the abyss just like 007 does in the film, freefalling for 7 and a half seconds parallel to the wall before the bungee rope springs you back from hitting the jagged rocks below. The river landscape is especially stunning in Lavertezzo where the two arches of the **Ponte dei Salti** stone bridge rise majestically over the Verzasca river. Although the most important sight of the valley is also known as the Ponte Romano, it doesn’t actually date from Roman times, but from the early middle ages, or the Romanesque period. Anyone who has the inclination (and courage!) can jump into the Verzasca from the bridge where the water is 7 - 10 metres deep. And if you need cooling off in the summer, you can go to one of the numerous grotti, the open-air restaurants.

Bellinzona



The first stop to Switzerland's sunny basin: Bellinzona. The capital city of the Canton, with its impressive legacy of castles (which were declared world cultural heritage by UNESCO), towers and a defensive wall that dominates the skyline. Discover a real city, on Saturday mornings, by browsing among the stalls of its market or during the carnival season, visiting the playful reign of 'King' Rabadan. You really can inhale history here; in every step you take!



Highlight: not to be missed!

Medieval festival "Spada nella Rocca"

In May, generally the last weekend of the month, the medieval world is brought back to life for the twentieth time on the grounds of Castelgrande in Bellinzona. During this two-day historical re-enactment at the UNESCO world heritage castle, around 300 re-enactors transport visitors back to the High Middle Ages. Gleaming swords and helmets, colourful costumes and flying flags—all this and more can be seen at the "Spada nella rocca" (Sword in the rock)

The event was first held in 1999 and re-enacts scenes from medieval life with sword-fighting tournaments, knights, archers, flag-wavers and medieval dinners as well as a display of medieval craftsmanship. An event not to be missed to experience even more the medieval essence of this fantastic city!

www.laspadanellarocca.ch

Mendrisiotto



Thick chestnut and beech woods, lush vineyards and bright green pastures: The Mendrisio region (also known as the “Mendrisiotto”) is a balm for the soul and a feast for the eyes, its beauty reflected in Lake Lugano. Behind the villages, the ridges and romantic hills of the Mendrisiotto rise and turn, peaking at Mount Generoso and Mount San Giorgio, the two mountains lure visitors with their attractions and stunningly beautiful vistas.



Highlight: not to be missed!

Stone Flower at Monte Generoso

Monte Generoso above Mendrisio is the most famous and possibly the most popular mountain in the Ticino, offering impressive views of the lake landscape, the city of Lugano, the Po Valley and the mountains, from the Apennines to the Gotthard massif and the Bernina Range. The nostalgic rack railway, which has been taking guests up to the 1704m summit from Capolago since 1890, is one of the oldest in the country. In 40 minutes, it covers almost ten kilometres

and climbs about 1000 metres. At the upper terminal, perched atop the mountain is the new landmark of Monte Generoso, the "**Fiore di Pietra**" (Stone Flower), which opened in spring 2017. The tourist complex sits majestically on a massive rock atop a 300- to 400-metre cliff on the northern slope of the mountain. The Stone Flower was designed by leading architect Mario Botta, who had previously set an architectural exclamation mark on Monte Tamaro with the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli. The four-storey building, clad in grey natural stone, houses a gourmet restaurant catering for up to 125 people, a self-service restaurant seating 120, and a conference room accommodating 100 people. The roof terrace with its magnificent panoramic view can be booked for special occasion.

www.montegeneroso.ch

A culinary journey through Ticino's delicacies

Even the history of food and drink is rich and varied here! Hardship famously leads to creativity, that explains the richness of Ticino cuisine which finds its roots in local ingredients, lovingly prepared. Delicious and unique dishes such as a savoury and cheesy polenta, cured meats, and heartwarming vegetables minestrone. The traditional Ticino culinary culture is groundbreaking insofar as it is now where everyone wants to be: close to its roots.

Some culinary tips for your stay:

A taste of the south at the Bellinzona Saturday market

Every Saturday, the inner city of Bellinzona is transformed into colourful and joyful hustle and bustle when the market booths spread out their treasures beneath the blue and red striped rooves. The Bellinzona Saturday market, where some 120 local producers offer their goods from 8am to 1pm, has long since become the meeting place for the locals and tourists: Sun-ripened fruit and vegetables of the season from the Magadino plain, cheese specialities from Leventina and the Muggio valley, sausages manufactured using traditional recipes and crispy Ticino bread and honey, but also flowers, arts and craft, antiques and clothing are offered.

www.bellinzonese-altoticino.ch



Grotto America – a ‘grotto’ makes history

The Grotto America in Ponte Brolla is a pretty little restaurant closely bound up with Ticino history. Situated on the River Maggia, it is surrounded by many old caves which once served for storing food. Its origins go back to the mid-nineteenth century, when it acted as one of the most important assembly points in the region where the emigrants came together before starting off on their journey to America. It has kept the same name up to the present and keeps the original wall paintings by a Ticino emigrant family which was lucky enough to be successful abroad. On their return, they bought the grotto and christened it “America” in memory of their journey. Meals based on traditional Ticino recipes and prepared with produce from small local farmers and manufacturers are served in the vaulted cellar and in the garden. Alongside these delights for the palate, there is also a cultural programme entitled “L’Angolo degli Artisti”, which offers a stage to Ticino, Swiss and even international artistes all throughout the summer.

www.grottoamerica.ch



Food & Wine Tour – a Culinary Journey of Discovery Through Lugano

Exploring Lugano through a culinary lens is the motto of a new Food & Wine tour along the banks of Lake Lugano. On the three and a half-hour journey, a local guide takes visitors to destinations such as famous specialty shop Gabbani or the Grand Café Al Porto, where local luminaries have held court in Lugano since 1803, along with other restaurants and bars typical of the city. Some of the Ticino specialties to be sampled along the way include regional

cheeses, aromatic salamis, risotto and polenta as well as delicacies from other parts of Switzerland. These local dishes are paired with regional wines such as Ticino Merlot, as well as entertaining anecdotes about the city’s various dining establishments. To end the tour on a sweet note, there is freshly baked torta di pane on offer, fragrant amaretti or gelato, refined with a few drops of local nocino. This tour is offered year-round and can be booked through the Lugano tourist office. www.luganoturismo.ch

A starry treat: Michelin’s star Restaurant Arté in Grand Hotel Villa Castagnola

A unique restaurant inside an art gallery such as those found in London and New York. Across the road from the hotel and directly on the lake, the Restaurant Gallery Arté al Lago offers breathtaking views of Lugano as well as a changing scene of international artworks. Head Chef Frank Oerthle creates spectacular signature dishes in a menu that specializes in lake fish and seafood.

www.villacastagnola.com/en

A pleasure to drink: our Ticino Wine



When you hear "Ticino wine", you immediately think of Merlot. For good reason: for many decades, the southernmost Swiss canton has been producing limited amounts of high-quality wines. The grapes ripen around mid-September with medium-sized, round fruits and a blue-black colour. Their vinification produces a fairly intense, ruby-red, balanced, full-bodied wine with an elegant ivy note. It is dry in taste, with a pleasant, slightly bitter aftertaste. Its structure makes Merlot an ideal accompaniment to minestrone, roasted meat, main courses in general and well matured, but not too strong cheese. As a rule of thumb, it can be stored for four to six years. The recommended serving temperature is 16 to 18 degrees. The Merlot grape has therefore bestowed a unique identity upon Ticino. But what does the name mean? It is believed that the term "Merlot" is derived from merle, the French for blackbird, because the colour of the ripe fruit is similar to that of the bird's plumage. Another theory suggests that Merlot is one of the first grapes to ripen and is thus the first to be eaten by blackbirds.

And as you would do with a good glass of wine, sip a little bit of Ticino and immerse yourself in its fascinating atmosphere. You won't regret it!

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