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Lake Garda in 3 Days

The perfect day-by-day itinerary

The definitive Lake Garda guide — with AI Trip Designer at instagarda.net

Three days, three souls of the lake: the Roman charm of the south, the alpine panoramas of the east, the outdoor energy of the north. This itinerary moves logically, never crossing the lake without reason (it is 52 km long!). Each day stays in one area and ends with a memorable sunset.

Day 1 — Sirmione and the southern lake

1

Grotte di Catullo

9:00 · Sirmione

The largest Roman villa in northern Italy, at the tip of the peninsula with 360-degree views. Arrive early: by 11 am tour groups fill everything.

Local tip: Leave your car at the Monte Baldo car park outside the centre and walk in: Sirmione's ZTL camera zone is strictly enforced.

2

Scaliger Castle and old town

11:30 · Sirmione

The drawbridge over the water is Lake Garda's most iconic photo. Climb the tower for peninsula views, then get lost in the lanes.

3

Lunch and Jamaica Beach

13:00 · Sirmione

Lunch in the centre, then half an hour on the white rock slabs of Jamaica Beach below the Grotte. Caribbean-like water when the lake is calm.

4

Desenzano at sunset

17:30 · Desenzano del Garda

Old Harbour, aperitivo on the promenade and dinner. The liveliest town on the lake, perfect for your first evening.

Local tip: Tuesday morning hosts the lake's biggest market.

Day 2 — Malcesine and Monte Baldo

1

Transfer to Malcesine

8:30

One hour along the eastern Gardesana road from Desenzano, passing Bardolino and Torri del Benaco. Leave early to find parking.

2

Monte Baldo cable car

10:00 · Malcesine

Rotating cabins up to 1,760 metres: the panorama over the lake and the Dolomites is the finest in the region. Ridge trails through flower meadows at the top.

Local tip: Bring a jacket even in August: it is 10 degrees cooler at the top.

3

Malcesine's Scaliger Castle

14:30 · Malcesine

The castle where Goethe was arrested as a spy in 1786 while sketching it. Superb views over Val di Sogno from the tower.

4

Bardolino: aperitivo among vineyards

17:30 · Bardolino

Heading south, stop in the wine capital: taste Bardolino and Chiaretto in a winery or on the lively lakefront.

Local tip: The Grape Festival takes place in September-October.

Day 3 — Riva, the Ponale and the northern lake

1

Ponale Trail

9:00 · Riva del Garda

Garda's most iconic path: carved into the cliff high above the lake, a former military road. 2 hours round trip with thrilling views. Check trail status on [instagarda.net](https://www.instagramarda.net) before setting off.

2

Riva del Garda

12:30

Lunch in the centre, then the Apponale Tower and Piazza III Novembre: Habsburg elegance meets the water. The atmosphere here is more alpine than Mediterranean.

3

Varone Waterfall

15:00 · Tenno

A 98-metre waterfall inside a vertical gorge, 10 minutes from Riva. Walkways in the rock and a deafening roar.

Local tip: Combine it with the medieval hamlet of Canale di Tenno, one of Italy's most beautiful.

4

Torbole at sunset

17:30 · Nago-Torbole

Finish watching windsurfers dance with the Ora, the afternoon wind. Aperitivo at the small harbour where Goethe fell in love with the lake.

Your journey starts here

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