



COME TO ITALY



Our training programs are held in the city of Como, washed by the worldwide famous lake which has captured the hearts of countless tourists, A-list celebrities, and artists throughout the centuries.

Are you ready to find out more about what your life will look like while studying with us in Italy?
Keep reading to discover what Italian "dolce vita" is about!



what to do IN COMO



Boat Tours - Embark on a boat or ferry tour and stop by the many towns and villages sprinkled along the coast (or just admire them from afar). Peek at the colourful houses perched up on the rocky coast, the deep blue waters of the lake, the countless hills and mountains hugging the shores, and the luxurious villas. You can choose from a range of public and private tours. What are you waiting for?



Mountains - The surrounding mountainous area is optimal for hikers and nature lovers. You can explore on your own, or book private guides and tours for an unforgettable experience. Make sure to visit the picturesque *borgo* (village) of Brunate, overlooking the lake at an altitude of over 700 meters. You can get to Brunate via cable car for a few euros.

Beaches - Lake Como offers about 40 swimming spots and numerous beautiful beaches (Bellagio, Lenno, Varenna, and Colico being among the most popular) to let yourself relax, sunbathe, and go for a refreshing swim with friends. Those looking for peace and tranquility can visit Isola Comacina, a small island right in the middle of the lake. Did you know there's a secluded area of the island that is only reachable by boat? Come and visit this hidden gem!



Shopping - Take a stroll through the streets of downtown Como, adorned by numerous historical stores, wineries, art gallery, jewellerys, silk and fabric stores and more. From late November to early January, make sure to stop by the Christmas markets in Como and Cernobbio: buy souvenirs from the stands, get a taste of local street food (we recommend the roasted chestnuts), and have a go at ice skating!

Water Sports - Swimming, rowing, paddleboarding and scuba diving are the most popular water sports in Como; alternatively, if you would rather spend a peaceful afternoon by the lake, you can pick up a pole and try your hand at fishing. And for the adventurous souls, signing up for a water skiing or kitesurfing course might turn out to be the perfect source of adrenaline. So... get ready and gear up!



Historical Sites - Many buildings and sites date back to the Roman and Medieval era, and are mostly intact. You can admire towers and castles scattered throughout the surrounding area, such as **Porta Torre** in downtown Como, or the **Castle of Baradello** inside Spina Verde Regional Park. The most famous religious building is probably the majestic **Duomo of Como**, adorned by its aqua-coloured cupolas.



discover the italian **CULINARY HERITAGE**

It is no secret that Italy is globally renowned for the excellent food.

Its **diverse** culinary heritage is partially owed to the fact that, up until the 1800's, Italy was made up of a myriad of smaller states – often based around a single city – each with its own separate language, culture, traditions, and food. This is why you can find characteristic specialties unique to each region.



Lake fish is naturally part of traditional dishes around Como (e.g. fried fish, risotto with fish, etc.). **Missoltini**, also called *missultin* in the local dialect, is a dish that consists of lake fish that is left out to dry in the sun and then wrapped in laurel leaves. After that, it needs to marinate with salt inside a wooden container for many months. Once ready, the delicious missoltini are usually grilled and seasoned with olive oil or vinegar.

Since you will be staying in Lombardy, you must also try a few of the many different types of **polenta** (traditional dish made with maize or buckwheat flour), such as **polenta uncia** with butter, garlic and cheese, or sweet polenta with sugar.

Val d'Intelvi (Intelvi Valley), near Como, is especially famous for its **cheeses**, such as Casoretta (perfect with polenta or pasta), Zincarlin (a special ricotta which smells like vanilla), and Semuda.



Italy is known as the **land of pizza and pasta** for a reason.

During your stay in Italy, you will surely get to eat these iconic culinary delights very often, as they are available in almost every restaurant.

There are countless types of pizza for you to savour, depending on the dough, nature and duration of the rising, and toppings.

The same can be said about pasta, which is an extremely versatile classic Italian dish that can be accompanied by numerous different sauces.

Did you know that there are more than 300 types of pasta varying in shape, length, colour and texture?



What is an Aperitivo? - This Italian word refers to a cherished tradition of having drinks and snacks in the late afternoon or early evening, as it is supposed to stimulate one's appetite.

Aperitivo perfectly embodies the Italian *dolce vita* – the philosophy of appreciating the pleasures of life, and fostering a sense of togetherness. While Italians don't necessarily have an aperitivo everyday, it is a very popular activity when hanging out with friends, as it's sure to put everyone in a good mood!

Common foods and drinks served during aperitivos include: soft drinks, wine, beer, cocktails and mocktails, fruit juice, olives, chips, bruschetta, small portions of cold pasta, saltines, cured meats, salted peanuts, small slices of pizza.





Como

a little bit of **HISTORY**



Lake Como is famously shaped like an upside-down Y. As one of the oldest lakes in Europe, as well as the deepest, its origins can be traced back to the Ice Age.

During ancient times, much of the terrain remained long inhabitable due to the predominance of swamps; however, that did not prevent the flourishing of what we nowadays call the magical city of Como.

- **Iron Age:** what today is known as the city of Como thrived under the first inhabitants of the area: the people of Golasecca. Como became the main intermediary for the trade of olive oil, wine, incense, bronze between the Greeks, the Etruscans and the Celts. However, at the end of the fourth century BCE the Gauls invaded the area, destroying the existing social structure and settlements.
- **Roman Era:** the area prospered once again under the Romans. The swamps were drained by consul Pompeius Strabo and the city adopted the name of **Novum Comum**. The wealthiest members of society settled in the area to enjoy its milder temperatures and stunning natural scenery.



- After the first century AD, Como kept growing exponentially. A forum, a port, public baths, roads and temples were built. Nowadays, the **public baths** can still be admired as a historical site.



- With **the fall of the Roman Empire** (476 AD), Como was invaded by the Goths, the Huns, and the Longobards (as you might guess, this is where the name “Lombardia” came from) and finally, in 774, Italy was conquered by **Charlemagne**. The amalgam of Christian, Byzantine, Roman, Hellenistic, and Middle Eastern cultural influences lead to a truly **unique artistic and architectural heritage**.



- **XI century:** A ten-year-long war with the city of **Milan** started in 1117, ending with the crushing defeat of Como. Afterwards, control over the city was passed between two powerful families: the Visconti and the Sforza.
- **XVIII-XX centuries:** Como has grown to be world-renowned for the manufacturing of silk. The city became part of Italy in 1859 (after Giuseppe Garibaldi defeated the Austrians). During this time, many European nobles and intellectuals would travel to Como, increasing the influx of tourists and the building of **beautiful villas**. Throughout centuries, Lake Como has attracted and inspired artists, musicians, writers, and poets such as **Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley, Twain, Manzoni, Hitchcock, Liszt, Verdi** and more.
- At the **end of World War II**, the city of Como was the scene of **Mussolini’s killing** in Tremezzina. The emotional impact of the event halted tourism for a while.

A cross can still be seen on the exact spot where the fascist leader was executed.



- **Alessandro Volta: the genius behind the invention of electric batteries.** Have you ever heard of a unit of measure called "**Volt**"? Perhaps you weren't aware of the fact that it was named after an incredible Italian physicist and chemist who was born in Como in 1745.

Volta made groundbreaking contributions to understanding physics and electricity. He is credited for the revolutionary invention of the **electric battery**. He also worked as a physics teacher in a local high school in Como, which was later named after him. During his life he was highly admired by his students, as well as historical figures such as Napoleon.



- **Pliny the Elder, author of the first encyclopaedia.** An intellectual from Ancient Rome, called Pliny the Elder, is widely known for being the author of what nowadays is considered to be the first ever encyclopaedia: the *Naturalis historia*. He tragically died during the eruption of Vesuvius (79 AD), during an attempt to save inhabitants of the area and document the historical event.



- **Alessandro Manzoni, author of *I Promessi Sposi*** ("The Betrothed"- 1842), a historical novel featuring a detailed recount of the bubonic plague that struck Milan in the 1600's.





journeying through **ITALY**

Don't miss out on the rest of our beautiful country! Como is well-connected to the surrounding towns and cities when it comes to both roads and public transportation (mainly buses and trains). It's the perfect opportunity to discover Lombardy and the rest of Italy!

If you wish to travel across Lombardy or throughout Italy, here is an approximate estimate of how much it would take you to reach:



- **Milano:** 45 mins by train - 1 hour by car;
- **Firenze:** 3 hrs by train - 4 hrs by car;
 - **Venezia:** 3.5 hrs by train - 3.5 hrs by car;
 - **Roma:** 4 hrs by train - 6 hrs by car;
 - **Napoli:** 3 hrs by train - 4 hrs by car;
 - **Venezia:** 5 hrs by train - 8 hrs by car.



Start now your **EXPERIENCE**

Website:

<https://italiancampus.mdacademy.it/>

Call us / WhatsApp:

+39 348 861 4396 (Italian, English)

Email:

italiancampus@mdacademy.it

Our office in Como:

Via Belvedere 45 - 22100, Como (CO)

