



GREATER
MILAN

BERGAMO ALTA

**“You can have no conception of real beauty unless you visit Italy at least once and you must only make the effort to fully enjoy it at leisure “
Johannes Brahms**

Less than **60 km** separate the centre of **Milan** from the centre of Bergamo, 45 minute by train, but while you approach it you will understand why they so proudly reaffirm the separation from the capital of Lombardy. Stunning walls still protect the centre of town, built by the Venetians they had as main purpose to protect the inhabitants from the attacks of from Milan.

The **old part of Bergamo, Bergamo Alta** (Upper Bergamo) has been inhabited since Celtic times. Its strategic high position dominates the fertile plane from where Etruscans, Barbarians, Romans, Longobards conquered the city. In 1200 it was an independent city but the Visconti army from Milan conquered it again in the XIV century, not for long since in 1300 Bergamo was in the hands of the Venetian Republic.

It was under the rich ruling of the Venetians that Bergamo became what you can see today: a stunning citadel totally surrounded by impressive walls. To enjoy the full view reach the upper town by the Funicular, once you enter the walls you will have full perception of what it means to be in one of the richest areas in Europe surrounded by middle-age buildings.

Photo credits: Valerio di Mauro

The structure of the city itself is a history book: If you look carefully at the map you can still recognize the Roman structure of the original town, the long Decumano and the shorter Cardo cut the city and meet at the Gombito Tower. From there a short stroll to Piazza Vecchia, the beating heart of town since 1400.

You can get a feeling of the power struggle between State and Church while standing in the Piazza. Venetians transformed the city centre by turning the facade of the most important government building away from the main religious buildings: the magnificent **Cathedral and the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore**. To reach them you have to walk under the shining lion that represents Venice, all the way to the back of the **Palazzo della Ragione**.

Enter the Basilica to enjoy a Last Supper fresco painted in 1300 that survived the heavy application of gold and stucco of the 1500. In the Basilica you can get a glimpse of all the arts that are still alive in Lombardy. There are more than 25 huge tapestries and magnificent wooden statues and inlaid panels whose subjects are designed by Lorenzo Lotto. You can see some works of this famous Italian Artist in the recently restored Accademia di Carrara and in churches along town.

You can visit historical palaces like **Palazzo Agliardi** (via Pignolo), **Palazzo Moroni** and many others. You can also follow the traces of the opera composer Gaetano Donizetti from the birthplace, visiting his museum and ending with the beautiful marble thumb in the Basilica.

After a plunge in the past enjoy what the present offers you and do not be surprised if the ground floor of still inhabited beautiful palaces are perfect locations for shops,

INFO AND ITINERARY



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restaurants, galleries and bars. You can taste perfect coffee in the old **Caffé del Tasso** in **Piazza Vecchia**, created in 1476, while you imagine to sit besides Bergamo historical characters. You can find both traditional and modernly designed restaurants, like **Ambulatorio Gastronomico Begnin**, that claims to ease human pain with food.

The lower part of the town is very interesting as well: the modern center was designed during the early XX century by a great Italian architect: **Marcello Piacentini**. Elegant shops are in this area, and you can also find the beautiful Gaetano Donizetti theater. Bergamo is a small wonderful mix of Italian history, culture, arts and pleasures ready for you.



WHERE

BERGAMO ALTA
By car 60 km from the centre of Milan
By train or by bus 45 minutes
Info : www.goeuro.it