



RELAXING, AMUSING AND CULTURAL HOLIDAYS

LAKE TRASIMENO

Distinguished personages of the past loved and depicted this place. From then onwards very little has changed in its landscape and in its inhabitants' refined courtesy

Trasimeno, the fourth lake of Italy for extension, lies in a protected regional park. The presence of the man in this area seems to go back to very ancient origins: in fact both fishing and agriculture, as well as the copious game, have always been important ways of livelihood. Fed by a few streams, with a maximum depth of 6 metres, the lake is adorned with three beautiful islands: Island Maggiore, Island Minore and Island Polvese. Lake Trasimeno and the surrounding area, situated in a favourable place at the centre of the peninsula between Tuscany and Umbria, in recent years have been highly appreciated by tourists. With 50,000 inhabitants and an area of 777.98 sq. km the district includes eight municipalities: Città della Pieve, Paciano, Panicale and Piegara, charming old towns located in the green hills, and Castiglione del Lago, Magione, Passignano sul Trasimeno and Tuoro sul Trasimeno, rich in history, art and culture, situated on the lakeside. The quality of the environment (air, land and water suitable for bathing) are continuously tested by the Regional Agency for the Environmental Protection and by the Local Health Council, according to the national and European regulations. Distinguished personages of the past loved and depicted these places: Goethe described the lake scenery as "extraordinarily pleasant"; the poet George Byron called the lake "a silver veil" and Stendhal wrote: "To go to Rome from Florence... I prefer taking the way through Perugia instead of Siena: the surroundings of Lake Trasimeno are wonderful!". The landscape and its inhabitants' refined courtesy, so appreciated by Stendhal, have changed very little from then onwards, even if the clean inns of the nineteenth century have been replaced by a large number of comfortable accommodation facilities.

AROUND THE LAKE: VILLAGES AND LOCAL TRADITIONS

The district of Trasimeno still preserves a medieval atmosphere: noiseless woods around castles and ancient hamlets, pleasant secluded spots and, up the hills, the fine view of the beautiful natural scenery of trees and water. It is possible to bathe and sunbathe on the eight equipped public beaches and practise sport activities like golf, archery, tennis, football, cycling, sailing, wind-surfing, parachuting, by themselves or with expert trainers. Walking down the various routes, the visitors can enjoy a display of enchanting scenes from Monte Pausillo and from the wonderful Pietrarvella pinewood; they can admire Medieval and Renaissance architectures, various churches and oratories housing some masterpieces, as well as the sandstone sculptures of Campo di Sole by famous Italian and foreign artists. In order to make the ecosystem of the wide Umbrian lake better known, a cycling path, just for cyclists and pedestrians, running along cultivated lands and thick canebrakes, has been created. The “Anello del Trasimeno”, an unpaved road, 116 km-long, running along the lake and among the surrounding hills, can be covered by mountain bike in three steps or, if you prefer, in more than one day.

TUORO SUL TRASIMENO

At Tuoro sul Trasimeno there is the Permanent Documentation Centre of the Trasimeno Battle, opened at the beginning of 1996 and housing the Hannibal and the Trasimeno Battle exhibition. The visit is carefully linked with the historic-archaeological route through the places of the battle; some information areas enable the visitors to locate the fighting zones and the “ustrina”, the big holes where Hannibal used to burn the corpses.

CASTIGLIONE DEL LAGO

At Castiglione del Lago you can admire the Rocca del Leone, dating back to 1247, pentagonal in shape with four cornerstone towers, and its triangular Mastio. Placed on a limestone promontory overlooking the lake, the building is one of the finest examples of the Umbrian medieval military architecture. Not to be missed Palazzo della Corgna, dating around the end of 1500; it is located nearby the Rocca and linked to it by a suggestive communication trench, forming together a typical medieval scene. Inside Palazzo della Corgna there is an important pictorial decoration, on a surface of more than 1200 sq. m, celebrating the achievements of the Commander Ascanio della Corgna.

PASSIGNANO SUL TRASIMENO

At Passignano sul Trasimeno, the Latin cross shaped Church of S.Cristoforo (X-XI centuries), housing some frescos of the XV-century Umbrian School, deserves a visit. Also the Museum of Boats, documentation Centre for traditional boats of Italian internal navigation, is quite interesting; not to be missed the “monossile” boat, found along the lakeside and dating back to the 13th century. During the Christmas festivities, the “Gruppo Ricreativo Passignanese” creates a living Presepe that every year, among the characteristic and suggestive views of the castle, in the magic glinting atmosphere of torch-lit and flavours of incense, renews the mystery of the Nativity.

MAGIONE

The Castle of the Knights of Malta, at Magione, was built around the 12th century as a fortified hospital. Originally it consisted of the bell tower and the ancient Church dedicated to S.Giovanni Battista, that still houses some frescos of Pinturicchio’s School. The current structure of the castle, even after many changes of the last centuries, preserves a splendid courtyard with some overlapped loggias on three sides. The Fishing Museum of Magione displays all the effects of twenty years of research about the protection of the lake water, starting from the geological history of the lake and ending with the new fishing techniques.

LAKE TRASIMENO ISLANDS

Isola Minore, called “isoletta” since the beginning of 1900, being the smallest of the three islands of Lake Trasimeno, today is uninhabited and a private property.

Isola Polvese, the widest one, is situated in the Comune of Castiglione del Lago and extends over a surface of 69,60 Ha, of which 40 Ha planted with olive trees, which produce biological tested oil. This island, turned into a Public Park, belongs now to the Provincial Administration of Perugia. It still preserves some historical evidence among which the Monastery of S. Secondo, the Church of S. Giuliano and a Castle of the 14th century, recently restored. Isola Polvese was named “Scientific-didactic Park” by the Province of Perugia and has been assigned to researching and testing activities as well as formative and educational ones in the environmental area. The “Fattoria del Poggio”, a well equipped youth hostel run by A.I.G., was opened a few years ago.

Isola Maggiore, located in the district of Tuoro sul Trasimeno, the only one inhabited, still preserves the characteristic appearance of a fifteenth century fishermen's village. The tradition of "Punto Irlanda" lace is a peculiarity of this island.

PIETRO VANNUCCI CALLED "IL PERUGINO"

In the middle of the 15th century, an artistic movement developed in the Trasimeno area, since the painters of that time used this landscape as a model to express a deeply renewed idea of light and space. The painting style of Pietro Vannucci called "Il Perugino", born at Città della Pieve around 1450, succeeded in creating a perfect balance between the evocation of the truth and a mental state. Perugino's visual memory was able to evoke images from places known since the years of his youth. The Trasimeno landscape has also become the "quintessence" of the Italian landscape in the learned travellers' imagination. To be seen in the surroundings: the Oratorio di S. Maria dei Bianchi and the Adorazione dei Magi (1504) at Città della Pieve, the Chiesa di San Sebastiano and "Il Martirio di San Sebastiano" (1505) at Panicale.

TRASIMENO NATURAL REGIONAL PARK

The biggest of six Umbrian Regional Parks, it extends along the lake perimeter and covers a surface of about 132 sq. km, including the surrounding villages. The Park consists of a very important humid zone where botanic and faunal aspects perfectly match each other. The Naturalistic Oasis "La Valle" is the most interesting area of the whole Trasimeno park, being placed where the extraordinary thick canes are more widespread. Lake Trasimeno is not only a perfect habitat for life and reproduction of fish, but also one of the most important European zones for the various species of migratory, nesting and wintering birds. It is open all the year round, morning and afternoon. Information at the Bureau: Via dell'Emissario - San Savino - 06063 Magione (PG).

SURROUNDING TOWNS AND MOST INTERESTING EVENTS

In the centre of one of the richest in historical, cultural and artistic heritage as well as local traditions areas, there is a range of remarkable towns, mostly about the ancient and medieval art, the Renaissance and Baroque, besides modern and present artistic masterpieces: Chiusi, Cortona, Perugia, Gubbio, Assisi, Siena, Orvieto, Todi, Urbino e Spoleto. Celebrations of cultural and folkloristic events are in the hands of the resident population and are attended by visitors every year. Here we just mention some of them. The Palio, the most folkloristic medieval event consisting of a dramatic and passionate horse-race, which takes place at Siena - Piazza del Campo (70 Kms), on 2nd July and 16th August, every year. At Gubbio (56 kms), the century-old traditional "Corsa dei Ceri" is held on 15th May: some vigorous men carry three huge candles on their backs, surmounted with the statues of S.Uboldo, S.Gioergio and S.Antonio, on a run along the town streets as far as Monte Igino, involving the whole population in the indescribable mystical excitement. At Spoleto (85 kms), within the first half of July, the famous Festival the Two Worlds is celebrated with the aim of exchanging Italian, European and American cultures. Known as one of the most prestigious international events, it features theatre and drama plays, ballets, concerts, besides the "SpoletoCinema" film festival. Two different jazz concerts take place within the "Umbria Jazz tutto l'anno" celebration: one in Summer at Perugia (20 kms) from 7th to 16th July and the others in Winter at Orvieto from 28th December to 1st January: music is played by rock stars and musicians in the squares, in the gardens, at theatre and in ancient and historical places. The "Giostra del Saracino" is another medieval play, performed at Arezzo (45 kms) twice a year, on 17th June and 3rd September: the knights of the town quarters, riding a horse at full gallop, throw themselves against an armoured figure representing a Saracen.

LOCAL HANDICRAFTS

The tradition of "Punto Irlanda" lace was introduced at Isola Maggiore at the beginning of 1900 by opening a school for the island fishermen's daughters. A half-century later, in the 60s, the precious handicraft of crochet pieces and the increasing demand for lace, encouraged a few women to set up a real business for its production, so that we can now admire, at the Museo del Merletto, a large display of these prestigious artefacts. Devised to offer a similar but cheaper production, the embroidery "tulle" was already in use at Panicale in the 19th century and, at the beginning of the 20th century a school was opened and the brand "Ars Panicalensis", now famous in Italy and abroad, was created. This needlework is directly executed on the cotton or silk tulle, previously prepared on a base of drawn paper and brown paper. At the Panicale "Museo del Tulle" set up in the 16th century Church of S.Agostino, you can see a wonderful range of ancient and modern artefacts. Since a long time ago, the skilful artisans of Magione have passionately taken up to project, realize and commercialize some forged cast iron artefacts. The local production includes: railings and banisters, gates, chandeliers, garden and internal furniture, common and ornamental objects, portals and sculptures. At Città della Pieve, where kilns have been in action since the 16th century, the production of handmade pottery, characterized by a changing colour from pale-pink to dark shade, is still realized. The natural clay, taken from the Pontecelli quarry, is grinded by a millstone and reduced to a powder like fine ground flour, so that it can homogeneously be made into a paste with water. It is fired at 1000 grades to grant anti freezing

products. The reed, one of the widespread national vegetables, with its hard but flexible trunk, is a typical plant of marsh, lake, river and canal areas. Worked to realize mats and other artefacts, this production has been gradually waning and today only a few artisans follow this activity.

Cuisine

In this area of the centre of Italy, there is a large variety of typical food and wine, famous all over the world for its old traditional quality and local flavours. The mild climate of Lake Trasimeno and its surrounding territory, together with the peculiarity of the land, characterizes the special taste of local products: wine, oil, saffron, “fagiolina” and, of course, the lake fish. The vast olive groves spread on the gentle hills grant an excellent quality of oil, certified by the European Union with a DOP brand and obtained in both ancient and traditional oil-mills and new ones realized with modern technology. Some particular arboreal essences offer an important production of choice honey, generally found in small farms associated in farmers’ Consorzi. We recommend you the

Wine Routes

The hills shape as well as their exposure to sunshine, for centuries have allowed them to produce, together with the traditional local wines (Sangiovese, Grechetto, Trebbiano, Canajolo) other important wine varieties such as Cabernet, White Pinot, Gray Pinot, Merlot Chardonnay, Riesling, Ciliegolo and Gamay. This area is today included in the DOC Colli del Trasimeno.

Getting to Trasimeno

Motorway A1 - From the north: turn off at Valdichiana - **From the south:** turn off at Chiusi-Chianciano Terme

Milano-Firenze-Roma FS Railway Castiglione del Lago Station or Chiusi-Chianciano Terme and Terontola Station - then by car to the destination.

Ancona-Foligno-Terontola Railway Magione, Passignano sul Trasimeno and Tuoro sul Trasimeno Station.

S. Egidio International Airport - Perugia