

In yellow : tarmac road  
 In black : trekking paths



# SAN SIRO

Lake Como - Italy



### PHYSICAL FEATURES

San Siro lies on the western shore of Lake Como (known also as Lario), on the southern slopes of Mount Bregagno. Its territory borders with Crema towards the north and Menaggio and Plesio towards the south. San Siro is a little over 38 km from Como and has a population of about 1800. Its area which covers 18,5 sq km, is made up of 20 hamlets (frazioni). Viewed from the lake, San Siro looks like one big village elongated from Rezzonico to Acquaseria by the startling blue lake and many little villages climbing the beautifully green mountain. A blooming vegetation covers most of the area and hosts various species of animals and trees. In each and every hamlet visitors may enjoy picturesque spots with old fountains, chapels, small churches, bridges, archways, ruins of ancient convents and fortresses alternated with breathtaking views along cobblestone paths reminiscent of Alessandro Manzoni's world famous novel "I Promessi Sposi" (The Betrothed).



### HISTORICAL OUTLINE

Rezzonico (dialect Rescionegeh), is the lakeside hamlet built on the slopes of a promontory above which towers a 14th century castle. It is rimmed with sunny cliffs, natural beaches, and ancient archways and there are three ancient guard gates which probably date back to the 12th or 13th century. Close to the lake you can see two 18th century buildings whose portals display the coat of arms of the powerful Della Torre family. The name Rezzonico may originate from the Rhaetic people who lived here, from "Rhaeto", an Etrurian captain who lived in the area or from the local term "risciuilada" which indicates the cobblestone paving so typical of this village.

Rezzonico could have been founded by the orobians, by the eturians or by some of the gaul tribes (Celts and Senons), traces of them all having been found in several sites. We know for certain that the romans also settled here as testified by the famous roman historian Tito Livio. Two tablets with latin inscriptions (one now in Milan, the other in Menaggio), together with remnants of a massive wall,

# SAN SIRO

## Tra monti e lago



two fortifications and the road called "Strada Regina" also date back to roman times. Interesting and mysterious rock inscriptions have also been found in the woody areas between Roncate, Soriano and Vezzedo di Crema. They belong to an ancient, unknown past and are still being examined by experts and lovers of local history for their anthropological relevance



#### THE PARISH CHURCH AND OTHER MONUMENTS

**SANTA MARIA ASSUNTA**  
Santa Maria Assunta, the historical parish church, is situated very close to the lake. It was built in the 15th century on the site of a preceding church consecrated to the Holy Virgin, which, in turn (according to reliable sources) was built on the ruins of a pagan temple. The parish church, consecrated to Santa Maria Assunta, was built between 1464 and 1474 by the Dominicans. Romanesque elements can be detected in the bell tower. On the front of the church a large white marble portal shows decorations and symbols representing the Passion; on the left a high relief made of white marble from Musso shows the Holy Virgin with the Christ Child. Inside, the first chapel on the right hosts a portrayal of Our Lady of Mercy decorated by Sigismondo de Magistris in 1541. The decorations of the Triumphal Arc with the Assumption of the Virgin Mary were painted by artists belonging to the de Magistris's school. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> chapels show frescoes of Dominican saints and date back to 1579. The painting portraying the assumption of the Virgin Mary between S. Sebastian and S. Rocco was presumably painted by Agostino Calvi. The chapel of the Crucifixion; first chapel on the left, was decorated by artists from the Aurelio Luini's school, while Giovanni Pietro Gnocchi built the high altar piece in 1578. The vault and sides of the presbytery, depicting episodes of the life of the Holy Virgin, were frescoed by Michelangelo Carminati in the mid-1590s when he also painted the decorations of the first chapel on the right which shows Moses ordering

water to flow from rocks. The "scagliola" used to make the front of the little chapels dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The baptismal font is in white marble from Musso and dates back to 1511; its bas-reliefs representing the fight between life and death. Set in the wall on the left of the presbytery is a late renaissance marble tabernacle.



**SANT'ABBONDIO**  
S. Abbondio's church is the original little chapel of Acquaseria (latin name; inter serineos). Built along the popular "Via Regina" and on the edge of the "centro storico" it may once have offered the ancient walkers, on their way from Menaggio to Rezzonico, a place where they could rest and offer a little prayer to God for allowing them a safe passing through the infamous and

treacherous "Sasso Rancio". This little church is believed to be one of the oldest places of worship in the area. Research into local archives reveals that it was restored around 1600 and enriched on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1712 with an ecclesiastical privilege of saving the soul, upon request to local gentleman, Gian Pietro Pedrazzini of Pezzo. Taxes for this privilege were paid by villages from as far away as Torno, Musso and Garzeno. Although lacking in the stunning paintings and ornaments of the prestigious church of S. Maria Assunta, S. Abbondio's church nevertheless boasts a unique if humble charm.

#### THE ROMAN FORTRESS

Along the main road, on the right-hand side of the church, visitors will face an imposing six metre high wall. In the past it embraced the church itself and the "piazza". Scholars believe (and recent excavations seems to agree) this wall to be what is left of an old fortress built to keep control of inland and water trade along the ancient "Strada Regina".



#### THE "CASTELLACCIO"

A little north from the roman fortress on a hillock guarding the village of Rezzonico is the "Castellaccio". The remains of an ancient four-sided tower and some large walls which in the past probably joined the roman fortress to the south and the walls of Rezzonico to the north. Local legends link these remains to the mischievous deeds of a mysterious country gentleman of Spanish descent called "Il Ficano".

#### THE CASTLE

Crenellated walls surround the 14<sup>th</sup> century castle of Rezzonico, which was probably built by the Della Torre family on the remains of a former fort. The castle, whose layout is trapezoidal, has three crenellated towers, one of which is higher than the other two thus granting Rezzonico its eye pleasing skyline. An arched portal leads visitors inside the walls to a garden which stretches down to the lake. A



few steps from the highest tower there is a small church known as "Church of the Three Kings".

#### MUSEUM OF RURAL LIFE

Conserved within the rural house of Carcente are artefacts and tools of the various trades of the villages including agriculture, farming, manual labour etc. illustrating a lost way of life.



#### NATURE WALKS

Walking along the paths which lead from one hamlet to another is a good way to see unique ancient buildings and to enjoy lovely views of undisturbed natural scenery. The carriage road which leads from Santa Maria to the higher hamlets and eventually to "i monti" (formerly mountain pastures) offers 7 km of wonderful views of the lake. To the north, the magnificent beauty of the mountains of Valtellina are belittled only by the imposing stony face of the Mount Legnone to the east while the "Pizzo dei tre Signori" and "la Grigna" are also formidable reminders of the striking presence of the Alps. Below, the lake stretches from one end to the other and duly mirrors the natural wonders surrounding its shores.



The ancient Via Regina goes south from Rezzonico to Acquaseria before continuing on to Nobiallo through "Sasso Rancio" along a well preserved path boasting beautiful forests, rocky cliffs and rustic views. Going north this old roman road snakes through fields and chesnut trees until it reaches Crema.



From Soriano to Vezzedo di Crema a narrow path leads through old chestnut trees to a small magical place where many rocks hold mysterious carvings and inscriptions. The same place can be reached from the view point "Sass tajaa" which is situated between Lucena and Gallio (the first hair-pin bend on the main road).

From Mastena a steep shady path leads to Marledo and then up to San Martino and to its beautiful "piazza". The return offers two options, half way back, at a place called "piocc" it is possible to take a right and keep walking down the cobblestone path towards Pezzo and then left back to Mastena or, from San Martino, another path takes to Lucena and from there back to Mastena.



From Carcente to Breglia a recently restored path crosses the valley between San Siro and Menaggio giving also the chance of a well deserved rest at the shelter situated half way.

Another cobbled path leads from Carcente up to Monti di Carcente and from there to the mountain pastures above.

From Lancio a slightly tricky narrow path leads to Marena or, taking a left at the fork by the stream you will reach La Torre.



#### COMUNE DI SAN SIRO

Via Don Giacomo Galli, 4  
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22010 San Siro CO  
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info@comune.sansiro.co.it

#### EMERGENCY

First Aid	118
Menaggio Hospital	0344 33111
Gravedona Hospital	0344 92111
Carabinieri - Police	112
Fire Brigade	115
Banca Pop. di Sondrio	0344 50425

#### MARKET

Rezzonico	1 <sup>st</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday
Acquaseria	1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday

#### HOTEL CAMPING RISTORANTE SOLE

Loc. Santa Maria - tel. 0344 50589

#### PENSIONE RISTORANTE LAURO

Rezzonico - tel. 0344 50029

#### RESIDENZA DA ANGELO

Loc. Molvedo snc. - tel. 0344 50987

#### BED & BREAKFAST MIRAMUSI

Loc. Rezzonico - tel. 0344 50095

#### BAR CARLO

Acquaseria - tel. 0344 50636

#### BAR PIAVE

Loc. Santa Maria - tel. 0344 50418

#### BAR PIZZERIA CREME CAMEL

Loc. Acquaseria - tel. 0344 50356

#### BAR PIZZERIA TRATTORIA DEI PLATANI

Loc. Rezzonico - tel. 0344 50139

#### LA TERRAZZA - BAR PASTICCERIA

Loc. Acquaseria - tel. 0344 50117

#### LOCANDA SAN MARTINO

Loc. San Martino - tel. 0344 50167

#### ZANZIBAR

Loc. Acquaseria - tel. 0344 50802

#### RISTORANTE PIZZERIA DA LUIGI

Loc. Acquaseria - tel. 0344 517052

