

## A walk from Acquaseria to Santa Maria Rezzonico

Allow an hour there and an hour back.

Santa Maria Rezzonico is the village with the castle tower that you can see if you look north up the lake from the windows of the house. The walk takes us along a stretch of the ancient Via Regina, that was the pilgrim's road. Our house was once part of a monastery which must have given shelter to pilgrims along their long walk from Milan to San Moritz.

Walk downhill keeping the little church to your left. Instead of going downhill to the main road when you get to the electricity tower, carry on at the same level. The road will fork. Take the right fork, which is a service road, and after a while the road ends and becomes a cobbled track. This goes along above and parallel to the road, passing houses and gardens, and then fields on the left.

After a while you come to a point where the path is blocked by a gate. This is the Villa Camilla, built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and obviously the owners weren't bothered about ancient pilgrims' rights of way. You have to go down to the road and pass in front of the villa. If you like you can double back a little way and then cross over the main road and walk along the pavement until you are past the Villa. You can either take the path up the other side, or carry on along the lakeside as far as the great church of Santa Maria. Take a minute to have a look at the remains of a 6<sup>th</sup> century Roman villa that has been unearthed between the church and the bar. Follow the road up the side of the church, skirting the square and the cemetery, and a little way uphill you will find the Via Regina again where it crosses the road. From here on it is a fascinating walk to Rezzonico, passing on the right the old fortress of the 13<sup>th</sup> century bandit baron La Torre, who terrorized this area of the lake as a pirate. If you go to the far edge of this 'Castellaccia' site, you will see that you are above the entrance to the traffic tunnel, and the main road



is disappearing beneath you. Descending into the village, cross over the little street and head down towards the lake.

The little square here at the port is really something to see. You can also follow the paths round the headland to the entrance to the castle, between some rocks. This is a favourite spot for sunbathing and fishing. Climbing back up, you will get a good view of the castle of Rezzonico, also built by La Torre, which is now the holiday home of a French family. If you have time, you can take the path down the other side of the castle to a very pretty little beach. From this upper square of Rezzonico you can see where the main road comes out between two tunnels. You can either go up over the entrance to the tunnel on your left to cross the main road and catch the bus home, or retrace your steps along the footpath.



Walking in the footsteps of the pilgrims

### **Alternative – going the higher route**

This way takes you up a bit and over, behind the Villa Camilla, so you don't have to go on the road at all. We like to go to Rezzonico this way, and come back the lower way.

From the house, go down to the road and turn left. Keep on the road and follow it up a couple of hairpins till you get to the cemetery. Just before the cemetery gates you will see a path going off to the left. Take this and it will lead you past some ruined houses and into the village. At the car park as you emerge from the wooded path, take the right fork and follow the road and paths gradually down towards Rezzonico. You will drop back down to the road and stay on this for a few minutes rather than dropping down to the big church at Santa Maria. Just around a hairpin you will pick up the path that goes on past the Castellaccia to Rezzonico.