



Event Focus

GRAN FONDO IL LOMBARDIA

With the Monument race the day before, this Gran Fondo is part of an ultimate Italian cycling break

LOMBARDIA 2023 STATS

Location Como, Italy
Next date 8 October 2023
Distance 113km
Price From €60 (2022)

Set to host its sixth event in October 2023, Gran Fondo Il Lombardia in Cantù, near Como, Northern Italy, has become one of Italy's biggest mass-participation cycling events. Some 688 riders finished in 2022 (many more started), with that Gran Fondo billing ensuring plenty of these were racing for amateur honours. The event coincides with the 117-year-old Il Lombardia (or the 'Race of the Fallen Leaves'), one of cycling's five classic Monument events, which shares some of the same course and attracts some of the world's best riders (Tadej Pogačar won in 2022).

PRE-RIDE PREP

Prepare for climbing! While its 113km distance isn't outrageous, the Gran

Fondo has 2,250m of elevation gain over the route, much of that coming in the iconic climbs of the Muro Di Sormano and Madonna del Ghisallo. The former's gradient peaks at 27%, so think about your wheel choices and gearing. Don't neglect your descending skills, either, as there are many tight hairpins to negotiate on the descents. You'll also need to complete a medical certificate before racing in Italy – we did ours through Sportive Breaks, who organised for a group of UK cyclists to race in 2022.

EVENT WEEKEND

Bergamo or Milan's airports are within close proximity. Como makes a stunning, if crowded, base, with the pro race finishing in the city on the Saturday. If you'd like to ride before the Gran Fondo, you could take the less busy eastern side of Lake Como and head for Bellagio before taking a turn inland to the iconic climb of Madonna del Ghisallo and back to Como. We stayed at the B&B Hotel Como, which was bike-friendly and close to Como Camerlata station.

RACE STATS

2,250m
 Total elevation gain on the 113km route



27%
 Steepest incline



688
 Finishers at the 2022 Gran Fondo edition

THE RIGHT KIT

Prepare for every eventuality. The weather turned cold and very wet in 2022 and many riders suffered. A waterproof lightweight jacket such as Gore's Shakedry is recommended, as are waterproof shoe covers and decent full-finger gloves. Think about your wheel and gearing choices, plus tyres with grip.

THE RIDE

If you're riding for the win, get there early (start time is 7:30am) to get a spot in the front of your race pen. The two climbs dominate the event's profile, but prepare for undulations in the first 25km before the 7km-long Sormano climb. The route splits halfway up Sormano, with the main road taking a less steep option to the summit, while a narrower track to the left is the famous Sormano climb. Use the cake-heavy feed stations at the top of both Sormano and Ghisallo to refuel, and watch out for the cruel 200m ascent to the finish line and 7hr cut-off time.

For event packages in 2023, head to sportivebreaks.com



Left The iconic Muro Di Sormano climb arrives at the 25km mark

Below Get there early to secure a decent spot in the pre-start race pen