



Little Kid in Stresa

Travelling has an influence on my life since I was two years old. I was born in a pretty little city named Beirut. My father is a medical doctor (Gynecologist) and frequently invited to update his knowledge in the medical field. I was just a kid when we travelled to many countries, but that did not stop my parents. They found excuses to travel, like for birthdays, holidays and vacation.

Studying in elementary and middle school, I could see that my vacation was different from everybody else. When they were drinking hot chocolate in the winter, I was eating ice cream at some beach elsewhere. It was really different!

I know my parents are not perfect but I am grateful for all the travelling we've done. I named my last trip in spring 2011: Little kid in Stresa.

Stresa is a touristic destination of international fame. It's located in the heart of the lake **Maggiore** opposite to the **Boromean Islands** northern Italy. The famous author and journalist Ernest Hemingway visited the town and stayed in the historical hotel "**Grand Hotel des iles Boromees**" where I was sharing with him the same view of the lake 60 years later, eating my breakfast.

The Boromean Islands are a group of three small islands and two islets. To reach them, we took a boat and we visited the **Isola Bella**, **Isola Madre** and our lunch was in the **Isola dei Pescatori**. Their names derive from the Boromeo family, which contributed largely to the history of the Second World War in 1935 where the treaty of **Locamo** was agreed to form the Stresa front to combat and contain Nazi Germany.

Inside the **Isola Bella Palazzo Boromeo**, one of the highlights is the shell **grotto** which is a passageway leading from the palace to the gardens. It's a cavernous space covered with shells and small stones. Outside, we will discover a monumental wall of sculptures. The top is crowned with a large unicorn, the **Boromeo** family emblem, who watches over the gardens while his rider, love, hold on his back. While peacocks roam everywhere in the garden, free and tame. The garden had ten tiers, each set back from each other, adorned with statues that wave at you from the terraces. Now let's wander a bit the alleys of the medieval village that hugs the sides of the palace. Centuries ago, these stone buildings were



inhabited by palace workers and craftsmen; today we find shops and restaurants, where they served my best sweet **gelato**. I wonder what my friends are doing in school at this fabulous moment! While I am enjoying the vanilla and chocolate flavor, they should be studying maths and science.

Back to the ferry a quick 10 minutes ride to the shore. We walk along the **Lungolago** the pink paved path that runs along **Stresa lakefront**. On the other side of the path are **Stresa's** famous old hotels, especially **Hotel des iles Boromeos** where I am staying for the coming three days.

Writing about an awesome day is easy but my greatest fear happened while walking the narrow streets of **Stresa**. Suddenly I looked around me, my parents vanished. I felt it's the end of the world. First it was a shallow fear. I tried desperately seeking them in the street and shops but it was in vain. My fear began to grow up more and more. The idea of loneliness is the one thing I ran away from and that seemed to catch up with me. My tears felt down and I cried their names but no answer.

My situation was critical when a policeman stopped me and asked a weird question: why are you so desperate little kid in Stresa? I felt relieved when I look at his friendly face and I explained my fears. He pointed out his big finger and showed me that I was the only kid in town. He took my hand to the police station where I saw my father standing up restless and my mother in tears. I was so happy that I hug her tremendously while my father was looking to the sky; I guess he was praying thankfully to God.

Finally, lake, mountain, **gelato** and being lost...It have been a good vacation for the little kid in **Stresa**.

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