A branch line heads west from Bellinzona (whose three superb castles are on UNESCO’s World Heritage list) to **Locarno**. It’s a charming town on **Lake Maggiore**, its piazzas overhung by subtropical shrubbery. Overrun with the rich and wannabe-famous on summer weekends and during its world-class film festival (early August), it manages to retain a sun-drenched cool. The **Piazza Grande**, where exquisitely groomed locals parade on warm summer nights, is near the lake, with the Renaissance Old Town rising gently behind. The fifteenth-century church of **Madonna del Sasso** is an impressive ochre vision high on a crag. It’s a glorious walk up (or down); or take the funicular from just west of the station to Ticino’s greatest photo-op, looking down on the church and lake. From the top station, a cable car climbs steeply to **Cardada**, amid fragrant pine woods with walking routes; a spectacular chairlift whisks you further up to **Cimetta**, where the restaurant terrace offers a view you won’t forget in a hurry. A short bus ride east of Locarno is Valle Verzasca, where you can re-enact the opening of the James Bond film Goldeneye by bungee-jumping a world-record 220m off the Verzasca Dam – in July & August, you can jump by moonlight.