



# The ultimate Dolomites Experience

*A complete tour through the world's most beautiful mountains, Trento, Marmolada, Passo Sella, Val Gardena, Val Badia, Fanés–Sennes & Cortina d'Ampezzo*



## TRIP NOTES 2020

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## INTRODUCTION

*The enormous pinnacles and towers of the majestic Dolomites are the crowning glory of Italy's northern border, and play host to our alpine adventure. A fairytale land where lush meadows nestle against towering limestone peaks of all different colours, with beautiful little lakes and wooden houses in the valleys. Small family-run hotels and comfortable 'rifugi' (mountain huts) welcome grateful hikers with delectable cuisine, the ubiquitous grappa and steaming cappuccino. Drink in this dramatic limestone setting as we make our way through the different parts of this beautiful mountain range. Because there is not just one 'Dolomites' – on this special tour we show you the different ranges and the different cultures: Italian, Tyrolean and 'Ladino'.*

*You start your tour from the charming little town of Trento, with its wonderfully decorated houses and impressive castle.*

*From here you travel to the great glacier of the Marmolada, before settling in at the next base in the Alta Badia valley, the heartland of the 'Ladino' culture. From here you explore the plateau of the Puéž Mountains, towering high above the Val Gardena. Then you explore the different parts of the Fanes-Sennes range, perhaps the prettiest part of the Dolomites. You hike along well-marked paths that lead into majestic mountain scenery. Stroll through alpine meadows carpeted with wild flowers, where by day you soak up the invigorating mountain air on our unforgettable ascent towards alpine bliss. On one night you relax in the warm embrace of your alpine lodging, savouring hearty gourmet cuisine.*

*You spend the last few days in charming Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy's most renowned mountain resort, where you walk to what may be the most beautiful set of peaks in the area, the Tre Cime di Lavaredo. At the end of the walk you descend to the Misurina Lake and then back to Cortina again. Here you have a last memorable evening, with a great dinner again. Your trip ends in Cortina the next morning. You have the option of spending a few more days here, and it's also easy to travel down to Venice, either by shuttle bus or by private minibus.*

*The premises where you will be staying are all very special, full of historical interest. The standard of the tour is 3/4 stars.*



*Please note: this is a moderately easy tour which is suitable for those who have some experience of walking and a good general physical condition. Most of the walks are on good paths, part of them waymarked. Average walking times: approx 5 hours each day.*



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## DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

### *Day 0 Verona or Trento*

*Arrival in Verona or Trento in case you arrive earlier. From Milan, Venice and Rome (and many other cities) Verona and Trento can easily be reached. There are regular AV (high speed), Eurostar and Intercity trains. If you arrive one day earlier in Trento you have the possibility of going to explore the mountain range on the opposite site of the River Adige, which can easily be reached by cable car straight from 'downtown' Trento. Another good option is to spend a night in Verona, to explore this beautiful city whose origins go back to ancient times. For example, you can pay a visit to the world-famous Roman amphitheatre and go to see the 'Balcony of Romeo & Juliet'. From Verona to Trento is one hour by train. Several hotels can be booked for you, according to your wishes (either 'downtown' centrally located, or near the train station, ranging from 3- to 5-star).*

### **Day 1 : (Verona) Trento**

The starting point of your tour is the beautiful city of Trento, the northernmost Italian-speaking city, on the frontier between Mediterranean and Alpine cultures. And it seems to have taken the best of both worlds! You settle in at your hotel and here you meet your tour leader and fellow travellers at 4pm for a short introduction on what lies ahead for the next week. Then we make a relaxed afternoon walk through the historical city centre, with its beautifully painted facades. Here we have our 'aperitivo' and may then wish to spend some time to relax at the hotel. But the Castello del Buonconsiglio is definitely worth a visit too! In the evening we go out for dinner together in a nice restaurant which offers the typical regional cuisine.

**Accommodation: Trento, Hotel \*\*\* - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner.**

*Total walking time: around 4-5 hours. Total driving: around 1,5 hour.*

### **Day 2 : Trento – Mount Marmolada –La Villa**

After breakfast this morning, we travel by private minibus up north and then penetrate into a landscape dominated by enormous pinnacles that must be seen to be believed— the mighty Dolomites! We first travel up the Adige valley and then into the Val di Fiemme, passing some charming villages along the road. Here we can make a short coffee stop and buy supplies for a good picnic lunch, before travelling on towards one of the most beautiful peaks in the Dolomites, Monte Marmolada. Here we make a great walk, not to the top, but beside the Lake of Fedaiia and down into the valley of Canazei, with spectacular views of Monte Marmolada. Weather permitting we can also take the lift up to the Marmolada and make a beautiful roundwalk. After our walk we drive to the famous Sella pass and walk down into the Gardena valley, one of the prettiest valleys of the massif, and perhaps have a drink in one of the villages along the road. At the end of the afternoon we arrive in the Alta Badia valley, dotted with lovely alpine villages, vibrant meadows and pastures. Our base here is in La Villa. In the evening we could use the sauna and then enjoy a dinner with local specialties at your hotel.

**Accommodation: La Villa, Hotel \*\*\* - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner.**

*Total walking time: around 3-4 hours. Total driving: around 2,5 hours.*

### **Day 3 : La Villa – Puez Plateau**

After breakfast this morning, we walk (optional bus) to the small village of Colfosco, where we start our hike onto the Puez Plateau. A first stop can be made at a beautifully located mountain hut, overlooking the whole Val Gardena (optional 4WD ride to get here). Then we continue our climb onto the high plain. Here you make a beautiful walk, with amazing views, towards the mountain hut ('Rifugio' or 'Utia', in local dialect) of Puez. We head along the impressive Ciampani Mountain, partly following the 'Alta Via delle Dolomiti'. Somewhere near the hut (or at the hut itself) we enjoy a (picnic) lunch in the mountains. Then, along the edge of the Vallunga and the Col Dalla Sone, we continue our walk on the high plain. We come across the Gherdenaccia pass and then start the descent, with great views of the Fanès–Sennes range in front of us, all the way down to your hotel in La Villa. In the late afternoon we can recover in the sauna to relax from your hard walk, and in the evening there are several options for a nice dinner.

**Accommodation: La Villa, Hotel \*\*\* - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 lunch.**

*Total walking time: around 5-6 hours.*



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### Day 4 : Val Badia – San Vigilio – Pederù - Fanes Valley

We enjoy a hearty breakfast in the hotel to prepare for our hike up into the Fanès-Sennes range. A short scenic drive by private minibus takes us to San Vigilio. Here we have the option of visiting a very interesting museum about the Dolomites. Then we climb up into the valley until we reach the mountain restaurant of Pederù, where we can stop for a quick snack. From here our hike really gets going as we ascend into the mountains, climbing towards the pass of the Fanes Valley, underneath the towering Col de Ru (2076 m.), beautifully coloured. From this pass onwards the path flattens out, and it becomes a very scenic easy walk into a quintessential alpine setting – the splendid Fanes valley. We hike around two spectacular alpine lakes, and end the walk at the beautifully located – and luxurious – mountain hut of Fanes, where we will spend the night.

**Accommodation: Fanes, mountain hut - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner.**

*Total walking time: around 3-4 hours. Total driving: around 1 hour.*

### Day 5 : Fanes - Alta Via – Lagazuoi – Cortina d'Ampezzo

After breakfast, today's hike starts right from the front door of the hut. This part of our journey sees us entering the real world of the Dolomites with the presence of the great mountains – Cima Scotòni and the Cima Fànès Sud. These mountains are perforated by mazes of operations from World War I (1914-18), bitterly fought in this area. We hike the 'Alta Via' of the Dolomites (also called the 'High Route' Number 1), a long-distance footpath that traverses the Dolomites from north to south. Our route passes through some of the most impressive scenery of the area. At the end of the afternoon we reach the shores of the tranquil lake of Lagazuòi and the Rifugio Lagazuoi (2773m), which is awesomely sited with world-class mountain views. Here we can enjoy a drink, before travelling down by cable car into the valley. We will experience one of the world's finest views here: the surrounding valleys disappear into the shadows, highlighting rock pinnacles which– still exposed to sunlight– take on an extraordinary palette of ever-changing colours. Down in the valley our minibus waits to bring us back to Cortina.

**Accommodation: Cortina d'Ampezzo, Hotel \*\*\*\* - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner.**

*Total walking time: around 5-6 hours (several shorter options).*

### Day 6 : Cortina & the Tre Cime di Lavaredo

After the challenging walks of the last two days, we make an easier walk today. But a splendid one nonetheless, around the Tre Cime ('three peaks') of Lavaredo, one of the most famous postcard images of the Dolomites. A short drive brings us to Lake Misurina, and then up to the Auronzo hut, where our walk starts: along the three mountain peaks of Lavaredo we walk towards the Rifugio Locatelli (Drei Zinnen Hutte). Then we cross to the other side of the mountain chain and enjoy excellent views of the northern face of the Tre Cime. Along a beautiful path you return to the Auronzo hut, where we get the bus back. Now we have the chance to recover and discover the charm of the valley of Cortina d'Ampezzo, a famous resort for the Italian jet set.

We relax for a bit on the shores of Lake Misurina, where there's the option of going for a nice stroll in the beautiful and relaxing surroundings, before travelling back down to Cortina. In the evening we enjoy our last great meal, a farewell dinner to the Dolomites!

**Accommodation: Cortina d'Ampezzo, Hotel \*\*\*\* - Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 lunch.**

*Total walking time: around 3-4 (+1) hours (several shorter options).*

### Day 7 : Cortina - Venice

This morning after breakfast, the journey ends. You can opt to spend some more time in the Dolomites, or travel to Venice, which can easily be reached by public transport. A transfer back to Venice can be arranged at any time.

**Meals included: 1 breakfast**



## TOUR DETAILS

### ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

All nights are spent in beautiful, characteristic hotels, mostly historical buildings (generally 3/4-star), and one night in a luxurious 'mountain hut'. All rooms have en-suite facilities.

Accommodation is mainly on a **HB** basis. Only on two nights are you free to choose from the wide choice of restaurants in the area. Your guide can give you good tips for these evening dinners.

Almost all (picnic) lunches are included in the tour price. On other days you are free to have your own lunch. Here you have the option of having your lunch in a nice restaurant, or purchasing your supplies for a picnic lunch.

**Night 1:** This night is spent in a good 3-star hotel, located in the centre of Trento, at walking distance from all main monuments and the river.

**Nights 2 & 3:** These two nights are spent in a charming 3-star hotel in the heart of the Val Badia, renowned for its special 'Ladino' kitchen and with a beautiful wellness centre.

**Night 4:** This night is spent in a wonderful 'Rifugio'. Rather than just a 'mountain hut', this is a good 3-star hotel, with a good kitchen as well, in a wonderful setting on the high plain of Fanes.

**Nights 5&6:** The last two nights you stay in the romantic & fashionable village of Cortina d'Ampezzo, capital of the Italian Dolomites. You'll stay in a beautiful family-run 4-star hotel. The friendly staff will make you feel at home.

### INCLUDED

- Private English-speaking tour leader for 7 days
- Accommodation: 1 night Trento, 2 nights Val Badia, 1 night Rifugio Fanes, 2 nights Cortina d'Ampezzo, all in good \*\*\*/\*\*\*\* hotels (1 night 3-star level 'mountain hut')
- Meals: all breakfasts, 4 dinners (good restaurants!), 3 lunches
- All private & public transfers as indicated throughout the entire itinerary
- Entrance fees of all sites along the itinerary
- All special activities as outlined in the day-by-day itinerary
- Luggage transport
- All gratuities for baggage, porters & hotel service
- 24/7 assistance

### NOT INCLUDED

- Departure taxes
- Visas & Travel Insurance
- Drinks and meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Optional additional tours or activities
- Tips
- Items of a personal nature



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## LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

**Moderately easy (3):** Mostly moderately easy walks, along well-maintained footpaths, with rough surfaces nonetheless. On some days some stretches are difficult for those suffering from vertigo (but NOT dangerous!). On these days alternative options are available. Extensions or shortcuts are also possible on most days.

## FOOTPATHS & WAYMARKING

Most paths are relatively well maintained, but during the winter season some paths can get damaged (*we are in continuous contact with local authorities to keep the paths clean – please help us by providing your feedback on the quality of the paths*).

**Waymarking:** Most paths are well waymarked; elsewhere you have to follow the route descriptions provided together with the maps. With these you will always be able to find your route. In case you don't feel confident a local guide can be provided for some trails.

## ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

### Arrival:

The tour starts in TRENTO (hotel), connected with Verona, Venice, Milan & Rome (and all other major Italian cities) by a frequent (high speed) train service. The nearest city with an international airport is Verona. From the airport there are regular shuttle buses to the train station. It then takes an hour by train to Trento.

### Departure:

The tour ends after breakfast in CORTINA D'AMPEZZO on day 7. A short transfer brings you to the train or bus station (included), where you travel back by bus or train to Venice. Several taxi services are available to bring you directly to your next destination.



## TOUR VARIATIONS

This tour can be turned into a Private '[Bespoke Adventures](#)' to accommodate your private group. Book the dates you want, with the family or friends you wish to bring along!

We can organize both "off the shelf" itineraries, as well as create custom itineraries to meet your special needs. Longer and shorter versions of this tour are also available, as well as a luxury version. Prices on request.

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