

ITALY

The Dolomites

A Guided Walking Adventure





Table of Contents

Daily Itinerary	4
Tour Itinerary Overview	13
Tour Facts at a Glance.....	15
Traveling To and From Your Tour	18
Information & Policies	23
Italy at a Glance	25
Packing List	30

Travel Style

This small-group Guided Walking Adventure offers an authentic travel experience, one that takes you away from the crowds and deep in to the fabric of local life. On it, you'll enjoy 24/7 expert guides, premium accommodations, delicious meals, effortless transportation, and local wine or beer with dinner. Rest assured that every trip detail has been anticipated so you're free to enjoy an adventure that exceeds your expectations.

And, with our **new optional Flight + Tour Combo** and **Venice Post-Tour Extension** to complement this destination, we take care of all the travel to simplify the journey. Refer to the attached itinerary for more details.

Overview

Dramatic pinnacles of white rock, flower-filled meadows, fir forests, and picturesque villages are all part of the renowned Italian Dolomites, protected in national and regional parks and recently recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site. The luminous limestone range is the result of geological transformation from ancient sea floor to mountaintop. The region is a landscape of grassy balconies perched above Alpine lakes, and Tyrolean hamlets nestled in lush valleys, crisscrossed by countless hiking and walking trails connecting villages, Alpine refuges, and cable cars.

The Dolomites form the frontier between Germanic Northern Europe and the Latin South. The region's cultural diversity is reflected in all aspects of life, and the inhabitants speak a soft, lilting tongue called Ladin, a unique language known since Roman times. The Dolomites are equally rich in flora and fauna—many species of flowers and plants are unique to the limestone geology, and the area is home to protected animals such as chamois, brown bear, and lynx. The cuisine, of course, reflects the region's unique cultural blend—hearty Austrian-influenced mountain fare meets lighter Italian cuisine made from fresh local ingredients. You retire to intimate, luxurious, and historic Tyrolean hotels, welcoming you to this enchanting corner of northeast Italy.





Daily Itinerary

DAY 1

Arrival. Mount Plöse; 4 miles, easy to moderate

The tour begins in the charming medieval town of Bressanone (as it is known in Italian; in German, it's Brixen) located just 28 miles south of the Brenner Pass, the border between Italy and Austria. Bressanone is located in the South Tyrol, the part of Italy encompassing the Trentino and Alto Adige regions, a bilingual region that belonged to Austria until 1918. In fact, German is spoken more than Italian by the inhabitants. This “Ancient Bishop’s City” is nestled between two rivers and enveloped by mountains sloping down to vineyards and lush orchards, with a pleasant center of narrow cobblestone streets, pastel-colored houses, and lovely buildings and bridges.

Following a brief orientation at your centrally located meeting point and first night’s hotel, you set out for an afternoon walk at the neighboring ski area, Mount Plöse. A scenic 10-minute gondola ride high above Bressanone and the Isarco Valley brings you to the start of your loop walk at an altitude of 6,700 feet. You follow a well-maintained panoramic trail with spectacular views over the Odle peaks, site of tomorrow’s walk, before a return gondola ride to the base of the mountain.

This evening, you stroll to a nearby restaurant for an *aperitivo* of local Alto Adige wines and cured ham (*speck*) and cheeses, before sitting down to a dinner of outstanding South Tyrolean cuisine. A first course may be handmade spinach-filled ravioli followed by a main course or *secondo piatto* of river trout, local game, or lamb, and you toast the start of your adventure with a crisp local white wine. Dessert may be your first taste of the region's delectable apple strudel.



Hotel Goldener Adler (or equivalent), Bressanone

The historical, family-run Goldener Adler is located among the cobblestoned streets of Bressanone's historical center, just steps away from the town's Baroque cathedral. This four-star property offers well-appointed river view rooms, an elegant bar and restaurant, charming outdoor courtyard, as well as a spa and wellness center with sauna, steam bath, and massage facilities.

DAY 2

Parco Naturale Puez-Odle (Puez-Odle Natural Park): Sass de Pütia Circuit; 9 miles, moderate with a one-hour challenging uphill section, elevation gain and loss of 1,150 ft. (Total walking time: 6.5 hours & lunch)

You awaken to a generous breakfast buffet in your hotel's warm, wood-beamed dining room—eggs to order, cheeses, *speck*, and an assortment of Alto Adige yogurts, cereals, juices, pastries, fruit, and, of course, cappuccino! Check out and board your private coach for a one-hour drive through the Funes Valley—the Dolomites' northwest boundary—and on to the Passo delle Erbe, roughly “the Grassy Pass,” where you can see the extraordinary peaks of the Odle that resemble a castle's battlements.

Today's route is the Sass de Pütia loop, which starts out on a wide gravel path bordered with heather and bilberry, and ascends gently past summer hay huts and the local Ladin people's small summer mountain cabins called *baita*. This ancient culture of a small minority population living in the Dolomites and speaking the Ladin language developed in the isolated mountain valleys from the time of the Roman Empire.



In the summer, Ladini families climb to their summer cabins to relax, picnic, hay, and carve wood, and, at many of the cabins, refreshments or snacks are offered to hikers. Continuing through meadows, the trail narrows, skirting a mountain, and at this point, you encounter the day's greatest challenge—a 650-foot ascent of about an hour.

Switchbacks make their way steeply up the hill, through large boulders, a trickling stream, and Rhaetian poppies, with steps and timber traverses at the final push. The view from the top of the saddle, Pütia Fork, at about 7,700 feet, is well worth the effort—rolling pastureland thick with yellow buttercups, gentians, and pink mountain thrift, and views of the upper Badia Valley, the Fanes Range, and the Sella Group.

Rounding Pütia Mountain, the route then joins the famous Alta Via 2 (the second of a network of eight long-distance footpaths through the Dolomites, called *Alte Vie*, meaning “high paths”). These trails are weeklong routes and are served by numerous *rifugi* (“refuge huts”). The next mile or so is on a beautiful level trail between green pastures and grazing cows, with views of the Sella group and the Odle, and soon your lunch spot comes into view—the welcoming Rifugio Genova at 7,566 feet. Stunning views accompany a lunch of homemade mountain fare, such as polenta with cheese, homemade noodles with mushrooms, and a local Forst beer. After lunch, you continue on a farm track, through sloping pasture that is home to marmots and abundant wildflowers; raptors soar above the mountain passes. With views below to the village of Antermoia, you enter a shaded forest trail where black grouse may be flushed out. After a farmhouse refreshment stop, the trail loops back to the starting point at the Passo delle Erbe.

A short transfer takes you on to your home for the next two nights in the idyllic mountain village of San Vigilio di Marebbe, where you are welcomed by the family that has been running their Art Nouveau hotel for generations. Surrounded by a crown of mountains, the hotel's garden is the perfect place to enjoy a cocktail and experience the *enrosadira*, the Ladin word for the pink sunset glow illuminating the peaks as the sun's last rays strike the white dolomitic limestone. You proceed to the hotel's dining room for the chef's fare of locally raised meat, fresh vegetables, and herbs picked from the garden.

Hotel Monte Sella, San Vigilio di Marebbe

An intimate, Art Nouveau, turn-of-the-century Tyrolean hotel nestled in a small mountain village. Run by the same family for generations, this welcoming, four-star property boasts inviting guest rooms, as well as an indoor pool and Ayurvedic spa and wellness center offering an array of treatments, massages, and sauna facilities.

DAY 3

Parco Naturale Fanes-Senes-Braies: Pederü to Capanna Alpina; 5- or 8-mile options, moderate to challenging, elevation gain of 2,047 ft. (or 367 ft. if choosing 5-mile option) and loss of 1,483 ft. (Total walking time: 5.5 hours for the complete walk & lunch)

A sumptuous breakfast buffet fuels you for today's walk in the Fanes-Senes-Braies Park. That being said, instead of starting off with a long, but gradual ascent, a very convenient option would allow you to take a jeep ride to meet the group at lunchtime, and then enjoy the afternoon's 5-mile walk. For those who choose the morning option, a short drive brings you to the eastern end of the Val Badia and the glacially carved Pederü Valley. From the Rifugio Pederü at 5,079 feet, a long, wide mountain road over gradual switchbacks climbs for 2½ hours (elevation gain of 1,680 feet), larch trees lining the way.

After passing a rocky gorge, you emerge onto the level Fanes Pasture. After passing green pastureland, yellow wolfsbane, rushing rivers, and grazing cows, you encounter the family-run Rifugio Fanes, a backcountry lodge of wood and stone with a huge deck overlooking the natural bowl of the Sasso della Croce and the Cunturines groups of mountains. The unique stratified rock layers and solitary pines in the horizon are known as the "Marmots' Parliament," part of the rich Ladini folklore of stories and legends about these mountains. A "Radler"—a refreshing mix of beer and lemonade—may hit the spot to accompany lunch, a hearty bowl of pasta, soup, or polenta.

After lunch, a 15-minute ascent (367 feet) of gradual switchbacks through a carpet of junipers brings you to Limo Pass (at 7,126 feet, the highest point of the day's walk). The trail then levels out at azure Lake Limo, gently undulating into a wide natural amphitheater, as you enjoy the Fanes high plateau with its typical karstic limestone landscape of wind-carved rock formations, caves, fissures, underground streams, and small lakes. A growing population of fox, deer, chamois, mountain goats, and eagles thrive under the park's protection.



After a final stunning view at the Forcella Col de Locia, a steep and narrow descent of steps brings you to the Capanna Alpina (5,643 feet), where you are rewarded with a refreshing drink or snack. A short drive brings you back to San Vigilio di Marebbe, where there is time to relax, stroll through town, or schedule an Ayurvedic massage at the hotel, before gathering for dinner in the

hotel's dining room.

Hotel Monte Sella, San Vigilio di Marebbe

DAY 4

Prato Piazza to Strudelkopf to Prato Piazza; 6.5 miles, moderate, elevation gain and loss of 985 ft. (Total walking time: 3 hours & lunch)

Departing San Vigilio after breakfast, you head east for the approximately 45-minute drive through the Pusteria Valley, toward Cortina, your home for the next three nights. Today's walk takes place en route, in the area of Prato Piazza—a picturesque Alpine basin that is home to dairy cows, pine forests, and timber chalets. Set 6,561 feet above sea level, the beautiful Prato Piazza is integrated into the Fanes-Senes-Braies Natural Park and offers splendid views of some of the Dolomites' most imposing peaks: Tre Cime di Lavaredo, Tofane, Monte Cristallo, and the majestic deep red Croda Rossa. Following an initial gentle ascent of two hours, you reach the peak of Strudelkopf. Sitting at 7,569 feet, the summit offers astonishing views onto the Sesto Dolomites. Following a 30-minute descent, you arrive at the small, old-style Rifugio Vallandro for lunch. Bordered by the ruins of a World War I Austrian fort, the *rifugio* boasts great views of the Croda Rossa (west) and Cristallo (south).

After lunch, an easy 35-minute descent returns you to Prato Piazza and your waiting bus for the 30-minute drive to Cortina. Cortina d'Ampezzo, known as the “Pearl of the Dolomites,” is perhaps Italy's most beautiful—and stylish—ski resort town. Set in a valley ringed by 9,000-foot peaks, it is appreciated for its miles of ski runs as well as its bustling center full of chic cafés and shops. After settling into your room, you regroup for dinner at a favorite local restaurant.

Grand Hotel Savoia, Cortina d'Ampezzo

This historic luxury hotel boasts an ideal location just a short stroll from the historic heart of Cortina. Steeped in tradition, the property offers guest rooms with contemporary decor, a full-service spa with indoor pool, sauna, fitness room and tea bar, and an elegant restaurant and piano bar.



DAY 5

Sesto Dolomites: Tre Cime di Lavaredo Circuit; 6 miles, easy to moderate, 525-ft. elevation gain and loss with one steep/challenging 15-minute 280-ft. elevation gain. (Total walking time: 4 hours)

This morning, a 45-minute drive takes you to the start of the day's walk, a circuit around the Tre Cime di Lavaredo, in the Sesto Dolomites Natural Park. The distinctive three peaks are one of the Dolomites' best-known landmarks; prized by rock climbers for their sheer rock faces, appreciated for their amazing pastel and vibrant red hues at sunset, and historically the site of some of the most intense mountain warfare of World War I. In fact, the range constituted the border between Hapsburg Austria and Italy up until 1918. Today's loop walk provides views at all angles, beginning with a drive up the beautiful Tre Cime Panoramic Road to the Rifugio Auronzo at 7,644 feet.

After a fortifying cappuccino, you set off along a wide trail, a former military track, just beneath the peaks. After visiting a chapel commemorating the First World War, you veer north, passing the Rifugio Lavaredo. Soon, breathtaking views of the Tre Cime open up, and you may spot rock climbers at seemingly impossible heights on the rock face. After dipping below the Mount Paterno ridge, which is still riddled with wartime tunnels, a level traverse across a scree slope brings you to the Rifugio Locatelli.

After a short break, the route initially descends a series of switchbacks, then traverses an undulating basin called the Pian da Rin, a grassy wildflower-filled meadow where you may hear whistling marmots. This tranquil trail offers spectacular views of the Tre Cime, surrounded by a mountain quiet only interrupted by the dull clanging of cowbells. A steep but short ascent of 280 steps, probably the day's most challenging section, is soon over and followed by



a flat stretch to a mountain dairy hut, where you may be able to taste incredibly fresh homemade yogurt or cheese.

You then round the south side of the Tre Cime at the Col di Mezzo pass, and close the loop back at the starting point, the Rifugio Auronzo. A short drive delivers you to a traditional restaurant for a satisfying lunch—perhaps

homemade *canederli* (bread balls with cheese) or a plate of *patate all'ampezzana* (pan-cooked potatoes and onions flavored with local *speck* ham).

This evening you are free to explore Cortina on your own, perhaps browsing its enticing shops, before venturing out to discover one of the town's many fine restaurants.

Grand Hotel Savoia, Cortina d'Ampezzo

DAY 6

Parco Naturale delle Dolomiti Ampezzane: Monte Nuvolau circuit; 4-5 miles, moderate, with an easy-to-moderate elevation gain of 1,082 ft. and loss of 820 ft. (Total walking time: 5½ hours & lunch)

Today's walk is considered to be one of the finest routes in the Dolomites for its variety of scenery—high peaks, remote wild areas, and significant evidence of World War I warfare. After breakfast at your hotel, you board the coach for the 30-minute to where you catch the Cinque Torri chairlift to the Rifugio Scioattoli, built by the mountain guide Lorenzo Lorenzi in 1969, this alpine hut marks the start of today's walk. From the refuge's terrace (at 7,300 feet), you're on top of the world, with 360-degree views overlooking the Dolomites' impressive peaks, such as the Croda da Lago, and the Cinque Torri. These mountains contain thousands of feet of tunneling, a result of the fierce fighting between Austrians and Italians during World War I to control the peaks and surrounding territory. Other wartime remnants are still ubiquitous, such as barbed wire, shell fragments, and building rubble. The tunnels and trenches have been restored and comprise part of the Great War Outdoor Museum of the Cinque Torri—the largest WWI open-air museum. Your walk today is along a well-established circuit beneath the Monte Nuvolau, a natural balcony with views over the

Tofane range, the Lagazuoi and the Falzarego Pass. Along the route, you may be lucky enough to spot sure-footed chamois on the rocky slopes.

Making your way along the dramatic scenery of mountainside, rock faces, and waterfalls, you reach the Averau Rifugio, (at 7,926 feet), a coveted milestone along the Alta Via no. 1 route where you stop for lunch. While dining at the “Restaurant at the Edge of the Universe” (as The Sunday Times refers to this family-run alpine chalet), you enjoy stunning views of the surrounding peaks of Civetta and Marmolada while savoring exquisite traditional dishes such as smoked roast beef with arugula and fresh homemade pasta prepared by Paola and Sandrone. Fueled for the final leg, you continue to the chairlift for the descent back to the valley and the return (30-minute) drive to Cortina.

This afternoon you have time to relax, pack, and enjoy the spa before gathering for your farewell dinner on the outskirts of town. You are welcomed with a glass of sparkling Prosecco on the deck of the warm chalet restaurant on a small lake at the base of the Croda da Lago peak. In this intimate locale, the first course, or *primo piatto*, may be the Cortina specialty of handmade, crescent-shaped ravioli stuffed with tender red beets and topped with melted butter, poppy seeds, and a generous dusting of parmesan cheese. Tonight’s main course may be fresh lake trout, grilled to perfection, as you toast your discovery of the beauty of the Dolomites.

Grand Hotel Savoia, Cortina d'Ampezzo

DAY 7

Departure from Venice

Departing shortly after breakfast, a scenic two-and-a-half-hour drive brings you to Venice, where you can conveniently explore this magical city on your own, or make flight and rail connections for onward travels.



ITINERARY CHANGES

Please bear in mind that this is a typical itinerary, and the actual activities, sites, and accommodations may vary due to season, special events, weather, or transportation schedules. We reserve the right to alter the itinerary, since tour arrangements are made up to a year in advance and unforeseen circumstances may arise that mandate change. Itinerary changes are made to improve the tour and your experience.

HIGH-ALTITUDE WARNING

The highest elevation you will be walking at on this tour is approximately 8,000 feet. The altitude may have some effect on travelers. Typical symptoms include nausea, a loss of appetite, insomnia, shortness of breath, dizziness, headaches, or other minor irregularities. There are actions you can take to help you adjust to the altitude, including drinking lots of water (more than you feel you need) and getting plenty of sleep. Also, take your time while walking, allow your body to adjust, and always keep your guides informed of how you are feeling. Please discuss with your doctor whether taking altitude medication would be helpful.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Country Walkers is a leader in active travel with responsible tourism an integral part of our core values. Our tours reflect our dedication to best travel practices—and to the preservation of indigenous cultures and the environment. Country Walkers has made a donation on behalf of every traveler to the CW Travelers Fund, which supports designated projects in the communities and habitats in which we travel. We invite you to learn more about our efforts and initiatives for giving back.

Tour Itinerary Overview

TOUR MEETING POINTS AND TIMES

Hotel Goldener Adler (parlor/bar off the hallway leading to the reception), Bressanone/Brixen, Italy, 1:30 p.m. (June 25 and July 16)

Grüner Baum Hotel (hotel lobby), Bressanone/Brixen, Italy, 1:30 p.m. (August 27)

NIGHT 1

Hotel Goldener Adler (June 25 and July 16)

Adlerbrückengasse 9

Bressanone/Brixen, Italy

Tel 011 39 0472 200 621

Email info@goldener-adler.com

goldener-adler.com

Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service unavailable.

OR

Grüner Baum Hotel (August 27)

Stufels 11

Bressanone/Brixen, Italy

Tel 011 39 0472 274 100

Email info@gruenerbaum.it

gruenerbaum.it

Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service available.

NIGHTS 2 & 3

Hotel Monte Sella

San Vigilio di Marebbe, Italy

Tel 011 39 0474 501 034

Email info@monte-sella.com

monte-sella.com

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

NIGHTS 4, 5, & 6

Grand Hotel Savoia

Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy

Tel 011 39 0436 3201

Email reservation@grandhotelsavoia.cortina.it

grandhotelsavoia.cortina.it

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

Venice's Marco Polo Airport, Venice, Italy, 12:00 p.m.

EMERGENCY CONTACT

One Call International

Email mail@oncallinternational.com

If communicating from within the US

Text 603.945.0103

Tel 800.555.9095

If calling from outside the US

Tel 603.894.4710

When calling from outside the USA, you will need to dial the access code for the country you are calling from (a complete list of access codes, provided by AT&T, can be found on the Country Walkers website under Travel Tips and Travel Resources: International Access Codes).

In the unlikely event you are unable to connect by phone with One Call, or the region you are calling from does not have an access code, you should speak with a live international operator and ask them to place a collect call to 800.555.9095 or 603.894.4710.

Tour Facts at a Glance

TOUR LENGTH (WITHOUT FLIGHT PACKAGE)

7 days, 6 nights

DEPARTURE DATES (WITHOUT FLIGHT PACKAGE)

June 25-July 1, 2016

July 16-22, 2016

August 27-September 2, 2016

SCHEDULED GROUP PRICE, TOUR ONLY

\$4,398 (Single +\$498)

If you are interested in reserving the optional Flight + Tour Combo and pre- or post-tour extensions **for our scheduled group departures**, please refer to the attached itinerary for tour length, dates, pricing, and inclusions.

PRIVATE TOUR-ONLY PRICE FROM

4–5 guests: \$5,098 (Single +\$498)

6+ guests: \$4,398 (Single +\$498)

This private tour is available daily, on request, from June 1 through September 30.

TOUR MEETING POINTS AND TIMES

Hotel Goldener Adler (parlor/bar off the hallway leading to the reception),
Bressanone/Brixen, Italy, 1:30 p.m. (June 25 and July 16)

Grüner Baum Hotel (hotel lobby), Bressanone/Brixen, Italy, 1:30 p.m. (August 27)

TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

Venice's Marco Polo Airport, Venice, Italy, 12:00 p.m.

ACTIVITY LEVEL

This tour is one of our Guided Walking Adventures, rated moderate to challenging, with an average of 5 to 7 hours (5-7 alpine miles) of hiking per day and limited options. This tour is more of a hiking experience than a walking experience. There are significant ascents and descents of between 1,100 and

2,200 feet per day, with a gradual descent of over 4,000 feet on one day. The highest walking altitude on the tour starts at approximately 9,000 feet, at a site which is accessed by cable car. Trails are a range of worn paths, gravel roads, and some stony stream crossings, and the footing varies from packed dirt to loose gravel, rocky sections, and steps on steep slopes. There might be roots that can be slippery when wet. The pace on this tour is steady, yet comfortable, with full days on the trail and transfers between 30 minutes to one hour. On several days, guests can choose to participate in a half- rather than full-day walk by shortening the walk with a jeep transfer, and instead exploring the towns of San Vigilio di Marebbe or Cortina.

Walking sticks and waterproof hiking boots with a thick and sturdy tread and good ankle support are required. For this tour, you should be in excellent physical condition with good balance and no orthopedic or cardiovascular conditions.

INCLUSIONS

- » Two expert, local guides (for groups of 8 or more), with you 24/7
- » All meals except for one dinner; local wine included
- » All accommodations while on tour
- » Transportation from the meeting point to the departure point
- » Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary
- » Destination information (weather, visa requirements, etc.) and other travel assistance available 24/7 provided by One Call International
- » The unbeatable and cumulative experience of the Country Walkers staff

LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN

Prior to your adventure you will be asked to sign a Guest Acknowledgment of Risk and you will receive:

- » Luggage tags
- » List of travel companions and guide biographies

GRATUITIES

Gratuities for all hotels, meals, and services that are included in your tour price will be paid by Country Walkers. Should you wish to tip your Country Walkers guide(s), the standard in the industry ranges from \$10 to \$15 per person, per guide, per day (or \$20 to \$30 per couple, per guide, per day), and can be paid in USD or local currency. Gratuities for your bus driver are included in the tour price, but extra tips are always welcome.

Traveling To and From Your Tour

If you are interested in reserving the **new optional Flight + Tour Combo** and **pre- or post-tour extensions**, please refer to the attached itinerary for more details.

TOUR MEETING POINTS AND TIMES

Hotel Goldener Adler (parlor/bar off the hallway leading to the reception), Bressanone/Brixen, Italy, 1:30 p.m. (June 25 and July 16)

Grüner Baum Hotel (hotel lobby), Bressanone/Brixen, Italy, 1:30 p.m. (August 27)

Your guide(s) will be wearing a Country Walkers shirt.

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT

Bolzano/Bozen (BZO), Italy (25 miles SW of Bressanone)

abd-airport.it

Innsbruck (INN), Austria (50 miles N of Bressanone)

innsbruck-airport.com

Verona (VRN), Italy (120 miles SW of Bressanone)

aeroportoverona.it

Munich (MUC), Germany (160 miles N of Bressanone)

munich-airport.de

Venice (VCE), Italy (190 miles SE of Bressanone)

veniceairport.it

Milan (MXP), Italy (190 miles SW of Bressanone)

milan-mxp.com

Please refer to the Italian Government Tourist Office website, **enit.it**, for additional information about Italian airports and transportation to and from the airport. You may also wish to visit the Italian Tourism Official website at **italia.it**.

GETTING TO THE MEETING POINT

From the Bressanone (Italian name)/Brixen (German name) Train Station:

Bressanone can be reached by train. It is nestled in the north of Italy on the main Munich-Innsbruck-Bolzano/Bozen-Verona train line. The Hotel Goldener Adler (as well as the Gruner Baum Hotel) is a 10-minute taxi ride from Bressanone's train station. Taxis are readily available and cost approximately 10 euros.

From Bolzano's Airport:

The city of Bolzano (German name is Bozen) is the capital city of South Tyrol and the largest city in the region. Its small airport, ABD Airport Bolzano Dolomites (BZO), has daily flights from Rome and Frankfurt, as well as service from Vienna, and requires connections from the U.S. The airport is located approximately 3 miles outside the Bolzano city center, where Bolzano's Central Train Station is located. A taxi from the airport to the Central Train Station costs approximately 30 euros.

From Innsbruck's Airport:

While the Innsbruck Airport (INN) is the closest international airport, it does require connections from the U.S. A taxi from the Innsbruck Airport to Innsbruck's Central Train Station takes approximately 15 minutes and costs approximately 10 euros. Some trains to Bressanone are direct, while others require a connection in Brennero/Brenner. There are occasional delays with these trains. Please pay attention to the loudspeaker announcements in the station.

From Verona's Airport:

Verona's Valerio Catullo Airport (VRN), located 7 miles southwest of Verona's city center, is the second-closest international airport, also requiring connections from the U.S. A shuttle bus runs to Verona's Porta Nuova Train Station every 20 minutes between 6:30 a.m. and 11:30 p.m.; a one-way ticket costs about 6 euros. A taxi from the Verona Airport to Verona's Porta Nuova Train Station takes approximately 15 minutes and costs approximately 15 euros.

From Munich's Airport:

Munich's Franz Josef Strauss Airport (MUC), a hub for Lufthansa and Star Alliance partner airlines, offers direct connections from the U.S. It is located 17.7 miles northeast of Munich. You may reach Munich's city center and central

train stations via train or taxi. Trains depart from the Flughafen (Airport) stop (steps away from Terminals 1 and 2) six times an hour between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m., with less-frequent service during the night. Major downtown stops include the München Ost Train Station (mainly InterCity/EuroCity services to Austria, Italy, and southeastern Europe depart from this station), Hauptbahnhof (main railroad station) and the Marienplatz in the pedestrian shopping zone. Two S-Bahn lines (covered by a rail pass), S1 and S8, offer slightly different routes, but both run from the airport to downtown Munich. To reach central Munich, follow the S-Bahn signs to the commuter rail station in the München Airport Center. There, you can buy tickets from vending machines or a ticket counter. The journey from the airport to the München Ost or Hauptbahnhof train stations takes approximately 45 minutes and costs approximately 10 euros. Taxis are also readily available outside of the terminals. A taxi ride into central Munich takes about 35 minutes (or longer in rush hour) and costs approximately 60 euros.

From Venice's Airport:

Venice's Marco Polo Airport (VCE), located 7.5 miles north of Venice's city center, offers limited direct connections from the U.S. There are also daily connections to and from Rome and other European cities such as London, Zurich, Paris, and Frankfurt. The Venice-Mestre railway station is connected to the airport by the ATVO Fly Bus and the ACTV bus 15. Bus information is available from ATVO at atvo.it and ACTV at actv.it. The ride takes about 20 minutes and costs approximately 3 euros (luggage included). Taxis are also readily available outside of the Arrival Hall. The ride to the train station takes about 20 minutes and costs approximately 30 euros.

From Milan's Airport:

Milan's Malpensa Airport (MXP) offers a number of direct flights from the U.S. Airport coach shuttle service from the Malpensa Airport to the Milan Central Train Station costs approximately 10 euros and takes about 45-60 minutes. A taxi from Milan's Malpensa Airport to the Milan Central Train Station costs approximately 95 euros and takes one hour (or more).

RAIL INFORMATION

Approximate travel times for train travel to Bressanone/Brixen from various Italian, Austrian, and German cities are as follows: from Bolzano/Bozen: 30 minutes; from Innsbruck: 1½ hours; from Verona: 2-2½ hours; from Munich: 4-

5 hours; from Venice: 3½-4 hours; from Milan: 4-4½ hours; from Turin: 6-11 hours; from Florence: 4-5 hours; from Rome: 6-11 hours.

Please note, the above travel times are dependent upon train type and speed. Additionally, some of these journeys require station changes. For further rail information including reservations, schedules, and up-to-date fares, please contact either Rail Europe at 800.622.8600 or raileurope.com, or Trenitalia at trenitalia.com, or ÖBB (Austrian Federal Railways -Österreichische Bundesbahnen) at oebb.at.

PRE-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

If you are not reserving our optional Flight + Tour Combo, you may wish to book a pre-tour stay at the **Hotel Goldener Adler (June 25 and July 16)** or **Grüner Baum Hotel (August 27)**, the meeting point for your tour. To reserve a room, please contact the hotel that corresponds with your tour date directly. In order to guarantee you do not need to move rooms, please mention Country Walkers when making the reservation and request a double/twin or double-for-single use (if you are a solo traveler) riverside room at the Goldener Adler and a double/twin or double-for-single use (if you are a solo traveler) in the main hotel at Gruner Baum. We suggest making a hotel reservation as soon as possible.

Hotel Goldener Adler (June 25 and July 16)

Bressanone/Brixen, Italy
Tel 011 39 0472 200 621
Email info@goldener-adler.com
goldener-adler.com

Room rates are seasonal and include breakfast: double or twin, from 160 euros; double-for-single use (room for 1 person with a double bed), from 155 euros. These rates do not include an additional Visitor's Tax of approximately 1.60 euros per person, per night.

Grüner Baum Hotel (August 27)

Bressanone/Brixen, Italy
Tel 011 39 0472 274 100
Email info@gruenerbaum.it
gruenerbaum.it

Room rates are seasonal and include breakfast: double or twin, from 160 euros; double-for-single use (room for 1 person with a double bed), from 125 euros. These rates do not include an additional Visitor's Tax of approximately 1.60 euros per person, per night.

DELAYS AND LATE ARRIVALS

If you are delayed or miss the scheduled group meeting point for any reason, we kindly request that you contact our emergency assistance provider, One Call International. This service is available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week to assist you with any type of travel delay. Please refer to the Emergency Contact details on your Tour Itinerary Overview page for One Call International contact details.

TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

Venice Airport, Venice, Italy, 12:00 p.m.

A private transfer is provided to all guests to Venice's Marco Polo Airport on the final day of the tour. Depending on your ultimate destination, it may not be possible to depart Italy for the U.S. on the last day of the tour. Please check airline schedules carefully. If you plan to schedule return flights immediately following the tour's conclusion, please call your airline directly for specific check-in requirements.

LEAVING VENICE

For information on travel between Venice airport and Mestre rail station, please refer to Getting to the Meeting Point and the section titled "From Venice's Airport"

RAIL INFORMATION

Approximate travel times for train travel from Venice's Mestre train station to various Italian cities are as follows: to Florence, 2 hours; to Milan, 2½ hours; to Pisa, 3½ hours; to Rome, 3½ hours; to Turin, 4 hours.

Please note: The above travel times are dependent upon train type and speed. Additionally, some of these journeys require station changes. For further rail information, including reservations, schedules, and up-to-date fares, please contact either Rail Europe at 800.622.8600 or raileurope.com, or Trenitalia at trenitalia.com (Trenitalia operates most train services in Italy).

Information & Policies

GUARANTEED DEPARTURES

Country Walkers guarantees the departure of every tour*—no exceptions and no disappointments! From the moment you make your deposit, you can start preparing for your adventure. We take care of all the details to ensure a seamless, small-group experience (with an average of 6 or 7 guests per guide). For best availability, reserve your trip today!

**except in cases of force majeure*

RESERVATIONS

Reservations for this tour may be made by calling Country Walkers at 800.464.9255. We can confirm your reservation with a deposit of \$350 per person. Final tour cost is due 90 days prior to tour departure date. As arrangements are confirmed at least a year in advance, the tour price is subject to change.

GUEST RESPONSIBILITIES

Each guest has the responsibility to select a trip appropriate to his/her abilities and interests and to prepare for the trip by carefully reading the confirmation materials. To join this trip, you must be in good health and capable of completing activities as described in the day-to-day itinerary. Our in-house experts welcome the opportunity to discuss the tour in more detail. In order to meet your needs, we ask that you please share any relevant physical limitations or health conditions when you make your reservation.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellations received 91 days or more prior to the tour start date will incur a loss of \$150; cancellations received between 90 and 61 days prior to the tour start date incur a loss of 25 percent of the tour price; there are no refunds within 60 days of the tour start date. Up to 91 days prior to departure, you may transfer your reservation, depending on availability, from one departure to another in the same calendar year at no cost*. Please notify us in writing.

**One transfer per year; afterwards a modest per person transfer fee will apply. Please note that tours with seasonal prices may involve a higher price.*

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We offer guests the opportunity to purchase a Travel Protection Plan. Please contact us for details.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Air or other travel arrangements to and from your tour are not included in the price of your trip. We encourage you to contact your local travel agent, or Better Travel, a Vermont-based agency (800.331.6996 or bettertravel@madriver.com), for any additional air, hotel, rail, or transfer arrangements you may need.

Italy at a Glance

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS



U.S. citizens: Passports are required and must be valid for at least three months beyond the dates of travel. Visas are not required for stays of up to 90 days. For more information, see travel.state.gov.

CURRENCY

Italy uses the euro (EUR). For current exchange rates, visit oanda.com.

Many businesses in Europe will no longer accept credit cards without PIN numbers (chip and pin cards). Always contact your bank or your credit-card company for details on fees and card use when traveling.

Travel Tip

Have a variety of options to start your trip: ATM card(s), credit card(s), some dollars to exchange, and some euros in small denominations.

TIME ZONE

Italy is in the Central European Time Zone, Eastern Standard Time plus 6 hours. For more information on worldwide time zones, see: worldtimezone.com.

PHONE & INTERNET

Italy country code: +39

Cell phone coverage throughout Italy is extensive, but cannot be guaranteed to be accessible on all American mobile carriers or to function at all times while on the trail or in remote areas. For more information regarding international phone use, please refer to countrywalkers.com/phones.



Internet access is generally very good in towns and villages; however, it is not guaranteed at all of the hotels used on the tour. For more details regarding Wi-Fi availability, please refer to the Tour Itinerary Overview.

LANGUAGE

Italian is Italy's official language.

While knowledge of the local language is not necessary, you may want to learn some fun and useful phrases; see bbc.co.uk/languages/italian or the enclosed Reading Guide for a suggested phrase book.

Travel Tip

- Bringing your own hair dryer or other electrical device? You'll need a travel converter, available at most hardware, travel, or consumer electronic stores.
- For laptops or an electronic device with a dual voltage switch, you'll need the adapter plug but not a converter.

ELECTRICITY

Alternating current of 220V and 50Hz is used in Italy. Plugs have two round prongs. For a full listing of electrical outlets worldwide, see electricaloutlet.org

WEATHER

Italy has a range of climates, depending on the region. In general, spring and fall are ideal for an active vacation, with daytime temperatures in the 60s to low 70s, evenings in the 50s, and occasional short rain showers.

In the northern Alpine areas, summer through early fall is an optimal time to travel. Springtime brings wildflowers, long days, and, on the table, early tender vegetables such as asparagus and artichokes. By late summer and fall, the warm days continue with highs in the low 80s, landscapes take on a golden hue as the grape harvest gets underway, and autumn specialties appear, such as mushrooms and truffles.

For up-to-date forecasts, see qwikcast.com. For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see weatherbase.com.

ITALIAN CUISINE & WINE



Considered one of the world's finest cuisines, Italian food is undoubtedly one of the best things about traveling in Italy. Based on fresh local ingredients, Italian cooking is consequently very regional.

Northern Italy is the home of risotto, polenta, and slow-cooked meat dishes such as *osso bucco*. The cuisine of Tuscany and Umbria in central Italy also features meat and game dishes, such as *bistecca alla fiorentina* (Florentine steak), sausages, and roast pork, as well as vegetable- and bread-based dishes such as savory bruschetta, *ribollita* (vegetable soup), and *panzanella* (bread salad).

Southern Italy and Sicily are justly known for fresh seafood—spaghetti with tiny clams, or a main course of swordfish braised in a light tomato sauce—and fresh vegetables are also prominent— spaghetti with zucchini, or the well-known *insalata caprese* of tomatoes, basil, and fresh mozzarella cheese.

Meals in Italy typically have several courses, starting with an *antipasto* (an appetizer); then a *primo* (first course), which is usually pasta or risotto; a *secondo* (main course), which is a meat or fish dish; and *dolce* (dessert).

Wine has been produced in Italy for millennia, and the country's climate and geography of coastline, foothills, and mountains allow grape growing in 20 regions from the Alps in the north to southernmost Sicily. Restaurants feature their regions' local wine.

Please see the detailed itinerary for region-specific sample menus, local delicacies, and wines.

Travel Tip

Coffee is served throughout the day in its many different ways. Italians tend to drink *caffè latte* or cappuccino until about 11:00 a.m. (a *latte* is a cup of hot milk). After 11:00 a.m., they usually drink *un caffè* (espresso). If you'd like it with a little milk you should order a *macchiato*. You'll need to specify if you want it *con latte caldo* (with hot milk), or *con latte freddo* (with cold milk), or *con schiuma* (with foam). Lastly, there's no charge to stand at the bar with a drink, but a small fee is added to the bill when you sit at a café table.

LIFE IN ITALY



Shopping hours

Shops and stores are generally open Monday to Saturday between 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., and from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m.; department stores and supermarkets are open all day from 9:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Open-air markets generally open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., although in larger cities such as Florence, open-air markets are typically open all day, even on Sundays.

Meal times

Breakfast is served at hotels from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 or 10:30 a.m. Lunch is served in restaurants from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. and dinner is usually served from 7:30 to 11:00 p.m. (Restaurant meal times may vary by region, trending from earlier to later as you travel from north to south.)

Travel Tip

Most restaurants have a “cover charge” or *il coperto*, a per-person fee of one to three euros that is added to your final bill. It is a legitimate practice and it is considered the “fee” for the place setting, the bread, tap water (which is fine to drink), and breadsticks.

Tipping

Tipping in restaurants is not compulsory in Italy. In restaurants the menu or bill indicates *servizio incluso*, meaning “service is included.” However, locals tend to leave a small amount in coins after a meal or a coffee—roughly one to two percent of the total, or one to two euros for a meal of up to 50 euros. For a coffee or a drink in a bar or café, 20 to 50 euro cents is appropriate.

Taxi drivers aren’t generally tipped, but you could round up the total, letting the driver keep the change.

For luggage assistance, a small tip of one to three euros is appropriate.

TRAVEL RESOURCES

National Italian tourist board official sites

italia.it and enit.it

Italian public holidays

To assist in travel planning, it may be helpful to be aware of Italian public holidays, festivals, or calendars of events. Visit the Italian tourist board’s website noted above, then click on Useful Information, More Information, and National Public Holidays. For local events, visit the regional tourism websites (links can be found on the region’s page on italia.it, in the Discover Italy section).

Travel Tip

Be aware that you may need to validate your train ticket by “punching” it before boarding, using a small machine located on the train platform, which stamps the time and date on it.

TRAVEL IN ITALY

Trains

Trenitalia: trenitalia.it (Italy’s national train company)

Raileurope: raileurope.com or 800.622.8600, a U.S.-based company that provides schedules, reservations, and ticketing for all European train networks (their

multi-day/-week/-month passes in one country or combinations of countries may be an economical and convenient choice for European train travel.)



Other local transportation

In addition to its excellent rail network, Italy also has several regional airlines, many regional bus lines, and, in coastal and lake regions, local ferries. Taxis are available at all major airports, train stations, and in smaller towns, and can be reserved in advance (your hotel can usually provide assistance).

Most major car rental agencies are available at Italian airports and train stations. For more information contact Country Walkers, or go to italia.it, and click on “Useful Information.” For driving, you can further navigate to “Rules to drive in Italy.”

Museum information and online reservations

tickitaly.com

Packing List

PACKING TIPS

Pack light! Keep in mind there will be times you may have to carry your own luggage short distances, especially before and after your Country Walkers tour. Due to space constraints, we require you to limit your luggage to one medium piece (approximately 18x15x29 inches or 8,000 cu. in.) and one small carry-on, per person. We recommend packing any personal necessities, medications, your hotel itinerary/emergency contact information, your hiking boots (or shoes), and extra clothes in your carry-on luggage in the event that your baggage is delayed. We suggest leaving valuable jewelry at home. A copy of your passport or other important documents should be kept in a separate area of your luggage. Always be alert when carrying a purse, camera, money belt, or backpack in busy cities, airports, and train stations.

A NOTE ABOUT VARIABLE WEATHER

Please note that the weather in the mountains is often unpredictable and can quickly switch from bright, warm sunshine to snow flurries or rain, wind, and cool temperatures, all over the course of one day. Dressing appropriately will be the key to your comfort while walking. Dressing in layers and in synthetic fiber clothing (not cotton) that wicks moisture and dries quickly is essential.

FOOTWEAR

- » Waterproof hiking boots. There are many brands to choose from. Proper fit is crucial, so try on new boots while wearing socks you plan to use on tour. Be sure to break in new footwear well before your tour begins. By the time you're ready to join your walking tour, you should be able to complete 8-10 miles of walking without discomfort. We require lightweight boots (not shoes) with proper ankle support and thick tread to ensure stability and comfort on all types of terrain (please note the terrain in the Dolomites is very rocky). Waterproof footwear keeps feet dry in heavy rain and water resistant footwear keeps feet dry in heavy dew. Country Walkers reserves the right to deny participation to any guest not wearing appropriate footwear.
- » Waterproof sandals for shallow river crossings. Sandals or flip flops will also provide relief to tired feet at the end of a long day's hike.

- » Synthetic, moisture-wicking socks (cotton socks are not recommended for walking as they will quickly cause blisters)
- » Blister remedy

CLOTHING

- » Lightweight, wash-and-wear long pants
- » Long-sleeved, wash-and-wear shirt
- » T-shirts and shorts
- » Polar fleece or light wool pullover (it will keep you warm even when wet)
- » Dinner attire: dress is smart casual
- » Light jacket or sweater for evening strolls and alfresco dining

OUTERWEAR

- » Waterproof rain gear: jacket, pants, hat, or hood
- » Windbreaker with hood (your rain gear may be suitable)
- » Hat with a broad brim or visor
- » Lightweight fleece or wool hat and gloves

EQUIPMENT

- » Pack (minimum size of 25L): large enough to carry at least two liters of water, all of your waterproof gear, snacks, packed lunch, camera, sunblock, hat, gloves, extra clothing, etc.
- » Telescopic walking sticks. (Please note that while telescopic walking sticks are highly recommended for this tour, they are not provided by Country Walkers. Therefore please plan on bringing your own should you wish to use them.)
- » Waterproof cover for pack
- » Water bottle, canteen, or CamelBak-type water reservoir or hydration pack to carry your own water while walking (equivalent of two liters)
- » Sunblock and lip balm
- » Insect repellent
- » Sunglasses

- » Toilet kit for when facilities are not available on the walks. Include zip-lock baggies, tissues, and moist towelettes, which can be disposed of upon return to the hotel.
- » Personal first-aid kit including any medications you ordinarily take (in their original container)

OPTIONAL

- » Binoculars
- » Bathing suit for use in hotel saunas, spas, or the pool at Hotel Monte Sella
- » Camera and charger and/or extra batteries
- » Zip-lock bags (to keep camera and valuables dry)
- » Small notebook and pen
- » Field guides (see enclosed reading list)
- » Folding umbrella
- » Bandana
- » Washcloth (many European hotels do not provide them)
- » Hand sanitizer and/or moist towelettes
- » Motion sickness bracelets or other non-sleep-inducing remedy if prone to motion sickness on windy roads or in cable cars
- » Alarm clock