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## 8 day Dolomites Alta Via 1 Trek

Trekking the Dolomites Alta Via 1, which covers a distance of over 100 km and around 7000m of ascent and descent, is one of the best ways to experience the fabulous Italian Dolomites. This beautiful mountain range, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, forms one of the most beautiful and distinctive landscapes in the world. There are 18 peaks over 3000 metres, and the rock formations and geology are exceptional, with incredible rock spires and towers, vertical walls and sheer cliffs.

Our trip passes some of the most famous peaks, including the Tofane, the Tre Cime, the Pelmo, the Civetta and the Moiazza, and of course, we can see the Marmolada (the highest peak in the Dolomites) and its glacier from many a view point over the course of the Alta Via 1.

You will also experience the unique culture of the region, which is an interesting mix of Austrian and Italian traditions, food and folklore. The South Tyrol area is known as the Südtirol in German, and as the Alto Adige in Italian, and you will find that every village has both a German and an Italian name.

The trekking can be fairly strenuous, but we follow good quality trails and walk at a steady pace so that we can enjoy the scenery and surroundings. If you are looking to compare it with other treks, it is slightly easier in terms of distance and height gain than the Tour du Mont Blanc, but as we stay in rifugi rather than hotels, we grade both trips at a similar level.

We think that the Dolomites, or the 'Dollies' as they are affectionately known, are a very special place and deserve their reputation as one of the most beautiful places in the world - and should certainly feature on every trekker's bucket list.

## Trip Summary

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### Day 1 Arrive Cortina d'Ampezzo

Arrive in Cortina d'Ampezzo - Cortina d'Ampezzo

### Day 2 Lago di Braies to Rifugio Pederu or Fanes

Transfer from Cortina to Lago di Braies

Trek from Lago di Braies to Rifugio Pederu or Fanes

Rifugio Pederu - Pederü Berggasthaus

Rifugio Fanes - Rifugio Fanes

### Day 3 Rifugio Pederu or Fanes to Rifugio Lagazuoi or Col Gallina

Trek from Rifugio Pederu or Fanes to Rifugio Lagazuoi or Col Gallina

Rifugio Lagazuoi - Rifugio Lagazuoi

### Day 4 Rifugio Lagazuoi to Rifugio Averau or Giau

Trek from Rifugio Lagazuoi to Rifugio Averau

Rifugio Averau - Rifugio Averau

### Day 5 Rifugio Averau to Rifugio Staulanza or Palafavera

Trek from Rifugio Averau to Rifugio Staulanza or Palafavera

Rifugio Staulanza - Rifugio Passo Staulanza

Rifugio Palafavera - Rifugio Palafavera

### Day 6 Rifugio Staulanza or Palafavera to Rifugio Vazzoler

Rifugio Staulanza or Palafavera to Rifugio Vazzoler

Rifugio Vazzoler - Rifugio Vazzoler

### Day 7 Rifugio Vazzoler to the Passo Duran

Trek from Rifugio Vazzoler to the Passo Duran

Rifugio San Sebastiano - Rifugio San Sebastiano

### Day 8 Passo Duran to the Rifugio Pian de Fontana

Trek from the Passo Duran to the Rifugio Pian de Fontana

Rifugio Pian de Fontana - Rifugio Pian de Fontana

### Day 9 Rifugio Pian de Fontana to La Stanga

Rifugio Pian de Fontana to La Stanga

Transfer from La Stanga to Cortina

### Day 10 - Depart Cortina

Depart Cortina d'Ampezzo

## Day 1 Arrive Cortina d'Ampezzo



### Arrive in Cortina d'Ampezzo

Our trip begins in the famous town of Cortina d'Ampezzo. The nearest airports are Venice and Innsbruck, and there are various train and bus connections. Please see the Travel Information section for more details.

Please aim to arrive in time for a 18:00 briefing in your hotel where you can meet the leader and the other people in the group.



### Cortina d'Ampezzo

Cortina d'Ampezzo, VENETO, IT, 32043

## Day 2 Lago di Braies to Rifugio Pederu or Fanes



### Transfer from Cortina to Lago di Braies

We take a 50 minute transfer from Cortina to the start of our hike at Lago di Braies.



### Trek from Lago di Braies to Rifugio Pederu or Fanes

The day starts with a transfer to the Lago di Braies, a stunning turquoise lake surrounded by dramatic cliffs. We make a steady ascent under the striated cliffs of Monte Muro to the pass at Porta Sora il Forn (2338m). From here the view takes in the glacier of Marmolada to the southwest. We head down to either the Rifugio Biell, or the Rifugio Sennes for our lunch, before a scenic descent through flower-strewn meadows, and a final steep section down to the Rifugio Pederu.

If we are staying at the Pederu hut, then we've reached our destination.

Sometimes we stay at the Rifugio Fanes, and if that's the case then we have a 1.5 hour final climb of the day to reach this hut. This will make it feel like a long day, so an early start will be required, but it is definitely worth the extra effort!

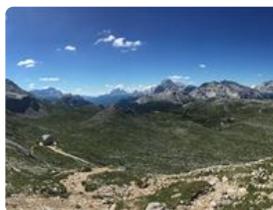
Ascent 1500m

Descent 1020m

Distance 22km

Walking time approx 7-8 hrs

Access to luggage.



### Rifugio Pederu

The Rifugio Pederu is in the heart of the Fanes-Senes-Braies Nature Park. It's possible to drive here, so we have luggage delivery today.

We try to book private rooms here wherever available, but occasionally we are in the dormitory.

The food is great and you can enjoy classic local dishes such as dumplings and game specialities.



### Pederü Berggasthaus

Strada Val dai Tamersc, Trentino-Alto Adige, IT, 39030  
+39 0474 501086



### Rifugio Fanes

The wonderful Fanes Hut is in a beautiful location in the heart of the Fanes-Sennes-Prags natural park. We love staying here, and although it might not feel like it at the time, we hope that when you arrive you will be glad you hiked the 1.5 hour climb up from the valley floor!

The hut offers both private rooms and dormitory accommodation: we book the best rooms or dorms available at the time of confirming, and we allocate places in the order that people book.

The food is excellent here, and has a local Ladin twist as well as featuring traditional Italian dishes.



### Rifugio Fanes

3 Strada Fanes, San Vigilio, Trentino-Alto Adige, IT, 39030  
+39 0474 501097

## Day 3 Rifugio Pederu or Fanes to Rifugio Lagazuoi or Col Gallina



### Trek from Rifugio Pederu or Fanes to Rifugio Lagazuoi or Col Gallina

A steady climb in the morning takes us to the Passo di Limo (2172m) and the pretty lake of the same name, and if we didn't stay here last night, then we can stop at the Rifugio Fanes for a coffee.

After meandering through pretty meadows on tracks built in the First World War, we take a steep climb across rugged mountainside to reach the Forcella del Lago at 2486m, a hidden notch. From a distance, the descent into a gully seems improbable, but some impressive engineering enables us to descend towards the Lago di Lagazuoi.

We finish the day with a 500m climb up to the Rifugio Lagazuoi. This entire area was the scene of fighting and terrible loss of life during the 1914-18 conflict, and our journey is punctuated by scattered timbers and cables, and remains of trenches and shelters - a sobering reminder of more troubled times.

The ridge just below the rifugio served as the front line between Austria and Italy, and here we can explore the remarkably well-preserved gun placements and tunnels carved out of the ridgeline.

We sometimes have to stay in the Rifugio Col Gallina (just below the Passo Falzarego), and if this is the case then we will either take the cable car from the Lagazuoi down to the pass, or if we have time we might descend via the World War 1 tunnels to reach the pass on foot.

Ascent 1185 m

Descent 450 m

Distance 18 km

Hiking time: Approx 7.5 hrs

No luggage access at Lagazuoi. Luggage access at Col Gallina if staying there.



## Rifugio Lagazuoi

Location, location, location! What a backdrop. The Rifugio Lagazuoi is in an amazing setting, perched high in the mountains, and even has a wood-fired sauna.

The Rifugio Lagazuoi has traditionally furnished private rooms on the first floor (some with balconies) and spacious dormitories with bunks beneath the large terrace with its amazing views of the Dolomites. It sleeps 76 in total with shared bathroom facilities on each floor. Vegetarians are well catered for and the cuisine is traditionally Ladin with Venetian and South Tyrolean influences. The breakfast spread is impressive.

Make sure you do the short hike to catch the sunset views.



### Rifugio Lagazuoi

Monte Lagazuoi, Cortina d'Ampezzo, Veneto, IT, 32043

+39 340 719 5306

## Day 4 Rifugio Lagazuoi to Rifugio Averau or Giau



### Trek from Rifugio Lagazuoi to Rifugio Averau

Today's journey will take us underneath the foot of the magnificent Tofana di Rozes. First we retrace our steps along the ridgeline for a short distance, then we head over the Forcella Travenanzes (2507m).

Next, we take the Forcella Col dei Bois, and enjoy fabulous views towards the Cinque Torri. There is an opportunity to stop at the Rifugio Dibona for coffee, before we descend through the forest.

In recent years, the path between Rifugio Lagazuoi and Rifugio Dibona has occasionally been closed due to rockfall risk. If this is the case, then we will descend either by cable car to the Passo Falzarego, or, if we have time, then through the World War 1 tunnels to come out on a footpath above the pass.

Our leader will make this decision according to the timing and weather conditions.

Upon reaching the other side of the valley, we then have a very steep climb, still in the forest, before we reach our lunch stop under the Cinque Torri.....you may have noticed a theme developing: walk, coffee, walk, lunch, coffee, cake!!!

It's a relatively easy climb to our home for the night, the Rifugio Averau. After you have checked in, we recommend heading up to the Rifugio Nuvola, which is perched on the cliff tops, and offers some of the best views in the Dolomites. It adds an extra 120m of ascent but is definitely worth it!

Ascent 975m with the extra climb to Rifugio Nuvolau, 855m without.

Descent 1150m

Distance 16km

Walking time approx 7 hrs

No luggage access



## Rifugio Averau

The Rifugio Averau, at 2413m, is a beautiful mountain refuge with a beautiful view. Enjoy the wide terrace with its phenomenal views of the Marmolada and Civetta peaks. Paola and Sandrone take turns at cooking and the rifugio is well-known for its excellent cuisine. Think homemade pasta, game, cold cuts, cheeses and rich local platters, plus ice cream with hot raspberries. We love staying here!

Accommodation is usually in clean dormitories with crisp sheets. There are a limited number of private rooms (supplement payable).





## Rifugio Averau

Forcella Nuvolau, Cortina d'Ampezzo, Veneto, IT, 32020  
+39 0436 4660

# Day 5 Rifugio Averau to Rifugio Staulanza or Palafavera



## Trek from Rifugio Averau to Rifugio Staulanza or Palafavera

The day starts with stunning views of the Tofane, Lagazuoi and Cinque Torri. We descend steeply to join a path leading us underneath the cliffs. After continuing through flower meadows, we reach the Forcella Giau (2360m), where we can stop for a coffee and take in the views towards Monte Pelmo.

Following Monte Formin's southern cliffs, we then climb to the Forcella Ambrizzola (2277m). As we descend to the Rifugio Citta de Fiume we pass through dairy herds, and enjoy views of Civetta. After a break we start our final section of the day, taking a trail that traverses under the rugged peaks and spires of Monte Pelmo, one of the most famous landmarks in the Dolomites. A final descent through larch forests brings us to either the Rifugio Staulanza or Palafavera, depending on availability.

Ascent 550m

Descent 1160m

Distance 20km

Walking time approx 8 hrs

Luggage access



## Rifugio Staulanza

The Rifugio Staulanza, located at the Passo Staulanza, has room styles from spacious dorms to private doubles, triples and quadruples, and as usual, we book the best available at the time of booking.

There is a wellness centre with a Finnish sauna, Turkish bath and Scottish shower (ok, that means a cold shower, apparently!).

The restaurant serves excellent food such as traditional pumpkin ravioli, dumplings, tagliatelle with game ragu or the hunter's plate, featuring venison stew, polenta and mushrooms.





### Rifugio Passo Staulanza

1 Localita' Passo Staulanza, Veneto, IT, 32010

+39 0437 788566



### Rifugio Palafavera



### Rifugio Palafavera

Palafavera - Zoldo, Zoldo Alto, Veneto, Italia

+39 0437 789133

## Day 6 Rifugio Staulanza or Palafavera to Rifugio Vazzoler



### Rifugio Staulanza or Palafavera to Rifugio Vazzoler

The morning starts with a steady climb along a farm track through the forest, to reach the working dairy farm of Casera di Pioda. We leave the tinkling bells of the goats and cows behind, as we take a well-graded mule track to the shoulder of Cima Coldai. After an obligatory coffee stop at the Rifugio Sonino al Coldai, we continue west along a small valley to the beautiful, turquoise Lago Coldai. Surrounded by towering cliffs, this really is a stunning place.

After a lunch stop, we climb up to the Forcella Col Negro (2203m) before our descent into Val Civetta. The scenery changes again, and now the west face of Monte Civetta, with impressive slabs and pinnacles, dominates 1200m overhead. A hanging icefield, the Cristallo, is suspended below the highest peak. This face is known by climbers as the "wall of walls" and is the only one of its kind in the world: with a vertical drop of over 1000m, and 4 km long, there are endless climbing routes. We then head over the Forcella di Col Rean to the Rifugio Vazzoler, a more rustic hut than we have become accustomed to!

Ascent 952m

Descent 800m

Distance 14km

Walking time approx 6.5 hrs

No luggage access



### Rifugio Vazzoler

On this section of the Alta Via 1, there are fairly limited accommodation options, and you'll find the Rifugio Vazzoler pretty basic in comparison with the huts that you've stayed in so far.

However, what it lacks in charm, it does make up for in food and location - meals are plentiful and there's usually a choice. The location is stunning - at the foot of the Civetta and Torre Venezia, the peaks tower above you. There's also a lovely alpine garden to have a wander round.

There are (basic) showers and shared bathrooms here. Luggage delivery is not possible.

We are in 2 x smaller dorms here (should have 4 beds in each).

Update: Vazzoler website now states that you must have the following items in order to stay:

- personal mask
- personal disinfectant gel
- personal sheet sleeping bag
- personal slippers (or sandals, crocs etc)
- personal towel



### Rifugio Vazzoler

Taibon Agordino, Veneto, IT, 32027  
+39 0437 660008

## Day 7 Rifugio Vazzoler to the Passo Duran



### Trek from Rifugio Vazzoler to the Passo Duran

As we leave the Rifugio Vazzoler, the impressive towers of the Civetta soar above us and we have great views of the Torre Trieste (2458m) and Cima della Busazza (2894). On the opposite side of the Val Cordevole, the elegant summit of Monte Agner comes into view. We soon leave this valley to head up through pretty, flower-strewn woodland. A short but steep climb takes us underneath the impressive west face of the Moiazza to reach the Forcella Col dell Orso (1823m).

After a short aided section, the path crosses boulders, rare flowers and pastures before another climb to the Forcella del Camp (1933m), where we are presented with a fantastic spectacle of the spires and pinnacles of the Moiazza Sud.

We now traverse through larch forests across the Van dei Cantoi (where we may be joined by climbers returning from the famous Via Ferrata Constantini, renowned for being one of the longest and hardest via ferrata in the Dolomites), and eventually reach the Rifugio Carestiatto, ideally placed for a coffee stop, or lunch.

The final section of the day descends through pastures and meadows to the Passo Duran.

Ascent 670m

Descent 800m

Distance 12km

Walking Time approx 6 hrs

Luggage access.





## Rifugio San Sebastiano

The Rifugio San Sebastiano is situated on the high road pass of Passo Duran, with stunning rocky peaks as a backdrop. It is run by Benjamin, our friendly and helpful host, who has managed the rifugio for more years than he can actually remember!

The refuge serves really excellent local food, and tonight you will have access to your luggage before we begin our final few days in the mountains. The accommodation is in small dormitories.



### Rifugio San Sebastiano

Veneto, IT, 32010

+39 0437 62360

## Day 8 Passo Duran to the Rifugio Pian de Fontana



### Trek from the Passo Duran to the Rifugio Pian de Fontana

Nearing the end of our adventure, we enter the Parco Nazionale delle Dolomiti Bellunesi. This is the wildest of the national parks on the Alta Via 1 trail, and the terrain is spectacular today.

After an early start we'll head round the southern slopes of Tamer Grande at 2547 m (8356 ft), passing the remains of Moschesin garrison to reach the Forcella del Moschesin at 1940 m (6364 ft). We'll continue on to our morning coffee stop at Rifugio Pramparet, located in a wonderfully remote setting with views along the Costa dei Nass valley.

After this, we'll ascend gradually to the more open Portela dei Pezedei, whose terrain is rockier under foot. Upon reaching the western slopes of the Cima de Zita, the trail narrows to a ridgeline path; this can feel exposed for a short section. Just look forward to the day's next milestone and highest pass at 2451 m (8041 ft). Enjoy glimpses across the Venetian plain before we commence our steep drop to our home for the night, the Rifugio Pian de Fontana, perched on a shelf at 1632 m (5354 ft).

Distance: 16 km / 10 miles

Ascent: 1100m / 3608 ft

Descent: 1030m / 3380 ft

Approx walking time: 6-7 hrs

No luggage access



### Rifugio Pian de Fontana

The Rifugio Pian de Fontana is a simple mountain hut in a spectacular, tranquil setting. The hut has large dorms (expect basic and you won't be disappointed, and the showers may not be hot), but the owners are friendly and welcoming, and there's often a nice social atmosphere. The food, wine and coffee are good and the Amaretto cake gets a thumbs up!



### Rifugio Pian de Fontana

Longarone, Veneto, IT, 32013  
+39335.6096819

## Day 9 Rifugio Pian de Fontana to La Stanga



### Rifugio Pian de Fontana to La Stanga

Leaving the Rifugio Pian de Fontana, we first descend through pine forests to pick up the Alta Via Bellunesi trail. A short ascent takes us up to Forcella la Varetta at 1704m (5590 ft), then passes north of La Schiara (2565 m), the last major summit on the route, on a narrow trail with fantastic views. There are some drops here so it is important to take care, but the terrain is easy underfoot.

A steep descent takes us to our final coffee stop of the trip, the Rifugio F. Bianchet.

From here, a farm track takes us through the forest to the valley floor and end of the Alta Via 1 at La Stanga.

Distance: 12 km / 7.5 miles

Ascent: 250 m / 820 ft

Descent: 1600m / 5249 ft

Approx hiking time: 4 hrs

Luggage access



### Transfer from La Stanga to Cortina

A private transfer will meet us for our journey back to Cortina d'Ampezzo (approx 1.5 hrs).

## Day 10 - Depart Cortina



### Depart Cortina d'Ampezzo

Our trip ends after breakfast this morning.

## Trip Information & Documents



### What's Included

- All accommodation
- All breakfasts & evening meals
- Fully qualified trekking guide (International Mountain Leader)
- Transport from Cortina d'Ampezzo to Lago di Braies at the start of the route
- Transport from La Stanga to Cortina d'Ampezzo at the end of the route
- Partial luggage transfer (this is possible on 2 of your 5 refuge nights)
- A shower where there is a charge for this in the huts



## Not included

- Flights
- Travel to/from Cortina d'Ampezzo
- Lunches
- Personal drinks & snacks
- Any transport, accommodation or additional expenses due to a participant being unable to complete the itinerary
- Travel / mountain rescue insurance
- Tips



## Dolomites Alta Via 1 - Travel to Cortina d'Ampezzo

### Air

There are several airports within a 3-4 hour journey of Cortina d'Ampezzo (commonly referred to as Cortina): Venice Marco Polo is the easiest (2 hours by bus), Treviso is ok (2-3 hours by bus), and Innsbruck is also possible (4 hours by bus or train).

Note that most Sud Tirol towns and villages have both an Italian and a German name - we've listed both for each.

### Travel from Venice Marco Polo airport

There are 2 companies running bus services from Venice Marco Polo airport to Cortina. Check both [Cortina Express](#) (3 buses per day) and [Flixbus](#) (4 buses per day) (previously run by [Atvo](#)). We recommend booking tickets in advance.

### Travel from Venice Treviso airport

Take bus no 101 or 103 from Treviso airport to Treviso bus station (every 15-30 mins, takes 7 mins), then you need to make your way to Treviso-Silea-Via Arma di Cavalleria bus stop to pick up the [Cortina Express](#). It would be easier to reach this bus stop by taxi, either from the airport (more expensive), or from the main bus station.

### Travel from Innsbruck airport

Take a free shuttle bus from the airport to Innsbruck central railway station (Hauptbahnhof or Hbf) (every 10 mins, takes 15 mins). Then take the train to Brennero / Brenner and change here for Fortezza / Franzensfeste, then again for Dobbiaco / Toblach. From here, you take the local [Sud Tirol bus](#) no. 445 to Cortina.

If your return flight is too early to catch a train from Dobbiaco / Toblach, then it is possible to take a taxi from the Cortina to Fortezza / Franzensfeste and pick up a train from here.

Train times can be found at <http://fahrplan.oebb.at/bin/query.exe/en?>

### Train

The nearest railway station is Calalzo di Cadore (35km from Cortina), and from here there are hourly buses to reach Cortina (journey 1 hour, bus no. 30. Schedules at Dolomiti bus).

Eurostar Italia run fast trains from Rome (3.5 hrs), Florence (2 hrs) and Milan (2 hrs) to Venezia Mestre, and from here you can book a Flix bus or a Cortina Express (2 hrs).

### Private taxi

If the buses and trains are too complicated or don't work for your schedule, then do consider a private taxi. We recommend [www.taxicortinasci.it](http://www.taxicortinasci.it). Prices are approx 240 euros for a private journey from Venice or Treviso, and 320 euros from Innsbruck.

### General travel tips

A useful link for travel to all areas is [Rome2Rio](#)



## 8 day Alta Via 1 Trek - What to Expect

### The trekking

The trekking is relatively strenuous, but we tend to follow good quality trails all the way round. A number of days have over 1000m of ascent and descent, but we walk at a steady pace so that we can enjoy the walking and the scenery. This trip is suitable for regular hikers and people with a good level of fitness. Note that your luggage is not transferred every day, so you will have to carry extra items in your pack on those days.

Although the Dolomites are famous for via ferrata, there are no via ferrata sections on our version of the Alta Via 1. There are, however, some sections where the path covers steep, rocky ground, and there are occasionally some cables and fixed equipment to help cross these sections.

Whilst it is entirely achievable for fit hikers, the Alta Via 1 does cover some exposed terrain, so it is important to be comfortable hiking in the mountains - you can't suddenly decide to bail, for example, in the middle of a day.

### **Accommodation**

At the start and finish of the trip, we aim to stay in an excellent quality 3\* hotel with fantastic facilities. You will normally be in a twin room, and if you have booked on your own, we will generally pair you up with another member of the same sex. A single room may be available for a supplement - just ask at the time of booking.

For the trekking part of the trip, we'll be in 7 different "rifugii" or mountain huts. The majority of the Dolomite rifugi are definitely a cut above most huts that you might be used to in the Alps! Many of our guests have said that they are more like hotels. We are often in small, mixed dormitories of 4-6 people, but if we can get private rooms of 2 then we do. These usually need to be booked around a year in advance, so we allocate private rooms in order of who booked first.

There are 2 huts that are more basic than the rest: the Vazzoler and the Pian de Fontana, but it wouldn't be practical to do the route without staying in them, so it is best to embrace the wonderful locations and savour the views.

### **Food**

All breakfasts and evening meals are included. Each night we usually eat in the hotel or rifugio where we are staying, and we will experience fantastic, local Italian food. Packed lunches are not included, but each day we tend to order food from the rifugio where we are staying (we do not go past many shops en-route). Occasionally we may be able to have a sit-down lunch in a rifugio. Drinks are not included, but you can normally order beer, wine and soft drinks at all hotels including the mountain refuges. Breakfast in our hotel is excellent, but in the mountain huts it tends to be slightly more basic and usually consists of tea, coffee, bread, jam and cereal. However, being Italy, there is often a fantastic spread, even in a rifugio!

### **Luggage delivery**

We deliver your main luggage on 3 of the refuge nights (the Pederu or Fanes, then the Staulanza or Palafavera, and at the Passo Duran). For the other nights you'll need to carry a small wash kit, change of clothes, travel towel, sleeping bag liner, and any medication you might need. Please ensure that your main kit bag weighs no more than 15kg.

On occasions where we use the Rifugio Col Gallina (instead of the Lagazuoi) and/or the Rifugio Giau (instead of the Averau), we may also deliver the luggage to these huts.

### **Money and Tipping**

There are cash machines in Dobbiaco / Villabassa. Lunches cost around €10-12 per day if we order a packed lunch, and slightly more if we have a sit-down lunch in a rifugio (it generally depends on the weather and how much time we have!) A coffee or soft drink costs around €3-4, and a beer around €5-6. Around €250 per person should be plenty to cover your personal expenses but it does depend how many coffees, beers and wines you consume - it would be possible to be more frugal if you wanted, but not possible to get more cash en-route if you change your mind and want to buy more meals / wine! Some of the rifugi take cards, but not all of them.

When we have a sit-down lunch we normally round up the amount to leave a tip, but only if the service has been good!

Tipping your guide is the accepted way of saying thank you for good service. But do remember that tipping is voluntary and should only be done if you were pleased or delighted with the service. The amount is entirely up to you. Our staff are all paid fairly.

### **Weather**

In mountainous terrain the weather can vary. Temperatures can reach to over 30°C in the height of summer (July/August), but can be as low as 5°C on the passes. It is often sunny with good weather, but it can rain, and even snow (even in July or August) so you should be prepared for any eventuality. The average temperatures range from 15-25°C in the valleys, to 5-15°C on the passes. Statistically you will have some rain every other day in the Dolomites, but in reality that tends to fall in one go as part of an afternoon storm, so we do try to finish our day before that happens!

### **Electric supply and plugs**

In Italy most European style plugs are used, the sockets being 2 or 3 pinned (230V). The 3-pin sockets tend to accommodate a slightly thinner prong (for example, a standard iphone charger will fit, but a wider 2-pin adaptor might not).

## Recommended Reading and Maps

'*Trekking in the Dolomites*', Gillian Price, Cicerone

'*Mountain Flowers: The Dolomites*', Cliff Booker & David Charlton

'*The White War: Life and Death on the Italian Front 1915-1919*', Mark Thompson

'*Untrodden Peaks and Unfrequented Valleys: A Midsummer Ramble in the Dolomites*', Amelia Edwards (1873)

3 of the 1:25,000 Tabacco maps cover the whole route: 031 'Dolomiti di Braies', 03 'Cortina d'Ampezzo e Dolomiti Ampezzane' and 25 'Dolomiti di Zoldo, Cadore e Agordine'. Please note that you are not expected to carry maps, it's just in case you are interested!

## Why Is Our Alta Via 1 Trip Different?

### Why is our trip different from the rest?

Not many companies offer the Alta Via 1, primarily because of the reputation of the "via ferrata". We have devised our trip to take in the hiking aspect of the trail, and miss out the via ferrata sections so that we comply with the legal guiding limitations of our IMLs (International Mountain Leaders).

Via ferrata are the domain of High Mountain guides and we recommend doing them on a ratio of 1 guide to a maximum of 6 clients. If you would like to try a via ferrata, you can extend your trip and we can help book you a mountain guide for as many days as you like - just let us know at the time of booking.

Unlike many of the well-known companies in the Dolomites, we will only ever use fully-qualified guides who are correctly certified for the activity they are undertaking. Some of the larger operators (including Colletts and Exodus) do use illegal guides, so you should always check that your guide is qualified.

We use the best accommodation available to us, and when comparing prices with other companies please bear in mind that this trip is a much higher standard of accommodation than our rivals. We always aim for twin rooms instead of dorms, and we choose a lovely, comfortable hotel and the start and finish of the trek.

We also decided that it would be nice to have some luggage delivery along the way, so have arranged this in the places where it is possible, whilst keeping the trip at a reasonable price.

We're a small company, more interested in the enjoyment of our clients than making huge profits, and as a result we tend to have small groups, very experienced leaders and happy clients.

## Summer Kit List - Guided Groups with Luggage Delivery

### Essential items :

- **Rucksack** – approx. 30-40L - for you to carry each day
- **Kit bag or suitcase** - for your main luggage to be transported. Max 15 kg and 1 per person (extra bags may incur a supplement).
- **Hiking boots** – you need to have a pair of waterproof hiking boots with ankle support and a good sole. Hiking trainers are okay for some days, but would not be appropriate in really bad weather, on rougher terrain, or when there is snow, so if you are thinking of bringing hiking shoes or trainers, you'll need boots in addition to those for the more rugged days. Sandals are not appropriate for mountain walking so please do not bring these for trekking.
- **Waterproof jacket and trousers** – both essential items, should be as light as possible (not insulated: your other layers should provide the insulation). Please ensure that you do not need to remove your walking boots in order to put on your waterproof trousers.
- **Socks**
- **Underwear**
- **Trekking trousers** – bring something lightweight.
- **Shorts**
- **T-shirts** – wicking t-shirts are better than cotton as they are lighter and dry faster.
- **Mid layer** - fleece jacket is good
- **Warm jacket** – We recommend bringing a lightweight synthetic belay jacket (eg. Rab Photon / Arcteryx Atom / Patagonia Nano) – just in case it gets cold. Remember, you are carrying this in your rucksack so it should be as light as possible. You don't normally need to bring a down jacket because it won't be much use if it gets wet.
- **Warm hat** - lightweight woolly hat is fine
- **Gloves** - we recommend bringing 2-3 pairs. A light liner pair are good for most of the trip. Then a pair of waterproof gloves such as Seal Skinz can be very useful in bad weather. And a warmer pair of gloves can be essential if it snows.

- **Sun Hat**
- **Sunglasses**
- **Suncream** (small bottle to save weight)
- **Lip protection** (with sun screen)
- **Water bottles / camelback** – you should have the capacity to carry at least 2 litres of water, but on very hot days you could need 3L.
- **Walking poles** – These often go in the “optional” section, but if there is snow, they are essential.
- **Sheet sleeping bag** – only needed for any nights in a mountain refuge (duvets or blankets are provided). Silk is best, it's lighter than cotton.
- **Travel towel** – again, only needed for the mountain refuges – the hotels provide towels.
- **Wash kit** – Bring whatever you like for wash kit - but for any refuge nights where you have to carry it, small bottles will be perfect: you would normally just take a toothbrush, travel size toothpaste, mini contact lens solution if applicable, a couple of wet wipes and a tiny travel soap.
- **Head torch** – just a lightweight torch, such as a Petzl Tikka / Zipka is fine for this trip.
- **Plastic bags / dry sacks** to keep essentials dry.
- **Passport** – to be carried whilst trekking. Make sure you keep it dry.
- **Cash** – for packed lunches and any drinks whilst on the trip
- **Credit card** - for emergencies
- **Basic first aid kit** – your leader will carry a large first aid kit, but you should bring a small first aid kit containing plasters, blister treatment, painkillers & diarrhea treatment (rehydration sachets & immodium)

#### Optional items:

- **Thermal base layer**
- **Long johns / thermal leggings**
- **Buff** – can be useful for extra warmth if it's cold, or sun protection for your neck on a hot day
- **Camera**
- **Book**
- **Lightweight sandals / flip flops** – whilst these are usually provided at the mountain refuges, they aren't provided in the hotels, so it's really nice to have footwear to change into in the evening
- **Hiking Trainers** – it can be nice to give your feet a break from your walking boots on some days. Your leader can advise on which days this might be suitable, and if you are thinking of doing this, your shoes must be suitable for trekking in!
- **Mobile phone** – there is phone reception for the majority of the trip. It is a good idea to have a phone in case of emergency or if you need to leave the group for any reason.
- **Umbrella**
- **Earplugs**
- **Snacks** – not essential as we do go past shops most days so you can top up your supply of snacks fairly regularly
- **Antibacterial handwash**
- **Insect repellent**
- **Swimwear** - some of the hotels have a swimming pool, spa or sauna
- **Boot dryers** - not many places in the Alps have drying rooms, so since I discovered these, I don't go anywhere without them: <https://www.sidas.com/en/products/204-drywarmer.html>
- **Travel kettle, mug & tea bags / coffee** - it is unusual for hotels in continental Europe to provide tea and coffee-making facilities in the rooms
- **External battery pack** - for charging your phone in a hut
- **Flask** - we do try to have regular tea and coffee stops, but a flask can be a comfort on bad weather days

#### A note about the kit:

Most of the time the weather is warm, usually fairly stable, and most people don't need too much extra kit to see them through the trip.

However, **you must bring all of the items on our essential list**. At least once per summer we experience unseasonal conditions that really do make every item on the above list essential. **If you do not have the correct kit, you can put yourself and others at risk of hypothermia**, and our guide may ask you to leave the trip until you have purchased the necessary kit.

Every year we experience unseasonal snow at least once. It can also rain very heavily and temperatures can go from being in the mid 30s celcius (96 F) one week, to below zero (32 F) the next.

So, if it rains, you *will* need waterproof jackets AND trousers, and will be glad of several pairs of gloves. If it snows, you *will* need decent hiking boots (NOT hiking trainers), walking poles, warm clothes and warm hat and gloves. It's also essential that you can put your waterproof trousers on without removing your boots.

It is also possible to experience several weeks of heatwave at a time - if this happens, you will likely get through numerous sachets of rehydration salts and will need to be carrying 3-4L of water, and a sun hat will be absolutely essential.

Note that this is not meant to alarm you - most of the time we enjoy stable weather and are in shorts and t-shirts - we just want to make sure that your trip isn't ruined if you come unprepared - we'd far rather you have extra kit and don't need it, than the other way round.

## General Information - Guided Group Trips Insurance

It is a condition of booking this holiday that you must be insured against medical and personal accident risks (this must include helicopter rescue and repatriation costs). You may find that your annual multi-trip insurance covers this trip, but you should check that you are covered for trekking up to 3000m. We would also recommend that you take out holiday cancellation insurance: your deposit is non-refundable once you have booked, and the full balance is usually non-refundable (see our Terms and Conditions for further details).

We recommend The BMC [www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk) or Snowcard [www.snowcard.co.uk](http://www.snowcard.co.uk) for UK residents, or Travelex [www.travelexinsurance.com](http://www.travelexinsurance.com) for US citizens or residents.

We can organise mountain rescue insurance for EU residents for £4.90 per day, or £11.50 per day for US and the rest of the world. You can book it online here: <https://www.cloud9adventure.com/online-store/Mountain-rescue-insurance-p101294506>

In addition to travel insurance, UK citizens should also obtain or renew the EHIC card from the [NHS](http://www.nhs.uk). This is not a replacement for insurance but it does mean you are entitled to the same treatment as any EU citizen, and unlike insurance it includes treatment of a pre-existing condition. You would normally have to pay for treatment at the time and then make a claim on return to the UK.

Please remember to bring a credit card with you on the trip: in the event of a medical problem or injury, you may be unable to complete the trek. You would normally need to pay for treatment, and would often have additional transport and accommodation costs. Although you can claim this back on your insurance, you usually have to pay at the time and make the insurance claim afterwards, so you must have a means of paying for this if necessary.

## Responsible Travel

We care about the places we visit, and our philosophy is simple: that each and every one of our trips has a positive impact on the local community and environment. We use family-run hotels, gîtes and restaurants in order to support the local communities. And it's a small step but we also recommend carbon off-setting. Visit [www.climatecare.org](http://www.climatecare.org).

## Adventure Travel

Please note that we specialise in Adventure Travel, the nature of which means that we cannot always follow our itinerary for a variety of reasons. All of our holidays can be subject to unexpected changes and you should be prepared to be flexible to accommodate these where necessary.

We update our itineraries on a regular basis to take into account such things as changes to trekking routes and the conditions of footpaths, but it is not always possible to guarantee that any of our holidays will run exactly according to the proposed itinerary. If during your holiday the itinerary is affected by immediate or local circumstances, the leader will make any changes that are necessary.

As a reputable tour operator, Cloud 9 Adventure supports the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office “Know Before You Go” campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas, and we recommend that all our clients take a look at the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination on the official FCDO website [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk). North Americans can also check out the US Department of State website: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for essential travel advice and tips.

Cloud 9 Adventure treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss alternatives. We have a local office in France, and our expert team monitor the conditions regularly to ensure that our trips are run safely, and are on hand to help if we need to change arrangements.

### **Group Size and Holiday Status**

For each of our group adventures, there is a minimum number of participants required in order for the trip to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from “Available” to “Guaranteed”. In order to achieve minimum numbers, we run the trips in conjunction with several other small companies. We find that co-selling in this way means that almost all of our trips become “Guaranteed”, and means that rather than 2 or 3 different companies all selling trips with 2-3 clients each, combining together with 1 guide means that we can offer the trips at a better price to you, and means that we achieve the minimum number faster. We are a small company with a high level of customer service, and we make sure that we only run trips in conjunction with companies who share our ethos. We know them well and have worked with them for years, and only use leaders who we know and trust to do an excellent job. We steer clear of large groups and cap our group size at 10 people for summer hiking trips, and 8 people for winter snowshoe or cross country ski trips, whilst many of the larger operators take up to 16 people.

### **Preparing for your holiday**

We have tried to grade the holiday as accurately as we can, with the intention of attracting people of similar abilities to each trip. As a general guideline, if we have described a trek as being tough or challenging, then you need to be fit and capable of the challenge. If you don't arrive in good shape for your trip, then you could be putting yourself and others in danger: if you're taking too long each day, at best it cuts into the time you have to relax and shower before dinner, and at worst, it can be the difference between the whole group being caught in an afternoon storm. As we are as accurate as we can be writing our trip notes, we do tend to be pretty good at making sure that the right people book each trip, but we do require a certain amount of personal responsibility for arriving fit and ready for your trip. We're not on a route-march so we are never expecting to be going too fast - we try to walk at a slow, steady pace, without the need to stop too frequently for rests. If you're worried about this, then please start with one of our easier trips graded Easy or Moderate, and you can build up to a Challenging trip. If you've booked an Extremely Tough trip, then you definitely need to be an experienced and fit hiker, used to long days in the hills.

Rather than hoping your trek will make you fitter (it will definitely help!), it makes a lot of sense to spend some time before your trip getting some additional exercise and preparing properly. The fitter you are, the more enjoyable your trip will be. The best preparation is long day hikes in the run-up to your trip.

We would also recommend that you adopt a weekly exercise regime leading up to your trip. Jogging, circuit training, squash and swimming are good for developing better stamina. Before departure, we also suggest that you try to fit in a number of long hikes in hilly terrain.