

Hiking in the Dolomites!

The dates are September 26, 2020-October 3 (possibly, Oct 4), 2020. The cost of this trip, which does not include airfare, is US\$1899 per person, double occupancy. (As of right now, roundtrip flights from Boston (BOS) to Venice (VCE) are around US\$750!) A non-refundable deposit of \$300 will hold your spot; final payment is due June 26, 2020. This trip is non-refundable; cancellation insurance is highly recommended!

TRIP OVERVIEW:

The small village of Villabassa, just north of Cortina d'Ampezzo, is the perfect base for this Dolomites hiking trip, nestled close to the Austrian border and sandwiched between the spectacular, jagged limestone peaks. From here we enjoy stunning trails, with the opportunity to relax in comfort at the end of a day's hike. During the week, we venture into the Fanes-Sennes and Dolomiti di Sesto National Parks for great views of the Tre Cime di Lavaredo. Historically the front line between Italy and Austria-Hungary during the First World War, the trails take us through incredible open-air museums.

At a Glance

- 7 nights 4-star Hotel Adler, all rooms en suite
- 5 days center-based walking; one free day.
- Altitude maximum 2539m, average 2300m
- Not recommended for vertigo sufferers
- Countries visited: Italy (optional free day independent visit to Austria)

Is This Trip for You?

Due to the nature of the terrain on this trip, it is not recommended for vertigo sufferers.

Level 3 - Moderate Walking

We usually walk between 5 and 7 hours per day. The area we are visiting is criss-crossed by a network of long established trails and walking paths, most of them well maintained and marked. Even so, paths are rocky and on occasion exposed. A reasonable level of fitness is required.

The exact itinerary (and therefore the length of each hike) may vary depending on weather conditions or other factors beyond our control. While aiming to always follow the routes described in these trip notes, it will be the leader's decision to amend the itinerary if and when necessary.

ITINERARY:

- September 26, 2020

Pick up at Venice Airport (VCE); time TBD; travel to Villabassa

Start at the Hotel Adler in Villabassa. The leader will give a short briefing to give an overview of the week ahead and other important information. No meals served.

- September 27, 2020

Lago di Braies

The ideal start to visiting this vast area is a walk straight from the hotel through the very pretty, flower-filled Braies Valley. We walk through small villages and farmland until we reach the

magnificent Lago di Braies, one of the 297 glacial lakes in the area. It is certainly one of the most beautiful areas, thanks to the surrounding jagged peaks that are reflected in the extraordinary mirror-like surface of the lake. We follow the route of 'SS hostages', the leaders of 19 countries who were freed after the First World War by the inhabitants of Villabassa.

Approx. distance 14km, 650m ascent, 255m descent.

Meals included:

Breakfast

Lunch

Dinner

- **September 28, 2020**

Kreutzberg Pass to Nemes Alm

Today we explore high pastures and ridges along the Austrian border. We walk steadily, exploring the meadows under the ridge of Knieberg. We have great views towards the Rotwand and Monte Popera. Later in the afternoon, we visit Alpe Nemes hut, where we could enjoy a drink and a homemade apple strudel.

Approx distance 14-16km. 6-700m ascent, 6-700m descent.

Meals included:

Breakfast

Lunch

Dinner

- **September 29, 2020**

Climb up towards Strudelkopf

We start the walk at 2000m elevation, ascending to the summit of Strudlekopf (2307m). We stop at the Durrenstein hut in the early afternoon to check out the local Kaiserschmarren speciality. On a clear day from the summit, we can enjoy views of the Tre Cime, Monte Piana and Monte Cristallo.

Approx. distance 15km. 500m ascent, 1000m descent.

Meals included:

Breakfast

Lunch

Dinner

- **September 30, 2020**

Free day

A free day to relax in the hotel's wellness center or take a self-guided bicycle ride around this wonderful area. Alternatively, you can make your way to Bolzano to visit a museum dedicated to Oetzi, the 5000 year-old 'iceman', whose remarkably well-preserved body was found in 1991, high on a glacier on the Austro-Italian border. Or you could journey to the attractive provincial capital of Lienz in Austria, or to the cozy town of Brunico, Italy.

Meals included:

Breakfast

- **October 1, 2020**

Tre Cime di Lavaredo

We enjoy a memorable walk under the famous 'Three Chimneys', or Tre Cime di Lavaredo (or Drei Zinnen in German). Set amid one of the classic mountain groups of this area, our walk around these impressive peaks is certainly a highlight of the week.

Approx distance 18km, 550m ascent, 1100 descent.

Meals included:

Breakfast

Lunch
Dinner

- **October 2, 2020**

Monte Piano

To complete the week, we take the amazing eastern approach route up Monte Piana. After 600m ascent, we find ourselves on the flat-topped mountain, surrounded by some of the most impressive scenery in the Dolomites. It is the site of an open-air museum, dedicated to the First World War, where we can see trenches, dugouts and shell craters. On our return, we'll see the beautiful Lake Misurina, surrounded by pink limestone rock.

Approx distance 15km, 700m ascent, 800m descent.

Meals included:

Breakfast
Lunch
Dinner

- **October 3, 2020**

Depart Villabassa; time TBD

(I'm looking into adding an *optional* night by the airport here, because the drive from Villabassa to VCE is almost three hours on mountain roads. I'm generally very cautious about guarding against mishaps around making it on time for a flight, and without a lot of stress. I think staying tonight near the airport would be prudent and allow for a stress-free airport arrival the next morning. This would also allow us to drop off our bags at the hotel and head into Venice for the rest of that day!)

Meals included:

Breakfast

Please note: it is possible that the order of the itinerary listed above will be changed to ensure the best possible conditions for each activity during the trip. All listed activities and services will be included. Your leader will inform you of any changes locally after assessing conditions.

ACCOMMODATION:

[Hotel Adler - 4 Star](#) (click to be directed to the hotel's website)

All bedrooms have en-suite facilities (some with showers and some with baths), tea/coffee making facilities (for a fee), minibar and TV.

Single rooms

A very limited number of single rooms are available for a US\$500 supplement.

Eating & Drinking

Please note an evening meal is not included or available at the hotel on the first night. Sandwiches or snacks are available at the airport (the leader can suggest options). I have a query out about local restaurants.

For breakfast, the hotel offers a large selection of cereals, fruit, cheese and cold meats, (along with tea and coffee, of course).

5 packed lunches are provided by the hotel. Each morning, there is a small buffet with items to make your own lunch (e.g. bread rolls, ham, salad, etc.). In an effort to minimize the use of plastic and single-use items, the hotel provides Tupperware-type boxes and reusable cutlery.

There is a set menu for evening meals (usually 3 or 4 courses), which may include some local specialties such as Speckknodel (dumplings).

TRANSPORTATION:

Transfers to and from the airport, and during the trip, will be in a private vehicle (normally minibus). On certain days, we may use public transport.

INSURANCE:

It is a condition of joining any of our trips that you must be fully insured for at least US\$200,000 against medical and personal accident risks (to include repatriation costs and air ambulance or helicopter rescue services). On arrival, you will be asked to present details of your policy to your trip leader.

ELECTRICITY:

European plug - 2 round pins.

MONEY:

The national currency of Italy is the Euro (EUR).

Extra Expenses & Spending Money

You will need sufficient funds to buy the 1 lunch and 2 dinners that are not included. We suggest €5-10 for lunch and €15-25 for dinner (excluding drinks). If you would like to sample the excellent a-la-carte menu available at Hotel Adler, please allow around €40.

Local taxes:

Many Italian cities have recently introduced a tourist tax for non-residents. The local administration is in charge of the tax, which will be collected by the accommodation provider at check-in or check-out. This fee varies, depending on the hotel category, the season and number of days of stay; it is usually between €0.50 and €1.50 per person, per night. For this trip, please allow around €10, for the week.

ATM Availability

ATMs are available at Venice airport and Villabassa (although this one is not always working). Almost all places take major credit cards, yet cash is generally easier.

OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS:

There are a number of extra excursions available; exact prices and details will be confirmed locally, but the following can be used as a guide:

- Messner Mountain Museum Ripa Brunico: €9 per person
- Cheese factory in Dobbiaco: €3.50 admission only; €6.50 for a small cheese tasting; €8.50 for a large cheese tasting.
- From Villabassa there are regular trains and buses to the different villages of the Pusteria valleys.
- Day trip to see Oetzi, the Ice Man, in Bolzano: allow approx. €35 for travel and €10 for entry (train journey involves changes and takes approx. 2hrs each way)

TIPPING:

Although optional, a tip for the leader at the end of the trip is greatly appreciated. This is entirely at your own discretion. As a guideline, we recommend a contribution between €15 and €20 per client.

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM:

Tourism can be a real help to local communities, providing income, positive cultural exchanges and a financial incentive to protect their natural environment. Ours is a 'total approach' to responsible tourism. On this trip, we spend the week in locally-owned Hotel Adler, which has a strong commitment to use 100% clean energy; hot water is supplied from solar-powered central heating,

and electricity is hydro-powered. They also employ local staff and use local produce whenever possible. As a hiking trip, we actively encourage clients to interact with the locals, visit local cafes and bars, support local produce and craft and to experience what life is really like in this region of Italy. Additionally, walking trips like this have very little detrimental impact on the environment and the locals, as it is a quiet, low impact activity, requiring comparatively little resources to support.