

Below is the proposed itinerary for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

DAY 1

Arrive Venice, transfer to Cortina D'Ampezzo, introductions and welcome dinner

Our trip starts about 1:30 p.m. in the Venice airport (VCE) where we will meet to catch the bus for the 2- hour trip to Cortina D'Ampezzo and the start of the trip. After getting settled in at our hotel, weâ€™™ll meet for introductions and a trip orientation before going out for our Welcome Dinner. Cortina, home of the 1956 Winter Olympics, is best known as a chic ski town. However, it is still quite lively in the summer, with lots of shops, restaurants, and an active nightlife. Overnight Cortina. (D)

DAY 2

Hike loop trail in the Tre Cima di Laveredo area, 8.5 miles

Our hiking trip starts with one of the iconic sites and hikes of the Dolomites: the Tre Cime di Laveredo ("three peaks of Laveredo") circuit hike. These three jagged limestone spires are one of the most recognizable sights here and the hiking is classic Dolomites: alpine meadows, scree, rocky paths, and outstanding views. After transferring to the Auronzo Rifugio, our loop hike starts with a relatively flat path and then an easy climb up to Forcella Col di Mezzo, with sweeping views over the Cadini, Sorapiss, and Marmarole ranges. We'll then climb more steeply up a rocky outcrop where Rifugio Locatelli is perched. Both the timing and the views make this the perfect place to stop to enjoy lunch. Our route then continues with a steep zig zag up to Forcella Pian de Cengia, a saddle with breathtaking views of the entire Tre Scarperi range. From here our path continues through an area full of World War I history, including old tracks, trenches, roads, and barricades with more sweeping views over the Cadini, Sorapiss and Marmarole range, before returning to Rifugio Auronzo. Hiking: 8.5 miles, 2150-foot ascent, about 6 hours. Overnight Cortina. (B, D)

DAY 3

Hike thru Fanes Valley to Rifugio Fanes, 7.5 miles

Leaving behind the glitz of Cortina, today we carry what we need for a night as we set off for Fanes-Sennes-Braies National Park. Starting near Fiammes (a short transfer from Cortina), we follow the Fanes River steadily up through a beautiful valley, surrounded by striking peaks and WWI history, to the Altiplano Fanes. This is a very popular backcountry skiing area and wintertime ski trails transform into great hiking trails. Our destination is Rifugio Fanes (6,758 feet), a mountain hotel that has been serving up good food and lively conversation for over 100 years, and a welcoming place to end our day. Hiking: 7.5 miles, 2800-foot ascent, about 5 hours. Overnight Rifugio Fanes. (B, D)

DAY 4

Hike across the Altopiano di Fanes and to Corvara, 11 miles

We continue our journey over to the Val Badia today. Located in the South Tyrol, this area was part of Austria before World War I, and the mix of Italian and Austrian culture manifests itself in the food, architecture, and language. While Italian is the predominant language in Cortina, here Ladino, which comes from the Romansh language, is also common. Many trail signs are written in Ladino, German, and Italian, emphasizing the truly rich multicultural nature of this area. Leaving the Rifugio, we'll spend the morning hiking across the Altopiano di Fanes with its glorious views of the western Dolomites, including Marmolada, the highest peak in the region (11,024'). Our path this morning is relatively flat, before dropping to Capanna Alpina. We'll stop here for lunch before transferring to the mountain town of San Cassiano. From here we can take advantage of the lift system up to Piz Sorega and then hike on a wide ridge trail with views in all directions. We'll walk across the wide-open plain to the other side, and then hike another hour down to the town of Corvara, our base for the next two days of hiking. There are several options today to make the day shorter: this itinerary is 11 miles (before lunch is 6 miles, after lunch, mileage will depend on the option you choose). Hiking: 1,400 foot ascent, 4,000

make the day shorter; this itinerary is 11 miles (before lunch is 6 miles, after lunch, mileage will depend on the option you choose). Hiking: 1,400-foot ascent, 4,000-foot descent, about 7 hours. Overnight Corvara (B, D)

DAY 5

Hike in Sella Massif area, 4.5 - 6 miles

We spend today hiking in the Sella Massif, a fortress-shaped mountain group best known for Piz Boe, its highest peak. We'll gain initial elevation without any effort as we transfer to Passo Pordoi to begin our hike along the southern face of the massif. Our trail initially switchbacks up to Forcella Pordoi, and from there we start the rolling traverse on a rocky path across the southern face. There are, as always, spectacular views of the surrounding mountains: Civetta, Marmolada and the Sassolungo mountains. We'll reach the Rifugio Franz Kostner in time for tea or a late lunch. Your choice about how to get back to Corvara will depend on how your legs are feeling: a chairlift and a gondola offer options for shortening the steep downhill hike. Hiking: about 4.5 miles, 1,750-foot ascent, about 5 hours. Overnight Corvara (B, D)

DAY 6

Hike in Parco Naturale Puez-Odle, 7.5 miles

Today we hike in one of the other Val Badia massifs: Parco Naturale Puez-Odle. Starting at Passo Gardena, we climb up and over two scenic passes before crossing a broad valley. After a picnic lunch along the trail, our hike continues across the Gherdenacia Plateau to a spectacular view before descending steeply to Sponata, where the chairlift saves our knees from the final descent into La Villa. Hiking: about 7.5 miles, 2100-foot ascent, 2500-foot descent, about 7 hours. Overnight Corvara (B, D)

DAY 7

Visit WWI museum and take cable car to Lagazuoi Rifugio

Returning today to the Cortina side of the Dolomites, we'll take time to learn a bit more WWI history, visiting a small museum and then exploring the Lagazuoi galleries and tunnels. These are the most famous, well-reconstructed and interesting of the WWI bunker ruins and tunnels, leftover from the Italian and Austrian armies' bitter contest. Transferring to Passo Falzarego, we'll visit a museum with lots of artifacts from the war. We'll then walk over to the cable car station. The cable car ascends sharply with fantastic views the whole way, ending at the top where we can visit the reconstructed bunkers and have a snack at Lagazuoi Rifugio. We can take a peek into the reconstructed tunnels, just enough to get a sense of how challenging it was to live in and guard them. (Note: Depending on opening time for the museum, we may visit Laguzoi first) We'll then take the cable car back to Passo Falzarego and return to Cortina for the night. We'll end our hiking trip with a final farewell dinner, celebrating the miles we've hiked, the history we've learned, the great food we've eaten, and the camaraderie we've shared. Hiking: about 1 hour. Overnight Cortina (B, D)

DAY 8

Early morning shuttle to Venice for flights after 11 Am

We will arrange an early morning shuttle to the Venice airport, in time for flights at or after 11 a.m. However, if you want to try one of the experiences for which the Dolomites are known, a via ferrata, then plan on staying another day. On a via ferrata, every step is safeguarded as you progress, always clipped into a sturdy cable using climbing harnesses, slings, and steel carabiners. You experience what rock climbers or mountain goats feel as you make your way up a mountain that you would never want to go up without some protection! We'll send you information about how to book this experience in the Pre-Departure information, 4 months before departure.