



The Dolomites

Hut to Hut on the Alta Via 1

August 1-6, 2010

Plan your arrival in Bressanone, Italy for July 31, 2010

Plan your departure from Bressanone, Italy for August 7, 2010

Join us on this hut-to-hut trek across the Dolomites along the Alta Via 1 from its start at Lago di Braies near Dobbiaco to the Passo Duran near the southern Dolomites town of Agordo. This is a “point to point” hiking trip with most overnight stays in mountain refuges (*rifugi*, in Italian) which allows you to experience the peace and beauty of the mountains before the day-hikers arrive and after they leave. Try this trip if you’re looking for a bit of a challenge and a more rugged and rustic experience close to the pulse of these magnificent mountains!

Day 1

Overnight Rifugio Fanes

Dinner included

This morning, depart the lovely South Tyrolean town of Bressanone for the high Dolomites. Travel by vehicle to San Leonardo in the Val Badia. Ride a gondola to Utia Lee where your hike begins. This walk is along a mountain track that sets off from the top of the lift and passes through scattered groves of trees as it approaches the historic Santa Croce chapel consecrated in 1484 and the site of annual pilgrimages even today. The church has been restored and the setting beneath the broad wall of the Sasso della Croce is stunning. From this point you’ll traverse beneath the great walls of the Sasso della Croce. The path follows an ancient Via Crucis punctuated with traditional wooden crosses. The path undulates just above timberline before climbing to reach the Forcella de Medesc where it enters the classic karst landscape of the Fanes Plateau. Two more hours of hiking will bring you to the Rifugio Fanes where you’ll spend the evening.

Day 2

Overnight at Rifugio Lagazuoi

Breakfast and dinner included

From the Rifugio Fanes, the route continues through the high meadow and karst formations climbing to the Forcella del Lago, a narrow and dramatic gap in the mountain with a trail descent through steep talus on the south side. At the base of the slope is the lake called Lago di Lagazuoi whose green waters are framed by pines and backdropped by the sheer walls of the Cima del Lago and the Cima Scottoni. From the lake, the path begins the long, steady climb to the Rifugio Lagazuoi. It enters open, rocky terrain where you’ll come across ruins and other signs of activity dating from the First World War. Eventually you’ll arrive at the Forcella Lagazuoi, a pass that separates Lagazuoi Piccolo from Lagazuoi Grande. Just after the pass, you can take a short detour through tunnels and fortifications built during the First World War. Rifugio Lagazuoi enjoys a spectacular setting at the top of a massive mountain promontory. The views are unforgettable with range upon range of mountains laid out before you. Rooms at the rifugio look out over the deck with views to the south including the peaks of Pelmo, Civetta, Marmolada and Croda da Lago.

Day 3

Overnight Rifugio Nuvolau

Breakfast & dinner included

From the Rifugio Lagazuoi follow a path through the trenches and fortifications of World War I to the beginning of the Galleria Anticima on the rocky spur of Anticima a short walk from the upper station of the Lagazuoi funivia. The galleria (“tunnel”) is accessed through a heavy door on the side of this narrow ridge and leads down through the heart of the mountain to the Martini Ledge. The tunnel is like a long, steeply spiraling staircase equipped with cables for hand support. It provides access to restored underground bunk houses, and observation posts and gives you a glimpse of life during the conflict that was World War I. The tunnel is dimly illuminated by a few “windows” cut into the rock so a flashlight and a hardhat are mandatory for the descent. Emerge into daylight on the Martini Ledge at an elevation of about 7,500 feet. From this point, a short traverse takes you along the south side of the Piccolo Lagazuoi to the main Italian positions. Here you can visit rehabilitated buildings and command posts while enjoying the magnificent view of a sea of peaks to the south and the Passo Falzarego directly below. After retracing your steps back to the beginning of the Martini Ledge, a short distance further brings you to open slopes, meadows and the trail to Passo Falzarego.

From the Passo Falzarego the path continues southward ascending gently yet continuously through meadows. As it climbs the terrain becomes rockier with rolling knolls eventually reaching the Forcella Averau where views are quite stunning. The route ascends to the Rifugio Nuvolau, truly perched on the summit of the mountain. It’s surrounded by dramatic drops especially on the south side where cliffs plummet 1,300 feet straight down. Panoramic views from the summit of Nuvolau compete with the views you enjoyed from Lagazuoi earlier in the day. With the spiny crest of the Croda da Lago nearby, the Rifugio Nuvolau provides an ideal vantage point for observing spectacular Dolomites sunsets, and if you’re lucky, the alpenglow that is here called enrosadira.

Day 4

Overnight in Rifugio Citta di Fiume

Breakfast & dinner included

After watching the sunrise over the mountains to the east, we descend to Passo Giau via a short stretch of ladder and cables. This is also a good taste of traveling by via ferrata. From Passo Giau the route heads southeast, climbing to the Forcella Giau (forcella means “pass”). At this point, you are under the south wall of the Punta Lastoi De Formin, a portion of the spiny ridge called the Croda da Lago. Views across the high alpine meadows of the Mondeval de Sora to the south and east and splendid! From Forcella Giau, the trail descends 600 ft down through the meadow and up the other side to the Forcella Ambrizzola. From the Forcella Ambrizzola, you can see down to Lago Federa and the Rifugio Palmieri on its shores. The trail continues on to the southeast under cliffs and through meadows with especially great views of the blocky bulk of Monte Pelmo. The trail descends as it makes its way to the Rifugio Citta di Fiume. This rifugio is situated at the top of a meadowland and offers views of the north face of the Pelmo and the ice-filled Val d’Arcia in one direction and the green Val Fiorentina in the other.

Day 5

Overnight Rifugio Tissi

Breakfast & dinner included

Depart Rifugio Citta di Fiume heading southwest under the north face of the Pelmo. The trail descends gradually through larch trees and then breaks into the open at the base of the great talus slope that rises up into the Val d’Arcia. Upon arriving at the Passo Staulanza the route continues to the south to the Malga

Vescova, a delightful rest stop. Fresh dairy products, great cheese and coffee are available. Beyond the malga, the trail switchbacks up a steep hillside through the grass. Views of the Pelmo are good from this point. Upon reaching the crest of a hill, the trail heads toward the Col dei Baldi and the Malga Pioda, a small cluster of farm buildings. After the Malga Pioda, the trail ascends more steeply to the Rifugio Coldai. From the rifugio, enjoy dramatic views of the Pelmo and the east side of Monte Civetta. Continue beyond the rifugio to Forcella Coldai and drop to the small tarn of Lago Coldai. Just beyond the lake, a path leads to a cliff edge where you can look down on the village of Alleghe. This is high alpine country, strewn with rocks and boulders; grass and flowers soften the rugged landscape. The trail rises to Forcella Col Negro which offers views across the grand west face of the Civetta. The walls are sheer and clouds moving in and out add to the drama of the scene. The trail drops from the col to a broad bench and proceeding with many ups and downs makes its way to the Col Rean. The Rifugio Tissi, your destination for the evening is now only about 25 minutes further. The rifugio is located just below the summit of the Cima di Col Rean. A short walk from the rifugio is the summit with a large cross anchored in the rock on the very edge of a cliff that falls away to the Alleghe lake. This is a spectacular place to come in the evening to watch the sun's rays illuminate the west face of the Civetta. Views extend to the Marmolada in the west; a sea of peaks stretches away to the north. The area around Rifugio Tissi feels wild and more remote than it actually is. Here, it's possible to experience a level of solitude hard to come by in the Dolomites.

Day 6

Overnight in Bressanone

Breakfast & dinner included

Depart Rifugio Tissi heading to the southwest. It's a pleasant walk descending through the trees before breaking out into a great open meadow and continuing to the Sella di Pelsa. From here the trail begins its descent to the Rifugio Vazzoler. This is a rewarding walk with the trail winding among large boulders before leaving the high meadow to enter the forest again. The trail continues its descent, more steeply in places, before leveling out to make a traverse beneath the cliffs of the Torre Venezia. The Rifugio Vazzoler (5,624 feet) is situated under large larch and pine trees. There is a small botanical garden here complete with walkways and signs identifying plants (no English labels, however). The route now ascends to reach the Col dell'Orso then makes its way below the great south face of the Moiazza to reach the Rifugio Carestiato. Dropping through woodlands to reach the pastures of the Passo Duran where your hut-to-hut trek ends. Travel by vehicle to Bressanone, settle in to your hotel and enjoy the final evening celebrations!

Your breakfast the following morning is included in the trip price.

Other Details about this Trip

Trip Dates: August 1-6, 2010

Price: \$3,495 (minimum 6 participants)

Single Room for evenings of July 31 and August 6: \$130 (single accommodations cannot be guaranteed or are not available for the nights spent in mountain huts.)

Meeting Point: Bressanone, Italy on the morning of August 1. Please plan to arrive in Bressanone on July 31. Please note that the cost of lodging for the evening of July 31 is included in the trip price.

Departure Point: Bressanone, Italy. Tour services conclude after dinner on the evening of August 6. Your accommodations for this evening and breakfast the following morning are included in the trip price.

Accommodations: Two nights in small hotels, five nights in mountain huts. Seven breakfasts and six dinners are included.

Notes: The specific rifugi listed for overnight stops are subject to change depending on group size and or circumstances beyond our control.