

The Dolomites

Rock Climbs and Via Ferrata

James Rushforth

152 Trad Routes

781 Sport Routes

37 Via Ferrata

across the Dolomites

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Cover photo: Lynne Hempton on the stunning
traverse pitch of *Via Myriam* (V+) - *page*
384 - on Cinque Torri.

This page: The difficult and exposed starting
traverse of *Tomaselli* (VF4C) - *page*
324 - on Cima Fanes Sud. Photo: PatitucciPhoto.com

Catnaaccio

Val di Fassa

Marmolada

Pordoi

Sella

Val Gardena

Fanis

Valparola North

Falzarego

Tofana

Cinque Torri

Cortina

Misurina

Tre Cime



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Guidebook Footnote

The inclusion of a climbing area in this guidebook does not mean that you have a right of access or the right to climb upon it. The descriptions of routes within this guide are recorded for historical reasons only and no reliance should be placed on the accuracy of the description. The grades set in this guide are a fair assessment of the difficulty of the climbs. Climbers who attempt a route of a particular standard should use their own judgment as to whether they are proficient enough to tackle that route. This book is not a substitute for experience and proper judgment. The authors, publisher and distributors of this book do not recognise any liability for injury or damage caused to, or by, climbers, third parties, or property arising from such persons seeking reliance on this guidebook as an assurance for their own safety.

Catinaccio
Val di Fassa
Marmolada
Pordoi
Sella
Val Gardena
Falzarego
Cinque Torri
Cortina
Misurina
Tre Cime

- Catinaccio
- Val di Fassa
- Marmolada
- Pordoi
- Sella
- Val Gardena
- Fanis
- Valparola North
- Falzarego
- Tofana
- Cinque Torri
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- Cortina
- Misurina
- Tre Cime

Located in northern Italy and with a unique mix of Italian and Austrian culture, the Dolomites is home to some of the grandest yet most accessible climbing and via ferrata in the world. The area is steeped in history and peppered with the names of some of mountaineering's greatest historical figures - Comici, Lacedelli, Mariacher, Messner, Piaz, Preuss, Vinatzer and Huber to name but a few.

The climbing on offer appeals to every taste, where both the enthusiastic novice and seasoned veteran are catered for in abundance; single pitch sport crags sit next to kilometre-long traditional routes; historical 'rites of passage' run parallel to modern bolted desperates. Alongside these rock climbs are the via ferrata with their metal wires interspersed with breathtaking ladders and unlikely suspension bridges. These provide aerial assault courses which combine the thrill of an ascent on rock with the security of a protected mountain scramble and give relatively straightforward access to some of the world's most striking summits.

All of this takes place in a scenically stunning and unique environment, the bright Alpine meadows and blue sky lending colour to these so-called 'Pale Alps'. There are enough crags, pitches and cables in the Dolomites to keep someone going for many lifetimes. The variety of climbing combined with the rich culture and history of this amazing part of the world are what brings climbers back here time and time again. If you have already experienced the Dolomites, flick through the pages to find some of the gems hidden alongside the classics. If you are visiting for the first time, prepare to be overwhelmed by what is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful and rewarding climbing destinations in the world.



Patrick Deacon and Lynne Hempton enjoying a night-time ascent of *Via Normale Quarta Bassa* (III+) - page 402 - with star trails surrounding the north star and Tofana di Rozes in the background.

Early History

Climbing in the Dolomites has a long and illustrious history, yet when mountaineering was first taking off in earnest in Europe following the first ascent of Mont Blanc in August 1786, the peaks of the Dolomites were still relatively unknown. In the late 1830s as part of his 'Handbook for Travellers' series, the Londoner John Murray III published 'A Handbook for Travellers in Southern Germany', one of the first guides to cover the Dolomites in any depth. This was published at the same time as Weber's 'Das Land Tirol', a German language guidebook that covered much of the same area. These sparked a number of new publications and consequently, in the latter half of the 19th century, the majority of travellers to the Dolomites were wealthy members of the British or German nobility.

In 1857, inspired by descriptions of the 'Pale Alps', mountaineer and naturalist Sir John Ball ventured to the Dolomites and was the first recorded mountaineer to summit one of the Dolomites' great peaks, Monte Pelmo.

He was soon followed by the eminent Paul Grohmann, a Vienna-born mountaineer who quickly established himself as a pioneer in Dolomite climbing. Accompanied by the local guides Francesco Lacedelli, Angelo Dimai and Franz Innerkofler (amongst other names found commonly on first ascent details in the Dolomites) Grohmann had made the first ascents of the three Tofana peaks, Antelao, the Marmolada and Cristallo in just three years. In 1864 he made the first recorded ascent of Piz Boè, although on his arrival at the summit he found indications that shepherds had beaten him to it - a sign of how, for many years, the mountains were simply a way of life as opposed to a passion. In 1869 he made the first ascent of Sassolungo, in honour of which in 1875 Sasso di Levante was renamed Grohmannspitze. Grohmann's successes, and indeed his publication 'Karte der Dolomiten-Alpen' - the first detailed map of the area - led to an influx of pioneering mountaineers, with notable first ascents continuing into the early 1900s.

As more of the major peaks saw first ascents, climbers naturally began to search for harder lines. New techniques were developed and bolder routes attempted, with climbers such as Tita Piazz and Paul Preuss (both responsible for their eponymous crack climbs in the Catinaccio and the Tre Cime groups) pioneering routes in the Fifth grade.

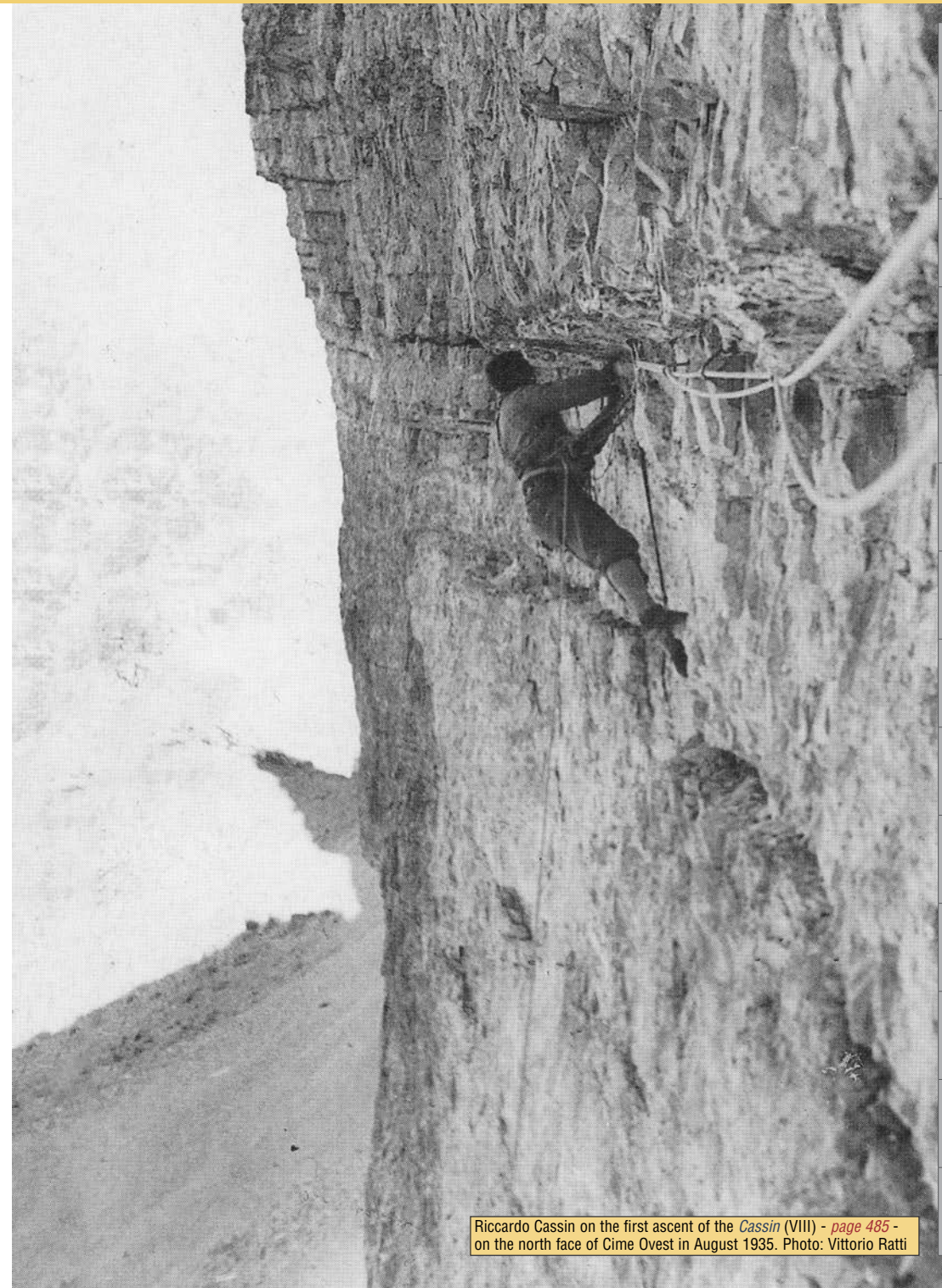
Unsurprisingly the First World War brought a halt to pioneering climbing in the early 20th Century, although it did result in a boom in the construction of via ferrata (see page 50).

Between the Wars

After the First World War a new wave of mountaineers turned their sights to the unconquered faces, with Emilio Comici and brothers Angelo and Giuseppe Dimai tackling the impressive north face of Cima Grande di Lavaredo in 1933 - an impressive feat even by modern standards. This sparked an increase in new and daring routes, with famous names such as Micheluzzi and Cassin making their mark and signalling what is often thought of as Dolomite the 'Golden Era' of climbing in the Dolomites, characterised by bold and difficult free climbs, only using pitons and aid techniques when absolutely necessary. Again the onset of the Second World War resulted in an enforced pause in climbing.

Post-war Period

The post-war period saw perhaps the most controversial period in the Dolomites' climbing history, with an increase in 'direttissima' style routes that prioritised a direct line over purist climbing ethics, and used pitons and other artificial means in a somewhat disproportionate scale. Expansion bolts were developed and it seemed that traditional 'free climbing' had met its end.



Riccardo Cassin on the first ascent of the *Cassin* (VIII) - page 485 - on the north face of Cime Ovest in August 1935. Photo: Vittorio Ratti

The Modern Era

In 1971, in response to the poor ethic developed in the post-war period, the Tyrolean Reinhold Messner, already a well-known mountaineer for his first ascents in the Dolomites and the Alps, published an essay entitled 'The Murder of the Impossible'. In it, he likened the demise of free climbing to the death of 'the dragon', imploring the climbing community to revert to traditional climbing techniques. He himself opened numerous hard free climbs in the Dolomites, including *Grande Muro* on Sass d'la Crusc and the *Messner Route* on the 2nd Sella Tower, routes which broke the barrier into the Seventh grade, a level long thought impossible.

More recently, thanks to improved equipment, more focus on training and a revolution in free climbing, many difficult aid routes have been climbed free. *Attraverso il Pesce* on the Marmolada was first climbed in 1981 by Koller and Sustr and was climbed free just six years later by Mariacher and Pederiva. In 1982 Mariacher had also put up *Tempi Moderni* entirely with 'traditional' free ethics - leader-based protection and pitons. These routes were developed simultaneously with modern bolted climbs, another of Mariacher's climbs *Tempi Modernissimi* having been opened using bolts placed ground up in 1986.

The improvements in climbing techniques and the growth of sport climbing have seen technical climbing grades increase dramatically. High-grade free climbs of routes such as *Via Italia* by Bubo Bole, and *Bellavista* and *Pan Aroma* by Alex Huber on Cima Ovest, demonstrate how far climbing has come in just a few short decades.

Testimony to the legacy of free climbing in the Dolomites, new free climbs are seeing a revival with routes such as Gietl and Grube's *Fairplay*, climbed ground-up in 2010 using trad gear and pegs and named for the climbing ethic it promotes.

Mountaineering in the Dolomites has changed dramatically over the years, but the result is an area where long traditional free climbs, modern bolted test pieces and short sport routes live happily side by side.



Dave MacLeod on the crux pitch of *Bellavista* (X+/8b+) - page 483 - on Cima Ovest. Photo: Calum Muskett

The Dolomites were a major site of conflict in the First World War and to a lesser extent in the Second World War. There is evidence of the fighting throughout the area covered by this guidebook and trenches, barbed wire and cartridges are a common site as you explore the Dolomites.

First World War

After remaining neutral for a long period, in May 1915 Italy declared war on Austro-Hungary. The Austro-Hungarians realised that their historical border was difficult to defend and promptly withdrew from the lowlands in the Dolomites to take up strategic positions in the mountains. Cortina, which at the time was the capital of the Dolomites, was abandoned by the Austro-Hungarians and conceded to the Italian forces. Despite this the Italian army advanced slowly, inadvertently giving the Austro-Hungarian troops time to dig in and fortify their positions on the mountain tops. Italy stationed troops parallel and just south of the Austro-Hungarian lines. Evidence of these fortifications can be seen on the Fedaia, Valparola and Falzarego passes and in the immediate area surrounding Cortina and Misurina. Many trenches are visible when descending from Sass di Stria, on Piramide di Col dei Bos and on the northwest side of Cinque Torri (now also the site of an open-air war museum). Old Italian field hospitals can be seen on the approaches to via ferrata *Col dei Bos* and via ferrata *Ettore Bovero*. The tactical advantage provided by a network of mountain paths protected by wire, known as via ferrata led to a rapid consolidation of existing wires and the addition of many new ones. For more information on the history of via ferrata, see page 51.

The war on the Dolomites front quickly became a relative stalemate. The mountain tops, already naturally difficult to access, were covered with fields of barbed wire and those occupying the top had a commanding field of fire. As a result, both sides went underground, digging vast networks of tunnels in an attempt to reach the enemy

lines. The two most impressive examples are found on the Marmolada and the Lagazuoi. As the Marmolada glacier retreats it is slowly revealing an 'underground city' dug out by the Austro-Hungarians and preserved in the ice. On the Lagazuoi, the Italian forces dug a tunnel from the bottom of the mountain through over 1000m of rock in an attempt to detonate mines under the Austrians occupying the top (see page 336). Such extreme methods were adopted due to the inaccessible locations which made the peaks so difficult to take. However these defensive positions came at a high price and simply holding them against the elements was an ordeal. The winters of 1915 and 1916 were particularly harsh, with many casualties as the result of cold-related injuries and avalanches.

On the 24th October 1917 the Austro-Hungarian and German forces broke through near the town of Caporetto (modern day Kobarid in Slovenia). What followed was one of the greatest Italian defeats in history, the disorderly retreat from which was the basis for Ernest Hemingway's 'Farewell to Arms'. Thus ended the war in the Dolomites and the Italians were pushed back to the Piave river just east of Venice, a position which they held together with allied troops.

After the War

With the defeat of Austro-Hungary, and following the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, Italy's territorial gains encompassed a large part of the South Tyrol, 90% of which was German speaking. What followed was a systematic and brutal Italianisation program to indoctrinate the Tyrolean people into Italian language and culture. In 1991, following a mandate from the Court of Human Rights, 'Il Pacchetto' was signed - an agreement to promote the harmonious co-existence of the two cultures. Overall this has been hugely successful and has been hailed as one of the world's greatest examples of the complete integration of an ethnic minority. Today most locals are tri-lingual, speaking Italian, German and the local dialect Ladin.

A war memorial on the summit of Col di Lana, the site of much fighting. Photo: Daniel Wildey



Inset photo: Trenches from the war are still found up near the summit of the Lagazuoi and in many other areas of the Dolomites, providing a chilling reminder of what happened here. Tofana di Rozes can be seen in the background where the *Giovanni Lipella* (VF4C) - page 360 - via ferrata was instrumental to the war efforts in the area. Photo: Daniel Rushforth



The rock formations on Sentiero Astaldi on the way to Punta Anna (VF5C) - page 368 - in the Tofana Group. Photo: Peter Braun

Geology

The Dolomites take their name from Dieudonné Sylvain Guy Trancrede Grater de Dolomieu, a French scientist who, in 1788, took a rock sample from the Adige valley and sent it off for analysis. The sample, a calcium and magnesium carbonate, was heralded as a new mineral and was given the name of its discoverer before this in turn was applied to the mountains themselves.

In layman's terms, dolomite is formed when magnesium-rich groundwater moves through limestone, converting the calcite to dolomite. The formation of the Dolomites began during the Triassic period, around 250 million years ago. Over the course of several millennia, marine sediments built up on the ocean floor. A few million years later, the sea withdrew and the area of the Dolomites became a flat coastal expanse. During the Eocene period the African and European plates began to push against one another, causing the uplift and eventual emergence of the Alps, and in turn the Dolomites, from the sea.

In more 'recent' history, the Dolomites were also subject to considerable change during the ice ages of the Quaternary period (about 3 million years ago to present day), which have sculpted many of the features we see today.

From a climber's perspective, although similar in chemical structure dolomite and limestone present subtly different characteristics. Limestone is generally more easily eroded by the elements into smooth slabs, whereas dolomite tends to be more horizontally stratified forming the characteristic towers and spires associated with the Dolomites. Consequently limestone is traditionally difficult to protect, whilst Dolomite typically presents more opportunity for gear placements because of the presence of many cracks and pockets. The range of colour found in dolomite can also be a good indicator as to the quality of the rock: orange rock is often steep, overhanging and loose, black rock can indicate a wet water streak, and grey rock commonly denotes dry rock that at some point has been cleaned with rain or water and is consequently more solid and dry.

Flora

There are an estimated 2400 species of plant in the Dolomites, although a relatively low number of these are the native and unique to the area. The sheer nature of these mountains and the variety of terrain - meadows, woodland, high mountain pastures, scree and rock - means it is possible to view species from many different altitude 'belts'. There is no need to be a horticultural expert to appreciate the beauty that these plants lend to the landscape; the vibrant colours of the meadows and the contrasting pale hues of the surrounding rock is one of the sights which makes the Dolomites so uniquely beautiful.

Perhaps one of the most striking flowers which can be seen whilst climbing here is the Devil's Claw (*Physoplexis comosa*), a rock flower which grows up to 1000m altitude and can be spotted clinging on to some very hostile terrain.

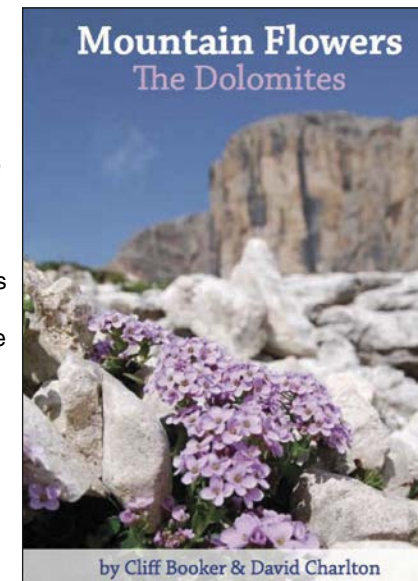
Other typical plants include the song-inspiring Edelweiss (which is guaranteed to start you singing however hard you try to stop it) that flourishes in the limestone landscape; and the Vanilla Orchid, a wonderfully fragrant flower found in the upper Alpine meadows. The elusive and much-coveted Lady's Slipper Orchid can also be found in certain areas of the Dolomites.

The woodland is also very varied, with a notable presence of silver birch, larch and the ever-present dwarf pine, the latter of which is vital in maintaining the stability of the rocky ground it inhabits.

Fauna

The same factors that have contributed to the creation of such a wide range of plant life have also affected the wildlife population.

One of the most common sightings is the Alpine marmot, which has boomed in recent years thanks to conservation and reintroduction efforts. This in turn has had a direct impact on the golden eagle, which now maintains a stable population with a good number of breeding pairs. Chamois can often be seen climbing impossibly steep scree slopes, whilst the ibex, once native to the Dolomites, was first re-introduced in 1965 and since then the population has spread with significant colonies moving to the Sella, Marmolada and Cristallo ranges.



For those wanting more information, 'Mountain Flowers - The Dolomites' by Cliff Booker and David Charlton is highly recommended, providing a superb means of identifying flower species in a conveniently pocket-sized guidebook.



Robbie Thurley going head to head with the locals. Photo: Andy Griffiths

The rich and varied culture experienced in the Dolomites today is a result of a historic collision between three distinct and separate cultures. Before the First World War the Dolomites were shared between the Austro-Hungarians and the Italians, with the border running just south of Cortina. As well as the Italian and Austrian populations, pockets of 'Ladinia', a local community spreading across five valleys, existed in the more remote uplands of the Dolomites. Following the war and the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, Italy was granted part of the Tyrol and the Trentino-Alto Adige regions, and three cultures were amalgamated.

Language

Today German and Italian is spoken throughout the region and, more recently, Ladin has seen a resurgence and received official state recognition. This has formed a tri-lingual society where every citizen has the right to speak their own mother tongue. You will often see signs in all three languages and, to make matters even more confusing, places often have three different names. For example, Arabba - a village below the Padon ridge and the starting point for the *Via delle Trincee* - is 'Arabba' in Italian, 'Buchenstein' in German and 'Reba' in Ladin. For the purposes of this guide the mountain, route and place names are provided in Italian with occasional German alternatives where it is the more commonly used name. Although this can be confusing, it does mean that, if you can speak Italian or German, you will be able to communicate well in the Dolomites. Whilst some English is spoken in the larger towns, you won't find many English speakers once you get into the mountain communities.

Cuisine

This rich and unique blend of cultures seems to have retained the best of each heritage, particularly from the point of view of the tourist; the housing is typically Austrian, complete with stunning flower displays on each balcony, whilst the cuisine is a wonderful blend of Tyrolean, Italian and Ladin specialities. Spatzle, kaiserschmarrn and of course strudel form part of Austria's contribution, whilst traditional Italian offerings such as spaghetti aglio olio, game ragu and pizza are offered alongside the local Ladin dishes of Canederli (bread dumplings), Casunzei (half-moon shaped ravioli) or the local Fortaes cakes, fried with sugar and jam.



Photo: Stephen Rotondo

Festivals

On religious and festival days many of the locals wear traditional Tyrolean dress, creating a picturesque scene with the spires of the Dolomites framing the background. Whilst walking into crags you will hear the distinctive jingling of cow bells coming from many of the meadows, giving it a very 'Sound of Music' feel. The passes and tourist hubs like Corvara, Selva and Cortina are lively and crowded, but once you get out into the rural villages and valleys such as the Val Duron the pace of life is much slower. Traditional farming methods are still used and it feels like taking a step back in history to a time when life was much simpler.



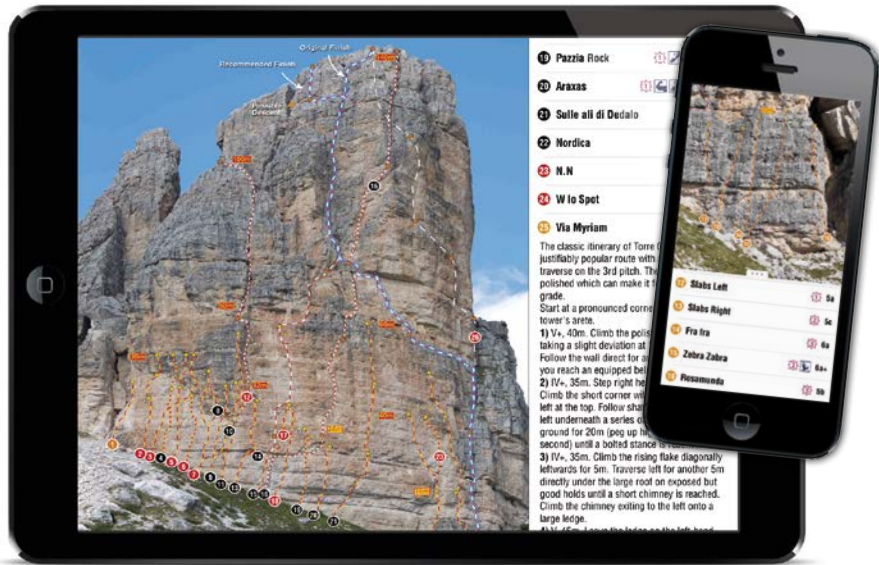
Wayne Wallace on the fantastic traverse pitches of the *Big Micheluzzi* (VI) - page 185 - at Piz Ciavazes. Photo: Michael Stanton

This book brings together the best climbing and via ferrata across the Dolomites. As with all Rockfax books, each chapter includes many features to help you select and locate your chosen route for the day. Our aim is that you should never have to turn more than a few pages to first get to the crag, then get to the buttress and finally locate the start of your chosen route or via ferrata. All route descriptions are on the same page as their topo and listed from left-to-right.

There are also many features to help choose suitable crags depending on specific weather conditions. You can select a crag from the crag tables on page 64 and via ferrata tables on page 54. Each topo also has crag symbols for a quick glance check - see key to the right.

Using your Smartphone - the Rockfax App

There is an 'app' version of this guidebook (available in late 2014) which contains all the routes and via ferrata. You can purchase each crag or via ferrata individually, or the whole book. The main data on the app is downloaded and stored on your device so you don't need any signal to be able to read the descriptions and see the topos and maps.



UKC Logbooks

An incredibly popular method of logging your climbing is to use the UKClimbing.com Logbooks system. This database lists more than 290,000 routes, over 18,600 crags and, so far, users have recorded more than 3.4 million ascents! To set up your own Logbook all you need to do is register at UKClimbing.com and click on the Logbook tab. Once set up you will be able to record every ascent you make, when you did it, what style you climbed it in, who you did it with and each entry has a place for your own notes. You can also add your vote to the grade/star system linked to a database on the Rockfax site used by the guidebook writers. The Logbook can be private, public or restricted to your own climbing partners only.

The Rockfax App can be linked to your UKClimbing.com user account and logbook so that you can record your activity as you progress and look at photos of the routes, although this does require a 3G/4G data connection. You can also look at the UKC logbooks to see if anyone has climbed your chosen route or via ferrata recently to check on conditions.

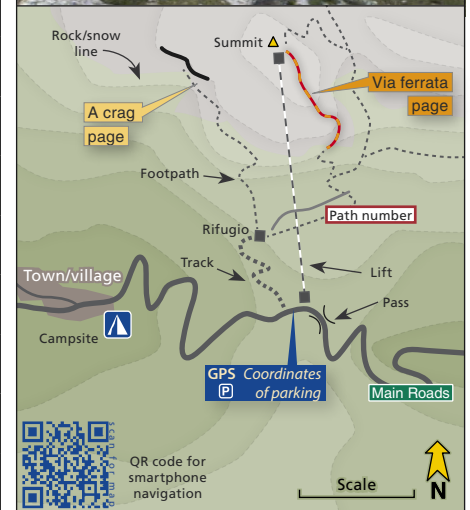
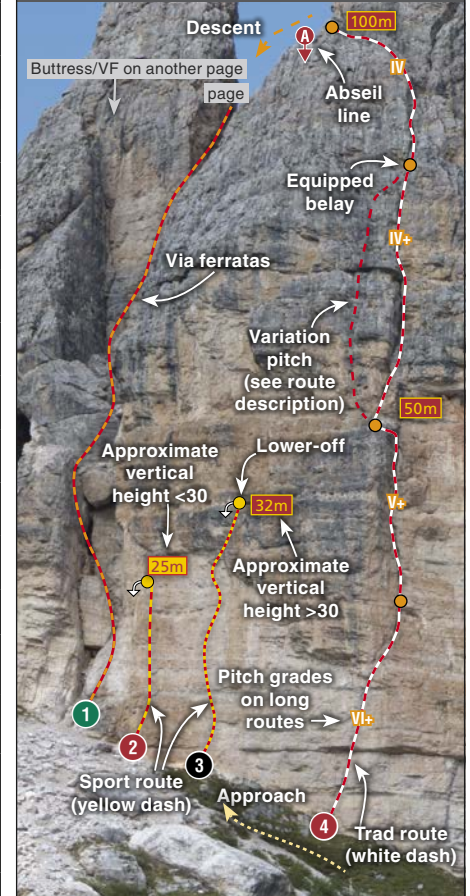
Route Symbols

- A good route/VF which is well worth the effort.
- A very good route/VF, one of the best on the crag or mountain.
- A brilliant route/VF, one of the best in the Dolomites.
- Technical climbing requiring good balance and technique, or complex and tricky moves.
- Powerful climbing; roofs, steep rock, low lock-offs or long moves off small holds.
- Sustained climbing; either lots of hard moves or steep rock giving pumpy climbing.
- Fingery climbing with significant small holds on the hard sections.
- Flutery climbing with big fall potential and scary run-outs.
- A long reach is helpful, or even essential, for one or more of the moves.
- Graunchy climbing, wide cracks or awkward thrutchy moves.
- A trad route which needs a full rack of gear, or a sport route on which a small rack is required.

Crag Symbols

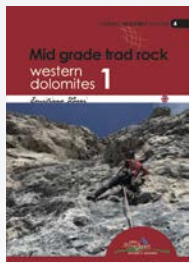
- 20 mins: Angle of the approach walk to the crag or VF with approximate time.
- Lots of sun: Approximate time that the crag or VF is in the direct sun (when it is shining).
- 1.5 hrs: Approximate minimum and maximum climbing time that should be allowed.
- 3 hrs: Approximate minimum and maximum time for completing a VF.
- Sport: Sport routes on this crag.
- Mixed: Trad routes with mixed gear (pegs, wires and cams) on this crag.
- Via Ferrata: A via ferrata.
- Seepage: The buttress suffers from seepage. It may well be wet and unclimbable in winter and early spring.
- Sheltered: The buttress can offer shelter from cold winds and it may be a good sun-trap in colder weather.
- Deserted: Currently under-used and usually quiet. Less good routes or a remote area.
- Quiet: Less popular sections on major crags, or good areas with awkward approaches.
- Busy: Places you will seldom be alone. Good routes and easy access.
- Crowded: The most popular sections of the most popular crags which are always busy.

Map and Topo Key



Catnaccio
Val di Fassa
Marmolada
Pordoi
Sella
Val Gardena
Fanis
Valparola North
Falzarego
Tofana
Cinque Torri
Cortina
Misurina
Tre Cime

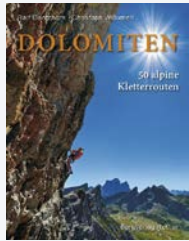
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Marmolada
Pordoi
Sella
Val Gardena
Fanis
Valparola North
Falzarego
Tofana
Cinque Torri
Cortina
Misurina
Tre Cime



As far as we are aware, this is the first guidebook to cover a large chunk of the Dolomites with trad, sport and via ferrata. There are many other guides that cover more of the crags and via ferrata in the area - a selection is listed below.

Other Guidebooks available in 2014

Western Dolomites 1 and 2 (2011) by Emiliano Zorzi
A general trad guide, translated into English covering the central Dolomites and Pala, in two volumes.



Dolomiten (2014) by Ralf Gantzhorn and Christoph Willumeit
A German guidebook covering 50 of the best trad routes in the Dolomites, illustrated with some superb photography.

Ferrate a Cortina (2011) by Francesco Cappellari
A via ferrata guide, translated into English covering Cortina d'Ampezzo and immediate surrounding area.

Klettern in Cortina D'Ampezzo (2010) by Mauro Bernardi
General guide in German and Italian covering Cortina d'Ampezzo and surrounding area.



Arrampicare in Val Gardena (2009) by Mauro Bernardi
General guide in German and Italian covering the Val Gardena and surrounding area.

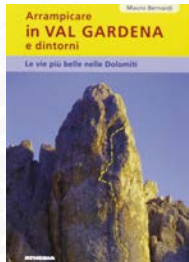
Classic Dolomites Climbs (2008) by Anette Köhler and Norbert Memmel
A guidebook covering 102 selected trad climbs in the Dolomites. Translated into English.



Dolomites West and East (2005) by Ron James
General guide in English covering selected trad climbs in the West and East Dolomites.

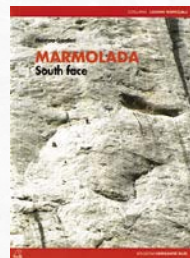
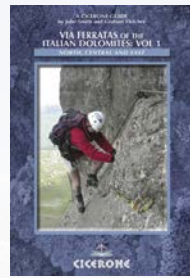
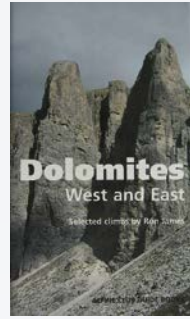
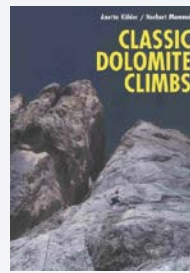
Via Ferrata in the Italian Dolomites: Vol 1 (2009) by John Smith and Graham Fletcher
A dedicated via ferrata guide, written in English covering the North, Central and Eastern Dolomites.

Marmolada South Face (2008) by Maurizio Giordani
An in-depth guide to the Marmolada South Face, translated into English.



Tre Cime (2009) by Erik Švab and Giovanni Renzi
An in-depth guide to the Tre Cime, translated into English.

It is not the policy of Rockfax to replace local guidebooks, but rather to introduce climbers to the new areas. Our books are written for climbers who may be unaware of the wealth of climbing in an area and who are unable to acquire information via their own local sources.



Maps

The maps in this book have plenty of detail and should be sufficient for many of the crag approaches and full via ferrata trips. However, due to the Alpine nature of the Dolomites, it is advisable to take a 1:25.000 map, particularly on routes with a complex approach or for navigating long via ferrata circuits. These maps have more detail than included in this book and could be vital, especially if you get off the beaten track.

There are several companies that produce maps for the area, however the Tabacco maps are generally the easiest to get hold of. Kompass also do a good range, covering the majority of the Dolomites at 1:50.000 and 1:25.000. The required Tabacco map number for any given area is provided on the Rockfax overview maps at the introduction to each major area.



Steve Ahern filling in the summit book on the top of Cima Piccola after climbing Spigolo Giallo (Yellow Edge) (VI+) - page 462. Photo: Dan Arkle

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This guidebook's creation was only made possible by the enormous support, help and encouragement of a great many people. Firstly my thanks to all those that came before us: without the first ascensionists, via ferrata equippers and sport crag protagonists, there would have been precious little to write about. The consistently well maintained bolted routes and via ferrata are testament to the hard work of the local climbing populace, CAI and the guides working within the area. This includes the many people who have worked hard to document, catalogue and collate all the route info, providing a wealth of information through numerous guidebooks, rifugio guestbooks and web resources.

Throughout the time spent working on the book Collett's Mountain Holidays offered a host of resources, not least providing a much needed shower in between climbing stints in the van. My thanks to the Collett's team back in the UK and to all the staff in the Dolomites for their support, not least to Patrick Deacon who endured several hours of belaying whilst I snapped away until I finally got the cover photo I was after.

Whilst working on the book the support from the English and international climbing communities was staggering. Thanks to all those who chipped in to share opinions, climbing knowledge and provide feedback. Thanks to John Scanlon and Ian Parsons for assisting with the history of the area, David Charlton for checking the flora text and Calum Muskett and Dave MacLeod for assisting with route descriptions. The response to photo requests was particularly impressive, breathing life and colour into the guide. Thanks to all those who sent me photos; I've endeavoured to squeeze in as many as possible! Although too many to list here, the individual photographers are credited in the photo captions and I've assembled a list (see opposite) of websites for anyone wishing to look them up.

My thanks to all of the Rockfax and UKC team who have been involved; Alan James for his tireless editing, Stephen Horne for all the technical support, Sherri Davy and Rob Greenwood for selling the advertising and Jaimella Espley and Chris Craggs for proofreading and turning my ramblings into cohesive text.

As ever my family provided excellent support, guidance and encouragement throughout the project. Finally my thanks to Lynne, who accompanied me on countless routes, whose linguistic skills proved invaluable, for enduring several years of living in a van, assisted with all aspects of writing the book, encouraging me to keep going when I thought the project was too big and finally for rescuing me from an embarrassing incident on the east face of Muro Occidentale del Pisciadù, involving a thunderstorm and a conspicuously absent rope. Despite not wishing to appear as a co-author for the book, it is as much hers as it is mine and I couldn't have done it without her.

James Rushforth, July 2014

We are grateful the following companies who have supported this guidebook.

Outdoor Retailers

BouldersUK - *Inside back cover*
bouldersuk.com

Cotswold Outdoor - *Page 39*
bouldersuk.com

Outdoor Gear

Arc'teryx - *Outside back cover*
arcteryx.com

Climbing Technology - *Page 53 and 59*
climbingtechnology.com

DMM - *Back cover flap*
dmmclimbing.com

Lowe Alpine - *Page 2*
lowealpine.com

RAB - *Inside front cover*
rab.uk.com

Scarpa - *Page 61*
scarpa.co.uk

Holidays and Accommodation

Collets - *Page 41*
collets.co.uk



James and Lynne.

Whilst the Dolomites are famous for providing some of the longest and most accessible climbing in Europe, for me personally it's the surrounding scenery that really sets them apart. Over the following pages I've tried to convey this through a number of photos, taken by myself and kindly provided by some exceptional photographers. For those who would like to see more of their work I've assembled the following list.

Alberto De Giuli
albertodegiuli.com

Alessandro Petri
Flickr.com/photos/khuzul

Alessio Feci
Flickr.com/photos/khuzul

Andreas Bengtsson
MountainGuide.se

Calum Muskett
muskettmountaineering.co.uk

Claudia Ziegler
Claudiaziegler.com

Dan Arkle
DanArkle.com

Dan Patitucci
PatitucciPhoto.com

Daniel Rushforth
Danielrushforthphotography.co.uk

Daniel Wildey
danielwildeyphotography.com

Enrico Grotto
Enricogrotto.weebly.com

Frédéric Dorn
Antecime.blogspot.co.uk

Giuseppe Ghedina
GiuseppeGhedina.com

Jan Laco
Chatatrnovec.sk

Kelly Diggle
dolomiti.wordpress.com

Mark Houston
coskr/houston.com

Michael Maili
mmarts.at

Mike Meysner
500px.com/Mike421

Nadir Khan
nadirkhanphotography.co.uk

Nicolas Zambetti
nicolaszambetti.ch

Nicolò Miana
NicolòMiana.com

Paula Hrešková
Travephotogallery.net

Radu Diaconescu
Diaconescuradu.com

Ralf Gantzhorn
Ralf-gantzhorn.de

Richard Felderer
rikyfelderer.wordpress.com

Roberto Bellini
FotoRobertoBellini.it

Roberto Sysa Moiola
sysaworld.com

Robin Van den Hende
TheSevereClimber.com

Rossalio Patuelli
web.tiscali.it/rossalio



The Cime flower meadows with Monte Paterno, Cima Piccola and the north faces of Cima Grande and Ovest. Photo: Alessandro Petri.

The Dolomites Logistics



Venice. Photo: Daniel Rushforth

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Emergency Services

In the event of a mountain incident requiring the assistance of the emergency services:

Dial 118

Be sure to have the details of the incident and a good description of your location.

Mobile phone coverage is generally very good in the Dolomites (particularly on top of the Sella!) although there are occasional black spots in the more remote areas.

Travel Insurance

UK citizens have reciprocal health care rights in Italy. Despite this, it is strongly recommended that personal travel insurance is taken out to cover rescue, medical and repatriation in the event of an accident.

For minor injuries and illnesses, most of the towns and villages in the Dolomites have a small health centre which can deal with minor injuries. Some of these have x-ray facilities and will otherwise be able to advise which hospital to go to. These can be the state-governed red cross or the regional white/green cross variants.

There are numerous pharmacies (Farmacia/Apotheke) that can process prescriptions, but most prescribed medicines must be paid for.

Most of the health centres accept the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) for emergency treatment and usually just take a copy of it, although some of the private clinics will charge. The same goes for hospital treatment - this must sometimes be paid for and claimed back through your insurance policy.

Rescue Procedure

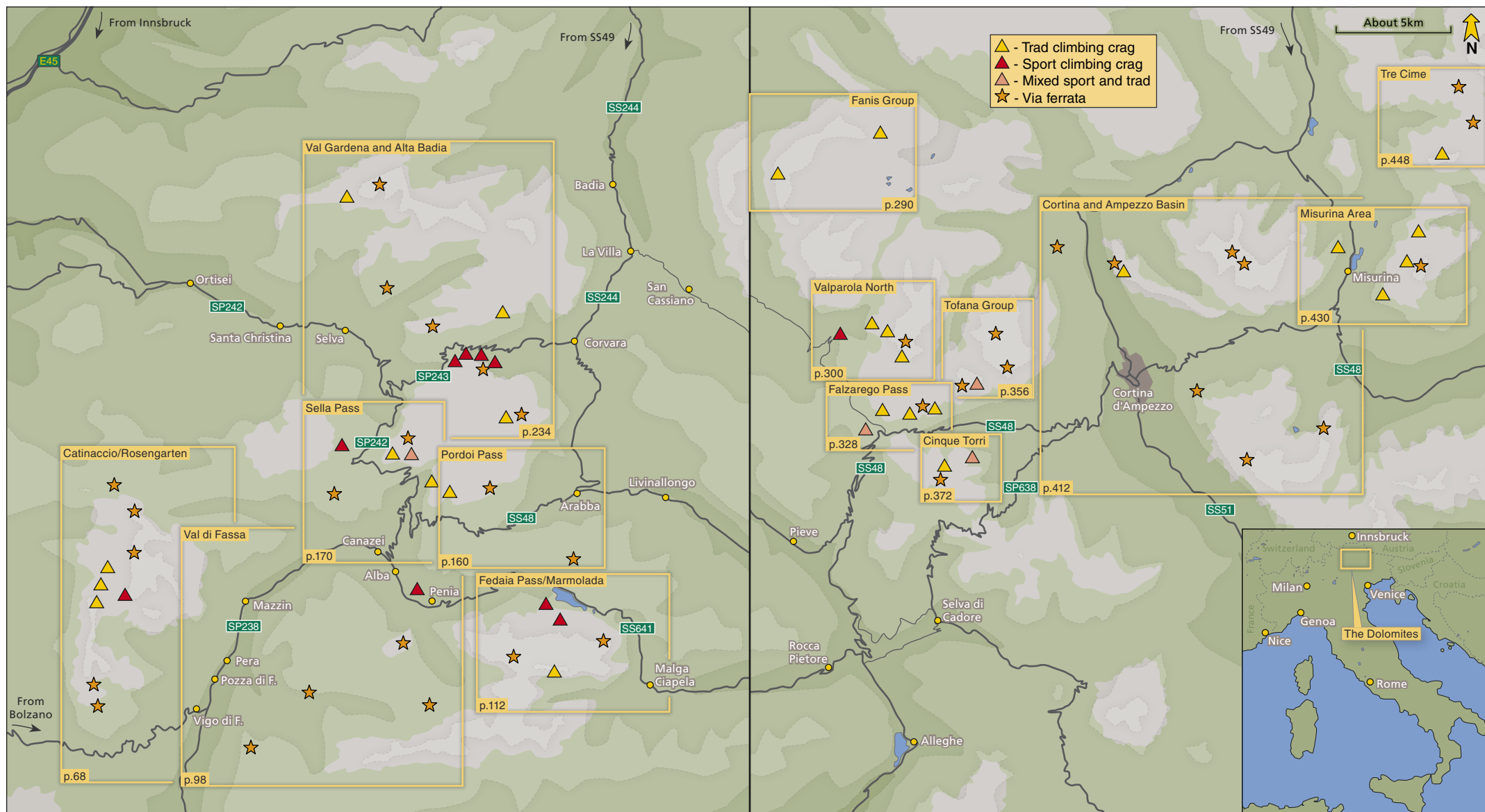
If you are involved in an incident then give the rescue services as many details as you can. Try to let them know your precise location, grid reference, crag name and route name. It may take an hour or more for the emergency services to reach you so any first aid you can administer is critical. If a helicopter is called to the scene you need to signal to the pilot by standing with your arms up making a 'Y' shape. Once the pilot has seen you, and he looks like he is coming in to hover, move to a safe distance away since the helicopter will either come into land or send a winchman down. The downdraft is considerable so collect all the loose equipment together and get someone to sit on them to stop them being blown away. Do not approach the helicopter unless directed to do so by the aircrew since the rotating blades are extremely dangerous.

Smartphone Apps

If you have a smartphone then download the **Echo112** app from the iOS or Android app store. This useful app has an SOS button that will call the correct emergency service no matter which country you are in and send your location using your phone's GPS system. There are also other useful apps that can calculate your OS grid reference from your phone's GPS system - search for **Grid Reference** to find one of these in the appropriate app store.



Echo112 app



Where are the Dolomites?

The Dolomites are a mountain range located in northeast Italy and are collectively shared by the Italian provinces of Belluno, Bolzano, Pordenone, Trento, Trentino-Alto Adige and Udine. They form part of the Southern Limestone Alps. The geographical location of the Brenta Dolomites, located in the west of the Dolomite range, meant that they were long considered a separate group. More recently however they have been included in the classification of the Dolomites as a whole, unlike the so-called 'Piccole Dolomiti' (Little Dolomites) located in the Vicenzan pre-alps, which are a separate group and owe their name to the rock type shared with their big sister.

This guidebook covers the Dolomites in the Trentino-Alto Adige, Bolzano, Belluno and Trento provinces. The surprisingly good network of roads and passes in the Dolomites means that the entire area can be accessed from any of the suggested bases. A central base such as Corvara makes it easier to access climbs in all directions, but it is not unfeasible to stay in the Val Gardena in the west yet spend a day climbing in Cortina d'Ampezzo in the east.

Corvara to Misurina - About 70 mins driving time

Corvara to Vigo de Fassa - 1 hour

Selva or Canezai to Cortina - 90 mins

Vigo de Fassa to Misurina - Just over 2 hours

Flying

The area covered in this guidebook is best accessed from Innsbruck, Venice or Treviso airports, all roughly two and a half hours drive away. A stop-over in Venice or Innsbruck is particularly recommended, as transport into the towns from the airport is very convenient and they are both well worth a visit.



Car Hire

You will need your driving licence and a credit-card. Car hire is available at all three of the above airports. The comparison site carrentals.co.uk is a useful resource for sorting through the maze of companies and offers, but be aware that the cheapest prices offered usually sting you for expensive compulsory insurance at the pick-up desk.

Driving from the UK

Driving from the UK is another option and gets round the issue of trying to work out how to squeeze your climbing rack into your luggage allowance! The suggested route from Calais or Dunkerque by way of Bruges, Ghent, Brussels, Stuttgart, Ulm, Innsbruck and finally the Brenner Pass takes around 15 hours. This route avoids all toll roads with the exception of the Brenner Pass and a short stint on the Italian motorway at the end of the journey.

Satellite Navigation

 **GPS** 44.39626  4.19651 All the parking spots are indicated with a precise GPS location. This is in the form of two decimal numbers as in the sample blue box. Different GPS devices accept these numbers in alternative formats; some devices are happy with two comma-separated numbers, others require a **N**orth and **E**ast value to be entered separately. QR codes have also been included. You can scan the QR code using an app like **Scan** (for iOS) or **Google Goggles** (for Android) and choose to choose to open the result direct into the **Google Maps** navigation app on your phone.



Waldemar Niclevicz perched on the famous *Piaz Arete/Delagokante (IV+)* - [page 86](#) - on Torre Delago. Photo: Eiki Higaki



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Sunset over the five towers of Cinque Torri. Photo: Enrico Grotto

Public Transport

To enjoy the Dolomites to their full potential a car is highly recommended. However for those hoping to reach the Dolomites using public transport there are limited options from all three airports.

From Venice/Treviso - Trains run fairly frequently from Venice to Belluno, and from there an infrequent (one or two a day) Dolomitibus service connects to Arabba and Corvara in high season - usually from mid June to mid September.

Both ATVO and Cortina Express run services twice a day. Services from Cortina then link back to the Falzarego Pass and the Val Badia. For the Val Gardena, it is possible to take a train from Venice to Bolzano and then a bus to Ortisei or Selva.

From Innsbruck - For Val Gardena, take a shuttle from the airport to the Hauptbahnhof then catch a train to Ponte Gardena/Waidbruck. From here a regular bus service (350) links up to the Val Gardena. For Val Badia, take a train to Fortezza then change and catch a local train to Brunico. Regular buses (460) then run throughout the summer season to Corvara.

Getting Around Without a Car

Once you get to the Dolomites there are some public transport links connecting a few of the major towns. These services are less frequent than you might hope and rarely run early enough to be used the day of a climb, but are sufficient for moving between bases or sport crags. Unfortunately all the bus services are operated by separate companies, meaning there is no one transport card which covers them all, but they are generally reasonably priced.

The SAD-operated 471 Passi Dolomitici - A service that covers the four passes of the Sella Ronda. The buses wait and link up with each other thus making it possible to get between Ortisei, Selva, Corvara, Canazei and Arabba.

Dolomitibus 30/31 links the Falzarego Pass, Cortina and the Tre Cime.

Dolomitibus 1/3/72 links Corvara and Arabba (and on to Belluno).

Transporto Integrato Alto Adige 460 runs between Brunico and Colfosco, which covers the Val Badia.

Transporto Integrato Alto Adige 465 links the Val Badia to the Falzarego Pass.

SAD-operated 350 covers the Val Gardena.

These services generally run between mid June and mid September, although it is always worth checking with the local tourist offices for information on the current service.

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Looking down the Marmolada South Face in full winter conditions.

When to Go

Though it is possible to complete climbs during the winter months (some of the via ferrata make for excellent ski tours) generally speaking the rock climbing season runs from June to the start of October. The guide below outlines typical conditions but as with all mountainous regions weather can be unpredictable and snow can fall unexpectedly.

June - Many of the higher peaks and north faces will still be holding snow, with most climbers seeking south-facing mountain routes or sport crags down in the valleys. High-level via ferrata are often out of condition until late in the month. The start of the flower season.

July - The start of peak season. Generally most routes are clear of snow. Arguably the 'prettiest' month with the flowers in full bloom and a small amount of snow capping the highest peaks.

August - Good weather albeit with a tendency for thunderstorms in the late afternoon. The end of the main flower season is towards the end of the month. The Italian national holiday 'Ferragosto' takes place on the 15th August and the Dolomites are usually extremely busy over this week. Booking well in advance is essential as campsites and hotels will be packed, but on the plus side there are usually some excellent local festivals with live music, traditional dress and culinary specialities.

September - A generally excellent and quieter time for climbing. Be aware that some of the lifts start closing from mid September onwards. Sporadic but light snowfall possible towards the end of the month.

October - Most of the tourist infrastructure will have closed by this point. Climbing is still generally good, though it can be cold on the north faces and the shorter days will make longer routes difficult. Snowfalls likely, though these often don't settle properly until November.

Lifts

Most of the lifts open around the third week of June and close in mid September, but it is worth contacting the local tourist offices for exact information if you are planning on using specific lifts during your trip.

Average Temp °C	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cortina (maximum)	6	9	15	19	23	27	29	28	25	19	11	7
Cortina (minimum)	-5	-2	2	5	9	13	15	15	11	6	0	-4

Hours sun/day	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cortina (average)	3	4	5	5	6	7	8	7	6	5	3	3

Rain days/month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cortina (average)	4	4	5	7	10	9	9	9	6	6	6	4

Crazy weather in the Alta Badia with Sas dla Crusc just visible on the left.



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The Dolomites are well developed from a tourist's point of view and there are numerous places to stay to suit most budgets.

Camping

There are campsites in many of the main areas that cater for tents, caravans and campervans. These are usually quite upmarket as campsites go, with good facilities and spacious pitches. Consequently they are not always as cheap as you might hope, and each person, tent and car is charged individually so prices can add up. Expect to pay something in the region of €6.50 - €8 per person, €10 per pitch and €4 for electric hook-up per day, although these costs vary between low and high season. Campsites are indicated at the beginning of each of the main sections.

Wild camping rules differ from province to province so it is worth checking with the local commune and tourist offices before doing so.

Campervans - Another option for campervan drivers is the 'area attrezzata/stellplatz', which are effectively car parks where campervans can pay to park legally for the night. There are not usually washroom facilities but there is often drinking water, a waste disposal tank and electricity. These can cost anything from €8 to €25 for a night, depending on the facilities and the time of year.

Hotels and B&Bs

All of the main towns and villages in the Dolomites have a good range of hotels and 'garni' (bed and breakfasts) which go from the very basic to the five star. They often boast 'wellness' facilities - usually a sauna and steam room - and many offer half-board. Most are accustomed to walkers and climbers and often have a boot room where you can dry out kit or leave muddy boots.

Rifugios

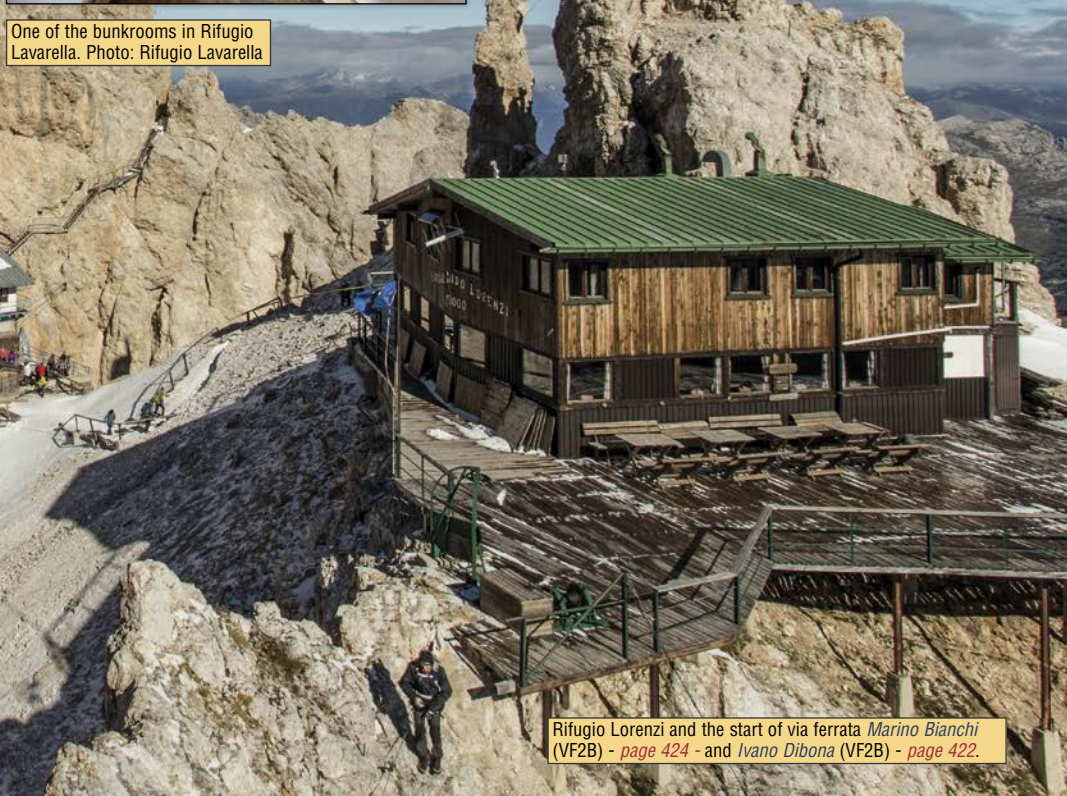
Rifugios, literally meaning refuges, are more commonly mountain restaurants which offer the possibility of an overnight stay. Some are more basic than others, and accommodation can be in the form of single or double rooms, the more traditional bunkroom or a combination of the two. Generally a full sleeping bag isn't required as there will be thick blankets and sheets, but a sleeping bag liner is usually expected.

You can stay 'mezza pensione' (half board) which will usually take the form of a set three course meal and a continental breakfast; 'con prima colazione' (bed and breakfast) or simply 'solo pernottamento' (just the stay itself). Prices can range anywhere between €18 and €80 a night, depending on the rifugio and the board basis.

If you are planning an Alpine start, be sure to let the rifugio know because they will often be happy to leave out some bread and jam for you to enjoy at 4am!



One of the bunkrooms in Rifugio Lavarella. Photo: Rifugio Lavarella



Rifugio Lorenzi and the start of via ferrata *Marino Bianchi* (VF2B) - page 424 - and *Ivano Dibona* (VF2B) - page 422.

The following is a list of the main rifugios in the areas covered in this book. Although there is often no official requirement to book, the rifugios can get very popular so it is advisable to ring ahead. Some of the rifugios will speak English and the tourist information offices can help if you are struggling.

Catinaccio/Rosengarten

Roda de Vael	+39 0462 764450
Paolina	+39 0471 612008
A. Fronza Coronelle	+39 0471 612033
Passo Santner	+39 340 656 2228
Re Alberto I	+39 0462 763428
Preuss	+39 368 788 4968
Vajolet	+39 0462 763292
Gardeccia	+39 0462 763152
Stella Alpina Spiz Pia	+39 0462 760349
Passo Principe	+39 339 4327101
Antermoia	+39 0462 602272
Alpe di Tires	+39 0471 727958
Micheluzzi	+39 0462 750050

Val di Fassa

Buffaure	+39 0462 764101
Baita Cuz	+39 0462 760354
Malga Crociffisso	+39 0462 764260
Baita Ciampìe	+39 337 459398
Baita alle Cascate	+39 330 841692
Passo San Nicolò	+39 0462 601466
Baita Monzoni	+39 337 452935
Valaccia	+39 0462 764922
Ciampac	+39 0462 600060
Baita Valeruz	+39 337 283 498

Fedaia Pass/Marmolada Group

Pian dei Fiacconi	+39 0462 601412
Punta Penia	+39 0462 601117
Passo Fedaia	+39 0437 722007
O.Falier	+39 0437 722005
Contrin	+39 0462 601101

Pordoi Pass

Forcella Pordoi	+39 0462 767500
Capanna Piz di Fassa	+39 0462 601723
Boè	+39 0471 847303
Padon	+39 0437 722002

Sella Pass

Carlo Valentini	+39 0462 601183
Passo Sella	+39 0471 795136
Sella Alm	+39 320 025 9925
Pian Schiavaneis	+39 0462 601338
Monti Pallidi	+39 0462 601337

Val Gardena and Alta Badia

Stevia	+39 347 266 7691
Col Raiser	+39 0471 796302
Fienze	+39 0471 796307
Franz Kostner	+39 333 875 9838
Jimmy	+39 0471 836776
Pisciadù/F.Cavazza	+39 0471 836292

Fanis

Santa Croce	+39 0471 839632
Lavarella	+39 0474 501079
Pederu	+39 0474 501086
Fanes	+39 0474 501097
Scotoni	+39 0471 847330

Valparola and Falzarego Passes

Lagazuoi	+39 340 719 5306
Valparola	+39 0436 866556
Dibona	+39 0436 860294
Giussani	+39 0436 5629
Pomedes	+39 0436 862061
Duca d'Aosta	+39 0436 2780
Ra Valles	+39 0436 3461
Col Druscie	+39 0436 862372

Cinque Torri

Averau	+39 0436 4660
Nuvolau	+39 0436 867938
Scoiattoli	+39 0436 867939
Cinque Torri	+39 0436 866853
Col Gallina	+39 0436 2939
Fedare	+39 0437 720182

Cortina d'Ampezzo

Albergo Fiames	+39 0436 2366
Son Forca	+39 0436 861822
Faloria	+39 0436 2737
Lorenzi	+39 0436 866196
A. Vandelli	+39 0435 39015

Misurina

Col de Varda	+39 0435 39041
Fonda Savio	+39 0435 39036

Tre Cime

Auronzo	+39 0435 39002
Lavaredo	+39 349 602 8675
Tre Cime/Locatelli	+39 0474 972002

Numbers beginning with 04 are landlines with an area code. There can be between 4 and 6 numbers following the four-digit area code. Numbers beginning with 3 are mobile numbers. All numbers are given with Italian dialling code +39, after which it is not necessary to remove the '0' of the area code.

Opening Times

Like much of Italy, most shops, supermarkets and services close for an extended lunch period, usually from 12pm or 1pm to 3pm. Sundays are still respected as the traditional 'rest day', so most amenities close for the entire day. The exceptions are the restaurants and rifugios, which remain open throughout the lunch period and during the weekend.

Supermarkets

Most of the major villages have a modest selection of supermarkets.

Corvara - Sport Kostner Conad

La Villa - De Spar

Arabba - Market Marilena, Anny Market

Selva - De Spar

Cortina - De Spar, La Cooperativa

Canazei - De Spar

Pozza di Fassa - Coop, Alimentari DA Martin

In most villages there is also a local butcher (macelleria), a bakery (panificio or panetteria) and sometimes an independent greengrocer (fruttivendolo).

Tourist Information

Each village has a tourist information office which provides excellent information on shops, services, accommodation and events in the area. They are also a good source of up-to-date information on route conditions, lift and road closures and the current weather forecast.

Corvara Tourist Office +39 0471 836176

La Villa Tourist Office +39 0471 847037

Arabba Tourist Office +39 0436 780019

Selva Tourist Office +39 0471 777900

Cortina Tourist Office +39 0436 869086

Canazei Tourist Office +39 0462 609500

Lifts

There is a 'Dolomiti Supersummer' card that accesses 90 lifts over twelve Dolomite valleys. The slightly confusingly named 'Hiking Up' option is most applicable to climbers and works on a points system, costing between €80 and €140 for a certain number of points. Each lift has a points value which is deducted from the card on each use, and the card is transferable so a party can buy one pass and share the points during their trip. Savings range from 20 - 35% on the cost of individual tickets, but the remaining value cannot be reimbursed at the end of a trip so if you are only intending on taking one or two lifts during the holiday it is usually more cost effective to pay as you go. For more see

www.dolomitisupersummer.com

Climbing Shops

Climbing, and in particular via ferrata, are very popular sports in the Dolomites and thus there are a number of excellent climbing shops in the area. The most comprehensive of these are:

Canazei - Sport Amplatz

Corvara - Sport Kostner

Cortina - Lacadelli K2 Sport

La Villa - Sport Tony

Other options are Sport Posch in Colfosco, Intersport in Santa Cristina, Sport Samont in Arabba, Lagazuoi Sport and Passion in San Cassiano, Quota 1224 in Cortina, Sport De Grande in Sottoguda below the Marmolada and numerous other outdoor clothing shops that sometimes stock a modest selection of climbing shoes or equipment.

For those travelling in from Venice or Treviso, just off the Treviso Sud motorway exit there is a large and excellent sport shop, Sportler, which also has an indoor (and outdoor) climbing wall. For those coming from the other direction, both Innsbruck and Brunico have Sportler branches.



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Craig and Michelle Young on the classic Cornici - South Arete (V-) - page 347 - on Torre Piccola di Falzarego. Photo: Mark Houston

Guiding Services

There are many qualified mountain guides operating in the Dolomites. A guided itinerary can be an excellent way of seeing the mountains for those with insufficient experience to feel safe attempting it alone, or indeed for those who simply wish to complete a route in the company of other people. Most of the guiding offices offer either tailored itineraries to suit a party or individual's specific requirements, or a set weekly programme of some of the most popular itineraries in the Dolomites. Options include trad climbing, modern multi-pitch sport routes, a day at a sport crag, via ferrata, glacier trekking, courses in rock climbing techniques, mountain biking, canyoning and children's programmes.

The set programmes often have a minimum (and maximum) group number, although all of the options are available to individuals as a private booking (and naturally at a higher cost).

Prices range from €90 - €350 per day, depending on the itinerary and the group number.

All of the Guides' offices can arrange for English-speaking guides on request, and more information can be found at the websites below:

Alta Badia Guides (Corvara) - www.altabadiaguides.com

Proguide (Corvara) - www.proguide.it

Guide Alpine Scuola di Alpinismo (Cortina) - www.guidecortina.com

Association of Mountain Guides (Val Gardena) - www.guidegardena.it

Guide Alpine Dolomiti (Val di Fassa) - www.guidalpinedolomiti.net

Guide Alpine Val di Fassa (Val di Fassa) - www.guidalpinedolomiti.net

Guide Tre Cime (Misurina) - www.guidetrecimedilavaredo.it

Cosley and Houston Alpine Guides (International) - www.cosleyhouston.com

Full Holidays

In addition to guides there are many companies which offer full holiday packages with various levels of walking, climbing and via ferrata on offer in addition to accommodation and guiding.

Collett's Mountain Holidays (Alta Badia) - www.colletts.co.uk (advert opposite)

Crystal (Selva) - www.crystalsummer.co.uk/holidays/italy/selva-val-gardena/

Dolomite Mountains - www.dolomitemountains.com

Holimites - www.holimites.com

Simply Dolomiti (Arabba) - www.simplydolomiti.com/en/summer-holidays/

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Road Biking

Road biking has long been an integral part of the Dolomites and numerous prestigious races take place up the winding and tortuous passes. Apart from the Giro d'Italia, which usually passes through parts of the Dolomites and in particular often features a famous stage by the Tre Cime, the Sella Ronda and the Maratona dles Dolomites see thousands of cyclists taking to the passes. The roads are closed during the races making travel between areas difficult unless you start very early, so it is worth checking the race schedules before planning a climb in another valley.



The Sella Ronda Bike Day - 63km/2100m ascent
 One of the most popular routes in the area, the Sella Ronda Bike Day is a non-competitive event which takes place in mid June. Starting in Santa Cristina, the roads are closed for the day and the route follows the four passes in an anti-clockwise direction, with a total length of 63km with a total of approximately 2100m ascent. No registration is necessary.

The Maratona dles Dolomites - 138km/4230m ascent
 An immensely popular competitive but non-professional race, the full Maratona route is 138km long with a total ascent of 4230m, (although shorter routes run at 106km/3130m and 55km/1780m) and takes place in the first week of July. Registration is essential because there are usually over 30,000 applicants for just 9000 places and selection is via a lottery so there is no guarantee of a spot. Many tour operators offer specific packages for the race which must be booked well in advance but do guarantee entry to the competition.

Other suggested routes:

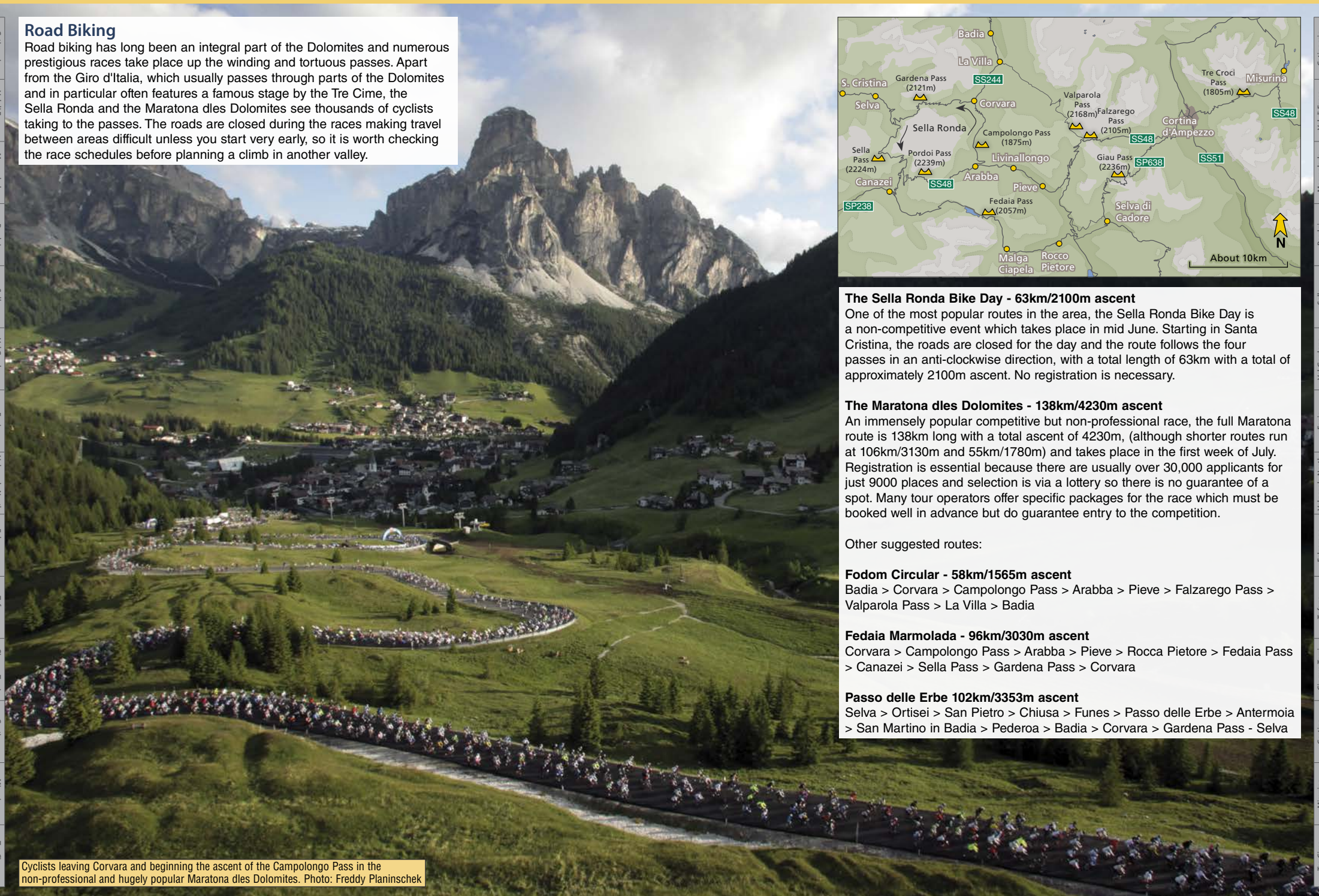
Fodom Circular - 58km/1565m ascent
 Badia > Corvara > Campolongo Pass > Arabba > Pieve > Falzarego Pass > Valparola Pass > La Villa > Badia

Fedaiia Marmolada - 96km/3030m ascent
 Corvara > Campolongo Pass > Arabba > Pieve > Rocca Pietore > Fedaiia Pass > Canazei > Sella Pass > Gardena Pass > Corvara

Passo delle Erbe 102km/3353m ascent
 Selva > Ortisei > San Pietro > Chiusa > Funes > Passo delle Erbe > Antermoia > San Martino in Badia > Pederoa > Badia > Corvara > Gardena Pass - Selva

Catnaccio
 Val di Fassa
 Marmolada
 Pordoi
 Sella
 Val Gardena
 Fanes
 Valparola North
 Falzarego
 Tofana
 Cinque Torri
 Cortina
 Misurina
 Tre Cime

Catnaccio
 Val di Fassa
 Marmolada
 Pordoi
 Sella
 Val Gardena
 Fanes
 Valparola North
 Falzarego
 Tofana
 Cinque Torri
 Cortina
 Misurina
 Tre Cime



Cyclists leaving Corvara and beginning the ascent of the Campolongo Pass in the non-professional and hugely popular Maratona dles Dolomites. Photo: Freddy Planinschek

Mountain Biking

Mountain biking has increased hugely in popularity and considerable efforts are being made to promote the sport in the area. Many of the trails follow the winter ski pistes, and some of the tours detailed below make full use of these. A bike-specific Dolomiti Supersummer lift pass, 'Biking up', gives access to the lifts with bike transport, with prices ranging from €75 and €100 euros for 3 - 5 days.

The Sella Ronda Hero - 84km/4300m ascent

The road-biking equivalent of the Maratona - a hard endurance test covering between 62-84km and 3300-4300m, depending on your chosen route. It takes place in mid June, usually a day or two before or after the Sella Ronda Bike Day, and early registration is essential as only 20% of the places are allocated to non-Italian nationals. Naturally this route can be biked at any time, not just as part of the race.

The Sella Ronda Downhill

Taking advantage of the lift system, this route completes the Sella Ronda yet reduces the total ascent to between 450-900m, depending on the direction. However officially the route must be guided in order to access the Sella Ronda lifts.

Other suggested routes:

Below Santa Croce - 18km, 800m ascent

Easy but scenic route below the Fanes massif and the Sas dla Crusc face. Predominantly on gravel tracks.

Sas dla Crusc - 56km, 1860m

Cycle from Badia to Pederu then onto the Fanes massif, then downhill into San Cassiano and back along the river to Badia. Gravel tracks and bike trails.

There are also downhill-specific trails at various 'bike resorts' such as Belvedere Canazei and Buffaure Pozza di Fassa. These are open from mid June to mid September and cost around €26 for a day pass (multi-day passes available), with numerous downhill trails complete with jumps, side-slips and even a giant air bag.



Becki Vale mountain biking along the Padon Ridge with superb views of the Marmolada North Face. Photo: Richard Manterfield

Walking

The walking in the Dolomites is spectacular with well-marked paths and idyllic mountain rifugios making it a good option for a break from climbing.

Paragliding

For a different perspective over the mountains, paragliding is an interesting option and can be done from many of the villages in the Dolomites, especially Corvara and Campitello. Col Rodella is a particularly popular spot for enthusiasts, and tandem flights are available for the uninitiated.

Horse Riding

Horse riding is another way of seeing the mountains, with treks and lessons available from Badia, Longiarù, San Cassiano, Campitello and Santa Cristina.

Wet Weather Options

One of the most relaxing wet weather options is taking advantage of the many spa facilities in the boutique hotels. Many of these are open to non-residents and are an indulgent way to rest aching muscles and generally get pampered.

There are numerous cultural options with excellent museums such as the **Messner Mountain Museum** in Brunico, the **South Tyrolean Museum of Archeology** - home of Otzi the ice man - in Bolzano, and the two Ladin museums in San Martino in Badia and San Cassiano. The three **Regole di Cortina** museums - Paleontology, Ethnography and Modern Art - offer interesting insights into the history of the rocks themselves and the heritage of the people who lived around them.

Anyone with an interest in more recent history may be interested in the **First World War Museum** at the Tre Sassi Fort on the Valparola Pass or at the Marmolada mid station.

Indoor Climbing

Finally for those who can't bear to go a day without training, there is a small selection of indoor climbing walls scattered around the Dolomites.

Brunico +39 0474 555 722 (managed by tourist office)

Selva +39 0471 794133

San Cassiano +39 0471 849486 (at Hotel Störes)

Campitello +39 347 9309289

Ortisei +39 0471 797275

Santa Cristina +39 0471 777800

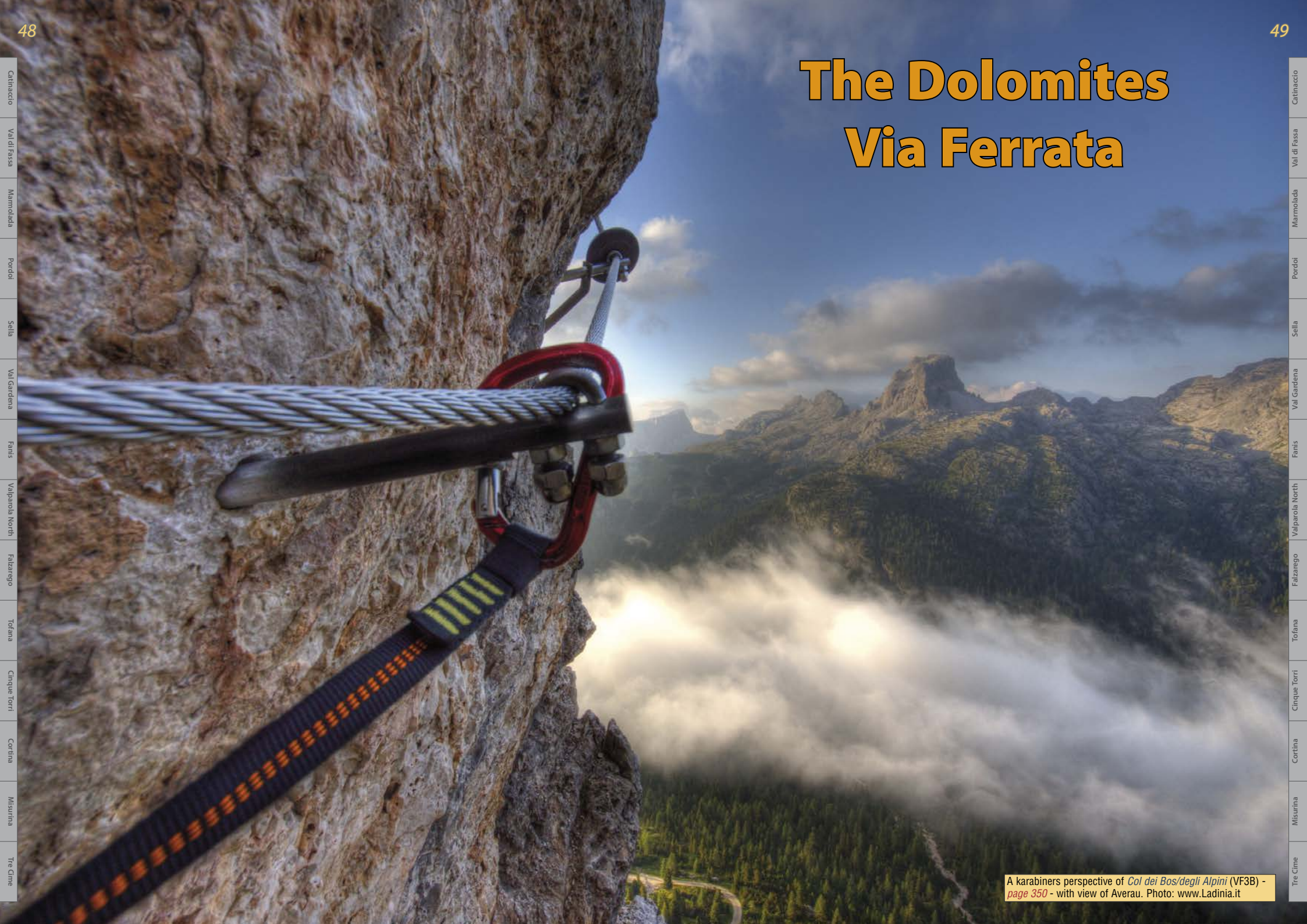


Walking one of the many trails in the Dolomites, with views of the beautiful Lago di Lagaccio and Fanis. Photo: Collett's Mountain Holidays

The Dolomites Via Ferrata

- Catinaccio
- Vai di Fassa
- Marmolada
- Pordoi
- Sella
- Vai Gardena
- Fanis
- Valparola North
- Falzarego
- Tofana
- Cinque Torri
- Cortina
- Misurina
- Tre Cime

- Catinaccio
- Vai di Fassa
- Marmolada
- Pordoi
- Sella
- Vai Gardena
- Fanis
- Valparola North
- Falzarego
- Tofana
- Cinque Torri
- Cortina
- Misurina
- Tre Cime



A karabiners perspective of *Col dei Bos/degli Alpini (VF3B)* - page 350 - with view of Averau. Photo: www.Ladinia.it

What is a Via Ferrata?

In its most basic form a via ferrata consists of a metal (originally iron - now more commonly steel) wire that is connected to the surrounding rock at numerous intervals. The purpose of this wire is twofold:

- 1) It provides a fixed form of climbing protection which climbers can physically attach themselves to.
- 2) It provides an artificial aid for climbers who can use the wire for assistance throughout the route.

Though the metal wire is the fundamental feature of all via ferrata, there are also numerous secondary elements employed as additional artificial aid. These can include (although are not limited to) stemples (large staples in the rock), steps, ladders, bridges and walkways.

Origins of the Name

The term 'via ferrata' is used in most languages with the exception of German, which uses 'Klettersteig' (climbing path). 'Via ferrata' originates from 'via attrezzata', which means 'fully equipped road/route'. Common English translations cite 'iron way', 'iron road' or 'iron path', derived from 'ferro', meaning iron. In Italian the plural is 'via ferrate', whilst in English both 'via ferrata' and 'via ferratas' are used interchangeably.

For the purposes of this guidebook 'via ferrata' will be used to describe both the plural and singular forms.

Via Ferrata History

Whilst the construction of via ferrata is often attributed to the First World War there are several routes that predate 1914. There is some debate as to which is the oldest via ferrata in the Dolomites, though it is generally accepted to be either the *Marmolada West Ridge* or *Delle Mèsules* (Possnecker Path), with some reports of the former being constructed as early as 1903.

Nevertheless it was the arrival of the First World War to the Dolomite mountains (see page 10) that provided the catalyst for construction of via ferrata en masse. Both the Italian and Austro-Hungarian armies in the area found the wires invaluable for moving men and supplies through previously inaccessible areas. Via ferrata were constructed to defend key positions and were often the site of vicious fighting. The legacy of this terrible conflict can still be witnessed on many of the routes, with the tunnels (*Giovanni Lipella*), trenches (*Eterna Brigata Cadore*), officer quarters (*Ivano Dibona*), lookout positions (*Delle Scalette*), field hospitals (*Col dei Bos/Degli Alpini* and *Ettore Bovero*) and even an original field gun (*Via delle Trincee - La Mesola*) still in evidence today.

Following the war many of the via ferrata were re-equipped by CAI (Club Alpino Italiano) and used as a means of attracting tourists to the area. This was a slow process until the 1950s which saw an explosion in tourism to the area. This sudden influx of visitors rapidly led to increased environmental concerns and led to the expansion being curtailed in favour of just maintaining the pre-existing routes.

More recently some new via ferrata have been constructed in the area, the first 'modern' route being *Sandro Pertini*. Built in Vallunga, an area covered under the EU's 'Natura 2000' environmental protection policy, the route was shrouded in controversy as many felt the route had been built purely to commercial ends with a disregard for the environmental impact. The route was closed temporarily before being officially sanctioned by the EU in 2008, setting a precedent for other new routes to be built in the area. *Ski Club 18* above Cortina was constructed in 2009 to 'enrich the mountaineering tradition' of the area, and named after the Rome ski club of the same name, whilst *Magnifici Quattro* in the Van San Nicolò follows part of a First World War route and was named in honour of four mountain rescue members who were tragically killed in an avalanche whilst attempting a rescue in 2009.

Via Ferrata Today

Today the Dolomites have the highest concentration of via ferrata in the world. This incredible network of historic and modern routes allows those with no technical climbing expertise to experience some phenomenal exposure and situations whilst reaching otherwise inaccessible peaks.

Climbers making their way up the initial ladder of *Ivano Dibona* (VF2B) - page 422.

Catinaccio
Val di Fassa
Marmolada
Pordoi
Sella
Val Gardena
Fanis
Valparola North
Falzarego
Tofana
Cinque Torri
Cortina
Misurina
Tre Cime

Catinaccio
Val di Fassa
Marmolada
Pordoi
Sella
Val Gardena
Fanis
Valparola North
Falzarego
Tofana
Cinque Torri
Cortina
Misurina
Tre Cime

Via Ferrata Grades

There are numerous grading systems used for via ferrata and a European standard system has yet to emerge.

This book will use the grading found in the Smith/Fletcher book, 'Via Ferratas of the Italian Dolomites' with a few subtle changes.

The Smith/Fletcher System

This system uses a dual numeric and alphabetic grading classification.

The number denotes the technical difficulty of the route in question, from a scale of 1-6 (the original Smith/Fletcher scale ran from 1-5 but the construction of modern high-grade via ferrata such as *Magnifici Quattro* has led to the introduction of a grade 6).

A grade 1 via ferrata takes the form of a path with wire protection - these haven't been included in this book. A grade 6 is steep or even moderately overhanging in parts.

The second alphabetic grade represents the 'seriousness' of the route and runs from A-C. This grade is based on the remoteness (the distance to facilities that could offer aid and support) of the via ferrata and the possibility to retreat or escape from the via ferrata if circumstances require. A grade 'A' is given to a route close to civilisation with good escape possibilities such as *Cir Spitz V*. A grade 'C' is reserved for remote via ferrata with limited possibilities for retreat once committed, such as *Laurenzi Molignon*.

In addition to the Smith/Fletcher A-C grading, a seriousness grade of 'D' has been added exclusively for routes on the Marmolada that require a glacier crossing.

In addition to the Smith/Fletcher A-C grading, a seriousness grade of 'D' has been added exclusively for routes on the Marmolada that require a glacier crossing.

Rockfax Colour Codes

The Rockfax colour codes are an attempt to equalise the difficulty level across different styles and types of climbing. If you are operating at the 'Orange Spot' level on trad climbs, then you should be able to attempt Orange Spot sport routes, boulder problems and via ferrata. The hardest via ferrata can be thought of as being roughly equivalent to a rock climb of about **VI, HVS, 5+** in difficulty level.

Via Ferrata Equipment

Harness - A sit, or full body, harness depending on personal preference.

Helmet - It is important to wear a helmet on via ferrata, primarily because of the risk of rockfall from parties above you.



Via Ferrata Lanyards (above) - These can be hired or bought from most of the sport shops in the Dolomites. They come in many different makes and designs, although there have been a number of recalls recently of via ferrata lanyards so it is worth doing some prior research. It is important not to create your own via ferrata lanyards using slings, static or dynamic rope because of the potentially huge fall factors that can be generated.

Via Ferrata Timing

Each via ferrata is listed with an approach time and an on route 'VF' time (note that the descent time is not included). The times given in this guidebook are a bit more generous than those found in other guidebooks for the area. Having said that, it is important to start small and see how your times compare to those found in the book.



Via ferrata times

Via Ferrata Etiquette

- 1) Try and leave one section of wire between yourself and other climbers to minimise the risk of a chain reaction in the case of a fall.
- 2) Always remain clipped into the wire with at least one lanyard.
- 3) If you are overtaking wait until a safe section to do so.
- 4) Warn climbers below you in the event of rockfall:

English - 'Below'

Italian - 'Sassi'

German - 'Achtung'



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		Tick	VF2	VF3	VF4	VF5	VF6	Approach Time	Ascent Time	Page
Catinaccio/Rosengarten	Masare and Roda de Vael	<input type="checkbox"/>	2B					75 min	2-5 hours	72
	Catinaccio d'Antermoia	<input type="checkbox"/>	2B					60 min	1-2 hours	90
	Sentiero Massimiliano	<input type="checkbox"/>	2B					2.5 hours	1-3 hours	94
	Laurenzi - Molignon	<input type="checkbox"/>			4C			3 hours	3-5 hours	96
Val di Fassa	Franco Gadotti	<input type="checkbox"/>	2C					75 min	2-4 hours	100
	Magnifici Quattro	<input type="checkbox"/>				6B		30 min	2-4 hours	102
	Col Ombert/Kaiserjeger	<input type="checkbox"/>			4C			2 hours	1-2 hours	104
	Dei Finanziari/Colac	<input type="checkbox"/>		3C				20 min	1-2 hours	110
Marmolada	Marmolada West Ridge	<input type="checkbox"/>		3D				90 min	1-2 hours	122
	Eterna Brigata Cadore	<input type="checkbox"/>			4D			60 min	3-5 hours	124
Pordoi Pass	Via delle Trincee/La Mesola	<input type="checkbox"/>			4B			20 min	3-5 hours	162
	Cesare Piazzetta - Piz Boe	<input type="checkbox"/>				5C		1.5 hours	2-3 hours	164
Sella Pass	Delle Mèsules/Possnecker	<input type="checkbox"/>				4C		20 min	3-5 hours	207
	Col Rodella	<input type="checkbox"/>		3A				40 min	1 hour	209

		Tick	VF2	VF3	VF4	VF5	VF6	Approach Time	Ascent Time	Page
Val Gardena and Alta Badia	Sass Rigais	<input type="checkbox"/>	2B					2 hours	3-5 hours	244
	Sandro Pertini	<input type="checkbox"/>			4B			20 min	1-3 hours	248
	Piz da Cir V	<input type="checkbox"/>	2A					60 min	1-2 hours	258
	Brigata Tridentina	<input type="checkbox"/>		3B				10 min	3-5 hours	272
Falzarego Pass	Piz da Lech	<input type="checkbox"/>		3B				15 min	2-3 hours	288
	Tomaselli	<input type="checkbox"/>			4C			90 min	1-2 hours	324
	Col dei Bos/degli Alpini	<input type="checkbox"/>		3B				30 min	1-2 hours	350
	Giovanni Lipella	<input type="checkbox"/>			4C			60 min	3-5 hours	360
Cinque Torre	Punta Anna and Lamon/Formenton	<input type="checkbox"/>				5B		10 min	5-8 hours	368
	Averau	<input type="checkbox"/>	2A					20 min	1-2 hours	408
	Ettore Bovero	<input type="checkbox"/>		3B				90 min	1-2 hours	414
	Michielli Strobel	<input type="checkbox"/>		3B				40 min	2-4 hours	418
Cortina and Ampezzo Basin	Ivano Dibona	<input type="checkbox"/>	2B					1 min	4-6 hours	422
	Marino Bianchi	<input type="checkbox"/>	2B					2 min	1-3 hours	424
	Ski Club 18	<input type="checkbox"/>				5B		50 min	1-3 hours	426
	Sorapiss Circuit	<input type="checkbox"/>		3C				75 min	14-18 hours	428
Misurina	Merlone - Cima del Cadin	<input type="checkbox"/>		3B				100 min	1-2 hours	446
	Sentiero de Luca/Innerkofler	<input type="checkbox"/>	2B					2 hours	2-4 hours	486
Tre Cime	Delle Scalette	<input type="checkbox"/>		3B				2 hours	1-2 hours	488

The Dolomites Climbing

Light and dark on Cima Piccola as Jesse Mattner leads *Muro Giallo/ Gelbe Mauer (Yellow Wall)* (7a+) - page 461 - Photo: Richard Felderer

On the majority of the trad routes in this guide there is usually a variety of fixed gear of varying quality, most notably on the crux pitches which often contain a lot of pegs. However these are rarely found in sufficient number to protect the entire climb and some of the climbs can be very run out. Thus in addition to your rock shoes, helmet, harness and chalk bag you will need an extensive (and expensive!) range of other gear.

Runners

The length of many of the routes means a fairly light rack is essential if aiming to move quickly. A typical multi-pitch rack will be based around a set of wires with a few duplicates in the smaller sizes, and three to four medium-sized cams. Many people find a set of tri-cams particularly useful for placing in the pockets found in dolomite rock. For those attempting the harder climbs a set of micro nuts and cams are useful, whilst parties attempting some of the extreme routes will benefit from taking a few skyhooks.

Slings

In addition to this metalware, you will also need a good number of slings for the numerous threads and for building fast and efficient belays. Some tat can also be useful for equalising abseil anchors (don't be afraid to take a knife to some of the stations and clear out old tat).

A set of prusiks is mandatory for the many traverses and abseil descents. A belay plate that can operate in 'guide mode' is advisable to assist with moving quickly. Finally a good number of extenders or 'quickdraws' of varying lengths is advised to help keep rope drag to a minimum. The sport climbs need between 12 and 18 quickdraws depending on their length.

Pegs/Pitons

From a British and increasingly modern climbing perspective the placing of pegs on summer Alpine rock routes should be avoided if possible. On new routes, or climbs of extreme difficulty, it may be necessary, but for the majority of routes in this book they are not required.

It could be argued that a set of pegs is a good idea as a safety precaution for retreat from the less well-travelled routes on the Marmolada South Face and other faces of a similar scale; ultimately this is up to individual parties to decide.

Ropes

Trad - A pair of double ropes (either 50m or 60m) is required for most of the routes in this book. This is because of the frequent need to make large abseils and to reduce rope drag.

Sport routes - A single rope of at least 60m is recommended for single pitch sport climbing in the Dolomites. A 70m rope is useful for Tridentina crag and Sass Dlacia, whilst an 80m rope is required for many of the (hard) routes at Eiszeit. For much of the multi-pitch sport a pair of 60m doubles is recommended for the added versatility when abseiling.

Shoes

Though choosing climbing footwear may seem relatively simple, the hot weather and length of the routes means that a comfortable pair of rock shoes is essential. Velcro fastenings are useful so the shoes can easily be slipped off at stances, although make sure you don't lose them on hanging belays! It is also worth paying some thought to your approach shoes. The steep descents, often on scree, are far more comfortable in a pair of lightweight approach shoes than tight climbing shoes. Clip them to the back of your harness or pop them in your bag; you will be glad you did.

Bivvy Gear

Some of the routes covered in this book, particularly on the South Face of the Marmolada, are so long that it is normal to make two-day ascents. If you are planning to bivvy on the face you will need other gear such as extra warm clothing or a sleeping bag, extra food and plenty of water. It should be noted though that climbs in the Dolomites generally benefit from a fast and light approach, so avoiding a bivvy where possible is to be recommended. Remember, if you take everything you may need, it will slow you down so much that you will probably end up using it.

Other Gear

The scale of the routes found in the Dolomites means that most parties choose to climb with a rucksack. It is generally better for both the leader and second to climb with a small sack, rather than loading up the second with a heavy bag (which quickly gets tiring). Some food and water as well as a lightweight windproof/waterproof layer is advised. A headtorch for each climber should be included for all climbs of moderate length and longer - attempting to abseil in the dark is not fun! A reliable mobile phone with a good battery for emergencies is recommended.



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The rock climbs in this book are graded using two different systems depending on whether they are a trad or a sport route (see page 52 for via ferrata grades).

Trad Grade

UIAA is the standard grading system used throughout the Italian Dolomites and is used in this guide for 'trad routes' - these are routes where the majority of the protection is hand-placed and/or contains fluctuating levels of fixed protection (pegs or bolts).

For routes of extreme difficulty (generally VIII and above) a second sport grade has also been provided as a useful point of reference for climbers operating at that level.

The table to the right gives an approximate grade translation. It should be noted that, unlike the British system, the UIAA grading system only takes into account the technical difficulty of the route and not the objective danger. Climbs that are particularly run-out have been detailed where possible in the route description and are denoted with the fluttery heart symbol. This is particularly the case on the Marmolada South Face, The North Face of the 2nd Sella Tower and the Messner Slabs.

Sport Grade

Sport grades are used for single and multi-pitch sport climbing. These routes rely for the most part on fixed bolts for protection. On some of the harder routes easier pitches may not be fully bolted and a small rack of gear might be required to supplement the spaced fixed protection.

This is denoted in the route description with the 'nut' symbol.

Aid Grades

A few routes have an 'Aid Grade' given - A0, A1, A2. This usually indicates routes where a single point of aid can be used to bypass a short difficult section and bring the whole route down to a more manageable level. The extra grade given with the aid grades denotes the maximum difficulty level required in addition to the aid point. Some routes have a third grade given which is for the route when climbed totally free.

ROUTE GRADES				
UIAA	Sport Grade	BRITISH TRAD GRADE		USA
I	1	Mod <i>Moderate</i>		5.1
II	2	Diff <i>Difficult</i>		5.2
III	2+		VDiff <i>Very Difficult</i>	5.3
III+	3-			5.4
IV	3		HVD <i>Hard Very Difficult</i>	5.5
IV+	3+	Sev <i>Severe</i>		5.6
V	4		BOLD 3c HS 4a 4b SAFE	5.7
V+	4+		BOLD 4a VS 5a SAFE	5.8
VI	5		BOLD 4b HVS 5b SAFE	5.9
VI-	5+	BOLD 5a E1 5c SAFE		5.10a
VI+	6a		BOLD 5a E2 6a SAFE	5.10b
VII-	6a+		BOLD 5b E3 6a SAFE	5.10c
VII	6b			5.10d
VII+	6b+		BOLD 5c E4 6a SAFE	5.11a
VIII-	6c			5.11b
VIII+	6c+		BOLD 6a E5 6c SAFE	5.11c
VIII	7a	BOLD 6b SAFE		5.11d
VIII+	7a+			5.12a
IX-	7b	BOLD 6c SAFE	BOLD 6c SAFE	5.12b
IX+	7b+			5.12c
IX	7c	BOLD 6c SAFE	BOLD 6c SAFE	5.12d
IX+	7c+			5.13a
X-	8a		BOLD 7a E8 7a SAFE	5.13b
X	8a+			5.13c
X+	8b		BOLD 7a E9 7a SAFE	5.13d
X+	8b+			5.14a
XI-	8c		BOLD 7b E10 7b SAFE	5.14b
XI	8c+			5.14c
XI+	9a			5.14d
XI+	9a+			5.15a

Colour Coding

The routes are given a colour-coded dot corresponding to a grade band. The colour represents a level that a climber should be happy at, hence sport routes tend to be technically harder than the equivalent coloured trad routes because the climber doesn't need to worry about the protection.

- 1 Up to IV - Up to 4+
- 2 IV to VI - 5 to 6a+
- 3 VI+ to VII - 6b to 7a
- 4 VII+ or 7a+ and above

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A party weaving between the spectacular roofs on *Labirinto Giallo* (6c) - page 187 - at Piz Ciavazes.

Route Finding

Route finding in the Dolomites is notoriously difficult, primarily because routes often don't follow the main line of weakness as they do on other rock types such as granite. To further confuse things, there are sometimes many possible variants, even on the classic climbs. Be wary of blindly following a line of pegs as this may well be a harder variant, project route, or indeed a failed attempt at a new route. Furthermore the scale of the climbs gives you more opportunities to go wrong, especially on the easier sections where the line is less crucial. It is worth spending some time on the valley floor, committing the route line to memory and mentally marking key features; an obvious-looking line seen from the ground is nearly always less apparent once on the route.

Route Timing

Each topo page has an 'approach time' and a 'climb time' listed in the symbols (right). These are general times for routes on that particular page. The times given in this guidebook are a bit more

generous than those found in other guidebooks for the area. Having said that, it is important to start small and see how your climbing times compare to those found in the book.

The shorter of the two climbing times given assumes the party will be moving together on the easier sections, that their multi-pitch ropework is efficient and that there are no route finding complications. It goes without saying that this will not always be the case and thus it is important to allow an adequate amount of time to complete the route.

It is also important to remember that the times provided don't include the descents, which can be complex involving multiple abseils. Where this is the case it is not uncommon for the descent to take nearly as long as the climb.

Finally, particularly in August, thunderstorms are common in the late afternoon/evening, thus an early start is recommended to make the best of the weather. If you're planning on using a lift for your descent it is worth checking what time the final lift down is (this often changes through the season).



Route times



Via ferrata times

		Trad Routes	Sport Routes	up to IV up to 4+	IV+ to VI 5 to 6a+	VI+ to VII 6b to 7a	VII+ up 7a+ up	Approach	Sun	Sheltered	Summary	Page
Catinaccio/Rosengarten	Porte Neigre	-	2	▫	2	▫	▫	30 min			This face features two excellent modern bolted routes, directly beneath Rifugio Preuss. It receives lots of sun and is climbable early and late into the season.	74
	Cima Catinaccio	1	-	▫	1	▫	▫	80 min			The big wall of the Catinaccio Group. The <i>Steger</i> route that takes the prominent line of cracks up the centre of the east face is a classic and not to be underestimated.	76
	Punta Emma	4	-	▫	4	▫	▫	50 min			A superb and popular tower adjacent to Rifugios Preuss and Vajolet that features a number of classic lines. The moderate length of the routes, coupled with the easy access means it can get busy during peak season.	78
	Vajolet Towers	7	-	1	5	1	▫	80 - 90 min			One of the most famous crags in the Dolomites with a number of superb short and classic trad climbs, often at an amenable grade. Don't expect peace and quiet - in peak season the towers are overrun making an early start essential.	84
V. de Fassa	Penia di Canazei	-	25	1	11	7	6	3 - 4 min			This superb little sport crag is ideal as an evening venue, or for those after a relaxing day. The conglomerate rock provides a different climbing experience to the surrounding area.	106
Fedaia Pass/Marmolada	Passo Fedaia	-	18	13	5	▫	▫	20 min			An ideal introductory venue featuring a number of amenable single pitch sport routes. Situated above the Fedaia reservoir this quiet crag is excellent providing you're not looking for anything other than routes at an easier grade.	118
	Pian dei Fiacconi	-	12	2	7	3	▫	10 min			Located on the north side of the Marmolada, directly beneath the glacier, this surreal crag is ideal for those looking for something a bit off the beaten track. Technical climbing on rock that still needs a little cleaning.	120
	Marmolada South Face	8	-	▫	1	5	2	60 - 120 min			The 'Silver Face' can be confidently recommended as one of the best big walls in the world. With routes up to 38 pitches in length everything on this face is a major undertaking and careful preparation and good conditions are required.	134
Pordoi Pass	Sass Pordoi South Face	4	-	1	3	▫	▫	50 min			Despite the fairly long approach, the sunny south face of Sass Pordoi is exceptionally popular and comes into condition early into the season. Whilst <i>Via Maria/Mariakante</i> is the classic, all of the routes on this face are excellent.	166
Sella Pass	Sass Pordoi Northwest Face	3	-	1	2	▫	▫	50 min			This huge face is home to the <i>Fedele</i> , arguably one of the best IV+ in the Dolomites. Just be sure to wait for a dry period before your attempt.	172
	Piz Ciavazes	13	42	8	17	19	11	15 - 20 min			One of the most popular faces in the Dolomites and with good reason. There are excellent moderate length trad and multi-pitch sport routes of every grade. The sunny face comes into condition early into the season.	176
	Sella Towers	12	2	▫	10	4	▫	15 min			The three Sella Towers offer a huge array of multi-pitch trad and some sport climbing of varying lengths and grades, in a superb environment. The 1st Tower comes into condition the earliest, but is also the busiest.	194
	Città dei Sassi	1	164	34	55	61	15	5 - 20 min			The 'City of Rocks' is one of the gems of single pitch sport climbing in the Dolomites, offering a huge array of routes on the many faces of the scattered boulders. Despite being popular there is so much to go at here it is easy to find solitude.	210
Val Gardena	Odle/Geisler Group	6	-	4	3	▫	▫	60 - 70 min			Located above the beautiful Stevia plateau, this group of peaks has some great long climbs and, despite having modest grades, often require good mountaineering experience as route finding is difficult and many of the descents are complex.	238
	Frea	-	73	3	22	32	16	10 - 15 min			Arguably the Val Gardena's most famous sport crag, featuring a good range of grades on excellent rock. The crag suffers from seepage immediately after heavy rainfall.	250
	Tridentina Crag and Eiszeit	2	77	▫	5	29	45	5 - 15 min			A superb pair of sport crags that are amongst the best in the Dolomites. They are both fairly difficult however and you will need to be climbing at least 6b to fully appreciate them. It is possible to climb at Tridentina crag during light rain.	260
	Torre Brunico and Mur de Pisciadù	-	5	▫	▫	3	2	30 min			Often overlooked, this face and tower provide some of the best multi-pitch sport climbing in the region. Because of the high altitude and north-facing aspect it can be one of the coldest spots in the area but it is brilliant for a hot day.	268
	Oscura della Luna	-	6	▫	3	3	▫	30 min			The aptly named 'Dark Side of the Moon' has some good and modestly graded multi-pitch sport routes. Just be sure to wait for a dry period before attempting them.	276
	Sas Ciampac	2	1	▫	2	1	▫	50 min			The sunny south face of Sas Ciampac features some beautifully-situated classic trad routes as well as a newly bolted 17 pitch sport route. The relatively long approach ensures you will nearly always find solitude here.	278
	Vallon	7	-	2	5	▫	1	10 - 15 min			Conveniently accessed using the Boè gondola out of Corvara, this horseshoe corrie features a number of classic chimney routes and a few harder face climbs. Because of the altitude the area can hold snow late into the season.	282

		Trad Routes	Sport Routes	up to IV up to 4+	IV+ to VI 5 to 6a+	VI+ to VII 6b to 7a	VII+ up 7a+ up		Approach	Sun	Sheltered		Page
Fanis	Sas dla Crusc/Sasso della Croce	4	-	□	□	3	1		90 min			Featuring the <i>Grande Muro</i> , one of the best routes in the Dolomites, this impressive wall has a number of tough but superb trad climbs.	292
	Sasso delle Nove/Sass de les Nu	4	-	1	3	□	□		130 min			This strange crag is recommended for those looking for solitude and something a bit different away from the beaten track. The long and tiring approach is more than compensated for by the climbing, just make sure you have a confident leader.	296
P.Fanes Lagazuoi	Sass D'Iacia	-	203	4	19	97	83		10 - 25 min			One of the largest sport crags in the area offering single and multi-pitch sport. The surrounding woodland makes the site a good destination for hot days.	302
	Punte di Fanes and Lagazuoi Grande	3	-	□	2	1	□		45 - 100 min			The west faces of Cima del Lago, Cima Scotoni and Lagazuoi Nord retain a fantastically remote feel and are highly recommended in peak season if you wish to escape the crowds. All host superb trad routes of varying difficulties.	318
Falzarego Pass	Sass de Stria/Hexenstein	1	29	9	19	1	1		5 min			The <i>South Arete</i> of Sass de Stria is one of the most well-travelled routes in the Dolomites, offering a perfect introduction to multi-pitch climbing. The neighbouring Sass de Stria sport crag is equally popular, with many good low-grade routes.	334
	Lagazuoi Piccolo	10	-	3	7	□	□		20 - 30 min			Whilst arguably more famous for its First World War heritage, Lagazuoi Piccolo also boasts a number of short yet enjoyable trad climbs.	336
	Falzarego Towers	5	-	1	4	□	□		30 min			These two towers are only of modest stature but are incredibly popular and with good reason. The classic <i>Comici - South Arete</i> is particularly worth seeking out, just don't expect to get this one to yourself!	345
	Col dei Bos	4	-	2	3	□	□		25 - 30 min			Often overshadowed by the neighbouring Tofana di Rozes, this sunny south face, with its many enjoyable moderate length trad routes, deserve more recognition.	348
Tofana Group	Tofana di Rozes	3	3	□	3	3	1		20 - 60 min			A Dolomites big wall with a fearsome reputation. The central pillar of Pilastro di Rozes is of the same scale as the north face of Cima Grande only with far less hype. If you're up to it <i>Via Costantini-Apollonio</i> or <i>Sognando l'Aurora</i> are utterly superb.	358
Cinque Torri	Cinque Torri	23	110	18	48	40	27		5 - 20 min			The five towers of Cinque Torri feature trad and sport routes of all lengths and grades. This is a must-visit spot for anyone in this beautiful area, just beware that it can get busy during peak season.	374
	Averau	1	-	□	1	□	□		15 - 20 min			Whilst Averau is primarily renowned for its easy via ferrata and stunning panoramic views from the summit, the <i>Alverà</i> route also has a good reputation and is well worth seeking out in you are in the area.	406
Cortina Basin	Punta Fiammes	3	-	1	2	□	1		40 - 120 min			Punta Fiammes is home to the classic <i>Spigolo Jori/Fiammes Arete</i> , which can be seen from the centre of Cortina itself. The face comes into condition early, and the long and complicated approach helps to moderate the amount of traffic.	416
Misurina	Monte Popena Basso	5	-	2	2	1	□		45 min			This small face comes into condition early in the season and makes for a pleasant half day venue.	432
	Punta Col de Varda	2	-	□	2	□	□		30 min			This small tower, perched above Lago di Misurina, is easily accessed via the Col de Varda chairlift and features another classic Comici offering.	436
	Torre Wundt	1	-	1	□	□	□		70 min			A classic and popular tower perched below the superbly situated Rifugio Fonda Savio.	438
	Il Gobbo, Torre Leo and del Diavolo	1	-	1	1	□	□		120 min			This trio of towers is well worth the long approach for some unusual and engaging traditional routes.	443
Tre Cime	Cima Grande West and South Faces	2	-	1	2	□	□		45 - 60 min			The west face of Cima Grande features the classic <i>Düfler Corner</i> , while the south face hosts the <i>Normal Route</i> up this much sought after peak. Both are susceptible to holding snow and are best tackled in mid season to late season.	454
	Cima Piccola	3	1	□	□	3	1		45 min			This impressive tower contains several excellent trad and multi-pitch sport routes. Though the climbs come into condition quickly the descent gullies often hold snow late into the season.	458
	Punta Frida	3	1	□	2	2	□		50 min			The most understated of the Tre Cime peaks yet still well worth seeking out for the routes on the southeast face. The sunny aspect and easy descents mean the climbs here are often some of the first to come into condition in the immediate area.	464
	Cima Piccolissima	2	1	□	1	1	1		50 min			The smallest of the main towers at the Tre Cime. The <i>Cassin</i> on the southeast face is a good preparation climb for parties considering the north faces of Cima Grande or Ovest. The <i>Preuss Chimney</i> on the north side is also superb.	468
	Cima Grande North Face	4	1	□	1	□	4		50 - 55 min			One of the six classic north faces of the Alps and highly sought after. The routes here are steep, sustained and major undertakings. The aspect and altitude mean it is best left until mid season to avoid finding ice in the upper pitches.	474
	Cima Ovest	3	-	□	□	□	3		60 min			Much like Cima Grande only steeper, on less reassuring rock and consequently not as popular. Home to Alex Huber's masterpieces and the audacious yet brilliant <i>Cassin</i> route.	482