ALTA VIA 1:
ITALIAN DOLOMITES TRAVERSE – week 1

Grade:	Moderate +
Land-only duration:	8 days
Trekking days:	6
Maximum altitude:	2750m
Dates & prices:	Guided: from £895 6-13 September 2014
	Also available self-guided on other dates - ask for details



Morning thermal inversion at RIfugio Lagazuoi (All photos: Ann Foulkes)

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UNESCO describes the Dolomites in Northern Italy as "widely regarded as being among the most attractive mountain landscapes in the world". In 2009, the Dolomites were added to the World Heritage List for its outstanding universal value.

Join us on the ultimate multi-day trek along the Alta Via 1 (High Route), the original and flagship high level route through the Dolomites. The AV1, described in the outdoor press as "one of the world's premier treks", is a north-south traverse of the Dolomites. This diverse route encompasses flower-filled alpine meadows underneath the mountainous spires that typify the Dolomites, crashing waterfalls, clear turquoise lakes, World War 1 heritage sites, and wild remote sections. Following the northern of the AV1, trekking up to 2750m we stay in the excellent network of mountain refuges along the way, enjoying traditional Italian and Austrian cuisine.



Monte Pelmo from Borca di Cadore at sunrise (Ann Foulkes)

Typically we can expect between 4 and 7 hours of walking each day and ascents and descents of on average around 700m. The itinerary allows for a relaxed pace, and on the shorter days there will be time to explore the locality around the refuge, or to relax and enjoy the views. Afternoon thunderstorms are not uncommon in the Alps. Arriving at the refuge mid afternoon should reduce the risk of walking in a thunderstorm. The route has been up-graded slightly to moderate+ as we will need to carry enough clothing each for the trek staying in mountain refuges. However, the amount of equipment we will need to carry will be little as we do not need to carry sleeping bags or food. Lunches will be available at refuges en-route or we will take a packed lunch from the previous night's refuge. Breakfasts and dinners will all be available at the refuges that we stay at. Including your water, you should aim to keep your rucsac weight to around 10kg.

Our route allows us to stay in some of the refuges held in the highest regard in one of the finest refuge networks in the Alps. The refuges vary from basic mountain huts to hotel–grade accommodation, and our accommodation may be in a mixture of dormitories and small shared rooms. The areas this trek passes through embrace the cultures of both the Italian Alto-Adige and the Austrian Sud Tyrol. Both Italian and German are spoken locally.

The trek is not technical and is accessible to regular walkers. We will have chance to explore the fascinating WW1 history of the region, and no doubt to also enjoy a well-earned glass of wine on a refuge balcony while watching the sunset turn the Dolomites to their famous pink colour. Taking just 1½ weeks, why not make the most of Italy's late summer sunshine and a cheap flight to Venice?



View from Rifugio Nuvolau of Cinque Torri (mid picture) with Rifugio Scoiattoli to the left, and the pyramid shape of Tofana de Rozes 3225m behind.

OUTLINE ITINERARY

Walking and journey times are approximate

Important Note:
The following itinerary is to be taken as a guide only. Whilst we expect that the trek will run as per the itinerary, participants should accept that there is a possibility of changes being necessary subject to local conditions. We do our best to book the named mountain refuges, but the route may change slightly due to availability in the refuges.
There are several different variations of the Alta Via 1 route, and we may adapt the itinerary shown to suit the needs of the group.

Day 1 **Arrive Venice, travel to Cortina d'Ampezzo.**
The trip starts from Cortina D'Ampezzo. For travel to/from Cortina, please refer to the travel section below. Cortina is a friendly, popular resort town. The hotel we usually use in Cortina is conveniently just a 1 minute walk from the main street, where a selection of restaurants and pizzeria can be found, as well as an interesting selection of shops. Depending on the time of your arrival in Cortina, why not take a stroll to explore the stunning scenery, check out the shops, buy last-minute provisions for the trek, or relax in a spa (payable locally), indulge in an Italian ice cream in a café or on the hotel's sun terrace enjoying views of the mountains you will be trekking in.
Overnight hotel.



Marmot

Day 2 **Travel from Cortina d'Ampezzo to start of trek at Lago di Braies, trek to Rifugio Biella.**
900m ascent, 60m descent, 6km,
3½ hours walking (B, D)

From Cortina bus station, which is less than 5 minutes we walk from our preferred hotel, we travel by public buses on the scenic route to Dobbiaco, and then to the lovely Lago di Braies. Lago di Braies is a beautiful lake with turquoise water. The Alta Via 1 officially starts at the far end of the lake, ascends through mugo pines up to a traverse under the rock wall of Croda dal Becco. The rifugio is located next to Croda dal Becco, a peak offering spectacular views of Lago di Braies which can be summited if time and energy allow. Look for edelweiss above the rifugio.
Overnight mountain refuge.



On the path close to Rifugio Sènnes, day 3

Day 3 **Trek to Rifugio Fanes**
565m ascent, 830m descent, 14km
4¾ hours walking (B, D)

After breakfasting at the refuge we trek across the moorland which is home to marmot, or along a track in edelweiss country to Rifugio Sennes. The route then follows an old military road, descending a narrow gorge to lunch at Rifugio Pederu. Ascending from the rifugio, the path passes through limestone karstic landscape and follows a charming stream before arriving at the rifugio for the night.
Overnight mountain refuge.

Day 4 **Trek to Rifugio Lagazuòi**
1070m ascent, 375m descent, 11km
5 hours walking (B, D)

Ascending from the rifugio the views of the spectacular karstic lunar landscape are revealed in full. Passing Lake Limo and a delightful farm stay, the route traverses a large flower-filled meadow where horses browse, and marmots may call out as they sense our approach. From here, the path splits there is a bad weather option and a good weather option. Both arrive at Lake Lagazuoi, but the good weather option involves an ascent and then a steep descent down a gully on a well-managed path that zig-zags down to the lake, whereas the bad-weather option stays on broad tracks.



Edelweiss

From Lake Lagazuoi there is a long ascent up to Rifugio Lagazuoi. Look out for edelweiss above the lake.
As we start to approach the rifugio, we pass several WW1 artefacts..
Rifugio Lagazuoi has a large, spectacular terrace with one of the Dolomite's most spectacular vistas best savoured over a well-earned drink. The path up to the cross above the rifugio is also worth exploring. Make sure you take your camera to dinner, as you may well want to record a sunset to treasure.
Overnight mountain refuge.



Exploring the WW1 tunnels at Lagazuoi

Day 5 **Trek to Rifugio Nuvolàu**
635m ascent, 810m descent, 15km,
7 hours walking (or 5½ hours walking if we take path 402)
(plus time to explore at Lagazuòi) (B, D)

Make sure you get up in time for sunrise at Lagazuoi – it's well worth it!
There are various options from Lagazuoi. The AV1 traverses to Rifugio Dibona along a path where you may see chamois on the scree. The route then traverses back down to the road.
This area was also the site of heavy fighting during the Great War. On guided trips, depending on weather conditions, and snow conditions we may explore WW1 tunnels in this area. (Please refer to the kit list for equipment that is essential for exploring the tunnels). If exploring the tunnels or bad

weather means we are pushed for time, we can use the shortcut of path 402 to miss out the long traverse to RIfugion Dibona.
From the road, the path ascends once again to the Cinque Torre area – a popular area for climbers. There are several rifugio in the area that we can use – we recommend Rifugio Nuvolau for one of the best 360º panoramas in the Dolomites and its history, but if you require a higher level of comfort than this basic mountain hut offers we can use an alternative rifugio. (see the note * in the accommodation section below about Rifugio Nuvolau).
Overnight mountain refuge



World War I Officers' Hut

Day 6 Trek to Rifugio Croda da Lago Palmieri
343m ascent, 850m descent, 11½km,
4 hours walking (B, D)

The view from Rifugio Nuvolau is a must-see on a clear day, so even if you didn't stay there, it is worth making the ascent first thing in the morning. The path descends from Nuvolau and then contours round the mountain that Rifugio Nuvolau is perched on top of. Passing through marmot country the trail gets busier as we near Passo Giau where lunch can be bought. The trail quickly quietens off again the other side of Passo Giau. It climbs to Forcella Giau, then a long, gentle flower-filled descent before ascending Forcella Ambrizzola and descending to Rifugio Croda da Lago Palmieri, 2046m next to the lake.
Overnight mountain refuge.

Day 9 Trek to Cortina d'Ampezzo
1,2000m descent, 10 km,
(B)
Our final day of trekking is a descent to Cortina d'Ampezzo, allowing time for refreshing, relaxing, souvenir shopping and a final celebratory dinner in one of the town's restaurants.
Overnight hotel.

Day 10 Depart Dolomites (B)
Group services end after breakfast. We can help to arrange travel for you back to your airport.
If you would like to extend your trip we can arrange for extra nights for you in Cortina. Alternatively you could extend your time in Italy by visiting the enchanting city of Venice.

Travel

Flights

The best airports to travel to are **Venice Marco Polo or Venice-Treviso.**
Airlines flying there include Ryan Air, Easy Jet, Thomson Fly Jet2, BMI Baby and BA.
The London airports offer the biggest choice of flights, but regional flights are also possible.

No flights should be booked until you have received written confirmation from the trekMountains office that your departure is guaranteed to run

Travel to Cortina

Public transport: For the majority of the season, several public coaches run on a daily basis from the Venice airports and Venice itself straight to Cortina for around €25 - €30 per person each way. The journey is also possible by train and bus. The coaches and bus station in Cortina is less than 5 minutes' walk from our preferred hotel. If you need help with your travel arrangements, please email info@trekmountains.com

Private transfers: Alternatively, trekMountains can arrange private transfers for you directly to the hotel from the Venice or Innsbruck airports. Please contact us for a quote.

Our pricing policy:

This trek is advertised based on a 5 person price. It can, however, be run with fewer. If there are less than 5 participants, we will offer you the choice to guarantee the trek at the appropriate price for the number of participants who have booked, and should that number increase we will decrease the final balance that you will owe us accordingly. This means that flights can be arranged at the best possible price without having to wait for more bookings.

The Price Includes:

- Journey by bus between our accommodation in Cortina d'Ampezzo and the start of the trail.
- Accommodation for 2 nights in Cortina d'Ampezzo in our group hotel in en-suite rooms and inclusive of breakfast.
- Accommodation in mountain refuges in shared rooms or dormitories for 5 nights
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D = dinner)
- Participation in the trek as per itinerary
- **Your guide** This trip will be guided by Ann Foulkes who runs trekMountains. Ann has led Alta Via 1 trips every year since 2009. Ann lives in Italy and speaks Italian. She is a qualified International Mountain Leader, and has led over 45 expeditions and holidays since 2004.

Not Included:

- International flights
- Travel between airport and our base in Cortina d'Ampezzo
- Meals not specified above.
- Drinks including drinking water at mountain refuges
- Showers at mountain refuges
- Travel Insurance
- Tips
- Items of a personal nature such as drinks, laundry, telephone calls and souvenirs
- Allow approximately €200 - €250 spending money for meals / drinks / showers in refuges.

Options:

- **Accommodation** is usually in twin rooms with another trekker of the same gender, or with a person you name on your booking form. **Single rooms** are available in the hotel, but not in the rifugi- please ask us for a quote.
- **Extra nights** are available in our group hotel – email info@trekmountains.com for details.
- **Venice extension** - extend your trip by spending some time in the enchanting city of Venice.

Accommodation

Cortina accommodation: Our preferred hotel in the popular resort town of Cortina d'Ampezzo is a friendly 3* hotel just a 1 minute walk from Cortina's main street, and less than 5 minutes from Cortina's bus station. The hotel has spa faciltiies (payable locally), a sun terrace and free Wifi.

Mountain accommodation: The mountain refuge accommodation in the Dolomites is very good, but also very varied. Accommodation is in a mixture of small rooms (2-4 beds) and dormitories (6-16 beds), and there may be both men and women in the same room. Wherever we can, we will book small rooms. In most of the refuges, the accommodation is in bunk beds, but some offer normal beds. Bathroom facilities are shared. Most of the refuges offer showers – some charge extra for the use of these as water is a precious commodity in the Dolomites.

• **Rifugio Nuvolau** is a spectacular rifugio, and is the favourite for many trekkers – it is a proper, traditional mountain refuge, but it is not for everyone. During the daytime, the toilet facilities are in an outside toilet room. There is no shower – just a washbasin with cold water. If you request not to be located here, we will book one of the other refuges in the area for you.

Equipment list - AV1

All items are essential unless marked optional or recommended

The weather in the Dolomites at this time of year should be pleasantly warm, and we hope that shorts and t-shirts will be the norm. However, the weather can change rapidly, and thunderstorms are a regular threat in the Alps so be prepared for anything while trying to keep your rucsac weight to around 8kg before adding your drinking water!

ESSENTIAL ITEMS:	
Tops	waterproof jacket
	2 fleece or softshell tops
	1 long sleeve quick-drying thermal
	2 short sleeve/sleeveless tops
Trousers	2 pairs trousers (preferably zip off type so don't need to take shorts as well)
	1 pair waterproof over-trousers
Footwear	walking boots – a lightweight, waterproof pair of broken-in 3-season boots broken in
Underwear	underwear
	walking sox & liner socks
	t-shirt & shorts for sleepwear in mixed dormitories
Extremities	sunhat
	fleece / warm hat
Equipment	rucsac: approx 40 - 45 litres (has to be big enough to carry all your kit on trek)
	kit bag for storing spare clothing at base
	roll-top waterproof rucsac liner or strong plastic bag
	headtorch – required for exploring tunnels as well as at night-time in the refuges. Hand-held torches are not good enough for the tunnels.
	spare batteries for headtorch
	sunglasses
	water bottles / drinks bladder 1½ litres minimum
	earplugs (strongly recommended for dormitories)
	sheet sleeping bag liner (silk is best) **Note. All refuges provide duvet or sheets and pillows, but it is essential you use these with a sheet sleeping bag liner.**
	small lightweight trekkers towel
	toiletries - just pack small amounts into travel size bottles
	good suncream
	tissues / toilet paper
	personal 1st aid kit
	snacks
	cash in euros
	travel insurance details
	Passport & travel tickets
	change of clothes for travelling

LAGAZUOI TUNNELS – ESSENTIAL ITEMS

If time, weather and snow conditions allow, we may be able to explore the WW1 tunnels at Lagazuoi.
To do this, all participants wanting to go into the tunnels **MUST HAVE** the following:

2 x HMS karabiners *
1x 240cm climbing sling *
a head-torch each

(or: a climbing harness**,
a via ferrata set**
and a headtorch each).

Climbing **helmets**** are optional, but tall people may be glad of them as the tunnels are low.

Items marked * can be hired from trekMountains.
Items marked ** can be hired in Cortina d'Ampezzo
This section is avoidable if you do not want to explore the tunnels.

	OPTIONAL ITEMS:
	camera / memory cards (optional)
	approach shoes or trekking sandals (optional- in though the rifugi have slippers that you can wear in the rifugi)
	thin gloves (optional)
	gaiters (optional)
	swimwear (optional)
	water purification tablets (optional)
	stuff sack to use as a pillow case (optional)
	2 trekking poles (strongly recommended – there are some steep paths)
	BMC membership cards and/or reciprocal rights card if you already have them (not worth buying specifically for this trek) (optional)
	several resealable plastic bags
	duck tape (small amount for repairs) (optional)

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