



Hiking in the Dolomites

September 18-26, 2027 (9 days)

The soaring peaks of the Dolomites are among the most staggeringly beautiful in the world (UNESCO World Heritage Site), a fairytale setting of alpine meadows, lush forests, tiny lakes, and surreal rock walls and pinnacles that seem to be from another world. Join Cathy Ann Taylor for an exciting hiking journey along mountain trails that lead to rocky summits with glorious views, to quiet valleys where the local Tyrolean and Ladin cultures have remained unchanged for generations, and to mountain inns set miles from the nearest road, where you're welcomed with a slice of strudel and a steaming cappuccino. All along the way, you'll enjoy the warm hospitality of the local people, appreciate the region's fascinating history, and indulge in delicious cuisine—from *polenta ai funghi* to *canederli*, a farm-style dumpling stuffed with speck (local cured ham). For a truly relaxed stay, we'll overnight in just three 4-star mountain hotels for the entire trip—less packing and unpacking each day! Hiking in September we'll experience fewer people and the stunning Enrosadira where the pale limestone peaks glow in brilliant shades of pink, red, and purple at dawn and dusk. Join us for a truly unforgettable experience!



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TRIP DETAILS

Moderate to strenuous ▶ 7 days hiking; 8 nights charming & stunning 4-star mountain hotels

ITINERARY

(You will need to leave the U.S. on September 17 to arrive in Venice on September 18.)

Day 1, September 18 ▶ Arrive in Venice, Italy / Val di Fassa, the Dolomites

Arrive at Marco Polo (Venice) airport. You will be met and transferred to a hotel in Val di Fassa, set in the Italian province of Trento. This 12-mile-long valley is surrounded by spectacular mountains, including the Sella Group, Sassolungo, Marmolada, home to the Dolomites' largest remaining glacier, and the Catinaccio/Rosengarten with its remarkable Torri del Vajolet (Vajolet towers). These mountains of culture, tradition, legend, and sport offer much to be discovered, and over time the Ladin people of Val di Fassa have guarded this valley of incomparable beauty. It's said this valley was the setting for the kingdom of the legendary King Laurino, who was the guardian of this enchanted valley. In the early evening, we'll gather for a trip briefing and enjoy a welcome dinner at the hotel. Overnight at the hotel. (2.5 hours driving.)

D...Hotel Astoria in Val di Fassa or similar

Note: This itinerary is a sample of possible hikes in the region and is weather-dependent.



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Day 2, September 19 ► Warm-up Hike Near the Marmolada

After breakfast, we take the cable car from the village of Canazei and begin our hike on Viel del Pan ("Way of the Bread"), a trail stretching right across the mountain that was once used by merchants who traded flour for handcrafted goods and other products. It is one of the most spectacular footpaths in the Dolomites, offering an incomparable view of majestic Marmolada (10,964'), often referred to as the "Queen of the Dolomites." It's the highest mountain in this range and home to its largest glacier. We descend to the artificial lake at the bottom of the valley and take a private transfer back to our hotel. Overnight at the hotel. (~5 hours hiking, 6.8 miles, 1,541' ascent, 2,135' descent.) B,L,D... Hotel Astoria in Val di Fassa or similar



Day 3, September 20 ► Val San Nicolò

Today's hike brings us through Val San Nicolò and involves a big ascent and descent. The higher we climb, the more impressive are the views: Piccolo Vernel (10,160'), Gran Vernel (10,530'), Punta Penia (10,965'), Punta Ombretta (10,595'), and the pyramid-shaped Col Ombert mountain. Along the way we'll stop for a well-deserved lunch and rest in a local rifugio. Our descent is through a picture-perfect landscape of green meadows scattered with picturesque wooden huts, framed by some of the most beautiful peaks in Europe. A 30-minute transfer brings us back to our hotel. Dinner is on your own this evening. Overnight at the hotel. (~5-6 hours hiking, 9.5 miles, 3,100' ascent, 3,313' descent, ~ 30-minute private van transfer.) B,L... Hotel Astoria in Val di Fassa or similar

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Day 4, September 21 ► Loop Hike Around Sassolungo

Occupying the head of Val di Fassa and Val Gardena is the splendid twin formation of Sassolungo-Sassopiatto (the names mean “long stone” and “flat stone”). Looking from above, it resembles a horseshoe open at the northwest end, and it holds two tiny glaciers. It was best described by Josiah Gilbert and George Cheetham Churchill in *The Dolomite Mountains: Excursions Through Tyrol, Carinthia, Carniola, & Friuli in 1861, 1862, & 1863*:

“Then come the gigantic masses of the Platt Kofel [Sassopiatto] and Lang Kofel [Sassolungo]; the first, sliced off, as by the malice of a Titan, at a single blow; the second, an array of splintered spires, ashy-tinted or pale yellow.”

Our hike offers superb scenery, with wildflowers growing in abundance on the grassy slopes and lazy cows and busy marmots populating the meadows. We will also see small birds of prey hovering for rodents. Our trail brings us under the rockface of Sassolungo and Sassopiatto, carefully crossing scree, and follows ancient shepherd routes; dazzling views take us past hay chalets and hillsides blanketed in wildflowers (in summer). We end our hike at our next hotel in Val Gardena (our luggage will have been transported separately). Dinner and overnight at the hotel. (~6 hours hiking, 9.6 miles, 2,329' ascent, 2,329' descent, ~35 minute private van transfer.)

B,L,D...Boutique Nives Hotel in Val Gardena or similar

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Day 5, September 22 ► Resciesa & Geological Phenomena

Today's hike is a bit easier and begins with a funicular ride from the town of Ortisei. Our trail is mostly flat with little or no elevation change. We'll stop for a drink or a rest at a local rifugio and admire the jagged north faces of the dramatic Odle Group before descending toward Ortisei by cable car. In the afternoon, we'll have time to discover the charming Tyrolean town of Ortisei on foot. Dinner in a pizzeria and overnight at the hotel. (~5 hours hiking, 8.3 miles, 1,150' ascent, 2,300' descent.)

B,L,D...Boutique Nives Hotel in Val Gardena or similar



Day 6, September 23 ► Puez-Odle Nature Park

Today's hike presents some challenges, but the views are breathtaking! After a transfer to Passo Gardena (6,955'), we hike up to a local rifugio, then follow the legendary Alta Via 2 into the heart of the Puez-Odle Nature Park, with its striking views over Val Gardena and the Sassolungo massif. This nature reserve is some 25,000 acres and is named after the striking peaks of the Puez and the pinnacles of the Odle/Geisler massifs. Here we can see firsthand the geological history of the Dolomites. A final three-hour hike downhill on an easy and panoramic trail brings us to the town of Colfosco, where our driver awaits to take us to our last hotel in Val Badia. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. (~7-8 hours hiking, 9.3 miles, 1,935' ascent, 3,775' descent.)

B,L,D...Hotel La Majun in Val Badia or similar

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Day 7, September 24 ► Fanes Natural Park

Today's challenging loop hike is in the setting of the Fanes-Senes-Braies/Fanes-Sennes-Prags Nature Reserve, where clusters of old log-built farmsteads adorn the mountainsides; they are called "viles" and are a typical feature of the Ladin-speaking valleys. This is a typical karstic limestone landscape, characterized by caves, fissures, underground streams, and small lakes. Rugged rocks eroded by the action of wind and weather rise in all directions. From a restaurant set at the edge of the park, we start hiking on grassy meadows and then onto a steeper, rocky trail. At the top of the trail, we come to a notch that marks the entrance of a fairytale-like valley amid the mountains, and a final ascent on a single-track rocky path leads to a narrow and dramatic gap in the mountains. Our descent is on a steep talus slope, and at the base is a beautiful lake with green waters, framed by pines with a backdrop of the sheer walls of the Cima del Lago and the Cima Scotoni. We continue to descend to a beautifully placed rifugio and return to our starting point. Transfer back to the hotel. Dinner is on your own this evening. (~4-5 hours hiking, 6 miles, 4,268' ascent, 4,287' descent.) B,L...Hotel La Majun in Val Badia or similar

Day 8, September 25 ► From Valparola to San Cassiano

Our final hike is a traverse along the Setsass Massif to the green pastures of Alta Badia. Reaching nearly 8,500 feet in elevation, the Setsass Group stretches in a west-east curve for almost two miles, and our hike beneath the massif and across the meadows of the Pralongia Plateau offers superb panoramas, including limestone peaks, green pastures, and plenty of wildflowers. The beauty of this

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hike is the numerous gentle ups and downs on varied terrain, from grassy fields to rocky terrain resembling a lunar landscape, with extraordinary views over the lush pastures of the Pralongia High Plateau and the Marmolada (10,964'), the Queen of the Dolomites, highest peak in the Dolomites and home to its largest remaining glacier. Along the way we'll come across some ruins of military fortifications. At the end of our hike, we transfer back to our hotel. In the evening, we'll gather and enjoy our farewell dinner in a local restaurant. (~6 hours hiking 9 miles, 1,085' ascent, 3,182' descent).

B,L,D...Hotel La Majun in Val Badia or similar



Day 9, September 26 ▶ Depart

After breakfast, transfer to the Marco Polo (Venice) airport. You can expect a 3- to 3.5-hour ride. Because of possible traffic delays, we recommend you do not book your departing before 2:00 pm. or you can spend the night near the airport or in Venice. Venice is a glorious city, and we recommend spending a few days here as a grand finale to your trip. It's easy to get a taxi boat from the airport to your hotel of choice. (2.5 hours driving.)

B...

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LAND COST

\$9995 per person (13-15 members)

\$10295 per person (9-12 members)

\$10695 per person (6-8 members)

\$1975 single supplement

Rates quoted are per person, based on sharing double accommodations.

*Should you choose to pay with credit card there will be a service charge of 3.5%, the fee we incur from the bank.

Note—Prices listed are subject to change. We are occasionally faced with unavoidable cost increases due to fuel increases, costs of services or currency fluctuations that we cannot absorb. We will, however, do everything we can to keep prices the same as published.

LAND COST INCLUDES...

- o Expert leadership
- o Local mountain guides
- o Hiking Maps
- o Accommodations in 4 – star mountain hotels
- o Meals as noted (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- o Ground transportation and lift tickets
- o Tips to the local guides and drivers
- o Wine, water, coffee, and tea during dinners
- o Airport transfers on Days 1 and 9

LAND COST DOES NOT INCLUDE...

International airfare from your hometown to Venice, Italy, and return; meals not noted on the itinerary; individual transfers for early arrivals or late departures; trip insurance (we urge you purchase trip insurance to include trip cancellation; tipping to the trip leader; excess baggage charges; airport taxes (if any); cost of medical immunizations; and items of a personal nature (sodas, alcoholic beverages beyond dinner, laundry, etc.), extra charges due to changes in itinerary.

TRIP PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation25% of land cost
120 days prior to departure25% of land cost
90 days prior to departure.....Balance

CANCELLATION FEE SCHEDULE

From time of reservation
until 90 days prior to departure.....25% of land cost
89-60 days prior to departure.....50% of land cost
59 days or fewer prior to departure.....100% of land cost



EXPERT LEADERSHIP

Expert leadership is the key to every successful trip. Cattara attracts knowledgeable and gifted leaders who are passionate about guiding trips and truly enjoy sharing the experience with others. They understand the cultures and traditions they work in and are a fountain of information. In addition to making sure everything runs smoothly and safely, Cattara guides enhance your experience by being educators, companions, and the best of friends.



TRIP LEADER



Cathy Ann Taylor, a high-altitude trekking & cultural guide for the last 37 years, will be leading this trip. Cathy Ann has trekked all over Nepal, Tibet, India, and Bhutan, with well over 200 trips in the Himalayas (she still considers the Himalayas her “second home”)! She has also hiked extensively in the European Alps (Tour du Mont Blanc—six times, Tour of Monte Rosa, The Haute Route, Gran Paradiso, Scotland—three times, and the Dolomites—four times), the Georgian Caucasus—seven times, South America (20 trips in Peru, 8 in Patagonia), Antarctica—four times, Kilimanjaro—one time, Morocco—five times, The Great

Walk of Africa Kenya—four times, Vietnam—three times, Laos—two times, Cambodia—six times, and Uganda & Rwanda—nine times. A devout hiker and mountain biker, she leaves no trail undiscovered, and her passion for the mountains, caring nature, and boundless energy are renowned. Her experience, knowledge, positive attitude (she can find the good in anything!), and her wonderful rapport with the local staff will enhance your experience. With the help of caring and like-minded individuals she has been able to manage the sponsorship of nineteen remote village children, all of

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whom are in boarding school in Nepal or in universities in India, Nepal, and the United States. She consistently gets rave reviews from members of her groups and has quite a following. Cathy Ann is active in the Breast Cancer Prevention Partners and has participated in sixteen expeditions, including Mount McKinley, Mount Cho Oyu, Mount Fuji, Mount Shasta, and Mount Rainier, which helped increase awareness of breast cancer. Cat's special trekking program, Sacred Treks, benefits Breast Cancer Prevention Partners. Past trips include Bhutan, Mont Blanc, Peru, Everest, Ladakh, Mustang, Georgian Caucasus, Sikkim, Dolomites, Cordillera Blanca, and Annapurna Sanctuary treks (she has raised \$1.8M to date!). Cathy Ann has also been active in the American Himalayan Foundation and has helped raised \$35,000 for their STOP Girl Trafficking project. She has also raised over \$25,000 for Lama Pasang's Himalayan Children's Care Home which houses 87 children from Mustang, Nepal, and has raised nearly \$30,000 for the Nepal Youth Foundation. Cathy Ann is also involved in fundraising for the National MS Society and has raised over \$95,000 for the organization. She has also reached the summits of Ama Dablam (22,500') and Island Peak (20,305') in Nepal and Argentina's Aconcagua (22,834'), the highest peak in South America. Cathy Ann received an honorable mention in *Hooked on the Outdoors* magazine's Outdoor Person of the Year Awards and received a letter of recognition for her fundraising and environmental work from former Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi.

PHYSICAL EXPECTATIONS

You should be an experienced hiker in good physical condition. This trip is rated strenuous, as you will be hiking five to seven hours (~six to nine + miles) a day on trails with a variety of terrain, including uneven, rocky surfaces with some steep ascents and descents. You can count on 2,000 feet up and down nearly every day, with some ascents and descents more than 3,000 feet. On some days, one or two steeper climbs to spectacular viewpoints are included. Hiking poles are highly recommended.

For physical preparation, we recommend regular cardiovascular exercise for one hour at least 4-5 times a week. We suggest stair climbing, running, and mountain biking on hills, squats, and lunges or elliptical or treadmill training in the gym with a daypack. And, of course, the best way to train for a trek is to go hiking! We recommend you get out on the trails at least twice a week. Wear your boots and a daypack and pick some trails with hills so you can strengthen your leg muscles and build up your stamina. We believe other important pre-requisites are a spirit of adventure and a positive attitude.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

You will need a passport, valid for at least six months beyond the date of completion of the trip. No visas are required for U.S. citizens for this trip. Note—it's a good idea to make a photocopy of the photo page of your passport and carry it separately from your passport. If your passport is lost or stolen, a photocopy will help the local consulate speed up authorization for replacement. Extra passport photos can also be helpful to have just in case.



AIR TRAVEL

Airfare is not included in the land cost of the trip. For air reservations, please contact the airlines directly, either by phone or via the Internet. Plan your arrival in Venice by approximately 12:00 p.m. on Day 1. Many travelers elect to use their “frequent flyer” miles when traveling, but please check with us before purchasing or obtaining your tickets. We need to verify your arrival and departure schedule and ensure we have enough participants to operate the trip. Note—Names on air tickets and passports must match!

MEDICAL MATTERS

No vaccinations are currently required, but usual immunizations for typhoid, tetanus, hepatitis A, and polio are recommended. These regulations and recommendations change frequently, so please check with your local health department or CDC for more information (www.cdc.gov).

Please advise us of any pre-existing medical conditions that may affect your health on the trip (recent injuries or surgeries, chronic illnesses, etc.). We recommend you bring your own personal first-aid kit, pain killers, and allergy medicines if you are prone to allergic reactions (especially epipens if you are allergic to bee stings). Moleskin or Second Skin for blisters is also recommended, as well as Band-Aids and antibiotic ointment. Consult your doctor about bringing other medications, such as antibiotics like Cipro and Azithromycin. The trip leader will also carry a basic kit for emergencies but will not have any prescription medications.

MONEY MATTERS

You should bring enough money for any souvenirs you may buy, plus a few items like aperitifs, extra beverages, two dinners, and the like (most of your meals are included in the cost of the trip).

Depending on how much of a shopper you are, \$500-\$600 should be plenty for incidentals and souvenirs. At least US \$750 per guest is recommended as a tip for the trip leader. You can present your gratuities to your trip leader individually.

The currency of Italy is the Euro. You will want to check the current rate of exchange just before traveling when planning how much cash to bring with you. Major credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard, and American Express are accepted at most shops and hotels.

WEATHER & CLIMATE

As in most mountain environments, the weather can be unpredictable, so each day on the trail you need to be prepared for a variety of weather conditions: sun, wind, rain—even the possibility of light snow. For that reason, you will carry your raingear and warm jacket in your daypack every day, even if the morning starts out bright and sunny. Dressing in layers that can be adjusted to suit the prevailing conditions is highly recommended. The temperatures at night are typically between 40 – 55 F and daytime between 50 – 65 F. September features cooler yet stable weather with crisp autumn air, fewer visitors, and the stunning alpenglow (Enrosadira). The pale limestone peaks turn brilliant shades of pink, red, and purple at dawn and dusk.



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INCIDENTALS

Laundry: We will have two- or three-night stays in each hotel, so you'll have time to hand wash a few items and hang them to dry in your room. Synthetic, quick drying fabrics are best (see the equipment list).

Electricity: In Italy, power plugs and sockets (outlets) of type F (round two-pin) and type L (round three-pin) are used. The standard voltage is 230 V at a frequency of 50 Hz. If you are planning to use something like a hairdryer, electric shaver, camera battery, or phone charger, bring a converter and a selection of plug adapters (you can buy these in drugstores or travel specialty stores in the U.S.).

Time Zones: Italy is on Greenwich Mean Time plus one hour. That means that Venice is six hours ahead of New York and nine hours ahead of California.

Communications: While we discourage the use of cell phones on our trip, we can't deny the fact that you may want to be in touch with your friends or family. Please be sensitive to the needs of others and use them in the privacy of your room. The international dialing code for Italy is 39. Contact your cell phone service about international coverage. All our hotels have internet access.



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WHAT TO BRING: CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT LIST

Packing Notes

It's best to go as light as possible and take only the essentials. Excess baggage can be a burden, not only to you but to support personnel.

Always bring all irreplaceable items, such as camera, medications, important documentation, and trekking boots in your carry-on luggage.

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Luggage

- ☐ Soft sided luggage, large enough to hold your hiking and city clothes. It should have a full-length zipper (for easy access) and be sturdy. Wheeled duffels are OK to bring, but hard-shelled suitcases are not advisable (they are difficult to load compactly in the vans).
- ☐ Daypack with a capacity of about 24 to 34 liters, with a good, padded waist belt. It can double as your carry-on bag*
- ☐ Spare roll-up duffel (optional). This is essential if you wish to bring home those great souvenirs! It should be lockable.

*Remember, you must carry a warm layer and rain gear with you every day on the trail, as well as 2 liters of water, sunscreen, warm hat, gloves, camera, and cover for daypack in case of rain. Be sure your daypack is large enough!

Clothing Notes

You should be prepared for very unpredictable weather. Bring comfortable clothing that will protect you from cold and possibly wet weather. Synthetic fabrics (such synthetic or wool) are the most effective barriers against the cold. They provide the best insulation, are light in weight, wick away perspiration, and dry quickly if wet. (Cotton garments are not good in cold or wet mountain conditions.)

When layering, your innermost layer should be a synthetic T-shirt. The middle layer can be a synthetic turtleneck or wool shirt, and pants or shorts. The outermost layer should be a synthetic fleece jacket, and/or a good quality wind/rain jacket and pants.

We haven't included quantities for each item listed. Use your own judgment, based on the expected weather conditions, your personal needs, and the overall weight restrictions for your luggage.

Underwear

- ☐ Regular underwear. Synthetics are easier to wash and dry.
- ☐ Thermal underwear (lightweight set).

Socks

- ☐ Casual socks (synthetic for easy washing and drying) that are suitable for your walking (not hiking) shoes.
- ☐ Light-weight hiking socks (synthetic or wool/synthetic).
- ☐ Synthetic or silk sock liners—optional.

Shirts

- ☐ Long-sleeved, synthetic, or wool shirt.
- ☐ Short-sleeved synthetic T-shirts (in case we have some warm, sunny days).
- ☐ Shirts for non-hiking activities.

Pants

- ☐ Full-length synthetic hiking pants or synthetic sweatpants.
- ☐ Hiking shorts (in case we have some warm, sunny days).
- ☐ Casual pants for non-hiking activities.

Outerwear

- ☐ Medium-weight synthetic jacket, such as fleece or Thinsulate or down.
- ☐ Rain/wind parka (must fit over bulky clothing).
- ☐ Rain/wind pants, preferably with full-length side zipper (must fit over your other pants).
- ☐ Lightweight to Medium-weight gloves (wool or fleece).
- ☐ Waterproof daypack cover.
- ☐ Gaiters (optional)—can come in handy if crossing snowfields or scree. Ankle gaiters OK.

Head Gear

- ☐ Sun hat with wide brim, preferably with a chin strap to keep it from blowing off, or baseball cap.
- ☐ Fleece or wool hat.
- ☐ Bandana or BUFF. A useful item—it will keep your neck from getting sunburned or used for warmth and can double as a hand towel in the field.

Footwear

Please break new boots in well before the trip.

- ☐ Medium-weight hiking boots with padded ankle, good arch support, and lug sole for traction. Your hiking boots must be waterproofed, well broken in, and suitable for prolonged walking on rocks.
- ☐ Comfortable walking shoes to wear while in towns.

Other Items

- ☐ Water bottles, 1- or 1.5-quart capacity. Make sure they are leak-proof. Bring 2 and mark them with your name or initials as several people may have the same bottle.
- ☐ Hiking poles—highly recommended. These are essential to relieve the impact on your knees during long downhill; they are also useful on uphill. Practice with them before the trip.
- ☐ Toiletry kit.
- ☐ Purell hand sanitizer for quick hand washing and hygiene (a must!).
- ☐ Toilet paper and a Ziploc bag (for stops along the trail).
- ☐ Personal medical kit, including blister protection.
- ☐ Ace bandage or brace if you're prone to sore knees or ankles.
- ☐ Sunglasses (100% UVA/UVB protected).
- ☐ Spare pair of prescription glasses, prescription sunglasses, or contact lenses.
- ☐ Sunscreen lotion and lipstick of SPF 25 or higher.
- ☐ Small padlocks or combination locks for your duffels.
- ☐ Heavyweight plastic garbage bag to help keep the contents of your daypack dry during hikes.

Optional Travel Accessories

- ☐ Camera and plenty of memory cards, extra batteries.
- ☐ Repair kit with needle, thread, and safety pins.
- ☐ Pair of compact binoculars.
- ☐ Swiss Army-type pocketknife.
- ☐ Powdered electrolyte mixes for your water.
- ☐ Your favorite trail snacks or supplements, especially if you have dietary restrictions.
- ☐ Reading and writing material.
- ☐ Swimsuit.
- ☐ Sit upon pad for trailside stops.
- ☐ Sun gloves.

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