



# IN THE SHADOW OF THE DOLOMITES TOUR

28 AUGUST - 11 SEPTEMBER 2025





Castello di Thun

## OVERVIEW

**AUD 10, 370**  
(PER PERSON, TWIN SHARE)

**AUD 12, 170**  
(PER PERSON, SOLO  
TRAVELLER)

*"The Shadow of the Dolomites tour was marvellous. Luca is a wonderful, knowledgeable tour leader, and the sightseeing activities, scenery and 12 fellow travellers all made for a great 15 days. Being only 12 people, plus a leader who enjoyed being part of the group for aperitivi and all meals, made it very inclusive. Food, wine, and accommodation were top-class, and the relaxed pace of the tour suited the age of the participants! I will certainly recommend Luca and Philippa's tours, as I have done already to my friends and family.*  
Kaye 2024

Since 2007, Italian Tours has specialised in creating immersive itineraries for those with a passion for Italy and its rich cultural tapestry. Our small group sizes (maximum of 12 people) allow for a more personal, authentic experience, connecting you deeply with the places, people, and traditions that make Italy so enchanting.

The Dolomites offer some of Europe's most spectacular mountain scenery, with dramatic cliffs, green alpine meadows, and narrow valleys. This tour takes you through these breathtaking landscapes and into the towns and rural regions that thrive "in the shadow" of this majestic range. You'll experience the distinct cultural influences that make northern Italy so intriguing.

We begin in the Prosecco hills, a UNESCO World Heritage site, where you'll visit a boutique winery to taste some of the region's finest sparkling wines. Then, we head deeper into the Dolomites, staying in San Martino di Castrozza, a charming town beneath the imposing Pale di San Martino peaks. Here, you'll have the chance to enjoy a gentle walk and savour traditional Alpine flavours while surrounded by stunning mountain views.

Our journey continues into the South Tyrol region, staying in the picturesque city of Merano. Once part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, this area retains a distinctive Germanic character. You'll explore historic castles like Castel Thun, and admire the blend of Italian and Austrian influences that define the area.

We conclude the tour on the shores of beautiful Lake Garda, where you can relax by the water and enjoy the peaceful surroundings. From here, we take a day trip to the historic city of Trento, known for its blend of Renaissance architecture and alpine charm. As our journey winds down, you'll have time to reflect on the rich variety of experiences, from the tranquil lake to the towering mountains.





Prosecco Hills

## ITINERARY

### DAY 1 - ARRIVE IN THE PROSECCO HILLS

Our tour starts in the Prosecco hills, staying in a converted farmhouse surrounded by the characteristic hills and vines of the area. To make things easier, we will pick you up in the afternoon at Venice Mestre train station or Marco Polo airport for the short drive to our accommodation.

We'll have aperitivi on the lawn overlooking the vines and a welcome dinner.

Overnight: Rolle

### DAY 2 - ASOLO AND VILLA MASER

This morning we visit Asolo, described as the town of a "hundred horizons" by Italian poet Giosuè Carducci. There will be time to wander the streets of this charming hill town, which flourished as the Renaissance court of the exiled Queen Caterina of Cyprus. The town gained popularity again in the 19th century thanks to the attention of Robert and Elizabeth Barret Browning.

In the afternoon, we visit Villa Barbaro at Maser, a superb Venetian-style villa (UNESCO site) created for the Barbaro brothers by Palladio and Veronese in the 16th century.

Overnight: Rolle

### DAY 3 - PROSECCO - CIN CIN!

Today is dedicated to prosecco. We will learn about the geography and viticultural traditions that led to the UNESCO World Heritage classification and develop a better understanding of the wine: how it is made, what makes it unique, and how it tastes, of course!



We'll visit one of the wineries and slowly make our way home along the stunning Strade del Prosecco through some sleepy, beautiful, rural towns.

We'll also explore the history of the area, visiting a fascinating mill from the 15th Century and a medieval church.

Overnight: Rolle

#### DAY 4 - INTO THE DOLOMITES

We will check out of the hotel this morning and head to our next base, in the heart of the Dolomites. The drive to San Martino di Castrozza will give you your first true glimpses of the peaks of this awe-inspiring mountain range. We'll arrive in San Martino in time to take the cable car up to Alpe Tognola for some breathtaking views across to the Pale di San Martino.

We check into our new accommodation at a family-run chalet.

Overnight: San Martino di Castrozza

#### DAY 5 - WALKING IN THE DOLOMITES

After a leisurely start, we will travel by bus to the Val Venegia, one of the most picturesque valleys in the Trentino Dolomites. We'll take a gentle walk (around 40-50 mins on a gravel path) along the valley to a typical "malga", a summer base for dairy cattle and hospitality for hikers. We'll have lunch overlooking the mountain pastures and staring up at the impressive peaks of the Pale di San Martino.

Return to San Martino for some free time for the rest of the day.

Overnight: San Martino di Castrozza

#### DAY 6 - A DRIVE THROUGH THE DOLOMITES AND CHEESE PRODUCTION

Today's drive through the Val di Fassa will offer different perspectives on the ever-changing Dolomite scenery. Our destination is Moena, a small town with an excellent family-run dairy, agriturismo and restaurant. Like many small producers in Italy, they focus on sustainability and kilometre-zero food production, which promotes the use of local ingredients. They make the DOP-classified local cheese called, rather unappetisingly, Puzzone di Moena (smelly Moena). You can see whether it tastes better than it sounds!

*DOP = Denominazione di Origine Protetta = A product only produced in a limited area following traditional practices and using traditional ingredients.*

After the visit, we'll drive back through the Dolomites, with plenty of opportunities to enjoy the stunning scenery.

Overnight: San Martino di Castrozza

#### DAY 7 - DOLOMITES TO MERANO

Today, enjoy a spectacular drive through the Dolomites, crossing a couple of mountain passes that offer beautiful views of the surrounding peaks. We'll stop for lunch at a restaurant with a view of the Sella Group and Sassolungo massifs, taking in the peaceful mountain scenery as you relax over your meal.

In the afternoon, continue the journey to your new base in Merano, a charming town in the South Tyrol region.

Overnight: Merano

#### DAY 8 - MERANO

Today we will stay in Merano, visiting the town centre with a local guide. Merano has been a favoured spa town for aristocratic Europeans since the 1830s and has some fascinating museums and galleries.

The afternoon will be entirely at leisure, and there is plenty for you to do. You can visit the Terme di Merano, a complex of 25 indoor and outdoor pools maintained at various temperatures. There is the 4km Passeggiata Tappeiner, a walk through botanical gardens created in the 1890s, a chair lift to the village of Tirolo and its castle beyond, or plenty of bars along the river for an aperitivo or two.

Overnight: Merano

#### DAY 9 - BOLZANO

Bolzano has long been considered a bridge between northern and southern Europe thanks to its position just 90km from the Brenner Pass and has been an important town since Roman times. We will visit the charming medieval centre and an important museum.

In 1991, some German hikers discovered a body in a melting glacier. The authorities soon realised this was not some unfortunate hiker but the mummified remains of a copper-age man, preserved in the ice for over 5,000 years. Nicknamed Ötzi the Iceman, he is now housed in a world-class and highly enjoyable museum.

Overnight: Merano





Tognolo

## DAY 10 - THE VAL VENOSTA AND THE ABBEY OF ST JOHN OF MÜSTAIR

More postcard-worthy scenery awaits you today as we drive through a valley that runs from Merano towards the Swiss border. We'll stop for lunch in the town of Glorenz, a walled village virtually untouched since 1555. After lunch, we will slip across the border into Switzerland to visit the UNESCO World Heritage site of the Abbey of St John in Müstair, famous for the well-preserved Carolingian art housed within its walls.

Overnight: Merano

## DAY 11 - CASTEL THUN AND ON TO LAGO DI GARDA

Trentino, which is famous for its apple production, and today, as we drive south through the Val di Non, we'll be entirely surrounded by orchards. We will stop at Castel Thun, an impressive castle built high on a hill that dominates the Val di Non. It was built in the 13th century, remodelled in Renaissance times, and was home to one of the most influential families of the Trentino nobility.

Then it's on to Riva del Garda, our last base in the northernmost town on Lake Garda.

Overnight: Riva del Garda

## DAY 12 - WINE AND OLIVE OIL PRODUCTION

Today, drive through the scenic Vallagarina Valley, following the Adige River. This region is known for its excellent wines, particularly those made from local grape varieties like Marzemino. Stop at Cantina Tarczal for a wine tasting and to enjoy a relaxed lunch, sampling the area's renowned wines.

In the afternoon, visit Maso Botes, an olive oil producer located near Arco. Learn about the production process and enjoy a tasting of their high-quality oils while taking in the views from the hill, overlooking the landscape and looking back towards Lake Garda.

Overnight: Riva del Garda





Riva del Garda

### DAY 13 - TRENTO

The capital of the Trentino region, Trento, is a welcoming city, and today, a local guide will introduce us to its main attractions.

Trento was ruled for several centuries by powerful bishop-princes who invested heavily in art and architecture to create a city worthy of their position. One of these bishop-princes, Bernard of Cles, put Trento on the map when he campaigned for the city to host the Catholic church's great Counter-Reformation council of the 1500s.

We will visit the Bishops' palace, the Castel Buonconsiglio, which houses an important mediaeval fresco cycle of the months and the surrounding duomo and piazze.

Overnight: Riva del Garda

### DAY 14 - LAGO DI GARDA

We will spend our last full day of the tour on the waters of Lake Garda, visiting two of the prettiest towns of the northern lake, Limone sul Garda and Malcesine.

In the late afternoon, we will return to Riva in time for a farewell dinner.

Overnight: Riva del Garda

### DAY 15 - DEPARTURES

On the last morning of the tour, we will provide a transfer to Verona's train station and airport to help you on your way.

Overnight: NA

### PLEASE NOTE

Occasionally, due to circumstances beyond our control, it may not be possible to visit a specific location as planned in our itinerary. Should this occur, we will make every effort to provide a comparable alternative that maintains the spirit of the original experience.





# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

## STAY

- ❖ Three nights in Rolle, in the heart of the Prosecco Hills, in a farmhouse that has been converted into a boutique hotel (with a pool)
- ❖ Three nights in San Martino di Castrozza, in a family-run chalet
- ❖ Four nights in the centre of Merano in a historic hotel (with an indoor pool and sauna)
- ❖ Four nights in Riva del Garda in rooms with stunning lake views

## INCLUSIONS

- ❖ Group pick-up from Venice Mestre station or Venice Marco Polo at the beginning of the tour (timing early afternoon - please confirm with us)
- ❖ Group transfer to Verona train station and airport at the end of the tour (timing mid-morning afternoon - please confirm with us)
- ❖ Breakfast daily
- ❖ Ten meals (lunches or dinners tbc) in restaurants chosen for their authenticity and local cuisine (wine included)
- ❖ Land transport in air-conditioned mini-coach
- ❖ Admission to all museums, galleries and other sites described in the itinerary
- ❖ Expert local guides at key locations

## EXCLUSIONS / ADDONS

- ❖ City tax - which is payable directly at each hotel

## PHYSICAL FITNESS

We don't place any age limitations on the tour. However, you must be able to walk unassisted over uneven circumstances and at a reasonable pace around the places we visit. If you do not meet these requirements, the tour leader may have to exclude you from certain visits for safety reasons or to limit the impact on the group.

## WEATHER

Please note that the descriptions below are only rough guides. We freely admit that, given the changing climate, we aren't very good at predicting the weather!

In early September, temperatures should be in the mid-high 20s, except when we are in San Martino, when it can be considerably colder (you will be at about 1500m)

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is compulsory when travelling on one of our tours. Please contact us if you need help arranging travel insurance.

## BOOKING

If you would like to book a place on this or any other tour, or if you have some questions about the itinerary, please don't hesitate to contact Luca or Philippa.

P 02 9358 4923

E [ciao@italiantours.com.au](mailto:ciao@italiantours.com.au)

W [www.italiantours.com.au](http://www.italiantours.com.au)

