Statistics of the Trek

• Trail length: 100 miles (160 km)
• Total ascent: 37,618 ft of trail + 2,687 ft of side trips = 40,233 ft
• Total descent: 36,165 ft of trail + 2,687 ft of side trips = 38,852 ft
• Total hiking time: approx. 80 hours over 13 days

• Note: 40,000 ft of ascent is roughly equivalent to climbing Mt. Rainier 5 times in a row, assuming the standard Cleaver route from Paradise (6,400 ft) to the summit (14,400 ft).
The Route


• 13 stages, 1 day each.

• Refugios are shown as the yellow houses.

• Modifications:
  • Stayed an extra day at Malga Ciapela to explore the Marmolada.
  • Combined stages 12 and 13 into one day.
Interesting Facts about the Dolomites

• The Dolomites were originally coral beds in the ocean that were uplifted by the igneous intrusions that formed the Alps. Fossil sea shells and fish skeletons can be found at elevations over 8,000 ft.

• The mineral dolomite is roughly limestone with added magnesium, which gives it a chalky white appearance. From a distance many of the talus slopes look like snow fields.

• The Dolomites are the South central section of the European Alps, roughly N of Venice and S of Munich.

• The soft nature of the Dolomite strata has made is easily erodible into tall vertical spires, towers and campaniles, making it the most vertical range in Europe. Typical trails gain well over 1000 ft per mile.
A Historically Interesting Region of Italy

• The Dolomites are in the middle of the region where the Austro-Hungarian and Italian empires met during WW1, often referred to as the Italian Front.

• This region was fiercely fought over during the years 1914-1918.
  • Nov. 3, 2018 is the centennial of the final battle of Vittorio-Veneto in which the Italians defeated the Austro-Hungarians by crossing over the Piave river.

• In the Northern Dolomites the predominant language is still Deutsch.
  • A sub-dialect, Ladin, is still spoken and recognized as its own language.

• Many of the mountains reveal remnants of WW1: military roads, artillery caves and trenches hewn right out of the sides of the mountains.
  • More soldiers died from avalanches and exposure than from live fire.

• Via Ferrata, “iron paths”, involving cableways, ladders, rungs, and steps, were put in to allow soldiers to ascend into the battlements. Today, via ferratas have become sport climbing routes throughout the Dolomites with hundreds of available routes.
  • Several sections of the Alta Via 2 involve via ferrata, but they can be negotiated (carefully!) without full climbing gear. Those affected by vertigo should not attempt these.
Streets of Bressanone, also known as Brixen
Country church hiking up from St. Andrea
Looking back down to the cathedral of Bressanone
Looking North, Austria in the far distance
A lunch stop, midway up
After reaching the top, looking South, the first views of the Dolomites
First night in Refugio Plosehutte
Sass de Putia, 2875m, (to be climbed tomorrow)
Ancient coral beds, now at 8000 ft.
Erosion versus dolomite
Starting up to Forcella di Putia
Waterfalls along the way up
Looking back down the gully
Aided cable-way climb to the top of the Sass
View to the East from the top of Sass de Putia
Looking back, the route up Sass di Putia
Passo Roma and on to Refugio Genova for night 2
Hiking along the Odle (Needles) Range
Trail up to Forcella della Roa
Traverse around the amphitheater
Climbing up from Forcella di Sielles
Look back West to Gran Odla, Sass Rigais, and Furcheta
Piz de Puez and the Puez altopiano
Refugio Puez for night 3
The glacially carved Vallunga
Descending from Forcella di Ciampai, Sasso Lungo far to the West
Descending Passo Cir to Passo Gardena, the Sella Massif ahead
Sasso Lungo
Route South up into the mighty Sella
Refugio Pisciadu for night 4 on the first Sella plateau
Well-marked trails
Nestled among the ramparts
Looking down to Colfosco
Starting up Val di Tita
On the summit of Piz Boe’, 3152m, the highest point in the Sella
Looking East out over the Sella altopiano
Refugio Pordoi tucked in Forcella Pordoi, cable car restaurant on top of Sass Pordoi
Paragliders – a pair o’ gliders
The airy porch of Capanna Fassa on Piz Boe’
The Marmolada in the distance, the queen of the Dolomites
So many choices
Refugio Pordoi at Forcella Pordoi
Looking back to Piz Boe’
Passo Pordoi and the Sella Massif
The descent route down from the Sella
Lago di Fedaia and the Marmolada
Refugio Viel del Pan lemonade stop
A long traverse along the Viel del Pan, beneath the Sasso Cappello
Night 5 at Refugio Castiglioni, aka Refugio Marmolada
Dusk on Lago di Fedaia
Heading off across the dam; the glacier used to reach down to here
WW1 war museum
Entering the UNESCO Marmolada region
A mini-marmot, much smaller than the Cascade variety
Night 7 in Hotel Tyrolia at Malga Ciapela
Madonna in the Grotta-cappella on Punta Roca
Punta Roca, 2nd summit of the Marmolada, 3265m, completely in clouds
Cable car between Serauta and Punta Roca
1918 Vickers 75mm artillery cannon at 2950m elevation
WW1 fortifications at Serauta
WW1 barbed wire and fencing
The heavily receded Marmolada glacier
Looking down to Malga Ciapela from Forca Rosa
Ponies!
Lemonade stop at Refugio Fuchiade
Vacation cottages on the way down to Passo San Pellegrino
Water stop
Looking back to the Formenton-Sasso Valfredda amphitheater
Wood carving is a pastime here
A carved crucifix, hundreds of these along the trek
Night 7 at Albergo / Rifugio Miralago
Climbing up from Passo Valles into the San Martino altopiano
Focobon campaniles from Forcella Venegia
Night 8 at Refugio Mulaz, the most remote one on the trek
The climb up to Forcella Margherita
Looking back down to Refugio Mulaz
Next the climb up to Passo delle Farangole
A typical cable aided section
Finally reaching Passo delle Farangole
And next, the climb down
More cables
Traversing around the Cima delle Comelle; Val Grande down to the right
Hiking over to the Pian dei Cantoni
The trail from Pian dei Cantoni up to the marker on the horizon
The Pala di San Martino
La Rosetta and cable car down to San Martino di Castrozza
Night 9 at Refugio Rosetta
Climb up to Passo del Ball
The trail up to Passo del Ball
Passo del Ball; Refugio Pradidali in lower left
Crumbly trail on scree
Refugio Pradidali
The beer gets a cable car; the visitors must hike
View looking South from the dining room of Refugio Pradidali
Lunch time!
Vertical back yard
Trail climbing up to Passo delle Lede
Remains of a Lockheed P-2V6 “Neptune” that crashed into the Fradusta in 1957
Descending to night 10 at Refugio Treviso; a thundershower on the way down
Last view back to the Pale di San Martino from Forcella d’Oltro
New views South into the Vette Feltrine and Cimonega
Forested trail down to Passo Cereda and night 11 at Refugio Cereda
Stone pinnacles along the route down
Looking back down to Passo Cereda from Forcella Comedon
Sasso Largo on the horizon
Sasso delle Undici
Bivacco Feltre-Walter Bodo beneath the Piz Sagron
Metamorphic folding
Lovely traverse along the Troi dei Caserini
Trail along the shoulders of the Sass de Mura
Larch just beginning to turn colors
Passo Finestra after leaving Refugio Boz, night 12
Between cable sections along the side of Sasso di Scarnia
After finishing at Croce d’Aune, the victory pin!
The old renaissance square in Feltre; night 13 in Hotel Doriguzzi
Looking South from the Centro Storico into the Piedemonte
Narrow city streets
Along Campo Giorgio
Duomo of Feltre
Municipio clock tower of Feltre
A spare day spent in Venice; Piazza de San Marco
Santa Maria della Salute
Basilica San Marco
Canal side dining
Gondoliers and touristas
Venezia classico
Non così tranquillo
Ponte de Scalzi
Time to head home; la fine del viaggio