



UNESCO GEOTRAIL – a journey through time ITALIAN DOLOMITES



The incredible Odles Peaks

	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Optional day walks / bike extension in Val Gardena
Trip length:	6 days	7 days	8 days	10 days	As many days as you like!
Trekking days:	4 days	5 days	6 days	8 days	As many days as you like!
Grade:	Moderate +				
Trip style:	Self-Guided multi-day hut-to-hut trek.				
Dates:	This trek can be run on dates to suit you between 15 June – 21 September				

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Trip overview

The Dolomites UNESCO Geotrail is an exciting new multi-day hut-to-hut trekking route which follows the geological story of the Dolomites.

It has been developed to take the trekker on a journey that traverses through some of the most beautiful and geologically interesting mountain ranges in the region. The route features plenty of contrasts, giving an overview of the area's unique geological history and an insight into why the Dolomites have been awarded UNESCO World Heritage Site status.

The UNESCO Geotrail travels from South-West to North-East across the Dolomite range, intersecting both the Alta Via 2 and, later on, the Alta Via 1.

The walk: The route is mostly on good paths, though Dolomite paths can be steep with some exposure. There are a few sections of the route that have iron cable which you can clip into or hold onto to protect yourself. The route does have some places where the path is steep on one side. Cable cars, chairlifts, shuttle buses and alternative route options can make some of the longer or harder days easier.



UNESCO GeoTrail: Itinerary

Trip length: variable:

- **Option A: Geotrail Passo Oclini to Val Gardena** 6 days total (itinerary days 1 + 4 to 8)
- **Option B: Geotrail Obereggen to Val Gardena** 7 days total (itinerary days 1 + 3 to 8)
- **Option C: Geotrail Full** 8 days total (itinerary days 1 to 8)
- **Option D: extension to Bressanone** 10 days total (itinerary days 1 to 10)

Day	Itinerary	Meals included	Ascent	Descent	km	Accommodation
1	Arrive in Bolzano					Hotel, Bolzano
2	Options C + D start trekking here: Taxi transfer to the start of the Geotrail at Bletterbach Gorge and trek to Passo Oclini.	Breakfast, dinner	Spend the morning exploring the fascinating Bletterbach Gorge, then: 900m (or 500m avoiding Corno Bianco)	386m (or 42m avoiding Corno Bianco)	7.7km (or 7km avoiding Corno Bianco)	Luxury Mountain Rifugio with great spa facility
3	Option B starts trekking here: Bus to Passo Oclini. Trek into the Latemar mountains	Breakfast, dinner	426m	929m	16km	Family-run Alpine hotel
4	Option A starts trekking here: Bus to Obereggen. Trek to the Passo di Costalunga and into the Rosengarten / Catinaccio mountains	Breakfast, dinner	809m (can be reduced)	23m	12.6km via path 548 (can be shortened)	Traditional Mountain Rifugio
5	Trek through the spectacular Rosengarten / Catinaccio mountains – choice of routes	Breakfast, dinner	700m over the pass (or 415m bad weather route)	728m over the pass (or 454m bad weather route)	9.7km over the pass – (or 8.8km bad weather route)	Traditional Mountain Rifugio
<p>Today's route over the pass is harder and takes longer than the mapping software statistics make it seem as it includes a section on steep, rocky ground assisted by a cable to hold on to, and then a long rocky descent – most groups arrive at the rifugio mid-afternoon. The bad weather route avoids this section.</p>						
6	Continue your journey trekking through the Rosengarten / Catinaccio mountains past the Vajolet Towers	Breakfast, dinner	682m	467m	6.1km	Mountain Rifugio
<p>Today's route is harder and takes longer than the mapping software statistics make it seem as it crosses a large scree and boulder field – most groups arrive at the rifugio mid-afternoon.</p>						
7	Trek to the Val Gardena.	Breakfast	129m walk to Santa	1232m walk to Santa	15.2km walk to Santa	Boutique Hotel, Val Gardena

			Cristina (or 401m using cable car to Ortisei)	Cristina (or 873m using cable car to Ortisei)	Cristina (or 14.2km using cable car to Ortisei)	
8	Depart Dolomites	Breakfast				

**Optional extra days in Val Gardena:
stay longer in the Gardena Valley for day walks or biking:**

If you wish to continue trekking on the next part of the GeoTrail, we suggest that you spend a night or two extra in the wonderful Val Gardena area before continuing the trek. See the section on Val Gardena walk or bike extension options below for further details.

**Option D: continues on through spectacular mountain terrain
alongside the Odles Peaks to Bressanone:**

8	Trek through the Puez-Odles Nature Park	Breakfast. Dinner available a la carte	612m	790m	11.4km	Mountain Rifugio
9	Complete your trek and descend by cable car into Bressanone	Breakfast	658m	926m	15.5km	Hotel, Bressanone
10	Depart Dolomites	Breakfast				



Dolomite reflections in Lago di Carezza © Ann Foulkes, trekMountains

Outline Itinerary

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.

Day 1 Arrive in Bolzano

The trip starts in the medieval city of Bolzano in the South Tyrol province of Northern Italy.

The city's archaeological museum is home to the Neolithic mummy who was discovered in a glacier, Otzi the Iceman. His pieces of equipment and clothing have been restored to give you a glimpse into life 5,300 years ago.

Bolzano is easily reached by train. The nearest airports are Verona or Venice Marco Polo.

Overnight: hotel

Day 2 Travel to the start of the Geotrail at Bletterbach Gorge and trek to Passo Oclini

The GeoTrail starts at the Bletterbach Gorge which can be reached by train and bus. The Bletterbach Gorge reveals the various geological layers of the Dolomites. Following violent volcanic eruptions about 280-274 million years ago, hot ash and lava streams covered the area that used to be located near the Equator. Today this reddish volcanic rock is the basis of the Bletterbach Gorge. Fossils of animals, animal tracks and plant life were embedded in sand or mud, and can still be easily found in the gorge.



Bletterbach Gorge, the start of the UNESCO Geotrail © Ann Foulkes, trekMountains

The Geotrail ascends to the rim of the gorge to viewpoints offering spectacular vistas down into it. Our trail continues to the luxury rifugio at Passo Oclini at the foot of the contrasting peaks of Corno Bianco and Corno Nero. There is the option to summit Corno Bianco if you wish.

Overnight: Luxury rifugio

Day 3 Trek into the Latemar mountains

From Passo Oclini the trek continues through forests and past a Nordic skiing area to the lake at Passo di Lavaze.

From here it continues through forests and ski areas to reach a panoramic plateau before traversing under the impressive cliffs of the Latemar Massif which form the rim of an ancient atoll when it was below sea level. Descend to a mountain rifugio near to the ski resort of Obereggen.

Overnight: Mountain rifugio



Passo di Lavaze, UNESCO Geotrail © Ann Foulkes, trekMountains

Day 4 Trek to the Passo di Costalunga and into the Rosengarten / Catinaccio mountains

Today the Geotrail passes from the Latemar range to the Catinaccio & Rosengarten mountain range which will dominate the next few days of the walk. The Latemar and the Catinaccio ancient reefs used to be separated by a deep sea.

The walking today starts with an easy morning on broad paths and tracks which take you to the popular lake, Lago di Carezza.

From here it is an easy walk to Passo di Costalunga and then a long ascent onto the flanks of the Catinaccio mountain range. A chairlift is available if you are feeling like a lazy day.

Overnight: mountain rifugio

Day 5 Trek through the spectacular Rosengarten / Catinaccio mountains – choice of routes

There is a choice of routes today. If you are happy with a bit of loose ground and some exposure there is the exciting option of traversing the Coronelle before crossing the atoll rim at the Passo delle Coronelle, assisted by some fixed cables before picking your way on the descent down on what was the inside of the atoll to your rifugio for the night, located under the Vajolet Towers – rock pinnacles which rise above the atoll rim.

If that sounds a little too exciting, or if there is bad weather we would recommend a different route on broad paths which descends to a cluster of rifugi where you could have lunch before ascending to the night's rifugio.

Overnight: mountain rifugio

Day 6 Continue your journey through the Catinaccio mountains past the Vajolet Towers

This is a short day, but can be challenging terrain, especially in bad weather, and the lovely rifugio tonight should not be missed. Climbing back up out of the atoll basin the route ascends for a coffee stop at tiny Rifugio Principe perched on the Passo Principe, before a big descent over a dramatic landscape down into a dry, rock-strewn valley. Ascend to a ridge before a final descent to a warm welcome which awaits you at a luxury rifugio.

Overnight: luxury mountain rifugio

Day 7 Trek to the Val Gardena.

The scenery abruptly changes today as the Geotrail encounters the softer landscape of the Alpe di Siusi – a huge basin which provides a great habitat for wild flowers. This basin, popular with skiers in the winter, is also a perfect playground for e-biking, but more about that later!

From the Alpe di Siusi there are options – either you can take a cable car or walk down to the Val Gardena which is a wonderfully-maintained valley with its immaculate villages of Ortisei, Santa Cristina and Selva di Val Gardena. There are also some pretty impressive pizzas to be found here – go on, you’ve earned it!

Overnight: boutique hotel

Day 8 Depart Dolomites , or start extension option

Today sadly is the day your 1-week tour of the Geotrail finishes.

We’re sure, however, that you will want to stay on as this area is sublime, so we have given you the following options:

- a. You could finish your trip today
- b. or, you could stay and explore the wonderful Gardena Valley for as many nights as you like
- c. and / or continue the Geotrail on to the next section, trek out to Bressanone on a couple of non-technical stages of the Alta Via 2:



Val Gardena © Ann Foulkes, trekMountains



View on the Geotrail

Val Gardena e-biking or walking optional extension: Day Walks in Val Gardena

We can offer various day walks in the stunning Val Gardena to extend your trip. The valley is surrounded by a number of mountain ranges, all of which are easily accessible by the comprehensive cable car network and also a funicular railway.

Let us tailor walks to your preferences for as many extra days as you want to spend in this immaculately-kept, beautiful and varied valley.

See the Odles Peaks from Seceda, explore the Col Raiser basin in depth, circumnavigate Sasso Piatto and Sasso Lungo, check out the Vallunga or the Sella Massif or perhaps explore the Alpe di Siusi more on e-bike (see next page for details).

You may also want to explore the 3 villages of Val Gardena – Selva di Val Gardena, Santa Cristina and Ortisei, or make use of the free transport pass to take you to the historic town of Bressanone.

One of our favourite walks gives the most dramatic views of one of our absolute favourite parts of the Dolomites - the striking peaks of the Odles range. These jagged edges seem to be torn out of the earth, and have been lifted up to an alarming angle. Home to chamois and ibex, these peaks tower above the Col Raiser Basin. The jagged peaks of the Odles, (shown on the first page) are not to be missed! The basin has a host of mountain refuges for refreshment.

Overnight: return to your hotel in Val Gardena for as many nights as you want!



The Odles Peaks © Ann Foulkes, trekMountains

Val Gardena e-biking optional extension

There are bike routes to suit all levels:

- gentle rides down the delightful converted old railway line in the valley
- journeys with incredible vistas of the mountains all around you the wonderful variety offered in the high Alpe di Siusi
- single-track challenges for adrenaline junkies.

All these routes are accessible with your bike either via the cable cars or with e-bike turbo power.



The valley cycle track © trekMountains

Whether you're finishing your trek at this point or you're planning to continue on the next section of the Geotrail, why not spend some extra time in the wonderful Val Gardena area which is one of our very favourite parts of the Dolomites. The Sella Massif, the Sasso Piatto, Sasso Lungo, the spikes of the Odles Peaks (shown on the front cover of this itinerary), and Marmolada, the highest peak in the Dolomites all surround the walks and bike rides in this immaculately-kept valley, with its gorgeous hotels and manicured window-boxes of flowers.

The Val Gardena area is linked by a fantastic network of cable cars and a funicular railway together with a free bus system which make getting into the high peaks around the valley really easy. You can choose to spend time relaxing in one of the many mountain restaurants soaking up the views, perhaps exploring the truly spectacular and incredibly varied walking on offer here (we can supply suggested routes), or perhaps hire e-bikes.

The trekMountains team hired e-bikes here for what turned out to be the very best couple of days cycling we'd ever done anywhere in the world. E-bikes make going uphill fun and the scenery... oh my...the scenery we were biking in was sublime. Surrounded by massive peaks all around us, on good paths and with superb huts to stop off for refreshments, what's not to like? The e-biking was so good we've decided to add it as an option to this trip.



Option D: continue trekking alongside the spectacular Odles Peak to Bressanone:



The funicular railway © trekMountains

Day 8 Trekking through the Puez-Odles Nature Park to enjoy views of the Sella Massif

From Val Gardena, take the funicular railway to the Rasciesa area which offers stunning views of the jagged -Odles peaks. Walk down into the Val di Funes. This delightful path offers the most spectacular views of the Odles Peaks before winding its way up to your rifugio for the night.

Overnight: Mountain rifugio.

Day 9 Final trek day, then descend by cable car and bus to Bressanone

From your final rifugio you will traverse to a col before descending to a valley before reascending to the final rifugio. Why not enjoy a celebratory drink before heading to the cable car to go down to Santa Andrea, from where a bus will take you into the historic town of Bressanone, also known as Brixen.

Overnight hotel, Bressanone.

Day 10: Depart Bressanone

Departing from Bressanone is easy as the train station is on the main line between Innsbruck and Verona, which links to the train line for Venice.

trekMountains services finish after a fantastic breakfast, but we are sure that you will want to come back to this area again and again.



Travel to the Dolomites

The nearest airports are **Verona**, **Venice Marco Polo** and **Innsbruck**.

If you choose to travel to Verona you will miss out the option to stay in Venice, but the travel time between Verona and the Dolomites is shorter (typically at least 4 hours from Venice and 2¼ hours from Verona).

We can supply comprehensive advice on train travel between the airports and the Dolomites.

Both Bolzano and Bressanone are on the main train line between Verona and Venice.

It's also easy to get by regular bus from Val Gardena to this same main train line.

Languages:

The area this trek passes through embraces the cultures of both the Italian Alto-Adige and the Austrian Sud Tyrol. Both Italian and German are spoken locally, as well as the local language of Ladin. English is often also now used in many places.

Equipment:

In addition to the things you would normally carry for a day walk you will also need to carry a spare set of clothing to change into in the evenings, a few basic toiletries, a towel and a sheet sleeping bag. You do not need to carry sleeping bags or food. Including your water, you should aim to keep your rucksack weight to around 10kg. As this is a linear route you will need to travel just with the things you will need for the trek. A full kit list will be supplied



Accommodation:

- In Bolzano we normally accommodate guests in a 4* hotel.
- In Val Gardena we can either use a hotel or a delightful family-run boutique guest house, hosted by the lovely Mjriam who has been looking after our guests wonderfully for a number of years now.
- In Bressanone we use a hotel or guest house depending on availability, though we normally use a 4* hotel.
- In the mountains you will stay in a mixture of luxury rifugi (some of which are more or less hotel standard with spa facilities) and traditional mountain rifugi.
In the traditional mountain rifugi, bathroom facilities are normally shared.

For groups of 2 or more, it is our policy at trekMountains to request private rooms in the mountain rifugi for you wherever they are available, which we do at no extra cost to yourself.

Food and drink:

Refreshments and meals can be obtained from rifugi en-route. On just a few days you will need to carry a packed lunch obtainable from the rifugio the night before.

Breakfasts and dinners will be available at the refuges that you will stay at.

Drinking water will always be available. In those places where the tap water is not drinkable you will always be able to buy bottled water.

Mountain refuges serve a variety of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, and some will have a range of home-made grappa for you to try.



Inside a typical rifugio dining area © trekMountains



The price

You can choose to pay in Sterling or Euros:

The price will vary according to the number of days trekking you wish to do.

Please contact us with your preferences and we will tailor a trek for you, and give you a quotation.

The Price Includes (Self-guided trips):

- Valley-based accommodation before and after the trek as shown in the itinerary above – where this in hotels it will usually be on a twin or double room shared basis inclusive of breakfast.
- Mountain accommodation during the trek as shown in the itinerary above. Most mountain rifugi have shared bathroom facilities. **For bookings of 2 people or more, trekMountains will request private rooms wherever available in the rifugi at no extra cost to yourself.** Please note that these rooms are very popular, and therefore early booking is advised if you wish to try to avoid shared rooms.
- Meals as shown in the itinerary above – Please note that a few rifugi no longer offer half-board packages. In these cases, dinners are available to purchase at the rifugio on an a la carte basis. Where this is applicable to the rifugi we book for you, we will indicate this on your invoice.
- Detailed route instructions
- Detailed, original 1:25,000 map with your route highlighted.
- GPX files on request to use on your preferred mapping software.
- A survival Italian language guide.

Not Included (Self-guided trips):

- Travel between your home and the start of the trip.
- Travel between your final night's accommodation and your home at the end of the trip.
- Meals not specified in the itinerary as being included.
- Travel Insurance (required)
- Tourist taxes – typically a few euros per night payable in cash on arrival at your accommodation.
- Any uplifts (cable cars, chairlifts or funicular railway) Uplifts can make some of the longer or harder days easier. The cost of using any of these easier options has not been included in the price of the trip. Prices vary, but a typical cable car trip costs around €15.
- Any costs incurred by a deviation from the itinerary.
- Items of a personal nature such as drinks, laundry, telephone calls, souvenirs and spa facilities.

Optional extras:

- Extra nights in the Val Gardena area in a hotel inclusive of breakfast
- Bike or e-bike hire in Val Gardena

