

# Dolomites Minibreak

Explore the highlights of the Dolomites from the comfort of a lakeside hotel in Alleghe

## Summary

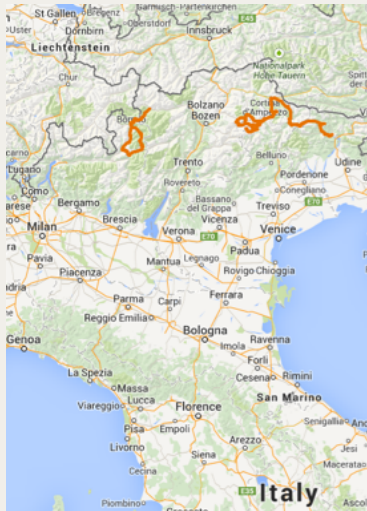
**WHERE:** Dolomites, Italy

**DISTANCE:** To suit you

**TIME :** 4 days

**PRICE :** see website

**DATES:** July to Sept



## Dolomites Minibreak

A landscape of lush green valleys and rugged limestone mountains, the Dolomites is considered by many to be the most beautiful mountain range in the world. It is a paradise for cyclists, with lots of infamous cols used regularly by the Giro d'Italia, plus some lesser-known ones to discover for yourself.

This mini-break showcases what this picturesque area has to offer. It doesn't include every infamous Col in the Dolomites - for that you need to check out our week long Classic Cols of the Dolomites holiday, but it offers a chance to relax and stay in just one hotel whilst not sacrificing the quality of cycling routes available to you. We have based ourselves in a lovely hotel in Alleghe with its popular restaurant, mini-spa facilities and lakeside bar with stunning views. Central to the Dolomites, it gives you four great (and optionally challenging) circular rides, without repeating a col. Each day there are 3 options to suit all aspirations and fitness levels, making this holiday suitable for anyone that likes riding a bike.

Whether you opt for the easier or harder routes (or a mix of the two), this week is a 'holiday' and riding your bike through the Dolomites is a real joy. This plus the good company of the others in your group and the local Italian culture and cuisine, all make for an excellent escape.

We run week long Classic Cols holidays in the Pyrenees, Alps Corsica, Sardinia, Picos, Cevennes & Ardeche, Provence, Andalusia and Catalonia too: for cyclists new to the mountains, looking at doing the classic route, we recommend starting with the Pyrenees.

## Highlights

**Flexible itinerary to suit everyone**

**Centre based from a lovely 4\* lakeside hotel**

**Infamous Sella Ronda and Marmolada loops**

**2 customised support vehicles & experienced, energetic guides**

**Suitable for non-cycling partners**

# Itinerary

## Day 0 - Travel Out

Included transfers from Venice Marco Polo Airport (2 hr journey) to your hotel in Alleghe. Meet your guides, assemble your bikes and have a welcome briefing and delicious Italian dinner.

The following routes can be done on any day of the trip, so we make the best of the weather conditions. If it is warm then our guides will suggest the higher level rides, if it is wet, they will support you on the lower rides where it is more sheltered.

### North West: Sella Ronda Circuit

You enjoy a short warm up along the lake to Caprile before taking on the eastern slopes of the **Passo Pordoi (2239m)** which provides the perfect introduction to the Dolomites. It is a long 28.5km climb, but in general the gradients are kind and there are even a few short downhill sections! The views from the top are magnificent and there is great choice of café's / restaurants to welcome you, regardless of the hour you get here. It is decision time and all the options are good!

#### Option 1 (68km with 1430m ascent)

Have a big lunch and return back the same way for some lakeside lounging.

**Option 2 (75km with 1880m ascent):** Head back to the village of Arabba, then nip up the south side of the **Passo di Campolongo (1875m)**.

#### Option 3 (101km with 2500m ascent)

Those who have heard of the Maratona dles Dolomites will be itching to complete the 'Sella Ronda' route — one of Europe's great rides over 4 great cols: **Passo di Sella (2244m)** from the south, **Passo di Gardena (2121m)** from the west and the north side of the **Passo di Campolongo (1875m)**. The altitude drop between the passes is not huge, but it is a big day out!

### South East: A Hidden Gem

The western side of the **Forcella Staulanza (1771m)** is another beautiful col accessible from the door of our hotel. The gradients do tend to change quite a lot, but that does mean you get some flat sections. Again the views from the pass are excellent, today it is the pointy limestone peak of Monte Civetta that dominates the horizon.

#### Option 1 (44km with 935m ascent)

Enjoy the view from the cafe and head back to the hotel. You could take in the **Colle Santa Lucia (1485m)** en route!

**Option 2 (71km with 1750m ascent):** After a short descent to a village called 'd'ont' (is it trying to tell us something?!) the gradients turn a bit tougher as we take on the **Passo Duran (1602m)** from the north. This is another Giro favourite and the Rifugio on the col is very welcome. The descent back into the Alleghe Valley requires your concentration, then all you have to do is climb gently uphill on a quiet side road.

#### Option 3 (100km with 2700m ascent)

Once back in Alleghe there is a nice little loop that can be tagged onto the day, taking you up the north side of the **Forcella Franche (992m)** and then the south side of the **Forcella Aurine (1297m)**. Neither of these climbs have had much to do with the Giro, but they are nonetheless very pleasant and quiet.

### North East: Legends of the Dolomites

The vista from **Passo di Giau (2238m)** is considered by many as the most magnificent that the Dolomites has to offer and today you will have a chance to judge for yourself. The western side of the climb is relentlessly steep, but it is a quiet road and the cool of the morning is surprisingly enjoyable. Yet again there are many options.....

#### Option 1 (39km with 1270m ascent)

Linger at the col for a few hours and have a leisurely lunch before heading back to the hotel.

**Option 2 (64km with 1850m ascent):** From the Passo Giau you start of down towards Cortina, but after a short section of flat you join the road to the **Passo Di Falzarego (2105m)** which you climb from the east. If you are ahead of schedule then it is worth downing the bike at the Col to look at the trenches built by First World War soldiers during battles between the Italians and Austro-Hungarians - these mountains have many a tale to tell. From here it is downhill to the hotel.

#### Option 3 (117km with 3030m ascent)

Continue over the Passo Giau to Cortina d'Ampezzo, the attractive (and chic!) town that hosted the 1956 winter Olympics. Next 'up' is the **Passo Tre Croci (1805m)** which has a few nasty little sections before briefly descending to the very beautiful Lago di Misurina ('Pearl of the Dolomites') - a great place for lunch.

The afternoon brings you the **Passo de Cimbianche (1530m)** from the east, a gentle gradient taking you back around to Cortina. The eastern gradients of the **Passo Di Falzarego (2105m)** then are all that stand between you and the hotel.



## South West: The Tour of Marmolada

Marmolada (3343m), the highest mountain in the Dolomites, has been dominating the skyline all week and today we enter into its shadow. Before World War I, the border between Austria and Italy ran over Marmolada, so it formed part of the front line during the conflict. The Austrian soldiers tunnelled deep into the glacial ice to push their frontier and sheltered from the harsh winters in the ice caves. It is chilling to even contemplate fighting a war in this harsh environment!

But, back to the cycling! The climb starts from the door of your hotel, and you will be pleased to hear that the road does not go all the way to the top of this mighty mountain. **The Passo di Fedaià (2057m)** from the east is brutal! The last 5km average 11% and there is a sneaky section of 15% thrown in a few km from the top! Fortunately the views are breathtaking, so there are plenty of photo opportunities (aka 'excuses to stop for a breather'). This is definitely the toughest (but most rewarding) climb of the week. Unlike most of the other climbs there is no café on the top, only a vast reservoir that reflects the towering peaks.

### Option 1 (37km with 1050m ascent)

It is justifiable to return back to the hotel for a massage.

**Option 2 (88km with 2151m ascent)** Once over the other side, there is no turning back! You drop down into civilisation and the lush green valley bottom the Val di Fassa. This makes for some easy cycling on good tarmac before you turn east

to take on the Passo di San Pellegrino (1914m) from the West. This is a lovely climb up into the pine forest and is used often by the Giro. Once over the other side you roll down into the Allege Valley and climb gently back up the valley bottom.

**Option 3 (102km with 2760m ascent)** On the descent of the Pelegrino you may (or may not) be tempted to detour up to the Passo di Valles (2033m), where the rugged peaks of the Dolomites give way to rolling green hills to the south.

## Extra climbs

The circuits detailed above are generally demanding enough, but there are a few optional extra climbs that could be tagged onto the end of each day:

Piana di Pezze (1463m) - adds 11km and 450m ascent: Ski resort above Allege

Passo di Falzarego (2103m) from the west - adds 28km and 830m ascent

Colle Santa Lucia (1485m) from the east - adds 18km and 500m ascent

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## Day 5 - Travel Back

All good things have to come to an end. We offer included transfers back to Venice Marco Polo airport (2hrs). Please read on to our Travel Section for details.





## Hotel

Sport Hotel Europa, 32022 Alleghe, Italy  
(+39 0437523362)

## Travel

### Finding flights

We recommend using a comparison tool such as [www.skyscanner.net](http://www.skyscanner.net) when searching for direct or indirect flights from various airports/regions/countries. It can be helpful if you search for one-way flights, giving results of all direct routes available, eg. 'UK to VCE'. Search results may change as airlines release their schedules for the following year at varying times.

If you are flying long haul, we recommend arriving into Venice a day early in order to get over any jet lag before you start cycling. It is very easy to extend this holiday - Venice is a lovely city to explore and there are a number of hotels which offer complimentary airport transfers (it's a searchable option on [booking.com](http://booking.com)).

Venice is very accessible by public transport with many busses, trains and water busses. If you don't like the thought of lugging your bike box around with you, Venice airport does have a left luggage facility which accepts bikes.

If you are travelling in a group of 6 or more and are unable to join the group airport transfers, we may be able to organise a private transfer for you. Please contact us to discuss.

### Under your own steam...

If you are going to meet us at the start hotel or are leaving independently at the end of your trip

to go on elsewhere, please let us know so we can plan accordingly; we may also be able to help you with your travel plans, so do get in touch if you need assistance.

### Foreign Travel Advice

For the latest travel advice from the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, check [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice).

## Airport Transfers

Marmot Tours offer airport transfers at designated times from the most convenient airport for the start of your trip. Transfers are timed to fit in with as many flights from as many regional airports as possible.

Transfers at set times from and back to **Venice Marco Polo airport (VCE)** are included in the holiday price. The transfer time is about 2 hours each way.

If you arrive earlier than the transfer time then you will need to wait at the airport for your pick up. If flights are delayed then transfers may also be delayed. If flights are significantly delayed or cancelled then you may need to take a taxi to the start hotel and make a claim on your insurance or to your airline.

You will find our most up to date transfer times on the **Holiday Details** page on the [Link](#) (once you've made your booking). If you need to know the timings before booking, please get in touch via email: [cycle@marmot-tours.co.uk](mailto:cycle@marmot-tours.co.uk).



## Navigation

We provide you with colour maps and altitude profiles, as well as detailed directions of where to go. Our guides will even aim to be at those 'easy to miss' junctions and as you will see the van and guides regularly, navigation does not tend to be a problem.

For those of you with GPS units, we have GPS files available and will post them on The Link a few weeks before departure, in .gpx, and .tcx formats.

The files can be downloaded onto most units, including Garmin and Wahoo and in their most basic form provide a purple line to follow. With the more recent units you will also receive a set of visual instructions as you approach a turning. Our GPS tracks take you from hotel to hotel.

## Am I fit Enough?

It is normal (and only right) that you should consider whether or not you are fit enough for a cycling holiday in the mountains.

We have created a range of daily options on this holiday in order to open up the world of road cycling in the mountains to those who may not have experienced it before.

Our easier options are an achievable goal for regular and fit cyclists who have never climbed a mountain on a bike before, though we would suggest starting with our Pyrenean Classic Cols itineraries which have gentler climbs for those new to the mountains.

Our vehicles and guides are on hand to support you on your holiday and can offer advice, moral support and lifts in the van if you are tired.

Our goal at Marmot Tours is to create an ambience of non-competitive cycling with no pressure to keep up with anyone else. It is about achieving your own individual goals and having a fabulous time doing it.

## Am I too fit?

We have designed our Dolomites Minibreak to be accessible to a wide range of riding ability. Having a quick peek at each day's stats for the hardest route option should reassure you that even if you are a very fit and experienced road cyclist, there will be plenty to entertain you on this holiday.

If you ride the hardest option each day then you are looking at 495km with about 13270m of ascent during your four days of riding.

What is so nice about this holiday is that you can come along with people who are either less or more experienced than you and you can each get out of it what you want by choosing the daily routes for you.

## Pacing and Training

As with all sports holidays, the fitter you are, the more you can relax and enjoy the stunning route.

It can be difficult to find extended climbs for training in the UK, but generally, if you can build up your comfort on the bike (ideally on consecutive days) and your stamina and cardio vascular fitness overall, then you will really benefit when it comes to the holiday itself.

As well as training before the holiday, pacing yourself will go a long way towards you achieving your goals. The joy of a group holiday is that you are likely to find someone to cycle at a similar speed to you, so you don't need to try and keep up with your partner/friend/room mate. The quickest way to injure yourself or burn out is to cycle faster than you feel comfortable going.

We can't emphasise enough that this is your holiday and so, if you want a lift up the hill for whatever reason, your guides will be happy to help.



## Guiding

Supporting you on your holiday will be two of our experienced, approachable, knowledgeable and fun guides. Despite being passionate about cycling, both guides will be in support vans as this holiday is all about you and your needs. Between them they will have knowledge of the area and the language and be skilled at bike mechanics.

Having two vehicles per group (regardless of the number of bookings up to a group size of around 20) is what allows us to offer you freedom to cycle at your own pace with a level of independence on this holiday. Your guides will choose the best general direction/route to be done each day, based on the weather conditions and then you can make your choice as to which route option to go for.

Our guides are experts at advising you on the routes, where you can expect to see the van, and what you might need with you. In the event that you need help for a mechanical issue (for example) one of the vans will be able to quickly get to you with full tool kits, spare back wheels and even a spare bike. We hope you won't need us for anything serious but being prepared for all eventualities is what we do exceptionally well.

You can expect to see a support van with water, snacks and your personal day bag 2 - 4 times a day, so you don't need to carry much on your bike, unless the weather is exceptional!

"Fantastic holiday which both we both really enjoyed. Our guides were superb, the group was really friendly, the hotel was in a lovely location, the rides had some good climbs and the scenery was amazing. Thank you to everyone in Marmot and the rest of the group for making the holiday so much fun." Jonathan F

## Strava

Many cyclists nowadays are using apps like Strava and Garmin Connect to track their progress, training and to compare themselves to their peers.

These apps make for great training tools and interesting post-ride analysis but there are obvious risks associated with competitive cycling styles, pushing yourself beyond your usual tolerance and focusing on live feed information whilst on the bike.

We therefore ask our clients to avoid such 'Live Segment' features when cycling on a Marmot Tours holiday, especially descending, and to focus on the road at all times.

## Gearing/Bikes

The Dolomites have some cheeky climbs so it is worth getting as low gearing as possible (more so than you would need in the Pyrenees or the Alps). As with any mountain range, even a climb that is not particularly steep (compared to a lot of hills in the UK), will go on for a very long time. It is best to make sure that your bike will be suitable for your level of strength/fitness.

For most people a compact (smallest ring on front having 34 teeth), fitted with a 30 or 32 cassette on the rear, is a good choice. It is possible to fit your bike with larger cassettes, using a rear hanger extender, like the WolfTooth RoadLink.

If this all sounds too complicated then we do have some excellent titanium-framed bikes for hire, which are fitted with SRAM 50-34 at the front with 11 speed 11-36 toothed cassettes.

## Group Dynamics

Your group will be any number up to around 20 riders. This number works really well - it's big enough for you to find others to cycle with at your pace, but not so huge as to feel impersonal! We get lots of clients booking alone and lots of small groups of friends. If you think you can get a group of 18 - 20 people together then we can offer you a custom departure date.

We love that we get a really big variety in terms of cycling experience... from club cyclists, people training for other events, those raising money for charity, ex-pro cyclists and people who are relatively new to cycling who like to try something new on holiday.

## Accommodation

You stay in a 4\* chalet style lakeside hotel in the small town of Alleghe, nestled in the heart of the Dolomites. The hotel has a great attitude towards cyclists and know us and our needs well.

Offering lakeside seating on the jetty, you can enjoy a drink in the sunshine at the end of your day on the bike. You will be sharing a twin room with another client (of the same gender) unless you book a single room for a supplement (contact [cycle@marmot-tours.co.uk](mailto:cycle@marmot-tours.co.uk) for availability). The hotel has a garage to ensure that your trusty steed has a comfortable night too.

## Food

### Breakfast

No surprise that this is the crucial meal of the day. We're in Italy, so expect continental style breakfasts with cheese & meats for your protein kick start. Where necessary, we supplement the breakfasts with cereals and fruit.

### Lunches

You know what you like to eat when you are riding and it is not likely to be the same as what the others in your group will want to eat. We don't include lunches so there are no enforced group stops. We strongly advise that you stop for proper food at lunchtime. Each day we recommend a suitable place serving cyclist friendly food which is great for you, and the locals appreciate your custom. We will be sure to have a van there for your midday faff!

### Snacks

Your support van aka snack-shack will be well stocked with a variety of tasty delectables: Salty crisps, bars, cakes, fresh fruit (bananas obviously!), nuts & sweets are the staples. We suggest you bring your own favourite energy powders/gels/bars with you as these will not be easily available en route.

### Dinner

We eat as a group in the evening - either in the hotel or at a nearby restaurant. Expect three courses (and generous portions) which are tailored to the needs of cyclists. Dinner will be served at around 19:30. Wine at dinner is included, however, coffees/soft drinks and beers are not.

### Special diets

Please note your special dietary requirements on the booking form or contact us. Our hotels can cater for most dietary needs and allergies if we know well in advance. Please note that we request that you stick to your dietary preference for the entire trip, as it is very complicated for the hotels (and guides) if an individual is vegetarian for some meals and not for others.

## What's Included?

- 4 days supported riding
- Airport transfers on arrival and departure days at specified times
- Route notes, directions, maps and GPS files
- 5 nights half board accommodation including wine at dinner
- 2 customised and well stocked vehicles with experienced guides, offering moral support, and nutritional, mechanical and first aid assistance, plus snacks & water





## Bike Hire

Marmot Tours has an excellently maintained fleet of custom built, titanium framed bikes available to rent for your holiday. Advantages of rental include:

- avoiding hefty fees levied by airlines for transport
- worry free travel (knowing your trusty steed is safely stored away at home!)
- the chance to try a titanium bike built specifically with climbing cols in mind (gearing!)
- relinquishing responsibility for cleaning and maintenance to our experienced team

Please see our [Bike Hire webpage](#) for details like prices as well as full specs and dimensions.

Please note that despite the size of our fleet steadily growing, we cannot guarantee that we will have a bike in your size available. If you would like to hire a bike, please check availability before booking your holiday.

## How to Book

1. Email [cycle@marmot-tours.co.uk](mailto:cycle@marmot-tours.co.uk) to check availability for your preferred departure date. Remember to also check availability for single room and bike hire if they are your preference.
2. Bag your spot with a provisional booking for a week or so while you get planning.
3. Log on to or register with our online booking system, The Link ([link.marmot-tours.co.uk](http://link.marmot-tours.co.uk)), to make your holiday booking.
4. Pay the £400 deposit by BACS or by card online. Receive a confirmation email.
5. Confirmed single room supplements and bike hire are being added manually to your balance invoices, so may take a day or two to appear.
6. We'll post regular holiday information and updates on the Link (you'll receive an email notification).
7. You can meet your fellow holiday makers via The Link Forum and share training / travel plans etc.



## Insurance

Holiday insurance is **essential** for all Marmot Tours holidays and anyone without insurance is not able to take part in the trip. Please arrange your insurance cover at the time of booking, as this will ensure that you are covered if you incur an injury during training and are unable to go on your holiday. We have a very high cancellation rate so are unable to deviate from our [cancellation policy](#).

Your insurance needs to cover you for non-competitive road cycling (cycle touring) at altitude with the following fairly standard inclusions:

- Medical Expenses
- Repatriation

Some clients also like to ensure they have the following optional items:

- Cancellation cover
- Loss or damage to their bike

NB if you are hiring a bike from us there is an insurance element in the fee so you will not need additional cover.

Once you have arranged your insurance, please add the relevant details to the **Before you go...** section of your holiday on [The Link](#). Unlike your passport and emergency contact details, you will need to add insurance details for every trip you are taking.

This ensures we have the most up to date information and are able to assist you in case you have an accident on your holiday.

## Financial Protection

Marmot Tours are members of ABTA, the Association of British Travel Agents.

ABTA and ABTA members help holidaymakers to get the most from their travel and assist them when things do not go according to plan.

As part of our membership contract we are obliged to maintain a high standard of service to you by ABTA's Code of Conduct.

- In line with our ABTA membership (no Y6184), we hold an insurance policy that gives you full financial protection for all funds you pay us for your holiday
- We have full Tour Operators Professional and Public Liability Insurance with specialist brokers Campbell Irvine
- We carry out risk assessments on all of our holidays to ensure we have thought through every detail
- We employ staff with the correct experience and skills to ensure you have a safe and fun trip, and have a thorough training programme each season.

For further information about ABTA, the Code of Conduct and the arbitration scheme available to you if you have a complaint, please contact ABTA, 30 Park St, London, SE1 9EQ (Tel 0203 117 0500).

