

## Italy: The Dolomites, Bolzano to Lake Garda

### Bike Vacation Only

They say imitation is the sincerest form of flattery—and this original VBT tour was the first of many copycats to combine easy Dolomite bike paths with the stunning scenery of Lake Garda. With our deep roots in the region, it's the local connections that make this itinerary a standout. Visit a local farm in Valle dei Laghi where you'll meet the owners and learn about the ancient method of crafting *vino santo*—plus observe the preparation of *carne salada*, a unique Trentino specialty. In the Rendena Valley, you'll meet an authentic alpine cheesemaker and learn how cows graze in the high mountain valleys. As you pedal easy bike paths with stunning views of the Dolomites' high peaks, your local trip leaders will introduce you to the people who call this incredible region home.

### Cultural Highlights

- Enjoy a wine tasting in a mountain hamlet renowned for its Gewürztraminer.
- Savor homemade specialties at a mountain chalet in the heart of the Brenta Dolomites, with unmatched views of the surrounding peaks.
- Ride through dramatic canyons and ravines surrounded by spectacular alpine peaks.
- Cycle through a Mediterranean-like paradise along the shores of Lake Garda.
- Explore the Old Town of Bolzano and marvel at Ötzi the Iceman in the renowned Museum of Archaeology.

### What to Expect

This tour features a mix of easy terrain and moderate hills, making it ideal for both beginner and experienced cyclists. Approximately 70% of the route follows dedicated bike paths, and all roads are paved. One ride begins at an elevation of 4,500 feet (1,372 meters) in a mountain setting and gradually descends. On two days, guests can choose between easy and moderate ride options. Our VBT support vehicle is always available for those who would like assistance with the hills.

**Tour Duration:** 7 Days

**Average Daily Mileage:** 3-32 miles

**Average Cycling Time:** 1-4 hours

**Group size:** 14-20 max

### Climate Information

**Average High/Low Temperature (°F)**

May 74°/49°, June 80°/55°, July 85°/59°, August 82°/59°, September 77°/52°, October 66°/42°

**Average Rainfall (in.)**

May 3.2, June 3.2, July 3.2, August 3.6, September 2.6, October 2.2

## DAY 1: Arrive in Bolzano / Your VBT Vacation Begins / Warm-Up Ride

Your cycling journey begins this afternoon at 2:00 p.m. at our first hotel in Bolzano, Parkhotel Laurin. Please have lunch prior to meeting your group. Your trip leaders—wearing VBT staff garments—will meet you in the hotel lobby and guide you through a safety and bike-fitting session. Cycling clothes are not required for this meeting. By the end of the session, your room will be ready, allowing you time to settle in and change before the warm-up ride. If you will arrive at the hotel later than 2:00 p.m. or are delayed, please call the hotel and ask the front desk to pass the message on to your trip leaders.

Later in the afternoon, enjoy an easy, scenic ride along bike paths outside the city. Cycle along the Talfer River to the Talfer Meadows and the base of the medieval Runkelstein Castle, one of the most majestic fortresses in the valleys surrounding Bolzano. As you continue along the Isarco River, the Rosengarten range rises before you. These peaks famously shift to hues of red and purple at sunset—a magical transformation that legend attributes to the dwarf King Laurin, who was said to enchant his rose garden with twilight color.

This evening, gather for a welcome cocktail at your hotel's legendary bar, where you can admire unique artwork and frescoes depicting the saga of King Laurin. The hotel's impressive collection includes around 200 original 20th-century works—ranging from woodcuts to canvas, Impressionism to German New Objectivity—displayed throughout the guestrooms, parlors, and private park.

Tonight, enjoy a special welcome dinner served in the elegant dining rooms or on the terrace of your hotel.

### Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Warm-Up Ride — 9 km (5 miles)

### What to Expect:

The warm-up ride leads you to the outskirts of the city and up to the base of Runkelstein Castle. As you approach the castle, expect a gradual uphill. The entire ride follows dedicated bike paths, which continue

into Bolzano's main square. From there, you'll walk your bike a short distance to your hotel, located in the heart of the Old City.

Cumulative Distance Range: 15 km (9 miles)

Included Meals: Dinner

## **DAY 2: The Wine Road to Lake Caldaro / Wine Tasting**

After a hearty buffet breakfast, begin your ride directly from the hotel, following an easy bike path out of town along the Isarco River. The landscape soon opens up as you pass the foot of Sigmundskron Castle, one of six mountain museums founded by famed South Tyrolean mountaineer Reinhold Messner and dedicated to mountain people and culture.

At the confluence of the Adige and Isarco Rivers, the route gently climbs past the sloping vineyards of the Kalterer Valley. As you ascend, take in sweeping views of the valley framed by soaring mountains. From here, the route remains easy and relaxed for the rest of the day. Pause for lunch in Kaltern, a mountain village known for its wines—particularly Vernatsch, an indigenous grape variety cultivated in South Tyrol since the 16th century. Enjoy a visit and tasting at one of the region's oldest wine cellars.

Early in the afternoon, cycle past Lake Caldaro, the warmest bathing lake in the Alps, and continue your ride along a scenic, easy bike path tracing the Adige River. This rewarding loop leads you back to your hotel.

You have the remainder of the day free to stroll through the beautiful Old Town of Bolzano. Explore its narrow alleys, historic manor houses, and Romanesque and Gothic architecture, famously constructed by the Schiche brothers from Augsburg, Germany. You may wish to visit the Museum of Archaeology, home to Ötzi the Iceman—the remarkably well-preserved glacier mummy discovered in 1991. The city's strong food culture is reflected in its many organic food shops and a vibrant street market offering fresh products from nearby farms. Savor the local bounty when choosing a restaurant for dinner on your own. South Tyrol's exceptional cuisine is recognized nationwide; in 2025, the province's restaurants earned a record 20 Michelin stars, ranking third in Italy.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Bolzano to Caldaro — 18 km (11 miles)

Afternoon: Caldaro to Bolzano – 32 km (20 miles)

What to Expect:

This morning's ride follows a well-paved bike path over mostly flat or gently ascending terrain, with the exception of one longer uphill stretch. In the afternoon, enjoy a scenic downhill glide from Caldaro through vineyards to Lake Caldaro. From there, follow the flat, well-paved Adige River bike path all the way back to the hotel. To shorten the afternoon ride, you may opt for a one-stop train journey from Ora to Bolzano.

Cumulative Distance Range: 18 – 50 km (11 – 31 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast

## **DAY 3: Bike the Sole Valley / Brenta Dolomites**

Setting off this morning, you'll skirt the Noce River, following a well-paved bike path into the verdant Sole Valley—a spectacular expanse of emerald green, flanked by the dramatic Stelvio National Park mountain range to the north and the Adamello-Brenta Dolomites Natural Reserve to the south. This invigorating ride begins in the unspoiled Pejo Valley along a tranquil stretch of river, continuing through open meadows and shaded spruce woods. You'll pass apple orchards and scenic picnic areas that invite you to pause and take it all in. Later, the magnificent Ortles-Cevedale mountain range comes into view. A charming highlight of the morning is the village of Pellizzano, an ancient cluster of stone buildings centered around a frescoed medieval church.

After your morning ride, you'll stop at a mountain chalet in the heart of the Brenta Dolomites, where the Trentino family will host you for a memorable meal. Savor homemade dishes and organic selections sourced from local farmers. The views of the majestic peaks from this unique setting are truly unmatched. If the weather permits, enjoy a short stroll near the chalet and immerse yourself in the surrounding natural beauty.

Your next two-night stay is in Pinzolo, located within the Adamello Brenta Natural Park—an excellent base for excursions and bike rides. Pinzolo and its hamlets are set in an extraordinary environment recognized as both a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a UNESCO Global Geopark. This protected area is one of the most active and significant of its kind in Europe. The lively and dynamic village is also known for its cultural heritage, including the renowned *Danse Macabre* fresco painted in 1539 by Simone Baschenis,

which portrays the equality of all in the face of death.

You'll be staying at Hotel Europeo Alpine & Wellness, a comfortable, family-owned property with warm hospitality and a convenient location in the heart of Pinzolo. Before dinner, unwind at the hotel's inviting spa, which features an indoor pool and saunas. Or perhaps enjoy an *aperitivo*—such as a refreshing Aperol spritz—or a homemade gelato. Later, gather with your group for a festive dinner of local specialties in the hotel's restaurant, a beloved venue for special occasions among locals, known as "Rendeners."

Please note: For our final three departures (September 27, 29, and October 1), accommodations will be at Lefay Resort & SPA Dolomiti, a luxurious and sustainably designed alpine retreat. Nestled in the heart of Pinzolo, the resort offers panoramic mountain views, world-class spa facilities, and elegant, nature-inspired guest rooms—providing an elevated experience for your stay.

### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Cogolo to Caldes and Dimaro — 40 km (25 miles)

#### What to Expect:

This morning, a shuttle takes you to Cogolo in the Pejo Valley, where breathtaking views await. From here, enjoy a downhill coast on a quiet, paved road for a couple of miles before joining a well-maintained bike path that follows the Noce River through Dimaro and Caldes, with mostly flat or gently descending terrain. In the afternoon, tackle a moderate 6 km (4-mile) climb to Costa Rotian—very manageable with an e-bike—where you'll be rewarded with magnificent views. Later, take a 20-minute shuttle to a mountain chalet for lunch, followed by another 20-minute shuttle to your hotel.

Cumulative Distance Range: 40 km (25 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 4: Waterfalls / Mountain Village of Pinzolo

Awake this morning to the staggering beauty that surrounds Pinzolo and your hotel. After a hearty breakfast, set off on a breathtaking day of riding amid the Adamello and Brenta Dolomites. Begin with an inspiring ride through the Rendena Valley before pausing at a family-run farm for a visit with a local cheesemaker—an ideal setting for a light lunch featuring a tasting of regional cheeses. You'll sample

delicious varieties made from the milk of cows that graze in high mountain pastures during the summer, accompanied by other simple local specialties.

In the early afternoon, continue cycling into the narrow and dramatic Genova Valley, carved into a canyon between the Adamello and Presanella ranges. The Sarca River flows through this astonishingly deep ravine, dropping into several scenic waterfalls. You'll ride past the impressive Nardis Falls—nearly close enough to touch. Ride at your own pace, and if you're up for a challenge, consider adding a few extra miles toward the bottom of the valley to see more waterfalls. You may also turn back at any time for a direct return ride to your hotel.

The afternoon is yours to explore at your leisure—perhaps browse the small shops selling local products, or relax in the spa. This evening, choose whichever restaurant calls to you most for dinner on your own.

#### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Hotel to Maso Pan — 16 km (10 miles)

Afternoon: Maso Pan to Nardis and Hotel — 13 km (8 miles)

#### What to Expect:

This morning, your ride leads you from your hotel into the peaceful Rendena Valley along a paved bike path or quiet country roads. In the afternoon, continue into the Genova Valley on a paved road with a gradual uphill to the spectacular Nardis Waterfalls. If you prefer, you may skip the climb by taking a short shuttle with your trip leaders. The ride concludes with an easy, mostly downhill section from the waterfalls back to your hotel. An additional independent ride may be available today for experienced cyclists—ask your trip leaders for details.

Cumulative Distance Range: 13 – 29 km (8 – 18 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

## **DAY 5: Sarca River Ride / Picnic Lunch / Lake Garda**

Today's leg of cycling through the Dolomites promises invigorating and scenic riding along paved roads. Departing from your hotel, follow a well-maintained bikeway along the banks of the Sarca River through

the Rendena Valley. Much of the route is downhill as you descend from the high mountains toward Lake Garda. Wide-open views of the Presanella and Adamello peaks and the Brenta Dolomites unfold, showcasing jagged pinnacles and high-altitude glaciers.

In Stenico, pause for an included picnic lunch hosted at a local osteria, with views of the town's imposing hilltop castle in the distance.

From Stenico, begin one of the most spectacular stretches of the week as you descend through the Limarò Canyon. This exhilarating downhill ride winds alongside the roaring Sarca River, flanked by the towering rock walls of Monte Casale.

You'll end your ride in Sarche with a well-deserved gelato. A short shuttle then brings you to your elegant hotel in Riva del Garda. After settling in, enjoy free time to explore the hotel's lakeside gardens or take a leisurely stroll along the promenade into the heart of Riva, nestled at the base of a dramatic rocky cliff. For dinner, choose to dine at the hotel restaurant or linger in town, where a variety of options await.

#### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Hotel to Stenico — 31 km (19 miles)

Afternoon: Stenico to Sarche — 13 km (8 miles)

#### What to Expect:

Today's ride begins directly from your hotel and follows a beautifully paved bike path through the Rendena Valley to its endpoint in Preore. From there, you can either shuttle to our lunch spot in Stenico or continue by bike on a scenic, easy-to-moderate route, partly carved into the side of a steep mountain. After lunch, the ride from Stenico to Sarche is mostly downhill and exceptionally scenic, including a dramatic stretch through the canyon carved by the Sarca River. From Sarche, shuttle approximately 25 minutes to your hotel. Please note: the final two miles before reaching Sarche are downhill with some car traffic. An additional independent ride may be available today for experienced cyclists—ask your trip leader for details.

Cumulative Distance Range: 13 – 44 km (8 – 27 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

## DAY 6: Riva del Garda / Arco / Vino Santo Tasting / Lake Cavedine / Farewell Dinner

Mountains surrounding Lake Garda shield the valley from cooler air currents, creating a Mediterranean climate where olive and fruit trees, vineyards, exotic flowers, and even palms thrive. Your journey culminates in this paradise as you depart directly from your hotel and cycle north on mostly flat terrain to Sarca River Park, where the river spills into Lake Garda. This is a ride where you'll want to stop along the way to take in the diverse habitats and scenery, including the quaint village of Arco, with its castle perched on a high spur. Admire the stark beauty of the Marocche di Dro—a strikingly dry, almost lunar landscape—and pedal through the vineyard-blanketed wine region of Sarche.

Later, arrive at the peaceful, verdant shores of intimate Lake Cavedine, where the Pedrotti family welcomes you for lunch on their winemaking farm. Enjoy simple regional specialties such as fragrant tomatoes from the Gresta Valley, freshly baked bread, and meats and cheeses from nearby organic farms. Here, you'll also taste the local *vino santo*, a rich, sweet "meditation" wine that the Pedrotti family has been producing the same way for generations—meant to be savored on its own rather than paired with food.

After this rewarding lunch, loop back to Riva and your hotel. Later this afternoon, relax in the property's luxurious spa and wellness center nestled in a majestic park, or enjoy a refreshing swim in Lake Garda. This evening, gather for a farewell dinner in Riva, hosted in a historic 17th-century manor house.

### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Riva to Pedrotti — 28 km (17 miles)

Afternoon: Pedrotti to Riva — 24 km (15 miles)

### What to Expect:

Today's route is a beautiful loop, with half the ride on a well-paved bike path and the other half on quiet country roads. The morning includes a long, gradual uphill stretch about midway, which can easily be skipped with a short shuttle in the support vehicle. In the afternoon, enjoy an easy descent back to Lake Garda and your hotel.

Cumulative Distance Range: 24 – 52 km (15 – 32 miles)



Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## **DAY 7: Lake Garda Cruise to Gargnano / Travel to Milan / Your VBT Vacation Ends**

After breakfast, enjoy a scenic two-hour ferry cruise on Lake Garda from Riva to the charming village of Gargnano. Along the way, relax and take in views of the lake and surrounding mountains from the comfort of the ferry, which offers onboard amenities. Once in Gargnano, you'll have time to explore the village and pick up some lunch or enjoy a gelato before continuing your journey by private coach to Milan. The drive takes approximately three hours, with a brief stop along the way. Your tour concludes in Milan at approximately 2:30 p.m. at our centrally located post-tour hotel, Hotel Cavour. From here, you may use a taxi or public transportation to reach the airport or train station at your own expense.

Included Meals: Breakfast

## **Accommodations**

May vary depending on departure date.

### **Parkhotel Laurin (Days 1-2)**

One of Bolzano's elegant properties, the Parkhotel Laurin occupies one of the most beautiful buildings in town. Its intimate bar is full of lush fresco paintings depicting the saga of King Laurin. The air-conditioned hotel houses other unique artwork, as well. Its collection includes around 200 original 20th-century works, from woodcuts to canvas pieces, from Impressionism to German New Objectivity. Exquisite works can also be found in the guestrooms and parlors and in the hotel's private park. The breakfast room is adorned with decorative hand-painted wallpaper.

### **Hotel Europeo Alpine & Wellness (Days 3-4)**

Hotel Europeo Alpine & Wellness, a 4-star hotel located in Pinzolo, is deeply rooted in Trentino tradition and alpine charm. This family-run establishment is set in the picturesque Dolomites and just a short distance from the ski slopes. Harmoniously blending comfort and elegance, this hotel includes a luxurious spa featuring an indoor heated pool, Finnish sauna, Turkish bath, infrared cabin and ice grotto. Spacious, modern rooms come fully equipped with a mini bar, refrigerator, private balcony, and complimentary WiFi. The onsite gourmet restaurant and complimentary breakfast provide guests with

local cuisine and exceptional service.

## **Du Lac et Du Parc Grand Resort (Days 5-6)**

The Du Lac et Du Park Grand Resort consists of three air-conditioned buildings set in a 17-acre park planted with large, rare trees and manicured gardens that extend to the shores of Lake Garda. The city center is just a half mile away and accessible via a picturesque lakeside promenade. During your stay, savor the carefully prepared dishes at its two restaurants, one of which provides an intimate and elegant setting in the heart of the property's gardens. The wellness center, too, is surrounded by delightful paths with fragrant florals. Take advantage of two outdoor swimming pools and one indoor pool; a relaxing way to end your invigorating days on the bike.

## **Hotel Cavour (Day 7)**

Milan's desirable Brera district, with its shops and galleries, is at your doorstep in this ideally located hotel, just minutes away from the metro, Milan Cathedral and La Scala Theater. In the lobby and restaurant, enjoy the vintage design, with furniture and artwork carefully selected to evoke the classic feel of an earlier era. The air-conditioned rooms were entirely refurbished in a more modern style in 2019. Your air-conditioned room features an LCD TV, minibar, and in-room safe. Free WiFi is available throughout the hotel. The hotel's fine restaurant serves light lunches and traditional Milanese dinners.