



The Dolomites Hiking plus Tyrol and Black Forest Trip Notes June 24 – July 8, 2014

This was another www.CountryWalkers.com hike, as was last month to Provence. Tom and I will go with them again in September to The Lakes of Italy and I'm considering Mendoza and Patagonia in November. I go on all possible domestic hikes with www.ParksPlusHiking.com and have four more domestic hikes booked for this year.

Highlights:

- Marie visited for five days just prior so it was rush-rush to get packed and out. I'd only returned from Portugal the day she arrived.
- We had three days prior to the hike for Kitzbuhel, Dobbiaco and Bressanone. All were new locations for me, but the first two were where Tom learned to ski in the early 70s.
- The Dolomites seem far away more dramatic than the Alps and that's not only because their weather can change from heat to hail within a couple hours. They are more rugged.
- It rained a lot. I gave up hiking two of the six days, one as much because of residual soreness from a fall.
- The food and drink was top notch and far too much, as usual. I came home with too much residual.
- The hotels had been upgraded by Tom to lovely suites and always with a view. Every one was an experience.
- The hiking itinerary, miles, times, elevation gain and loss, etc. are all covered in the itinerary at the end.
- The added three days in Innsbruck at the end was a favorite, but maybe the last day in Munich at the Hofbrauhaus in city center was the headline.
- Within two weeks we only had one near-miss and the lost luggage was found, turned in, and was intact with valuables, cash and goodies. Harrah for the Tyroleans!
- Much of the following are from notes sent home to friends.
- The full hiking description is at the end with the itinerary. It's full of too-long too-many-vowels of Italian words.



There will be a photo show at www.TomsKoi.com. I'll save room here by waiting for his show of the tourist photos but will add a few shots from the hiking.

One of the hikers, Alan, sent us his link of wonderful photos. A real professional. The window shot above is his. Here's the link:

<http://alanmckeeon.smugmug.com/Travel/2014-Dolomites-Picks-Top-40/i-sW9dz6b/0/D/Dolomites-0341-D.jpg>



I panicked every time I came to an ice field and some of the leaders and guys would placate me by tramping down the ice somewhat. I still went super slow. And yes, we were in the clouds oftentimes and sometimes only had the peaks peeking out of the clouds. It reminded me of Machu Picchu.



Yes, still ANOTHER ice field! Just like in Switzerland we encountered cows plenty often. Were the ice fields or the cows more plentiful? Depends on my emotional state at the time but most of the time I thought there were far too many ice fields. I suspect however that I was one of the only ones who wanted to avoid them.



Still in the clouds, and then leaving our luncheon hut and climbing into the never-never-lands. In the rain as you can see by the ponchos.



Was the cow posing for me? I believe this lovely lake spot was at the end of a long day's hike where it was perilous (to my mind) and I never fell until we were done: it was on the flats, and I found a root which totally captured me, as did the rocks in the knee that even broke through the pants leg. The shoes line up? On the way down a cable ride. Everyone wanted a pair of my Dirty Girl Gaiters. I left my purple paisley ones with leader Claudia.



At Five Towers where the scenery just kept getting more and more dramatic. We asked: are we really traversing over these rocks? Yep! And it was worth it. At least it wasn't snow.



I said it was worth it? For the fields of wild flowers and the backdrops of craggy mountains, yes, but then we found another ice field. I had no choice but continue and fortunately it worked and I didn't slide miles down the hillside like I was envisioning. The reward was a meal on the top of the mountain, with a 360 degree panorama, in a restaurant that only WE who hiked deserved. It was said to be in the top spot of the Michelin-type ratings of mountain huts for good food. We all agreed. Some had truffled pasta, some steak tartar, most had wine, and all were happy.



This hiker brought his ferret along for the ride. My menu of choice in the huts was always a rosti with egg and speck (like thick bacon.) It brings back many fond memories of rosti in Switzerland and though different, similar enough. We would say goodbye the next day to our wonderful guides: Keegan (in training), Alex (a veteran and loved by all), Luigi (our driver, marathoner, and who everyone wanted to hug goodbye), and our hero Claudia who never let the boys get ahead of her (she's mountain trained and U.S. educated.)

Kitzbuhel – first night out from landing in Munich

<http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kitzb%25C3%25BChel> We are at our first stop of this journey. Kitzbuhel is about two hours south of the Munich airport going through part of the Black Forest. We did this in a surprise rental car because it was a giant and luxurious Volkswagen SUV called the Touareg. I first thought it was a gas guzzler but as a diesel it turned out to be fine. Besides, should I care? It reminds me of the story of the wife of a major financial tycoon who lives on the Navesink River and parks her Mercedes 500 SL because it uses too much gas.

If you care to see what Kitzbuhel looks like, please check out the above link and the panorama view. That is basically the view we get from our hotel which is a converted 1300s castle which was added on in the 60s. It didn't look like much from the outside but is rather gloriously deserving of its five-star category once inside. Our room looks out to the forest after a large patio and grassy area. (Would a bear walk into our open door room at night . . .?)

We walked to the medieval village, a walk down hill about 20 to 25 minutes. It didn't take Tom very long to find out that the hotel offers a shuttle for going up the hill; our timing was good since we got the last shuttle of the day. The little village has been well preserved and made a good setting for the first ski resort of the area.

I have never been here before but this was where Tom came in the early 70s for his first ever ski trip. (We had spent quite a bit of time in the Black Forest during the 70s.). Kitzbuhel is known for many firsts, such as the first ski area, and surprisingly was not damaged during WW I or II.

Both Tom and I suffered the effects of the lack of sleep on the airplane and thus we resorted to the forbidden afternoon nap. All of which just makes one groggy thereafter and interferes with a good night's sleep. But we have time and we are next off to the little town of Dobbiaco where Tom also went skiing in the 70s.

Since this is my second effort making a short trip report, I'll send it off before I lose it like I lost the first one.

Tom's email: Diana bought us a special bottle of JW Platinum. Why? I think because it's Wednesday.



He also sent to his Italian friend: We are now in Kitzbuhl, Austria and will move along to northern Italy over the next couple of days. Tough life. Friend Bob replied: NOOOOO - DON'T GO TO ITALY - TOO MANY ITALIANS. LOCK THE CAR DOORS AND WINDOWS HOLD ON TO YOUR PANTS, WALLET, AND DIANA.

We would later have a wonderful story about the honest Italians who turned in a lost piece of luggage.

Dobbiaco – our second night out



Our hotel, the view from our balcony, the old town square, and a typical building with art work which generally surrounded windows and/or borders.

<http://www.three-peaks.info/alto-adige/dobbiaco.html> - I lost a full long trip report once again through a flaw in the iPhone system. If you use your iPhone do not let it time out or it erases everything. Maybe my report was too long anyway.

This is again a place that I have never been and it is again the place where Tom is having a refresher course. He came here in the early 70s for skiing. We are in the southern portion of the Tyrol region and just on the edge of the Dolomites.

Our drive from Kitzbuhel was to be about two hours but it was lengthened by both stops and also by road construction. It was also confused by the fact that Ms. Garmin didn't know some of the new roads so when Tom returns home he will update Ms. Garmin so that we are up to date for our September Italian lakes trip.

We don't usually make quick fly over trips and stay only one night in a hotel but in this case it cut our travel time to about 2 to 3 hours per leg. Tomorrow we will be in Bressanone also known as Brixen which will be the start of my hiking trip. (Why cities have two names is beyond me. But that is the case pretty much around the world. We are in Dobbiaco but it is also known as Toblach. Apparently it's using both the Italian and the German names since the area has changed countries.)

If you are interested, please look at the above link as there is a video showing the Dolomites and in particular Dobbiaco (also called Toblach) highlighted by the three peaks. We see those three peaks out the balcony of our hotel room.

Tom has done well choosing our hotel once again as we have a small suite with a balcony with a wonderful view. It is quiet but the entire town is quiet.

Driving across the border from Austria to Italy reminds me of when we lived in the French Riviera for one month. We would drive across the border into Italy and declare that the black drape went down when entering Italy. In Austria everything is so precise and perfect. In Italy the roads are not kept up, the pastures are not as clean, there are not the lovely little white farmhouses full of window boxes all blooming, and life is just much easier and looser in Italy. But you can't fault the Italians. They are very kind and helpful as evidenced by our hotelier who wanted to translate the menu on our behalf. Tom tested his patience with asking for a Swiss recipe (veal zurichoise) and the hotelier was true to his kindness and was willing to make his best effort.

Okay, for fear of losing this, my second report, I am going to send it without proofing.



The restaurant on the top floor with a view of mountains on three sides.

Bressanone aka Brixen – our third night and first of the hike



Our hotel as we saw it from across the river via what looked like a pedestrian bridge. I ran across, asked the hotel, who sent a 'boy' (their words) who must have been 40 years old, to guide us across the wee little bridge where we gladly gave him the car to go park it. That's the view from one of our windows – we'd later see one of the races/runners cross the bridge; it was a women-only race the night before the marathon. No – no temptation. The marathon for Saturday would be a very steep climb of a few thousand feet of elevation gain and loss on mountain trails.

The hotel has a history of at least 500 years and is the first known hotel in the area. Fortunately it's been modernized.



In our lovely little suite with a view of the river, the mountains, and at the edge of old town.



The center of the city is where of course their glorious old Duomo sits. We'd walk every inch of the village and watch the set up for the marathon before parking ourselves on the cobbled streets at a lovely little café attached to our hotel to enjoy an Aperol Spritz. We learned about them in Portofino last summer at the start of another hike (through Cinque Terre.)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brixen>

I can guess that these cities have two names in part because they were owned by the Austrians until the early 1900s and now owned by Italy. German is the more common language.

The town is in an attractive setting, in a broad valley beneath the mountains. With a medieval quarter and a Plaza de Duomo, it's easy to find one's way. It's also easy to be reminded that the city is one of the oldest in the area and the Duomo dates a thousand years. We walked through the Cloister, ancient and still colourful with frescoes. The chapel was open through a door of the cloister so we glared at the gold and old works of art and continued to wonder how so much money flows into the church. The Bishop's Palace has a moat, is huge, and now home to the Diocesan Museum which houses sacred relics of Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque art. There you can see the cathedral treasury, the Bishop's apartment and the furnishings of the Imperial apartment, with some frescoes, and interesting examples of Venetian silk upholstery. Again, where do these Bishops get the money?

The Pharmacy Museum next to our hotel gave me the chance to see the medicines and treatments that were applied in years gone by, in and through a series of period re-created rooms. Another

museum, less for the squeamish, contains various instruments of medieval torture that the locals endured for three centuries until the end of the 18th century.

Tom took pictures of the Town Hall after we had a delightful outdoor meal next to one of their many churches (are they really worshiped in or are they for tourists?) and in between thousand year old olive trees. I was bent on missing dinner as there will be six or seven huge dinners coming up, on top of lunches, luxurious breakfasts, and a concern that I'll never work off all those calories.

The weather has cooperated with heavy rain happening at night and bright sunshine with fluffy clouds during the day, only sometimes threatening and never raining on us yet. But the prediction of rain continues.

Sent to Harvey of www.RunQuestTravel.com who took me to Portugal in June and is exploring a tour around Mont Blanc currently: Hey there – check it out!

<http://www.brixenmarathon.com/en/press/5th-brixenbressanone-dolomites-marathon-four-weeks-until-start/> Not only is there a marathon with zillions of feet of elevation in these mountains of Dolomites but I found they have a high alpine Alta Via d'Europa 340 km long trail. Huts. Villages. Astounding scenery. Idea? It connects to the Tyrolean high alpine trail of 130 km if that isn't enough. Brixen is also known as Bressanone where there is the only known medieval cathedral city at the foot of a 2500 meter high trekking paradise. For when you are done with Mont Blanc. Smile.



Photo is the town square and start of the marathon on Saturday night. Friday night was a Women's Only run. No temptation but a big thank you to Marathon Woman Kathrine Switzer for starting women running.

From Tom: A fabulous, picturesque drive today and the "saw tooth" Dolomites are spectacular. Another short drive tomorrow to Bressanone where Diana meets up with her hiking group and starts hiking on Saturday. So far, hotels I arranged are great and weather wonderful (rain was expected all days but just started about a half hour ago). The bottle -- wounded but not dead. (From Diana: it was hard to abandon this empty bottle as it was a Baccarat type chunk of glass.)

Monday from the Monte Sella Hotel

<http://www.monte-sella.com/en/ie1/> - We are here two nights staying in the two floor suite but not indulging in their spa services. We leave Tuesday to Cortina where Tom went skiing in the 70s. It will be new to me. Our next hotel is in center village in the pedestrian center so I have little hope of the same luxury or square footage. Direct to our suite pics: <http://www.monte-sella.com/en/owm/rooms/suites.html>

Our current hotel, Monte Sella, is rightly known for its dinner restaurant. I had more opportunity to see it today because I avoided the hike. It sounded like much too much downhill for the predicted rain. It is okay to me that the rain never came because we enjoyed the village here plus a hike along the river bank.

Tom loves driving on these windy narrow little roads. I do too when my stomach cooperates.

I am reading a book called "Iceman" about the 5000 year old man found in 1991 by a couple who were hiking along the Alpine glaciers. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%96tzi>

I wonder if we hiked over some of those glaciers where Otzi was found? They spooked me because I felt so out of control. Fortunately they were not too long in length. There aren't many switch backs but many steep routes. (This hike was billed as "strenuous" and sometimes it is.)

A highlight yesterday was stopping at a little hut and being fed a rosti with egg. And sort of drying out. The grappa didn't hurt any either. The scene would have been spectacular had we not been first fogged in and then rained out. My poncho saved the day and I thank Steve and Nola (my favorite hiking leaders) for the suggestion. Most everyone was soaked as was their backpacks.



Some of you will probably be surprised that I skipped a hiking day. Me too. Not so long ago I would have not been able to do so. I have figured out that there is much too much to do in my life and I will never see it all. So I did the logical and spent the day with Tom. We walked, we explored the village, we drove the canyons, we sat around and enjoyed the surprising sunshine, and we luxuriated in our suite. (We also shopped with a gal who lost her suitcase with Alitalia who is known for losing about 30% of them.)

The Dolomites are pretty surprising and I wonder if Tom is still thinking Switzerland is number one.

To Sister Beverly: You are correct that this is a www.CountryWalkers.com hike. They really do everything in a glorious manner and they give us a local guide so we learn so much. But we eat too much. (Darned price is double to triple that of my favorite www.ParksPlusHiking.com.)

I gave up today's hike because yesterday's, though wonderful, by afternoon it poured rain on us and I was so miserable. The prediction was rain this afternoon so I gave it up. The reality was it was beautiful sunshine. It turned out to be quite fine because I spent the day with Tom and a new friend (lovely gal named Lorette who seriously converted to being a Mormon) and we shopped and drove and hiked a bit ourselves.

As to language, you might be surprised to know that there are three languages in our current area. Not one is English, however most people speak a bit of English. German, Italian, and a language I had never heard of called Ladin.

We are in the Tyrolean region where the 5000 year old man was found. They called him the Iceman and there is a book by that name that I am working on.



Wednesday - From Cortina

We are in the Hotel de la Post in Cortina. Cortina was probably one of the early ski resorts and now thought to be one of the more elegant ones such as Aspen and Vail would be for Colorado.

I sent some videos around about a wonderful hiking day yesterday. What I didn't tell was at the end of the day after getting on the flats and being all done and just scurrying a bit too fast to the toilets, I fell. Rock in the knee and torn pants. Bent glasses. Arm and shoulder will be very colorful once the bruising shows.

Today I thought I was just fine after a little nursing by Dr. Burton and some ice on my knee. So I got up and did the five flights of stairs a couple times and decided I was able to hike so I went to start at which time I learned that it was hundred percent chance of rain all day. You will not be surprised to learn that that was a good excuse to stay in Cortina for the day with Tom. So here is my 55 second video of the center Cortina which is surrounded by a mountain range that is absolutely amazing but which is mostly covered in either fog or snow or both.

Typical of the Dolomites, yesterday we had strong sunshine requiring hiking in shorts and short sleeve shirt, and then we had rain, and then we had hail, requiring hiking in every layer we owned. Rick Steves suggests that the Dolomites would be more famous than the Alps were it not so difficult to predict weather. Weather is extremely changeable here.



Our dinner last night was a pure delight even for those of us who claim they don't like food all that much. The restaurant grows their own food in the case of meat and vegetables. My favorite dish was the homemade thick or wide pasta (papadella?) with wild-boar. I left the dinner early both because I had so much of the first few courses and also because I wanted to ice my knee again.

Cortina hotel – space age? Only the shower. We never indulged in the whirlpool tub in our huge bathroom but we did giggle about all the features of the J-dream shower/steam room stall.



Or as Maryanne said: Beam Diane and Tom up Scottie! The breakfast room had a glorious view and was more traditional.

As we often say, and as we continue to feel, life is good. Back to hiking:



Too many ice fields which really spooked me, but some lovely forested areas. I never fell where one might expect to fall – only at the end on the flats.



As Tom says, not a tiptoe-through-the-tulips hike, but ultimately worth it when you find the glaciers, the wildflowers, the lunch spots and eventually some sunshine on the Dolomites.

Tom from Cortina on last day: I went up the Faloria lift this morning for spectacular vistas of the mountains and the town. This is probably the one you took as well (suggested by the tourist office). I'll do the opposite side cable to Cima Tofamo tomorrow. The gal at the info office suggested I drive up to Misurina Passo Tre Croci (on the north of the map at about 12 o'clock) (Cristallo and Larieto are up there as well). Or he thought that would be his last day. More needed on that story!

Last hiking day – at Five Toros



Cortina further info: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cortina_d'Ampezzo - Located in the heart of the Dolomites in an alpine valley, it is a popular winter sport resort known for its ski-ranges, scenery, accommodations, shops and après-ski scene. After the scheduled 1944 Winter Olympics had been cancelled because of the Second World War, it hosted the 1956 Winter Olympics as well as various world cup events and motion pictures. Much of 1963 classic *The Pink Panther*, the progenitor of the series, was filmed in Cortina. One of the memorable James Bond stunt sequences in 1981's *For Your Eyes Only*, gunners on spike-wheeled motorcycles chasing Roger Moore on skis, was filmed on its slopes, as were several scenes in the film *Cliffhanger*. It is also known for its jet set and European aristocracy crowd.

Innsbruck next for three days

Two lovely fellow hikers needed a ride to Innsbruck and we had a big car so we all climbed in, visited the highest cable car peak in the Dolomites on the way, and had a lovely day. Meal and conversation and view and all.

Lost luggage?

As we unpacked the car there was the sudden realization that Tom's carry-on was missing. Lots of calls, panic, listing of the valuables in the bag (really a lot!) and finally giving up and realizing that life goes on and that at least the passports and house key weren't in the bag. The next day there was the thought of checking again with the concierge who agreed to inquire of the police department and VOILA, it was there.

Listen to this: All cash, and there was a stunning amount, was all there. Love those Tyroleans. The concierge must have thought he died and went to heaven for the reward Tom gave to him.

Our accommodations

Tom sent these pictures with the headline "We're still toughing it out in Europe" – ha.



A view from one of our windows. But more glass than I like: I'm not too hot on bathroom glass doors even if it's frosted glass. See the sliding glass doors with tree limbs? Then see the view into the separate bedroom.



The wood was lovely and rich. The room was uniquely modern for the old town and building it occupied. The breakfast was in a glassed room with views to gardens and up to the mountains almost making one forget all the lush food choices. I could have spent the day eating off the breakfast buffet.

Tom to Pat about Innsbruck: We're in Innsbruck, Austria staying in a lovely modern hotel that I'd found, right in the middle of things and few steps from old town. We're just up and going to the huge buffet breakfast then off to be tourists. Great town and lots of history. The suite we're in has a great view of one of the surrounding mountains and speaking of mountains -- the difference between the Dolomites and the Alps? Dolomites are very saw-toothed whereas the Alps are a bit less so - both fabulous in their own way of course. Rick Steves says the Dolomites would be more popular if the weather were more predictable. I'm really glad we came to see again and Diana's hiking, though

strenuous, was very dramatic and enjoyable for her. And I really enjoyed driving the curvy roads and see the great sites and sights all around me.

Giant Panorama and museum

<http://www.austria.info/us/vacation-in-austria/museum-tirol-panorama-1551730.html>

There are very few 360s left in the world and we'd seen a similar one in Lucerne. The museum was well done, next to the Olympic ski run, and connected to a military museum.

Other touring – While Tom drove the 3-hours (each way) to retrieve his bag, I visited museums, took a guided walking tour, and an overview bus tour. The next day we did an overview hop-on/hop-off bus tour but gave it up early for it wasn't very well done. It did however get us to some additional sites. We went twice to the cathedral with the trompe l'oeil amazing work, toured the folk museum to enjoy the costumes and the recreated rooms from different periods, and the royalty church attached.

Munich – the last harrah!

After three days in Innsbruck, on a whim, Tom suggested that we go into Munich city center. We went through Garmisch and didn't remember a single thing from our visits in the 70s. Getting Into the center of Munich was an adventure that only Tom would tackle in a big SUV. But he had in mind seeing if the old original and favorite Hofbrauhaus still existed. It was found, right in city center, next to the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. It was chaotic, colorful, interesting, and amazingly the food was good. I sent around a video of our wurst sausages, German potato salad, sauerkraut and red cabbage and of course the requisite huge steins of beer. In the background of this famous and historic home of the Oktoberfest and outdoor gardens was an oompa band playing. So there's still some more kid in both of us.

IF you want pics and info on these "wondrous" and unique mountains.

<http://www.dolomitimountains.com> - They offer a dance of colors. They offer something different which some find as spectacular as the Alps.

Also it's a UNESCO site - <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1237>

Or more than you want – stunning! Via Ferrata: Climbing the Iron Paths of the Dolomites

One of the greatest thrills a hiker can have is to walk or climb a via ferrata, the "iron paths" of the Dolomites in Italy. <http://www.dolomitmountains.com/en/resources/resources148.htm>

Traveling on a via ferrata is a different way of enjoying the sheer magnificence of the Dolomites, providing access to places normally reserved for rock climbers and mountaineers. In this awesome mountain environment, you will be stopped in your tracks by amazing views, from a perspective that few have the opportunity to experience. A via ferrata, iron path in English, klettersteig in German, is quite literally a route with fixed "protection" that aids travelers in moving safely through the mountains. Hikers can connect otherwise isolated trail systems together to create longer hikes. You can even spend several days hiking rifugio-to-rifugio, facilitating traverses of large sections of the Dolomites at high altitudes. Via ferrata also provide greater access to the incredible scenery the Dolomites has to offer than hiking trails alone.

Hot Spots of Italy's Dolomite Mountains from Travel + Leisure

<http://www.travelandleisure.com/articles/hot-spots-of-italys-dolomites-mountains>

Unique location. Known for its unpredictable weather which we've experienced in full bloom. The same day can bring the need for short sleeves and snow all at once. One day I wore skimpy shirt and shorts at one point and at I was shivering in two shirts, jacket, headgear BUFF, gloves, Tilley hat, and belted down poncho overall. Had I not been trying to speed up to get warm, I'd have added the black garbage bag.

Difference between the Alps and the Dolomites?

<http://www.walksofitaly.com/blog/alps/italian-alps-dolomites>

I kept hearing about the difference between the Alps and the Dolomites to include its geography and weather. Even the age. But now that I read more, it appears that the Dolomites are part of the Alps. Surprise.

A book review on Tyrolean culture -- thanks Nola: There are regions here that are like no other. There is a language of their own. They've been owned by different countries and yet held on to their tradition. "The Hidden Life of Tirol" also known as the Tyrolean people to us: Split between the modern nations of Austria and Italy, the "Holy Land of Tirol" sits in the heart of the spectacular Alps, astride the mountain passes that link the edges of Europe. Tirol has some of the most accessible and integrated social traditions in the world. But the deeper meanings of life in the region remain hidden. Here, then, is an anthropological guidebook. The goal is to make sense of and explain how the history, geography, politics and the rootedness of community life fit together. The conventional categories of an ethnography are all here: religion, subsistence, marriage, land tenure, ethnicity, agro-pastoralism, folklore, and inheritance. But the viewpoint is unconventional: the anthropologist is a fellow-traveler, taking readers on a tour in imagination to a region often visited but rarely understood or studied. The study of European folk life and cohesive communal societies such as this have particular relevance today. In a world where ethnic groups and class tensions dominate the news, *The Hidden Life of Tirol* is a story of how people worked out these differences.

From the author, Martha Ward: "The foundation of *The Hidden Life of Tirol* is traditional ethnography. It tells how people of these high mountains put meaning into their collective lives and how they organize the "whole house"--the social structure of mountain survival. But beyond an ethnography about a culture area in the heart of Europe, I added several other pertinent themes. Through time Tiroleans have suffered and solved major ethnic problems. In a world rife with such tensions, it is instructive to see how they accomplished this. Moreover, this Alpine region has wedded economic development to ecological sensitivity. Their remarkable achievements are an international model. I have also used Tirol as a case study about traveling, culture shock, trips as rites of passage and the anthropology of tourism. Readers will find many of their own experiences of travel included as examples. Tirol is one of the most highly visited and highly visible culture areas in Europe. Tirol often feels familiar to us; we know about ski resorts, holiday customs and souvenir kitsch. At the same time, the cohesive and communal society forged in high mountain life is largely hidden from our understanding. My purpose is to illuminate these covert patterns of culture in one of the most fascinating and dramatic regions of the world."

The End? I hope not. My Sister Beverly just sent this picture from a trip many years ago when I took grandson and nephew to Gray Rocks. Tom had also taken them on a ski trip another year. I invited them to a hike, any hike, and so far only the nephew has committed. I've tried before too!

We go home for a week before I start a hike to Yellowstone/Grand Tetons out of Jackson Hole. I did it in 2008 and want to see if I can still manage the strenuous hiking. August takes me hiking to Colorado for 11 days, then to Lassen Volcano National Park. September is High Sierra and Yosemite before Tom and I leave to The Lakes of Italy. I'm home two days before going to London for the Royal Parks Marathon where I'll stay for ten days. Later October to meet Beverly in Chicago to watch Ice Skating competition. November should take me to NYC to be a spectator for the NYC marathon and then I have an empty month. Panic! December is a trip to Atlanta for the Jeff Galloway inaugural 13.1 marathon before Marie arrives for our Christmas trip to Barcelona.





Itinerary

Tue Jun 24

5:25pm Depart Newark EWR via UA#106

Wed Jun 25

7:40am Arrive Munich MUC

Rental Car Avis #04549988US2 from 9am June 25 thru 4pm July 7

Hotel Hotel Schloss Lebenberg – 1 night
Lebendergstrasse 17, Kitzbuhel 6370 Austria Tele: 43 53 566 901

Munich to Kitzbuhel from 1:40 to 2:10 hours

Thu Jun 26

Hotel Hotel Cristallo – 1 night
St-Johannes-Str. 37, Dobbiaco (Toblach), 39034 Tele 39 04 7497 2138

Kitzbuhel to Lienz or Dobbiach about 1:30 or 58 miles

Fri Jun 27

Drive to Brixen/Bressanone about 2 to 2:20 hours or 70 miles

Hotel Hotel Goldener Adler, Bressanone – added 1 night at front end of hike
In Suite Romantic Junior Suite, Eleonora from Mantova“
Adlerbrückengasse 9, I-39042 Bressanone/Brixen, Italy
Tel 011 39 0472 200 621 Email info@goldener-adler.com www.goldener-adler.com

Hotel Adler was built about 500 years ago this was the first hotel in Brixen/Bressanone. Over the centuries many things have been preserved, but the building was adapted to modern times and is also inspired by a modern touch. The 30 rooms and the hotel area feature high-quality furnishings and numerous refined details. The Mayr Family and the dedicated staff look after the guests with heartiness and warm hospitality as numerous awards and listings in hotel guides show. The recently re-designed rooms are characterised by a casual, modern and cosy style for modern people: the new bathrooms are bright with oak floors and high-quality fabrics and furnishing. The rooms that were last renovated about 10 years ago feature period furniture, warm colours and noble fabrics. If you are looking for something special you should stay in the Montagne Junior Suite with antique furniture.

*The entrance leads you into a bright courtyard and gives you an excellent view of the cross vaults, as well as the upper levels. Via a stone staircase with a wrought iron handrail, you will reach the first floor and the reception, bar and breakfast area. On the top floor, closer to the sky and the mountains, our relaxing **wellness area** offers a Finnish sauna, Turkish steam bath and a quiet area for total relaxation. One of the hotel's highlights is the roof terrace, which opens up a view across the historic town and leaves you with unforgettable panoramic views of the mountains.*

*The hotel is situated at the Isarco/Eisack promenade, right at the entrance to the historic centre of Bressanone/Brixen. The church square and the 'Lauben' are only a two minutes' walk away. From the church square, you can walk along the Domgasse to reach the **restaurant Künstlerstübele Oste Scuro/Finsterwirt**, which is part of our business. It's renowned and listed in numerous gourmet guides.*

Overview by www.CountryWalkers.com - Dramatic pinnacles of white rock, flower-filled meadows, fir forests, and picturesque villages are all part of the renowned Italian Dolomites, protected in national and regional parks and recently recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site. The luminous limestone range is the result of geological transformation from ancient sea floor to mountaintop. The region is a landscape of grassy balconies perched above Alpine lakes, and Tyrolean hamlets nestled in lush valleys, crisscrossed by countless hiking and walking trails connecting villages, Alpine refuges, and cable cars. The Dolomites form the frontier between Germanic Northern Europe and the Latin

South. The region's cultural diversity is reflected in all aspects of life, and the inhabitants speak a soft, lilting tongue called Ladin, a unique language known since Roman times. The Dolomites are equally rich in flora and fauna—many species of flowers and plants are unique to the limestone geology, and the area is home to protected animals such as chamois, brown bear, and lynx. The cuisine, of course, reflects the region's unique cultural blend—hearty Austrian-influenced mountain fare meets lighter Italian cuisine made from fresh local ingredients. You retire to intimate, luxurious, and historic Tyrolean hotels, welcoming you to this enchanting corner of northeast Italy.

Pictures: <http://photographytraveltours.com/dolomites-2014/>

MEETING POINT - Hotel Goldener Adler (parlor/bar off the hallway leading to the reception), Bressanone/Brixen, Italy, 1:00 p.m. Your guide(s) will be wearing a CW shirt.

Sat Jun 28 - DAY 1 of hike

Arrival. Mount Plose; 4 miles, easy to moderate

The tour begins in the charming medieval town of Bressanone (as it is known in Italian; in German, it's Brixen) located just 28 miles south of the Brenner Pass, the border between Italy and Austria. Bressanone is located in the South Tyrol, the part of Italy encompassing the Trentino and Alto Adige regions, a bilingual region that belonged to Austria until 1918. In fact, German is spoken more than Italian by the inhabitants. This "Ancient Bishop's City" is nestled between two rivers and enveloped by mountains sloping down to vineyards and lush orchards, with a pleasant center of narrow cobblestone streets, pastel-colored houses, and lovely buildings and bridges. Following a brief orientation at your centrally located meeting point and first night's hotel, you set out for an afternoon walk at the neighboring ski area, Mount Plose. A scenic 10-minute gondola ride high above Bressanone and the Isarco Valley brings you to the start of your loop walk at an altitude of 6,700 feet. You follow a well-maintained panoramic trail with spectacular views over the Odle peaks, site of tomorrow's walk, before a return gondola ride to the base of the mountain.

This evening, you stroll to a nearby restaurant for an aperitivo of local Alto Adige wines and cured ham (speck) and cheeses, before sitting down to a dinner of outstanding South Tyrolean cuisine. A first course may be handmade spinach-filled ravioli followed by a main course or secondo piatto of river trout, local game, or lamb, and you toast the start of your adventure with a crisp local white wine. Dessert may be your first taste of the region's delectable apple strudel.

Hotel Hotel Goldener Adler, Bressanone – 2nd of 2 nights - only 1 night with tour
Suite upgrade confirmed
Adlerbrückengasse 9, I-39042 Bressanone/Brixen, Italy
Tel 011 39 0472 200 621 Email info@goldener-adler.com goldener-adler.com

The historical, family-run Goldener Adler is located among the cobblestoned streets of Bressanone's historical center, just steps away from the town's Baroque cathedral. This four-star property offers well-appointed river-view rooms, an elegant bar and restaurant, charming outdoor courtyard, as well as a spa and wellness center with sauna, steam bath, and massage facilities.

Sun Jun 29 - DAY 2 of hike

Parco Naturale Puez-Odle (Puez-Odle Natural Park): Sass de Pütia Circuit; 9 miles, moderate with a one-hour challenging uphill section, elevation gain and loss of 1,150 ft. (Total walking time: 6.5 hours & lunch)

You awaken to a generous breakfast buffet in your hotel's warm, wood-beamed dining room—eggs to order, cheeses, speck, and an assortment of Alto Adige yogurts, cereals, juices, pastries, fruit, and, of

course, cappuccino! Check out and board your private coach for a one-hour drive through the Funes Valley—the Dolomites’ northwest boundary—and on to the Passo delle Erbe, roughly “the Grassy Pass,” where you can see the extraordinary peaks of the Odle that resemble a castle’s battlements. Today’s route is the Sass de Pütia loop, which starts out on a wide gravel path bordered with heather and bilberry, and ascends gently past summer hay huts and the local Ladin people’s small summer mountain cabins called baita. This ancient culture of a small minority population living in the Dolomites and speaking the Ladin language developed in the isolated mountain valleys from the time of the Roman Empire. In the summer, Ladini families climb to their summer cabins to relax, picnic, hay, and carve wood, and, at many of the cabins, refreshments or snacks are offered to hikers. Continuing through meadows, the trail narrows, skirting a mountain, and at this point, you encounter the day’s greatest challenge—a 650-foot ascent of about an hour. Switchbacks make their way steeply up the hill, through large boulders, a trickling stream, and Rhaetian poppies, with steps and timber traverses at the final push. The view from the top of the saddle, Pütia Fork, at about 7,700 feet, is well worth the effort—rolling pastureland thick with yellow buttercups, gentians, and pink mountain thrift, and views of the upper Badia Valley, the Fanes Range, and the Sella Group. Rounding Pütia Mountain, the route then joins the famous Alta Via 2 (the second of a network of eight long-distance footpaths through the Dolomites, called Alte Vie, meaning “high paths”). These trails are weeklong routes and are served by numerous rifugi (“refuge huts”). The next mile or so is on a beautiful level trail between green pastures and grazing cows, with views of the Sella group and the Odle, and soon your lunch spot comes into view—the welcoming Rifugio Genova at 7,566 feet. Stunning views accompany a lunch of homemade mountain fare, such as polenta with cheese, homemade noodles with mushrooms, and a local Forst beer. After lunch, you continue on a farm track, through sloping pasture that is home to marmots and abundant wildflowers; raptors soar above the mountain passes. With views below to the village of Antermoia, you enter a shaded forest trail where black grouse may be flushed out. After a farmhouse refreshment stop, the trail loops back to the starting point at the Passo delle Erbe.

A short transfer takes you on to your home for the next two nights in the idyllic mountain village of San Vigilio di Marebbe, where you are welcomed by the family that has been running their Art Nouveau hotel for generations. Surrounded by a crown of mountains, the hotel’s garden is the perfect place to enjoy a cocktail and experience the enrosadira, the Ladin word for the pink sunset glow illuminating the peaks as the sun’s last rays strike the white dolomitic limestone. You proceed to the hotel’s dining room for the chef’s fare of locally raised meat, fresh vegetables, and herbs picked from the garden.

Hotel Hotel Monte Sella, San Vigilio di Marebbe – 1st of 2 nights – upgrade confirmed
San Viillo di Marebbe, Italy Tele 011 39 0474 501 034 info@monte-sella.com
www.monte-sella.com

An intimate, Art Nouveau, turn-of-the century Tyrolean hotel nestled in a small mountain village. Run by the same family for generations, this welcoming, four-star property boasts inviting guest rooms, as well as an indoor pool and Ayurvedic spa and wellness center offering an array of treatments, massages, and sauna facilities.

Mon Jun 30 - DAY 3 of hike

Parco Naturale Fanes-Senes-Braies: Pederü to Capanna Alpina; 5- or 8-mile options, moderate to challenging, elevation gain of 2,047 ft. (or 367 ft. if choosing 5-mile option) and loss of 1,483 ft. (Total walking time: 5.5 hours for the complete walk & lunch)

A sumptuous breakfast buffet fuels you for today’s walk in the Fanes-Senes-Braies Park. That being said, instead of starting off with a long, but gradual ascent, a very convenient option would allow you to take a jeep ride to meet the group at lunchtime, and then enjoy the afternoon’s 5-mile walk. For

those who choose the morning option, a short drive brings you to the eastern end of the Val Badia and the glacially carved Pederü Valley. From the Rifugio Pederü at 5,079 feet, a long, wide mountain road over gradual switchbacks climbs for 2½ hours (elevation gain of 1,680 feet), larch trees lining the way. After passing a rocky gorge, you emerge onto the level Fanes Pasture. After passing green pastureland, yellow wolfsbane, rushing rivers, and grazing cows, you encounter the family-run Rifugio Fanes, a backcountry lodge of wood and stone with a huge deck overlooking the natural bowl of the Sasso della Croce and the Cunturines groups of mountains. The unique stratified rock layers and solitary pines in the horizon are known as the “Marmots’ Parliament,” part of the rich Ladini folklore of stories and legends about these mountains. A “Radler”—a refreshing mix of beer and lemonade—may hit the spot to accompany lunch, a hearty bowl of pasta, soup, or polenta.

After lunch, a 15-minute ascent (367 feet) of gradual switchbacks through a carpet of junipers brings you to Limo Pass (at 7,126 feet, the highest point of the day’s walk). The trail then levels out at azure Lake Limo, gently undulating into a wide natural amphitheater, as you enjoy the Fanes high plateau with its typical karstic limestone landscape of wind-carved rock formations, caves, fissures, underground streams, and small lakes. A growing population of fox, deer, chamois, mountain goats, and eagles thrive under the park’s protection. After a final stunning view at the Forcella Col de Locia, a steep and narrow descent of steps brings you to the Capanna Alpina (5,643 feet), where you are rewarded with a refreshing drink or snack. A short drive brings you back to San Vigilio di Marebbe, where there is time to relax, stroll through town, or schedule an Ayurvedic massage at the hotel, before gathering for dinner in the hotel’s dining room.

Hotel Hotel Monte Sella, San Vigilio di Marebbe – 2nd of 2 nights

Tue Jul 1 - DAY 4 of hike

Prato Piazza to Strudelkopf to Prato Piazza; 6.5 miles, moderate, elevation gain and loss of 985 ft. (Total walking time: 3 hours & lunch)

Departing San Vigilio after breakfast, you head east for the approximately 45-minute drive through the Pusteria Valley, toward Cortina, your home for the next three nights. Today’s walk takes place en route, in the area of Prato Piazza—a picturesque Alpine basin that is home to dairy cows, pine forests, and timber chalets. Set 6,561 feet above sea level, the beautiful Prato Piazza is integrated into the Fanes-Senes-Braies Natural Park and offers splendid views of some of the Dolomites’ most imposing peaks: Tre Cime di Lavaredo, Tofane, Monte Cristallo, and the majestic deep red Croda Rossa. Following an initial gentle ascent of two hours, you reach the peak of Strudelkopf. Sitting at 7,569 feet, the summit offers astonishing views onto the Sesto Dolomites. Following a 30-minute descent, you arrive at the small, old-style Rifugio Vallandro for lunch. Bordered by the ruins of a World War I Austrian fort, the rifugio boasts great views of the Croda Rossa (west) and Cristallo (south). After lunch, an easy 35-minute descent returns you to Prato Piazza and your waiting bus for the 30-minute drive to Cortina. Cortina d’Ampezzo, known as the “Pearl of the Dolomites,” is perhaps Italy’s most beautiful—and stylish—ski resort town. Set in a valley ringed by 9,000-foot peaks, it is appreciated for its miles of ski runs as well as its bustling center full of chic cafés and shops. Your historical hotel is perfectly situated in the heart of the pedestrian zone for strolling around the town. After settling into your room, you regroup for dinner at a favorite local restaurant.

Hotel Hotel de la Poste, Cortina d’Ampezzo – 1st of 3 nights – upgrade confirmed
Tele 011 39 0436 4271 info@delaposte.it www.delaposte.it

Established in 1835, this large, family-run Alpine chalet boasts an ideal location in the heart of Cortina. Steeped in tradition, the “Posta” offers charming guest rooms, old-fashioned sitting rooms, a grand dining room, and a celebrated bar and terrace.

Wed Jul 2 - DAY 5 of hike

Sesto Dolomites: Tre Cime di Lavaredo Circuit; 6 miles, easy to moderate, 525-ft. elevation gain and loss with one steep/challenging 15-minute 280-ft. elevation gain. (Total walking time: 4 hours)

This morning, a 45-minute drive takes you to the start of the day's walk, a circuit around the Tre Cime di Lavaredo, in the Sesto Dolomites Natural Park. The distinctive three peaks are one of the Dolomites' best-known landmarks; prized by rock climbers for their sheer rock faces, appreciated for their amazing pastel and vibrant red hues at sunset, and historically the site of some of the most intense mountain warfare of World War I. In fact, the range constituted the border between Hapsburg Austria and Italy up until 1918. Today's loop walk provides views at all angles, beginning with a drive up the beautiful Tre Cime Panoramic Road to the Rifugio Auronzo at 7,644 feet. After a fortifying cappuccino, you set off along a wide trail, a former military track, just beneath the peaks. After visiting a chapel commemorating the First World War, you veer north, passing the Rifugio Lavaredo. Soon, breathtaking views of the Tre Cime open up, and you may spot rock climbers at seemingly impossible heights on the rock face. After dipping below the Mount Paterno ridge, which is still riddled with war-time tunnels, a level traverse across a scree slope brings you to the Rifugio Locatelli. After a short break, the route initially descends a series of switchbacks, then traverses an undulating basin called the Pian da Rin, a grassy wildflower-filled meadow where you may hear whistling marmots. This tranquil trail offers spectacular views of the Tre Cime, surrounded by a mountain quiet only interrupted by the dull clanging of cowbells. A steep but short ascent of 280 steps, probably the day's most challenging section, is soon over and followed by a flat stretch to a mountain dairy hut, where you may be able to taste incredibly fresh homemade yogurt or cheese. You then round the south side of the Tre Cime at the Col di Mezzo pass, and close the loop back at the starting point, the Rifugio Auronzo. A short drive delivers you to a traditional restaurant for a satisfying lunch—perhaps homemade canederli (bread balls with cheese) or a plate of patate all'ampezzana (pan-cooked potatoes and onions flavored with local speck ham).

This evening you are free to explore Cortina on your own, perhaps browsing its enticing shops, before enjoying a people-watching aperitivo on the terrace of the Hotel de la Poste, and then venturing out to discover one of the town's many fine restaurants.

Hotel Hotel de la Poste, Cortina d'Ampezzo – 2nd of 3 nights

Thu Jul 3 - DAY 6 of hike

Parco Naturale delle Dolomiti Ampezzane: Val Travenanzes; 9-10 miles, moderate, with an easy-to-moderate elevation loss of 4,265 ft. over 5 hours. (Total walking time: 5 hours & lunch)

Today's walk is considered to be one of the finest routes in the Dolomites for its variety of scenery—high peaks, remote wild areas, and significant evidence of World War I warfare. After breakfast at your hotel, you board the coach for the 30-minute drive to the Falzarego Pass to catch a cable car to the 9,000-foot summit of Mount Piccolo Lagazuoi. The walk starts at the summit's family-run Rifugio Lagazuoi, which is the highest refuge in the area, reachable only on foot or by cable car. On its terrace, you're on top of the world, with 360-degree views overlooking the Dolomites' impressive peaks, such as the Marmolada, the Croda da Lago, and the Cinque Torri. The mountain you're standing on has thousands of feet of tunneling, a result of the fierce fighting between Austrians and Italians during World War I to control the peak and surrounding territory. Other wartime remnants are still ubiquitous, such as barbed wire, shell fragments, and building rubble. You initially pass these tunnels, trenches, and caves, near massive anti-avalanche fortifications, then gradually descend the Val Travenanzes, with the majestic Tofane di Rozes rising straight above the rubble and debris. Here, far from the more frequented trails of the Dolomites, you may be lucky enough to spot surefooted chamois on the rocky slopes. The path dips into a larch forest, passing streams, waterfalls, and an abandoned shepherd's hut, surrounded by pink alpenrose. Farther along, the trail traverses an expanse of white gravel, crisscrossed by streams that may need to be forded, depending on the water level. Among the dramatic scenery of mountainside, rock faces, and waterfalls, a picnic spot is found to enjoy a spread of thinly sliced speck from Cortina, fresh creamy Pusteria Valley cheese, fruit,

and other treats. Fueled for the final leg, you descend the valley into a canyon, with a torrent churning below and the Croda Rossa's distinctive silhouette coming into view. Soon the path enters a shady pine needle-covered trail, crosses the Ponte Alto—a high bridge over a deep ravine—and concludes at a cool stream where you can reward your feet with a soak before being picked up by jeep for the return drive to Cortina.

This afternoon you have time to relax, pack, and do any last-minute shopping before gathering for your farewell dinner on the outskirts of town. You are welcomed with a glass of sparkling Prosecco on the deck of the warm chalet restaurant on a small lake at the base of the Croda da Lago peak. In this intimate locale, the first course, or primo piatto, may be the Cortina specialty of handmade, crescent-shaped ravioli stuffed with tender red beets and topped with melted butter, poppy seeds, and a generous dusting of parmesan cheese. Tonight's main course may be fresh lake trout, grilled to perfection, as you toast your discovery of the beauty of the Dolomites.

Hotel Hotel de la Poste, Cortina d'Ampezzo – 3rd of 3 nights

Fri Jul 4 - DAY 7 of hike

Departure from Bressanone - Departing shortly after breakfast, a scenic two-hour drive returns you to the tour's starting point of Bressanone, where you can conveniently make rail connections throughout Europe, south to Verona, Venice, or Milan, or north to Innsbruck, Munich, and beyond.

Hotel Hotel Grauer Bar – 3 nights
 Universitätsstrasse 5-7, Innenstadt, Innsbruck, 6020 Austria Tele: 43 51 25 9240

DEPARTURE POINT

Bressanone/Brixen Train Station, Bressanone/Brixen, Italy, 12:00 p.m.

Please note: if you are traveling south to Venice or Verona following the tour, you may also choose to travel directly from Cortina to your destination. You may view up-to-date rates and reserve private transfers online from Radio Taxi Cortina d'Ampezzo (Web: contac.it; Email: info@contac.it; Tel: 011 39 0436 860 888). Alternatively, public transportation options are outlined on the following websites: dolomiti.org/dengl/Cortina/cinfo/info04.html cortinaexpress.it/en/index.htm.

Mon Jul 7

Hotel Sheraton Munich Airport – king suite - with shuttle – form in file
 Freisinger Strasse 80, Schwaig-Oberding 85445, Germany Tele: (49)(89) 927220

Tue Jul 8

9:30am Depart Munich MUC via UA#107
12:35pm Arrive Newark EWR

CW Notes

HIGH-ALTITUDE WARNING - The highest elevation you will be walking at on this tour is approximately 9,000 feet. The altitude may have some effect on travelers. Typical symptoms include nausea, a loss of appetite, insomnia, shortness of breath, dizziness, headaches, or other minor irregularities. There are actions you can take to help you adjust to the altitude, including drinking lots of water (more than you feel you need) and getting plenty of sleep. Also, take your time while walking, allow your body to adjust, and always keep your guides informed of how you are feeling. Please discuss with your doctor whether taking altitude medication would be helpful.

ACTIVITY LEVEL - This tour is one of our Guided Walking Adventures, rated moderate to challenging, with an average of 5 to 7 hours of hiking per day and limited options. This tour is more of a hiking experience than a walking experience. There are significant ascents and descents of between 1,100 and 2,200 feet per day, with a gradual descent of over 4,000 feet on one day. The highest walking altitude on the tour starts at approximately 9,000 feet, at a site which is accessed by cable car. Trails are a range of worn paths, gravel roads, and some stony stream crossings, and the footing varies from packed dirt to loose gravel, rocky sections, and steps on steep slopes. There might be roots that can be slippery when wet. The pace on this tour is steady, yet comfortable, with full days on the trail and transfers between 30 minutes to one hour. On several days, guests can choose to participate in a half- rather than full-day walk by shortening the walk with a jeep transfer, and instead exploring the towns of San Vigilio di Marebbe or Cortina. Walking sticks and waterproof hiking boots with a thick and sturdy tread and good ankle support are required. For this tour, you should be in excellent physical condition with good balance and no orthopedic or cardiovascular conditions.

INCLUSIONS

- » Two expert, local guides (for groups of 8 or more), with you 24/7
- » All meals except for one dinner; local wine included
- » All accommodations while on tour
- » Transportation from the meeting point to the departure point
- » Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary
- » Basic travel insurance coverage (see Travel Insurance section that follows)
- » The unbeatable and cumulative experience of the CW staff

GRATUITIES - Gratuities for all hotels, meals, and services that are included in your tour price will be paid by CW. Should you wish to tip your CW guide(s), the standard in the industry ranges from \$10 to \$15 per person, per day (or \$20 to \$30 per couple, per day), and can be paid in USD or local currency. Gratuities for your bus driver are included in the tour price, but extra tips are always welcome.

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT

Bolzano/Bozen (BZO), Italy (25 miles SW of Bressanone) abd-airport.it
Innsbruck (INN), Austria (50 miles N of Bressanone) innsbruck-airport.com
Verona (VRN), Italy (120 miles SW of Bressanone) aeroportoverona.it
Munich (MUC), Germany (160 miles N of Bressanone) munich-airport.de
Venice (VCE), Italy (190 miles SE of Bressanone) veniceairport.it
Milan (MXP), Italy (190 miles SW of Bressanone) milan-mxp.com

GETTING TO THE MEETING POINT - From the Bressanone (Italian name)/Brixen (German name) Train Station: Bressanone can be reached by train. It is nestled in the north of Italy on the main Munich-Innsbruck-Bolzano/Bozen-Verona train line. The Hotel Goldener Adler is a 10-minute taxi ride from Bressanone's train station. Taxis are readily available and cost approximately 10 euros.

From Bolzano's Airport: The city of Bolzano (German name is Bozen) is the capital city of South Tyrol and the largest city in the region. Its small airport, ABD Airport Bolzano Dolomites (BZO), has daily flights from Rome and Frankfurt, as well as service from Vienna, and requires connections from the U.S. The airport is located approximately 3 miles outside the Bolzano city center, where Bolzano's Central Train Station is located. A taxi from the airport to the Central Train Station costs approximately 30 euros.

From Innsbruck's Airport: While the Innsbruck Airport (INN) is the closest international airport, it does require connections from the U.S. A taxi from the Innsbruck Airport to Innsbruck's Central Train Station takes approximately 15 minutes and costs approximately 10 euros. Some trains to Bressanone are direct, while others require a connection in Brennero/Brenner. There are occasional delays with these trains. Please pay attention to the loudspeaker announcements in the station.

From Verona's Airport: Verona's Valerio Catullo Airport (VRN), located 7 miles southwest of Verona's city center, is the second-closest international airport, also requiring connections from the U.S. A shuttle bus runs to Verona's Porta Nuova Train Station every 20 minutes between 6:35 a.m. and 11:35 p.m.; a one-way ticket costs 6 euros. A taxi from the Verona Airport to Verona's Porta Nuova Train Station takes approximately 15 minutes and costs approximately 15 euros.

From Munich's Airport: Munich's Franz Josef Strauss Airport (MUC), a hub for Lufthansa and Star Alliance partner airlines, offers direct connections from the U.S. It is located 17.7 miles northeast of Munich. You may reach Munich's city center and central train stations via train or taxi. Trains depart from the Flughafen (Airport) stop (steps away from Terminals 1 and 2) six times an hour between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m., with less-frequent service during the night. Major downtown stops include the München Ost Train Station (mainly InterCity/EuroCity services to Austria, Italy, and southeastern Europe depart from this station), Hauptbahnhof (main railroad station) and the Marienplatz in the pedestrian shopping zone. Two S-Bahn lines (covered by a rail pass), S1 and S8, offer slightly different routes, but both run from the airport to downtown Munich. To reach central Munich, follow the S-Bahn signs to the commuter rail station in the München Airport Center. There, you can buy tickets from vending machines or a ticket counter. The journey from the airport to the München Ost or Hauptbahnhof train stations takes approximately 45 minutes and costs approximately 10 euros. Taxis are also readily available outside of the terminals. A taxi ride into central Munich takes about 35 minutes (or longer in rush hour) and costs approximately 60 euros.

From Venice's Airport: Venice's Marco Polo Airport (VCE), located 7.5 miles north of Venice's city center, offers limited direct connections from the U.S. There are also daily connections to and from Rome and other European cities such as London, Zurich, Paris, and Frankfurt. The Venice-Mestre railway station is connected to the airport by the ATVO Fly Bus and the ACTV bus 15. Bus information is available from ATVO at atvo.it and ACTV at actv.it. The ride takes about 20 minutes and costs approximately 3 euros (luggage included). Taxis are also readily available outside of the Arrival Hall. The ride to the train station takes about 20 minutes and costs approximately 30 euros.

From Milan's Airport: Milan's Malpensa Airport (MXP) offers a number of direct flights from the U.S. Airport coach shuttle service from the Malpensa Airport to the Milan Central Train Station costs approximately 10 euros and takes about 45-60 minutes. A taxi from Milan's Malpensa Airport to the Milan Central Train Station costs approximately 95 euros and takes one hour (or more).

RAIL INFORMATION - Approximate travel times for train travel to Bressanone/Brixen from various Italian, Austrian, and German cities are as follows: from Bolzano/Bozen: 30 minutes; from Innsbruck: 1½ hours; from Verona: 2-2½ hours; from Munich: 4-5 hours; from Venice: 3½-4 hours; from Milan: 4-4½ hours; from Turin: 6-11 hours; from Florence: 4-5 hours; from Rome: 6-11 hours. Please note, the

above travel times are dependent upon train type and speed. Additionally, some of these journeys require station changes. For further rail information including reservations, schedules, and up-to-date fares, please contact either Rail Europe at 800.622.8600 or raileurope.com, or Trenitalia at trenitalia.com (Trenitalia operates most train services in Italy), or ÖBB (Austrian Federal Railways - Österreichische Bundesbahnen) at oebb.at.

PRE-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS - You may choose to stay at the Hotel Goldener Adler, the meeting point for your tour, where we have a limited number of rooms blocked for the night before each tour. Please note that the hotel will hold our block of rooms until 60 days prior to your tour's start date. To reserve a blocked room, please contact the hotel directly, indicating that you are with the CW group, and refer to the date prior to your tour's start date. Offer your credit card number as a guarantee when making the reservation, and request a written confirmation. The hotel staff speaks English, so you should not have a problem communicating with them. We suggest making a hotel reservation as soon as possible.

LEAVING BRESSANONE/BRIXEN - If you choose to take a train from Bressanone/Brixen to another Italian destination, your guides can assist you in making train reservations. If your travel plans necessitate an earlier departure, your guides can also arrange a taxi transfer for you (at your own expense) from your last hotel in Cortina d'Ampezzo to your airport or train station of choice. You may also view up-to-date rates and reserve transfers online from Radio Taxi Cortina d'Ampezzo (Web: contac.it; Email: info@contac.it; Tel: 011 39 0436 860 888).

TRAVEL INSURANCE - All guests automatically receive coverage for \$5,000 in medical expenses, \$50,000 for emergency medical transportation, repatriation of remains coverage, and 24-hour travel-assistance services. This complimentary plan is subject to restrictions and is not intended to replace supplementary travel insurance. For more details, please contact CW or call Travel Guard directly at 877.525.2372.