



Fold 2

MINI GUIDE June 2012



# South Tyrol, Italy

## WHY GO?

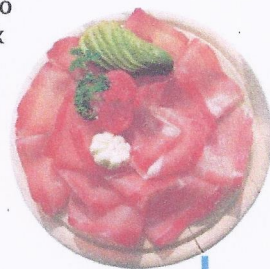
Called Südtirol in German and Alto Adige in Italian, South Tyrol lies where the two languages meet among the jagged peaks of the Dolomites. While mountainous national parks and ski resorts are big draws, South Tyrol's gastronomy can hold its own with Italy's finest.

## WHEN TO GO

December to April is ski season, while hikers descend in summer when rates fall considerably. Most rifugi (mountain huts) open from late June to September. Some resorts close in April and May, and again in October and November.

## HOW TO GO

Ryanair flies to Venice-Treviso from East Midlands, Leeds-Bradford and Stansted (from £130; ryanair.com). From here, it's a three-hour drive north to Bolzano. BA flies to Verona from Gatwick (from £130; ba.com). Trenitalia runs rail services north from Verona to Bolzano (from £30 return; trenitalia.com).

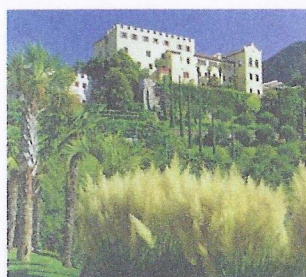


LEFT The gentle slopes of the Alpe di Siusi, in the Italian Alps.  
RIGHT Speck, a popular type of cured ham

## See

### BEST FOR ICEMEN 1

A human corpse discovered by hikers in 1991, 'Ötzi' was thought to be a lost mountaineer, but turned out to be 5,300 years old. Visit the oldest mummified remains ever found in Europe at the Museo Archeologico dell'Alto Adige in Bolzano (iceman.it; Via Museo/Museumstraße 43 admission £8).



Castel Trauttmansdorff and its botanical gardens

### BEST FOR WALKS 2

There are few more beautiful sights than the Alpe di Siusi, Europe's largest high-altitude plateau, which ends dramatically at the foot of the Sciliar mountains. Walks here range from family friendly to endurance testing (alpedisiusi.info).

### BEST FOR CABLE CARS 4

South Tyrol has no shortage of spectacular cable car rides. One of the best is from the village of Ortisei in Val Gardena up to Seceda, where you can take in views of the Gruppo delle Odle, a cathedral-like row of rocky peaks (seceda.it; returns £22).

### BEST FOR LADINS 3

Two of South Tyrol's valleys are populated by Ladin-speakers. For more about this unique language and culture, visit the Ladin Museum housed in a castle in San Martino, with another branch in nearby San Cassiano (museum.ladin.it; Via Tor 65, San Martino in Badia; admission £7 for both).

### BEST FOR GARDENS 5

Once home to Empress Elisabeth of Austria, Castel Trauttmansdorff is a 19th-century castle near the town of Merano that's surrounded by botanical gardens, with cacti, lilies, iris and tulips cascading down a hillside (trauttmansdorff.it; Via San Valentino 51a; open Apr–Nov; admission £9).

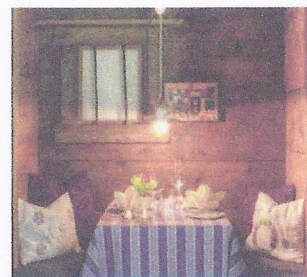
## Eat & drink

### Acherer Patisserie & Blumen 6

in Brunico is the place to go for strudel, cheesecake and sachertorte (chocolate cake). If you like your cake with coffee, they'll happily plate it up for you to eat in the Wörtz Bäck bar next door (acherer.com; Corso della Libertà 8b; slices of cake from £2).

An artisan deli-cum-winebar in Merano, **Pur Südtirol 7** showcases regional produce such as Tyrolean cider, cheese and chocolate. Stay for a glass of wine and brettjause (a plate of cured meat) at a communal table (pur.suedtirol.com; Corso della Libertà 35; glasses of wine from £2.50).

A brewery restaurant in Merano, **Forsterbräu 8** has a huge beer garden and a number of atmospheric dining rooms. Come for platefuls of gulaschsuppe (goulash soup), trout and roast boar. There is also a respectable selection of beers, ranging from dark bocks to light pils (forsterbrau.it; Corso della Libertà 90; mains from £9).



A small but charming booth for two at La Stüa de Michil

Dating back to 1277, **Vögele 9** is an antique-stuffed restaurant in Bolzano, which is well loved for its schnitzels, steaks and suckling pig. The attached bar is pleasantly rowdy (voegele.it; Via Goethe 3; closed Sun; mains from £9).

Strewn with Alpine antiques and built entirely from wood, **La Stüa de Michil 10** is a candlelit, Michelin-starred restaurant in the town of Corvara's Hotel La Perla. Exquisite dishes rework traditional Ladin and Tyrolean favourites with organic ingredients (hotel-laperla.it; Col Alt 105; dinner Mon–Sat; mains from £25).

Fold 1

TURN OVER FOR MAP AND NUMBER LOCATIONS



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### Find your way

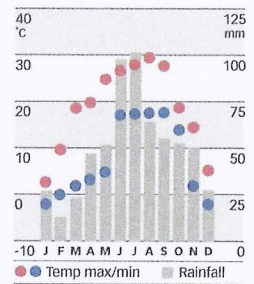


### Essentials

#### GETTING AROUND

It's best to have your own private transport – car hire is available at Venice-Treviso airport (from £40 per day). Bolzano is a transport hub, with regular buses run by SAD (sad.it). You can also buy three- or seven-day public transport passes (mobilcard.info).

#### CLIMATE



#### TYPICAL COSTS

- Platter of speck ham £5
- Mid range meal £15–£40
- Mid-range hotel £90–£150
- Top-end hotel from £150

### Sleep

A good-value, family-run hotel close to the centre of Bolzano, the **Hotel Feichter** 11 has cosy wooden rooms decked out in blonde wood. Some even have small balconies with views out to the surrounding mountains. They serve a decent breakfast with excellent coffee (hotelfeichter.it; Via Grappoli 15; from £75).

Dating back to 1641, the characterful **Charme Hotel Uridl** 12 is tucked behind a church in the village of Santa Cristina. It has bright, simple rooms adorned with contemporary artwork, and a marvellously old-fashioned restaurant. There are excellent views up to the slopes of Val Gardena from its back garden too (uridl.it; Via Chemun 43; closed Apr–May, Oct–Nov; from £100).

**The Hotel Heubad** 13 in Fiè allo Sciliar is renowned for and named after its traditional Tyrolean hay baths: known for being curative and relaxing, hay baths have been on offer since 1903. Spacious rooms have balconies with views of the Alpe di Siusi (hotelheubad.com; Via Sciliar 13; closed Nov; from £125).



Hay from mountain meadows is used for baths at Hotel Heubad

The **Lagació Mountain Residence** 14 in San Cassiano offers apartments with heated floors, big baths and balconies. The breakfast buffet takes in meats, cheeses, vegetable juices and cakes (lagacio.com; Strada Micurá de Rù 48; closed May & Nov; apartments from £150).

A remote chalet in Val Gardena with an eccentric undulating rooftop, **Chalet Gerard** 15 offers a refreshingly modern take on the traditional mountain lodge. Interiors have lots of glass fireplaces, bare pine and windows that look out over meadows to the Gruppo del Sella range (chalet-gerard.com; Plan de Gralba 37; closed May & Nov; from £170).

### Your recommendations

**16 FRIENDS OF THE EARTH** Lonely Planet forum users (lonelyplanet.com/thorntree) rate the **Earth Pyramids**, a series of unusual geological formations in the hills above Bolzano. Pinnacles of eroded soil stand out from the forested hillsides, many capped with rocks to form fairy chimneys. The pyramids are clustered in three main areas around the plateau of Renon and can be seen from walking trails (ritten.com).

**17 LEARNING ON HIGH** Forum users recommend the quintet of museums in South Tyrol that make up the **Messner Mountain Museum**. These are the work of South Tyrolean mountaineer Reinhold Messner, the first man to climb Everest without supplemental oxygen, and each takes a different theme. The centrepiece branch, which looks at man's relationship with mountains, is found in the 10th-century ruins of Castel Firmiano southwest of Bolzano (messner-mountain-museum.it; Sigmundskronenstr 53; open Fri–Wed from Mar–Nov; admission £7.50).

**18 BLAZE YOUR TRAIL** Forum users also rate **Stelvio National Park**, the largest national park in Italy. Its mountains have an extensive network of marked trails, and there is a low-key ski resort at the mountain village of Solda. At the park's centre is the 2,757m-high Stelvio Pass, the highest paved mountain pass of the Eastern Alps, and a favourite challenge for both drivers and cyclists (parks.it/parco.nazionale.stelvio; admission free).

#### FIND OUT MORE

See Lonely Planet's *Italy* guide (£17.99). Alternatively download the *Trento & the Dolomites* chapter from lonelyplanet.com (£2.99). Lonely Planet's *Hiking in Italy* (£15.99) has details of walking in the Dolomites, while the tourist board has more on places to visit (suedtirol.info). To find out more about Otzi, read Brenda Fowler's *Ice Man* (£25; Pan Books).



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