

MADE TO EXPLORE

THE DOLOMITE ROAD

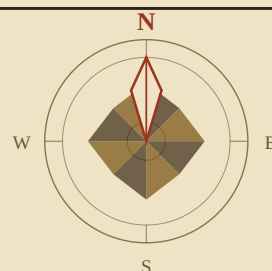
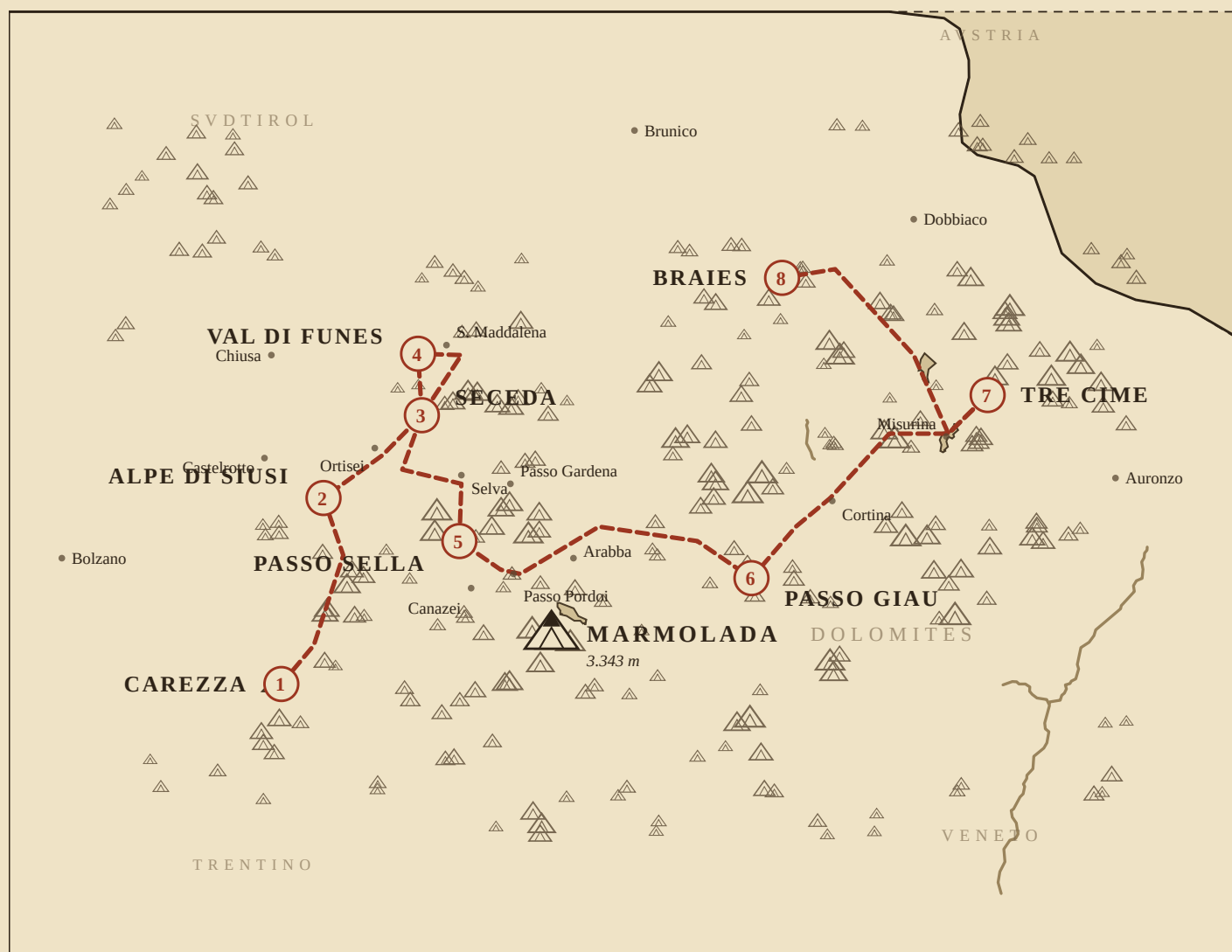
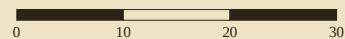
*Eight places, eight hours of the day, on the
reef that turns red at dusk*

8 stops · 400 km · by campervan

LEGEND

- the driving route
- stage stop
- △ summit above 2,300 m

SCALE — KILOMETRES



1

CAREZZA

Val d'Ega — 7 in the morning, still water

THE HOUR	Lago di Carezza is a three-hundred-metre lake, green as glass, in which the Latemar is mirrored whole — but only early in the morning, before the wind rises and before the coaches arrive. At seven the water is a mirror and you are alone. At ten it is a queue. The people here called it the rainbow lake, after the legend of a sorcerer who threw a rainbow into it to seduce a nymph.
THE CAMPER	You sleep at the Paolina camper area, by the chairlift station: open all year, no booking, with a toilet; the lake is half an hour on foot along path 6, or by the bus that stops in front of the area. The car park at the lake is paid and three minutes' walk away, through a tunnel. The camper fits.
FREE	The lake is seen from the path, freely, with a wooden fence round it — you do not go down to the water. The car park costs, the lake does not.
WHERE TO SLEEP	Camper area · Camper Stellplatz Paolina, Welschnofen / Nova Levante · GPS 46.40720, 11.59450
FOR THE VISIT	P1 Karersee, right by the lake, paid. P2 Schönblickweg is closed to all vehicles from 21:00 to 06:00.

Carezza → Passo Costalunga → Val Gardena → Alpe di Siusi, 40 km · ~1 h by camper. The first pass of the route, a gentle one.

2

ALPE DI SIUSI

Seiser Alm — sunrise, on the meadow

THE HOUR	The largest alpine meadow in Europe: fifty-six square kilometres of grass at 2,000 metres, with the Sassolungo and the Sciliar rising out of it vertically. At sunrise the light comes from the east, low, and catches the summits first, then slides down the meadow. In summer it is closed to traffic between nine in the morning and five in the afternoon — so either you are up before nine, or you take the cable car from Ortisei or Siusi.
THE CAMPER	No sleeping on the plateau: across the whole Seiser Alm area, spending the night in any vehicle is banned and fined. You sleep below, at Camping Seiser Alm in Völs am Schlern (St. Konstantin), which has a motorhome stopover in front of it, no booking needed. You go up to the plateau by day.
FREE	The meadow is open and walked for hours. The cable car costs. Sunrise is free to anyone who is awake.
WHERE TO SLEEP	Campsite · Camping Seiser Alm, Völs am Schlern · GPS 46.53333, 11.53361
FOR THE VISIT	The Compaccio car parks are booked on seiseralm.it/parking , with entry by 9:30; parking is banned from 23:00 to 05:00.

Alpe di Siusi → Ortisei, 15 km down. The cable car for the Seceda leaves from Ortisei.

3

SECEDA

Val Gardena — the afternoon, with the sun behind you

THE HOUR	The Seceda ridge is the most photographed silhouette in the Dolomites: a tilted meadow that ends abruptly in a wall of several hundred metres, with the Odle towers behind it like teeth. It is reached by cable car from Ortisei, in two stages, to 2,500 m. The good light is in the afternoon, when the sun is in the west and hits the wall in front of you; in the morning the ridge is in shadow.
THE CAMPER	You sleep at the Gasthaus Pontives stopover, 3 km from Ortisei, with power, water and emptying. The Seceda cable car leaves from the centre of Ortisei: take the bus from Pontives, not the camper.
FREE	The ridge is walked freely once you are up; the cable car costs about a lunch. Whoever climbs on foot from the Val di Funes, via Malga Brogles, gets there in four hours and pays nothing.
WHERE TO SLEEP	Stopover at an inn · Gasthaus Pontives, Pontives 36 · GPS 46.58667, 11.63361
FOR THE VISIT	The bus from Pontives to Ortisei, every half hour; the Seceda cable car leaves from the centre of Ortisei.

Ortisei → Passo Pinei → Val di Funes, 25 km. You cross to the other side of the Odle.

4

VAL DI FUNES

Villnöss — the evening, with the church in front

THE HOUR	Santa Maddalena is a village church on a meadow, with the Odle towers directly behind it — the picture on every postcard. The good light is in the evening, when the sun drops in the west and turns the Odle pink; the church stays in shadow, small, and the contrast is everything. Reinhold Messner was born in this valley and learned to climb on the Odle.
THE CAMPER	You sleep at the Zum Gletscher Hons farm stopover in Santa Maddalena, five minutes from the bus stop. The viewpoint is ten minutes on foot from the village on a marked path; you do not drive up.
FREE	The view, the village, the path — all open. And at the head of the valley, Zannes, the car park at the foot of the Odle, from where the Adolf Munkel path leaves, flat, two hours, beneath the walls.
WHERE TO SLEEP	Farm stopover · Zum Gletscher Hons, Ruefenweg 12, St. Magdalena · GPS 46.64257, 11.71991
FOR THE VISIT	The Zans car park, paid: camper tickets are bought only on site, subject to space. When the light at Ranui is red, park in St. Magdalena and take bus 330, once an hour.

Val di Funes → Ortisei → Selva → Passo Sella, 40 km · ~1 h by camper. You climb into the heart of the Sella.

5

PASSO SELLA

2,218 m — sunset on the Sassolungo

THE HOUR	The Passo Sella is the gap between the Sella massif and the Sassolungo, and it is where the enrosadira is seen best: at sunset the Sassolungo wall turns pink, then red, then violet, in twenty minutes, with nothing else moving. It is the phenomenon that gives the name — from the Ladin enrosadira, to turn red. Dolomite reflects low light differently from granite, and that is why these mountains look like no others.
THE CAMPER	Large car park at the pass, paid. In summer the pass is closed to traffic at certain hours of the day to reduce congestion — check the timetable. You sleep at a campsite, at Selva or Canazei.
FREE	The sunset. It costs nothing and it is the best show on the whole route. The rest — the cable car to Sasso Levante, the refuges — costs.
WHERE TO SLEEP	Campsite · Camping Marmolada, Canazei · GPS 46.47292, 11.77568
FOR THE VISIT	The Sellajoch car park at the pass, paid. Further down, at Plan de Gralba, overnight stays are not allowed.

Passo Sella → Passo Pordoi → Arabba → Passo Giau, 45 km · ~1 h by camper. Three passes linked, with tight hairpins.

6

PASSO GIAU

2,236 m — sunrise on Ra Gusela

THE HOUR	The Giau is the pass with the finest view on the route: Ra Gusela, a tooth-shaped tower of rock, directly above, and the Croda da Lago, the Cinque Torri, the Pelmo all around. At sunrise the sun comes out from behind the Sorapis and strikes Ra Gusela first, which lights up yellow. It is also the pass with the most hairpins: twenty-nine from the Cortina side.
THE CAMPER	Car park at the pass. Campsite at Cortina or Selva di Cadore and up before sunrise, which means leaving at five. The hairpins from Cortina are tight for a 7-metre camper.
FREE	The view and the sunrise. The path to the Cinque Torri, two hours, is open and passes the restored First World War trenches, open to visit.
WHERE TO SLEEP	Campsite · International Camping Olympia, Fiammes (Cortina) · GPS 46.57101, 12.11498

Passo Giau → Cortina d'Ampezzo → Misurina → Tre Cime, 50 km · ~1½ h by camper. The last 7 km are the toll road up to the refuge.

7

TRE CIME

2,320 m — sunset on the north faces

THE HOUR Three towers of limestone five hundred metres high, side by side, the most famous in the Alps. You drive up to the Rifugio Auronzo on a road with a steep toll, then walk round them, three hours, flat. The classic picture is from the Rifugio Locatelli, from the north, at sunset, when the western sun hits the north faces from the side and draws every crack. In the morning the same faces are in total shadow.

THE CAMPER The toll road to the Rifugio Auronzo is by online booking only, on auronzo.info, and the ticket lasts 12 hours from the time you choose — it does not cover a night up top. Otherwise, the shuttle from Misurina, also booked online. You sleep at Misurina, in the municipal camper area on Via Monte Piana.

FREE The loop round the three summits is open and is the finest walk on the whole route. The refuges cost. The road toll is the largest expense on the route and can only be avoided on foot, from the Val Fiscalina, four hours.

WHERE TO SLEEP Camper area · Area sosta camper Misurina, Via Monte Piana · GPS 46.58834, 12.25561

| *Tre Cime → Misurina → Dobbiaco → Braies, 35 km · ~1 h by camper. The last stage, to the lake at the end.*

8

BRAIES

Pragser Wildsee — 6 in the morning, before the boats

THE HOUR Lago di Braies is the turquoise-green lake with wooden boats and the Croda del Becco rising out of it like a thousand-metre wall. It is the most visited place in the Dolomites and, at midday, the most crowded. But at six in the morning, before the boat hire opens, the water is still, the wall is mirrored whole and there is nobody. This is where the route ends: with a lake at first light, as it began.

THE CAMPER In summer (July to mid-September), by day you only get into the valley with a booking or on bus 442 from Dobbiaco, also booked; the hours change from year to year. The camper gets in only with a booking. Campsites at Dobbiaco and at Braies, down the valley.

FREE The loop round the lake, an hour, is open. The boats cost. And if you are there at six, everything you see is free and yours.

WHERE TO SLEEP Campsite · Camping Olympia, Dobbiaco / Toblach · GPS 46.73450, 12.19350

| *End of the route. Innsbruck is 180 km over the Brenner, Verona 200 to the south, Venice 160.*

THE ROUTE IN BRIEF

Distance	~400 km
Driving time	~11 h in all, without stops
Recommended time	8–10 days
Stage stops	8
Countries	IT
Highest point	Tre Cime, 2,320 m
Direction	west → east
Best months	Sep

GOOD TO KNOW BEFORE YOU LEAVE

You don't sleep on the Alpe di Siusi: across the whole Seiser Alm area, spending the night in any vehicle is banned and fined; you sleep below, at Camping Seiser Alm in Völs.

The toll road to the Tre Cime is by online booking only, on auronzo.info; the ticket lasts 12 hours from the time you choose.

At Lago di Braies, in summer (July to mid-September), by day you only enter the valley with a booking or on bus 442 from Dobbiaco; the hours change from year to year.

WHEN TO GO

Ideal: September. The light is low and warm all day, the pastures have emptied of cattle, the summer crowds have gone and the snow has not come.

Workable: June–August, but with restricted access at Braies, Tre Cime, Alpe di Siusi and the Sella. Everything is done early or booked.

Avoid: November–May. The Giau and Sella passes close with snow, the cable cars stop, the lakes freeze.

October: the best for photography: yellow larches, the first snow on the summits, clear water. But some cable cars have already closed.

ACCESS, PLACE BY PLACE

Lago di Braies: in summer (July to mid-September), by day you only get in with a booking or on bus 442 from Dobbiaco; the hours change from year to year.

Tre Cime: toll road to the Rifugio Auronzo, by online booking only (auronzo.info); the ticket lasts 12 hours. The alternative is the shuttle from Misurina, also booked.

Alpe di Siusi: closed to traffic between 9 and 17 in season. You don't sleep on the plateau: go up before 9 or take the cable car.

Passo Sella: closed to traffic at certain summer hours to cut congestion. Check the day's timetable.

Seceda: only by cable car from Ortisei or on foot. There is no road.

Carezza, Val di Funes, Passo Giau: open access, paid parking.

WHERE YOU SLEEP

Free overnighting is banned in South Tyrol and fined; in the Veneto it is laxer, but at the passes and lakes it is enforced. The campsites are good and frequent.

The key places to sleep are the ones that put you in place at the right hour: Santa Maddalena for the evening with the Odle, Misurina for the Tre Cime. You don't sleep on the Alpe di Siusi: for sunrise you drive up in the morning from Camping Seiser Alm in Völs.

In September you find a place without booking almost everywhere. In August, you do not.

Nights at 1,800 m are cold even in August. Heating on, water drained if frost is forecast in October.

ENROSADIRA — HOW TO READ THE LIGHT

What it is Enrosadira is the Ladin name for the phenomenon: at sunrise and sunset the dolomite walls turn pink, then red, then violet. It lasts twenty minutes and happens every clear day.

Why Dolomite — calcium magnesium carbonate — reflects low, red light differently from granite or ordinary limestone. These mountains are a coral reef from 250 million years ago, lifted out of the sea; the colour comes from its chemistry.

How to read it Walls facing west light up at sunset, those facing east at sunrise. The Sassolungo from the Sella faces west — sunset. Ra Gusela from the Giau faces east — sunrise. The Tre Cime from the north — sideways sunset. The route is built on this.

What it means for the camper That you sleep beside the right place, not in the right town. Every stop says what hour to be there, and the campsite is chosen so you reach that hour without driving in the dark.

What cannot be done You cannot see sunrise at the Giau and sunset at the Tre Cime on the same day in a camper. One stop a day, at its hour, is the rhythm.

What is the enrosadira in the Dolomites?

It is the Ladin name for the phenomenon in which the dolomite walls turn pink, then red, then violet, at sunrise and sunset. It lasts twenty minutes and happens every clear day, because dolomite reflects low light differently from granite.

How do you get to Lago di Braies in a camper?

In summer (July to mid-September), by day you only get into the valley with a booking (car park or permit) or on bus 442 from Dobbiaco, also booked; the hours change from year to year, so check prags.bz beforehand.

Is the road to the Tre Cime a toll road, and where do you check the conditions?

It is a toll road up to the Rifugio Auronzo, by online booking only on auronzo.info; the ticket lasts 12 hours from the time you choose, and campers pay more than cars. It is the largest expense on the route and can only be avoided by walking up from the Val Fiscalina, four hours, or by the shuttle from Misurina, booked online.

When is the best time for the Dolomites?

September. The light is low and warm all day, the pastures have emptied, the summer crowds have gone and the snow has not come.

THE RULE OF THE ROAD

“Here you do not drive to get somewhere. You drive to be there at the right hour.

The mountain is the same at noon; the light is not.

What you pay for are the car parks and the cable cars. The hour costs nothing, but you have to be awake.”

Documentary check: October 2026. Places, hours and conditions change — check them before you leave.