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Exploring Northern

Italy's ALPS

By Mark Sissons

From the dazzling Dolomites to azure Lake Garda, Trentino lures adventurous travellers to the northern part of Italy. Relatively little known, this is the sunny side of the Alps.



TRENTINO ALTO ADIGE



VILLAGE IN THE DOLOMITES, ITALY

When you dream of an Italian holiday, perhaps you imagine exploring fabulous Florentine palaces, cruising Venetian canals, sampling wine at Tuscan vineyards and admiring Roman ruins. But for adventurous travellers, the ideal Italian vacation involves more active pursuits like trekking amid UNESCO World Heritage sites, admiring the pinkish alpenglow at a mountain refuge, or slicing through the waters of an azure alpine lake aboard a speedy catamaran.

From the grandeur of the Dolomites to idyllic Lake Garda, Trentino will fuel your appetite for outdoor adventure while serving up generous helpings of *la dolce vita*. This sunny side of the Alps is Italy's gateway to mountains, lakes and action sports, and it is best known as a ski holiday destination. In summer, it receives far fewer visitors than its more famous neighbours, making a holiday here refreshingly manageable and relaxing.

Summer in Trentino offers epic mountain hiking and biking with dazzling views of the Dolomites. There are options to cruise the crystal-clear waters of its fabled lakes. It also includes picturesque piazzas and a Mediterranean ambiance, making it a superb place to relax, re-energize, and toast your good fortune with a glass of Trentodoc spumante.

Early June is a particularly lovely time to explore Trentino – hiking, sailing, paddle boarding, dining and sightseeing your way through one of Italy's hidden gems. From the provincial capital of Trento, plenty of options await. Take an easy but spectacular hike to Rifugio Croz dell'Altissimo, surrounded by the breathtaking Brenta Dolomites. Inhale the alpine fragrances while e-biking around Lake Molveno,

considered one of Italy's most beautiful lakes. Stroll through Fai della Paganella's Forest Bathing Park. Or soar high over Lake Molveno on a tandem paragliding adventure.

A 90 minutes' drive southwest of Trento brings you to shimmering Lake Garda, Italy's largest lake. Narrow and ringed by mountains, its shores are covered in olive and lemon groves and lined with resort towns and ruins. Most popular is Sirmione, with Scaliger Castle and remnants of a Roman villa. There is also Riva del Garda, famous for the *Ora del Garda*, a reliably strong wind that blows every day, making it a world-class sailing, windsurfing and SUP destination. If watersports are not your passion, you can always take the plunge into the magnificent scenery of canyons in nearby Valle di Ledro. Or soak up the views of Lake Garda from the rock walls overlooking the lake during a cliff-climbing class.

What Italian adventure would be complete without indulging in the typical cuisine of the region? Fortunately, Trentino doesn't disappoint when it comes to gastronomic pleasures. Hearty mountain cooking here infuses German and Austrian influences, as one would expect in a border region. First courses range from spätzle to strangolapreti, served with locally cured meats and Trentingrana cheese. Sweets like strudel and Kaiserschmarren follow popular mains like Tyrolean goulash and juniper deer, accompanied by white wines like Gewürztraminer and reds like Lagrein and Teroldego. Hungry yet? You certainly will be by the end of each vigorous day spent embracing the fresh air and fantastic scenery on an outdoor adventure in the magnificent heart of the Italian Alps.



LOCALLY CURED MEATS AND TRENTINGRANA CHEESE ©MARK SISSONS



LAGO DI BRAIES (PRAGSER SEE) IN THE DOLOMITES MOUNTAINS