

HIKING IN ITALY

DAY 1: JOHANNESBURG

Meet at O.R. Tambo International Airport. Please ensure that you arrive at the Airport at least 3 hours prior to the departure time.

Overnight on board your flight

DAY 2: VENICE

Arrive at Venice International Airport and transfer to your hotel in / near Riva del Garda.

Dinner and overnight in Riva Garda area

DAY 3: MONTE BALDO

After breakfast, depart with the guide by public coach, descending to Malcesine, on the lake shore. Continue by cable-car, reaching the altitude of 1800 meters. This is the Mount Baldo group, so called "Garden of Europe" for its rich in flora.

Among its most exclusive species in particular, we should first of all mention the orchids– numbering more than 60 species – that flower from March to August, according to the altitude at which they grow. Equally beautiful and much loved by climbers are the Edelweiss, the brightly majestic Red lily, the Mount Baldo anemone, wild peony and many other endemic species. From the arrival of the cable-car, we depart on foot to reach Damiano Chiesa hut and enjoy extraordinary views over the lake from one side and on the Dolomites in the other direction.

After a picnic lunch and some relaxation, take the cable-car up to Malcesine. Time permitting, we spend some time at leisure in the cosy village of Malcesine, before returning by coach to Riva del Garda.

Dinner and overnight in Riva Garda area

DAY 4: PONALE ROAD / LAKE GARDA / LAKE LEDRO

After breakfast, depart with the guide by bike. Bike along what is probably the most famous bike itinerary of the area, along the ancient Ponale road up to cosy Lake Ledro. The construction of this road was considered an engineering marvel. It opened an easier way to the valley through some tunnels and sharp U-bends in 2004, to allow bikers and hikers to enjoy a wonderful view over Lake Garda, it was then closed to the traffic. The trail is white initially. The route runs through tunnels carved into the limestone rock and the track for the first 4 km overlooks the waters of Lake Garda. The gradient of the slope is maintained at a constant comfortable 5%. Enter the Ledro Valley, and after a short length of asphalt pass the village of Biacesa to enter the center of Pré Ledro. Already on the slope that leads first to Molina and then to the beautiful Lake Ledro, where you can visit a lake dwelling museum which exhibits the archeological finds of the known prehistoric settlement found near the lake. Time at leisure on one of the beaches of the lake and del Garda valley, by bike.

Dinner and overnight in Riva Garda area

DAY 5: VERONA

After breakfast, coach transfer to Verona. Meet with the local guide for a guided tour of the town, with Piazza delle Erbe and the Market Square, Piazza dei Signori, Juliet's House and Piazza Bra. This includes the Arena, the famous Roman Amphitheatre which hosts every year the open air opera season. Spend some time at leisure, then leave in the Afternoon to visit an olive oil museum, and learn the history and techniques of production, followed by tastings.

Dinner and overnight in Riva Garda area



DAY 6: TRENTINO / CASTLE OF ARCO / DRENA

After breakfast, check out of your hotel and depart by coach to Arco, a nice village well known for being the European capital of rock climbing. The Castle of Arco is the symbol of the town and one of the most famous castles in the Trentino region, which is featured in countless codes and paintings, including the famous water colour painted by Albrecht Dürer, found at the Louvre in Paris. In 1927, the Countess Giovanna d'Arco, Marquise of Bagno, purchased the castle and became its sole owner up to 1982, when it returned into the hands of the Municipality of Arco. Walk uphill to reach its ruins and enjoy the great views from its rock. After lunch, continue to Drena Castle by bike. The rock on which stand the ruins of Drena Castle, with its ashlar-work tower, still amazingly intact, was the seat of an ancient Castelliere (fortified village). In the Middle Ages the rock, which dominated the road connecting the Sarca plain with the Cavedine Valley, represented an outpost at the junction of the roads to the north. After careful restoration by the Trento Provincial Government the complex, comprising a Ghibellina wall enclosing the remains of the count's palace, a small chapel and other buildings is open to visitors. Overlooking the complex is the 25 metre high fourteenth-century tower, the top of which affords a view over the evocative Marocche stone quarry. After the visit of the castle, continue by coach to the Brenta Dolomites near Madonna di Campiglio.

Dinner and overnight near Madonna die Campiglio

DAY 7: DOLOMITES VALLESINELLA / BRENTA VALLEY

After breakfast, it is the main hike of the tour, for its beauty and for its length, passing through enchanting water-falls and impressive rocks, arriving to Casinei Hut (from 1250 up to 1825 mt. altitude). Depart from the house with the guide and walk towards Vallesinella. From here, the track approaches a long series of beautiful water-falls and walk nearby, admiring the unique scenery. The track then passes from the woods to an open plain, where the view extends to the Adamello group. Arrive at the Casinei hut, and enjoy a picnic lunch. Return to the house and, descend from Casinei to the Brenta valley, walking through a wonderful vegetation and landscape.

Dinner and overnight near Madonna die Campiglio

DAY 8: CAMPIGLIO

After breakfast, walk along the small river near the house to explore the surroundings or reach a nice lake in a wonderful setting. Alternatively, take the nearby cable-car (cable-car ticket fee for your own account) which ascends to the ski slopes just above Madonna di Campiglio: from here, you can reach the cozy village of Campiglio in a few minutes for possible shopping, or a typical "malga" with production of cheese.

Dinner and overnight near Madonna die Campiglio

DAY 9: BRENTA VALLEY / PADUA

After breakfast, check out of your accommodation and depart for rafting in Val di Sole. Set off after breakfast towards the best spot in Italy for rafting, located 45 min by coach from the house. On arrival, the instructors will explain the techniques and brief you on all useful information, providing all necessary equipment. Start the descent by raft with the guides, for one hour of great fun in nature. After lunch, continue by coach along Val di Non valley, one of the main areas of cultivation of apples in Europe. Visit the company Melinda, listen to a short video about the cultivation and see the plant and how the apples are selected and prepared for distribution. Finally, an apple strudel and apple juice snack. Continue to Padua.

Dinner and overnight in Padua

DAY 10: VENICE

After breakfast, depart by train from Padua to Venice. Walk along a guided tour; pass the famous Rialto Bridge and visit Saint Marks' square and Basilica. The Basilica is a wonderful example of Byzantine Venetian architecture. It was once the Doge's chapel but it was also the mausoleum for Saint Mark, the patron Saint, whose life is narrated in the golden mosaics on the walls. In the afternoon, take a boat ride to the islands of the Venetian lagoon in Murano, renowned for its artistic glassware; visit a workshop to see a master working while he is shaping this material with fire, one of the most fascinating spectacles one can watch. Burano is one of the greatest centers of the lagoon of Venice, with its 7.000 inhabitants around, a flourishing activity of fishing, laces and tourism. This marvellous island is known for its charm, the unreal silence of its mornings, the happy bawling and for the peculiar local dialect. From St. Mark's square, return to the railway station to catch the train back to Padua.

Dinner and overnight in Padua



DAY 11: PADUA / VENICE

After breakfast, check out of your accommodation and enjoy some time at leisure in Padua before you transfer to Venice International Airport.

Overnight on board your flight

DAY 10: JOHANNESBURG

Arrive in Johannesburg at O.R. Tambo International Airport.

