



Top 10 Best Things to See and Do in the Dolomites (Italy)

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Top 10 Best Things to See and Do in the Dolomites (Italy)

The Dolomites in northern Italy — especially in the autonomous region of [South Tyrol](#) — are among Europe's most breathtaking mountain destinations. Part of the Italian Alps and recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, this extraordinary landscape of jagged limestone peaks, emerald lakes, rolling alpine meadows, and storybook villages is perfect for those seeking both adventure and slow travel. Here, life moves at a gentler pace: long mountain lunches at rustic huts, scenic drives over high passes, sunrise hikes, and wellness afternoons overlooking dramatic summits. Visitors are encouraged to take their time, exploring the culture, immersing themselves in nature, and [enjoying hikes responsibly](#), rather than rushing through.

Despite their wild beauty, the Dolomites are surprisingly easy to reach. Regional carrier [SkyAlps](#) offers direct connections to Bolzano, placing you right in the heart of the mountains. Alternatively, nearby airports such as Verona, Milan, and Innsbruck provide excellent international links, with straightforward train or car connections into the region. Once there, public transport is highly recommended: many accommodations provide the free Südtirol Alto Adige Guest Pass, which allows unlimited travel and makes exploring the region both efficient and sustainable. For a more relaxed and less crowded experience, travelers should avoid peak season—especially August—and consider visiting in spring or autumn.

Whether you're planning a summer hiking escape, a winter ski holiday, or a refined alpine retreat, the Dolomites combine accessibility with unspoiled nature. From panoramic viewpoints and picturesque churches to legendary hikes and world-class skiing, here's my guide to the top 10 best things to see and do in the Dolomites.

What is your favorite things to see & do in the Dolomites? Leave a [comment](#).



10. Horse Riding or a Traditional Carriage Experience

Exploring the Dolomites on horseback is one of the most peaceful and authentic ways to experience the region's alpine beauty. Riding through forest trails, flower-filled meadows, and beneath towering rock formations allows you to connect with nature at a slower pace. Many alpine farms and riding schools across South Tyrol offer guided horseback tours suitable for beginners and experienced riders alike. For

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a more traditional experience, opt for a horse-drawn carriage ride through scenic valleys or snow-covered landscapes in winter. These romantic excursions are especially popular in villages around Val Gardena and Alta Badia, and in Alpe di Siusi. If you're looking for a unique and family-friendly activity in the Dolomites, horseback riding or a carriage ride is a memorable choice.



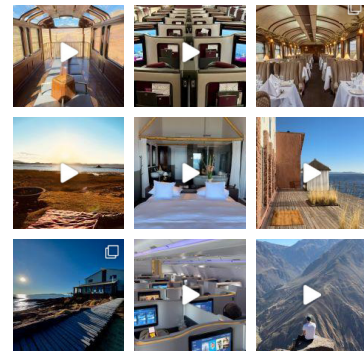
9. Visit the Picturesque Churches of Val di Funes

Few images symbolize the Dolomites more than the tiny alpine churches set against dramatic peaks. In the beautiful valley of Val di Funes, you'll find two of the region's most photographed landmarks: St Magdalena Church and St John Church. St Magdalena Church sits in a lush meadow with the Odle/Geisler peaks rising behind it — a postcard-perfect scene at sunrise or sunset. St John (or San Giovanni) Church, with its charming onion dome, offers a similarly idyllic setting surrounded by rolling green pastures. These churches are not only beautiful photo spots but also reflect the region's deep-rooted Ladin and Tyrolean heritage. Visiting them is a must for photographers, culture lovers, and anyone seeking iconic Dolomites views.



8. Enjoy the Region's Gastronomy

The Dolomites are renowned not only for their spectacular landscapes but also for a cuisine that is just as memorable. Influenced by Italian, Austrian, and Ladin traditions, the region has crafted a distinctive culinary identity grounded in alpine heritage and fresh local ingredients. Rustic mountain huts, known as rifugi, elevate simple comfort food into unforgettable dining experiences, pairing hearty dishes with breathtaking panoramic views. A perfect example is **Rauchhütte** in Alpe di Siusi (pictured below), a charming alpine retreat known for its warm atmosphere and authentic South Tyrolean specialties. Guests can enjoy homemade dumplings, regional cheeses, and traditional desserts while taking in sweeping views of the surrounding peaks. With many establishments embracing farm-to-table principles and sourcing ingredients directly from nearby valleys, exploring the gastronomy of the Dolomites becomes an essential — and delicious — part of any visit.

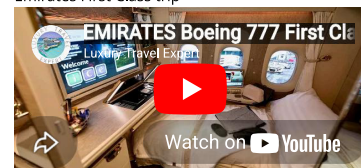


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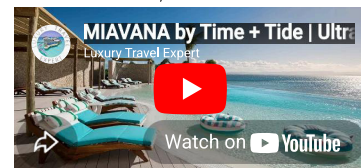
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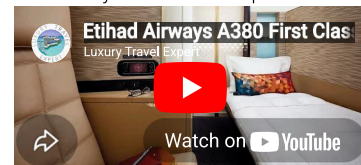
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7. Drive the Scenic Mountain Passes

One of the best ways to explore the Dolomites is by car or motorcycle, winding your way along its dramatic high-altitude mountain passes. These legendary roads twist through towering limestone peaks, opening up breathtaking panoramas at nearly every curve — a true dream for road trip enthusiasts, cyclists, and photographers alike. A standout route is Gardena Pass, which connects Val Gardena with Alta Badia and offers sweeping views of rugged rock faces and rolling alpine valleys. Equally spectacular are Pordoi Pass and Giau Pass, both known for their dramatic switchbacks and postcard-perfect viewpoints. In summer, clear skies and open roads make for ideal driving conditions, while autumn paints the landscape in warm golden hues. Every ascent reveals new perspectives, making the journey itself just as rewarding as any destination.

That said, while there are currently no official regulations for cars on the passes, visitors are strongly encouraged to minimize car use wherever possible. For instance, Lago di Carezza is extremely easy to reach by public bus and visiting this way is highly recommended. Val di Funes is best explored by bus as well, allowing travelers to take in the wider valley and combine sightseeing with hiking. Even the mountain passes themselves are ideally enjoyed outside peak season, and when paired with public transport and walking, the experience becomes both safer and more sustainable. By choosing buses and combining driving with hiking, visitors can reduce congestion and fully savor the Dolomites' breathtaking landscapes.



6. Wander the Alpine Meadows of Alpe di Siusi

The rolling alpine plateau of **Alpe di Siusi (Seiser Alm)** is the largest high-altitude meadow in Europe and one of the most idyllic landscapes in the Dolomites. Set beneath the dramatic silhouette of Sciliar (Schlern) and surrounded by jagged peaks, this vast open expanse feels almost surreal in its beauty and tranquility. In summer, vibrant wildflowers blanket the meadows while traditional wooden huts and grazing cows create a postcard-perfect alpine scene. Well-marked trails invite visitors to hike, cycle, or simply wander along gentle paths, all while soaking in sweeping panoramic views. Thanks to its relatively flat terrain, it's an excellent destination for families and travelers seeking relaxed, scenic walks. In winter, Alpe di Siusi transforms into a snowy wonderland, ideal for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and peaceful winter hikes.



5. Stay at a Luxury Hotel

For discerning travelers seeking comfort, privacy, and exclusivity, the Dolomites are home to **some of the finest hotels in Europe**. Prestigious resorts such as **Aman Rosa Alpina** and **Como Alpina Dolomites** set the standard with world-class service, refined gourmet dining, and serene spa facilities designed to complement the surrounding mountain landscape. A highly anticipated opening from Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group is expected to further elevate the region's luxury scene. Another standout property is **Forestis**, an architectural masterpiece perched high above the valleys, celebrated for its minimalist design, holistic wellness concept, and breathtaking panoramic views. Whether planning a honeymoon, a wellness retreat, or an upscale adventure holiday, choosing a luxury mountain hotel in the Dolomites transforms a beautiful trip into an unforgettable experience.



4. Ski the Legendary Sella Ronda

In winter, the Dolomites transform into one of Europe's most spectacular ski destinations, combining reliable snow conditions with dramatic alpine scenery. Thanks to its connection to Dolomiti Superski — one of the largest ski networks in the world — visitors have access to over 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) of interconnected pistes. The legendary Sella Ronda is the region's crown jewel — a panoramic ski circuit that loops around the mighty Sella massif and connects four valleys (Val Gardena, Alta Badia, Arabba, and Val di Fassa) in a single, unforgettable day. This well-signposted route allows skiers to glide across varied terrain, from wide, perfectly groomed slopes to more challenging descents, all while surrounded by towering limestone peaks. Ideal for confident beginners and intermediate skiers, the Sella Ronda also passes countless cozy mountain huts where you can stop for a warming lunch with a view.



3. Visit the Dolomites' Stunning Lakes

The Dolomites are home to some of Italy's most breathtaking alpine lakes, and the crown jewel is Lago di Braies. Famous for its striking turquoise waters that perfectly mirror the dramatic surrounding peaks, it has become one of the most photographed and iconic destinations in the region. To experience its serene beauty, it's best to arrive early in the morning when the lake is calm and the soft light enhances its colors. Visitors can take a leisurely walk along the easy loop trail that hugs the shoreline, offering multiple vantage points for photography, or rent a traditional wooden rowboat in the summer to glide across the glassy water for a truly immersive experience. Another remarkable alpine lakes includes Lago di Carezza, known for its jewel-like emerald waters set against the Latemar peaks.

Lago di Braies' summer access regulations and required booking system can be visited [here](#).



2. Explore the Dolomites' Most Epic Viewpoint: Seceda

For jaw-dropping panoramic views, few places in the Dolomites rival the stunning Seceda. Its dramatic ridgeline plunges steeply into the valley below, creating one of the most iconic and instantly recognizable vistas in the region. The combination of jagged peaks, rolling meadows, and expansive alpine skies makes it a paradise for photographers, hikers, and nature lovers alike. Seceda is easily accessible via a modern cable car from Ortisei, followed by a short and scenic hike, meaning you can enjoy breathtaking scenery without the need for a strenuous climb. Once at the top, well-marked trails lead to multiple viewpoints, each offering unique perspectives of the Odle/Geisler peaks stretching across the horizon. Sunrise and sunset are especially magical here, as the soft golden light illuminates the rugged peaks, creating perfect conditions for photography and quiet reflection. In addition to the views, the area offers alpine huts where you can enjoy local refreshments while soaking in the scenery.

As of 2026, Seceda has implemented a daily visitor cap of approximately 3,000–4,000 people to preserve its natural beauty and prevent overcrowding. Visitors are required to make an online reservation in advance, ensuring a safer and more enjoyable experience for everyone while helping protect this extraordinary alpine landscape.



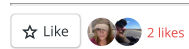
1. Hike the Tre Cime di Lavaredo Trail

Hiking is widely regarded as the number one experience in the Dolomites, and no trail captures the region's grandeur quite like the trek around Tre Cime di Lavaredo. These three towering limestone pinnacles are among the most iconic and instantly recognizable landmarks in the Alps, drawing hikers and photographers from around the world. The circular day hike provides a variety of perspectives, with each turn revealing dramatic cliffs, alpine meadows, and panoramic vistas of surrounding peaks and valleys. Along the route, charming alpine huts offer opportunities to rest, enjoy hearty local dishes, and soak in the scenery, while informative signposts share insights into the area's geology and history. The trail is moderately challenging, making it accessible to most active travelers, yet still rewarding for seasoned hikers seeking a memorable alpine adventure. Summer and early autumn are ideal times to visit, with clear skies, vibrant wildflowers, and optimal trail conditions.

As of 2026, the Tre Cime di Lavaredo area has specific [summer access regulations](#) to preserve the landscape. Parking at the main trailheads is limited, and authorities encourage visitors to use public transport whenever possible. One excellent alternative is to take public transport to Plätzwiese and hike up to the Strudelkopf. From there, you'll enjoy a breathtaking panoramic view of the Drei Zinnen and the surrounding peaks without the crowds. These measures ensure a safer, more sustainable experience while allowing everyone to appreciate the majesty of the Three Peaks.



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MARCH 28, 2026 AT 4:37 PM

This list is so inspiring! I love how you highlight both adventure and slow travel in the Dolomites. The idea of long mountain lunches and scenic drives sounds perfect for a relaxing getaway.

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