

Your Base Camp

Let me introduce you to my town: BOLZANO - BOZEN.
"The entrance door of the Dolomites!"



Before and after your trek, via ferrata tour, or climbing experience in the Dolomites, you will pass through Bolzano.

It is the central town of the Dolomites region, and the place where I was born and my family has lived for the last 100 years (probably more).

Bolzano is not only your "best base camp" in the Dolomites, it is also an amazing and important historical town on its own.

You can spend some days in Bolzano to rest or visit the cultural attractions with a nice regional focus. Consider some of these unique ideas ...

I've remarked "11" points of interest on the map of "old town" Bolzano in the next page, our historictown center, watch it, are good ideas to discover my town!



- 1. ICE MAN MUSEUM "OTZI"**
South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology
<http://www.iceman.it/en>
- 2. OFFEN RESTAURANT**
Homemade beer and homemade bread
local specialities
Piazza dell'Erbe 17 tel. +390471300788
- 3 OPEN AIR BAR "by CoBo"**
Very "avantgarde" open air bar at the
medieval fish market...
Excellent aperitifs!
order: the "Veneziano" or the "Hugo"
- 4. LA TORCIA PIZZERIA**
Very good southern italian traditional pizza
- 5. CA DE BEZZI - BATZENHAUSL**
Founded in 1404, this is the
oldest restaurant in Bolzano!
Homemade beer and local specialities
- 6. ATHESIA BOOK SHOP**
The largest selection of maps and guidebooks
- 7. MOUNTAINSPIRIT**
- 8. SPORTLER ALPIN**
- 9. MARMOT**
- 10. JACK WOLFSKIN**
Mountaineering sport shops multiple brands
- 11. MUNICIPAL RENTAL BIKE**
City bikes for your tours



SUGGESTION 1: Cultural day - bicycle to two castles and tour them.

In one day it is possible to visit two important castles by bicycle! Here is the plan (see map on next page):

- **07.00 hrs.** Breakfast at your hotel.
- **08.00 hrs.** Walk from your hotel to Walther square. On the southeastern edge of the square you will find "the Municipal rental bike point". Rent your bicycles here for the daily fee (few Euros). The staff will ask you for a document for the deposit.
- **08.15 hrs.** Consult the map of Bolzano and ride back into Walther square and continue west to traverse "old town" in the "restricted traffic area" (pedestrian zone) until you arrive at the Talvera river. Cross the river on one of the pedestrian bridges and find the bicycle path on the other (west) side. Head north (right) and continue on this bicycle path to where it ends at the base of the historic "Runkelstein Castle".
(from tuesday to sunday: 10 am -18 pm, closed monday)
- **09.00 hrs.** Park the bicycles near the bridge and walk up the steep path to the door of the castle.
- **09.15 hrs** Begin your visit of the castle. Runkelstein castle has two important particulars: 1. For strange historical reasons, the original form of the first medieval structure has been preserved. It is rare to find an intact medieval building in Europe. 2. The castle has one of the most extensive collections of medieval frescos

in Europe. Ask at reception for an English-speaking guide (not always available) and allow about 1,5 hrs to visit this amazing castle.

- **10.45 hrs.** Coffee break at the castle bar/restaurant, why not? :-)

- **11.00 hrs.** Walk back to the parking lot.

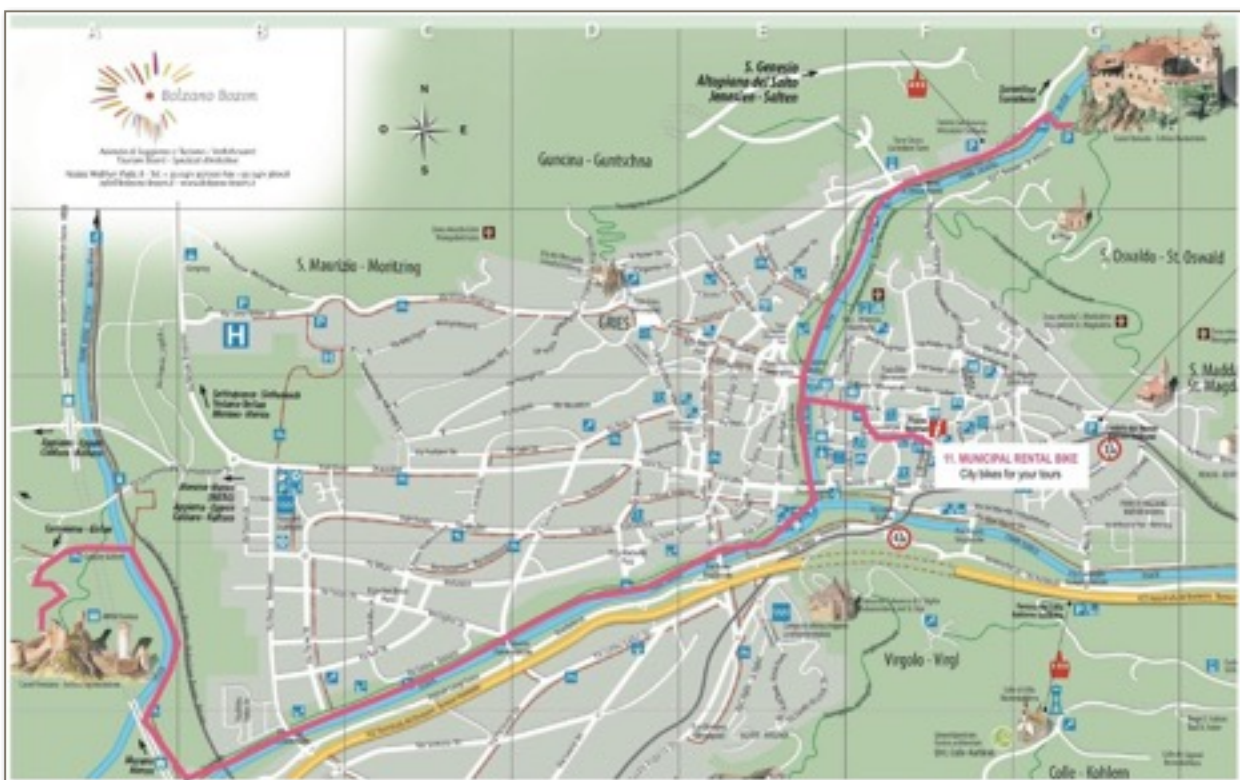
- **11.15 hrs.** Jump back on your bike and head south on the bicycle path. Continue on the path to the junction with the big Isarco/Eisack river (about 2,5 km), continue to the right on the bike path along the river, passing under 3 car bridges (about 3 km). Go a bit farther until you pass under the railway bridge, then watch on the right for the Adige/Etch river bicycle path (about 1 km). Take this bike path (heading northwest toward Merano/Meran). Off to the left, you will see the Sigmundskron/ Firmian castle (the biggest castle of the South Tyrol) on the skyline. In about 1 km you will find a metal bridge (ex-railway bridge) on the left. Cross this bridge over the river and begin the steep climb to the Sigmundskron/ Firmian castle. If the hill is too much, walk this short section to arrive at the door of the castle. (monday, tuesday, wednesday, friday, saturday and sunday: 10 am - 18 pm, closed thursday)

- **13.00 hrs.** Enter the walled compound of the castle, pay the entrance fee for the "Reinhold Messner Mountain Museum" and go directly to the restaurant inside the museum (good local specialties and good selection of local wines).

- **14.00 hrs.** Begin your visit of the spacious "Reinhold Messner Mountain Museum," wandering along the walls, paths, stairs and towers of this big castle to find various exhibits.

- **16.30 hrs.** Wrap up your visit and bicycle back to Bolzano.

- **17.30 hrs.** Arrive back at your hotel. Note: this day-long tour is fantastic, but it is not a rest day! It's a full day, with about 3 hrs on bicycles and 2 lengthy castle visits. Check the weather forecast the day before.





SUGGESTION 2: Rest day – Play and relax at the Merano Thermal Spa

In one day it is possible visit (and rest) at the biggest spa of the Alps. Here is the plan:

After trekking, climbing, or experiencing the via ferrata routes in the Dolomites, it is possible that you are a bit tired :-). Your vacation in Italy will continue in the following days, but now you need a rest day before the new adventures begin! OK, I have a solution!

On the morning of a free day, go to the Bolzano railway station and buy a ticket for the local train to Merano. This train leaves every half hour (minutes: .01 and .35), and takes about 40 min from Bolzano to the terminal station of Merano (NOT: Merano Maja Bassa). Exit at this station, walk 15 min to the huge and luxurious spa complex (see the map below) and relax all day there.

Note: the Merano spa was completely rebuilt about 15 years ago with very high level facilities. It has 25 swimming pools, variously with hot, warm, cold, and salt water: 15 indoor and in-out pools, 10 outdoor pools (open only in summer), even a flume! There is an enormous fitness center, beauty center, massages, different types of saunas, gourmet restaurant, and more.

Don't miss this unique experience - Perfect for a luxury rest day after a hard climbing week in the Dolomites!

