

ALPINE PASTURES
TRENTINO – ALTO ADIGE

THURSDAY 17 JUNE – WEDNESDAY 23 JUNE 2021 (7 DAYS)

TOUR DIRECTOR: JAMES HILL

£2635

- Visit an ‘undiscovered’ part of northern Italy with stunning alpine & valley scenery
- Discover Trento & Bolzano, two very handsome Italian towns
- Gothic, renaissance & baroque art & architecture in abundance
- Wonderful food and wine
- Two comfortable 4* hotels, both with swimming pools
- The perfect early summer break



Trentino, typical valley scene in summer

OVERVIEW

Trentino-Alto Adige is frequently described as a “middle land” between Italy and Austria. It is an area with a proud past, whose historical and cultural history is distinct, just as its dramatic Alpine scenery is beautiful. Early man settled this range of the Alps following the last Ice Age while the later Celtic settlers were peacefully ‘Romanised’ over three centuries. Already an important commercial and military centre, the Emperor Claudius bestowed on Trento, known to us as Trent, the status of *municipium splendidum* and built the Via Claudia Augusta, the principal Alpine North-South road linking northern Italy to Augsburg, initiating Trento’s importance as a stopping off point for the German speaking world on its many journeys south.

After Rome’s fall the region was divided between Ostrogoths, Lombards and Bavarians, an uneasy situation eventually resolved under the sole rule of Charlemagne, the first of the Holy Roman Emperors. In medieval times abbots, bishops and nobles sought to exert their rights on both sides of the Brenner Pass - all attracted by the plentiful vineyards and orchards in the Alpine pastures and the lucrative levies exacted from travellers. Prince-Bishops ruled from Trento and Brixen whilst the Counts of Tyrol later claimed lordship over all Tyrol from their castles. Amidst these contending factions, plague and political unrest played havoc and in 1363 the House of Habsburg took control, under whose rule the area remained until 1918. The Habsburg Emperors, Maximilian I and his grandson Charles V, made the region an important strategic and commercial base. This was confirmed when Charles V and Pope Paul III agreed to use Trento as the initial setting for a great Council, opened in 1545, when the Catholic Church attempted to put its house in order as Protestantism swept through Habsburg lands.

As travel patterns changed in the nineteenth century, the area saw a transformation in its fortunes as demand for new types of holidays emerged: visitors now sought cool summer retreats and winter skiing opportunities. In recent times, post-war treaties and constitutional changes have given the region an unusual level of political autonomy from Rome, consolidating its appeal while creating one of the wealthiest regions in Italy.

We shall stay in the hills immediately above Trento at the 4* **Hotel Villa Madruzzo**. This well-laid out sixteenth century villa has been restored as a hotel and Spa. The 4* **Hotel Laurin** is a grand and elegant *fin de siècle* hotel, situated in the heart of Bolzano’s historic centre. Both hotels have swimming pools and restaurants.

ITINERARY OUTLINE

Day 1: Thursday 17 June – We fly to Verona and drive for an hour northwards to our hotel, the 4* **Villa Madruzzo**, just above Trento. We have dinner in the hotel - wine, water and coffee are included with all group lunches and dinners.

Day 2: Friday 18 June – From Roman times **Trento** was an important border town, a persuasive consideration when it was chosen as the venue for the Counter-Reformation Council that met here from 1545 and we begin with

the renaissance church of **Santa Maria Maggiore**, used for many of its sessions. Trento's **Cathedral** is a medieval masterpiece, set in a piazza of singular beauty embraced by rows of painted renaissance palaces. The adjoining medieval **Bishop's Palace** houses the **Museo Diocesano Tridentino**, with tapestries, paintings and illustrations from the Council of Trent. After lunch, not included, we visit the **Castello di Buonconsiglio**. The seat of the local prince-bishops, this medieval castle complex is a maze of loggias, frescoed rooms, courtyards and gardens. Its **Torre Aquila** contains a very fine late Gothic fresco cycle. The evening will be free.

Day 3: Saturday 19 June – This morning we visit the lower **Val di Non**, possibly Italy's largest apple orchard? Dominating the valley is **Castel Thun**, a fine example of the fortified princely residences prevalent here. The Thuns were one of Trentino's principal medieval families, rising to power as prince-bishops of Trento. The family lived here until a few decades ago and today the castle is a museum with some family furniture, paintings and a frescoed chapel. We return to Trento for a group lunch after which the afternoon will be free for private explorations of the town. The evening will be free.

Day 4: Sunday 20 June – We depart Trento and drive northwards along a vine-filled valley, the *Strada del Vino*. We break for coffee and visit the **Gardens of Trauttmansdorff**, where we explore their late summer splendours, full of themed European and Asian designs, punctuated by floral themed 'pavilions' complete with viewing platforms. We continue the short distance into **Merano**. Once a favourite Habsburg resort, its buildings and town plan retains a *Belle Époque* ambiance. After a group lunch we explore the **Cathedral** and the surrounding buildings. We continue the short distance to **Bolzano** and our hotel, the 4* **Hotel Laurin**. The evening will be free.

Day 5: Monday 21 June – **Bolzano** is unique, a mixture of Austria and Italy, reflected in the architecture, food and lifestyle of this prosperous valley town. We begin our walk at the medieval **Cathedral**, followed by visits to the **Franciscan** and **Domenican Churches**, both part of larger monastic complexes with cloisters and restored late medieval frescoed chapels. We end our morning with a private visit to the **Merchant's Palace**. This trade house was an important meeting place and is in appearance wholly Italian, reflecting the taste of the Archduchess Claudia de' Medici, Regent of Tyrol in the seventeenth century. Lunch is not included today and the remainder of the afternoon and evening will be free for private explorations.

Day 6: Tuesday 22 June – Today we drive close to Italy's border with Austria, to the **Abbey of Novacella**, home to a vibrant and active community of Augustinians. An important place of pilgrimage; medieval, baroque and rococo styles are evident in the spectacular **Collegiate Church, Library and Museum**, round which we shall be guided by one of the community. We continue into nearby **Brixen**, seat of a Bishopric, for lunch, not included. The importance of this bishopric is evident in the town's fine **Cathedral** and the **Hofburg**, the **Bishop's Palace**, which was renovated in the Baroque style. The **Diocesan Museum** has an excellent collection of sculpture and paintings. We return to Bolzano where later in the evening we have our final dinner in the gardens of our hotel.

Day 7: Wednesday 23 June – We leave Bolzano and return to the outskirts of Trento to visit the sixteenth century **Villa Margon**. Hosting many distinguished guests during the Council of Trent, this fine renaissance villa is partially frescoed with scenes of the victories of Emperor Charles V. After our visit we have an early lunch in the renowned restaurant **Locanda Margon**. We continue to Venice airport and our afternoon flight to Gatwick.

PRACTICALITIES

Price £2635 **Without Flights** £2495 **Deposit** £390

Single Supplement £245 (Double Room for Sole Use)

Hotel 3 nights with breakfast at 4* Villa Madruzzo, Trento; 3 nights with breakfast at 4* Hotel Laurin, Bolzano

Flights British Airways

Outward: **BA2598** Departs London Gatwick (South Terminal) **1530** arrive Verona **1830**

Return: **BA2585** Departs Venice **1810** arrive London Gatwick (South Terminal) **1930**

Price includes 2 dinners & 4 lunches with wine, water & coffee, all local transfers, City Tax, entry fees & gratuities, services of our Italian Tour Director, James Hill

Not included Travel to/from Gatwick, 4 dinners & 2 lunches



CICERONI TRAVEL
2 The Square, Aynho, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX17 3BL
Telephone +44 (0) 1869 811167 Fax +44 (0) 1869 811188
Email info@ciceroni.co.uk Website www.ciceroni.co.uk

