

Merano and Environs

THE ALPINE-MEDITERRANEAN WAY OF LIFE



Holiday Guide

A HANDBOOK
FOR HOLIDAY PLANNING





South Tyrol
Inhabitants
500,000



Germans
around 314,600
69.4 %
in everyday life,
they speak South
Tyrolean dialect;
72% live
in rural areas



Italians
around 118,000
26.1 %
98% live
in the cities



Ladins
around 20,500
4.5 %
they speak
a neo-Latin
(Rhaeto-Romanic)
language



Foreigners
around 44,000
9.7 %



Dolomites
World Natural
Heritage Site



South Tyrol ☞ Merano and Environs

An overview of basic historical, economic, cultural, linguistic and culinary information

South Tyrol is Italy's northernmost province. Since the 1970s, it has enjoyed comprehensive right of self-governance. The province capital is Bolzano/Bozen. Cultural and linguistically, South Tyrol differs markedly from the rest of the country: here, in addition to Italian speakers, there are also German and Ladin language groups. For centuries, in fact, the province was part of the Habsburg monarchy. South Tyrol is thus a melting pot of cultures and contrasts. It is here that the Alpine and Mediterranean lifestyles and cuisines intersect. Customs converge here, fusing into something altogether new. Exploring the nooks and crannies of the enchanting little town – part of which dates back to the Middle Ages – against the backdrop of the spectacular open-air stage that is the Dolomites is extremely rewarding.

History of South Tyrol



1918

First World War

Austrian South Tyrol is incorporated into Italy.



1922–46

Fascism

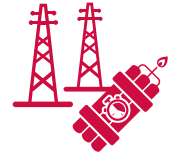
Forced Italianization of German-speaking South Tyrol;
German no longer used in schools;
Resettlement of townspeople from Italy's southern provinces;
Anyone who wants to retain their German culture is forced to emigrate to Nazi Germany.



1946

After the Second World War

The victorious powers refuse to grant South Tyrol self-determination;
Paris Treaty between Italy and Austria: assurance of specific measures to protect the minority in South Tyrol;
The agreement is not respected for decades.



1961

Struggle for Autonomy

Austria turns to the UN;
Simultaneous escalations in the province: bombings of dozens of pylons;
South Tyrol becomes a European “case.”



1972

Lengthy negotiations between Rome, Bolzano and Vienna

These lead to a package of measures regulating South Tyrol's autonomy and guaranteeing equal rights and protection to all three language groups.



1998

Austria joins the European Union

The border crossing at the Brenner Pass is removed (Schengen Agreement).



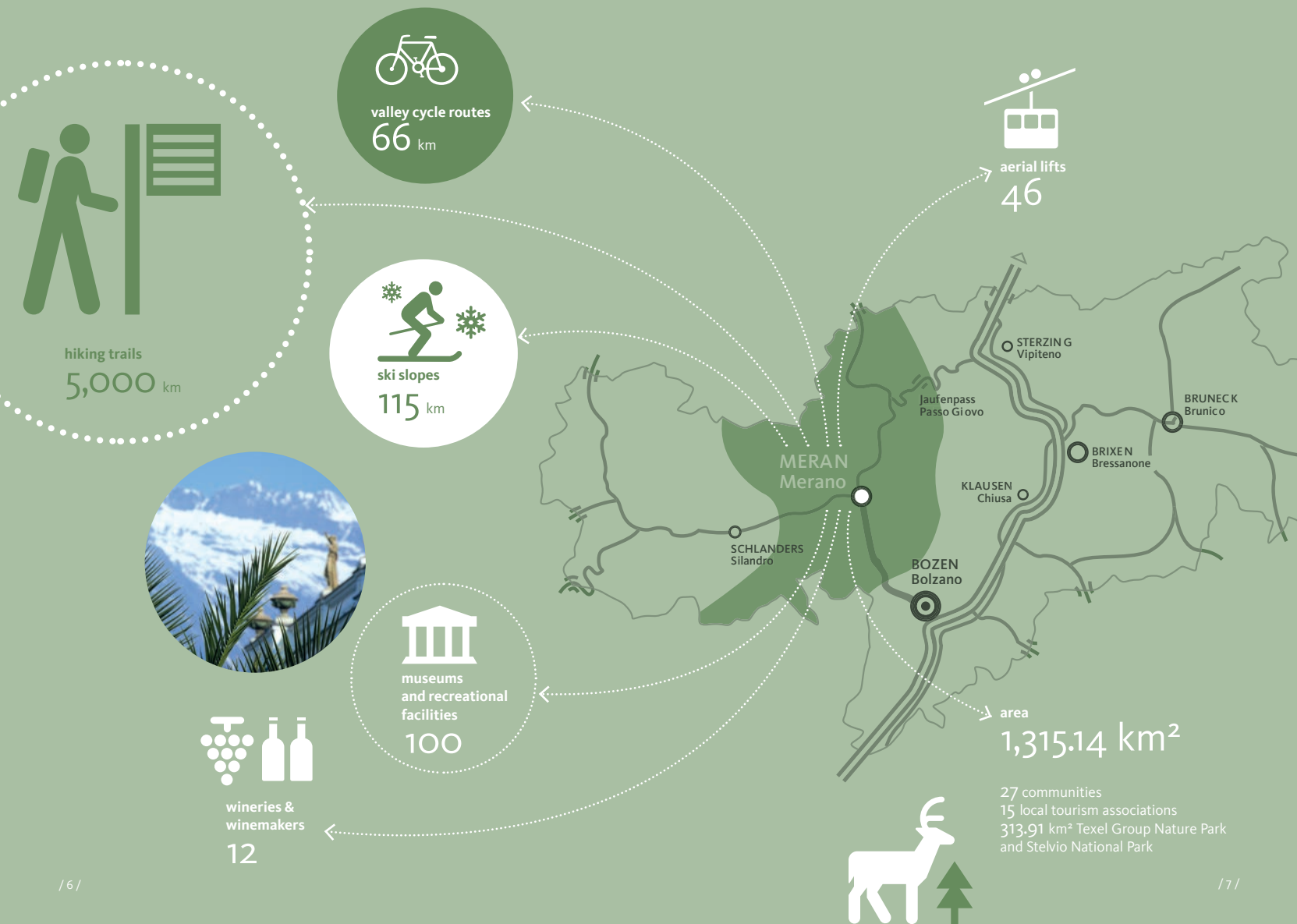
Today

Three language groups

live under an autonomous administration, which has been gradually expanded and consolidated;
A complex system (equal political representation of the three language groups) regulates this coexistence;
The staff members of offices and public institutions are bilingual, and in some cases, trilingual.

Merano & Environs: Alpine–Mediterranean Quality of Life

The Merano & Environs region is located in the western part of South Tyrol. It offers a wealth of juxtapositions: Alpine mountains versus Mediterranean-influenced valleys, urban life in contrast to the enchanting countryside, and traditional farms against modern architecture. The activities are just as diverse: enjoy the great outdoors, reflect on the day while relaxing in a whey bath, or indulge in the culinary creations of a top chef. Pleasure and wellbeing are always of the utmost importance.



The Spa Town of Merano and Its Environs



The fashionable spa town of Merano, which has nearly 40,000 inhabitants, is also defined by its contrasts: **Mediterranean climate** and **palm trees** in the valley set against the snow, ice and Alpine landscapes of the mountains that surround it. Historical buildings such as the **Kurhaus** and the medieval **portici/Lauben** arcades dominate the townscape while contemporary buildings like the **Merano Thermal Baths** give a modern feel. Stylish boutiques and gourmet shops just beg you to do some shopping, but the street cafes entice you to drink a cappuccino in the sunshine instead. This is Italian style set against an Alpine panorama.

A mild climate throughout the year, a seamless transition from valley to high mountains, and the region's abundance of water are the foundation of Merano's more than 150-year history as a health resort. The city boasts pristine and well-maintained nature, and is surrounded by mountains and valleys. Life in the outlying villages is leisurely and strongly rooted in Alpine traditions. **Castles, fortresses and rural culture** lend a unique character to the region.

Feeling Good from Head to Toe

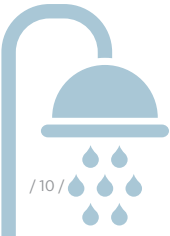
mineral springs
and traditional
therapeutic
baths

10

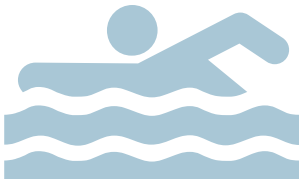




One particularly strong point of the Merano and Environs area is the fact that it offers extensive **spa services** and high-quality treatments using natural local products. In addition to a number of walking paths and promenades in town and wide-ranging hiking options along **Waalweg** water channels and in the high mountains, another of Merano's real treasures is its water. It's as if **mineral water** flows directly from the taps. As a result, a long-standing tradition of **beneficial bathing** in rural areas and health facilities exists. The beneficial effect of water is evidenced at waterfalls like the one in Parcines/Partschins, where the spray is beneficial to the respiratory tract. The many cottage gardens around Merano and the public herb garden on the Tappeinerweg Trail are testimony to another hallmark of the region: rich lore about the cultivation of herbs and their use in healing and cooking.



/ 10 /



/ 11 /



South Tyrolean Cuisine

South Tyrol's cuisine is a fusion of rustic Tyrolean or old Austrian traditions and Mediterranean, especially Italian, cooking. In everyday life, traditional South Tyrolean entrees are commonly eaten together with Italian antipasti and classic pasta dishes. There are also high-quality products produced locally that are based on these specialties.

» South Tyrolean Snack Boards

A *Merende* is a typical South Tyrolean snack served on a wooden board or plate. It usually includes South Tyrolean *Speck*; cheese from alpine farms or one of the area's many cheese dairies; freshly baked South Tyrolean bread such as *Vinschger Paarl*, also known as *Vinschgerle*, or *Schüttelbrot*, a crispy flat bread made of rye flour. The classic accompaniment is a good glass of red wine – Vernatsch, for example.

» Knödel

Knödel are made of day-old bread, eggs and milk; the dumplings are boiled in water. Variations include spinach, cheese, liver and bacon. This dish is usually served as an accompaniment to meat or as an appetizer with melted butter and Parmesan cheese. There is even a sweet version made with apricots and potato dough: *Marillknödel*.

TIP *Knödel dumplings should be eaten with a fork only. If you use a knife to cut them, it is a signal that they are too hard – an insult to the chef!*

» Schlutzkrapfen

Schlutzkrapfen, also known as *Schlutzer*, are hearty ravioli that probably originated in the Puster Valley. The name derives from the verb *schluzen*, which means “slip” or “slide.” The traditionally filling is made of spinach and *Quark* cheese.

» Sauerkraut with Surfleisch

Sauerkraut is cabbage preserved through lactic-acid fermentation. It is flavored with juniper berries and bay leaves, cooked for a long time, and served as a side dish with *Surfleisch*, or marinated pork.

TIP *Alpine farms and mountain inns bearing the Echte Qualität am Berg (Real Quality in the Mountains) designation guarantee especially high-quality preparation of local specialties.*





» Apfelstrudel

South Tyrolean apple strudel is made with thin strips of sweet-and-sour apples and raisins, wrapped inside a short-crust that has powdered sugar sprinkled on top. Sometimes strudel is served warm with vanilla sauce, vanilla ice cream or whipped cream.

» Bauernkrapfen

Bauernkrapfen crullers are a very old South Tyrolean specialty. Prepared differently depending on the region, they are fried in oil until light brown in color and then filled with apricot jam, poppy seeds or chestnuts.

TIP *These delicious treats are often prepared fresh by local farmers and sold during special events and village festivals.*

» Italian Cuisine in South Tyrol

Coffee: An essential component of Italian lifestyle, coffee is served in the forms of *espresso* (small cup of strong black coffee), *macchiato* (espresso with a *macchia* or “spot” of frothy milk) and *cappuccino* (larger cup of coffee with frothy milk).

Pasta and pizza: In South Tyrol, countless variations of both are available – often with a dash of local taste. Many pizzerias offer, for example, Tyrolean pizza with Speck or pizza with asparagus and *Bozner Sauce*, a egg-based specialty from Bolzano. Pasta is available in the traditional form of traditional durum-wheat pasta, as rye-based *Schüttelbrotnudeln*, or with mountain herbs.

TIP *In Italy, cappuccino is ordered only before noon – traditionally for breakfast. After dinner, coffee is drunk black or with a shot of grappa (caffè corretto).*

» The Tradition of Törggelen

The word *Törggelen* derives from *Torggl*, meaning “wine press.” A Törggelen party takes place in autumn – ideally in a traditional *Törggelekeller* cellar – and usually starts with Tyrolean dishes that can be either light or hearty, such as Speck ham, Schlutzkrapfen ravioli, or *Schlachtplatte*, a meat platter. Then it’s time for the real star of the show: roasted chestnuts, known in South Tyrol as *Keschn*. The classic accompaniment is the season’s new wine, still sweet, called *Suser*.





Summer Activities

HIKING

One of the most inspiring and relaxing activities on offer in Merano and Environs is to simply choose from among the region's many outstanding hiking options. Hikes range from city promenades to challenging mountain treks and from the mostly flat Waalweg trails that run along ancient waterways to *via ferrata/Klettersteig* fixed-rope climbing routes. One thing all of these options have in common: delightful views.

» Merano High Mountain Trail

The Merano High Mountain Trail (*Alta Via di Merano* in Italian and *Meraner Höhenweg* in German) is an extraordinary multi-day hike through the Texel Group Nature Park. The route is divided into northern and southern circuits, and hiking is possible throughout the course of the whole year. The entire route runs 94 km (58 miles) and takes between 4 and 6 days. The Merano High Mountain Trail is not only a challenge, but also brings hikers into close proximity with the local flora and fauna, which are an integral part of the landscape. Spectacular views are par for the course here: in addition to the Venosta/Vinschgau Valley, the Merano basin, and the Alps of the Passiria/Passeier, Sarentino/Sarntal, Stubaital, and Ötztal valleys, you may even be able to see the Dolomites, the Brenta Group and Mount Ortler. There are a number of mountain lodges and inns along the way where you can stay overnight. The route is sign-posted No. 24, and exposed sections of the trail have been secured by chains, ropes or railings.

- » Best starting and finishing points: Tirol/Tirol, Naturno/Naturns, Parcines/Partschins, Plan/Pfelders and Lagundo/Algund
- » Length of route: 94 km
- » Elevation gain: 5,056 m
- » Level of difficulty: challenging
- » Best period: July to September (southern circuit: May to October)
- » Walking time: 4 to 6 days for the entire trail. Individual legs are possible as day hikes.

TIP

The Sponser Lakes are ten high-alpine lakes located in the mountains of Texel Group Nature Park. These lakes supply water to much of Merano and its surrounding areas. Some very beautiful hiking routes run past the lakes.





ALSO POSSIBLE
AS A GUIDED SKI TOUR
FROM OCTOBER TO APRIL

» Ötzi Glacier Tour

This guided glacier hike leads over the Hauslabjoch Pass to the place where the world-famous glacial mummy known as Ötzi was discovered at an elevation of 3,210 meters. In addition to breathtaking views of the glaciers around Mount Similaun, you can try walking in a roped party and climbing over rocks secured with wire ropes. This high-alpine tour is manageable if you are experienced, but note that some passages are recommended only for hikers with good physical stamina, sure-footedness, and no vertigo problems.

- » Starting and finishing point: Maso Corto, Senales Valley
- » Length of route: 16 km
- » Elevation gain: 1,900 m
- » Level of difficulty: challenging
- » Best time of year: June to October
- » Walking time: 7 to 8 hours



FAMILY TIP

» Merano Waalweg Trail

This hike runs through the entire Merano Valley Basin and follows ancient water channels called *Waalwege*, making it a wonderful way to explore the area. The *Waalwege* are man-made water channels commonly found throughout South Tyrol, which have been used since the thirteenth century. Farmers originally used rudimentary tools to build the channels, which were designed to regulate water distribution – quite a clever idea, actually. Today, the paths running alongside these waterways are popular with hikers and passable at any time of the year.

The Merano Waalweg Trail unites eleven separate paths: along the way there are mountain huts, castles, churches and natural sights. Another advantage to the *Waalwege* trails is that they run at relatively low elevations: between 400 and 900 meters. Hikers can walk all of the trail's eight stages in about a week; doing a single leg as a day hike is another option. The Merano Waalweg Trail is a nice supplement to the popular Merano High Mountain Trail.

- » Best starting and finishing point: Lagundo–Töllgraben
- » Length of route: 80 km
- » Elevation gain: 2,880 m
- » Level of difficulty: intermediate
- » Best time of year: March to June and September to November
- » Walking time: 8 days for the entire trail. Individual legs are possible as day hikes

» Tappeinerweg Trail

The Tappeinerweg Trail is a promenade that runs for 4 kilometers along the side of Mount Küchelberg. It is bordered by species-rich Mediterranean vegetation. A walk along the trail offers beautiful views of Merano and the whole Burggrafenamt area.

- » Best starting and finishing point: center of Merano
- » Length of trail: 4 km
- » Elevation gain: 100 m
- » Level of difficulty: easy
- » Best time of year: all year round
- » Walking time: 2 to 3 hours



MTB

Cycling fans will find a lot to rave about in Merano and Environs: there are easy bike paths in the valley, trails through the forest, and routes crossing vast high-alpine pastures. Mountain biking thrives here as a result of this wealth of possibilities, and people you meet are always happy to share an insider's tip. There is something for everyone, whether you just want to take a nice little ride with the kids or attempt a trail that winds up to a mountain peak. In Merano and Environs, hikers and nature are both of the utmost importance: this mutual respect guarantees that the Merano's countryside will always remain a paradise for hikers and bikers alike.

» Mountain Bike Route: to the stone quarries

Töll – Quadrathöfe – Rasner Kreuz – Forest Trail No. 9 – Seespitz – Forest Trail No. 9 – Eggerhof – Quadrathöfe – Töll

- » Best starting and finishing point: Töll-bridge
- » Length: approx. 25 km
- » Elevation gain: 1,000 m; elevation loss: 1,500 m
- » Level of difficulty: intermediate to challenging
- » Best time of year: May to October
- » Duration of excursion: 3,5 hours

» Mountain Bike Route: rural trail on Mount Nörderberg

Naturns – Sportplatz – Nörderberg – Steilhof – Brandhof – Birchberg – Plaus – Naturns

- » Best starting and finishing point: Naturno Train Station
- » Length of route: approx. 18 km
- » Elevation gain: 800 m; elevation loss: 600 m
- » Level of difficulty: intermediate to challenging
- » Best time of year: March to October
- » Duration of excursion: 2,5 hours

BIKE ROUTES

In addition to the new panoramic bike route through the Venosta Valley, which is supported by the local railway, you'll find a wealth of bike paths here. Choose between a relaxing ride through the valley or venturing up into an alpine world and trying a mountain pass or riding along one of the high plateaus. If you choose the latter, spectacular outlook points and breathtaking scenery are ample reward for the effort. Even racing cyclists can test their mettle: two highly recommended passes, Passo del Rombo and Passo Palade, both form part of the Giro d'Italia.

TIP *Timmelsjoch (2,509 m) is a border pass between Austria and Italy. At resting points along the pass road, walk-in architectural sculptures communicate information about the historical and geographical particularities of the region.*

» Venosta Valley Bike Route

The Venosta Valley Bike Route leads from the Resia/Reschen Pass to Merano, running along what was once a Roman trade road: the Via Claudia Augusta. The path offers cyclists a great opportunity to combine physical activity and fun. If you get tired, you can just hop on the train at one of the stations. Those who want a real challenge can continue through the Adige Valley to Bolzano, about 30 kilometers further.

- » Best starting and finishing point: Malles–Merano
- » Length: 62 km
- » Elevation gain: 700 m
- » Level of difficulty: intermediate
- » Best time of year: April to October
- » Duration of excursion: 3,5 hours





» Passiria Valley Bike Route

This bike route into the Passiria Valley leads from Merano to S. Leonardo, following the Passer River. Running mostly flat or slightly uphill through the predominately rural countryside, it passes Sandwirt, the birthplace of legendary freedom fighter Andreas Hofer. The local MuseumPasseier offers interesting insights into the history of Tyrol and addresses our modern-day approach to heroes.

- » Best starting and finishing point: Merano to S. Leonardo and back
- » Length of route: Merano to S. Leonardo leg, 21 km
- » Elevation gain: 350 m
- » Level of difficulty: intermediate
- » Best time of year: April-October
- » Duration of excursion: Merano to S. Leonardo leg, 2 hours

» Bike and E-Bike Points

There are bike points in Merano and its surrounding villages as well as along the railway line running between Merano and Malles (see page 57). From early April to late October, you can borrow mountain bikes, women's, men's and children's bikes and electric bikes. Safety helmets and child seats are also available, of course.

- » Information: local tourism associations and www.suedtirolbike.it



SWIMMING



» Merano Thermal Baths

The Merano Thermal Baths complex, located in the center of the spa resort town, offers indoor and outdoor swimming pools, a large spa & wellness area, and a spacious park. There are also numerous outdoor pools within the Merano and Environs area, some of which offer fantastic views of the Adige Valley.

The complex, a transparent cube of glass and steel with wooden elements, arches above thirteen indoor pools and represents a stately oasis of wellbeing in the heart of the city. Its expansive and verdant park surrounds twelve outdoor swimming pools. The Merano Thermal Baths is a unique opportunity for visitors to experience true relaxation amidst the beauty of Mother Nature.



» Gargazzone Natural Pool

This natural swimming pool located in Gargazzone/Gargazon is divided into a swimming area that includes a natural landscaped creek and small children's pool and a regeneration area, where the growing plants provide natural water purification. This type of cleaning system allows for chemical treatment of the water to be avoided completely.

3

» Lake Caldaro

Lake Caldaro is an extremely popular day-trip destination. The warmest lake in the Alps, it is nestled idyllically amidst the vineyards south of Caldaro/Kalern and near Tramin, the hometown of Gewürztraminer.

TIP

A bike ride from Merano along the tranquil South Tyrolean Wine Road is a worthwhile day trip – especially in autumn, when the grapes are being harvested. Three different bike routes amidst the vineyards provide an opportunity to visit wine cellars and castles and to cycle past Lake Caldaro.



CANOEING, CANYONING, RAFTING, PARAGLIDING

Merano has long been a hub for canoeing. The European and world championships of the sport have both been held here more than once. The Passer River provides ideal conditions for canoeing enthusiasts, especially in spring – and is equally well suited to canyoning. Inflatable boats make the Adige and Passer rivers accessible to everyone. One does not need any special experience to participate in the rafting tour: a relaxed attitude and a healthy respect for flowing water are all that is required. Professional guides will assist you, adapting each tour to personal needs.

Capture an eagle's-eye view of the earth, paragliding freely through the air. Expert tandem pilots will ensure your safety and comfort as you relax and enjoy a truly incomparable view.

- » Best time of year: April to October
- » Duration of excursion: 3 to 4 hours

TIP In a fascinating Passiria Valley canyon, expert instructors will show you how to handle yourself in whitewater and the basics of climbing.



FAMILY TIP

ALPINE BOB

Merano 2000's Alpine Bob winds through the trees and over mountainous terrain. The thrill, which involves racing down the mountain on rails, lasts for more than a kilometer.

- » Best time of year: all year round
- » Duration of excursion: 1 hour

CLIMBING

Merano and Environs offer great opportunities for indoor and outdoor climbing. There are many specialized climbing parks: Lagundo's bouldering area, the climbing garden in Plan/Pfelders, the area around the Church of S. Ippolito in Lana, Fragsburg Waterfall, and Merano's RockArena climbing hall, which is open year round. High-ropes courses, where you can learn climbing basics, are a good option for beginners. The magnificent Dolomites, just an hour's drive from Merano, are a true paradise for climbers. Various levels of difficulty, up to level 3 and 4, are available.



FAMILY TIP

» High-Ropes Courses

The high-ropes courses in Parcines, Val Senales/Schnalstal, the Passiria Valley and at Taser Family Alm in Schenna offer a unique climbing experience for adventurous visitors.

- » Best time of year: April to October
- » Duration of excursion: 3 hours

» Mountaineering in the Dolomites

The Alpini Trail, which starts in the village of Sesto/Sexten, is a highly regarded mountain route set amidst the magnificent natural splendor of the Dolomites. The trail is not too difficult yet affords unforgettable views.

- » Best time of year: June to September
- » Duration of excursion: all day



GOLF

In Merano and Environs, there are two golf clubs: Passeier Meran and Lana Gutshof Brandis. Both courses, which are open from February to December, are popular amongst expert and recreational golfers alike.

4

» Golf Club Passeier.Meran

This redesigned 18-hole golf course in S. Leonardo is an absolute delight. It is quite large, affords magnificent views and offers high-quality services.

5

» Lana Golf Club

Lana Golf Club is a stylish 9-hole course laid out below the ruins of Brandis Castle and designed by acclaimed British golf-course designer Michael Pinner.



FAMILY TIP

TRADITIONAL HAFLINGER HORSERACING

A number of riding stables in the village of Avelengo/Hafling offer guided trail rides and pony riding tours, as well as individual and group lessons. Whether in winter or summer, there are several places where you can enjoy a horse-drawn carriage ride, including Avelengo and in the Passiria Valley. The racecourse in Merano is among the most famous in Europe. Highlights of the season include the traditional Haflinger horse races on Easter Monday and the Merano Grand Prix, a high-stakes steeplechase held on the last Sunday in September (see page 53).



FISHING

Rivers, Alpine reservoirs, streams, and high-mountain lakes: in Merano and Environs, everyone will find his or her own ideal body of water for fishing. The marbled trout, an indigenous species of large trout, is very much sought after. The chance of catching one on the Passer, Falschauer or Adige rivers is actually very good. Most stretches of water may be entered in order to use the gentle approach needed for fly-fishing, providing that you have a valid water-fishing day pass for each particular stretch of water. Day passes are available at the Passiria Tourist Association or at Jawag, a hunting store in Marleno. Fishing permits (mandatory in Italy: € 30) may be obtained at Merano Tourist Bureau.





Winter Activities

In the Merano and Environs holiday region there are five diverse areas for winter sports ranging from an old-time family ski area to a glacier. There are runs and snow parks for all levels of skiers, snowboarders, freeriders and telemark skiers. Serpentine natural sledding trails and the Alpine Bob at Merano 2000 guarantee that everyone has fun. Ski touring, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are fabulous ways to enjoy the region's pristine nature in a relaxed way. Or you can take a romantic horse-drawn sleigh ride through snow-blanketed woods in discovery of idyllic mountain villages. More information is available at the local tourist associations within the holiday region of Merano and Environs.



SKIING, SNOWBOARDING AND TELEMARK SKIING

Merano and Environs offers ideal conditions for skiing and snowboarding: guaranteed snow, great mountains, a wide range of facilities and sunny weather. The five ski areas within Merano and Environs are part of Ortler Ski Arena, an alliance that comprises a total of 16 ski areas. All 16 are easily reachable and well connected to one another. The Merano SkiCard was introduced in order to acknowledge this development. This advantage card grants the holder access to all five ski areas within the Merano and Environs holiday area. Fans of snowboarding will find their own little piece of paradise at the huge Senales Glacier Snow Park (120,000 square meters) in Senales Valley. The Plan facility is built directly into the sunny side of the mountain. Both snow parks are freshly groomed every day and re-shaped twice a week. Telemark skiing was invented in 1886 in Norway. Telemark skis are quite similar to Alpine skis in form and appearance. The main difference is the binding: only the front of the telemark boot is fixed into the binding while the heel remains free. Telemark ski equipment is available throughout winter season in both ski areas; the ski schools of both also offer telemark courses.





GREAT FOR HIKING
IN SUMMER, TOO

THE REGION'S FIVE SKI AREAS

6

» Skiing on a Glacier

Skiers love the wide slopes and year-round accessibility at the Senales Valley Glacier, located at an elevation of 3,212 meters. Freestylers will find a spacious snow park; cross-country skiers can expect to find a good number of summits with elevations up to 3,700 meters and snow until the end of May.

» Information: www.valsenales.com

7

» Merano 2000 Ski Area

Merano 2000 Ski Area towers high above the enchanting city of Merano, in a sun-kissed corner of Hafling. This is the homeland of the lovely Haflinger breed of horses, and a good starting point for adventures in the snow. Try out the well-groomed ski slopes and fast-paced sled run at this charming and very family-friendly ski area.

» Information: www.meranz2000.com

8

» Plan Ski Area

The romantic village and ski area in Plan is an idyllic spot for families and anyone who loves nature. The ski area can guarantee a lot of natural snow, and has runs that are suitable for all tastes and experience levels. The ski area's clever Smooth Traffic concept promises a relaxing holiday for families and more intense skiers alike.

» Information: www.pfelders.info



9

» Schwemmalm Ski Area

Schwemmalm Ski Area in Val d'Ultimo/Ultental has several broad slopes that fall into the intermediate category. The unique atmosphere of this untouched valley is one of the distinctive features of this ski area.

» Information: www.schwemmalm.com

10

» Vigiljoch

Vigiljoch is a small, romantic ski area that evokes a bygone Alpine era. Its gentle snow-laden hills, pedestrian-only policy, and stunning vistas of the Dolomites make it ideal for anyone who loves nature and for skiers who are on the laid-back side. The smart Vigilius Mountain Resort, located near the summit cable car, offers 360° relaxation to all those who value style and charm.

» Information: www.vigiljoch.com





FAMILY TIP

SLEDDING

The thrilling, zigzagging natural sled trails in Merano and Environs ensure that this sport enjoys great popularity with people of all ages. The holiday region's five skiing and hiking areas accordingly attach great importance to the maintenance of their sledding runs, which have varying levels of difficulty. Many of the mountain lodges offer sleds for hire.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

All of the five winter sport areas in the holiday region of Merano and Environs offer guests lovely cross-country ski trails with spectacular views:

- » With only a slight elevation gain, the cross-country skiing trail in Val d'Ultimo winds through an incredibly pristine landscape of forests, fields and meadows.
- » The Passiria Valley offers several good cross-country trails like the one in the village of Plan, which is perfect for beginners and for more experienced skiers alike.
- » The Senales Valley Glacier has two high-alpine cross-country trails. A number of national teams train regularly at the glacier.
- » The cross-country run at Merano 2000 Ski Area comprises 5 km, (3.1 miles). Due to its low difficulty level, this is an ideal slope for beginners and children.

All cross-country trails are appropriate for both classic and skating techniques.

SKI TOURING

There are more opportunities for ski touring in Merano and Environs than one might imagine. The best are found in the three valleys nearest to Merano: the Ultimo, Senales and Passiria valleys. The routes with the best conditions for ski touring run at elevations of between 1,200 and 3,700 meters.

» Popular Ski Tours

Il Galletto in the Passiria Valley (1,999 m)

- » Ideal starting and finishing point: Christl Pond in the Passiria Valley. From S. Leonardo in Passiria, take the road towards Breiteben and follows signs for Christl.
- » Length of tour: 7.4 km
- » Elevation gain: 840 m
- » Level of difficulty: not difficult in terms of touring or mountaineering, but the area is slightly exposed and prone to avalanches. Downhill mainly on the northern side.
- » Best time of year: December to March
- » Time: 2.5 hours

Gleckspitze Peak in Ultimo Valley (2,944 m)

- » Ideal starting and finishing point: Fontana Bianca, Ultimo Valley
- » Length of tour: 13 km
- » Elevation gain: 1,050 m
- » Level of difficulty: intermediate for ski touring and mountaineering
- » Best time of year: January to March
- » Duration of excursion: 3 hours

WINTER HIKING

Because the climate in Merano and Environs is so mild, many of the summer hiking trails are also accessible in winter. Merano's promenades and the Tappeinerweg Trail, which runs just above town, are great tips for winter hiking: it affords delightful views of the townscape and surrounding mountains. Limitless hiking options can be found in Merano's outlying areas. At Merano 2000 Ski Area, all of the chalets and inns are within comfortable walking distance. The Vigiljoch high plateau offers awe-inspiring views of the Dolomites.





SNOWSHOEING

In Merano and Environs, snowshoe hikers have an option of choosing between basic excursions through the side valleys, circuit trails on high plateaus above the tree line, and truly demanding summit treks up to elevations of 3,700 meters.

Tour

- » From Avelengo up to the Verano alpine pasture (1,873 m)
- » Elevation gain: 600 m
- » Level of difficulty: easy tour, well signposted
- » Duration of excursion: about 4 hours

ICE CLIMBING

The Merano and Environs region is highly respected in the climbing world for its bouldering sites, which are accessible year round. There are also a number of icefalls at varying levels of difficulty. Val Senales and the Passiria Valley are home to some of the largest waterfalls in the region. The lengths of the routes here range between two and six pitches, and most waterfalls can be climbed in just under half an hour. The range of grading for waterfall ice is wide here: from WI3 to WI6. There are also mixed tours: some routes with a grading of up to M5 are suitable for beginners as well as experienced ice climbers. Ice climbing facilities: There is an artificial ice-climbing tower in Corvara, a village located in the Passiria Valley. The tower is big enough to accommodate more than ten ice climbers at a time.

- » Best time of year for ice climbing in the area: December to March



FAMILY TIP

ICE SKATING

Ice-skating is really back in vogue again. In Merano and Environs there are indoor ice-skating rinks in addition to lakes that make fabulous outdoor rinks. MeranArena: this public ice-skating hall offers skating shows, lots of fun and a rental service between November and March. Ice hockey tournaments take place here once a week. In Val Senales there are two outdoor ice rinks: one is situated in the village of Certosa, the main square of which is converted into an idyllic rink during the winter. The rink in the Ultimo Valley, which has a rental service, is located near Schwemmalm Ski Area. Alpine curling tournaments take place here every Friday. Schwarze Lacke is an idyllic woodland pond situated atop Mount Vigiliujoch, above Lana. Even though this enchanting little natural lake lies in the middle of a forest, it is easily reachable from the summit station on foot or via chairlift.



FAMILY TIP

SLEIGH RIDES

One of the best ways to explore Merano and Environs in winter is a sleigh ride through the snowy winter landscape, passing quaint villages and traditional farms. Avelengo and the Passiria Valley are wonderful options.

CHRISTMAS MARKETS

The Christmas season in Merano and Environs is deeply rooted in tradition yet remarkably multifaceted. The region's Christmas markets start opening at the end of November, and whether you prefer the hustle and bustle in town or the tranquil Alpine ambience in the villages and castles, one thing is clear: Christmas is here (see page 54).



WELLNESS AND RELAXATION

Merano has been a thriving health resort since the nineteenth century thanks to its mild climate. After Sisi, the Austrian empress, spent her summer holiday in Merano, the little town – in fact, the whole region – transformed into a vibrant resort and gained prominence for its *Badlkultur* (bathing culture) overnight. Despite its historical flair, the Merano and Environs holiday region has moved forward with the times. This is evidenced both by contemporary architecture and spa facilities such as the Merano Thermal Baths and by interesting spa services based on local products and a long-standing tradition of natural healing. These range from traditional hay baths to whey treatments to organic herbal saunas. Invigorating herbal teas from Alpine cottage gardens are as much a part of Merano's spa tradition as are the grape cure or the wealth of products derived from the South Tyrolean apple.

MERANO THERMAL BATHS

In the Spa and Vitality area, you will leave the stress of everyday life behind and enjoy a wide selection of massages, aromatic baths and body packs. Whether relaxing or revitalizing, strengthening or purifying, all of the treatments on offer make use of premium quality organic products from South Tyrol. Enjoy a wide array of wellness baths with aromas and essences derived from local products such as juniper, grapes, mountain hay, apples and dandelions. The Merano Thermal Baths complex is open 365 days a year.

» Information: www.termemerano.it



Cultural Highlights & Nature's Best

The cultural offering in Merano and Environs is wide ranging. This is in tune with the region's unique and eventful history and its location at the interface between the German and Italian cultural areas, between North and South, between the Alps and the Mediterranean. This also applies to Mother Nature: Mediterranean vegetation thrives in Merano's parks and along its promenades, vineyards and apple orchards flourish around the city, and coniferous forests, alpine meadows and majestic three-thousanders dot the landscape at higher elevations.

» Information: www.meranerland.com/culture



11

THE GARDENS OF TRAUTTMANSDORFF CASTLE

The botanical Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle, located on the outskirts of the sun-blessed spa resort of Merano, is among the world's most beautiful gardens (International Garden of the Year 2013). Trauttmansdorff's twelve-hectare complex and intriguing Experience Stations take visitors on a botanical voyage around the world. Matteo Thun's Viewing Platform, which is designed in the form of binoculars and 95% see-through, gives you the feeling of floating freely in the air with breathtaking views of the Adige Valley, Merano, and the Texel Group Nature Park. In summer, the Garden Nights concert series brings the finest in world music to the floating stage at the Water Lily Pond.

» Information: www.trauttmansdorff.it

TIP

A guided wine-focused fall tour at the Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle grants insights into South Tyrol's rich wine culture. Next, a shuttle bus takes visitors to Prissiano/Prissian where the largest and probably oldest vine in the world grows: the Versoaln. Rounding out the package is a wine tasting of South Tyrol's leading grape varieties.



FAMILY TIP
12

PASSIRIA VALLEY MUSEUM

The MuseumPasseier is located in the Passiria Valley, on the farm of Tyrolean patriot Andreas Hofer. It focuses on the turbulent times of the Napoleonic Era, and illuminates the life of the man who went down in history as a freedom fighter who dared to oppose Napoleon. The ethnographical collection in the museum's barn brings rural life in the nineteenth century to life, displaying original pieces from the era.

» Information: www.museum.passeier.it/en

TIP

13

The MuseumPasseier has tied in interesting objects related to the museum's concept including the Bunker Mooseum, the shell of a 1940s bunker that houses a new museum facility.

CASTLES AND HISTORIC WALLS

With over 400 castles and ruins, South Tyrol has a higher density of castles than any other region in Europe. The highest concentration of castles and manors in Merano and Environs can be found in two castle villages: Tesimo and Prissiano. Fahlburg Castle, for example, houses a wonderful restaurant and hotel today. Another must for visitors is a guided tour through the well-preserved and enchanting Monteleone Castle in Tscherm, near Lana. Schenna Castle, built in 1330 and besieged by Friedrich IV of the Empty Pockets, boasts marvelous interior decoration featuring fantastic ceilings, wainscoting and a large collection of paintings. Archduke Sigmund built the Landesfürstliche Burg (Prince's Castle), which is still located in the center of Merano, in 1470 as an in-town residence. Brunnenburg Castle is a privately owned hillside castle in Tirol. In addition to the Ezra Pound Center for Literature, it houses a museum of South Tyrolean rural culture. Runkelstein Castle in Bolzano is graced by a cycle of secular frescoes that depict the Knights of the Round Table and Tristan & Isolde. Churburg Castle in the Venosta Valley is also worth a visit – notably for its collection of more than 50 customized sets of armor.

» Information: www.meranerland.com/castles



TYROL CASTLE

The most famous castle of the region is undoubtedly Tyrol Castle. The majestic walls of the former seat of the Counts of Tyrol tower above the Merano Valley Basin – an unambiguous reminder of the past. Tyrol Castle, construction of which began as early as the eleventh century, was the seat of the local government until 1420 and kept watch over an economic and cultural Golden Age. In fact, many of the castle's treasures date to this period. Tyrol Castle is home today to the well appointed South Tyrol Museum of Culture and History. The main part of the museum covers many different facets of life during the Middle Ages; the castle tower, meanwhile, is dedicated to the modern age and the eventful history of the region between 1898 and 1992. The permanent exhibition is augmented every year, with rotating special exhibitions taking place for a limited period of time.

» Information: www.schlosstirol.it/en/home/

TIP

Any injured or helpless wild birds found should be taken directly to the bird refuge at Tyrol Castle. There they will receive treatment and, if possible, released back into the wild. Between April and November, flight shows take place daily: it's a great opportunity for a close encounter with birds of prey.
Information: www.gufyland.com/en/



15

THE TYPEWRITER MUSEUM

The Typewriter Museum in Parcines is dedicated to inventor and pioneer Peter Mitterhofer, who developed the first typewriter prototype in this very village. Since 1998, the museum has assembled a wide-ranging exhibition dedicated to this town's most famous son. Its collection of various models are on also display, including intriguing cipher machines from the world wars and the extremely rare Malling-Hansen typewriter.

» Information: www.typewritermuseum.com

16

CHURCH OF ST. PROCULUS

The earliest wooden structure of the Church of St. Proculus near Naturno was built in the seventh century. Its interior contains the oldest fresco in the entire German-speaking area: a pre-Carolingian work dating from between the seventh and eighth centuries. In the twelfth century, a Romanesque tower was added to the church. The St. Proculus Museum opposite the church is dedicated to the extraordinary fresco and to the historical plague cemetery located outside the church.

» Information: www.naturno.it/en/proculus/



FAMILY TIP

ÖTZI THE ICEMAN

Ötzi the Iceman is, beyond question, among the most famous South Tyroleans. The exceedingly well-conserved glacial mummy was found in September 1991 at Tisenjoch Pass in Val Senales; he is estimated to be around 5,300 years old. Even today, Ötzi is still the only body from the Copper Age preserved by natural freeze-drying in all of Central Europe. Over the years, scientists from around the world have studied the Iceman and have consequently gained a great deal of knowledge about life in the Copper Age.

17

VAL SENALES ARCHEOPARC

The Archeoparc in the Senales Valley was built near the site of the sensational discovery of the oldest glacial mummy ever found, Ötzi the Iceman. Half an hour's drive from Merano, this interactive museum concentrates on the Neolithic period and features excellent informative exhibits, photographs, video and various other attractions. In the outdoor area visitors can view reconstructed huts, clothes, implements and tools, even participating in demonstrations of living conditions during the Neolithic period.

» Information: www.archeoparc.it



FAMILY TIP

18

SOUTH TYROL MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY

The exhibit at the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology in Bolzano is structured chronologically and documents the ancient history of the province from the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic ages (15,000 BC) to the Carolingian period (around 800 AD). The museum also has an extensive exhibit revolving around the glacial mummy, Ötzi the Iceman.

» Information: www.iceman.it/en

19

MUSEION

Museion, South Tyrol's museum of contemporary art, recently inaugurated its new building in the heart of Bolzano. The building's cubic form is quite striking visually: in fact, the dazzling architecture itself is a vehicle for juxtaposition between the city's historical center and some of its more modern areas, the meadows that flank the Talvera River, and its two new bridges. Museion showcases rotating temporary exhibits that have international relevance.

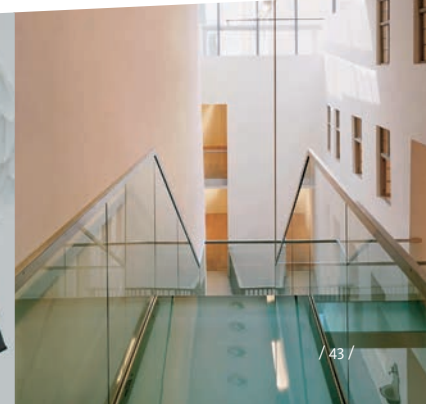
» Information: www.museion.it

20

MERANO ARTE

Merano Arte, located in the centre of Merano and occupying 500 square meters of exhibition space over three floors, is dedicated to contemporary art, architecture, literature and music. Its Artists in Residence program invites artists to live and work in the Merano Arte studio. The adjacent Kunsthaus café and bar is a popular and lively gathering place in the city's downtown area, run by a young and cosmopolitan team.

» Information: www.kunstmeranoarte.org





FAMILY TIP

21

TRAIN WORLD

Train World in Rablà/Rabland houses an enormous model railroad. Here, more than 20,000 model trains pass through an enchanting and intriguing landscape: South Tyrol in miniature. Extraordinary attention to detail and interactive elements immerse visitors in an awe-inspiring world.

» Information: www.eisenbahnwelt.eu

22

WOMEN'S MUSEUM

The women's museum in Merano documents 200 years of women's history through a variety of different collections: dresses, accessories, personal effects and items from everyday life. All related to the changing role and social development of women, they represent a truly unique collection.

» Information: www.merano.eu/womens-museum

23

SOUTH TYROL MUSEUM OF FRUIT GROWING

As the province's traditional and largest fruit-growing community, Lana is the ideal site for the South Tyrol Museum of Fruit Growing. The museum covers the history of fruit cultivation, granting fascinating insights into this branch of agriculture.

» Information: www.lana.info/applemuseum

24

K. & K. BAD EGART MUSEUM

Bard Egart, located in the Tel district of Parcines, is home to the oldest *Badl* (baths) in Tyrol. The source has been documented since 1430, but was probably used for drinking and bathing since Roman times. The passionate collector, Onkel Taa, has transformed the historic *Badl* into an exhibition area over the course of 50 years. On display are personal items of Emperor Franz Joseph I and Empress Elisabeth, affectionately known as Sisi, and K.u.K. rarities that belonged to Crown Prince Rudolf, Kaiser Karl and Archduke Johann.

» Information: www.bad-egart.com

25

MERANO'S MAIA RACETRACK

Maia Racetrack opened in 1935, the same year as the first running of the Merano Grand Prix. The 40-hectare facility, with its 5-km-plus racetrack, has offered a rich program of events every year since. The season runs from May to October and comprises about 25 racing days, with flat and obstacle horseracing alike. Season highlights include the Merano Grand Prix and the Traditional Haflinger Horseracing.

» Information: www.merano.eu/riding

26



FAMILY TIP

ADVENTURE KRÄNZELHOF

The village of Cermes, near Merano, is home to the labyrinth garden at Kränzel Manor. Visitors may choose their own Ariadne's thread: wine, arts and cuisine are just three of the many options to explore. The owner also offers wine tastings that illustrate the very individual characters of his homegrown wines. Tastings are held in the historical restaurant, *mil*, the interior of which captures the unique atmosphere of this winegrowing area. Kränzel Manor also has a collection of local and international art on exhibit; subject matter changes frequently. Inside the maze, visitors can discover their own hidden artistic talent.

» Information: www.kraenzelhof.it

THE CULTURE OF WINE, BEER AND SPIRITS

The tradition of winemaking and distilling schnapps is deeply rooted in Merano. Grapes grow here in the mild climate of the Merano Valley Basin as if in a giant amphitheater. Indigenous red varieties include Vernatsch, Magdalenener and Lagrein. If you're a fan of white wine, tasting these fresh and fruity whites is an absolute must. South Tyrol's dessert wines are particularly highly regarded: *Spätlese* wines, Goldmuskateller and, above all, Rosenmuskateller. In Tirol, the Dolcissimo awards event offers an ideal occasion for tasting and celebrating dessert wines.

The traditional distillates such as brewer grains, fruit brandy, *Marilleler* (apricot), *Nusseler* (walnut) and pear brandies are made from high-quality raw materials that are either locally cultivated or that grow wild. These are certainly among the finest specialties of the Merano and Environs region. There are also breweries in Merano and Environs: the largest and best known is the Forst specialty-beer brewery in Lagundo.

» Marlengo

Knowledge about the right site for a given grape variety, the selective manual harvest in the vineyard, and the painstaking process of vinification in steel or wooden barrels: these are the cornerstones upon which the philosophy of the Merano Burggräfler Winery is built.

» Information: www.kellereimeran.it/en

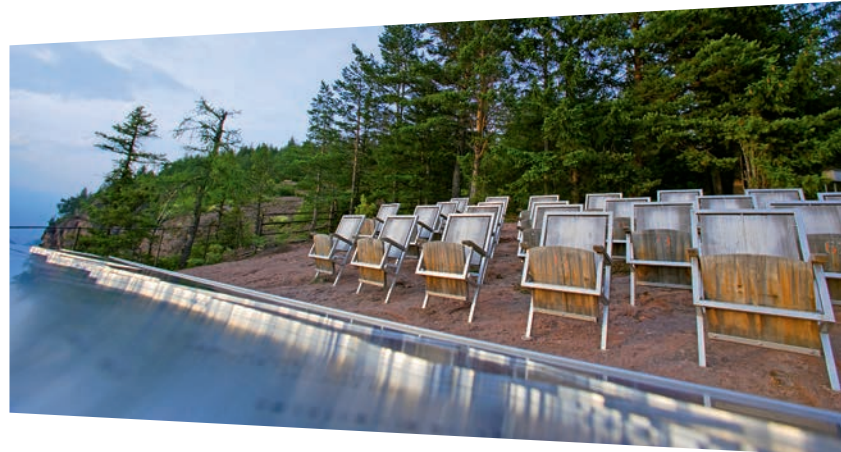
» Nals Margreid Winery

As gently as possible and with as much modern technology as necessary: that is the maxim of Nals Margreid Winery. The winemaker here ushers wine along on its way to maturity with a great deal of knowledge and passion.

» Information: www.kellerei.it/en

TIP
27

The Ramez Castle Estate grows wine using the traditional method of pergola cultivation. The estate's museum shines the spotlight on traditional methods of viticulture.



FAMILY TIP

28

KNOTTNKINO (LIT: ROCK CINEMA) IN VERANO

In 2000, artist Franz Messner crafted 30 cinema chairs out of steel and chestnut wood. He then placed them at marvelous panoramic outlook point on Rotsteinkogel Knoll, high above Merano, creating a one-of-a-kind "cinema." The film playing here never ends – yet is never the same: a spectacular show put on by Mother Nature.

» Information: www.meranerland.com/rock-cinema

29

THE ANCIENT LARCHES OF ULTIMO VALLEY

An ancient natural monument thrives in Val d'Ultimo: a group of three larches more than 2,000 years old are the oldest conifers in Europe. They grow at an elevation of 1,430 meters, their massive trunks measure up to 8 meters in diameter, and they stand at up to 35 meters in height.

» Information: www.meranerland.com/ancient-larches



NATURE PARK & NATIONAL PARK

Only about 15% of the magnificent Merano and Environs landscape is habitable. The power of water, the power of imposing mountains, the radiance of crystal-clear mountain lakes, and the meditative effect of the area have traditionally dominated the land and its people. To protect this natural wealth, large sections of the region have been placed under protection. The best – indeed only – way to really explore these parks is on foot.

30

» Texel Group Nature Park

Texel Group Nature Park is South Tyrol's largest natural park and covers an area of about 33,000 hectares, which is roughly equivalent to about 45,000 football fields. An exceptionally wide array of species of flora and fauna make this park a paradise for anyone who loves nature.

31

» Stelvio National Park

Stelvio/Stilfserjoch National Park is one of Italy's oldest protected reserves. With approximately 134,000 hectares, it is one of Europe's largest nature parks and extends across four Italian provinces. In the center stands the highest massif of the eastern Alps: Mount Ortler, with Passo Stelvio, from which the park's name stems. You can view majestic ibex, marmots and golden eagles, among others, inside the national park.

TIP

32

The centuries-old Lahnersäge located in Santa Gertrude in the Ultimo Valley is home to the national park's visitors' center. This old Venetian saw was used by the farmers of the valley for cutting wood up until just a few decades ago. Information: www.stelviopark.bz.it/en/lahnersaeg/



33

MMM – MESSNER MOUNTAIN MUSEUM

Legendary mountaineer Reinhold Messner has dedicated a museum project to mountains and mountain culture. Housed in unusual settings within the magnificent Alpine landscape, the five museums are places to come face-to-face with the mountains, with humanity and ultimately with oneself.

MMM Juval is located at Juval Castle and deals with the mythological aspect of the mountain and its role within different cultures. Holy mountains around the world are highlighted. The adjacent zoo rounds out the offering and makes Juval Castle an ideal destination for the whole family.

MMM Firmian is located at Sigmundskron Castle near Bolzano. A fascinating contemporary structure made of glass and steel houses the museum. The permanent exhibition focuses on the history of mountaineering and on how mountains are depicted in the fine arts.

MMM Dolomites, located south of Cortina d'Ampezzo at an elevation of more than 2,000 meters, centers around the theme of ice climbing.

MMM Ortles is situated below the highest mountain of the Eastern Alps, Mount Ortler. Built underground, it evokes the feeling of being stuck in a crevasse. This museum, in fact, highlights an intriguing theme: eternal ice.

MMM Ripa in Brunico/Bruneck is dedicated to establishing direct contact with a variety of different mountain cultures.

» Information: www.messner-mountain-museum.it



Events



JANUARY

» Rabenstein Icefight/Ice Climbing World Cup

In Corvara/Rabenstein in the Passiria Valley, the world's best ice climbers gather to compete at the Rabenstein Ice Tower. The 25-meter structure is considered to be one of the most sophisticated artificial ice-climbing constructions in Europe. It is open daily to the public when the competition is not taking place.

FEBRUARY

» Egetmann Parade

Termeno: during the Egetmann Parade, the wedding carriage of Hansl Egetmann pulls up accompanied by trumpets, crocodile-like creatures and allegorical figures. The parade takes place on Shrove Tuesday in odd years; in even years, a child-friendly version of the Egetmann Parade has been established.

» Information: www.egetmann.com/en/

MARCH

» Musik Meran

Musik Meran serves up uncomplicated access to classical music – with a little side dish of education. In addition to the Youth Meet Artists evening series, there are concerts designed to awaken a love of music in young people.

APRIL

» Ötzi Alpine Marathon

Participants in the Ötzi Alpine Marathon compete at mountain biking, running and backcountry skiing. The race begins in the village of Naturno and ends all the way up on the Grawand Glacier, in the Senales Valley, at an elevation of 3,212 meters.

» Merano Vitae – Festival of Health

In spring, the Merano and Environs region transforms into a zone of health and wellbeing. The festival of health offers tastings, cooking classes, hiking, and the opportunity to meet with experts.

MAY

» LanaLive

The multi-week LanaLive cultural festival featuring music, art, literature, theater and cabaret has a different theme every year. The festival in Lana presents some interesting artists and musicians and makes a big impression as a result of its exceptional venues.

JUNE

» Soirees at Tyrol Castle

Set against the magnificent backdrop of Tyrol Castle, musical works of the Middle Ages, Renaissance and early Baroque are presented from June to August. During the breaks, there are opportunities to taste medieval cuisine.

» Sheep Drive

One of the liveliest traditions in the region is the Val Senales Sheep Drive: every year in mid-June, shepherds drive around 4,000 sheep from the Venosta and Senales valleys across the main Alpine ridge to the pastures in the Ötztal Valley.

» South Tyrol Jazz Festival

This festival features traditional and modern music performed by artists of international renown. The locations of the concerts are also unusual: castles, alpine pastures, old farms, alleyways, streets, and theaters.

JULY

» Südtirol Classic Schenna

In July, the village of Schenna is dedicated to the cult of cars: the Südtirol Classic rally runs along South Tyrol's most beautiful panoramic roads and mountain passes through the imposing Dolomites and the Mediterranean-influenced valleys. A small fleet of Fifties Speedsters is also on hand, together with some real beauties from the Golden Twenties.

» World Music at the Gardens

From June to August, the Water Lily Pond at the Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle in Merano takes center stage – literally: its floating stage is the venue for star-studded open-air concerts. In keeping with its Plants From Around the World theme, Trauttmansdorff showcases musicians from the continents of the world.

AUGUST

» Music Weeks Merano

Music Weeks Merano is among the most important classical music festivals in Europe. The festival, which takes place in August and September, maintains the highest of artistic standards. Its world-class orchestras, chamber-music ensembles and solo performers are guaranteed to please even the most discriminating of classical music aficionados.

» Marble and Apricots

The traditional Marmor und Marillen (lit: Marble and Apricots) festival of culture in Lasa offers diverse events related to Lasa marble and to Venosta apricots, one of the region's culinary specialties.

SEPTEMBER

» Forst Merano Grand Prix

Jockeys from all over the world converge in Merano to compete in this spectacular steeplechase, which has a rich tradition – and a famously rich purse.

» Livestock Drive

All good things must come to an end. This also goes for sheep, goats and cattle: high-alpine summer pasturing ends in September or October. The herdsmen adorn the animals and drive them back down into the valley, where they are received by the farmers with a great deal of ceremony.

OCTOBER

» Merano Grape Festival

Thousands of locals and guests flock to Merano every year in the third October-week to take part in one of South Tyrol's most popular harvest celebrations.

» International Brass Festival

The month of October brings the International Brass Festival to Merano. Bands from all over Europe join in on the festivities.

» Chestnut Festival

The Keschtnriggl chestnut festival takes place from October to November in and around the village of Lana. The festival carries on ancient local traditions in celebration of the chestnut harvest and its attendant delicacies.

» VinoCulti

In October and November, the VinoCulti event forms part of Wein (er)leben, a series of events centered in the village of Tirolo. A highlight of this gourmet festival, which shines the spotlight on South Tyrol's high-quality wines, is Dolcissimo: a competitive tasting for the title of South Tyrol's top dessert wine.

NOVEMBER

WINE EVENTS

Late autumn in Merano and Environs is dedicated to the grape harvest and the pressing of wine. Numerous events and tastings pay tribute to the season.

» Merano Wine Festival

This epicurean gathering at the Kurhaus complex is the irrefutable highlight of November. The Merano Wine Festival offers a mind-boggling variety of premium wines and culinary specialties.

» Riesling Days in Naturno

The South Tyrol Riesling Days event is held in Naturno every October-November. Gourmet and Riesling: star chefs pull out all the stops at four-star hotels.

DECEMBER

CHRISTMAS MARKETS

(see page 35)

» Christmas in Merano

Spending Christmas in Merano means being transported into a magical world. Set against the romantic backdrop of the Kurhaus, you'll find market stalls with unique wooden architecture. In Merano, urbane Christmas traditions converge with the aesthetics of the historical spa town, which were influenced by the art nouveau. On offer: local handicrafts, traditional South Tyrolean treats and an extensive program of events for the young and the young-at-heart.

» Advent at Tyrol Castle

In mid-December, a very special sort of Christmas market welcomes visitors to Tyrol Castle. The offering includes Christmas concerts, a crèche exhibition, events for children, a petting zoo and traditional local handicrafts – all set within the fairytale atmosphere of the castle courtyard.

» Advent at Schenna Castle

This event takes place in mid-December within the cellar vaults and courtyard of Schenna Castle. Talented artisans from Schenna exhibit their work, which is also available for purchase.

» Sterntaler – A Christmas Fairytale in Lana

The traditional Sterntaler Christmas Market at the town square in Lana gives rise to an atmosphere of true Christmas spirit and contemplation in the historical center of the village. The market offers solely traditional handicrafts and farm products from the local area.

» Lagundo's Advent Market in the Stables

Far removed from the Christmas hustle and bustle, you'll find handmade items at a small and peaceful Advent market held at Bachguterhof Farm in Lagundo.

» Arts and Crafts at Kallmünz Castle, Merano

This much-loved artisan marketplace is held in the courtyard of Kallmünz Castle on two weekends in December. Artists and craftsmen from South Tyrol and abroad offer art, jewelry and ceramics for sale.



Public Transport



Because of its mountainous terrain, South Tyrol relies heavily on a well-functioning public transportation system and has, as a result, created an integrated transport system. The public transportation system mainly depends on trains, buses and shuttle services; cable cars, trams and funiculars, however, also play an important role. In order to help visitors utilize these services and transportation options effectively and economically, a number of different advantage cards are made available. A mobile yet stress-free holiday in South Tyrol is thus possible – and you can confidently leave the car behind.

The integrated transportation system includes: local buses; regional trains in South Tyrol; the cable cars to Renon/Ritten, Maranza/Meransen, San Genesio/Jenesien, Meltina/Mölten and Verano/Vöran; the Renon tram and the funicular to Mendola/Mendel; and the Swiss Postbus between Malles/Mals and Müstair in the canton of Grisons.

- » Information about tickets: www.meranerland.com/mobility
- » Timetables: www.sii.bz.it and www.sasabz.it



TRAVELING WITH A BIKE

In spring, summer and autumn you can explore Merano and Environs in an environmentally friendly way: by bike and train. The region offers an excellent network of paths running through diverse natural and cultural landscapes. Particularly enjoyable routes include the one that leads to Bolzano and the paths into the Passiria and Venosta valleys. The Val Venosta Railway carries cyclists from Merano to Malles in the Venosta Valley. You can rent bikes directly at various train stations. The bike path runs with a slight downhill grade along the old Roman trading road, the Via Claudia Augusta, for about 60 km back to Merano. There are six stations along the way where bikes can be returned, if you opt to hop back on the train instead. There are also special tickets offered that include passenger transportation and the bike rental.

- » Information: www.meranerland.com/cycling





Summer Activities

Swimming

1	Merano Thermal Baths	23
2	Gargazzone Natural Pool	23
3	Lake Caldaro	23

Golf

4	Golf Club Passeier.Meran	27
5	Lana Golf Club	27



Winter Activities

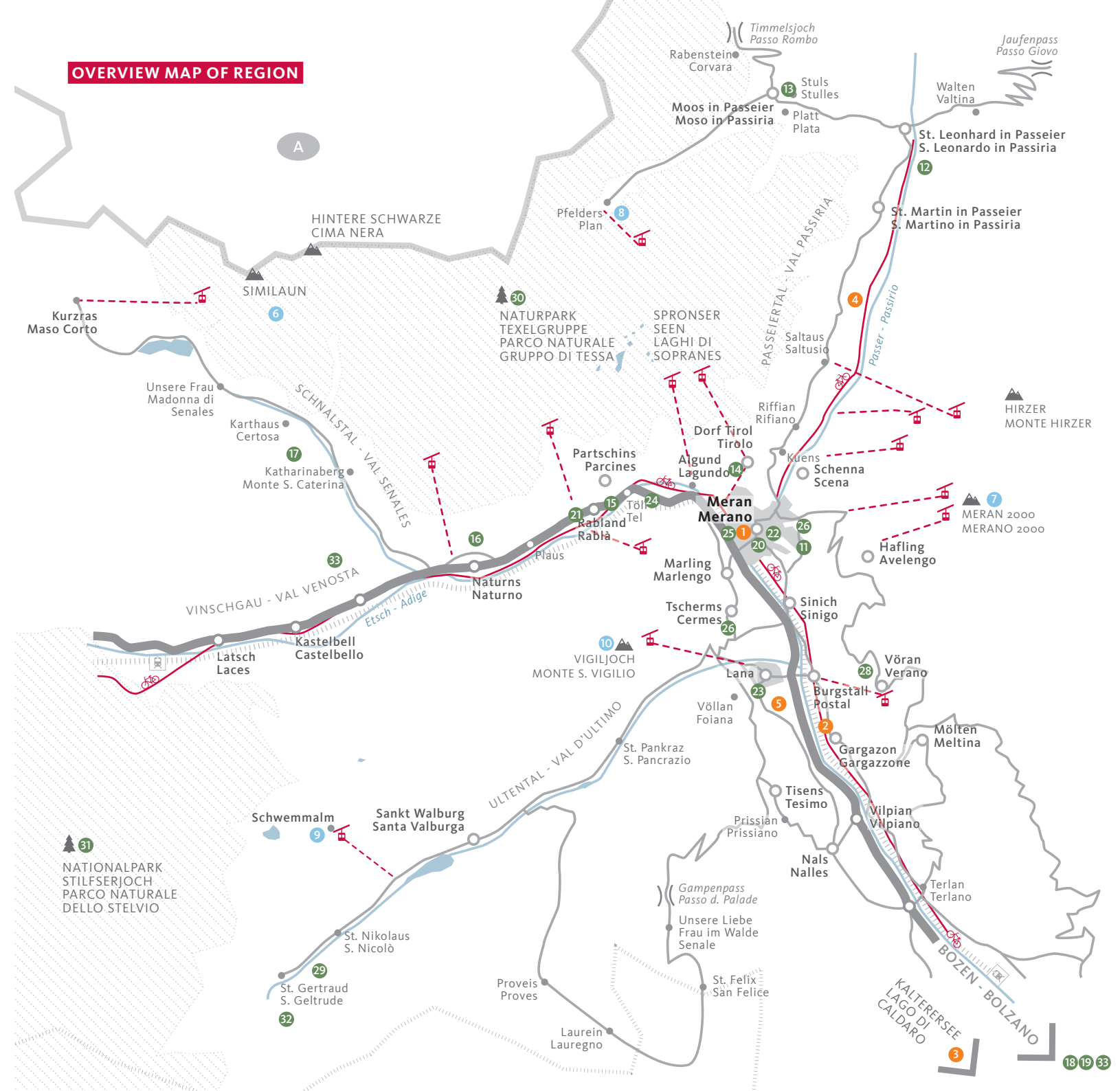
Ski Areas

6	Skiing on a Glacier	30
7	Merano 2000 Ski Area	30
8	Plan Ski Area	30
9	Schwemmalm Ski Area	31
10	Vigiljoch Area	31



Cultural Highlights & Nature's Best

11	The Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle	38
12	Passiria Valley Museum	39
13	Bunker Moosum	39
14	Tyrol Castle & Gufyland	40
15	The Typewriter Museum	41
16	Church of St. Proculus	41
17	Ötzi the Iceman – Val Senales Archeoparc	42
18	Ötzi the Iceman – South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology	42
19	Museion	43
20	Merano Arte	43
21	Train World	44
22	Women's Museum	44
23	South Tyrol Museum of Fruit Growing	44
24	K. & K. Bad Egart Museum	45
25	Merano's Maia Racetrack	45
26	Adventure Kränzelhof	45
27	Rametz Museum	46
28	Knottkino (Lit: Rock Cinema) in Verano	47
29	The Ancient Larches of Ultimo Valley	47
30	Texel Group Nature Park	48
31	Stelvio National Park	48
32	Lahnersäge	48
33	MMM – Messner Mountain Museum	49



A Mini Dictionary



English	German	Italian
South Tyrol	Südtirol	Sudtirolo, Alto Adige
Hello	Hallo	Ciao
Good morning	Guten Morgen	Buongiorno
Good evening	Guten Abend	Buona sera
Bye-bye	Tschüss	Ciao
Goodbye	Auf Wiedersehen	Arrivederci
Thank you	Danke	Grazie
Please	Bitte	Per favore
Excuse me	Entschuldigung	Mi scusi
Cheers!	Prost!	Salute!
Help	Hilfe	Aiuto
Toilet	Toilette	Servizi
Entrance	Eingang	Entrata
Exit	Ausgang	Uscita

info:
Merano and Environs
Tel. +39 0473 200 443
info@meranerland.com
www.meranerland.com/en

