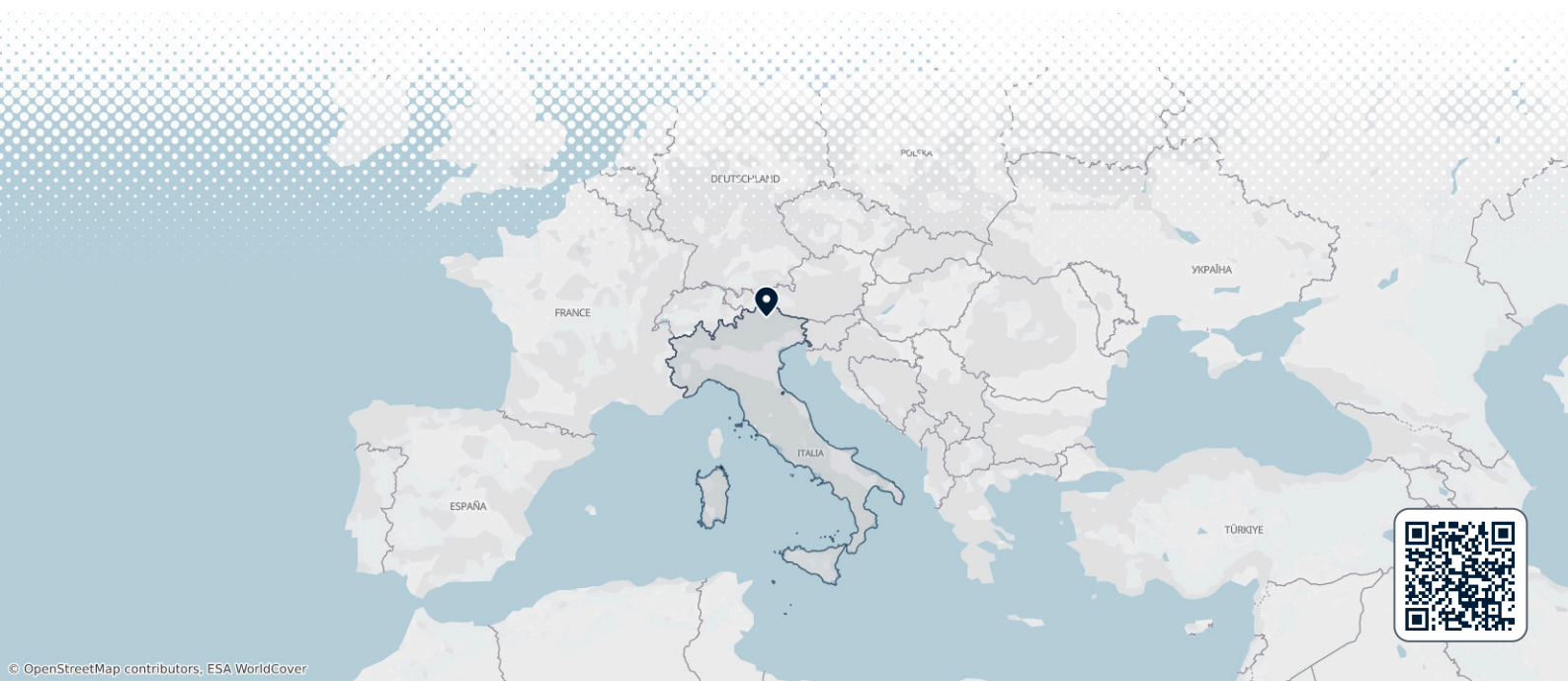




Gherdëina - Grödnertal - Val Gardena

 Trentino-South Tyrol · Italy

TRAVEL GUIDE



Overview

Val Gardena sits in the Dolomites of South Tyrol, in northern Italy. Ladin speakers call it Gherdëina; German speakers call it Grödnertal. The valley holds three villages — [Ortisei](#), [Santa Cristina](#), and [Selva di Val Gardena](#) — surrounded by some of the most photographed peaks in the Alps. The Dolomites here are a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The valley works well for skiers in winter and hikers in summer, with cable cars that turn steep mountain terrain into an easy day out for families too. It also keeps a centuries-old wood-carving tradition alive, and Ladin, a language older than Italian or German in this valley, is still spoken and taught in local schools. *Luis Trenker*, the filmmaker, mountaineer, and architect, was born in Ortisei and remains the valley's best-known son.

When to visit

Winter (December to March) is cold and reliably snowy, built around skiing. Summer (June to September) is mild and sunny, best for hiking. Spring and late autumn are quiet shoulder seasons when many cable cars and hotels close.

Plan around **Sella Ronda Bike Day** in June, when the four mountain passes around the valley close to cars for a day and fill with cyclists instead — one of the best times to experience the high passes without traffic.

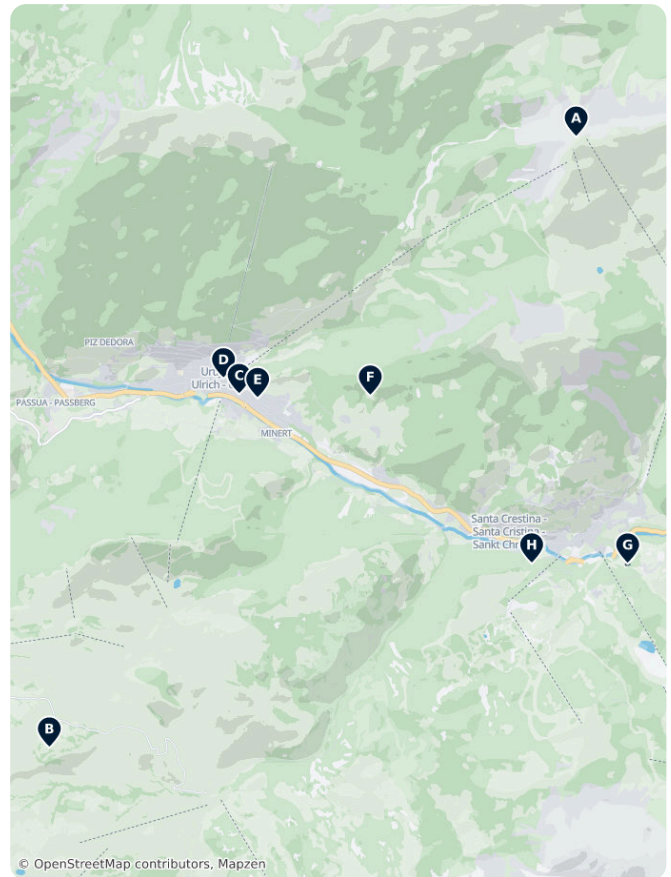
MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	● Great Great for skiing	1° / 6° Feels like -3°	-8° / -17°	Dry air · Calm winds
February	● Great Great for skiing	3° / 10° Feels like -1°	-7° / -18°	Dry air · Calm winds
March	● Good Good for skiing	7° / 14° Feels like 3°	-3° / -13°	Dry air · Calm winds
April	● Fair Fair for cycling	11° / 18°	2° / -5°	☔ 14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
May	● Fair Fair for cycling	16° / 22°	6° / 0°	☔ 20 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
June	● Good Good for sightseeing	21° / 27°	10° / 4°	☔ 20 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
July	● Good Good for sightseeing	22° / 27°	12° / 5°	☔ 21 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
August	● Good Good for sightseeing	22° / 27°	12° / 6°	☔ 19 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
September	● Good Good for sightseeing	18° / 23°	8° / 1°	☔ 14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
October	● Good Good for cycling	13° / 19°	4° / -2°	☔ 12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
November	● Fair Fair for skiing	7° / 14°	-1° / -10°	☔ 12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
December	● Great Great for skiing	2° / 7° Feels like -2°	-6° / -15°	Dry air · Calm winds

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Summer days are warm and sunny with a real chance of afternoon thunderstorms; pack a rain layer even in July and August. Winter nights drop well below freezing, so dress for genuine cold, not just "chilly."

Top sights

- A** [Seceda](#) is one of the most photographed viewpoints in the Dolomites, a jagged ridge at 2,519 m reached by cable car from Ortisei. The panorama over the Odle peaks is why most visitors ride up.
- B** [Alpe di Siusi - Seiser Alm](#) is the largest high-altitude Alpine meadow in Europe, a rolling, mostly car-free plateau reached by cable car from Ortisei. It's easy walking in summer and open for sledging and cross-country skiing in winter.
- C** [Museum Gherdëina](#) covers the Ladin culture and history of the valley, including the wood-carving craft the region is famous for.
- D** [Ortisei Parish Church](#) anchors the center of Ortisei, its onion-domed bell tower visible from much of the valley floor.
- E** [Passeggiata Luis Trenker](#) is a gentle walking promenade named after the Ortisei-born filmmaker and mountaineer, with open mountain views the whole way.
- F** [Chiesa di San Giacomo](#) is one of the valley's oldest churches, a quiet spot away from the main streets that few visitors seek out.
- G** [Castel Gardena - Fischburg](#) is a 17th-century castle near [Selva di Val Gardena](#) that once served as a count's summer and hunting lodge.
- H** [Tervela](#) is a short walk from the villages, a good easy stop if you want a look at moving water and green woods between bigger outings.



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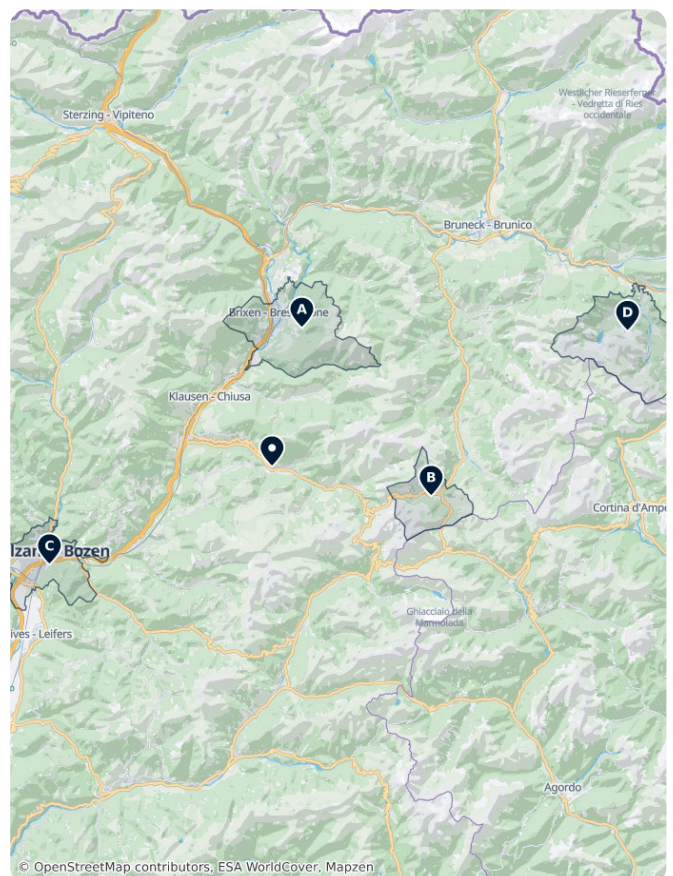
What to experience

- Ski or ride the **Sella Ronda** in winter, a circuit of four mountain passes linking Val Gardena to three neighboring valleys, doable in a single day on a lift pass.
- Walk, snowshoe, or cross-country ski through **Vallunga**, a flat, car-free side valley near Selva.
- Watch a woodcarver shape a sculpture in one of Ortisei's small workshops, a craft this valley has practiced for centuries.
- Look out for a Ladin festival with traditional costume in summer, when the valley celebrates its own culture rather than its tourist season.

Day trips

Val Gardena sits close to several other South Tyrol highlights, and one mountain pass drive alone is worth a day.

- **A Bressanone** — ≈35 min by car or bus. A historic town with a pastel-colored old town and a centuries-old cathedral.
- **B Corvara in Badia** — ≈35–40 min by car over the Gardena Pass. The main village of Alta Badia, another Ladin valley, with one of the best mountain-pass drives in the Dolomites along the way.
- **C Bolzano** — ≈45 min by car or bus. South Tyrol's capital, home to the Ötzi the Iceman mummy at the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology.
- **D Braies** — ≈1–1.5 hours by car. Home to Lake Braies, an emerald-green alpine lake ringed by cliffs; arrive early, since the small parking area fills fast in summer.
- Tre Cime di Lavaredo — ≈1.5–2 hours by car. Three sheer rock towers and one of the most recognizable views in the Dolomites, worth the longer drive if you have a full day.



Where to explore

Val Gardena is made up of three villages, each with a slightly different character.

- [Ortisei](#) is the largest and the main gateway, with cable cars up to Seceda and the Alpe di Siusi, plus most of the shops and museums.
- [Santa Cristina](#) sits in the middle of the valley, quieter than its neighbors and a good base if you want easy access both ways.
- [Selva di Val Gardena](#) is the highest and farthest up the valley, closest to the Sella Ronda passes and the Sella and Langkofel mountain groups.

Getting there

- **By air:** Innsbruck and Verona are the closest airports with regular scheduled flights, each roughly 1.5–2.5 hours away by car or transfer bus; Venice and Munich have more frequent connections but add another hour or so of travel. Bolzano's own airport has very limited scheduled service.
- **By train:** there's no railway in the valley itself. Take a train to Chiusa or Ponte Gardena on the Bolzano–Bressanone line, then a local bus up into the valley, about 20–30 minutes.
- **By bus:** SAD regional buses run from the train stations at [Bolzano](#) and [Bressanone](#) directly to [Ortisei](#), [Santa Cristina](#), and [Selva di Val Gardena](#).

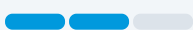
Getting around

- **Public transit:** the valley bus (SAD) connects [Ortisei](#), [Santa Cristina](#), and [Selva di Val Gardena](#) frequently throughout the day. Buy single tickets on board or get a Val Gardena guest card from your accommodation, which often includes free bus travel.
- **Cable cars and lifts:** a dense network of cable cars, gondolas, and chairlifts links the villages to the ski slopes and hiking trails above; the winter ski pass and some summer guest cards cover a number of them.
- **Taxi:** limited outside hotel transfers; most visitors rely on the bus or cable cars instead.
- **On foot / cycling:** village centers are compact and easy to walk, especially Ortisei's pedestrian main street. A paved cycle path runs the length of the valley floor connecting all three villages.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

Moderate



Village centers are compact and easy to explore on foot, especially Ortisei's pedestrian main street, but getting between the three villages means using the valley bus, a cable car, or a car.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

High



A paved cycle path runs the length of the valley connecting all three villages, and the surrounding passes are popular with road cyclists, especially during Sella Ronda Bike Day each June.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?:** not essential within the valley — buses and cable cars cover the villages and slopes — but useful for day trips and for driving the mountain passes yourself.
- **Parking:** paid car parks sit at the edges of each village; central streets are largely closed to non-resident traffic in peak season.
- **Restrictions:** the four passes around the valley close to motor vehicles for a day each June for Sella Ronda Bike Day; check the date before planning a drive that week.

Food & drink

Val Gardena's kitchens mix South Tyrolean and Ladin cooking: canederli (bread dumplings) in broth, speck, polenta, and turtres, a Ladin fried pastry stuffed with spinach or sauerkraut. Mountain huts (rifugi) along the hiking and ski trails serve simple, hearty versions of the same food and are often part of the experience of a day outside.

For a sit-down meal, look around Via Rezia in [Ortisei](#), the main pedestrian street, where most of the valley's restaurants cluster.

What to eat & drink

LUNCH

Pizza Margherita

Thin-crust pizza topped with tomato, mozzarella, and basil, invented in Naples and still best there.

DINNER

Spaghetti alla Carbonara

Pasta with egg, cured pork cheek (guanciale), pecorino cheese, and black pepper, a Roman classic.

Risotto alla Milanese

Creamy saffron-infused rice dish from Milan, often served alongside braised veal shank.

Lasagna · Lasagne al Forno

Layered baked pasta with ragu, bechamel, and cheese, a staple of Emilia-Romagna cooking.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Prosciutto and Cheese · Prosciutto e Formaggio

Cured ham paired with regional cheeses, a common antipasto plate found nationwide.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Gelato

Dense, slow-churned Italian ice cream, traditionally lower in fat and air than American-style ice cream.

Tiramisu · Tiramisù

Layered dessert of coffee-soaked ladyfingers and mascarpone cream, dusted with cocoa.

DRINKS

Espresso · Caffè

A short, strong shot of coffee drunk quickly, usually standing at a bar counter.

Wine · Vino

Italy is one of the world's largest wine producers, with regional styles from Piedmont's Barolo to Tuscany's Chianti.

Aperol Spritz

A bittersweet orange aperitif mixed with prosecco and soda water, a staple of the early-evening aperitivo.

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Safety & health

Val Gardena is a very safe destination with little crime beyond watching your belongings in busy cable car queues. The real risks are the mountains themselves: weather changes fast at altitude, so carry warm and waterproof layers even in summer, and stay on marked trails and pistes. Skiing and hiking off-piste or off-trail carries avalanche and fall risk; check local conditions before heading out that way.

History

The valley has been Ladin-speaking for longer than it's been part of Italy or Austria — Ladin is a Rhaeto-Romance language, older here than German or Italian, and it's still taught in local schools alongside them. Wood carving grew out of long, snowbound winters, when farming families carved religious figures and toys to sell; by the 19th century, Gröden woodcarvings were being exported as far as the United States, a trade [Museum Gherdëina](#) traces in detail.

[Castel Gardena - Fischburg](#), built in 1641, recalls a different era, when the valley's counts used it as a summer and hunting retreat rather than a year-round home. The mountains above the valley were also a front line in the First World War, when Austro-Hungarian and Italian troops fought for the high passes; some of the fortifications are still visible today for those who hike up to them.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Italy at a glance:

 CURRENCY

EUR €

 EMERGENCY

112

 ELECTRICITY



Type C / Type F / Type L
230 V · 50 Hz

 LANGUAGES

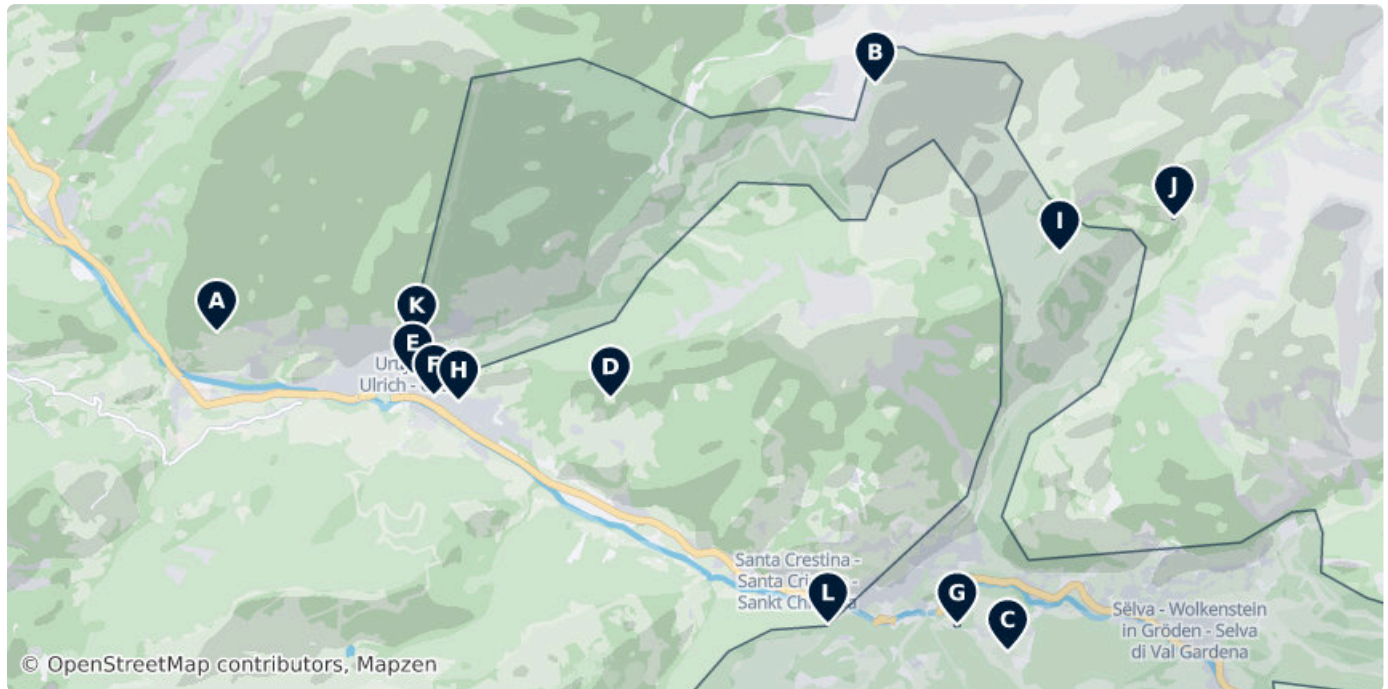
Italian

 TAP WATER

Safe to drink

Val Gardena Essentials

Val Gardena is a UNESCO World Heritage site in the South Tyrolean Dolomites, renowned for its Ladin culture and woodcarving heritage. This selection covers the valley's three main villages—Ortisei, Santa Cristina, and Selva—and key natural landmarks like the Seceda ridgeline and Tervela waterfall. It highlights architectural sites including the 17th-century Gardena Castle and the Romanesque-Gothic St. Jacob's Church, alongside the Museum Gherdëina which documents the region's unique linguistic and artistic history.



A Val Gardena

Val Gardena is a valley in Northern Italy, in the Dolomites of South Tyrol.

39046, Italy (46.57855, 11.64952)

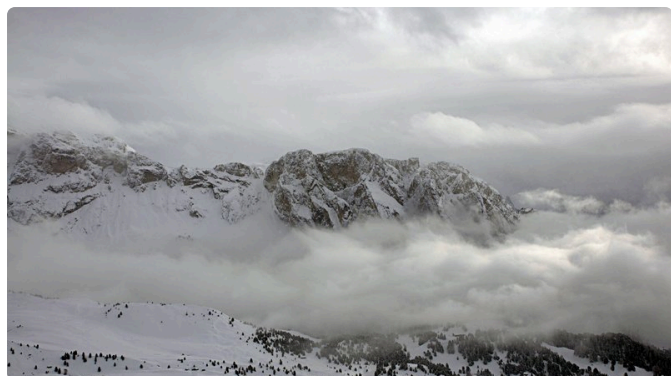


B Seceda

Summit station providing access to the iconic Odle Group ridgeline. The viewpoint at 2,500 meters offers panoramic vistas across the Dolomites, including the Sella Group, Marmolada, and Alpe di Siusi.

(Unnamed Road), 39046, Italy (46.59794, 11.72435)





C Val Gardena

As part of the world-famous network of 12 ski areas, Val Gardena is a particularly popular spot for beginners and families with children.

39040 Kastelruth, Province of Bolzano - South Tyrol, Italy
(46.55362, 11.73941)

valgardena.it



D St.-Jakobs-Kirche

Known as the oldest church in Val Gardena, this Romanesque structure features a Gothic choir and 15th-century frescoes. It is located above Ortisei and is accessible via a historic forest path.

39046, Italy (46.57339, 11.69426)

Jul-Sep Mo-Tu	10:30-12:15
Jul-Sep We	15:30-17:00
Jul-Sep Th	10:30-12:15
Jul-Sep Fr	15:30-17:00
Jul-Aug Sa-Su	10:30-12:15, 15:00-18:00



E Ortisei Parish Church

The Parish Church of Urtijëi located in the town of Urtijëi in Val Gardena in South Tyrol, Italy is dedicated to the Epiphany and to Saint...

S. Durich Square, 39046 Ortisei, Val Gardena, Italy
(46.57520, 11.67179)



F Museum Gherdëina

The Gherdëina Local Heritage Museum was opened in the Cësa di Ladins in Urtijëi, in northernmost Italy, in 1960.

Cësa di Ladins, Via Rezia 83, 39046 Ortisei, Val Gardena, Italy (46.57355, 11.67420)

museumgherdeina.it, +39 0471 797 554





G Gardena Castle

This 17th-century castle served as a summer and hunting lodge to a Tyrolean count. It has retained its former beauty.

Str. Dorives, 39048 Selva, Val Gardena, Italy
(46.55573, 11.73366)



H Footpath Luis Trenker

Luis Trenker was a South Tyrolean film producer, director, writer, actor, architect, alpinist, and bobsledder.

59 Via Sotria, Ortisei 39046, Italy (46.57313, 11.67702)



I Col Raiser

Cable car station serving the Mastlé alpine pastures. It provides a starting point for high-altitude hikes into the Puez-Odle Nature Park and access to several traditional mountain huts.

(Unnamed Road), 39047, Italy (46.58478, 11.74532)



J Ncisles - Regensburger - Firenze

Built in 1888, this historic alpine hut sits at 2,037 meters on the Cisles alp. It serves as a base for climbing the Sass Rigais and exploring the Geisler peaks.

(Unnamed Road), 39047, Italy (46.58751, 11.75834)

rifugiofirenze.com, +39 0471 796307





K Resciesa

A funicular railway connecting Ortisei to the Rasciesa plateau at 2,200 meters. The area is part of the Puez-Odle Nature Park and features panoramic walking trails and a winter toboggan run.

77 Via Sneton, Ortisei 39046, Italy (46.57818, 11.67226)



L Tervela

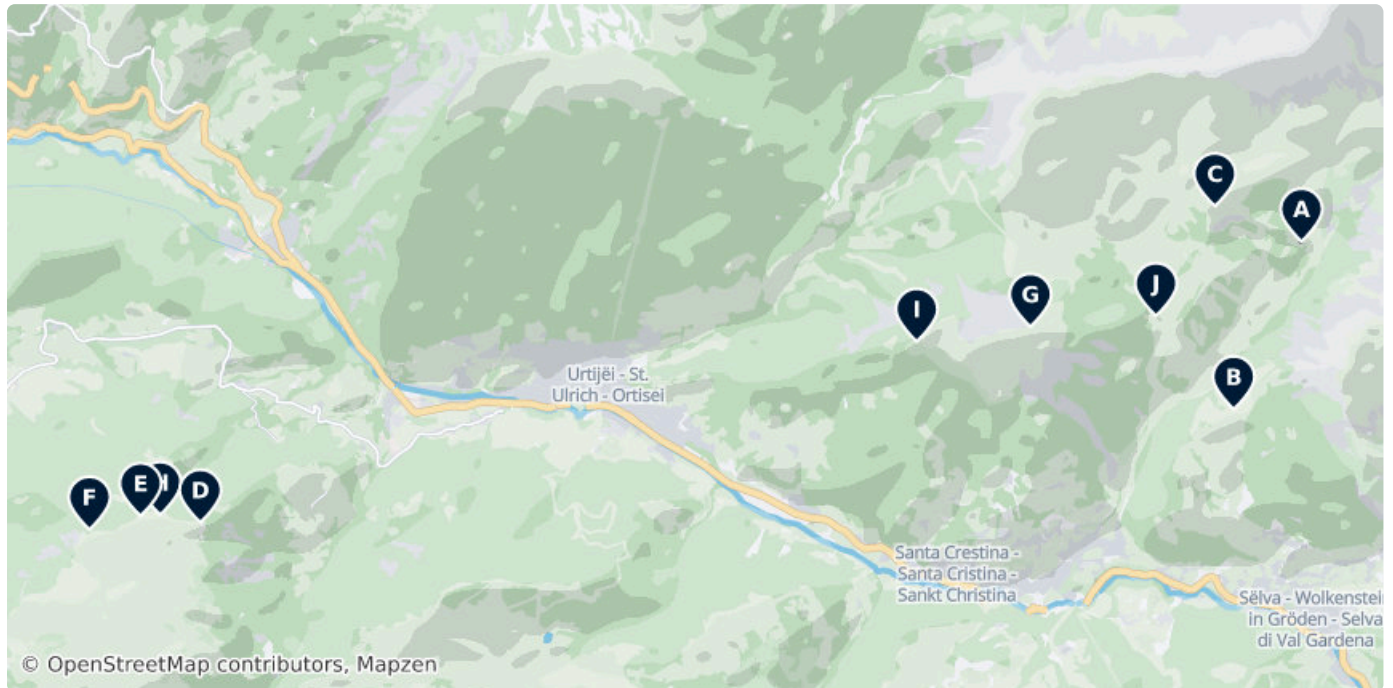
A tiered waterfall located between Santa Cristina and Selva. The falls are fed by the Tervela stream from the Sassolungo group and are accessible via a short walking trail.

SS242, 39047, Italy (46.55574, 11.71897)



Dolomites Peaks & Huts

This selection traverses the high alpine pastures of the Cisles Alm and the Puflatsch plateau in the Val Gardena Dolomites. It features historic structures like the 19th-century Regensburger Hütte and specialized UNESCO viewpoints designed to showcase the region's unique tectonic geology. The list includes the basalt 'Witches' Benches' formations and several summits exceeding 2,000 meters, offering 360-degree views of the Odle and Sassolungo massifs.

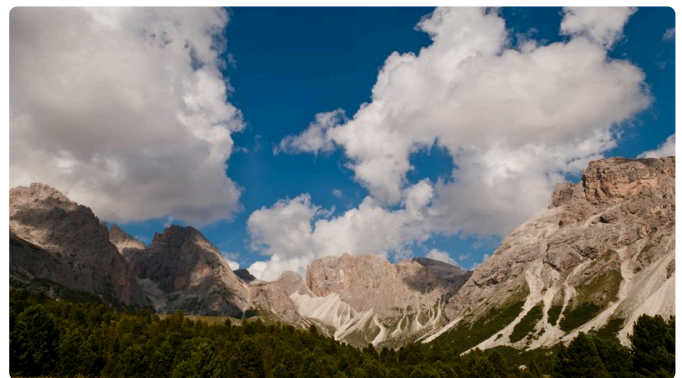


A Ncisles - Regensburger - Firenze

One of the oldest mountain huts in the Dolomites, built in 1888. It is located at 2,041 meters within the Puez-Odle Nature Park.

(Unnamed Road), 39047, Italy (46.58751, 11.75834)

rifugiofirenze.com, +39 0471 796307



B Juac

Private mountain refuge situated at 1,903 meters on a grassy plateau, offering direct views of the Sassolungo and Sella massifs.

(46.57319, 11.74993)

juac.it/en/



C Dolomites UNESCO Viewpoint Mastlé

A designated observation platform on the Mastlé Alm, built to highlight the geological significance and landscape of the UNESCO World Heritage site.

(46.59052, 11.74758)



D Fillner Kreuz

A summit cross on the northern edge of the Puflatsch plateau, providing views over the Alpe di Siusi and the surrounding Dolomite peaks.

(46.56353, 11.62152)



E Hexenbänke

Natural basalt rock formations shaped like benches. According to local folklore, these were the ancient meeting places for the Schlern witches.

(46.56409, 11.61407)



F Bulacia - Gollerspitz (2099m)

A 2,099-meter viewpoint on the Puflatsch plateau, featuring a panoramic orientation table and views extending to the Ortler group.

(46.56292, 11.60772)



G Pic - Monte Pic - Pitschberg

A 2,363-meter peak providing a 360-degree panorama of the Odle, Sella, Sassolungo, and Catinaccio groups.

39047, Italy (46.58024, 11.72466)



H Piza de Bulacia - Puflatschspitz - Monte Bullaccia

The highest point of the Puflatsch plateau at 2,174 meters, marked by a summit cross and accessible via the Puflatsch circular hike.

39040, Italy (46.56417, 11.61652)



I Crujëta

A scenic viewpoint marked by a large wooden cross on the slopes of Monte Pic, overlooking the villages of Val Gardena.

39046, Italy (46.57896, 11.71054)



J Gamsblut

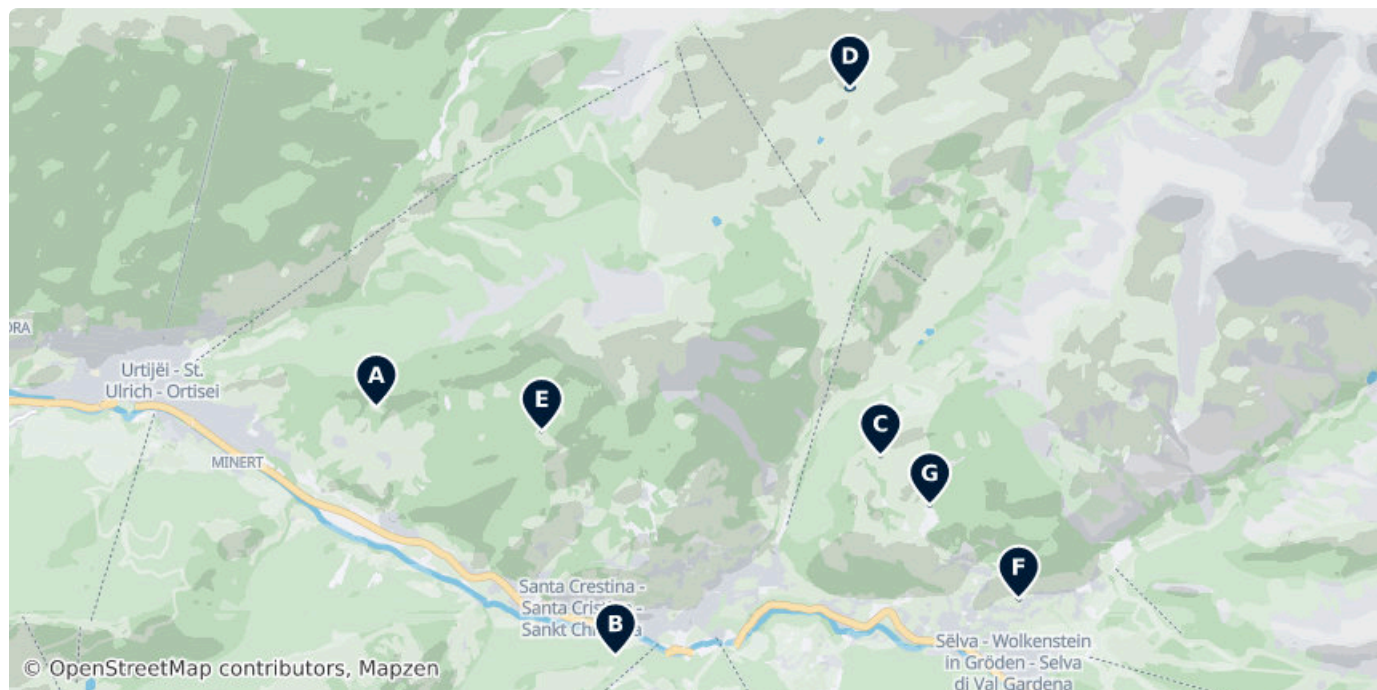
Alpine hut at 1,965 meters on the Mastlé Alm, specializing in traditional South Tyrolean dishes and located near the Col Raiser cable car.

(46.58115, 11.74025)



Hidden Gems of Val Gardena

Explore the quieter corners of Val Gardena, away from the main ski runs and busy village centers. This collection features the valley's oldest place of worship, St. Jacob's Church, known for its 15th-century frescoes. The selection also includes the Tervela waterfall and a series of secluded alpine ponds like Lech da Iman and Lech de Lagustel, situated on high-altitude pastures beneath the Odle massifs.

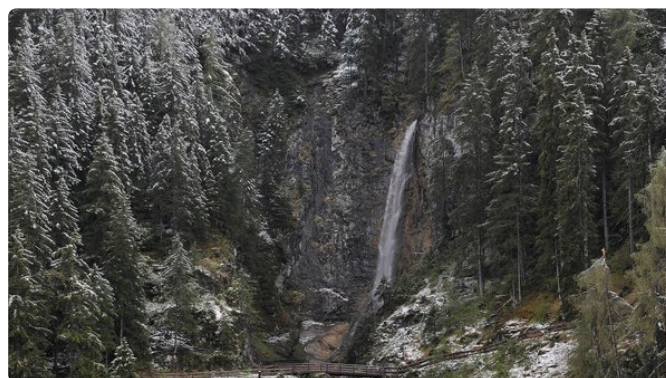


A St.-Jakobs-Kirche

The oldest church in Val Gardena, featuring 15th-century Gothic frescoes and a Baroque high altar. It is located on the historic Troi Paian path above Ortisei.

39046, Italy (46.57339, 11.69426)

Jul-Sep Mo-Tu	10:30-12:15
Jul-Sep We	15:30-17:00
Jul-Sep Th	10:30-12:15
Jul-Sep Fr	15:30-17:00
Jul-Aug Sa-Su	10:30-12:15, 15:00-18:00



B Tervela

A waterfall located near Santa Cristina that cascades down the rock face from the Monte Pana plateau.

SS242, 39047, Italy (46.55574, 11.71897)



C Lech de Ciampac

Small alpine pond located in the Vallunga valley, surrounded by the steep dolomite cliffs of the Puez-Odle Nature Park.

39048, Italy (46.56993, 11.74637)

**D Lech da Iman**

High-altitude lake situated on the Mastlé pastures at the foot of the Odle peaks.

(Unnamed Road), 39047, Italy (46.59604, 11.74320)

**E Lech de Lagustel**

Secluded mountain lake located on the southern slopes of Mount Pic, accessible via hiking trails from Santa Cristina or Ortisei.

39047, Italy (46.57168, 11.71137)

**F Lech da Plazola**

Small mountain pond located near the village of Selva Gardena, serving as a quiet resting point on local walking paths.

31 Strada Larcionëi, Selva di Val Gardena 39048, Italy (46.55977, 11.76064)

**G Lech de Sciuz**

Alpine pond located in the high pastures of the Puez-Odle group, offering views of the surrounding dolomite peaks.

(46.56642, 11.75146)



DATA SOURCES

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