

Merano

Trentino-South Tyrol · Italy

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Merano is a spa town in a wide, sunny basin where several valleys meet, surrounded by mountains, vineyards and apple orchards. In the 19th century it became a fashionable health resort for Central European nobility, and the Austrian Empress *Elisabeth*, known as Sissi, stayed here several times. The grand hotels, villas and riverside promenades from that time still shape the town.

Merano is part of South Tyrol, and most people speak both German and Italian. You notice the mix in the street names, the food and the Tyrolean arcades of the old town. The town suits a relaxed stay of two to four nights, with gardens, castles, a modern thermal spa and easy walks. It is also a good base for hiking in the mountains above the town and for trips to Bolzano and the Dolomites.

When to visit

Spring and autumn are the best seasons. In April the orchards and gardens flower, and in September and October the grape and apple harvests bring warm, clear days. Summer is hot in the valley, but cool walks and lifts are close by. Winter is cold and mostly dry, with snow on the mountains rather than in town.

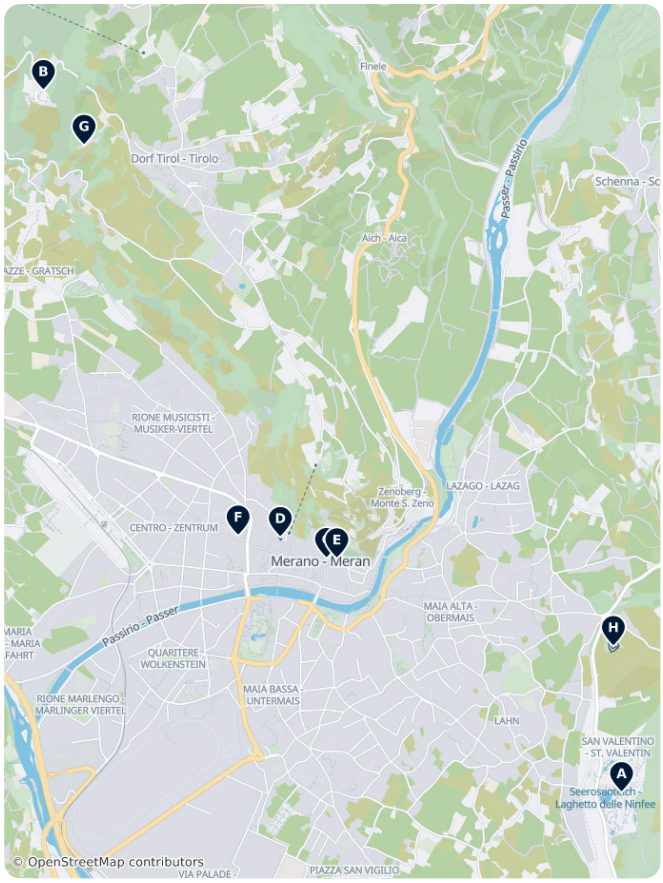
The biggest event of the year is the Christmas market, from late November to early January. Wooden stalls line the promenade along the Passer river by the Kurhaus, selling crafts, local food and mulled wine.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for sightseeing	7° / 12° Feels like 4°	-3° / -11°	Dry air · Calm winds
February	Good Good for cycling	9° / 16°	-2° / -12°	Dry air · Calm winds
March	Good Good for cycling	13° / 20°	3° / -7°	Dry air · Calm winds
April	Good Good for cycling	18° / 24°	7° / 1°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
May	Good Good for sightseeing	22° / 28°	11° / 6°	18 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
June	Fair Fair for sightseeing	27° / 33°	16° / 9°	19 rainy days · Humid air · Calm winds
July	Fair Fair for sightseeing	28° / 33°	17° / 11°	20 rainy days · Humid air · Calm winds
August	Fair Fair for sightseeing	28° / 33°	17° / 11°	18 rainy days · Muggy, humid air · Calm winds
September	Good Good for sightseeing	24° / 29°	13° / 7°	13 rainy days · Calm winds
October	Great Great for sightseeing	19° / 26°	10° / 4°	Dry air · Calm winds
November	Good Good for cycling	13° / 20°	5° / -4°	Dry air · Calm winds
December	Poor Poor for sightseeing	8° / 13°	0° / -9°	Dry air · Calm winds

Best months: October

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

Top sights



A The Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle are the town's main attraction. Terraced gardens with plants from around the world climb a hillside around a castle where Empress Sissi stayed, with ponds, viewing platforms and wide views over Merano. Inside the castle, the Touriseum museum tells the history of Alpine tourism. The gardens open from late March or April to early November. From late November to early January, they host an evening light show.

B Tirol Castle stands on a ridge above the village of Tirol, about 3 km north of the centre. It was the seat of the Counts of Tyrol and gave the whole region its name. Today it holds the South Tyrolean Museum of History, and the walk from the village has fine views of the valley. It is closed in winter.

C St. Nicholas' Church, Merano is the Gothic parish church at the end of the Lauben, the long arcaded main street of the old town. Look for the giant fresco of Saint Christopher on its south wall. A short walk away on the river is the Kurhaus, the town's elegant Art Nouveau spa hall.

D Landesfürstliche Burg - Castello Principesco is a small castle in the old town, built around 1470 as a town home for the rulers of Tyrol. Its rooms keep furniture, painted walls, tiled stoves and old weapons.

E Palais Mamming Museum is the city museum, in a Baroque palace next to the parish church. It covers Merano's story from prehistoric finds to the spa era.

F Women's Museum tells the history of women's lives through clothing, household objects and everyday things from the last two centuries.

G Brunnenburg is a medieval castle just below Tirol Castle. The poet *Ezra Pound* lived here with his daughter's family, and it now has a small museum of farm life.

H Schloss Rametz - Weinmuseum is a castle estate among the vineyards of Maia Alta, with a winery and a small wine museum.

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What to experience

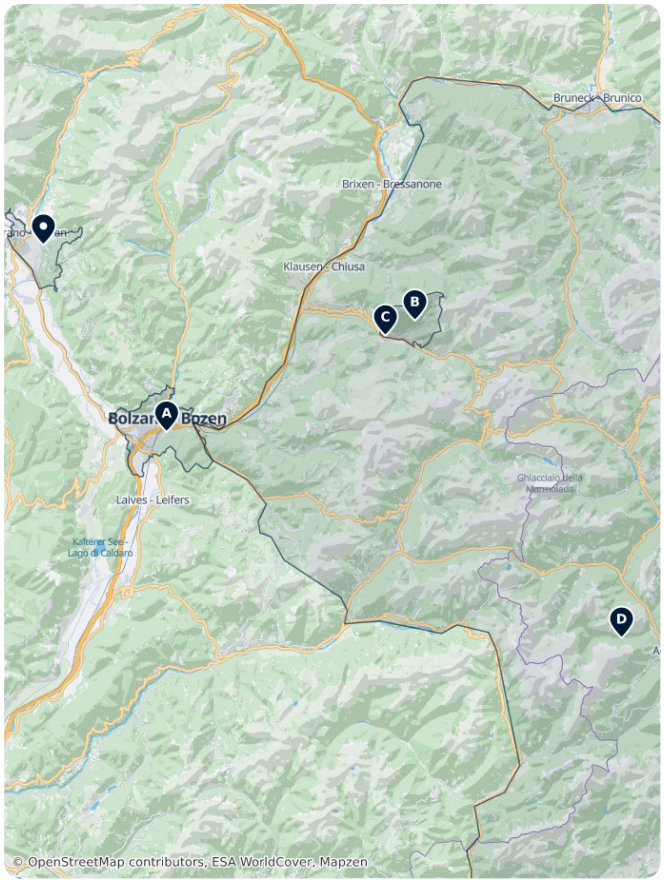
Merano's best moments are slow ones, in the open air or in warm water.

- **Walk the spa promenades**: Follow the Winter Promenade along the Passer river, past the covered 19th-century Wandelhalle, to the Gilf promenade near the gorge. Then climb to the Tappeiner promenade on the sunny slope above the old town, with palms and views over the roofs. It ends near Pulverturm, a medieval tower you can climb for the view.
- **Spend an afternoon at the thermal baths**: Therme Meran has indoor and outdoor pools, saunas and a large park in the middle of town. It is a good plan for a rainy day or a winter evening.
- **Ride the cable car to Meran 2000**: The lift climbs from the edge of town to a high plateau. In summer you can hike on easy mountain paths, and in winter there is a small ski area.
- **Watch the horse races**: On Easter Monday, the racecourse holds the traditional Haflinger horse race with a parade in local dress. The Grand Prix of Merano, a famous steeplechase, takes place in late September.
- **Join the Grape Festival**: Every October, the town celebrates the grape harvest. On the Sunday, decorated floats and brass bands in traditional costume parade through the centre.

Day trips

Merano sits where several valleys meet, so villages, waterfalls and towns are all close.

- Schenna — about 15 minutes by bus. A hillside village above Merano with a castle and wide views over the valley.
- Partschins — about 20 minutes by bus. A path climbs from the village to a high waterfall at the edge of the Texelgruppe Nature Park.
- St. Leonhard in Passeier — about 30 minutes by bus or car up the Passeier valley. The birthplace of *Andreas Hofer*, the Tyrolean folk hero, now has a museum about him and the valley.
- A Bolzano — about 40 minutes by train. The capital of South Tyrol has a lively old town and the archaeology museum with Ötzi, the Iceman, who lived more than 5,000 years ago.
- Glurns — about 1 hour by car up the Vinschgau valley. A tiny medieval town still inside its full ring of walls and gates.
- B Ortisei — about 1 hour 30 minutes by car. A base in C Gherdëina - Grödnertal - Val Gardena for cable cars and walks in the D Dolomites.



Where to explore

Merano is one of the main towns of Trentino-South Tyrol.

Bolzano, the capital of South Tyrol, is the closest city. Further east, Brixen, Chiusa and Vipiteno are historic towns on the road to the Brenner Pass.

The Dolomites have their own guide. To the south, Trento is the capital of Trentino.

Getting there

- **By air**: Bolzano Airport (BZO), about 30 minutes away by car, has only a few seasonal flights. Most travellers use Verona Airport (VRN) or Innsbruck Airport (INN), each about 2 hours by car, or Munich Airport (MUC), about 3 hours 45 minutes by car. By public transport, take a train to Bolzano and change there for Merano.
- **By train**: Regional trains run from Bolzano to Merano station in about 40 minutes. From Verona, Munich or Innsbruck, change in Bolzano. The Vinschgau railway continues west from Merano up the valley to Mals. südtirolmobil timetables
- **By bus**: Regional buses link Merano with the valleys and villages around it. Most leave from the bus station next to the train station.
- **By car**: A fast road (MeBo) connects Merano with Bolzano and the A22 Brenner motorway in about 30 minutes.

Getting around

- **On foot**: The centre is compact and flat. The old town, the river promenades, the thermal baths and the station are all within about 15 minutes' walk.
- **City buses**: Urban buses connect the centre with the Trauttmansdorff gardens and the outer districts, and regional buses run to nearby villages such as Tirol and Schenna. On city buses you can pay by tapping a contactless Visa or Mastercard bank card or phone on the validator when you board, and again when you leave. Otherwise, buy a ticket before you board at the tourist office, the train station or the südtirolmobil info point. südtirolmobil tap&go
- **Guest pass**: Many hotels give guests the Südtirol Alto Adige Guest Pass. It covers buses, regional trains and some cable cars in all of South Tyrol, so ask about it when you check in.
- **Cycling**: Flat cycle paths follow the valley floor towards Bolzano and up the Vinschgau valley. The town itself is easy to ride, but the hills around it are steep.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The flat, compact centre is easy on foot, with the old town, river promenades, thermal baths and station all within about 15 minutes' walk.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

High

Flat cycle paths follow the valley floor towards Bolzano and up the Vinschgau valley, though the hills around town are steep.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: Not for the town, which is easy on foot and by bus. A car helps for remote valleys and mountain passes, though buses reach most villages.
- **Parking**: Use the underground car parks, such as the one at the thermal baths. Street parking in the centre is paid and limited in time.
- **Restrictions**: The old town and the Lauben are a **pedestrian and limited traffic zone**. Unauthorised entry is fined, so ask your hotel before you drive in.

Food & drink

Merano's food mixes Tyrolean and Italian cooking. Try Knödel, bread dumplings with speck, cheese or spinach, and Schlutzkrapfen, half-moon pasta filled with spinach and cheese. South Tyrolean speck and crisp rye flatbread called Schüttelbrot are classic snacks. For dessert, order apple strudel, made with apples from the orchards around town.

The hills around Merano grow wine, especially the light red Vernatsch, also called Schiava. In autumn, many farm inns serve Törggelen, a meal of new wine, roast chestnuts and hearty dishes. In town, the best areas to eat and drink are the arcades of the Lauben and the cafés along the Passer river promenade. The Merano WineFestival, held at the Kurhaus every November, is a major event for wine lovers.

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

Merano is a very safe town with little crime that affects visitors. Take normal care with bags at the Christmas market and on crowded buses.

Tap water is good to drink. In the mountains, the weather can change fast. Summer afternoons often bring thunderstorms, so start hikes early, carry a jacket and check the forecast. In July and August the valley can be very hot, so plan walks for the morning or evening.

History

In the Middle Ages, the Counts of Tyrol ruled a large Alpine state from Tirol Castle, and Merano grew below it as their market town. It was the capital of Tyrol until the early 15th century, when the court moved to Innsbruck. The Gothic St. Nicholas' Church, Merano was completed in the 15th century at the end of the arcaded Lauben. Around 1470, Duke *Sigismund* built Landesfürstliche Burg - Castello Principesco as his town residence.

After that, Merano became a quiet country town. Everything changed in the 19th century, when doctors began to send patients here for the mild climate. Empress *Elisabeth* of Austria stayed at Trauttmansdorff Castle, and Merano soon became a fashionable spa. Grand hotels, villas, the promenades and the Kurhaus date from this time. A Jewish community also grew around the spa, and its synagogue still stands and holds a small museum.

After the First World War, South Tyrol became part of Italy, and Merano became a town of two languages and cultures. Since then, the spa tradition has continued, and the modern Therme Meran opened in 2005.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Italy at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY



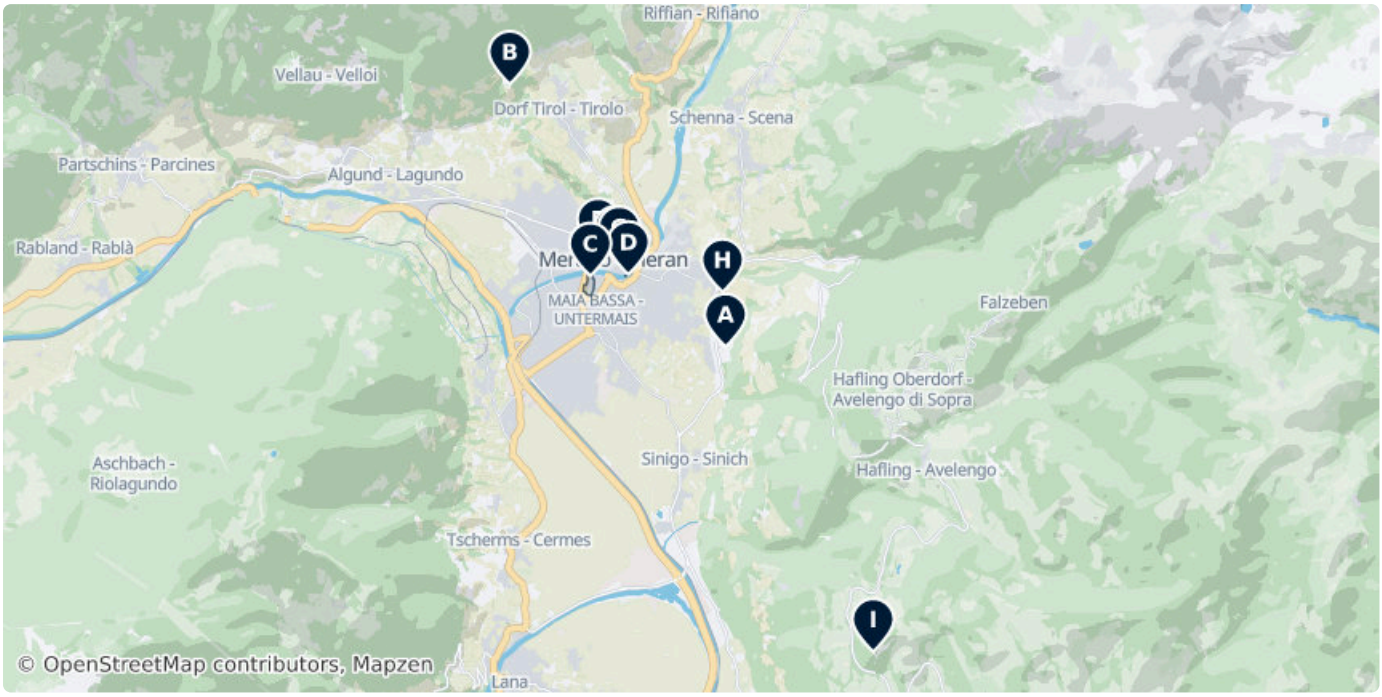
Type C / Type F / Type L
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
Italian

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Merano's Essential Gems

The defining sights of Merano: the terraced botanical gardens of Trauttmansdorff, Tirol Castle above the town, the modern thermal baths, the covered Wandelhalle on the river promenade, the Gothic parish church and the small princes' castle in the old town, plus the city museum, a castle winery and the Knottnkino viewpoint.





A The Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle

Botanical gardens on terraces around Trauttmansdorff Castle, with plants from around the world, viewpoints and the Touriseum museum in the castle.

St.-Valentin-Str. 51A, I-39012 Merano, Italy (46.66005, 11.18613)

Mo–Su 09:00–19:00

trauttmansdorff.it, +39 0473 235730



B Tirol Castle

Medieval castle above Merano that gave the County of Tyrol its name; today it houses the South Tyrolean Museum of History.

(Unnamed Road), 39019, Italy (46.69447, 11.14487)

schlosstirol.it

C Therme Meran

Modern thermal spa complex on the Passer river with indoor and outdoor pools, saunas and a large park.

Piazza delle Terme - Thermenplatz, 39012 Meran - Merano BZ, Italy (46.66934, 11.16027)

Mo–Su 09:00–21:00

termemerano.it, +39 0473 252 000



D Wandelhalle

Covered 19th-century promenade hall on the sunny Winter Promenade along the Passer river.

Winterpromenade - Passeggiata D'inverno, 39012 Meran - Merano BZ, Italy (46.66953, 11.16755)



E St. Nicholas' Church, Merano

Gothic parish church of Merano with a tall bell tower and a giant fresco of Saint Christopher on its south wall.

6/a Piazza Duomo, Merano 39012, Italy (46.67153, 11.16507)

stadtpfarre-meran.it



F Landesfürstliche Burg

Small 15th-century town residence of the Tyrolean princes in Merano's old town, now a museum.

5 Via Galileo Galilei, Merano 39012, Italy (46.67256, 11.16178)



G Palais Mamming Museum

Merano's city museum in a Baroque palace next to the parish church, covering the town's history from prehistory to the spa era.

6, 39012 Meran - Merano (46.67151, 11.16581)

Mo	Closed
Tu–Sa	10:30–17:00
Su	10:30–13:00

palaismamming.it, +39 0471 982384

I Knottnkino

Open-air 'cinema' of seats on a rocky knoll above the Adige valley, where the view is the film.

39010, Italy (46.62008, 11.21436)

meranerland.com/de/kultur/kulturtipps/knottnkino/



H Castello Rametz - Wine Museum

Castle estate in Maia Alta with a working winery and a small wine museum.

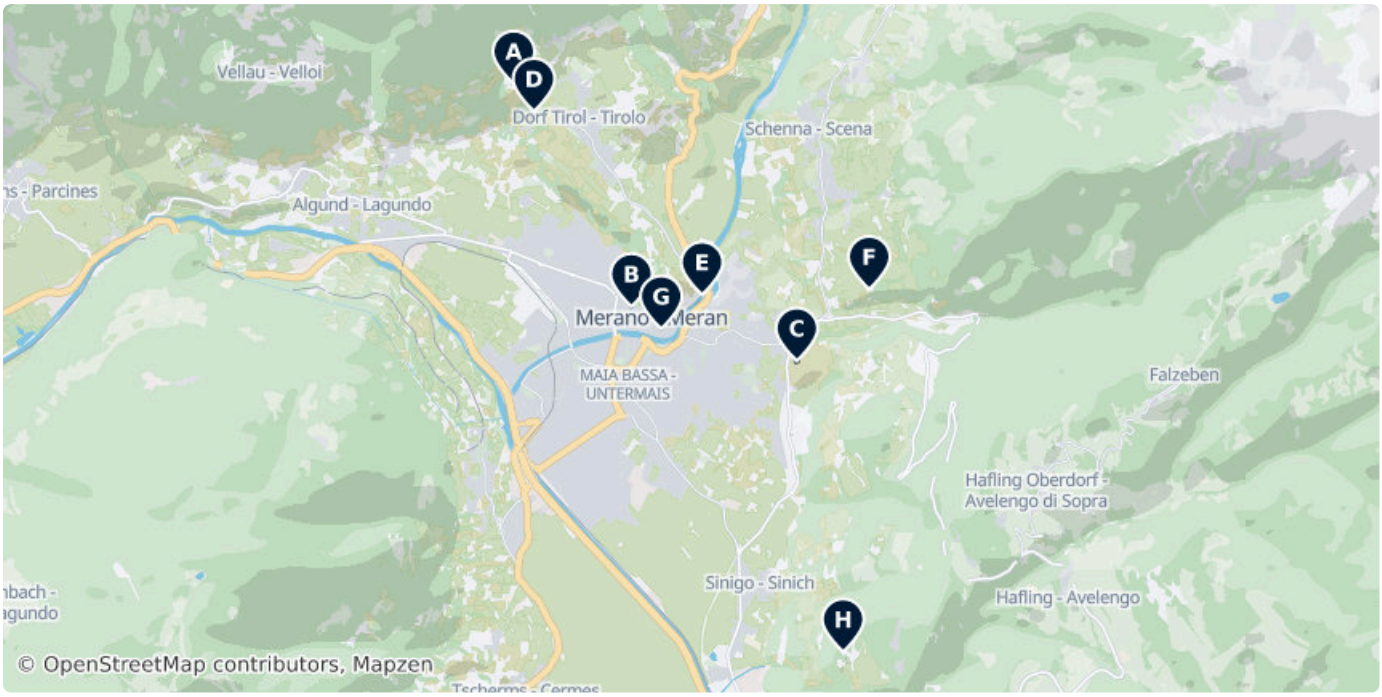
(Unnamed Road), 39012, Italy (46.66722, 11.18555)

Apr-Nov Mo–Sa	10:00–16:00, 10:00–12:00
Dec-Mar Mo–Sa	10:00–17:00, 10:00–12:00

rametz.com/oeffnungszeiten/weinbaumuseum.html

Merano Castles

Merano sits among dozens of castles. This selection starts with Tirol Castle above the town, which gave the whole region its name, and includes the princes' town residence, a castle winery with a wine museum and several hillside strongholds, some of them privately owned and seen only from outside.





A Tirol Castle

Medieval castle above Merano that gave the County of Tyrol its name; today it houses the South Tyrolean Museum of History.

(Unnamed Road), 39019, Italy (46.69447, 11.14487)

schlosstirol.it



B Landesfürstliche Burg

Small 15th-century town residence of the Tyrolean princes in Merano's old town, now a museum with period furniture and weapons.

5 Via Galileo Galilei, Merano 39012, Italy (46.67256, 11.16178)



C Castello Rametz - Wine Museum

Castle estate in Maia Alta, remodelled in the 19th century, with a working winery and a small wine museum.

(Unnamed Road), 39012, Italy (46.66722, 11.18555)

Apr-Nov Mo–Sa	10:00–16:00, 10:00–12:00
Dec-Mar Mo–Sa	10:00–17:00, 10:00–12:00

rametz.com/oeffnungszeiten/weinbaumuseum.html



D Brunnenburg

13th-century castle below Tirol Castle, later home of the poet Ezra Pound's family, with an agricultural museum.

39019, Italy (46.69178, 11.14777)

brunnenburg.net

E Zenoburg

Ruined castle on a rock above the Passer gorge, once a seat of the Counts of Tyrol, privately owned.

(Unnamed Road), 39019, Italy (46.67372, 11.17191)

F Schloss Goyen - Castel Goiano

Hilltop castle in Schenna above Merano, privately owned and seen from the surrounding walking paths.

(Unnamed Road), 39017, Italy (46.67426, 11.19593)

burgen-adi.at/burg_goyen/

G Castel Kallmünz

Small residence in the old town near the Passer river, used today for exhibitions and events.

13/B Piazza della Rena, Merano 39012, Italy (46.67037, 11.16605)

kallmuenz.it

H Castel Fragsburg

Castle on a rocky ridge high above the Merano basin, now part of a hotel estate.

Fragsburgerstraße, 39012, Italy (46.63855, 11.19218)

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