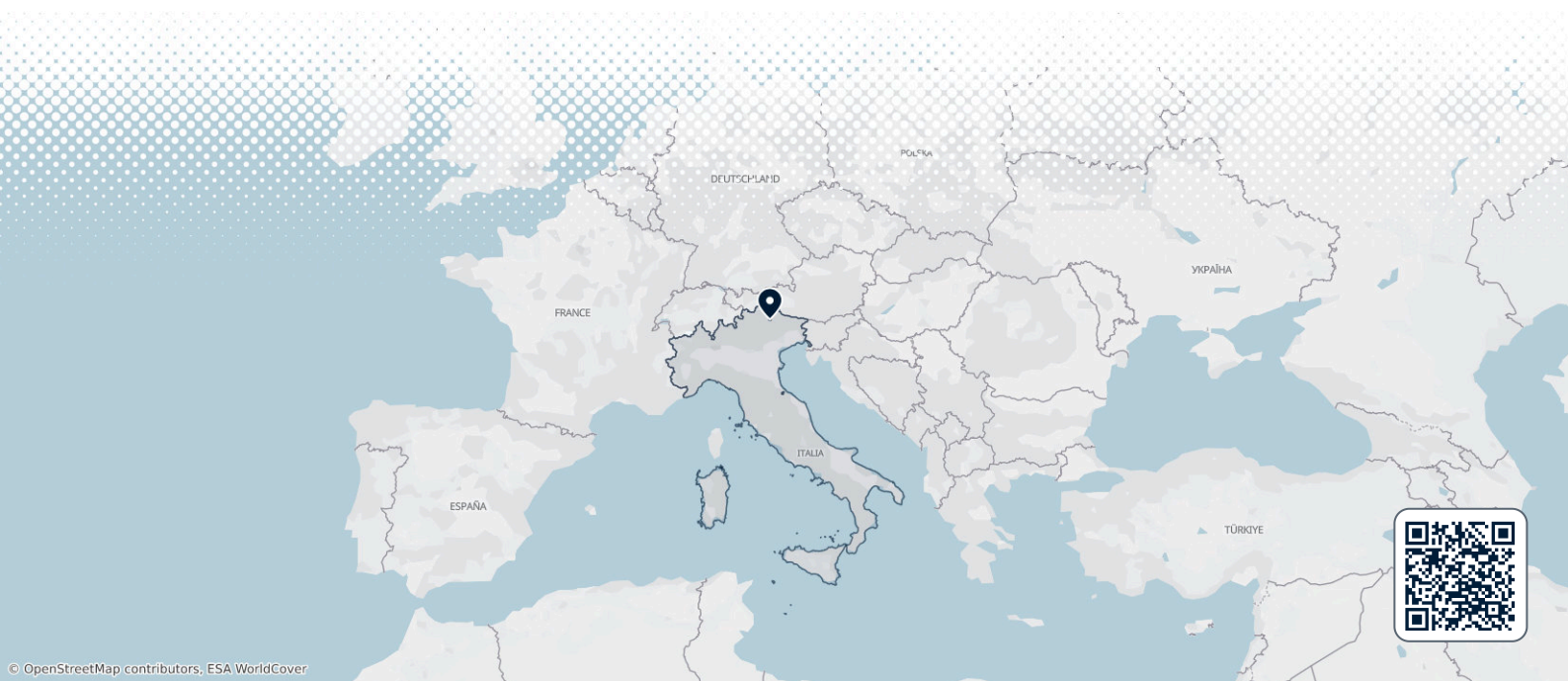




Sella Group

 Trentino-South Tyrol • Italy

TRAVEL GUIDE



Overview

The Sella Group is a massif of pale dolomite rock rising between four valleys in the heart of the Dolomites: Val Gardena, Alta Badia, Val di Fassa, and Livinallongo. Steep cliffs rise from a high central plateau, and the massif is ringed by some of the most famous mountain passes in the Alps. It forms part of the Dolomites UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The group takes its name from *Quintino Sella*, the Italian statesman and mountaineer who founded the Club Alpino Italiano. There is no town inside the massif itself. Visitors stay in one of the surrounding valley villages and come here to hike, climb, ski, or drive the passes. This destination suits travelers who want outdoor activity — it is a place to walk trails and ride cable cars, not a town to sightsee in.

When to visit

Summer, from June to September, is best for hiking, climbing, and driving or cycling the passes; afternoons often bring short thunderstorms, so plan hikes for the morning. Winter, from December to early April, brings heavy snow and the ski season. Spring and late autumn are quiet, with many cable cars, rifugios, and hotels closed.

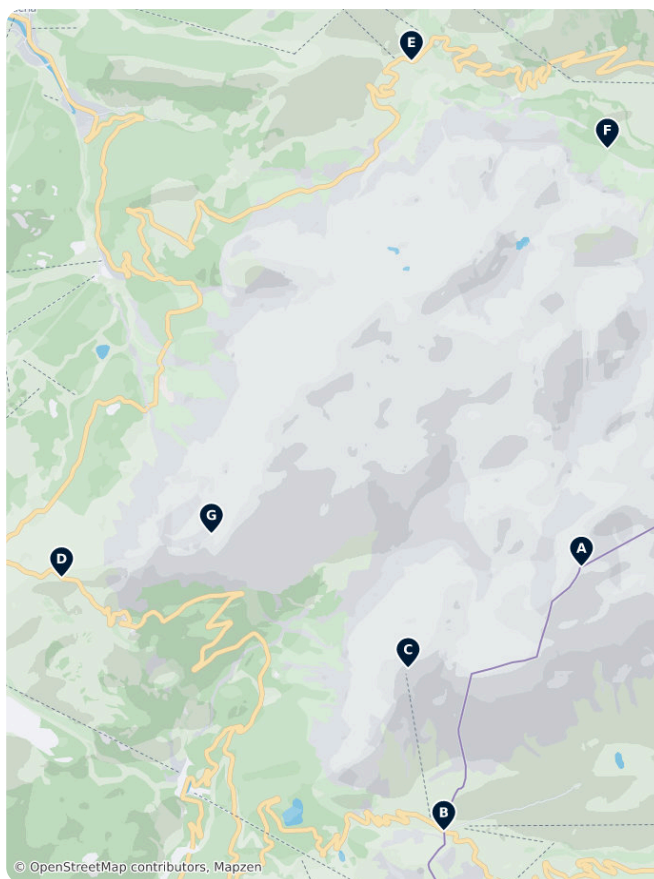
Time a summer visit around the *Maratona dles Dolomites*, a mass cycling event held in early July that closes the passes around the Sella Group to normal traffic for one day — tens of thousands of riders climb Passo Pordoi, Passo Sella, Passo Gardena, and Passo Campolongo in a single loop.

At this altitude, conditions stay alpine even in summer: expect cool days and cold nights near the passes, with snow possible at any time of year on the highest points.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	● Great Great for skiing	-9° / -4° Feels like -14°	-18° / -27°	Dry air · Calm winds
February	● Great Great for skiing	-8° / -1° Feels like -12°	-17° / -28°	Dry air · Calm winds
March	● Great Great for skiing	-3° / 4° Feels like -8°	-13° / -23°	Dry air · Calm winds
April	● Great Great for skiing	1° / 8° Feels like -3°	-9° / -15°	☂ 14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
May	● Fair Fair for skiing	6° / 12° Feels like 3°	-5° / -10°	☂ 20 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
June	● Poor Poor for cycling	11° / 17°	0° / -7°	☂ 20 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
July	● Poor Poor for cycling	12° / 17°	1° / -5°	☂ 21 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
August	● Fair Fair for cycling	12° / 17°	2° / -5°	☂ 19 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
September	● Fair Fair for skiing	8° / 13° Feels like 5°	-3° / -9°	☂ 14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
October	● Great Great for skiing	3° / 9° Feels like -1°	-6° / -12°	☂ 12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
November	● Great Great for skiing	-4° / 4° Feels like -8°	-11° / -20°	☂ 12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
December	● Great Great for skiing	-8° / -3° Feels like -12°	-16° / -26°	Dry air · Calm winds

Top sights

- A** **Piz Boè** is the highest point in the Sella Group at 3,152 meters, reached by cable car and a short hike, or by a full via ferrata route for a bigger challenge. It's one of the few 3,000-meter Dolomite summits a fit hiker can reach without technical climbing gear, with a wide view across the Dolomites.
- B** **Passo Pordoi**, at 2,239 meters, is one of the highest paved passes in the Dolomites, its hairpin bends familiar to every Giro d'Italia fan. It marks the boundary between the Sella Group and the Marmolada.
- C** **Sass Pordoi** is a flat rock plateau just above Passo Pordoi, reached in a few minutes by cable car. Its viewing terrace looks out over the Marmolada glacier and the Val di Fassa.
- D** **Passo Sella** is a high pass between rock towers and scree slopes, linking Val Gardena to Val di Fassa. It's one of the classic viewpoints for photographing the massif's cliffs.
- E** **Passo Gardena** connects Val Gardena to Alta Badia and is a popular starting point for hikes and climbing routes on the massif's northern side.
- F** **Cascade del Pisciadù** is a waterfall reached by an easy walk from Corvara, tucked below the cliffs on the massif's southeastern side.
- G** **Piz Ciavazes** is one of the best-known rock walls in the Dolomites for climbers, rising directly above Passo Sella.



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What to experience

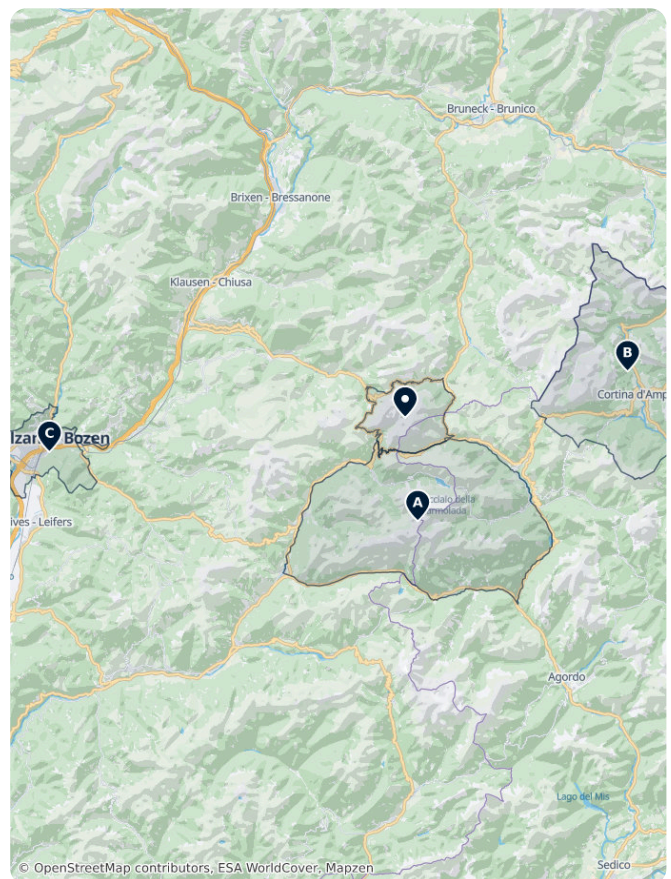
The Sella Group is built for outdoor activity, not sightseeing from a café table.

- Ski or ride the [Sella Ronda](#), a roughly 40-kilometer lift-and-piste circuit that loops around the entire massif through all four surrounding valleys — most skiers complete it in a single day.
- Cycle the same loop by road in summer, climbing Passo Pordoi, Passo Sella, Passo Gardena, and Passo Campolongo — the route made famous by the *Maratona dles Dolomites* race. A monument near the top of Passo Pordoi, Fausto Coppi Memorial, honors *Fausto Coppi*, one of the greatest riders to race over the Dolomite passes.
- Clip into the fixed cables and ladders of the [Via Ferrata Brigata Tridentina](#), a classic via ferrata built over old World War I mountain infrastructure — wear a helmet and harness, or book a mountain guide if it's your first time.
- Spend a night at a mountain hut such as [Rifugio Boé](#) or [Rifugio Pisciadù](#), sleeping high on the massif between days of hiking or climbing.

Day trips

The valleys around the Sella Group make good bases for day trips further into the Dolomites and beyond.

- **A** [Marmolada](#): about 30–40 minutes by car over Passo Fedaia. The only glacier in the Dolomites and their highest peak, reached by cable car; a somber World War I front line runs beneath the ice.
- **B** [Cortina d'Ampezzo](#): roughly 45 minutes to an hour by car over Passo Falzarego. A well-known ski town surrounded by its own dramatic peaks, worth combining with the drive over the pass.
- [Lago di Braies](#): about an hour by car. A turquoise mountain lake with a lakeside chapel, one of the most photographed spots in the Dolomites — arrive early, since parking fills up fast in summer.
- **C** [Bolzano](#): around 1 to 1.5 hours by car or bus. South Tyrol's capital, with the Ötzi ice mummy at the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology and a historic center that mixes Italian and Austrian influence.



Where to explore

There is no town within the Sella Group itself. Most visitors base themselves in one of the villages in the four valleys that surround it.

- **Corvara in Badia**, in Alta Badia to the southeast, is close to the Cascade del Pisciadù waterfall and sits directly on the Sella Ronda ski and bike circuit.
- **Selva di Val Gardena**, in Val Gardena to the northwest, sits below Passo Sella and is known for woodcarving workshops alongside its outdoor activities.
- **Canazei**, in Val di Fassa to the southwest, is the main base for reaching Passo Pordoi and Sass Pordoi.
- Arabba, on the northeastern side in the municipality of Livinallongo del Col di Lana, is a small ski village directly on the Sella Ronda circuit.

Getting there

- **By air:** The nearest airport is Bolzano Airport (BZO), about an hour's drive, but it has only limited seasonal flights. Most travelers fly into Innsbruck (INN, Austria), Verona (VRN), or Venice Marco Polo (VCE), each roughly 2 to 3 hours away by car or transfer bus. Munich (MUC) is a longer but common option too, around 3.5 to 4 hours.
- **By train:** No railway reaches the valleys around the Sella Group. The nearest useful station is in **Bolzano**, on the main Munich–Verona line; regional buses run from there up to the valleys.
- **By bus:** Regional SAD/Südtirol Mobil buses connect **Bolzano** to **Corvara in Badia** and **Selva di Val Gardena**; **Canazei** is reached by bus from Bolzano or Trento via Val di Fassa. Journeys typically take 1.5 to 2.5 hours and often require a change.

Getting around

- **Cable cars and chairlifts:** A network of lifts crosses the massif and its passes, including the cable car up to Sass Pordoi from Passo Pordoi. In winter, the Dolomiti Superski pass covers the Sella Ronda circuit and the wider ski area; buy it at any valley ticket office or lift station.
- **Buses:** Local SAD buses and, in ski season, a dedicated Sella Ronda bus link the valley villages and the passes; a Mobilcard covers unlimited rides on South Tyrol's public transport, including these routes.
- **Driving:** A car is the easiest way to move between the four valleys and reach trailheads at the passes. Roads are well paved but wind through many hairpin bends, and mountain passes can close temporarily for snow or ice outside summer.
- **On foot:** There is no walkable town center here — getting around means hiking trails, via ferratas, and lift-served terrain rather than sidewalks.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

Low

There's no walkable town center within the massif — getting around means hiking trails, via ferratas, cable cars, and roads between the surrounding valleys.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

High

The Sella Ronda road loop and its four passes make this one of the top road-cycling destinations in the Alps, headlined by the Maratona dles Dolomites race each July.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?:** Yes. A car makes it far easier to reach different trailheads and passes around the massif in a single day, especially outside ski season when buses run less often.
- **Parking:** Paid parking areas sit at Passo Pordoi, Passo Sella, and Passo Gardena; they fill early on summer mornings and during the Maratona dles Dolomites weekend. Village parking in Corvara, Selva, and Canazei is usually a mix of free street spaces and paid lots near the centers.
- **Restrictions:** Passes can close temporarily for snow, ice, or maintenance, especially in shoulder season; check road conditions before driving over Passo Sella, Passo Gardena, Passo Pordoi, or Passo Campolongo outside summer.

Food & drink

Food up here is Ladin and South Tyrolean alpine fare: canederli (bread dumplings) in broth, speck, polenta with mushrooms, and Kaiserschmarrn for dessert. Expect hearty, simple dishes built for a day of hiking or skiing.

The best places to eat are the mountain rifugios scattered across the massif and its passes — many double as restaurants with terraces facing the cliffs, and some are reachable only on foot or by cable car. Eating at a rifugio, rather than a restaurant down in the valley, is part of visiting the Sella Group.

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

Hiking and via ferrata routes here go well above 2,000 meters, and weather can change fast — afternoon thunderstorms are common in summer, and snow is possible even in July on the highest ground. Check the forecast before setting out, carry warm layers, and turn back if clouds build over the peaks.

Via ferratas require a harness, a via ferrata lanyard, and a helmet. Do not attempt one without this gear or without experience, and consider hiring a mountain guide for a first attempt. Mountain rescue is well organized, but a helicopter rescue can be expensive without travel or Alpine Club insurance that covers it.

Petty crime is rare here. Tap water is safe to drink, including at most staffed rifugios.

History

The Sella Group sat inside the front line of the *Guerra Bianca*, the "White War" fought between Italy and Austria-Hungary from 1915 until the front shifted after Austria-Hungary's advance in late 1917. Soldiers on both sides cut tunnels, trenches, and gun positions into the rock and ice above 2,500 meters, some of which are still visible along hiking routes today. A cemetery near Passo Pordoi, [Cimitero Militare Tedesco](#), holds the graves of Austro-Hungarian and German soldiers who fought on this front.

The massif takes its name from *Quintino Sella*, the Italian statesman and mountaineer who founded the Club Alpino Italiano in 1863 and helped bring early mountaineering to the Dolomites. Climbers began mapping and naming its peaks and rock towers in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and the group remains one of the most climbed in the range today.

In 2009, the Sella Group and the rest of the Dolomites were named a UNESCO World Heritage Site for their geology and landscape.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Italy at a glance:

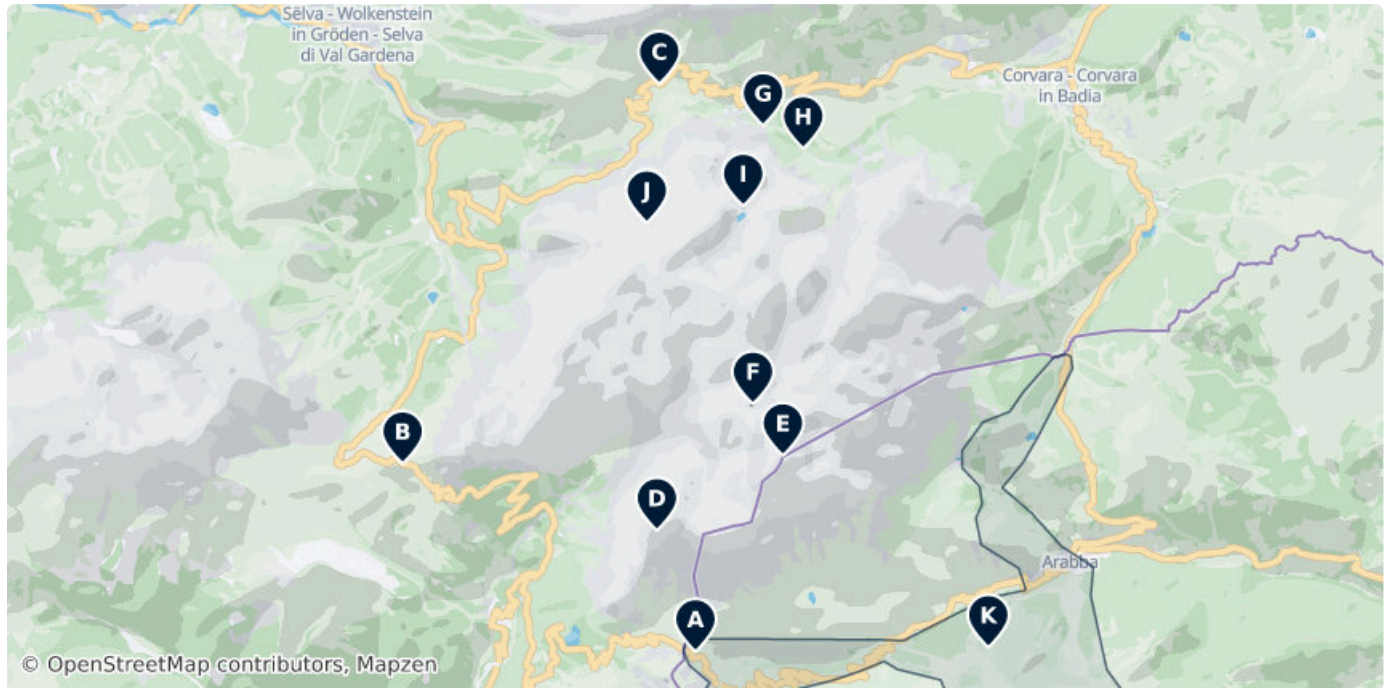
 CURRENCY**EUR €** EMERGENCY**112** ELECTRICITYType C / Type F / Type L
230 V · 50 Hz LANGUAGES

Italian

 TAP WATER**Safe to drink**

Sella Group Essentials

The Sella Group is a massive plateau-shaped massif in the Italian Dolomites, surrounded by four major mountain passes: Pordoi, Sella, Gardena, and Campolongo. Its highest peak, Piz Boè at 3,152 meters, is accessible via the Sass Pordoi cable car. The range is characterized by vertical limestone walls, the challenging Brigata Tridentina via ferrata, and high-altitude glacial lakes, serving as the central hub for the Sellaronda circuit.



A Passo Pordoi

Mountain pass at 2,239 meters connecting the Sella Valley with the Livinallongo Valley. It features a memorial to cyclist Fausto Coppi and serves as the base for the cable car ascending to the Sella plateau.

(46.48742, 11.81416)



B Sella Pass

The Sella Pass is a high mountain pass between the provinces of Trentino and South Tyrol in Italy.

Strada del Sella, 38032, Italy (46.50807, 11.76733)





C Gardena Pass

Gardena Pass is a high mountain pass in the Dolomites of the South Tyrol in northeast Italy.

1A Località Passo Gardena, 39048, Italy
(46.54982, 11.80839)



D Sass Pordoi

A flat-topped rock summit at 2,950 meters known as the 'Terrace of the Dolomites.' It offers 360-degree views of the Marmolada glacier and the Sassolungo group, accessible by a three-minute cable car ride from Passo Pordoi.

38032, Italy (46.50073, 11.80799)



E Rifugio Capanna Piz Fassa

A high-altitude mountain hut situated directly on the summit of Piz Boè at 3,152 meters. It is the highest refuge in the Sella Group, providing basic food and lodging during the summer months.

(46.50898, 11.82815)

15 giugno- 30 settembre

rifugiocapannapizfassa.com, +39336452523



F Rifugio Boè

Located at 2,873 meters at the foot of Piz Boè, this alpine hut offers 70 beds and a winter room. It serves as a central junction for hiking trails traversing the Sella plateau.

(46.51464, 11.82335)

Mo–Su

rifugioboe.it, +39 0471 847303



Open 24/7

G Via Ferrata Brigata Tridentina

A classic Dolomites climbing route featuring a suspension bridge near the Pisciadù hut. The route scales the vertical walls of the Exner Tower and is one of the most frequented via ferratas in the region.

(46.54527, 11.82497)



H Pisciadu Waterfalls

Fed by the Pisciadù lake, these waterfalls drop down the northern rock faces of the Sella massif. They are reachable via a hiking trail from the village of Colfosco.

(46.54273, 11.83139)





I Utia Pisciadù - Pisciadù Hütte - Rifugio Franco Cavazza al Pisciadù



An alpine hut at 2,585 meters situated next to the Pisciadù lake. Managed by the CAI Bologna, it marks the completion of the Brigata Tridentina via ferrata and provides accommodation for 76 people.

39033, Italy (46.53640, 11.82180)



J Lech dl Dragon

Lech dl Dragon is a proglacial lake in the Dolomites of South Tyrol, Italy.



39048, Italy (46.53458, 11.80638)



K Arabba

Located at the feet of the Dolomites' tallest glacier, the resort promises a great winter holiday.

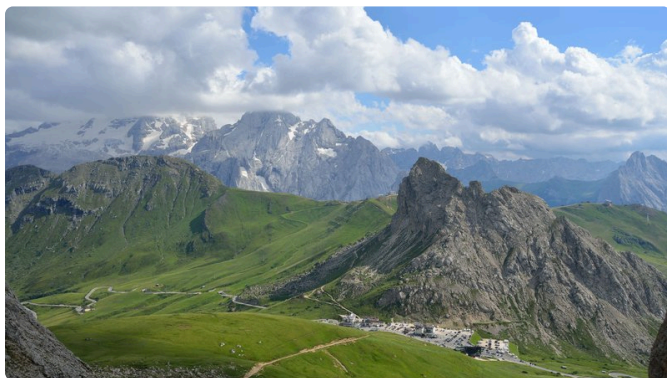
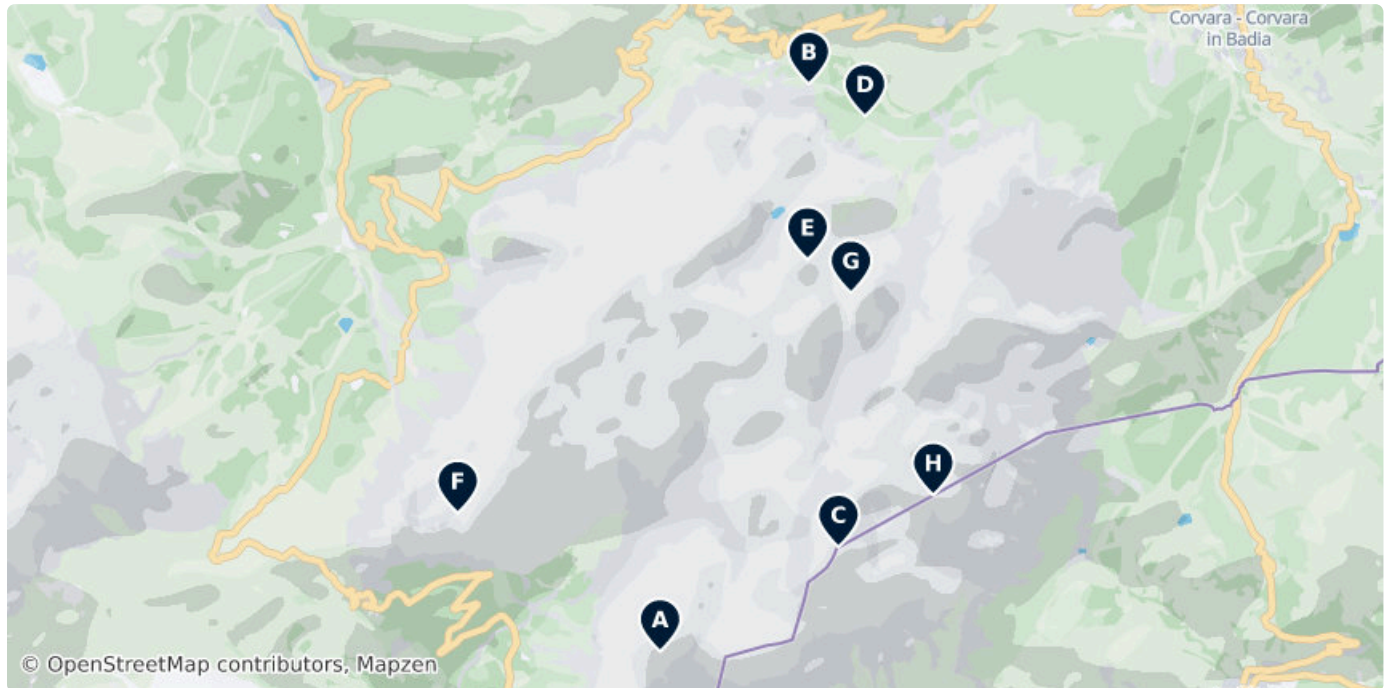


(Unnamed Road), 32020, Italy (46.48787, 11.86101)

arabba.it

Sella Group: Peaks & Via Ferratas

The Sella Group is a plateau-shaped massif in the Italian Dolomites, characterized by sheer limestone walls and high-altitude plateaus. This selection highlights the range's most prominent features, including Piz Boè, the highest summit at 3,152 meters, and the Sass Pordoi plateau. It also features technical routes like the Brigata Tridentina via ferrata, known for its suspension bridge, and the vertical south face of Piz Ciavazes, alongside the scenic Pisciadù waterfalls near Corvara.



A Sass Pordoi

A flat-topped limestone summit reachable by cable car from the Pordoi Pass, offering panoramic views of the Marmolada and Langkofel groups.

38032, Italy (46.50073, 11.80799)



B Via Ferrata Brigata Tridentina

A classic climbing route featuring a series of vertical ladders and a notable suspension bridge near the Pisciadù mountain hut.

(46.54527, 11.82497)





C Piz Boè

Piz Boè is the highest mountain of the Sella group, a mountain range in the Dolomites, Italy. It has an elevation of 3,152 metres.

(46.50894, 11.82835)



D Pisciadu Waterfalls

A series of cascades reachable via a gentle hiking trail from the town of Corvara in the Alta Badia valley.

(46.54273, 11.83139)



E Piz Pisciadù - Pisciadù-Spitze - Cima Pisciadù

A 2,985-meter peak located in the northern part of the Sella massif, situated above the Pisciadù lake and mountain refuge.

39033, Italy (46.53149, 11.82482)



F Piz Ciavazes

A 2,828-meter peak renowned for its expansive, vertical south face, which serves as a premier destination for alpine rock climbing.

39048, Italy (46.51159, 11.78490)



G Dent de Mezdi

A prominent rocky spire located within the Sella massif near the Val de Mezdi.

39033, Italy (46.52887, 11.82978)



H Le Ponte - Le Punte

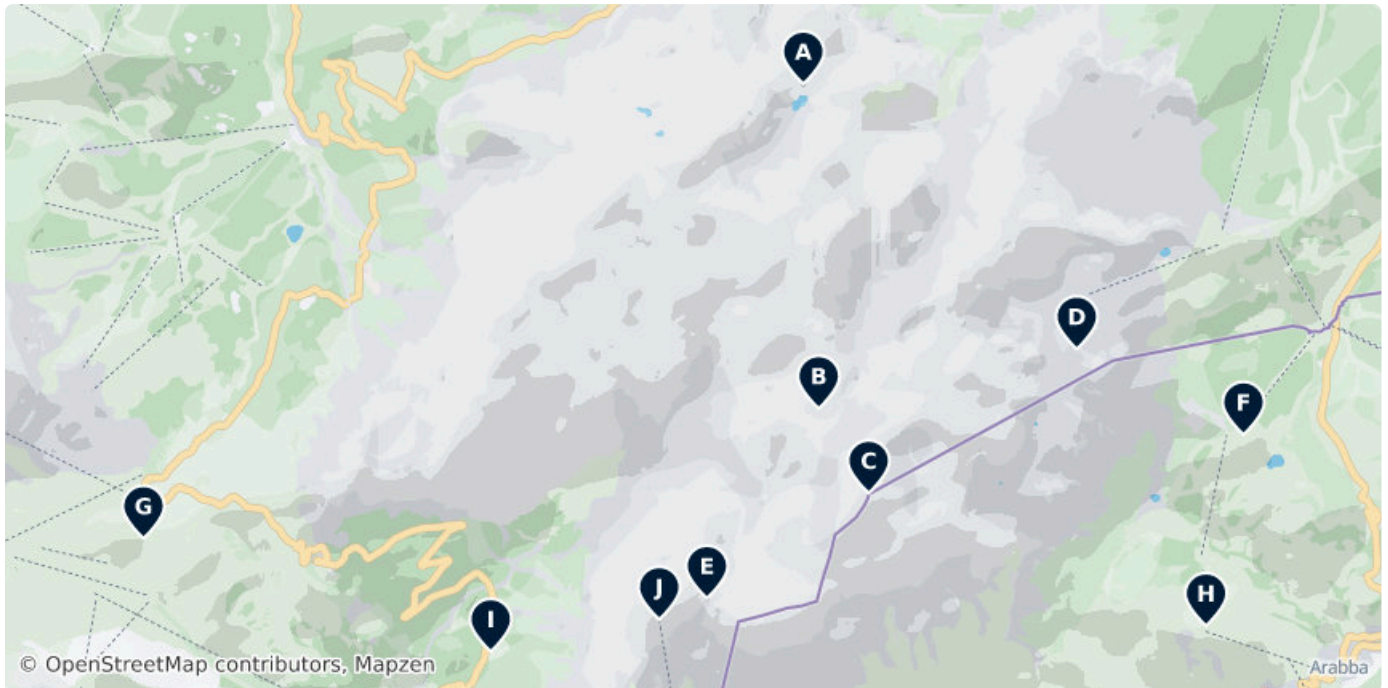
A series of rocky summits located on the southeastern edge of the Sella plateau.

32020, Italy (46.51301, 11.83917)



Dolomites Alpine Refuges

The Sella Group in the Dolomites features a network of high-altitude refuges, ranging from remote alpine huts to accessible mountain restaurants. These locations, such as the summit-top Capanna Piz Fassa at 3,152 meters and the historic Rifugio Valentini, provide essential shelter and regional Ladin and Tyrolean cuisine. Many are managed by the Club Alpino Italiano (CAI) and serve as key stopovers for hikers on the Alta Via 2 and the Sellaronda circuit.



A Utia Pisciadù - Pisciadù Hütte - Rifugio Franco Cavazza al Pisciadù



Managed by the CAI Bologna section, this hut sits near the Pisciadù lake. It is a primary destination for climbers completing the Brigata Tridentina via ferrata.

39033, Italy (46.53640, 11.82180)



B Rifugio Boé



Situated at 2,871 meters in the heart of the Sella massif, this SAT-owned refuge serves as a central hub for trails leading to Piz Boé and the Mesdì Valley.

38032, Italy (46.51462, 11.82329)

Mo–Su

Open 24/7

rifugioboee.it, +39 0471 847303

C Rifugio Capanna Piz Fassa

A private refuge situated directly on the 3,152-meter summit of Piz Boé, the highest point in the Sella Group. It offers 360-degree views of the surrounding peaks.

38032, Italy (46.50894, 11.82818)

15 giugno- 30 settembre

rifugiocapannapizfassa.com, +39336452523



D Ütia Franz Kostner al Valun

A CAI Bozen section hut located in the Vallon basin. It provides access to the Vallon via ferrata and the climbing routes of the Sella's eastern face.

39033, Italy (46.51861, 11.84849)

Apertura 2021- 12/06-3/10

rifugiokostner.it, +39 333 875 98 38



E Rifugio Forcella Pordoi

Positioned in the narrow Forcella Pordoi notch at 2,848 meters, this hut is accessible via a steep scree slope or from the top of the Sass Pordoi cable car.

38032, Italy (46.50188, 11.81239)



F Rifugio Bec de Rocces

Located near the distinctive rock formations above Passo Campolongo, this refuge features a restaurant specializing in regional Ladin cuisine.

Via Savinè, 32020, Italy (46.51287, 11.86476)



G Rifugio Valentini

A historic mountain inn located near Passo Sella, established in 1884. It offers traditional lodging and dining along the Sellaronda route.

(Unnamed Road), 38032, Italy (46.50590, 11.75737)

rifugiocarlovalentini.com, +39 462 601183



H Rifugio Col de Burz

A mountain restaurant located on the Col de Burz above Arabba, featuring a panoramic terrace and modern alpine interior design.

(46.50003, 11.86111)

+39 043679399



I Monti Pallidi

A traditional mountain lodge and restaurant situated on the slopes of Passo Sella, named after the local Ladin legend of the 'Pale Mountains'.

(46.49831, 11.79128)



J Rifugio Maria

Located at 2,950 meters at the arrival station of the Sass Pordoi cable car, this refuge features a wide observation deck known as the 'Terrace of the Dolomites'.

38032, Italy (46.50046, 11.80772)



DATA SOURCES

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