



**NOLS ALUMNI TRIP  
HIKING ITALY'S DOLOMITES  
SEPTEMBER 12 – 19, 2008**

**Features of This Trip**

- 6 nights in the field at “rifugios”
- 7 moving days
- Approx. 40 mile, trailed route
- Hiking at elevations of 6-9,000 feet
- Cultural interaction
- Eating and sleeping at “rifugios” keeps pack weight down
- One night (paired lodging) on each end in a Bolzano hotel
- Stunning scenery in the Italian Alps
- First and last nights’ hotel lodging included
- Group size: up to 10 participants and 2 instructors

**Cost:** \$2475

**Minimum Age:** 21

**Trip Description:**

Join a small group of NOLS grads, friends, families and instructors for a week of spectacular hiking in the Dolomites as we trek between "rifugios" (small, hostel-style lodgings) during the Italian Alps' early autumn.

This trip will re-acquaint you with NOLS backpacking techniques in a convivial, relaxing and visually stunning location. Instruction is geared to your interests, with optional walk-up peaks, Italian "word(s) of the day," time for journal writing and photography, and more. Of course, non-alumni friends and family are also invited— this is a great way to introduce NOLS to your sidekicks.

The route offers a moderate level of hiking – the average hiking day is about 5-miles with variable changes in elevation – averaging about 2,400' per move. For those that want more, there will be options to do additional day hiking with an instructor.

Connecting our string of rifugios gives us the chance to savor Italian cuisine and culture while mixing with other, mostly European travelers, in a dorm-style setting. Sleeping and dining (dinner and breakfasts) in the rifugios allows us to considerably lighten our packs for our daily mountain hikes among the stunning spires, valleys, ridges and peaks of northern Italy.

The trip spends 6-nights in the "field" at rifugios and 7-days hiking. Unlike a standard NOLS expedition, we won't carry cook gear, or heavy rations—even pads and sleeping bags are not needed at the rifugios, but we'll do "real" trail hiking over varied terrain with our lightened backpacks.

**The Environment:**

The Dolomites offer a variety of mountain terrain—boasting grassy meadows, stands of conifers, large boulders and wide expanses of exposed bedrock. The majority of our trek follows established trails with limited signage. In addition, weather at this time of year can vary—including hot, sunny days, or rain mixed with snow at higher elevations. Temps are likely to be 65-70° F. during the days and near 45° at night. Most hiking will be in the 6,500-9,000' elevation range with nearby peaks reaching about 10,000'.

**The Rifugios:**

Rifugios are mountain hotels ranging from extremely posh to very basic. Our rifugio lodging will supply hostel-like accommodations in either large, common, mixed-gender bunkrooms or a series of smaller rooms. Showers are available for an extra cost (~€4- bring your own towel). The rifugios supply a bed and heavy blankets, but no sheets. We suggest using a lightweight sleeping bag liner for sleeping. Earplugs may also come in handy.

Well-made dinner and breakfasts are part of the lodging package (“mezza-pensione”), but alcohol is not. Wine and beer are available at the rifugios for €4-9. We'll eat in a dining room with a common table for our group. Breakfasts include fresh coffee, tea and pastries/cereal/yogurt. Dinners are likely to be pastas, chicken, soups and salad.

In September, the trails and rifugios will attract people from all over Europe, providing a true cultural experience. From Milan to Bolzano to the rifugios, there is not a lot of English spoken. Italian and German are predominant, so you might enjoy an Italian phrase book- the *Lonely Planet* series is good for tourist ideas and basic country facts.

**Curriculum:**

This trip focuses on many traditional NOLS skills, including map reading, hiking and group travel. Participants can learn new outdoor skills with friends and family with a small group of fellow grads. The instructors will present information necessary for the group to comfortably travel and can present topics desired by the participants— including natural history, NOLS' leadership topics and relevant local human history.

Alumni trips, though more relaxed than a typical NOLS course, are not full-on vacations or guided trips. They are self-reliant trips through remote areas where evacuation to modern medical facilities can take several days. Throughout the trip, you will travel outdoors and care for yourself. The expedition format emphasizes hands-on learning and application of skills in a variety of situations. Participants have the freedom to bring equipment that is necessary for their comfort and enjoyment of the trip and are expected to take responsibility for this aspect of the trip.

**Trip Logistics:**

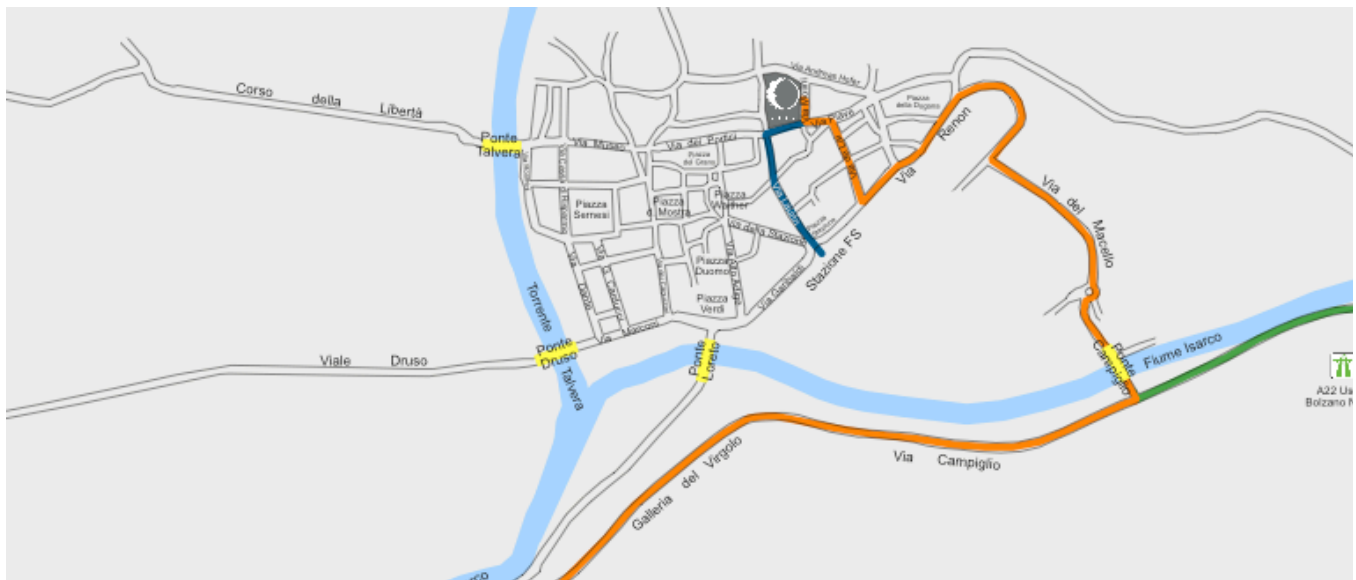
The trip starts and ends in the ancient, cobble-stoned city of Bolzano (capital of the autonomous province of Bolzano-Bozen: population ~100K), which is easily reached by train from Milan, a renowned fashion, historic and artistic center (the travel information supplies details). Participants should plan on flying in and out of Bolzano (code: BZO, connecting via Munich or Rome) or Milan Malpensa Airport (code: MXP). Consider staying extra days on either end of the trip to explore the sights of northern Italy.

From Bolzano, our group will take a series of train and shuttle rides to and from our "roadheads" in the mountains.

### **Registration and Payment:**

To reserve a space on this trip, please submit a non-refundable deposit of \$200 per person to the NOLS Alumni Department. Mastercard or Visa works via phone (800.332.4280), or mail a check to: NOLS Alumni Department, 284 Lincoln St. Lander, WY 82520. The remainder of the tuition and all application forms are due by August 5.

### **Bolzano Map:**



NOLS has secured lodging for our group (we'll single-gender pair up the group) at the Parkhotel Luna Mondschein on the nights of September 12 and 19 (<http://www.hotel-luna.it/en>). The hotel is a five-minute walk from the train station. If you want to stay at the Parkhotel Luna Mondschein before or after our trip dates, contact us for possible special NOLS rate details.

### **Currency:**

You'll need cash in the form of Euros for miscellaneous, incidental purchases and transportation throughout the trip. You'll receive the best exchange at your local bank, but money change kiosks are handy in most airports. US credit cards will work in most locations, including train stations, but it's often a good idea to give your credit card company a heads up that you're traveling internationally. Fifty to 100 Euros will be plenty of cash for the field portion of the trip for incidental purchases.

## **Air Travel:**

There are two main ways to access Bolzano from the United States: fly directly there via Munich or Rome; or fly into Milan Malpensa Airport and catch a train to Bolzano.

Our trip starts and ends in Bolzano, which is served by Lufthansa regional flights out of Munich or Rome. If you're keen to utilize Italy's extensive train system, consider flying into Milan's Malpensa International Airport (code: MXP). Milan requires using the bus and train system to reach Bolzano (details below – takes about 3.5 hours).

Depending on where you first touch down in Europe, you may either clear customs in that city or in Milan. You don't need a visa, but customs will stamp your passport.

## **Travel in Italy – Flying Direct into Bolzano:**

The Airport Bolzano Dolomiti code is "BZO." Check Lufthansa regional commuter airlines for connections via Munich or Rome. You may also have luck using Air Alps, Alitalia, Austrian Airlines, Air Europa, Air Dolomiti, Iberia, Lauda Air, Italy First, KLM, Olympic Airways, Sabena, or Volare Airline regional carriers. The historic city center and the Parkhotel Luna Mondschein are about a 20-min, 3-mile taxi ride from the airport.

## **Travel in Italy – Flying into Milan, Then Train to Bolzano:**

### **STAGE ONE - FROM MILAN MALPENSA AIRPORT TO THE MILAN TRAIN STATION -**

When you arrive at Milan Malpensa Airport (MXP) you're most likely to retrieve your luggage in Terminal #1. Go to the Malpensa Shuttle ticket counter near exit #5. Buy a round-trip shuttle ticket ("Andata a ritorno" - roundtrip tickets are not dated and cost about €10.00) to "Stazione Centrale" (the Central Train Station in Milan). See <http://www.malpensashuttle.it/e-default.htm> for further details.

Shuttle bus services leave from outside the Terminal 1 Arrivals area. The shuttle departs about every twenty minutes and takes about an hour to reach the Milan Central Train Station.

Please note that Milan's Stazione Centrale has some very good and inexpensive sandwich shops. Consider picking up a bottle of water and a sandwich for the train ride.

**STAGE TWO - TRAIN FROM MILAN TO BOLZANO -** At Milan Central Station, proceed into the Station Head House and go to the ticket windows for inter-city trains. Purchase a ticket to Bolzano- ("per favore un biglietto per Bolzano- andata solamente." Cost is about €38). This ticket allows you to change trains in Verona (layover 20-40 minutes) and board the Bolzano train.

The train tickets have important information printed on them. Typical wording might say "Carrozza 005, posti 31 finestrino" - this means that you are on car 005, your reserved window seat is number 31. The trains are smoke-free and luggage is stored in the compartment.

The trip from Milan to Verona is about 80-90 minutes depending on the train. Layover and change trains in Verona for 20-40 minutes. The final train leg to Bolzano is about two and a half hours. Get off at the Bolzano/Bozen main station. Your train may come to "Sud Bolzano" before Bolzano proper- wait for the true Bolzano/Bozen stop.

### Accommodations:

The trip tuition includes lodging at Bolzano's Parkhotel Luna Mondschein on September 12 and the final night in Bolzano (September 19). If you come early or want to stay in the area after the trip, contact us ([alumni@nols.edu](mailto:alumni@nols.edu)) and we'll provide lodging suggestions.

Personal baggage that doesn't go into the mountains with you can be stored at our Bolzano hotel. This is reasonably secure storage, but highly expensive items (e.g. computers or other electronics) should not be left in your in-town bags. NOLS assumes no responsibility for your stored baggage.

Hotel information: Parkhotel Luna Mondschein Bolzano, via Piave 15, Tel +39 0471 / 975 642. Fax +39 0471 / 975 577. Email: [info@hotel-luna](mailto:info@hotel-luna).

### Itinerary:

<b>Sept. 10</b>	Depending on connections and possible pre-trip plans, many participants will depart the US on this day.	
<b>Sept. 11</b>	We urge you to arrive in Bolzano on this day, allowing for jet lag recovery, possible baggage snafus and some optional activities on the 9/12.	Lodging: on your own, but we suggest the Parkhotel Luna Mondschein.
<b>Sept. 12</b>	For those in Bolzano, we'll loosely organize some optional activities- including a visit to the "Iceman" at the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology and acclimatizing day hikes in the mountains near town. Our <b>pre-trip group orientation occurs at 6:30 p.m.</b> in the Luna Mondschein lobby.	Lodging provided by NOLS at the Parkhotel Luna Mondschein. Dinner on your own.
<b>Sept. 13</b>	Pack up. Store in-town luggage. Vehicle shuttle to Lago Braies roadhead. Hike 5+ miles.	Lodging: Rifugio Sennes. Breakfast on your own.
<b>Sept. 14</b>	Hike 6+ miles.	Lodging: Rifugio La Varella
<b>Sept. 15</b>	Hike 6+ miles—this is our most challenging day.	Lodging: Rifugio Lagazuoi
<b>Sept. 16</b>	Hike ~2 miles using a mix of cable cars, chair lifts and shuttles to visit WWI museums and Tre Sassi Fort.	Lodging: Rifugio Cinque Torri
<b>Sept. 17</b>	Hike 3+ miles.	Lodging: Rifugio Palmieri
<b>Sept. 18</b>	Hike 7+ miles.	Lodging: Rifugio Venezia
<b>Sept. 19</b>	Hike 5+ miles to our roadhead near Borda di Cadore. Shuttle to Bolzano.	Lodging provided by NOLS at the Parkhotel Luna Mondschein. No host dinner.
<b>Sept. 20</b>	Depart Bolzano/fly home	

### Contact Information:

The NOLS alumni office is located at the NOLS Headquarters in Lander, Wyoming. We can be reached at (800) 332-4280. Email is also an option: [alumni@nols.edu](mailto:alumni@nols.edu). If you have any **problems on arrival day**, please leave a message for us at 800-332-4280.

## Equipment List

**NOLS provides:** Maps, First Aid Kits, Emergency Communications, Water Treatment, Emergency Shelter

- Bring these items with you:**
- 1 set of light or medium synthetic long underwear
  - comfortable medium or lightweight hiking boots – sized to fit with a liner/wool, or 2 pairs of wool socks system (contact us for additional boot fitting information).
  - hiking socks (2-4 pair)
  - water bottle (wide mouth quart or liter size plastic)
  - flashlight/headlamp and batteries
  - sunglasses w/ retainer
  - sleeping bag liner–silk is available–we’re using rifugio bunk beds with a basic sheet, pillow and quilt. If your bag liner doesn’t have a built-in pillowcase, consider one.
  - medium-sized backpack- large enough to fit your personal gear, but no food/cooking items or tents.
  - long sleeve shirt for sun protection (1)
  - underwear (1-2 pairs)
  - sneakers or similar non-hiking shoes
  - toiletries
  - gaiters
  - hiking shorts
  - sunscreen/lip balm
  - rain jacket & wind pants
  - t-shirt
  - wool or fleece gloves
  - sun hat/ball cap

- Nice touches:**
- camera with waterproof bag
  - small towel for optional rifugio showers
  - extra pair of prescription glasses or contact lenses
  - personal reading book
  - hiking poles (collapsible) - takes hiking stress off the knees
  - casual shirt/slacks – lightweight options for dinner or shower room treks at the rifugios.

- Notes:**
- Your US cell phone may or may not work in Europe. Check with your carrier for details.
  - Depending on the exact items you bring, packs are likely to be in the 18-25 pound range. You should be able to use a pack that is 3-4,000 cubic inches.
  - Boot fit is key. You can use fairly light boots because of the light packs and trail travel. Contact us if you have boot questions.

**Basically, you’ll need a t-shirt, 3 insulating layers, plus a wind proof and a rain proof layer– all must fit comfortably over each other so they can be worn at the same time. If you tend to get cold easily, add a fleece vest, or second pile jacket. On your legs plan 1-2 insulating layers that fit under your wind/rain pants.**

