

ITINERARY 2027 AUSTRIA & ITALY

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Alpine Cultures in the Heart of the Alps

March 1–12, 2027

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This tour was custom designed to experience the Alpine cultures of the southern Tyrol region in Austria and Italy, the geographic heart of the European alps: their topography, ecosystems, history, art, cuisine, and future.

This itinerary is subject to change.

Travel demands flexibility. We will strive to balance adaptability with remaining on schedule. Please trust that, when it is not possible to follow the plan laid out below, your program leaders will work to find substitutions that retain the quality of this Study Travel program. Various details may be added or changed due to information obtained while making reservations, or perhaps on site, especially because of the weather. BLD indicates included group meals.

Monday, March 1 Depart U.S.

Depart the U.S. on your individually-booked flights.

Tuesday, March 2 Arrive Innsbruck (D)

Upon arrival, make your way to the group hotel. In the early evening we'll gather for introductions and have our group welcome dinner. Overnight at Hotel Grauer Bär or similar x 3 nights.

Wednesday, March 3 Innsbruck (BD)

This morning we'll embark on a guided walking tour of Old Town. After lunch on your own, we'll have a tasting at a nearby schnapps brewery. Schnaps – as it's spelled in German – is a cornerstone of Alpine heritage, with deep cultural connections to Alpine farming traditions and an important role in social rituals. Unlike the sweet, syrupy liqueurs often labeled as schnapps in the U.S., authentic Austrian schnaps is a potent, unsweetened fruit brandy known as Obstler and is renowned for its high quality. Group dinner. Overnight in Innsbruck

Thursday, March 4 Innsbruck (BL)

Today we'll start with a guided tour of Swarovski Kristallwelten, a place of immersive art, unique crystal installations, and a distinctive design intertwined with nature. Swarovski Crystal is world-renowned and the Crystal Worlds museum is described as a walk-in fantasy realm where art and technology merge in unexpected ways. The Chambers of Wonder offer 14 art-filled rooms curated by international artists, each with a unique crystal installation. We'll learn how crystals are used in art and design, and marvel at the Crystal Cloud, a massive structure of thousands of crystals. After a group lunch we'll visit the Bergisel Ski Jump which boasts a panoramic view of Innsbruck and the surrounding Alps from its viewing platforms. As a historic site for the Olympics and the Four Hills Tournament, we will get to see where ski jumping legends are made, and you can even try the "tremble bench" experience, which simulates the position ski jumpers adopt before launching themselves down the ramp. Dinner on your own. Overnight in Innsbruck.

Friday, March 5 Innsbruck to Telfes (BL)

After breakfast we'll check out of the hotel and head off in our private bus to the Stubaital – Stubai Valley – where we'll visit the Forsterhaus local history museum, housed in an old Tyrolean farmhouse and showcasing rural life from a century ago. After a group lunch, we'll visit the farmer's market and get a sense of local products, while enjoying the warm social atmosphere of the local community. Dinner on your own. Overnight at Hotel Oberhofer or similar x 3 nights.

Saturday, March 6 Telfes (BD)

Today we'll set out on our first full day of skiing on the Stubai Glacier, including the Top of Tyrol platform, an architectural viewing platform offering panoramic views of over 109 three-thousand-meter peaks in the Alps, including the Dolomites. Accessible via a modern gondola lift the Top of Tyrol is located at an altitude of 3,210 meters on the Große Isidor peak and its platform extends nine meters beyond the mountain's edge (you read that right!). For those desiring an alternative to skiing, opportunities abound for curling, tobogganing, ice-sculpture carving, Laser Biathlon, a husky sled-dog workshop, or simply a relaxing spa day with massage, sauna, steam room and more at our group spa hotel. Lunch on your own. Group dinner. Overnight in Telfes.

Sunday, March 7 Telfes (BD)

We'll start our day by visiting a local shop for a tasting of regional products such as Tyrolean bacon and sausages, local cheeses, and baked goods with jams. After lunch on your own, we'll set out for an afternoon of tobogganing and dinner at a mountain hut. Austrians love winter: socializing, delicious food, and lots of fun in the fresh mountain air! And what better way to enjoy all of this than a day of tobogganing, a very popular activity in Austria for all ages and abilities. We will get to the top of the hill via the Toboggan Taxi (lift), before setting off back down the sledding tracks. Overnight in Telfes.

Monday, March 8 Neustift to Cortina d'Ampezzo (BL)

After breakfast we'll check out of the hotel and head for Italy on our private bus. On the way we'll visit the Brenner Base Tunnel site, whose construction began in 2007 and is expected to be completed around 2032. One of the most ambitious railway projects in Europe, spanning about 65 kilometers, and aiming to enhance transportation between Italy and Austria, this is cooler than it might first sound. So far we've been learning about Alpine history and traditions, but one of the important considerations is modern transportation in this unforgiving environment. During a tour of the tunnel we'll delve deeper into the fascinating challenges and innovations behind this monumental undertaking. Group lunch. Afternoon free with dinner on your own. Overnight at Hotel Franceschi or similar x 4 nights.

Tuesday, March 9 Cortina (BL)

We'll set off today for a morning of snowshoeing, a serene yet invigorating winter adventure. We'll trek on pristine, snow-covered trails, surrounded by towering limestone peaks bathed in sunlight. We'll pause at a rustic rifugio for a hearty meal of local specialties with warm drinks. Then, it's off to a nearby abbey for a tour and tasting at their winery. Dinner on your own. Overnight in Cortina.

Wednesday, March 10 Cortina (BD)

Today we'll enjoy our second full day of skiing, or optional activities as you choose. A day of alpine skiing in Cortina is a thrilling experience in the heart of the Dolomites, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The amazing views of craggy limestone peaks and huge Alpine scenery make every run amazing. Pause midday at a cozy rifugio perched on the slopes to savor local dishes like casunziei (beet-filled pasta) or a steaming plate of pasta paired with Italian wine. Spend the afternoon carving through scenic runs like the Olympia delle Tofane, the 2026 Olympics downhill track, or enjoying more gentle slopes. Lunch on your own. We'll gather back together to share stories from the day during a group dinner. Overnight in Cortina.

Thursday, March 11 Cortina (BLD)

We start today with some flavors of the Dolomites during a cooking class in a Cortina kitchen. In embracing the heart of the Italian Alps, we will learn about the rich, comforting flavors of mountain cuisine. This is a hands-on experience brought to us by a local chef, and when the cooking is done, we'll sit down to enjoy the fruits of our labor over a glass of fine South Tyrol wine — warm company, rustic flavors, and Alpine charm all around. After an afternoon free to do with as you like, we'll gather for our farewell group dinner. Overnight in Cortina.

Friday, March 12 Ciao! (B)

Breakfast is provided at the hotel. Make your own way to the airport for your homeward or onward journey. Until next time!