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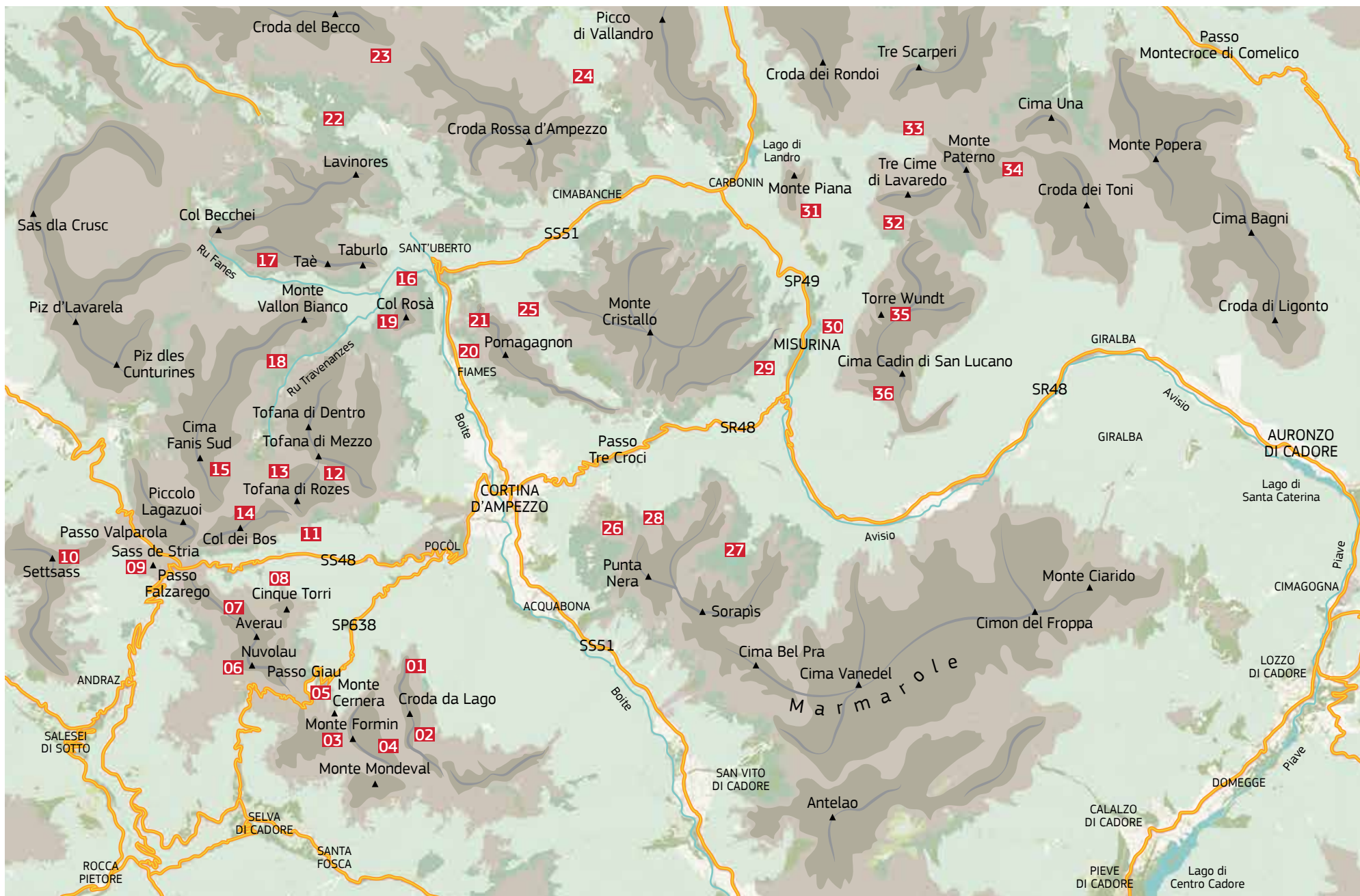
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The Cadini di Misurina.









## THE AMPEZZO BASIN & MISURINA

Some places are so unique as to encapsulate an entire region, and the area described in this guidebook is one of those. Indeed, to most people, any mention of **Cortina d'Ampezzo** intrinsically conjures up images and thoughts of the Dolomites. The so-called "Pearl of the Dolomites" rose to international fame with the Winter Olympics of 1956 and today the town is a well-regarded tourist destination that offers infinite possibilities for outdoor sports enthusiasts. The present and future look bright, with the town set to host the FIS Alpine World Ski Championships 2021 and the 2026 Winter Olympics. This will be an unmissable opportunity to develop the local tourist infrastructure, but also, we hope, a chance to showcase and promote a respect for the environment that a wonderful place such as Cortina so deserves.

The Ampezzo region alone has over 400 km of marked trails of varying difficulties, 56 mountain huts or "rifugios" and dozens of via ferrata routes, to say nothing of the spectacular rock faces that harbour over 850 sport climbs and hundreds of classic routes (there are over 300 routes on the tiny Cinque Torri group alone).

Enjoying a stunning location at the foot of the legendary Tre Cime di Lavaredo, **Misurina** is also justifiably famous for its magnificent lake that each year draws thousands of visitors from all over the globe.

### The paths and Alte Vie trails of the Dolomites

The routes described in this guidebook follow well-walked trails which are marked and maintained by the Club Alpino Italiano (CAI). Between 1990 and 1996, CAI's Commissione Centrale Escursionismo defined the standards for Italy's network of paths and set the benchmark for waymarking and trail maintenance.

A strategic plan was defined to enable the trails to be managed more effectively. Path numbers were assigned and the paths were ordered, catalogued, recorded digitally on a digital system and, most importantly, marked both on the ground and on the map.

The **CAI paths** are identified through a three-figure numbering system where the first figure denotes the Sector and the second two figures indicate the path number within the Sector. The path numbers are written on a white stripe with red stripes above and below. In the South Ty-

### ● The Ampezzo Basin and Misurina

rol some of the older path numbers with only one or two figures are still in use.

The **Alte Vie** of the Dolomites are a series of high-altitude, multi-day hiking trails served by rifugios and huts that offer overnight shelter or accommodation. The story of the Alte Vie began on 05 July 1966, when two Bavarian hikers, Ulrich Görn and Gerda Hoffmann, reached Belluno from Braies in the Val Pusteria. In the sixties, the Pale Alps were very different to now: the landscape was much wilder and the memory of the Second World War still lingered, perpetuated by the South Tyrolean secessionist movement for the region's removal from Italy. The hikers' adventure brought with it the idea of a cultural rapprochement between two areas so close geographically, but ideologically so far apart. However, the real turning point was the article published in the German magazine *Alpinismus* in February 1966, with a report that sparked the curiosity of throngs of Germans ready to embark on this new and exciting trail. We are talking, of course, about Alta Via 1, the classic high altitude route that heralded the start of a new era of hiking tourism, bringing with it enormous economic advantages and putting the Dolomites on the map. The Alte Vie generally follow trails graded from T (tourist) to EEA (expert hikers with equipment), and often feature variations to extend the route or ascend nearby peaks. The routes are clearly marked with a triangular waymarker containing the number of the Alta Via. Alta Vie 1, 3 and 4 pass through the Ampezzo Basin and the neighbouring Misurina area.



*CAI signs and waymarks around Passo Giau.*

Alta Via 1 begins in the Val Pusteria, leading south through eleven mountain groups to end in Bolzano. From Lago di Braies it ascends to Rifugio Biella (Croda del Becco) and then crosses the high plateaus of Sennes and Fanes to reach the highest point of the route, Rifugio Lagazuoi. From here it continues towards the Tofane, crosses Passo Falzarego, passes Cinque Torri, Averau and Nuvolau, and continues towards the Passo Giau. It then wends towards Lastoi di Formin and Croda da Lago, crosses Forcella Ambrizzola and heads towards Pelmo, leaving the Ampezzo region.

In 1969 Mario Brovelli, a doctor from Cremona, wrote an article in the "Le Alpi Venete" magazine about what would later become the **Alta Via 3** (Alta Via dei camosci). Numerous routes were considered in this period, inspired by the wave of enthusiasm that followed the creation of Alte



# NUVOLAU

A majestic view accessible to all



**MOUNTAIN GROUP:** Nuvolau  
**DEPARTURE POINT:** Passo Giau (2236 m)  
**MINIMUM ALTITUDE:** 2236 m  
**MAXIMUM ALTITUDE:** 2575 m  
**LENGTH:** 8.1 km  
**ASCENT:** 569 m  
**TIME:** 4.10 h  
**GRADE:** E

**SUPPORT BASES** Rifugio Passo Giau,  
 Rifugio Nuvolau  
**WATER:** no  
**RECOMMENDED PERIOD:** July-September  
**POPULARITY:** very high  
**FAMILY:** >6

*Ra Gusèla and Nuvolau  
 from Passo Giau.*

# 006

*The ascent of Nuvolau is a true Cortina classic; it is not often that such a scenic peak can be accessed with such limited effort and technical difficulty. The view from the summit is unparalleled and it is no surprise that each year thousands of walkers make the climb to soak up the magical atmosphere and create memories to take back home. Watching the sunrise or sunset from the top of Nuvolau is an unforgettable experience.*

### ACCESS

Passo Giau, col between Ampezzo and Selva di Cadore. From the centre of Cortina take the SS48 towards the Passo Falzarego. 400 metres beyond Pocòl, turn left onto SP638 and follow this for 10 km.

### ROUTE

From Passo Giau ascend north along path 452

which leads up the broad grassy crest, aiming for the foot of the imposing buttress of Ra Gusèla (2595 m).

Shortly afterwards, at the fork at 2244 m, keep left and follow the path to undulate easily below the west face of Nuvolau, overcoming the rocks of **Masarei di Piezza**.

The characteristic squeaks of the timid marmot population can often be heard from the rocky meadows below.

After a short descent (with a steeper shortcut to the right), the path joins the track that ascends towards Rifugio Averau (2413 m) situated in a scenic position at Forcella Nuvolau.

The hut is reached in 1.30 h; from here, ascend the broad, gently ascending rocky slabs of Nuvolau's northern flank (path 439), gaining height easily to reach the summit and Rifugio Nuvolau (40 minutes from Rifugio Averau).

The view on the ascent is superb, with unparal-



*The path to Nuvolau and Averau.*



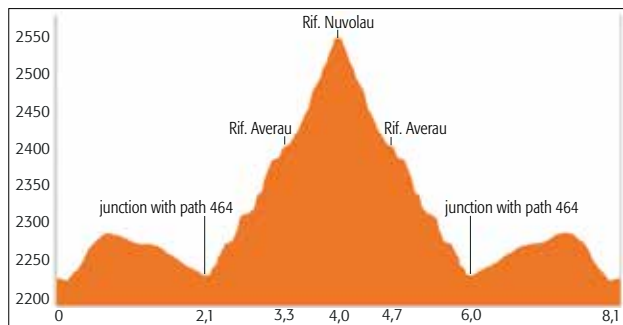


leled views over the main Dolomite mountains, but the summit experience exceeds all expectations with its stunning and truly breathtaking 360° view of the surrounding natural beauty. Reverse the route to return to Passo Giau in 2 h.

**VARIANTS**

- A)** Rifugio Nuvolau can also be reached from the Passo Falzarego road (see route 07).
- B)** More experienced hikers may wish to take **via ferrata kit and make the ascent to the hut via Ferrata Ra Gusèla**, a beginner-friendly protected path. From Passo Giau follow path 452, at the fork keep right to follow path 443 and at the next fork turn left (path 438) to reach the start of the ferrata. Simple cabled sections lead through the rocks of the Gusèla before a traverse leads to the final ascent to the summit of Nuvolau (1.35 h).

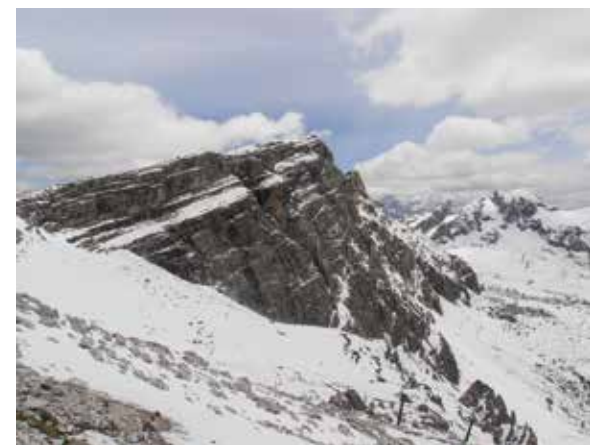
**C)** For a longer walk, it is possible to descend down the eastern side and complete the full circular tour of Nuvolau. Follow the main track to reach Rifugio Cinque Torri (2137 m, 15 minutes, E), a popular haunt of alpine choughs and finches who have quickly leaned to take advantage of tourists to find food! Continue south (path 443), ascending the slopes of Crêpe dei Rónde through sparse but imposing larch trees and Swiss pine and a dense undergrowth dominated by rhododendrons. The next section is short but



challenging, with steep gradients and exposed hanging valleys.

Follow the undulating path on the western slope of Becco Muraglia (Bèco de ra Marogna), at the base of which stands the start of the Giau Wall, the ancient border between Cadore and Ampezzo.

As the Passo Giau draws nearer (1.45, E), the environment changes considerably, with beautiful flowering plant species (orchids) and small but fascinating areas of high altitude peat bog.



Above: the rocky slope leading to the summit of Nuvolau. Next pages: Nuvolau and surrounding peaks seen from Monte Cenera.

**THE OLDEST RIFUGIO IN THE DOLOMITES**

The very first mountain hut in the Dolomites - meaning a genuine building rather than a mere shelter, and not including the Brenta region - was Nuvolau. The building was constructed by the DuÖAV (German and Austrian Alpine Club) in 1883 thanks to the generosity of Baron Richard vom Meerheimb who arrived to the area from Saxony gravely ill and spent his recovery in Ampezzo. As a mark of his gratitude he commissioned the construction of the then-named *Sachsendankhütte* (literally "hut of Saxon gratitude").



Extended in 1901, the hut was later destroyed in the First World War. When the hostilities came to an end the site passed into the hands of CAI Cortina d'Ampezzo who repaired and reopened the building under its current name.







Cinque Torri

Castelletto

Ra Gusèla

Torre Fanis

Nuvolau

Cima Fanis Sud

Rifugio Averau

Gran Lagazuoi

Averau

Piz dles Cunturines

Piz d'Lavarela