

## Preparing for your trek: Italy

The following information tells you what you will need to do to prepare for your trek.

### Checklist

#### To send to CAT office

- Medical form
- Insurance declaration form

#### To do

- Now - Make a note in your diary of the payment schedule shown on your invoice
- Now - Check that the name on your invoice EXACTLY matches the first and surname on your passport and notify the CAT office immediately if there are any discrepancies.
- Set aside time to improve your mountain fitness
- Vaccinations – travel clinic. 2-3 months before departure
- Obtain medical items on kit list
- Dental check-up 1-2 months before departure
- Insurance
- Book travel arrangements to / from the trip meeting point (only do this once the trip is guaranteed to run, ie when we have received the minimum number of bookings to guarantee the trip).
- Equipment list – decide which items you may need to buy.

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## Health issues

- **Fitness - train for your trip** – you will enjoy the trek much more if you are fit. For most of our trekking trips you will need to be comfortable trekking for on average 6 hours a day in mountainous terrain. By far the best way to train for trekking is to get out on the British hills and spend time climbing, for example, to the heights of the Lake District peaks, ie around 800 – 1000m. If you are capable of putting together a few days of that calibre back-to-back, you should be capable of most of our treks. For those not able to regularly get to the British hills, then regular cardiovascular exercise, for example on the stepper in the gym is a good alternative, but you should still try to get some time in mountain terrain as gyms cannot simulate the rough ground found in a mountain environment.
- **Medical form** – please complete and sign the enclosed form. You will need a doctor to sign the form to declare your suitability for the trek if you are over 65 or have a pre-existing medical condition.
- **Vaccinations** – you do not need any specific travel vaccinations for travel to Italy, though it may be worth checking that your primary courses and boosters are up to date as recommended for life in Britain.
- **Ticks** – it is worth keeping a check on your body at the end of each day on trek for ticks, just as it would be if you were walking in the UK. Ticks like warm, moist parts of the body, and can cause Lyme Disease.
- **Dental checkup** – altitude and flying are notorious for highlighting dental problems, and there is nothing worse than being on trek with toothache. A check-up timed sufficiently in advance of the departure date to allow for any work that is required to be done on your teeth can save you a lot of pain on trek.
- **Medicines** – A limited first aid kit is carried on all our treks to Italy, and your sirdar/trek leader will be trained in first aid, but you should make sure that YOU carry any medication that you rely on and a personal basic first aid kit too. It is very important that you tell your trek leader of any medication that you take, and also of any medical conditions, even if you have already told us about them on your medical form.
- **Stomach upsets** can happen, sometimes just as a result of a change of diet, but sometimes from a more persistent cause. In the event of you having an upset stomach, we recommend that you do NOT block up your system with immodium-type medicines, but that you limit your food intake, keep to a low-fat diet. Flattened coke seems to help, as do rehydration salts (eg Dioralyte or Jeevan Jal). If it looks like the problem is severe, antibiotics almost always offer an extremely effectively and rapid solution, but this is unlikely to be necessary in Italy.
- **Trekking at altitude** – Our itineraries are planned to give time for acclimatisation, but it is important to think of trekking at altitude as a multi-day event. Think “marathon” rather than “sprint”. If you can’t talk while you are walking, you are walking too fast. Keeping to this as a guide, and learning to listen to what your body is telling you will help you with acclimatisation. Our treks in Italy are not high enough to cause altitude problems, but you may notice that it is slightly harder to breathe when exerting energy at altitude.

## Paperwork

**Insurance:** It is a condition of booking that you have adequate insurance for your trip. Your insurance must cover you for the entire period of travel, and for the activities\* and the altitude you are going to, and also for helicopter rescue and repatriation. You should also notify the insurance company of all pre-existing medical conditions. Please note that many insurance companies do not cover these requirements. There are a few insurance companies that specialise in insurance policies suitable for trekking expeditions. If your current travel insurance company cannot provide you with a suitable policy, please contact us for further information. We recommend that you also have insurance for cancellation and personal baggage.

As a result of changes to travel insurance rules from 1 January 2009 we can no longer arrange your insurance for you. However, we would be happy to refer you to Campbell Irvine, an insurance company we have worked with in the past, but the relationship is then between yourself and the insurance company. To purchase the same insurance that you would have previously been able to buy from ourselves, please contact Campbell Irvine direct by one of the following methods, **and please mention that you are trekking with Community Action Treks:**

Online at: [www.catreks.com/info/Insurance.pdf](http://www.catreks.com/info/Insurance.pdf)

By telephone: 0844 826 2722

By email: [info@campbellirvine.com](mailto:info@campbellirvine.com)

In all cases, extra costs incurred by a client as a result of premature departure from the expedition, eg, rescue, food and accommodation costs of themselves and support staff etc, are the responsibility of the client. It is important that all clients carry with them the financial means to meet these costs at the time of them being incurred.

Once you have arranged your insurance, please complete the enclosed insurance declaration form, and return it to us.

### Passport

Check that your passport will have at least 6 months of validity at the time of travelling. Send a copy of the details page of your passport to the CAT office. You may also like to travel with a copy of this page in case you lose your passport. You will need to carry it with you as ID in Italy.

**Visa:** Visas are not currently required for entry into Italy by UK nationals. Other nationalities should consult their Italian embassy.

## Money

- **Currency and cards:** Euros are used throughout Italy. Once in the mountains, do not assume that you can use cards to pay for anything, so take as much Euros in small notes as you can on the trek. ATMs are widely available at airports and in the major towns. Sometimes you will be asked for photo ID when you use a card in Italy, for which you should carry a photocard driving licence or your passport.
- **Spending money:** Please see your itinerary for a guide on how much money you will need for your trek.
- **Departure taxes:** Departure taxes are included in your flight tickets.
- **Leaving a trek early:** If you leave a trek early you are responsible for the costs incurred by yourself and the trek participants and/or staff who accompany you. This applies whether you choose to leave early, or if you are forced to leave early due to medical reasons. The costs of this can be several thousand pounds, especially if helicopters are required which is why we insist that you take out insurance to cover you for medical emergencies. We ask that all participants ensure they have a credit card with them with credit to cover this. In some cases, credit card banking fees may be incurred.

## Further information

**Arrival in Italy:** Please see the trek itinerary for details of travelling to / from the meeting point for your trek.

**A typical trekking day:** Life on trek is quickly adopts a very simple pattern. You will be woken early, often by the sound of other occupants of the dormitory making an early start. The weather is usually best in the mornings, so it makes good sense to get up promptly. Breakfast will be taken at the refuge. After breakfast we start trekking, taking time for rests, drinks and toilet stops along the way. We stop for a lunch, wherever the itinerary allows this will be at another refuge. If you don't like stopping for a long time mid-walk, try to keep moving and stretching as it is not uncommon for the lunch to be a leisurely affair if the weather allows. Then we set off again for the afternoon walk to our refuge for the night. Time to rest, wash and change into clothes for the evening. Some refuges do not offer showers, and those that do may only do so for a limited time period in the evening. It is a good idea to prepare your bed for night before eating dinner with your fellow trekkers in the refuge. An early night is necessary to make the most of the best weather the next day.

**Food:** Please refer to the trip itinerary for details of which meals are included in your package price. Once on trek we will eat breakfast and dinner at the refuges, and either take a packed lunch or call into another refuge for lunch if one is en-route. The food in the Dolomites is a mixture of Italian and Austrian cuisine.

**Accommodation:** Please see your trek itinerary for details of the accommodation for your trek.

Accommodation in some resorts in Italy can be extremely expensive, so apartments and guest houses are often used instead of hotels to keep the price of the trek to a minimum.

The refuge network in Italy is excellent. Staying in a refuge is a great way to stay high in the mountains, and to make the most of the catering facilities that exist in the high mountains. Rooms in refuges are usually either dormitories (which can be very large) or sometimes we may have use of a smaller room. Single rooms cannot be provided in most refuges, so you will be sharing, and sometimes the rooms may be used by both men and women. Nights can be noisy and disturbed early, so earplugs and something to put over your eyes may be desirable.

When staying in a refuge, you should remove your boots at the door and place them in the rack provided. Hut slippers or clogs are usually available, but you might prefer to use a pair of trekking sandals if you have them instead. You will need to use your own sheet sleeping bag and towel in refuges. You do not need to take a sleeping bag as blankets or duvets are provided.

If you have a BMC and a Reciprocal Rights Card, or if you are a member of any other National mountaineering organisation, take your membership cards with you to obtain discounts in the refuges. However, it is not worth buying these just for this trip.

**Washing / Toilet facilities:** At the refuges you can either wash in the basins provided, or at some refuges showers are available. Water is a precious commodity in the mountains, and you are asked to use it carefully. There may be a charge for using a shower, and in some refuges they are only available for certain hours of the day.

Toilets throughout Italy may be squat style or the seated variety. If you get caught short whilst trekking, please ask – there may be a toilet for you to use at a nearby refuge. If not, please bury your offering and put your toilet paper in a plastic bag to place in the next refuge toilet. There is nothing worse than seeing the litter of what is described in the Himalaya as “western prayer flags” along the way. Keep toilet paper with you at all times!

**Mobile Phones and Internet:** Mobile coverage is generally good in the Dolomites and most UK providers will connect to one of the Italian providers. Check with your mobile phone company to see if your phone will work in Italy. Internet cafes are available but not particularly cheap in the towns.

**Electricity:** Do not rely on electricity being available at all refuges. The sockets in Italy require the round 2-pin European adapter.

**Weather:** The trekking season in the Dolomites is very short – around 3 months from mid June to mid September. Late lying snow can be a problem in June. Thunderstorms are frequent, especially in August, and these are most likely to occur in the afternoons. Generally we hope for t-shirt and shorts weather, but it can get cool especially in the evenings and first thing in the mornings, and you should always carry both good quality waterproof jacket and waterproof trousers.

**Further reading:** We recommend doing some reading about Italy before your trek. You will probably enjoy your trip more if you try to learn a few basic words of Italian. The following titles may be of interest, and include some useful words in Italian:

- **Dolomites Trekking Alta Via 1 & Alta Via 2** - Trailblazer Guide – Henry Stedman
- **Treks in the Dolomites Alte View 1 and 2** – Cicerone Guide - Martin Collins & Gillian Price
- **Maps of Italy** For the Alta Via 1 trek, the maps we will use are the Tobacco 1:25,000 range numbers 31, 3 and 25. If you wish to buy maps, it is probably best to buy what you need in Italy as good maps are readily available in the mountain resorts. Alternatively you could try Stanfords, Long Acre, London

**Itinerary changes:** These may happen, though we will try to keep changes to a minimum. There are some things that are outside of CAT's control (eg, airline changes, the weather, strikes etc). We will always endeavour to work around any disruption to provide you with the best possible alternative. We ask you to travel with an open mind.

**Extensions:** If you wish to have extra nights in Italy before or after their trek, discuss your options with us as soon as possible. The cost of your flights may alter if you change your plans, so early decisions about this are advisable. Changes cannot be made once your air ticket has been issued.

## Equipment List

The kit list that is appropriate for your trip is detailed on the trip itinerary.  
Note that for the Alta Via 1 trip there are some non-standard trekking items.

Ensure you have the appropriate equipment, and use it before your trek. It is essential that you ensure you are comfortable walking all day in your boots in a mountain environment well in advance of departure.

**Suppliers:** There are many excellent outdoor retailers. The following companies are just some that offer good advice, a good range and a mail order facility.

**Cotswold Discount:** Cotswold is a UK-wide chain of outdoor equipment shops, and also an on-line shop. They have generously offered a **15% discount** to Community Action Treks clients – details will be sent to you with the confirmation of your booking.

Cotswold	tel. 0844 557 7755	<a href="http://www.cotswoldoutdoor.com">www.cotswoldoutdoor.com</a>
Field & Trek	tel. 0844 800 1001	<a href="http://www.fieldandtrek.com">www.fieldandtrek.com</a>
Field & Trek	tel. 0844 800 1001	<a href="http://www.fieldandtrek.com">www.fieldandtrek.com</a>
Needlesports	tel. 017687 72227	<a href="http://www.needlesports.com/index.php">http://www.needlesports.com/index.php</a>





# COMMUNITY ACTION TREKS LTD

Unit 7, Sunset Hill, Keswick, Cumbria CA12 4RN

Tel: 017687 71890

Email: info@catreks.com Web: www.catreks.com



## Medical Form

Community Action Treks Ltd operate in often extreme and inhospitable terrain and most of our treks demand a fairly high degree of physical fitness and health. Please fill in this form carefully, detailing your medical history. We will treat all information in the strictest confidence and send it to the trek leader and /or doctor / medic who are responsible for your safety and welfare during your trek with us. Once your trek is complete and you have returned to your destination and safety and there is no further need for the information on this form, it will then be destroyed.

If you have a history of any of the following medical conditions, please give details such as frequency, severity and aggravating factors where necessary. If you have had an operation within the last year, whether minor or not we need to know the details of the operation and the outcomes and possible long term problems, particularly ones that may occur or be accentuated if strenuous and physically demanding exercise is taken.

It is the responsibility of each trekker to ensure that he/she is adequately insured for the trek, including activities undertaken, and the altitude. Helicopter rescue and repatriation must be a part of the insurance policy. Pre-existing medical conditions must be declared to the insurance company.

<b>Title and Full Name as it is shown on your passport (please print in CAPITALS)</b>			
<b>Trek:</b>			
<b>Date of Trek:</b>		<b>Height:</b>	
<b>Date of Birth:</b>		<b>Weight:</b>	
<b>Condition</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Details (if insufficient room for details, please write on reverse of this sheet)</b>	
High blood pressure			
Heart/circulatory disorders			
Chest/lung disease			
Asthma/hay fever			
Epilepsy/diabetes			
Digestive/bowel disorders			
Joint/ back injuries			
Knee/ hip/ ankle			
Surgical operations			
Mental/emotional problems			
Pregnancy (at the time of the trek)			
Allergies			
Any current medical conditions			
Dietary requirements			

- I understand that I will be undertaking a challenge which requires a good level of fitness and I believe that I am fit enough to complete the challenge and take responsibility for myself under these conditions.
- I declare that the above information is a true and fair representation of my current state of health. Should my circumstances change, I will inform Community Action Treks at the earliest opportunity

**Signature** ..... **Date** .....

**If you are over 65 or have a pre-existing medical condition, please ask your doctor to sign below to confirm that you are fit enough to undertake the challenge:**

We recommend an ECG for participants over the age of 65 at your doctor's discretion

**Signature of Doctor** ..... **Date** .....





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It is a condition of booking that you have adequate insurance for your trip.

Your insurance must cover you for

- the entire period of travel
  - the activities\* and the altitude you are going to
  - for helicopter rescue and repatriation.
- You should also notify the insurance company of all pre-existing medical conditions.

Please note that many insurance companies do not cover these requirements. There are a few insurance companies that specialise in insurance policies suitable for trekking expeditions. If your current travel insurance company cannot provide you with a suitable policy, please contact us for further information. We recommend that you also have insurance for cancellation and personal baggage. Once you have arranged your insurance, please complete this insurance declaration form, and return it to us as soon as possible.

Name:	
Trip Title:	
Trip code or group name:	
Land-only dates:	
Insurance company:	
Insurance policy number:	
Insurance company general telephone number:	
Insurance company emergency international assistance telephone number:	
I understand that responsibility for the payment of all bills incurred for rescue and repatriation lies ultimately with myself, the client in the event of the insurance company not paying for them. I am responsible for ensuring that these payments can be met as outlined in the Booking Conditions.	
Signature:	
Date:	