



Refugios and Huts
Here is an introduction to the basics of the Dolomites rifugio (refuges/huts)



Forget the spartan shelters you can find in the Rocky mountains, or in the Scotland mountains, or elsewhere, here in the Dolomites the refuges (the exact name is: "rifugio" in singular form, "rifugi" in plural form) are considered to be "high altitude hotels", logically they are a bit essential in the services.... but you will miss nothing you may need during your stay.



Read the important suggestions here below to discover the rules of the refuges of the Dolomites:



1. The refuges are "public safety facilities".

What I present you is the: "[Rifugio General Achille Papa](#)" and the "[Rifugio Vincenzo Lancia](#)" in the Pasubio Dolomites (southern Dolomites), these refuges, like all the others that you will find in the Dolomites, all follow the same organizational typology because for the Italian law they are classified not as hotels but as safety facilities in the mountains. So the first thing you need to know is that they have a hierarchical system similar to that of a military ships.

The manager (chief of the refuge) is recognized a status similar to that of a ship commander. He is recognized as the public authority to decide everything in terms of the security of the people under the roof. He is legally obliged to find accommodation inside for each person who is present at any time of the day or night.

Logically, whoever has the reservation will have his place in bed, who arrive at the last moment can sleep where is a free place, even in the kitchen or in the bathrooms if there is no place elsewhere.....Do not worry, with my treks, I always booking in advance, I personally know every owner or head haven and so you will always be in the best possible accommodations of every refuge.



2. Do not go at bed rooms upstairs with your trekking boots

In every refuge, near the entrance, there is a corner where shelves are arranged to leave your boots and where you also find the slippers for the customers, choose the ones you like and your right size.



In the recent years there are the "Crocs" of Chinese manufacturing with written the sizes (European sizes). This solution is a good healthy precaution to avoid boots scattered around the shelter, and for this reason it is forbidden always to go up in your room with the boots.



3. Description of the accommodation on the rooms

Each refuge has small rooms, generally 4/6 or 8 beds and dormitories of 12 or more beds. I always prefer to stay in the small rooms because I live in the shelters about 5 months a year these are the rooms I usually will booking for you. Each person has its own bed with pillow and blankets but not with linens that are mandatory, and you must be carried. The sackcloth (or cotton liner sack) can be found on the market in many [online shops for mountain or camping as REI](#) and even in every hut, where it costs around 20 Euros





4. Showers and toilets

In the last years (finally) in each refuge there are showers, usually close to the toilets, these are setted with a timer that can only be activated with a coin that you can buy at the refuge bar at a variable cost of 3-5 euros. This is a system to saves the water. Water supply is one of the biggest problems of almost all refuges. Once you have bought the coin prepare yourself for the shower and when it's all ready to put it in the timer inside the shower, from that

moment you will have 3 to 5 minutes of hot water sufficient for a person's shower. Warning: when the time activated by your coin will end, you will only have cold water to finish the rinse you are warned! Always for the sake of saving water, especially in high season, is sold only one coin per person..... The number of showers are always limited... so do the shower early and not at the late on the evening or early the morning when is a long line of persons is a good strategy.



5. Have you wet clothing?... no problem....

In almost all refuges there is a room used as a "drying room" for the clothing (clothing and shoes). It is an empty furniture room with a rope grid hangers to hang wet clothes and a large electric fan heater that is operated in the evening or constantly on rainy days to dry the guest's clothes. You can also use it freely for drying hand-washed t-shirts in the bathroom. Refuges do not have laundry service.

6. Extra consumptions

Upon your arrival in the refuge you will be assigned in a bed room, this number will be a reference for your consumptions.

Each refuge has a reception usually arranged in the dining area bar area. Many refuges prefer to mark the number of the room / bed for the drinks you drink at the bar during your stay, so you do not have to pay with cash for each beer you drink. This is a system to save work and time at the staff especially when the refuge is full. At the morning of your departure you will be able to weld your drinks from the list referring to your room. So when you take snacks or drinks at the bar, postcards or various editions, gadgets like t-shirts and caps (now available at every rifugio and sometimes are very beautiful for your information i have the full home :-)) you will tell (for example): "Roberto's Group room n. 4" the chief of the hut the next morning will be indulgent in making you the final bill



7. Lunchroom

The dining room is the main refuge's room, and if will be a cold day, here inside is usually warm, welcoming and always at your disposal. In many refuges, the desks are divided and reserved for the different groups. At the groups of the local guides are usually assigned the best bedrooms and the best position of the tables in the dining room. When you come down to the dining room after the shower, look for the table with the ticket that points my group. I usually the staff write my last name "Iacopelli" or just the name "Roberto". In the room there is often a small library, from which you can read interesting readings (but almost exclusively in Italian and German), or there are playing cards or chessboards, to spend the awaiting for the dinner time.



8. Food and menus

Refueling of the food supplies for the kitchen of a rifugio is in any case a long and difficult job. 90% of the refuges have their own private small cableway, the rest or have a steep dirt road dating back to First World War, or are near the ski lifts and consequently, they can use the service of the cableways to carry their supplies.

In any case, every day, they have staff in the valley to carry the food supplies to the cable car where they charge them to the downstream station and then download them to the upstream station and then transport them to the kitchen.

From this description you will understand why the chef not to wasted the food with large menus, and ask at the customer (usually at the arrival) what you would like to eat at dinner, sometimes with two or more hours in advance.

The half board is included in my price and consists of:

- overnight stay
- breakfast (Italian style: coffee, tea, biscuits, bread, butter and jam).
- dinner (with abundant portions) consisting of:

A first dish of pasta or soups or dumplings or local specialties.

A second dish of meat with vegetables or vegetarian dish.

A homemade dessert

Bread included

The extra you will have to pay according to your consumption are: drinks, extra snacks, souvenirs

The menu card available usually consists of 5/6 first pasta dishes, 7/8 or more flat seconds, 3/4 desserts or pies.

Desserts like pies, strudel etc ... are generally great everywhere!

For the shelters' kitchens it is more practical to prepare homemade pies and sweets that carry it up from the valley, so often bread is cooked in the kitchen and not bought in the valley.

By now, the tendency of almost all shelters is to have a narrow menu card to prepare everything at home and have easier management of the kitchen that allows for a consequent good quality.

Concluding: sometimes you eat better in the shelters than in the valley restaurants!

In many refuges, foods containing lactose and gluten are reported on the menu list.

The lactose intolerants are able to arrange their diet better in comparison at the gluten-free intolerants instead, for these second intolerance is better to bring some supplemental foods like specific breads and snacks.



Living the refuge experience is a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in local life, taste the typical gourmet, and live into our authentic traditional atmosphere!



Checkout these websites for some of the most popular refuges in the central Dolomites. This is just a hint of how great it will be to stay in huts during your trek!

<http://www.rodadivael.it/eng/index.html> <http://www.rifugiopassoprincipe.com>

<http://www.rifugiofronza.com> <http://www.rifugiorealberto.com/en/index.htm>

<http://www.tierseralpl.com/index.php?lang=en> <http://www.rifugioantermoia.com>