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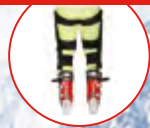
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RESORT INSIDER ALTA BADIA

Italy's Alta Badia region contains half-a-dozen traditional ski villages of various sizes. Located on the famous Sellaronda circuit, within the giant Dolomiti Superski region, it's almost as famous for its authentic atmosphere (the local Ladin dialect is still spoken here) and superb cuisine as it is for its strong winter-sports heritage. Even the most lowly mountain hut here endeavours to provide gourmet quality cuisine at affordable prices. **By Vanessa Fisher**

Best café?

Italians famously love their coffee and obviously the cafe culture is King in the Dolomites. The terrace at the Hotel Soleil in La Villa makes a coffee, with a stunning view over the Dolomites. On the Sellaronda, stop in at the Raetia for a home-made cake in their 'Stua dal te' – tea room.

Best day out?

The Lagazuoi ski tour: take the cable car to the top of Mount Lagazuoi, warm up on the red run back to the valley base. After your second cable car ride up, take the 8.5km Red Armentarola following the enchanting Fanes valley and down to Sass D'laia. From here a horse drawn lift will tow you back to the ski slopes.

Local drink?

Aperol Spritz is the drink of choice in the Italian Dolomites - Prosecco, Aperol and Soda with ice and a slice of orange.

What not to miss?

Join a Gourmet Ski Safari – eat exquisite local

food and Italian wines at the rifugios (mountain huts) on the mountains as you tour by piste around the Dolomites.

Best for spa?

Many of the 4★ and 5★ hotels in Alta Badia have their own spas. If you are after a luxury break, consider booking into one of these for some seriously luxurious apres-ski spa action – try the 4★ Hotel Posta Zirm in Corvara, 4★ Hotel Fanes in San Cassiano or the 5★ Hotel Rosa Alpina in San Cassiano.

Best for romantic evening meal?

If the romance continues beyond the spa you can't go wrong with a meal a deux in either of these gorgeous restaurants: Hotel Restaurant Armentarola in San Cassiano or Hotel La Perla in Corvara.

Best ski challenge?

The Gran Risa World Cup Slope (black run). With a vertical drop of 448m, a length of 1,255m and a maximum gradient of 53%,

the Gran Risa slope in La Villa is considered one of the most beautiful slopes in the Ski World Cup and has been on the circuit since 1985. The breathtaking descent in the forest begins just below the black and red slopes of Piz La Ila. After the steep slope at the beginning a rapid curve leads on to a steep, narrow section and on with another change in direction to the base in the centre of La Villa.

What is Ladin Cuisine?

It's not all prosecco and prosciutto – the Ladin cuisine actually originates from a few simple ingredients which were available over the winter months – barley soup, Turtres (little fried pastries) Schlutzkrופן (Ravioli filled with spinach) and Furtaies (a spiral-shaped, fried dessert) remain some the most popular specialities of Ladin cuisine.

For winter-sports holidays to Alta Badia visit:

dolomit-mountains.com

Or for regional info go to:

altabadia.org