



Hikers traverse the Via Ferrata Tridentina in the Italian Dolomites.

## Moving On Up in the Dolomites

WHEN WORLD WAR I broke out, Italy's Dolomites became a treacherous front line for Austrian and Italian soldiers. Here among the jagged peaks and sheer pastel walls of this ancient range of the Alps, where many cultures had coexisted for centuries, soldiers on both sides built networks of bolted-down steel cables, called *via ferrata* (iron path), to move supplies quickly—and for other missions, too. “Soldiers came down the mountains at night to exchange family news with their relatives,” says hiking guide Karin Pizzinini. As the world marks the war’s centennial, travelers can explore the same transport system. Anchored cables bolster the original ladders, and local outfitters provide necessary gear and pair

experienced guides with many skill levels. Near the ski village of Cortina d’Ampezzo (about a 3.5-hour trip by bus and train from Venice), the beginner-friendly Via Ferrata Averau awards vistas of the massive towers of the Cinque Torri. At the base, an outdoor museum preserving the World War I headquarters of an artillery unit details the human side of war, from personal diaries to tales of winter survival. All together, several museums and a 50-mile ski tour commemorate the Dolomites’ role in the Great War. Here, says Pizzinini, “you can not only climb the via ferrata but truly know why they’re here.” —JENNIFER WILSON

■ TIP: RENT A ROOM IN THE RENOVATED RIFUGIO AVERAU, A MOUNTAIN HUT WITH TERRACE VIEWS OF THE MARMOLADA GLACIER.

### ATLAS

#### Dolomites, Italy



In 2010, a hiker happened upon the mummified remains of a World War I soldier frozen into a glacier in the Dolomites.

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