**Explore parks and nature reserves with expert guides**

**STROLLING THROUGH NATURE’S COLOUR PALETTE**

**When spring comes around, the wildlife in the mountains starts to stir and pick up the pace of its rhythms and cycles. Our selection of activities includes trips with guides to watch animals, see flowers and rare wild plants**

When springtime comes around in Trentino, the region’s thousands of species wildflowers take centre stage as meadows and pastures at all altitudes fill with vast arrays of bright colour. The fruit trees at the bottom of the valleys and at heights of up to 500 metres in the hills are the first to make an appearance in the ‘flowering calendar’, and areas covered with apple orchards are particularly stunning. In the following months, the spotlight moves up the slopes where each zone has its own species, from daisies and buttercups to wild orchids. The finishing touches are added between June and July, when the pastures more than 1,500 metres above sea level start to fill with eye-catching blooms such as globeflowers, rhododendrons, fragrant nigritella and gentians. Many of the species are rare and some are extremely scarce, so they are protected and should not be picked under any circumstances. Among the places where all forms of flora and fauna awake in the spring are the sites in the **Trentino Network of Nature Reserves and Parks**, where visitors will see animals, flowers and wild vegetation during activities led by plant and animal experts.

The **Network of Nature Reserves and Parks** covers approximately 30% of the entire Trentino area. **Between April and June**, a programme of events welcomes visitors who want to enjoy breathtaking weekends witnessing the awakening of nature.

**‘Val Lomasona foraging weekend’** **(weekend of 23-24 May)** - The experience includes a half-board stay at Maso Pertener, a farm that providing fresh spring products. Visitors will also go out on a trip with an expert botanist and learn to recognise and forage for edible wild plants in one of Trentino’s most magnificent nature reserves - the Parco Fluviale della Sarca, a river park, where meadows, woods, wetlands and farmland can be found. The thriving environment is a perfect place for peaceful, relaxing walks. It is necessary to book in advance and the price is €110 per person.

‘**Blooming spectacle on Monte Baldo**’ **(weekend 6-7 June)** - An expert botanist from the Museo Civico di Rovereto will take visitors on a guided tour around the Parco Naturale Locale del Monte Baldo: a nature park that is renowned among scholars all over Europe for its remarkable biodiversity. With this package, a comfortable base camp and great food – including seasonal products – can be provided by Malga Mortigola. Info & booking: [**ambientetrentino.it**](http://www.ambientetrentino.it).

**The apple trees in the** **Val di Non** blossom in late April, making it an unbeatable time to explore the valley. It is full of historic villages and outstanding natural environments, the majority of which can be reached by following the numerous walking, hiking and cycling routes. In most cases, routes meander through blossoming apple orchards on the way. The season will reach its climax this year during the “**Fiorinda**” event on the weekend of **18 and 19 April**. It is a colourful showcase for the world of flowers and apple blossoms, where visitors can enjoy workshops, guided tours, walks, and food and wine stands.

Dandelions brighten up meadows and are known as “dog’s teeth” locally, while pellitory-of-the-wall has little striped leaves that smell like basil. Together with wild garlic and thin-stemmed wood sorrel, they may seem like nothing but weeds to the untrained eye. However, these and many other wild plants can be used as **ingredients in homemade dishes** and even natural cosmetic products. The woods are like vegetable gardens for expert foragers: over the centuries, a wealth of knowledge has been built up about matters such as the healing and soothing properties of hay and the qualities of flower petals, which contain fragrant and therapeutic essential oils.

**‘Spring in Val Canali**’ (**25 and 26 April) -** **Spend two days with the farmers of** Primiero in their stunning home valley in the Dolomites, which is one of the most enchanting places in the Parco di Paneveggio Pale di San Martino nature park. Herds of sheep, goats, cows and calves are kept and raised here, as are draught horses and the donkeys used for trekking. As well as taking a close look and learning about all of these animals, visitors will have the opportunity to see craft activities and products made from wool and milk during specific workshops and demonstrations. In addition, visitors can go for a spin in carriages drawn by Noriker and Haflinger horses.

**Andar per Erbe** is an initiative that will take place in San Martino di Castrozza in Primiero for three weekends in a row, **starting on 30 May**. Visitors can enjoy guided walks with flower-filled lunches, spring-based workshops, and local products that encapsulate the freshness of flowers with themed dishes and snacks. Another event organized by the Strada dei Formaggi delle Dolomiti Association is **Fiori, Erbe e Sapori**, which will take place **from 21 to 28 June** in Val di Fiemme.It celebrates the start of summer with a whole week revolving around plants and flowers in one of the greenest parts of Trentino. From meadows to menus, all sorts of wonders are waiting to be discovered and savoured. Go on trips with experts, take cooking lessons, and try flowery aperitifs and delicious dishes in the restaurants and agritourism establishments in the valley.

**Visiting stunning castles by train**

Spring is a great time to discover the secrets and hidden treasures in Trentino’s top castles and historic buildings. In addition to the more monumental castles such as the Castello del Buonconsiglio in Trento, Castel Beseno in Vallagarina, and Castel Thun in Val di Non, there are many other strongholds that were built to defend the Alpine valleys. From **Saturday 23 May**, the ***Trenino dei Castelli*** (castle train) will be back to take visitors on a journey of discovery among the natural landscape, apple orchards, flower-filled meadows and historic sites in the Val di Non and Val di Sole. You will spend an entire day discovering four of the most significant castles in Trentino: **Ossana**, **Caldès**, **Valèr** and the breathtaking **Castel Thun**. Along the way, there will also be time to sample products from the “Apple Route Association”. In addition to 17 trips that are scheduled to take place on Saturdays, once again this year there will be four “Speciale Famiglie” (“Family Special”) Sundays with great prices and special initiatives in each of the castles: workshops, storytelling and a treasure hunt for the whole family. Info & booking: [info@guidavacanze.it](mailto:info@guidavacanze.it).