**Slow meanders on spring weekends**

**DISCOVERING TRENTINO'S VILLAGES**

**With six locations included on the list of the "*most beautiful villages in Italy*", visitors can discover their traditions, ancient stones, rural architecture and sacred symbols**

Nature and history entwine in the Trentino valleys. Secluded in the mountains, the small historic villages of Trentino are unmistakable thanks to their stories, old barns and traditions.

**Mezzano**

At the foot of the Pale di San Martino is Mezzano, home to artistic wooden architecture and panoramic views of the Dolomites. Today the village offers an eclectic taste of alpine life and can be visited simply by following different themed walking routes, which invite visitors to trace the "Segni sparsi del rurale" (scattered signs of rural life). Mezzano has also become famous for its **red chairs**, which are dotted around the village with a bell resting on them. Just ring it and within a few minutes someone will come to tell one of the many anecdotes and stories set in these magical towns. The tales almost always include the water of the ancient fountains, the wash houses and the vegetable gardens, the rural architecture and the tabià (wooden barns) with wall paintings and historic inscriptions. Most importantly, there are the famous wood piles that have been turned into an art form here: "**Cataste&Canzei"** is a pathway with surprises around every corner, forming a widespread exhibition amongst the area’s most beautiful nooks. In Mezzano, everything starts from nature and leads back to nature. Numerous marked trails lead from the town towards the **Parco naturale di Paneveggio - Pale di San Martino,** acres where unspoiled naturecan be discovered on foot or by mountain bike. A typical product from the area is **Botiro**, a raw cream butter that is formed naturally in dairy huts from milk produced in the mountain pastures during summer.

**Vigo di Fassa**

Another of the most beautiful villages in Italy is Vigo di Fassa, a cradle of traditional Ladin culture and the perfect spot to admire the Dolomites turning pink at sunset. Vigo has many hamlets, one of which is **Tamiòn**, a small centre 4km from the town where there is a small church dedicated to the Holy Trinity and beautiful houses with historic barns. The Gothic sanctuary of **Santa Giuliana**, named after the patron saint of Val di Fassa, is one of the oldest in the valley and stands on a prehistoric place of worship, the Ciaslìr hill-fort. From the village, a short cable car trip takes visitors up to the Ciampedìe viewpoint, the gateway to the Vajolet valley and the **Catinaccio - Rosengarten group**. The area’s typical local product is **Cuore di Fassa** cheese from the Val di Fassa Social Dairy, which is made with whole raw milk from bovine breeds such as the Bruna and the Grigio Alpina and aged from 2 to 8 months.

**San Lorenzo – Dorsino**

At the foot of the Brenta Dolomites and a short distance from Lake Molveno sits San Lorenzo – Dorsino, a peasant village formed when seven hamlets (known as the "Ville") were merged together. In each former hamlet it is still possible to observe rare rural architectural styles, with elements such as the vehicle ramps used to access hay deposits, the drying rooms and the haylofts in the upper part of the houses. One possible route combines the sacred with the everyday, leading to a selection of sanctuaries, small churches and chapels where numerous sacred symbols can be discovered. The most typical product is **Ciuìga**, a cured meat obtained by mixing selected pork meat with cooked turnips.

**Rango**

Rango silently dominates the **Bleggio** plateau a few kilometres from the Terme di Comano. Porticoes, wine cellars, entrance ways, fountains, stone fences, paved streets and ancient houses can be seen in the heart of the village, all bearing witness to ancient rural life in Trentino. “El portech de la Flor" is the first imposing housing structure that meets the eye. It is the oldest and largest core of the village, which inspired all the others that came to fill Rango out over time. With a short walk you can reach the nearby hamlet of **Balbido**, one of Trentino's "painted villages" where the facades of numerous houses are frescoed with large "murals", by national and international artists inspired by the peasant world. A typical product from this area is the **Noci del Bleggio**, walnuts that are harvested by hand in the second half of September, then washed and dried naturally on the racks of the ventilated attics in the houses.

**Canale di Tenno**

In Canale di Tenno, cobbled paths curve between buildings, stone arches, arcades and sturdy walls, all just a few kilometres away from Lake **Garda**. A maze of cobbled alleys and arcades is overlooked by the characteristic old stone houses that connect the areas to one another, bearing witness to a centuries-old peasant past. These spaces are now occupied by artisanal shops and typical restaurants. One of the landmarks is the "Giacomo Vittone" House of Artists, which hosts exhibitions and artistic events from March to December. A veritable gem near the village of Canale, **Lago di Tenno** is famous for the colours of its waters ranging from turquoise blue to emerald green, which change according to the season, water level and weather conditions. The typical product of this area is **Carne Salada** (salted meat).

**Bondone**

Last but not least, a visit to the ancient village of Bondone is unforgettable. Bondone is also the southernmost municipality of Valle del Chiese, on the border with Lombardy, and was historically established asa village of charcoal burners. Walking through the narrow streets and medieval cobbled paths takes visitors on a journey through history, when the inhabitants of Bondone, the charcoal burners and their families, only lived there for four months of the year and then moved to the neighbouring valleys to produce charcoal in early spring. As such, the village emptied out and was immersed in silence until late autumn. In the surroundings, the fascinating **Castel San Giovanni** is an ancient fortress belonging to the Lodron Counts, dating back to the twelfth century. The fortress is admirable for its inaccessible position, situated on the top of a rocky spur overlooking Lago d’Idro. Other possibilities in this area include combining culture with unforgettable excursions in the valleys of the river **Chiese**, which is famous especially among fishing enthusiasts.

**Further Information**

* [**The Museum of Customs and Traditions of Trentino People**](http://www.museosanmichele.it)**.** Entirely dedicated to thepopular traditions of Trentino, it is a must for those interested in Alpine rural traditions and the ancient craft of farming. With its five floors, 43 rooms and over 12 thousand exhibits, it is the most important ethnographic museum in Italy and one of the richest in Europe and the Alps.