



DESTINATION >>



Cortina, Italy

Getting there: Singapore Airlines to Milan via Singapore. It's a 432km drive to Cortina, but a popular option is train from Milan to Venice, then shuttle bus to Cortina (162km, about 3.5 hours). Schedules vary; see Dolomites region website www.dolomiti.org

Stay: Hotels in Cortina aren't cheap, but the mezza pensione (half-board) option is good value; includes breakfast and dinner (and you can make up fresh rolls with cheese and ham at breakfast, so your skier's lunch is covered, too). Mezza pensione beds at a 3-star hotel such as Hotel Aquila (www.aquilacortina.com) are from \$110 to \$170 a night.

Peak performance: Skiers hit the main slopes of Cortina; coffee time at a popular cafe and après-ski nightlife in town

in the sunshine on Tofana peak (including lunch on a restaurant terrace overlooking the valley), followed by a bus ride over to Faloria peak to catch the afternoon sun.

Although Cortina's ski runs are overwhelmingly populated by traditional alpine skiers, they don't appear at all grumpy towards snowboarders, who are notorious for sweeping the fresh snow off the piste as they carve

their way down the mountain. Everyone is courteous in a comfortable, old-world sort of way — and the only people you see on the slopes who bother with fashionable clothes and fancy skis seem to be non-Italian tourists.

Of course, for many people a ski town is only as good as its après-ski scene and Cortina's nightlife does get talked up by the Italians. My feeling, though, is that little is better than a glass of

pinot nero in the convivial surrounds of an enoteca, the traditional Italian wine bar.

Enoteca di Cortina is reputed to be among the finest in northern Italy, and it makes a perfect venue for a bit of civilised après-ski revelling. A nice drop of vino rosso or vino bianco can be had for \$4 a glass or \$25 a bottle.

Following Ernesto's advice, I end my visit with a sunny afternoon on the slopes of Faloria

peak. I run into him outside Cortina's only supermarket and we compare notes on the day's events.

He feels the snow has been a bit below par this season, but is in no doubt that he and his friends will be back next year.

"There are lots of nice places in the Alps and some have more snow and longer runs," he says. "But Cortina will always be the most beautiful place to ski in Europe."



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