



# Awareness in the Mountains ↻ the Urban Areas

merano



# Index

Introduction	s. 4
Drinking Water	s. 6
Remember: Optimal Waste is No Waste at All!	s. 7
How to Organize Your Backpack	s. 8
Bathroom and Menstrual Products	s. 10
Emergency Number ☎ What to Do in the Event of an Emergency in the Mountain	s. 12
Staying Safe in Case of Lightning	s. 14
Hiking Etiquette 101	s. 16
Sustainable Mountain Adventures	s. 21
Responsible Cycling and Mountain Biking	s. 22
Interacting with Wildlife and Livestock	s. 24
Am I Too Near the Livestock?	s. 26
Conservation of Our Flora and Fauna	s. 27
Rules for Visitors with Dogs	s. 28
Permits for the Use of Drones	s. 30



# Awareness in the Mountains ↻ Urban Areas

It's no secret that during bad weather the mountains are off limits, and that any trash produced during hikes should never be abandoned in nature. However, the precise ways we need to safeguard nature while hiking, walking, or biking might not be as obvious. Moreover, mindfulness on the mountain trails and in the urban greenery of Merano entails more than just these practices. It's part of a broader commitment to embracing and promoting sustainability in every step we take. For example: Did you know that a reusable 500 ml aluminium water bottle generates only 26.07 grams of CO<sub>2</sub>, whereas a 500 ml commercial plastic bottle of water produces 428.71 grams of CO<sub>2</sub> (manufacturing and transportation included)?

Did you know that if an aluminium rescue blanket is placed in direct contact with the skin heat is drawn away from the body, instead of providing warmth? That lemon rinds and banana peels are toxic to a significant number of wild animals? That in many cases it's more energy-efficient to rent mountain sports apparel rather than buying it outright, seeing it's only going to be worn a few times a year? Did you know that the use of drones in the nature reserves and parks of South Tyrol is completely prohibited, and that elsewhere a permit issued by the local municipality is required?

Below you'll find a summary of the main regulations in force as well as some suggestions for your upcoming hikes and excursions, helping you stay as safe and environmentally aware as possible.



# Drinking Water:

- Merano's tap water is of the highest quality, with 95% coming from springs in the valleys surrounding Merano. You can drink the tap water in holiday apartments, hotels, and elsewhere without any safety concerns!
- There are 69 designated drinking fountains throughout Merano. These can be easily located using the Refill app, visiting the [refill.bz.it](http://refill.bz.it) website, or just find out at the Merano information office.
- To reduce the volume of plastic waste refill your water bottles at the drinking fountains. Using tap water helps protect the environment by eliminating the need for packaging and reducing transportation distances (as detailed in Up2You surveys comparing reusable and plastic water bottles CO<sub>2</sub> emissions).
- Water is a precious resource and well-considered practices help prevent wastage.



# Remember: Optimal Waste is No Waste at All!

Mountains serve as crucial habitats for the indigenous flora and fauna. Human-generated waste represents a threat to these ecosystems; something that affects humans as well. Below are some key suggestions on how to limit waste creation and how to manage trash responsibly when hiking and/or engaged in other outdoor activities – such as sports and training in the mountains.

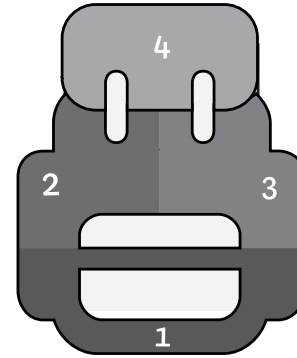
- Opt for minimally packaged goods when shopping and place your snacks into a reusable food container. If possible, try making your own snack bars.
- Use an aluminium water bottle instead of single-use plastic bottles or cans.
- To avoid harming wildlife and humans ensure you leave nothing behind.
- Only pack essential items into your backpack.
- The waste products of whatever goes with you into the mountains (such as banana peels and orange skins) should be brought back with you and disposed of ecologically.
- Store cigarette butts in a sealed container, such as a small reusable box made of plastic or metal.
- Prefer toilet paper over tissues for sanitary use outdoors. Toilet paper decomposes faster, and it should be covered with soil or buried underground.
- After returning home, sort and dispose of your waste. Remember, the most sustainable waste is that which doesn't exist. Using tap water helps protect the environment by reducing the need for packaging and transportation (as detailed in Up2You's surveys that compare the carbon emissions of bottled and tap water).
- Eco-friendly tip: on your walks and hikes bring gloves and a bag with you to pick up any litter you may find.



# How to Organize Your Backpack

- Weather-appropriate clothing, rugged mountain boots/trainers, extra thermal apparel to keep you warm, and a set of trekking poles. (Note: make sure your body core – your torso – stays warm, as well as your head, hands, and feet. When venturing into higher altitudes, or on hikes during the colder seasons make sure you always bring a woollen cap, gloves, and warm socks with you. Leave your cottonwear behind and rather opt for woollen or thermic apparel.)
- Bring a hiking map as well as a GPS navigation device.
- Use a lunchbox that serves both as a food holder as well as a container to store your waste products. Make sure that whatever you take up the mountain (and isn't consumed) comes back down again and is properly disposed of. You might also wish to bring an extra garbage bag with you.
- Pack light meals and nutritious snacks (such as granola bars, dried fruit, and nuts) into your lunchbox. Choose seasonal/local products to support local producers and avoid long transportation logistics.
- Bring a reusable water bottle with at least 1 litre capacity.
- Sunscreen cream and waterproof apparel (and don't forget a rain cover to protect your backpack).
- Head protection for the sun (such as a cap/hat) and earmuffs (if required).
- Sunglasses are a must, even during the winter months.
- First aid kit equipped including an emergency blanket and plasters in case of blisters.
- Fully charged mobile phones (in an emergency call 112).
- Bring a pocketknife and a portable light such as a headlamp.
- Bring cash with you since some restaurants and refuges at high elevations cannot accept cards.
- For longer trips, pack hygiene products and extra clothing.
- If undertaking challenging winter mountaineering activities, bring with you the necessary avalanche safety equipment including a helmet, crampons, and an avalanche transceiver.

- Avoid overpacking. Essential items are available at the manned mountain lodges.
- Smokers should bring a reusable/portable ashtray. Smokers should always carry a reusable cigarette ashtray or a portable one with them. Due to the numerous toxins contained in a single cigarette butt, it can contaminate up to 60 liters of drinking water. This is yet another compelling reason to never carelessly discard them.



1. Place lightweight clothing at the bottom (such as a down jacket and rain protection gear).
2. Position heavy equipment (such as provisions, water bottles, and professional camera equipment) on your back at shoulder level.
3. Store medium-weight items (such as extra clothing) in the outer layers
4. Place small, frequently used items at the top of your rucksack (such as phones, keys and sunscreen ointment) within easy reach for convenience.





# Bathroom and Menstrual Products

- When possible, make use of the toilets at the mountain refuges and huts!
- Otherwise, make sure you are at least 50 m (about 70 steps) away from waterways and trails. Do your business in a sunny spot in order to accelerate decomposition and dig a hole about 15 – 20 cm deep (the length of your hand). Use unbleached toilet paper sparingly and avoid using tissues or wet wipes. Afterwards completely refill the hole.
- Used sanitary products should be disposed of in the designated waste bins ONLY. If no other option is available, place the used products in a sealable plastic bag (such as a doggie bag) and deposit into the nearest trash can.
- Empty your menstrual cup in toilets or bury the contents along with any human waste in a hole 20 cm deep (as above).



# Emergency Number 112

App: 112 Where ARE U – an app for location tracking!

## What to Do in an Emergency

- Stay calm.
- If you're a first responder (only one person should take this role) try to get a clear picture of the situation (check the condition of the injured).  
Always prioritize your own safety – never endanger yourself.
- Dial the emergency number 112 and be ready to provide:
  - Location of the incident
  - Caller identity
  - Description of what occurred
  - Number of persons affected
  - Stay on the line to answer any further questions
- If possible: provide any necessary assistance to the injured and remain with them until the emergency responders arrive.
- When the emergency services do finally reach you, provide all details as requested, and under NO circumstances should they be obstructed in carrying out their work!

Exercise caution and stay alert! Remember that in South Tyrol emergency responders are usually civilian volunteers and are putting their lives at risk when responding to an emergency call. Call the emergency line only in the event of genuine emergencies!



# What to Do in the Event of an Emergency in the Mountain

In all emergency situations adult persons are obliged to provide first aid, and this practice also extends to mountainous areas. However, self-preservation should always come first; do not place yourself in danger when assisting another person. Carefully assess the situation beforehand and immediately request help from the mountain rescue services. To call during an emergency: dial 112

## Using Emergency Blankets

An aluminium foil emergency blanket can save lives, but it needs to be handled properly. Under difficult outdoor conditions that may include strong winds, snow and extreme cold, it is susceptible to tearing when being placed around an injured person. It is important that it should not come into direct contact with the skin, as the metal alloy can draw heat away from the body, rather than the other way around. It should cover the person's inner clothing layer (underwear) and cover as much of the body as possible to generate warmth.

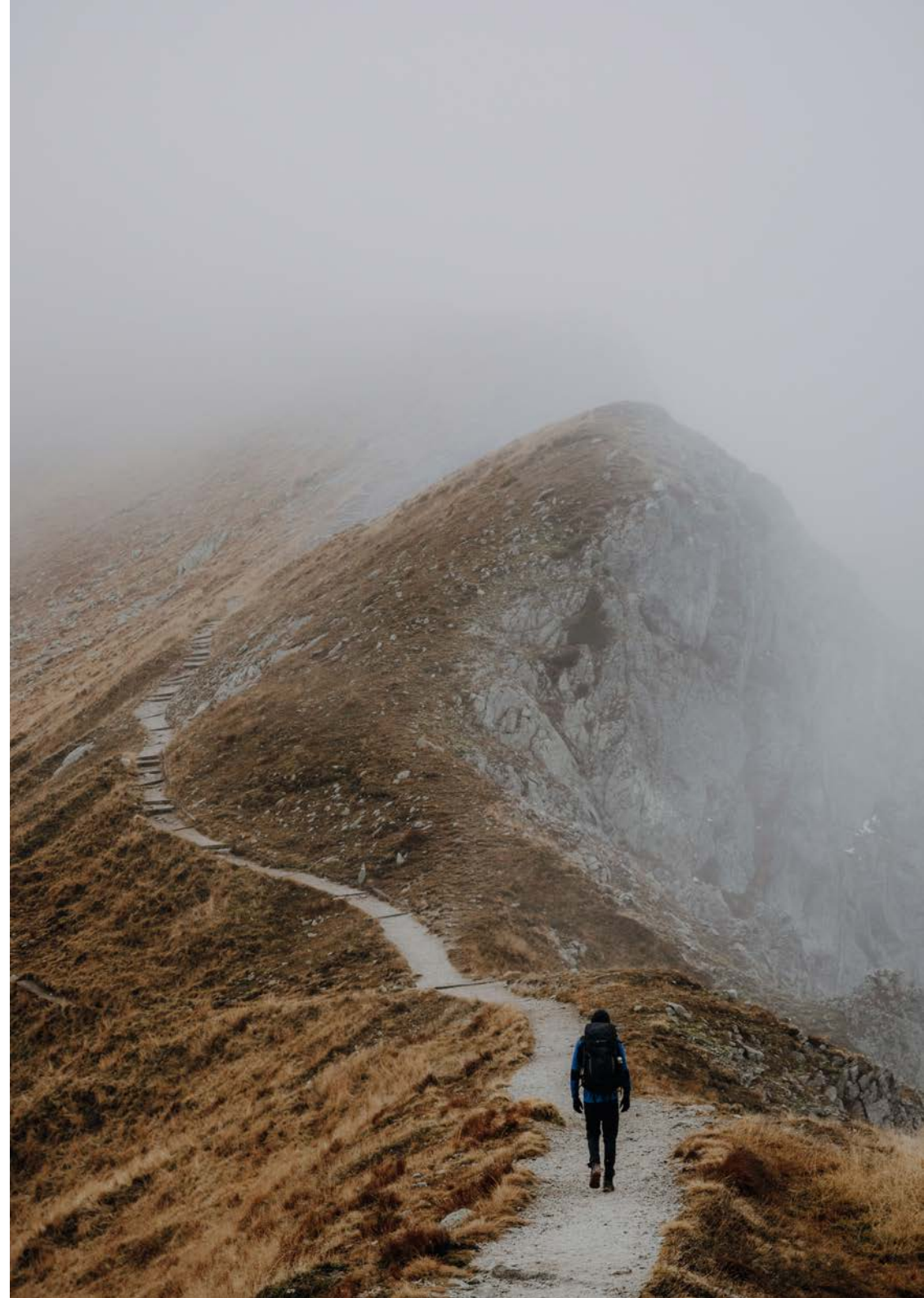
## South Tyrol Helicopter Rescue Services

- Prepare a suitable landing pad for the helicopter by removing backpacks and properly securing items such as clothing and emergency blankets that could be blown away by the helicopter's powerful rotors thus obstructing the landing/take-off.
- A single member of the rescue team (the first responder) should signal for help by stretching both arms out into the air. This means: "YES – HELP IS NEEDED". On the other hand, signalling with one arm means: "NO – help is NOT NEEDED." Everyone else should stand aside, making themselves useful by holding any children by the hand, and keeping dogs on a leash.
- The first responder and injured person should maintain a crouched position in a safe location until the helicopter has landed.
- If the emergency call is medically motivated in a life-threatening situation, a € 100 charge applies. In the event of inappropriate callouts (i.e. in the absence of any real emergency) the maximum charge levied is € 1,000 per incident.



# Staying Safe in Case of Lightning

- In the mountains, thunderstorms can create hazardous conditions such as reduced visibility, increase the risk of falls, as well as the threat of lightning strikes.
- Avoid hiking – if forecasts predict thunderstorms or significant downpours.
- Should weather conditions suddenly worsen, immediately terminate your hike, and find the nearest mountain shelter to weather out the storm.
- When there's a threat of lightning, stay away from exposed objects such as cliffs, lone trees, isolated large rocks, and ski lift towers, steering clear of streams that can quickly turn into treacherous torrents. Maintain a safe distance from cave walls (at least 2 m) and keep metal objects and electronic devices away from you.
- When there's a threat of lightning, stay away from exposed objects such as cliffs, lone trees, isolated large rocks, and ski lift towers, steering clear of streams that can quickly turn into treacherous torrents. Maintain a safe distance from cave walls (at least 2 m) and keep metal objects and electronic devices away from you.
- In the event of a lightning strike: quickly move any injured persons to a shelter, as lightning can strike multiple times in the same place. Immediately perform life-saving procedures as necessary. Emergency calls: 112





# Hiking Etiquette 101

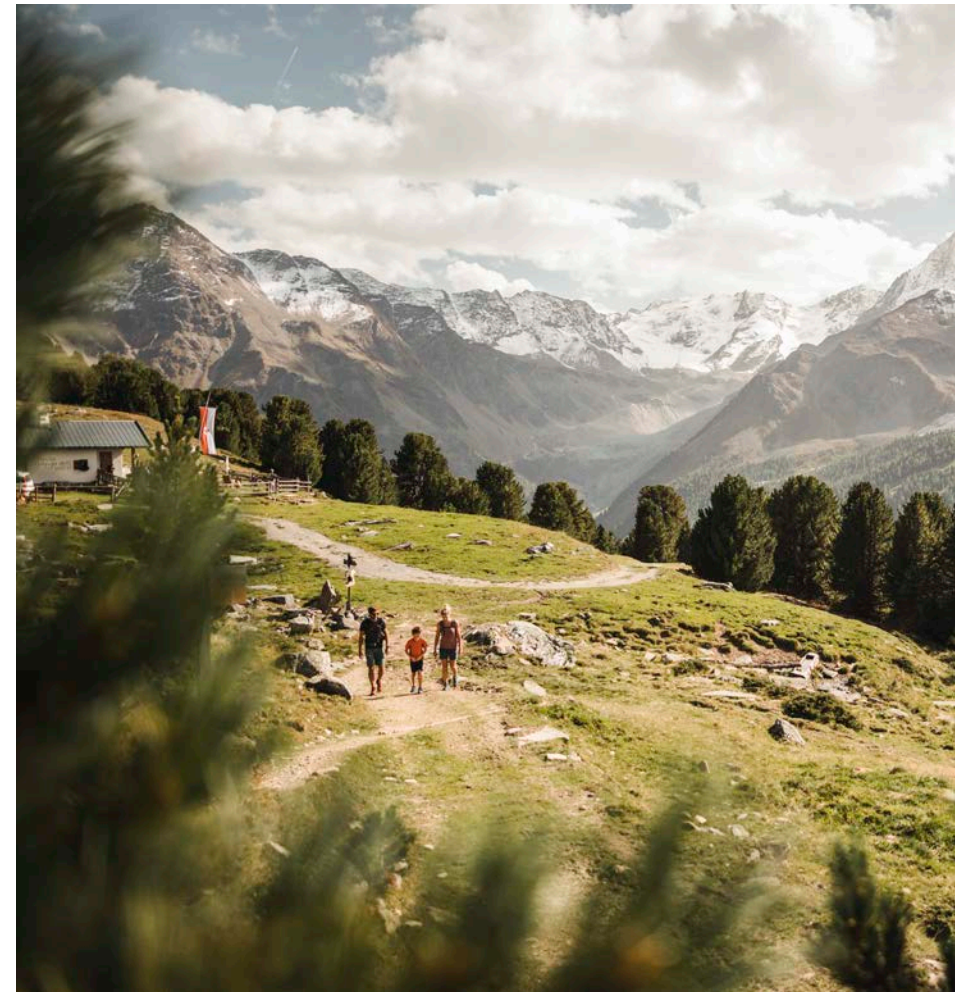
- Whenever possible opt for environmentally friendly transport such as public transport, lift and cable mechanisms, cycling, or on foot. This helps protect the environment, leaving your car parked.
- Should you choose to drive form carpools, park only in designated areas, avoid blocking access ways and comply with driving restrictions. Never park in forests or the fields!
- Both in summer and winter plan your hikes in advance. Check the route lengths, elevation differences, difficulty levels, and weather conditions beforehand to ensure a safe hiking experience. Keep in mind: climbs require stamina and endurance, and descents call for coordination and can be tough on the knees.
- Hiking information is found in guidebooks and maps, via local tourist offices, experienced mountaineers, or in apps such as Outdoor Active or Komoot.
- Always inform someone (relatives, friends, or your hosts) of your destination, planned route, expected return time, and who's going with you. Let them know when you return.
- Before heading out be sure to first check the weather forecast and during your hike keep an eye open for changing conditions. Hut and refuge managers can usually provide useful information about local weather conditions. When hiking in winter, make sure to follow the avalanche report closely since fast-changing weather can also increase the risk of accidents.
- Make sure that everyone in your hiking group matches the requisite level of capability and select the route accordingly. Are all members of the team sufficiently fit, sure-footed, and none of them suffer from vertigo? Is their current fitness and activity level adequate for the climb? Are any children coming along? Such considerations are critical when selecting an appropriate trail and ensuring that everyone is safe and enjoys the hike.

- If the route leads across high elevations make sure the effects of such altitude might have on participants. Symptoms including fatigue, headaches, and dizziness usually start at 2,000 meters. Ascend slowly to avoid altitude sickness and consider several lower-altitude hikes for improved acclimatization.
- Be sure you are aware of any existing medical conditions within your group. This is important both to ensure that everyone can complete the hike and for handling any potential medical issues that may occur during the trek.
- Ensure you have the right gear: rugged footwear enhances stability; rain, cold, and sun protection are essential; and always pack a first-aid kit and a fully charged mobile phone (emergency calls 112). Navigation aids such as maps, apps, and GPS are essential, and wearing bright coloured clothing increases visibility in emergencies.
- Start early to allow plenty of time to return before dusk. Show consideration for wildlife, especially during feeding at dawn and dusk.
- Practice sure-footedness: mountain trails can be uneven and slippery – treading carefully and hiking at a steady pace helps to prevent falls.
- On narrow paths yield to ascending hikers; it's easier for those descending to pause.
- Greet fellow hikers encountered on the trails, whether with a nod or a verbal greeting.
- Maintain a steady pace with sufficient stop breaks for snacks and hydration. This is especially important when hiking with children, who would need more frequent stops.
- Ensure adequate hydration. Water, tea, and natural juices are good options, and nutritious foods like whole grain bread, dried fruits, and nuts make excellent snacks.

- Make sure children stay focussed and are always safe. Avoid exposed and dangerous paths and be especially careful near cliffs or on steep inclines.
- Let the slower members of the group go in front, setting the pace. Or stop at regular checkpoints where everyone can regroup and be counted. Make sure that no one is ever left behind!
- Avoid smoking or making fires in the forest.
- Respect nature: Stay on marked trails, leave no litter, minimize noise, avoid disturbing wildlife, and leave plants alone.
- Use the toilets at refuges and huts whenever possible.
- Throughout the year and during activities such as skiing, winter hiking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing, make sure you remain on the designated paths. Do not take shortcuts through meadows, which can damage vegetation and result in soil erosion.
- To ensure your safety pay attention to signage, close any gates and fences after you, and be mindful when following trails crossing through private property.
- Keep dogs tethered, especially near livestock, but be prepared to unleash them if threatened by animals. When using public transport remember to muzzle your dog and utilize dog toilets where possible to prevent environmental contamination.
- Observe grazing livestock from a distance without interfering, feeding, or petting, which could lead to unexpected and dangerous circumstances.
- Bask in the tranquillity of the mountains – accompanying wildlife sightings and is the soundtrack to unforgettable experiences.
- Whether you're skiing, sledding, snowboarding, mountaineering, biking, hiking, or climbing the mountains welcome everyone. Mutual respect makes the

adventure enjoyable for all.

- If things go awry, and if you become lost, or separated from your group, stay where you are, and above all remain calm. Assess your surroundings, carefully weigh up your options and their likely consequences, and choose the best course of action based on the situation at hand.







# Sustainable Mountain Adventures

- **Start with a bike ride:** Integrate cycling into your mountain trip by cycling from your place of abode to the start of your hiking/climbing trip. This enables you to reach your destination in a more leisurely manner and cuts down on emissions. For longer routes, consider combining your bike trip with a return journey using public transport, making sure beforehand that bikes are allowed on the train.
- **Utilize public transit during your journey:** cross multiple terrains or follow a linear route while avoiding the need to double back to your vehicle. The well-networked local bus and train services offer seamless connections between the different valleys, making it easy to start in one and finish in another. The Merano Tourist Office is able to recommend numerous excellent excursions.
- **Rental gear:** outdoor equipment is not only expensive but also carbon-intensive to produce and transport. Renting mountain boots and via ferrata kits makes better sense especially if you use them infrequently. Compared to buying rarely used new clothes and gear this is far more cost-effective and reduces your carbon footprint.

# Responsible Cycling and Mountain Biking

- Bike paths are public spaces, shared between hikers, tractorists, and others. Cycle with caution and be considerate. Bear in mind that, as a cyclist, you're often not easily heard especially when coming from behind.
- Follow traffic laws: use hand signals to indicate when you plan to stop, turn, or change lanes. When on the road keep to the right, and when riding in a group, stay in single file to avoid blocking the way. Make sure you keep a safe distance away from the path edges and curbs.
- Never leave litter along the trails or at rest areas.
- Always wear a helmet for safety—it can be a lifesaver.
- Meticulously plan your mountain biking excursions taking into account your level of fitness, the weather forecast, and trail conditions.
- Before each ride perform a bike check: ensuring that your brakes, lights, tire pressure, seat, suspension, and gears are in working order. Make sure your bike is regularly maintained, in optimal condition and properly adjusted for comfortable riding.
- Make sure you're fully ready for mountain trips: bring warm clothes, some protection against rain and wind, a maintenance box, a first-aid kit, a mobile phone, lighting, food, water, gloves, protective eyewear, a map and GPS device, and a helmet.
- Stay on the designated trails and adhere to the regulations to avoid causing erosion. Avoid taking shortcuts, that can harm fragile ecosystems and avoid any paths that are closed to the public.
- Practice minimal impact biking: avoid skidding to prevent trail damage and erosion.
- Stay off wet and muddy trails – riding under such conditions can severely damage the path.
- Give precedence to pedestrians. Allow enough time to alert them to your presence, and slow down as you come closer, even stopping if necessary. Try to avoid heavily trafficked walking paths.



- Control your speed, stay alert and always be ready to stop for unexpected obstacles.
- If using an e-bike for the first time, make sure to familiarize yourself with its handling, particularly the increased weight and speed, especially before undertaking more challenging rides.
- Respect the wildlife, particularly during feeding times (dawn and dusk). Ride during daylight hours, approach animals slowly, and close gates after you.
- Practice responsible and mindful cycling to ensure safety and enjoyment for all users of shared trails



# Interacting with Wildlife and Livestock

- Stick to the designated trails and routes. If livestock obstruct your path, find a way around them. Animals often avoid areas frequented by humans, so be particularly considerate when hiking in winter, which can be stressful for animals.
- When crossing a field or pasture treat grazing animals with circumspection. Generally, these animals are gentle but can easily be startled due to their limited field of vision. Alert them to your presence from a distance and proceed quietly, leaving plenty of space separating yourself and the herd.
- Be careful during the more sensitive times of the day: especially when animals are feeding in the early mornings and late evenings and avoid disturbing them. Make sure your hike enables you to return before dusk.
- In woodlands and pastures always keep your dog on a leash, regardless of its level of training. Dogs can provoke wildlife, possibly leading to fatal encounters in certain seasons. Unleashed dogs can also disturb animals, particularly in winter, causing unnecessary stress and expenditure of energy. If your dog injures livestock, you will be responsible for compensating the owner!
- Take all your trash away with you to avoid endangering wildlife by leaving hazardous materials such as glass and plastics.
- When encountering wildlife, maintain a calm demeanour and move slowly, using predictable movements to avoid startling the animals. Most wildlife poses no danger if you remain composed.
- Keep a safe distance: leave about 100 meters to separate you and the animals and avoid touching or feeding them. Do not approach wildlife that appears unafraid; it may be ill (i.e. infected with rabies). If you are bitten, seek immediate

medical care (hospital). Notify the authorities about any dead animals you might find.

- Do not touch or move young wildlife like fawns or bunnies; they are left alone while their mothers are foraging for food nearby. The scent of humans on the young animals can lead to rejection by their mothers. Avoid approaching or positioning yourself between young animals and their mothers, as this can be dangerous.
- Be aware that maternal animals will return to their young only after humans have departed. This is crucial near duck nests, as human presence can prevent mothers from returning, leading to the eggs cooling and death of chicks.
- Never disturb or destroy nests, dens, or other wildlife habitats.



# Am I Too Near the Livestock?

If you have come too close to cows and other grazing animals, they will adopt the following behaviours:

- **Signal #1:** The animal fixates on you. You are seen as a potential threat and the animal is intent on keeping an eye on you.
- **Signal #2:** The animal lowers its head and adopts a confrontational stance – it means it's getting ready to charge. Beware!
- **Signal #3:** The animal starts advancing in your direction. It's time to go!

If you notice any of the aforementioned warning signs, follow these steps:

- Back off slowly and stay calm, without ever turning your back to the animal.
- Unleash your dog, enabling it to avoid being hurt.
- If the situation escalates: start shouting loudly or wave a stick

# Conservation of Our Flora and Fauna

We're fully committed to preserving the stunning diversity of South Tyrol's natural habitats and, due to their endangered status, a significant number of animal and plant species are protected by law. Currently, some 27% of the indigenous plants and over 40% of animal species are considered under threat.

- Do not pick flowers or fungi.
- The most protected plant species include arnica, most kinds of ferns, all kinds of carnations and gentians, edelweiss, crocuses, tulips, daffodils, and many other species.
- Leave plants and flowers alone without touching them. Admire them only.
- Scan the QR-Code: you'll find regulations covering the protection of plants and animals in South Tyrol.
- Find guidelines on how to pick mushrooms correctly on the website «Land- und Forstwirtschaft» of the Provinz Bozen
- Join our efforts to safeguard our biodiversity and natural environment!





# Rules for Visitors with Dogs

- Ensure that your pet canine has an EU pet passport, with microchip identification, and a rabies vaccination (for at least 21 days). Bringing young pets up to 12 weeks old into Italy is not permitted; puppies over 15 weeks old with valid rabies vaccination are allowed into the country. When coming on vacation, a maximum of five dogs may be brought to Italy. In Italy, liability insurance is mandatory for dogs.
- When travelling, dogs must be secured (i.e. in a transport crate, dog seat belt, or behind a barrier). During the journey the dog may not be untethered, as it could distract the driver and risk injury in case of sudden stops and cause accidents. Please note: when undertaking long journeys plan your stops in advance to allow your dog to properly water, eat, and relieve itself. Never leave a dog alone in the car – stifling heat can build up within minutes and become life-threatening
- In public places, dogs must always be tethered (a leash up to 1.5 m max) except for specific types of working dogs (hunting, herding, avalanche, and civil protection). Muzzling is also required especially in public transportation, lift systems, and in crowded environments. In Merano dog muzzles are available at the Rösch store (Untere Lauben arcades).
- On public transport dogs must be leashed and muzzled and are not allowed on seats. Service animals and lap dogs (fitting into a dog carrier box 70 x 30 x 50 cm max) may travel free of charge. Medium and larger breeds must have a ticket costing 15 cents-per-kilometre or a Mobilcard Junior Pass (valid for 1, 3, and 7 days). When transiting on lift systems additional charges may apply. Further information is available from the Merano Tourist Office.
- Make use of dog toilets. Several locations have dog toilets equipped with free bags for dog waste. Such bags are mandatory and after use must be immediately disposed into trash bins, also in the mountains. Please note: dog toilets do not

double as general waste containers.

- Livestock is often threatened by dogs. Keep your dog on a leash and maintain a safe distance from cows, goats, sheep, etc. In case of an attack, unleash your dog to enable it to escape more easily.
- In restaurants, hotels, mountain huts and shelters there is no general rule for dogs. In some cases, they are welcome, at times tolerated, and in some places they must wait outside. It's better to check in advance! In Italy, dogs are considered part of the family, but every establishment (administrative offices, restaurants, hotels, museums, etc.) has its own rules.
- Do not leave your dog unattended at your place of stay or in the car!
- In Merano there are designated areas where your dog is free to run around. If you have a dog with you, avoid children's playgrounds.
- Local Veterinary Services: Merano Team Vet MTV (Romstr. street 278/A, info@meranteamvet.it, +39 0473 200 211), Dr. Spampinato & Dr. Frühauf (Romstr. street 58/60, vet.meranocentro@gmail.com, +39 0473 238348), Small Animal Practice Dr. Moser and Dr. Holzknecht MoHoVet (Vinschgaustraße street 9, +39 0473 200901)



# Permits for the Use of Drones

Whether for leisure or commercial purposes, a permit for drone operations is required. This ensures:

- the protection of indigenous wildlife (also from noise)
- allowing others to enjoy the natural environment without undue distraction
- respecting the privacy of individuals

In general, the use of drones is banned in nature reserves in South Tyrol.



## Texts

Chantal Redavid, Katharina Hohenstein, context

## Fotos

IDM Südtirol-Alto Adige/Alex Moling, IDM Südtirol-Alto Adige/Manuel Ferrigato, IDM Südtirol-Alto Adige/Manuel Kottetsteger, IDM Südtirol-Alto Adige/Andreas Mierswa, IDM Südtirol-Alto Adige/Armin Terzer, IDM Südtirol-Alto Adige/Patrick Schvienbacher, Kurverwaltung Meran/Tommy Hetzel, Kurverwaltung Meran/Simon Koy, Thomas Tribus, Lanaregion/Maike Wittreck, TV Hafling-Vöran-Meran 2000/Benjamin Pfitscher