

Colourful Skies in the Winter: The Dolomiti Balloon Festival in Toblach from 6 to 11 January

In January, Toblach once again becomes the stage for an extraordinary winter event: the **Dolomiti Balloon Festival**. When colourful hot air balloons rise into the sky above the snow-covered Dolomites, the **3 Zinnen Dolomites region** is transformed into a sea of colour, movement and wonder. Over the years, the festival has become one of the most renowned gatherings of the Alpine ballooning scene, attracting teams and visitors from across Europe every year. What originally began as a small meeting of passionate pilots has developed into a fixed highlight of the winter calendar.

Balloon pilots from Italy, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Denmark and other European countries take advantage of the clear winter conditions, calm thermal currents and the impressive panorama to plan their flights over the Dolomites. Only in winter is it possible to cross the Dolomite mountain range by hot air balloon, and only in the **3 Zinnen Dolomites region** are safe balloon flights and landings possible under these conditions.

One of the festival's highlights is the **Nightglow**: as darkness falls, the balloons are set up on the ground and illuminated in rhythm with the music. This atmospheric spectacle lies somewhere between art, technology and magic and attracts large numbers of spectators every year.

In addition to balloon flights, the festival offers a varied supporting programme for families, interested visitors and amateur photographers. Model balloons, technical demonstrations and opportunities to meet international pilots provide insight into a fascinating world that many people usually experience only from a distance.

With its unique blend of Alpine scenery, international participation and a warm, family-friendly atmosphere, the Dolomiti Balloon Festival has long been more than just a sporting event. It is a place of encounter where people experience winter from a different perspective – quiet, floating, yet impressively close to the mountains. Those who wish to attend should bring warm clothing, a camera and a sense of wonder – because winter in Toblach reveals itself here every year in its most colourful form.

Information

<https://www.balloonfestival.it/>

Pustertalerstraße 15, I-39034 Toblach

Dolomites – South Tyrol – Italy

Tel. +39 348 2444451

Tel. +39 0474 972458

E-mail: info@balloonfestival.it

Key Facts

- **Initiator:** Alexander Strobl, owner of Hotel Rosengarten, Hotel Savoia and Guesthouse Rosengarten
- **2026 marks the 23rd edition** of the festival – traditionally held around the second week of January
- The festival concludes with a competition for the longest flight, awarding the **Dolomiti Balloon Trophy**
- **Longest flight to date:** Belgian pilot **Ramses Vanneste**, who transports around 10,000 passengers per year in Belgium
- **Other record holders:** Roland Sebastien, Günther Binder and his son Martin Binder, Othmar Hochreutener and Kurt Frieden (both Switzerland)
- **Teams and crew members in 2026** come from: Italy, Germany, Austria, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Lithuania and England
- Also always part of the festival: **model balloon pilots** – this year under the direction of **Christian Schulz**, with long-time participant **Jupp Hein**, who is also involved with the **Kinderherz Foundation** and is particularly committed to introducing children in schools and kindergartens to the history and world of ballooning

Pilots 2026

Paolo and Eduardo Barbieri, Günther and Martin Binder, Steffen Brückle, Ivan and Luca Vastano, Ramses Vanneste, Othmar Hochreutener, David Hochreutener, David Strasman, Kurt Frieden, Uwe Schäfer, Markus Theisen, Julian Brüggenkamp, Uwe Brüggenkamp, Othmar Pircher, Andrew Gregory, Ron van Kesteren, Peter Girardi, Alberto Pasin, Robert Lercher

Programme 2026

6 January

10:00–12:00 – Tethered balloon rides for children

17:00 – Opening ceremony with model balloon glow and face painting in Toblach

6–11 January

From 10:00 – Balloon flights: valley flights and long-distance flights over the Dolomites

Model balloon pilots on site throughout the festival

9 January

18:00 – Model Balloon Nightglow in Innichen

11 January

10:00–12:00 – Tethered balloon rides for children