

SUMMER HIGHS

From canyoning to paragliding, here are six great reasons |
to head back up the mountains when the snow has gone

Words Jon Wyatt

VIA FERRATA

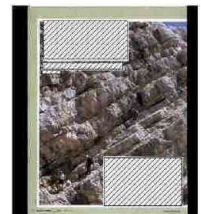
Get high in the mountains, with nothing but thin air and a view of the valley floor between your feet

The first Via Ferrata (literally translated as iron roads) were created to help Second World War troops travel more easily in the Italian Dolomites. Hand rails, ladders and metal cables were cemented to mountain ridges and rock faces to enable troops to scale high mountain ridges or sheer rock faces that were previously the preserve of seasoned climbers. When the recreational potential of the routes

was recognised more recently, many new Via Ferrata were created.

You wear a helmet and a climbing harness, which is attached to a steel cable to provide (almost) complete safety as you move up the mountain. You need a head for heights to cope with the exposure – the term climbers use to describe the heart-stopping moments where routes cross dizzying drops.

Exodus (0845 863 9600; www.exodus.co.uk) offers an eight-day Introduction to Via Ferrata from £1099. It includes flights, transfers, half-board accommodation and guiding. Gear hire (£25) and transport to daily start points are paid locally. You need to be able to walk six to eight hours a day.





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