

**Always leave a place better, cleaner, and more beautiful than before. Then you will always be welcome and you will leave the world a better place for those who come after.**

*—Daniel Waterman*

Dear friend(s),

The following pages contain detailed information concerning visits to my house in Zonca and your presence in the village, especially with respect to the community. This information will help you understand how the community functions and how you can make your visit/stay in Zonca more enjoyable and meaningful, both for yourself and for those who live in Zonca all the year round.

**Important:**

After early experiences with friends staying at the house in Zonca it has been decided that visitors must always get in touch with someone who actually lives in the village and will be present throughout their stay. This can be Steffano, Miki & Fabienne, or someone else. You need to contact the natives as soon as possible to let them know the exact date of your arrival and to discuss any questions or special needs. These people can welcome you, show you around, act as contact if you have any questions and generally make sure you are OK and know where everything is.

In addition, you should allow for a period of acclimatisation in Zonca. If you are in a hurry to get there and have only a few days to stay, you will miss out on many important features and will also be unable to get to know people well. Please consider that visitors are welcome but that their presence is also always in some way an intrusion. Having someone to welcome you and make sure you understand how things work is easier if you plan a longer stay.

**The House:**

Upon arrival in the village of Seppiana, (arriving from the direction of Villadossola-Dommodossola), you can reach Zonca from two or three different starting points. (I will not be discussing the route from Barboniga which is longer but useful for those who have physical difficulties walking). You may either park behind the Church in Seppiana and follow the markers along a steep path that takes about 30-40 mins. to walk. You will need to take into account that all approaches to Zonca require a vigorous walk and make sure you pack appropriately; use backpacks and don't carry too much in your hands.

Alternatively, you can park at the recycle bins just past Seppiana and walk up the road. There is a parking space about half way up this road. Do not attempt to drive past this point as the road is in very bad condition and only for use by people living in Zonca! Also, the barrier may be down. If necessary, make arrangements to use the lifts to bring heavy gear up to the village; call Steffano or Miki and ask for advice.

**Steffano: +393470340588 / +41792990469**

**Miki & Fabienne: +393426685532**

**Brigitte: +491707785361**

## Recognising the house:

As you come to the Church of Zonca you will find a main path leading right through the village. You will pass through an arch/tunnel and then you will see a house with an icon of the virgin Mary. (see image) Go up the directly on the left. There are two sets of keys to the house: the first set is kept by Miki. You can call him using the number above, space and turn to the left. Miki or his wife Fabienne will usually be home you will find an extra set of keys in the stable opposite the house. Go into the stable and plastic bag in the wall just near the face the entrance; the keys are in a the top of the door. Please return them upon leaving. The photo below shows where to look for the keys.



steps and the door to the house is two sets of keys to the house: the call him using the number above, space and turn to the left. Miki or around. In case there is no one of keys in the stable opposite the face the entrance; the keys are in a the top of the door. Please return them upon leaving. The photo the keys.



## Water:

Water should be turned off when leaving the house and also you need to empty out any excess water because the pipes can be damaged when it freezes. In front of the house there is a square metal cover. Lift it and turn both taps. Then open the taps in the house to drain the pipes! If water is filling the hole you have turned the wrong tap first! One of the taps is only for draining excess water. Also, please flush the toilet!



The water drain cover and taps: one for on/off, one for draining

### **Care of the house:**

During your stay it is perfectly ok to leave the doors of the house unlocked. If you leave the village, please lock the doors! The wooden case in the corner contains private stuff. There is a small supply of food in the house. If you use stuff, please replenish when you do shopping. *Please do not leave perishable goods in the house when you leave.* Waste needs to be sorted. Paper can be left outside on the balcony with firewood. Plastic trash and glass should be taken down to the main road in Seppiana and deposited in the recycling bins. There are two sets of recycle bins: right at the turn off to the Church of Seppiana and just beyond the village in the opposite direction to Villadossola. Please do not leave waste for others to clear up.

### **Cooking:**

There are two cookers in the house. One uses gas and can be used to make coffee or tea. It should not be used to heat the house! The other uses wood and can be used for more extensive cooking. Feel free to use the cooking equipment like tajine and the copper pot. But clean them well afterward.

### **Food:**

There is a basic supply of food in the house. Feel free to use it as long as you do some shopping too. There is a high likelihood that you will get invited to join the communal table at breakfast lunch or dinner! Consider how you might like to contribute, either by doing some work, helping out with cooking and cleaning or bringing a dish. You will be very welcome! You might also like to ask people from the community whether you can do shopping with them, or whether they need any shopping if you decide to go to town.

### **Shopping:**

A drive down the road to Villadossola will bring you close to 3-4 supermarkets. There is one situated right in Villadossola near the main square. There is also an open air market on Tuesdays. If you drive straight instead of turning right into Villadossola there are three other supermarkets just off the main road to Dommodossola. There is also a pharmacy on this road and a gas station. There is one small grocery store in Seppiana which has very basic foods.

### **Sleeping:**

I have not had time to bring in a double mattress but there are two single beds that fit nicely together. The sofa on the ground floor can be opened to provide a third sleeping place. You need to bring your own blankets and sheets! The house may be dusty so shake everything out on the balcony. Remember that the period between mid-September and February can be quite cold; it can even snow! When the sun is out it can be quite warm in the daytime but you need to prepare for the cold. Also bring raingear and boots if you visit in the autumn/winter.

### **Wifi/Internet/Telephones:**

There is wifi in the upper part of the village but you need to request access from Steffano or from anyone staying at his house. Internet reception is poor in the village without wifi. Phone

reception has improved a lot in recent years but you may still find areas where you can't call; just move around until you get a few bars on your screen. You can call from the house.

### **Washing:**

There is no shower in the house at present. You have several options: if its warm you can use the solar shower right at the end of the village. There is a spiral and if the sun is out you will get hot water. You can also make arrangements with Steffano to use the bathroom in the big house, or talk to anyone who is staying at the house. You can also ask Enrico, Miki & Fabienne. Finally, you can just heat water on the woodstove and rub down in the bathroom.

### **What to bring:**

- Candles
- Torch (headlamp)
- Batteries
- Lighter
- Food (especially veggies)
- Warm clothes
- Raincoat
- Sheets
- Blankets

### **What not to bring:**

Please do not bring stuff that might harm the environment, chemicals, cleaning stuff, shampoo, soap, plastic stuff, single use stuff. Do not leave batteries. Please don't drop cigarette butts. Don't leave stuff behind because you cannot be bothered to carry it down!

### **Community:**

In general everyone will welcome you to Zonca. You will be invited to join meals and you are welcome to join in work. Please ask whether there is anything you can do to help! Whether just gathering or hauling wood, bringing some shopping, helping to prepare meals or clear up afterward, all these things will make you very welcome and will be much appreciated, and you will enjoy your stay more!

### **Exploring:**

Feel free to explore the village but please don't just walk into houses; even if they look empty they may be owned or inhabited. Some houses are unsafe to enter! You can go on long walks just above the village. Ask people to show you where paths begin. Don't be afraid to walk for several hours, but always make sure you have enough food and proper clothing. Just above the village there is a path that takes you well up the mountain. You will pass springs and a waterfall with a pool. I have never walked all the way to the end but weather permitting, it is said you can walk up to 2000 meters. You can also go up the valley to Bordo (either via the road through Seppiana or on foot by the path just below Zonca) or to Lago Antrona, both really nice places to visit and walk around. Ask around for ideas or read the website: [www.zonca.info](http://www.zonca.info)

## **Donations:**

If you feel like donating toward your stay in Zonca your donations will certainly be much appreciated. Anything between €5.- to €15.- euro should be OK. You can leave small donations in the jar on the table or give them to Miki & Fabienne.

## **Checklist:**

- Turn on water outside and don't forget to turn it off and drain water when leaving!
- Turn on gas under stove and don't forget to turn off when leaving!
- Replace wood that you burn as well as paper and starter wood (gather wood and twigs in the forest and let them dry).
- Unless you helped finance the house please consider donating €15 euro per day per person for upkeep of the house and village
- Please replace any food used
- Batteries not included! Please bring your own and take them to recycling upon leaving!
- Please replace anything broken or lost
- Please clean and sweep before leaving
- Put key back where you got it
- Charge batteries upstairs. Detach USB charger after use. Telephones charge faster if off!
- Organic waste can go to the recycling in the main square near the big table
- Ashes from the woodstove need to be emptied and taken to organic toilets
- Please use toilet paper sparingly to prevent blockage and overflow.
- Do not use soap for washing-up if lemon juice is available.
- Make sure all sweet stuff is out of reach of ants!
- Carry plastic, glass and metal to the recycling bins in Seppiana
- Please bring your own candles. Do not leave candles unattended.
- If gas is finished please exchange the bottles down at the general store in Seppiana
- Electric outlets are 12 volt DC!
- Packets of food should be left in the orange plastic container!

- Bring your own sheets! There is a double mattress upstairs and a couch downstairs. Cover the mattress with the sheet when you leave!
- Washing: either take washing to Villadossola or make arrangements with Steffano. Keep in mind that electricity costs money.
- Be aware of snakes and scorpions! Check bedding, shoes and clothing. Sweep daily!
- Peyote plants do not need water in winter but in summer a little water is ok.
- Do not leave food open for flies and rats. Keep cats out of bedroom.

**Enjoy your stay in Zonca!**