



SELF-GUIDED
EDELWEISS TOURS

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)

“ This tour leads you through the Alps and will make you discover all its diversity. This is a paradise for every experienced rider! ”

www.edelweissbike.com

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



RIDING DAY 1 : MIEMING - LIVIGNO

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Standard Route (258 km / 160 miles)

We have decided to start this tour with a blast! Today's ride is both very challenging and spectacular, so full of highlights!

Right after leaving Mieming, we discover how scenic Tyrol is: a morning cruise across Kühtai Saddle is the perfect start for an alpine tour! A bit later you can admire the sheer cliffs at the Gacher Blick viewpoint before returning down to the valley and entering Italy via Reschen Pass. Be fascinated by the sunken church (and the entire village as well) in the lake Resia, where only the bell tower sticks out of the water. Then, medieval Glorenza/Glurns awaits you with some real Italian coffee to supply you with energy for today's mega-highlight: the 48 tight switchbacks up to Stelvio Pass, the Queen of Alpine Roads! Up at 2,758 m, the air is crisp and thin; what a great spot for a lunch break with a view!

Later on, you descend towards Bormio and across the lesser-known Foscagno Pass you finally reach Livigno, a wonderful mountain village set amidst sheer mountains and verdant pastures.

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Highlights:

#1: SELF-GUIDED TIPS: Mieming - Livigno STD

Morning coffee: in Kühtai (WP Café Dorfstadl Kühtai Apfelstrudel) or in Gorenza/Glurns. (WP Café Grüner Baum, Gorenza/Glurns)

Lunch: great lunch on the Passo Stelvio, either quick sandwich lunch at Bruno's wurststand (WP Bruno Würststand, Stelvio/Stilfserjoch) or in the panorama restaurant Tibet (WP Rest Alpengasthof Tibet Hütte, Stelvio).

Afternoon break: on Passo di Foscagno (WP Passo di Foscagno).

Photo stops: at the viewing platform Gacher Blick (WP Foto Gacher Blick), the church tower in the lake (WP Foto Sunken Church Reschensee), and along the road to Passo Stelvio, on the pass (WP Passo dello Stelvio/Stilfser Joch), in Livigno.

Gas: in Livigno, very cheap because of duty-free agreement (WP Gas Livigno (Eni)).

Dinner: Livigno has plenty of restaurants along the walking street. Many are very good, choose as you like! We can recommend Concordia Lounge, Ristorante La Posa, Il Bivio Bistrot, all along the central street.

#2: Kühtai (2017 m)



This is one of the many good motorcycle roads around the area of Innsbruck. It takes you up to 6,561 ft. above sea level and offers spectacular views of the Stubai Alps. The skiing area is well-known, but the name indicates that the area was and still is used to take the cattle to the alpine pastures during summer time. Watch out for their presence, and their "presents," on the road. Another interesting place to see here is the Kühtai power station.

Divided into two different stations, the upper one is located on 6,233 ft. above sea level. The second one lies approx. 270 ft. below the main plant. Electricity is transferred via power lines down to the valley and fed in the Austrian electricity network as well as into the Central European network.

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#3: Gacher Blick



Thousands of years ago, people were already coming to the Piller saddle and were captivated by the "sheer view" and the fascinating vista of the Upper Inn Valley. In those times, traveling across the Alps on those demanding paths was hard work, but for us motorcyclists today this road up to the Piller saddle means just great riding fun.

The word "gach" was generally used as a synonym for "sudden". Here, in the Tyrolean Uplands, it also is used to replace "fast" (meaning sudden), "sheer", or "steep". And here at this point, the cliff indeed shows a drop of approx. 800 m (2,600 ft.)

#4: Lago di Resia (Lake Reschen)



Prior to the creation of the reservoir lake, the Reschenpass featured three lakes. Expropriations for this project already began under the Fascist government in 1940-41. A total of 163 houses and 523 hectares of fertile soil, including the village Graun and a large part of the village Reschen, drowned in the new lake. Despite great protests from the population, the project could no longer be stopped. Today

we still see the listed church steeple of Graun bizarrely peeking out of the lake.

#5: Glorenza (Glurns)



With 924 inhabitants, Glurns is Italy's smallest city. Located on the old salt trade route, the town was very important during the 14th and 15th centuries. During the Engadin War between the Habsburg army and the Swiss farmers in 1499, the town was destroyed. The inhabitants rebuilt their hometown in the 16th century surrounding it with a new 10 m (30 ft.) high wall. It seems Glurns has been sleeping since that time and, hence, preserved its medieval character.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



#6: Passo dello Stelvio (Stelvio Pass) (2758 m)



Planned in 1818, this pass road was built within 5 years (1820-1825) by about 2,000 workers. Because of the horse-drawn vehicles of the time, the gradient was limited to a maximum of 11%. At an altitude of 2,758 m (9,048 ft), Passo dello Stelvio is the highest pass in Italy and the second-highest paved pass of the Alps. With its 48 tight switchbacks on the northern side, it is a tourist attraction

famous all over Europe and a first-class attraction for European riders. You will love it, too!

#7: Passo del Foscagno (2291 m)



Passo di Foscagno represents the eastern access road to Livigno from the town of Bormio. Located closer to Livigno, Passo di Foscagno has its highest point at 2,211 m (7,255 ft) and is, together with the toll road through the Munt-la-Schera-Tunnel from the north, the only way to access Livigno all year round. The access via the Forcola di Livigno road from the south is closed during the winter season.

#8: Livigno



The small town (6000 inhabitants) is situated at an altitude of more than 6000 feet. Due to its extremely remote location, in 1805 Napoleon declared the village to be duty-free - hoping that this would help the village's development. This status remains unchanged today, making Livigno very attractive for shoppers and skiers.

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Optional Route (195 km / 121 miles)

If you do not want to spend so much time on your bike on the first day, then just skip the morning lap over the Kühtai and ride directly up to the Gachen Blick. After that, the route is the same, all the way up to the Stelvio Pass, where you'll arrive a little earlier, but certainly not too early for a hearty lunch, because switchbacks make you hungry!

To get to Livigno, instead of going via Bormio, you can ride a short distance through Switzerland, just down the Umbrail Pass, over the smooth and fun Ofen Pass, and through single-lane Munt la Schera tunnel, which isn't cheap, though.

If the weather is bad, you could skip the Stilfser Joch, because snow can fall up there at any time, even in summer. Instead, you could ride from Glurns directly to the Ofenpass and then through the tunnel. This would also leave more time for duty-free shopping in Livigno for chocolate, perfume, tobacco, and alcohol....

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Lunch: great lunch on the Passo Stelvio, either quick sandwich lunch at Bruno's wurststand (WP Bruno Würststand, Stelvio/Stilfserjoch) or in the panorama restaurant Tibet (WP Rest Alpengasthof Tibet Hütte, Stelvio).

Afternoon break: on Pass dal Fuorn/Ofenpass.

Photo stops: at the viewing platform Gacher Blick (WP Foto Gacher Blick), the church tower in the lake (WP Foto Sunken Church Reschensee), and along the road to Passo Stelvio, on the pass (WP Passo dello Stelvio/Stilfser Joch), in Livigno.

Gas: in Livigno, very cheap because of duty-free agreement (WP Gas Livigno (Eni)).

Dinner: Livigno has plenty of restaurants along the walking street. Many are very good, choose as you like! We can suggest Concordia Lounge, Ristorante La Posa, Il Bivio Bistrot, all along the central street.

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#6: Umbrail Pass (2503 m)



The 2,503 m (8208 ft) Umbrail pass is a great alternative ascent to (or descent from) the Stelvio pass. While the west ramp leads you down to Bormio in Italy, the Umbrail pass represents the direct connection into Switzerland. This little frequented road is completely paved by now and offers a scenic and twisty ride to the avid motorcyclist.

#7: Pass dal Fuorn (Oven Pass) (2149 m)



Being an easier-to-ride alternative next to the Stelvio Pass, the Fuorn Pass leads you directly into the heart of the Swiss national park. It offers a nice variety of narrow and wide curves, very much to the delight of any type of motorcyclist. At the western end of the pass, you can turn into the duty-free town of Livigno via the toll tunnel Munt-la-Schera. At the top of the pass at 2149m, a restaurant invites you for a break.

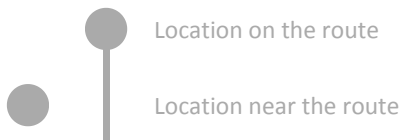
ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



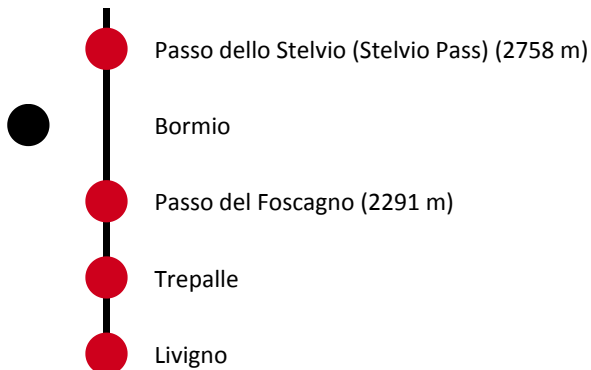
Route



Legend



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RIDING DAY 2 : LIVIGNO - LUGANO

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Standard Route (232 km / 144 miles)

Today's route brings you first from Italy into Switzerland, than briefly into Italy again, and then one more time into Switzerland. The part of Switzerland you end up in is italian-speaking and known as Ticino, or Tessin in German.

The first part of Switzerland you travel through is known as the Engadine. People here speak their own language, about 15,000 of them, but the number is dropping. You will also notice a distinctly different building styles in all these regions.

On this standard route, you will ride more pass roads with seemingly endless curves. The first one is Bernina Pass, followed by Maloja Pass and a photo stop at the scenic Acquafraggia waterfalls in Italy. Then turn right towards Splügen Pass for some crazy switchbacks (on the way down find a safe spot along the road to take an epic photo). The next "big boy" is San Bernardino Pass. From here you will start to descend towards Lugano and the warm, sunny shores of the eponymous lake.

Enjoy an absolutely fantastic riding day and arrive at your destination with a happy smile on your face.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



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Highlights:

#1: SELF-GUIDED TIPS: Livigno - Lugano STD

Morning coffee: at the Acquafraggia waterfalls there is a small café (WP Foto Cascade dell'Acquafraggia).

Lunch: early lunch in Montespluga, right before reaching Splügen Pass. (WP Rest Albergo della Posta, Montespluga, along the road or Pizzeria La Capriata (Rest La Capriata, Montespluga) on the lake, small side road. Late lunch either on Passo San Bernardino or later in Lostalio (Rest Pizzeria Boffalora, Lostalio).

Afternoon break: On Passo San Bernardino.

Photo stops: at Bernina Pass, Maloja Pass, Acquafraggia waterfalls, on the way down from Splügen pass (WP Foto Splügenpass Kehren), on San Bernardino Pass.

Gas: in Lugano (WP Gas Lugano (Agip))

Extra activities: if you arrive early enough take a stroll around Lugano and its waterfront.

Dinner: the Grotto Morchino restaurant is a traditional Ticino restaurant serving up local specialties at communal tables. Family-run and friendly. For a more international flavor profile head to La Fermata for burgers, tacos, and truffle fries.

#2: Bernina Pass (2328 m)



Switzerland is surrounded by several countries of the EU. It is only natural that quite a number of passes are bordering to some of these countries. Such as the Bernina pass. It has its starting point in the Italian town of Tirano, meandering across to Pontresina in Switzerland on the other side. Don't miss out on a coffee stop on top of the pass to enjoy the view of the Bernina mountain glaciers.

#3: Maloja Pass (1815 m)



Maloja Pass connects Lake Como with Graubünden in Switzerland. It is a one-sided pass, only on the western side are "real" switchbacks. These are beautiful and in excellent condition. Great fun to ride!

#4: Cascade dell'Acquafraggia (Acquafraggia Waterfalls)



At an elevation of 3,083 m (10,114 ft) the Cima de Lago has the source of a stream called Acquafraggia from which, in turn, two impressive series of waterfalls plunge down into the valley.

#5: Passo dello Spluga (Splügen Pass) (2115 m)



By climbing the 2,115 m (6,940 ft) Splügen pass you add a true riding highlight of the Swiss-Italian Alps to your pass collection. The challenge of the Italian south ramp lies in its tight switchbacks, which partially run through short but narrow avalanche tunnels. The north ramp on the Swiss side offers pure riding pleasure on its numerous turns, too. Already 2,000 years ago, the Via Spluga, as it was called back then, was considered to be one of the most important

connections between the Swiss canton Grisons and Italy. Goods were transported, and people were traveling from Thusis via the Via Spluga to Chiavenna and vice versa. The construction of the road as we know it today was finished in 1822. But after the tunnel through the nearby San Bernardino was completed, the Splügen pass has lost its importance, nowadays. Much to the pleasure of us motorcyclists.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



#6: Passo di San Bernardino (2067 m)



In 1770, the original path over the Bernhardin mountain was finally turned into a "paved" road. The top of the pass was relocated to cross over the natural mountain saddle at its lowest point. At 2,067 m (6,780 ft), a mountain guesthouse was opened, which today serves as a restaurant and popular meeting point for motorcyclists. Once you've reached the top of the pass, you probably will feel like you've landed on the moon, standing in between the bare

rocks and the mossy ground. The road down into the Tessin is twisty with some tight hairpins. On your ride down the mountain, you can find the new Bernardino highway, crossing over or under your road again and again. What a pleasure for us to be able to enjoy a quiet ride on this little frequented pass road.

#7: Lugano



Located on the northern shore of Lake Lugano, Lugano has a very comfortable Mediterranean climate. It is one of the three warmest places in Switzerland – and the largest Italian-speaking city outside of Italy. The pedestrian-only old town and the promenade along the lake shore are perfect for a little walk. If you want to see the town and the lake from the top, you can take a side trip to one of

Lugano's mountains, Monte Salvatore or Monte Brè.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Optional Route (161 km / 100 miles)

In order to have a little more time for breaks and sightseeing, you could skip the last two major passes and turn left instead of right in Chiavenna. This will take you directly to Lake Como, whose beauty has enchanted visitors for decades. Here, the orange trees are thriving and along the promenades you can enjoy the much-praised dolce vita. The view over the lake is enchanting and should definitely be crowned with a cappuccino or a gelato.

From Menaggio on Lake Como it is not far to Porlezza on Lake Lugano, which Italy shares with the Swiss canton of Ticino. The best view is from Monte Brè, which is just beyond the border and is accessed by a funicular. So if you still have time and can resist the jump into the cool water of Lake Lugano...

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



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Highlights:

#1: SELF-GUIDED TIPS: Livigno - Lugano OPT

Morning coffee: at the Acquafraggia waterfalls there is a small café (WP Foto Cascade dell'Acquafraggia).

Lunch: at Lake Como, either in Domaso (WP Café Domaso) or in Menaggio (WP Cafe Menaggio).

Afternoon break: at Lake Lugano (WP Lugano Lake).

Photo stops: at Bernina Pass, Maloja Pass, Acquafraggia waterfalls, at Lake Como.

Gas: in Lugano (WP Gas Lugano (Socar)).

Extra activities: if you arrive early enough take a stroll around Lugano and its waterfront.

Dinner: the Grotto Morchino restaurant is a traditional Ticino restaurant serving up local specialties at communal tables. Family-run and friendly. For a more international flavor profile head to La Fermata for burgers, tacos, and truffle fries.

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At an elevation of 3,083 m (10,114 ft) the Cima de Lago has the source of a stream called Acquafraggia from which, in turn, two impressive series of waterfalls plunge down into the valley.

#5: Lago di Como (Lake Como)



Lake Como has been a popular retreat for aristocrats and wealthy people since Roman times, and a very popular tourist attraction, which boasts many artistic and cultural gems, and is famous for its numerous villas and palaces. Many celebrities have or used to have homes on the shores of Lake Como, such as Matthew Bellamy, Madonna, George Clooney, Gianni Versace, Ronaldinho, Sylvester Stallone,

and Ben Spies.

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Located on the northern shore of Lake Lugano, Lugano has a very comfortable Mediterranean climate. It is one of the three warmest places in Switzerland – and the largest Italian-speaking city outside of Italy. The pedestrian-only old town and the promenade along the lake shore are perfect for a little walk. If you want to see the town and the lake from the top, you can take a side trip to one of

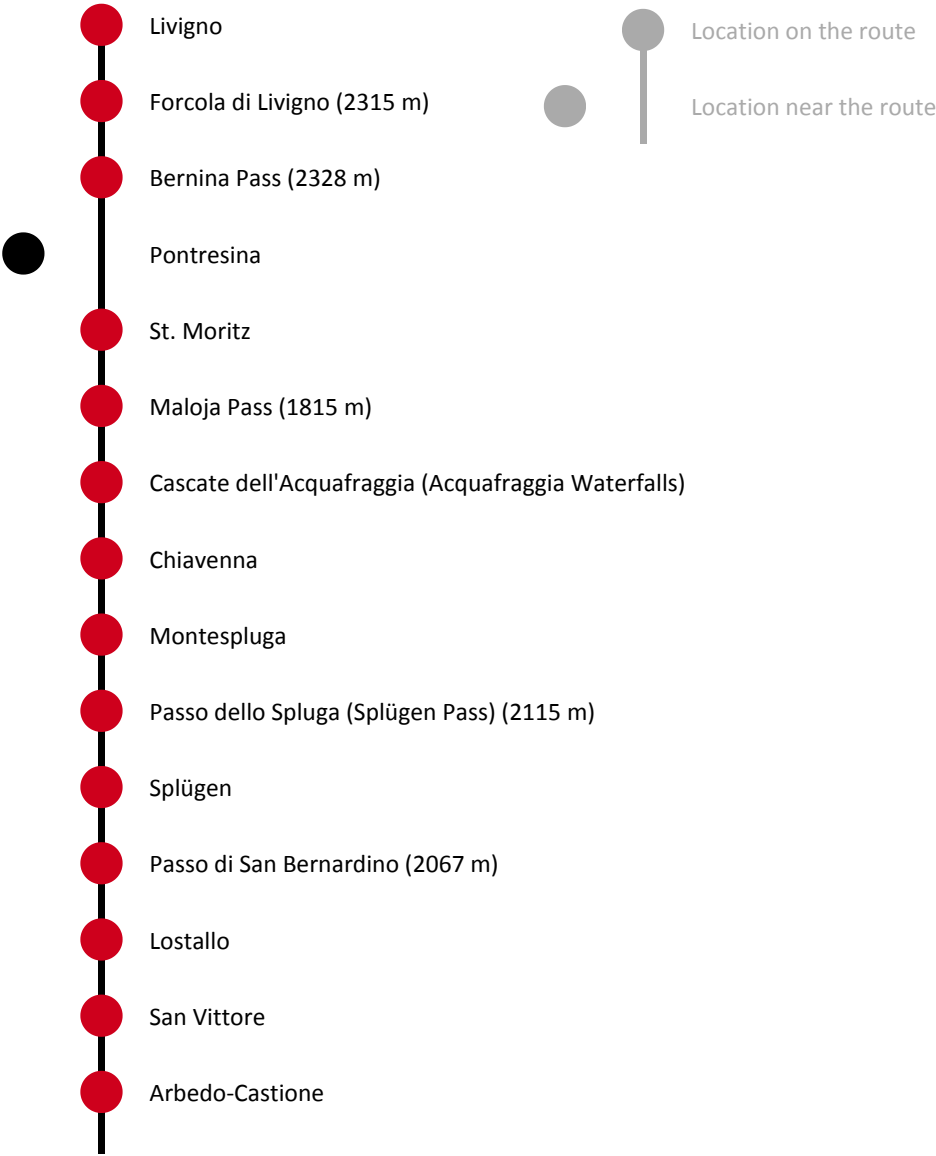
Lugano's mountains, Monte Salvatore or Monte Brè.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)

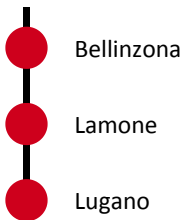


Route

Legend



ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



RIDING DAY 3 : LUGANO - AOSTA

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Standard Route (271 km / 168 miles)

Although you will get to see some high mountain ranges on our way to Aosta valley in the afternoon, you won't reach any high altitudes today.

In the morning, after warming up your tires on the very narrow road of Passo Sant'Antonio, a short ferry ride takes you across beautiful Lago Maggiore. Once on the other side, you can quickly leave the main roads behind you and tackle some very narrow side roads.

Don't expect any major mountain passes around here, instead you will be exploring the hills of the Italian backcountry. At first glance these hills, adjacent to the western flats of the River Po, don't look like there would be any roads running along their sides. But once you have entered this maze of hidden roads, however, you will just enjoy riding the tight curves in the cool shade of the trees. Needless to say that you may also come across one or the other culinary delight such as a cappuccino, a pizza, or some gelato.

In the afternoon you have the opportunity to stop and - depending on your timing - visit the huge, impressive fortress of Bard. Between Bard and Aosta, a little detour on a very curvy road towards Brusson offers more outstanding riding fun. So you see, you don't necessarily need huge mountain passes in order to find your riding bliss.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Highlights:

#1: SELF-GUIDED TIPS: Lugano - Aosta STD

Morning coffee: in Laveno if you need to wait for the ferry (WP Café Eiscafé l'Imbarcadero, Laveno).

Lunch: excellent, busy little pizzeria in Varallo, Ristorante Pizzeria La Sfinge (Via Osella, 27, 13019 Varallo VC, Italy). Park at WP "P Varallo La Sfinge".

Afternoon break: the Bar Sport Sas in Graglia is a typical, simple small-town café with excellent espresso (3, Piazza Paolo Giovanni Crida, Graglia, BI 13895, Italy) WP "Cafe Bar Sport, Graglia".

Photo stops: on the ferry, in Varallo and heading north on the main road around Bard stop at the parking lot on the right just after the castle for a great picture of the fortress of Bard (WP Foto Fortress of Bard).

Gas: in Aosta (WP Gas Aosta (Esso)).

Extra activities: visit Bard Fortress or Aosta downtown.

Dinner: High-quality Italian food at reasonable prices can be found at La Bottegaccia (Via S. Anselmo 90, Aosta, AO 11100) or at the nearby Osteria da Nando (Via S. Anselmo 99, Aosta, AO 11100).

#2: Lago di Lugano (Lake Lugano)



Lake Lugano (Italian: Lago di Lugano or Ceresio) is a lake in the south-eastern part of Switzerland, near the border between Switzerland and Italy. The lake, named after the city of Lugano, is situated between Lago Maggiore and Lago di Como. Lago di Lugano is quite a relief when it gets too cold in the mountains. Though still in Switzerland, you will already feel an Italian influence taking hold: the language

changes, and pasta and cappuccino are available everywhere. Just enjoy the "Southern Spirit," by doing what the locals do: Sit down and relax.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)

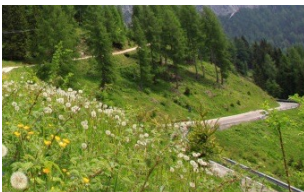


#3: Lago Maggiore



This lake is one of the most beautiful areas in Italy and certainly in Europe. Lake Maggiore with its rugged shores is surrounded by the high rocky walls of the Lepontine Alps. Several provinces border the lake: The western shore belongs to Piedmont (the provinces of Novara and Verbano-Cusio-Ossola), the eastern shore belongs to Lombardy (the province of Varese), and the northernmost part of Lake Maggiore extends thirteen kilometers into the Swiss canton of Ticino. There it reaches both its lowest point above sea level and the southernmost point of Switzerland.

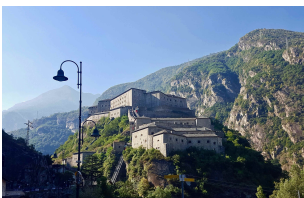
#4: Passo Sant'Antonio (1489 m)



Not only is this pass a fantastic ride but also clearly a challenge for the motorcyclist. The narrow road features very tight corners all the way up from the Lago Maggiore side. Running through a forest, the switchbacks on the other side join the main road near the village of Arcumeggia. When riding the Passo Sant'Antonio you should always keep in mind that on this road, traffic runs in

both directions!

#5: Fortress of Bard



The fortified complex of Fort Bard is located on a rocky prominence above Bard, in a narrow gorge at the entrance to the Aosta Valley. The fort has been used for millennia to control the historic route between Italy and France. The building we can visit today, however, was built in 1830 by King Karl Albert of Sardinia-Piedmont. Before, on May 14, 1800, a 40,000-strong French army was stopped by 400

Austro-Piedmontese soldiers at Fort Bard. They held the pass for two weeks, completely ruining Napoleon Bonaparte's plan of making a surprise attack on the Po Valley and Turin. When he heard the news, Bonaparte then gave the order himself that the fort should be razed to the ground.

Fort Bard has been completely restored after many years of neglect. It reopened as the Museum of the Alps.

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#6: Aosta



The Aosta valley, which borders France and Switzerland in the northwest is Italy's smallest province. This mountainous area is dominated by world known summits such as the Matterhorn, the Monte Rosa, and the Mont Blanc 4810 m (15,780 ft).

In the course of time, the proximity to France has arranged for the good connections with the neighbouring country. Even today, French and Italian are equally used as the

official languages in the autonomous region of the Aosta valley.

Obviously, the Aosta valley is not only famous for its mountains but also for the impressive fortresses and castles, which can be found embedded in the beautiful landscape along the valley.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Optional Route (230 km / 143 miles)

The optional route today is not very different from the standard route, it only omits the Passo Sant'Antonio and the detour between Bard and Aosta. Additionally, you can take the A5 highway from Quincinetto and save a total of 1.5 hours of riding time. This leaves more time for sightseeing and also for leisurely breaks in nice little cafes. There will still be enough riding fun left, you can be sure of that.

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Lunch: excellent, busy little pizzeria in Varallo, Ristorante Pizzeria La Sfinge (Via Osella, 27, 13019 Varallo VC, Italy). Park at WP "PVarallo La Sfinge".

Afternoon break: the Bar Sport Sas in Graglia is a typical, simple small-town café with excellent espresso (3, Piazza Paolo Giovanni Crida, Graglia, BI 13895, Italy) WP "Cafe Bar Sport, Graglia".

Photo stops: on the ferry, in Varallo and in Aosta.

Gas: in Aosta (WP Gas Aosta (Esso)).

Extra activities: visit Aosta downtown.

Dinner: High-quality Italian food at reasonable prices can be found at La Bottegaccia (Via S. Anselmo 90, Aosta, AO 11100) or at the nearby Osteria da Nando (Via S. Anselmo 99, Aosta, AO 11100).

#2: Lago di Lugano (Lake Lugano)



Lake Lugano (Italian: Lago di Lugano or Ceresio) is a lake in the south-eastern part of Switzerland, near the border between Switzerland and Italy. The lake, named after the city of Lugano, is situated between Lago Maggiore and Lago di Como. Lago di Lugano is quite a relief when it gets too cold in the mountains. Though still in Switzerland, you will already feel an Italian influence taking hold: the language

changes, and pasta and cappuccino are available everywhere. Just enjoy the "Southern Spirit," by doing what the locals do: Sit down and relax.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



#3: Lago Maggiore



This lake is one of the most beautiful areas in Italy and certainly in Europe. Lake Maggiore with its rugged shores is surrounded by the high rocky walls of the Lepontine Alps. Several provinces border the lake: The western shore belongs to Piedmont (the provinces of Novara and Verbano-Cusio-Ossola), the eastern shore belongs to Lombardy (the province of Varese), and the northernmost

part of Lake Maggiore extends thirteen kilometers into the Swiss canton of Ticino. There it reaches both its lowest point above sea level and the southernmost point of Switzerland.

#4: Aosta



The Aosta valley, which borders to France and Switzerland in the northwest is Italy's smallest province. This mountainous area is dominated by world known summits such as the Matterhorn, the Monte Rosa, and the Mont Blanc 4810 m (15,780 ft).

In the course of time, the proximity to France has arranged for the good connections with the neighbouring country. Even today, French and Italian are equally used as the

official languages in the autonomous region of the Aosta valley.

Obviously, the Aosta valley is not only famous for its mountains but also for the impressive fortresses and castles, which can be found embedded in the beautiful landscape along the valley.

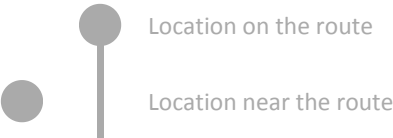
ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



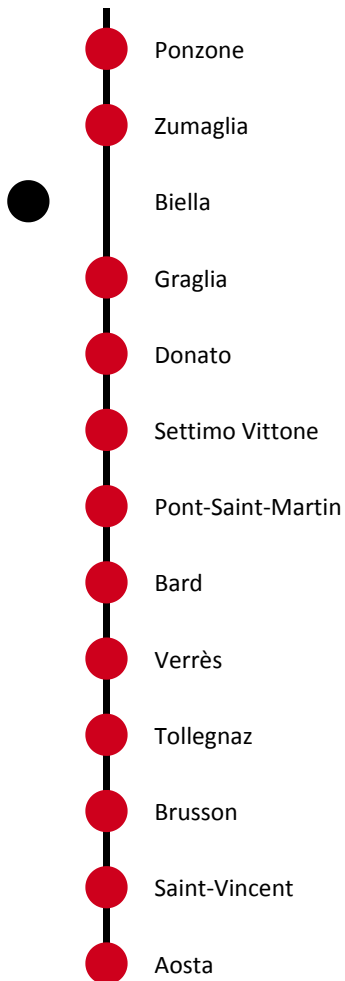
Route



Legend



ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



RIDING DAY 4 : AOSTA - BRIANÇON

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Standard Route (252 km / 157 miles)

In the past three days you have crossed most of the Central Alps and today you will reach the western regions of this 1,200 km long mountain range. Over the breathtaking Col du Petit St. Bernard, you reach the valley named Val d'Isère, home of a world-famous ski circus. In 1992 the Winter Olympics were held here and even today world championships in various snow disciplines are regularly held. Do you remember the Stelvio Pass from your first riding day? That was the second highest pass in the Alps and today you are tackling the highest one! Col de l'Iseran is 2,770 m high, which is 12 m higher than Stelvio! Col de la Bonette, which is often (incorrectly) considered the highest pass in the Alps, measures 2,802 m, but it's not really a pass, but rather a panoramic road.

After the pass, the route skirts the Lac de Mont Cenis reservoir, nearly 2,000 m above sea level, and crosses over into Italy one last time, in the very westernmost corner of the country. Col de l'Echelle brings you back to France and then Briançon comes into view, where your overnight accommodation awaits you.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Highlights:

#1: SELF-GUIDED TIPS: Aosta - Briançon STD

Morning coffee: at the Col du Petit Saint-Bernard at the Ancien Hospice du Petit Saint-Bernard (WP Café Col Petit St. Bernard).

Lunch: in Lanslebourg-Mont-Cenis (WP Rest Veille Poste, Lanslebourg) or in Val d'Iserre (many restaurants in town).

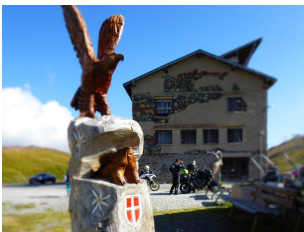
Afternoon break: on Col de l'Echelle.

Photo stops: after La Thuile in Pont Serrand (WP Foto Pont Serrand), on Col du Petit Saint-Bernard, at Lac du Chevril (WP Foto Lac du Chevril), on Col de l'Iseran, at Lac du Mont Cenis (WP Foto Mont Cenis), and on Col de l'Echelle.

Gas: in Briançon (WP Gas Briançon (Total)).

Dinner: several options in the old town, check for example Restaurant Le Rustique, Le Gravoche or L'Etage. For all kinds of meat grilled over an open fire make your way to Le Pied de la Gargouille.

#2: Col du Petit Saint-Bernard (Little St Bernard Pass) (2188 m)



21 hairpins lead you to the top of the Col du Petit Saint-Bernard, offering outstanding scenery. Take the time to enjoy it! The Little St. Bernard Pass (Italian: Colle del Piccolo San Bernardo) is a mountain pass in the Alps connecting France and Italy. Its saddle is at 2,190 m (7,178 ft) above sea level. It is located between Savoie (France) and Aosta Valley (Italy) to the south of the Mont Blanc Massif, precisely on the main Alpine watershed. Although

interrupted by a road that runs through it, the pass is the site of a stone circle measuring 72 m (236 ft) in diameter. A standing stone once stood in the middle. The age could not be determined exactly so far, but coin finds prove that the ceremonial site dates back to the Iron Age and was possibly a ceremonial site (725 BC-450 BC). A Roman temple dedicated to Jupiter was later erected nearby, along with a Roman mansion serving travelers along the pass. Supposedly, the Carthaginian general Hannibal used this route, too. The stone circle was partly restored in the 19th century, now carrying the statue of the Holy Bernard de Menthon.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



#3: Val d'Isère



Human habitation of the valley dates back even to Pre-Roman times. The town was granted canon law in 1637 and the parish church which is still a landmark in the town center today, was built in 1664. The Eastern and Central areas of Val-d'Isère are most recognizable by their chalet architecture, while at the Western part of the town higher buildings dominate. Skiing in Val-d'Isère has its roots in the 1930s, when a drag lift was built on the slopes of the Solaise. This was followed by an aerial tramway (cable car). Along with nearby Tignes, the area forms part of the l'Espace Killy, the self-styled Most Beautiful Ski Area in the World.

#4: Col de l'Iseran (2764 m)



With an altitude of 2764 m (the sign even says 2,770 m), Col de l'Iseran is the highest motorable mountain pass in the Alps - the Col de la Bonette is 2715m high, the 2802m peak can be reached only via an additional loop, which is not a pass. The road is only passable in summer; in winter it is used as part of a ski slope of the Espace Killy ski area.

#5: Col du Mont Cenis (2084 m)



At an elevation of 2,084 m (6,830 ft) the Col de Mont Cenis doesn't rank among the lowest Alpine mountain passes, but, at the same time, doesn't necessarily make you feel euphoric because of high altitudes either. But since the road is so perfectly carved into the mountain, the ride itself will be an exhilaratingly flowing experience for you anyways. The most mind-blowing moment, however, will surely come up when the panoramic view over the

turquoise lake of the same name opens up before your eyes.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



#6: Briançon



After Davos, Briançon (4,334 ft.) is the second-highest city in Europe. Visiting Briançon's citadel is a must! From the terrace, you've got the best view over the area. Since ancient times, two great routes into Italy have met here, and so the town always played an important commercial and military role.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Optional Route (220 km / 137 miles)

This route is almost an hour shorter than the standard route and uses the Fréjus tunnel (toll €29.40) instead of the mountain road over Mont Cenis. So if the weather isn't great or it just sounds tempting to arrive a little earlier in the lovely little town of Briançon, treat yourself to a ride through the tunnel. You shouldn't suffer from tunnel phobia, though, because the Fréjus tunnel is one of the longest road tunnels in the Alps at just under 13 km!

Briançon consists to a considerable extent of fortifications designed by the legendary fortress architect Vauban. Some of them have been protected by UNESCO since 2008, including Briançon's ramparts. The city's alleys are very narrow and, above all, steep, so bring some stamina when you go sightseeing.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Highlights:

#1: SELF-GUIDED TIPS: Aosta - Briançon OPT

Morning coffee: at the Col du Petit Saint-Bernard at the Ancien Hospice du Petit Saint-Bernard (WP Café Col Petit St. Bernard).

Lunch: in Lanslebourg-Mont-Cenis (WP Rest Veille Poste, Lanslebourg) or in Val d'Iser (many restaurants in town).

Afternoon break: on Col de l'Echelle.

Photo stops: after La Thuile in Pont Serrand (WP Foto Pont Serrand), on Col du Petit Saint-Bernard, at Lac du Chevril (WP Foto Lac du Chevril), on Col de l'Iseran and on Col de l'Echelle.

Gas: in Briançon (WP Gas Briançon (Total)).

Dinner: several options in the old town, check for example Restaurant Le Rustique, Le Gravoche or L'Etage. For all kinds of meat grilled over an open fire make your way to Le Pied de la Gargouille.

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ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



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ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)

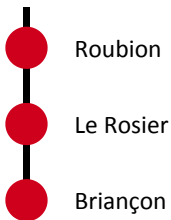


Route

Legend



ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Roubion

Le Rosier

Briançon

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



RIDING DAY 5 : BRIANÇON - CHAMONIX-MONT-BLANC

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Standard Route (286 km / 178 miles)

Welcome to the "Day of the Seven Passes"!

Alpine passes are just about the most beautiful thing that can get in the way of a motorcyclist. Many road cyclists in France, as well as in neighboring Italy and Spain, surprisingly think alike: the higher the pass, the more fun! Some of the passes you ride today are repeatedly incorporated into the world-famous Tour de France and have cult status.

The most beautiful of them - and the highest for you today - is the Col du Galibier, over 2,600 m high, to which 34 hairpin bends and countless "normal" curves lead up. Don't take the tunnel at the top, but ride all the way up for the ultimate view: a 360° panorama of the highest peaks in the Alps, and on a clear day you can even see Mont Blanc!

In the evening you follow the main valley in the direction of Megève and reach the breathtaking area of Chamonix, considered by many as France's "capital of the mountains". There you should take the opportunity to take the cable car to the Aiguille du Midi ("Midday Needle"). From the top station at 3,777 m, the view is impossible to describe in mere words. A must see!

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Highlights:

#1: SELF-GUIDED TIPS: Briançon - Chamonix STD

Morning coffee: just below the top of the Col de Lautaret there is a nice café right next to the Hotel Bonnabel, called Café de la Ferme (WP Cafe de la Ferme, Col de Lautaret).

Lunch: at the top of the Col de la Madeleine you will find the Le Banquise 2000 restaurant. The burgers here are highly recommended. Another great place for lunch is the sun terrace of Restaurant Les 2 Mazots.

Afternoon break: at the top of the Col des Saisies (2 cafes).

Photo stops: heading up to the Col de Saisies stop on one (or some) of the many pullouts for some fantastic mountain shots, e.g. at WP "Foto Col de Saisies". Otherwise, every mountain pass is worth a photo stop!

Gas: in Chamonix (WP Gas Chamonix (Carrefour)).

Extra activities: visiting Megève or Chamonix.

Dinner: restaurant Revola comes highly recommended with daily changing menus and a very decent wine list at moderate prices. For fine dining make a reservation at Albert 1er and try the 11-course tasting menu.

#2: Col du Lautaret (2058m)

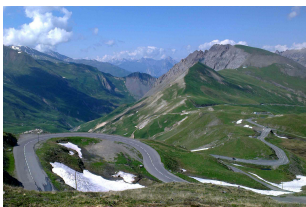


With its elevation of 2,058 m (6,752 ft), Col du Lautaret is frequently neglected and merely seen as the little sister of neighboring Col du Galibier. However, approaching the pass from the North, the road is spectacular and so are the views from the top. The pass was part of the Tour de France several times and it's open all year round.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



#3: Col du Galibier (2642m)



From the vista point of this pass at 2,642 m (8,688 ft.), you have a superb panoramic view of all the peaks reaching up to 3,000 m (13,000 ft) and more. Col du Galibier was first used in the Tour de France in 1911. The first rider over the summit was Emile Georget, who, together with Paul Duboc and Gustave Garrigou, were the only cyclists not to push their bicycles up the mountain. The original summit was at 2,556 m (8,385 ft) but with the closing of the tunnel in 1976, the tour route now goes over the pass closer to the mountain peak at 2,645 m (8,677 ft). At the south portal of the tunnel, at the edge of the road, there is a memorial to Henri Desgrange, initiator and first director of the Tour de France. Whenever the tour crosses Col du Galibier, a wreath is laid on the memorial. The "Souvenir Henri Desgrange" is awarded to the first rider, who crosses the summit of the highest mountain in each year's tour. Since 1947, Col de Galibier has been crossed 31 times by the Tour de France.

#4: Col de la Croix de Fer (2067m)



The top of the mountain pass Col de la Croix de Fer at 2,067 m (6,781 ft) offers you a spectacular panorama over the fantastic French alpine mountain landscape. Enjoying the view over the Chaîne de Belledonne mountains to the northwest and the Aiguilles d'Arve to the southeast will be your award after tackling the pass' winding southwest ramp.

#5: Col de la Madeleine (1993m)



This mountain pass connects La Chambre in Maurienne with La Léchère in Tarentaise. It is usually closed from November to the beginning of June. The road across Col de la Madeleine (2.000m) with its average gradient of 8% is one of the toughest climbs of the Tour de France. It was a part of the route 25 times since 1969.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



#6: Albertville



The 1992 Winter Olympics took place in the Savoy region, with Albertville hosting it. Some of the sports venues were later adapted for other uses. But some sports venues such as the ice rink designed by the architect Jacques Kalisz are still in use. The city can't compete with the likes of Annecy or Chamonix when it comes to beauty or touristic value, but the historic old town with its medieval buildings is well

worth a closer look and waiting to be discovered.

#7: Megève



Megève is a traditional Haute-Savoie village that will not leave you feeling indifferent. It cultivates the charm of a true radiant village, flourishing around its main medieval style square, with its old districts and narrow streets, its cool little squares brightened up with fountains and wash houses: all the character of an Alpine architecture that has managed to respect its history while offering a cafe au lait

downtown.

#8: Télécabine de l'Aiguille du Midi (Cable car Aiguille du Midi)



At 4,808 m (15,777 ft), Montblanc is not only the highest but also one of the most famous mountains in Europe. One of its many peaks is named Aiguille du Midi and can be accessed by a funicular that covers almost 2,800 meters (9,200 ft) of elevation from Chamonix. Built in 1955, it was the world's highest funicular for many years. Once at the top, you can enjoy a spectacular 360° panorama of the French, Italian and Swiss Alps. At an altitude of 3,842

meters (12,605 ft), you can walk out onto a terrace, which is then extended by a glass cabin, the "Skywalk". Do you dare to walk on this platform with 1,000 meters of emptiness below you?

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



#9: Chamonix-Mont-Blanc



Chamonix is France's mountaineering capital and is located at the foot of the famous 12,000 ft. Aiguille du Midi at a point where the glacial valley of the Arve widens out. The dome of Mont Blanc (White Mountain) is visible from the town.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Optional Route (241 km / 150 miles)

Another fantastic day exploring the French Alps!

This optional route is similar to the standard one, but it avoids the loop around Col de la Croix de Fer and Col du Glandon, shortening the total riding time by about one hour.

Same like in the neighbouring countries, Spain and Italy, bicycling is a real popular sport in France. This is not surprising, though, considering the number of mountain passes you can find in the area of the French Alps. The Tour de France takes place once a year and climbs many of those passes.

On your route from Briançon to Chamonix you will ride many of the passes that are part of the Tour de France. Out of the five passes that you will be crossing over with your motorcycle, Col de la Madeleine and Col du Galibier (over 2600 m or 8,600 ft) will be two great highlights of the day.

In the evening, following the main valley towards the town of Megève, we arrive in the breath-taking area of Chamonix considered by many the “mountain capital” of France.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Highlights:

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ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



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ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



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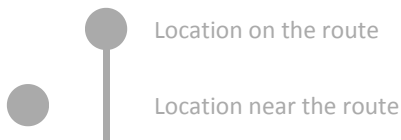
ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



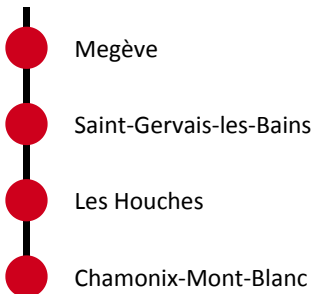
Route



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ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



RIDING DAY 6 : CHAMONIX-MONT-BLANC - ANDERMATT

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Standard Route (274 km / 170 miles)

Have you had the chance yesterday to go up to the Mont Blanc with the cable car Aiguille du Midi. If not, you still could do that early this morning, but in this case it's better if you take the optional route, which is a lot shorter than this one, cutting off the scenic Grimsel Pass and Susten Pass. Alternatively, you could just do both and arrive in Andermatt a little later.

Leaving Chamonix over Col de la Forclaz you follow the long Rhône Valley for most of the morning. Then you climb the Furka Pass to get to the Rhône Glacier, source of the River Rhône.

Then you turn back and at the junction in the valley you climb up towards Grimsel Pass, another majestic alpine wonderland. Up there it's definitely time to stop for lunch, leaving the afternoon for the last part of the ride over Susten Pass and past its glacier.

From here it's only a short ride to reach the idyllic Andermatt, an important winter resort in Switzerland.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Highlights:

#1: SELF-GUIDED TIPS: Chamonix - Andermatt STD

Morning coffee: on Col de la Forclaz or later in Lax at the Bahnhof Cafe.

Lunch: on Grimsel Pass (Grimsel Pass Hotel or Alpenrösli).

Afternoon break: on Susten Pass (WP Cafe Sustenbrüggli)

Photo stops: after Col de la Forclaz (WP Photo Siontal), before Furkapass (WP Foto Furkapass and Grimselpass, Belvedere) then turn back and go up to Grimsel Pass (WPs "Foto Grimsel Hospiz" and "Foto 2 Dams"), on Susten Pass (1 WP before and 2 WPs after the pass).

Gas: in Andermatt (WP Gas Andermatt (Shell)).

Dinner: for traditional Swiss cheese-based fare such as fondue and raclette visit the Restaurant Ochsen in the center of Andermatt. For a good beer and burger visit the Pinte Pub & Club.

#2: Rhône Valley



In the mosaic of Swiss cantons, the Vallais (Wallis) accommodates one of the most isolated districts of the Alps: The Upper Rhône Valley between Furka Pass and Lake Geneva. This wide fissure, almost completely cut off from the main part of German-speaking Switzerland, has been kept busy for 2,000 years by traffic through the Great St. Bernhard and Simplon Passes. Here you can expect

unforgettable high mountain landscapes dotted with chalets, old style farm houses and raccards or mazots, small barns perched on piles and used as granaries or storehouses.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



#3: Rhone Glacier



Imagine coming out of a hairpin turn and suddenly you are right in front of the Rhone Glacier – a dream? No, it's true! At least it used to be true, now you actually have to walk to see the glacier's tongue. Don't miss this opportunity for nice pictures and a walk into the blue world of glaciers. Each year, for the past 170 years, a new cave needs to be dug into the ice because it keeps moving by approx. 4

inches. At the beginning of the season in June, the cave measures more than 330 ft. but the glacier will be melting down by approx. 15 ft. during the summer. The melting water from the Rhone glaciers runs from here into the Lake of Geneva and then further on to the Mediterranean Sea down at Marseille, France.

#4: Furka Pass (2431 m)



Furka pass, same as the passes Nufenen, Grimsel, Susten, and Gotthard, belongs to the figure-eight circuit of passes around Andermatt. Besides the countless curves, meandering over the mountain pass through stunningly beautiful scenery, Furka pass has, compared to all the other passes, a unique feature to offer. From its western slope, you can access the Rhone glacier and actually go for a short hike, which leads you right into the crystal blue inside of

the glacier. Unlike the easier-to-ride west side of Furka pass, the east side offers a more challenging ride with narrow twisting roads.

In 1964, the pass became world-famous thanks to James Bond. The car pursuit over the pass is one of the most legendary film scenes of all time!

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



#5: Grimsel Pass (2164 m)



The scenery in the Swiss mountains seems to be amazing no matter where you go. Grimsel pass sure is no exception, especially with its out-of-this-world beautiful northern side. The gigantic mossy rocks, the glacier lakes, and its impressive hydroelectric power stations guarantee unique pictures. Whether from the top of the pass at 2,164 m (7,040 ft) or from the small peninsula on lake Grimsel, you

shouldn't miss stopping and enjoy the pass road and the scenery. Like many of the passes of the Alps, Grimsel pass used to be a mule track before proper roads were built across the mountain ranges. In 1894, the construction of the Grimsel mountain road was completed. After the construction of the hydroelectric power stations between 1920 and 1950, it was expanded into the road we can enjoy today.

#6: Susten Pass (2224 m)



The Susten pass stretches over 47 km (30 mi) between the Swiss villages of Innertkirchen and Wassen and, thus, is the longest road among the figure-eight circuit of passes around the famous ski resort of Andermatt. A waterfall, rushing down into the valley over a road tunnel, or the incredibly impressive scenery of mountains and glaciers above 2,224 m (7,300 ft), are only some features of this

amazing, twisty pass road. Take your time and find a stop of your choice to savor this exhilarating first-class riding experience.

#7: Andermatt



Andermatt is not only famous because of a scene in the James Bond movie Goldfinger (1964) - it is most famous as a ski resort. Since 2009 a big tourism project is underway - with construction of a golf course, hotels and a big sports- and leisure-center. For us motorcyclists, Andermatt is the perfect base to explore the mountain passes. Susten-, Grimsel-, Nufenen-, Furka-, Oberalp- and St. Gotthard-Pass are just around the corner!

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Optional Route (202 km / 125 miles)

This variant, which leaves out the Grimsel and Susten passes, is significantly shorter in terms of both distance and time. So you could do the Aiguille du Midi in the morning or arrive earlier in Andermatt and enjoy the "Swiss way of life" there. Of course, you can also combine the routes and, for example, ride up to the Grimsel Pass and back down on the same side.

From the Hotel Belvédère on the approach to the Furka Pass you can walk to the tongue of the Rhône Glacier and admire it "from the inside" in an artificial ice tunnel. In the souvenir store you can see old postcards showing the glacier 50 or more years ago, when it was much longer and bigger.

Andermatt became famous in 1964 when James Bond in "Goldfinger" refueled his Aston Martin there. The gas station still exists, albeit as a reconstruction, and so does the hotel where Sean Connery and the film crew stayed. By the way, the famous car chase took place on the Furka Pass road, a bend there is named after James Bond.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Highlights:

#1: SELF-GUIDED TIPS: Chamonix - Andermatt OPT

Morning coffee: on Col de la Forclaz or later in Lax at the Bahnhof Cafe.

Lunch: in Münster-Geschinen (WP Rest Baschi, Münster-Geschinen) or in Obergesteln (WP Rest Grimsel, Obergesteln).

Afternoon break: on Furka Pass (WP Rest Furkablick).

Photo stops: after Col de la Forclaz (WP Photo Siontal), before Furkapass (WP Foto Furkapass and Grimselpass, Belvedere) and on Furka Pass.

Gas: in Andermatt (WP Gas Andermatt (Shell)).

Dinner: for traditional Swiss cheese-based fare such as fondue and raclette visit the Restaurant Ochsen in the center of Andermatt. For a good beer and burger visit the Pinte Pub & Club.

#2: Rhône Valley



In the mosaic of Swiss cantons, the Vallais (Wallis) accommodates one of the most isolated districts of the Alps: The Upper Rhône Valley between Furka Pass and Lake Geneva. This wide fissure, almost completely cut off from the main part of German-speaking Switzerland, has been kept busy for 2,000 years by traffic through the Great St. Bernhard and Simplon Passes. Here you can expect

unforgettable high mountain landscapes dotted with chalets, old style farm houses and raccards or mazots, small barns perched on piles and used as granaries or storehouses.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



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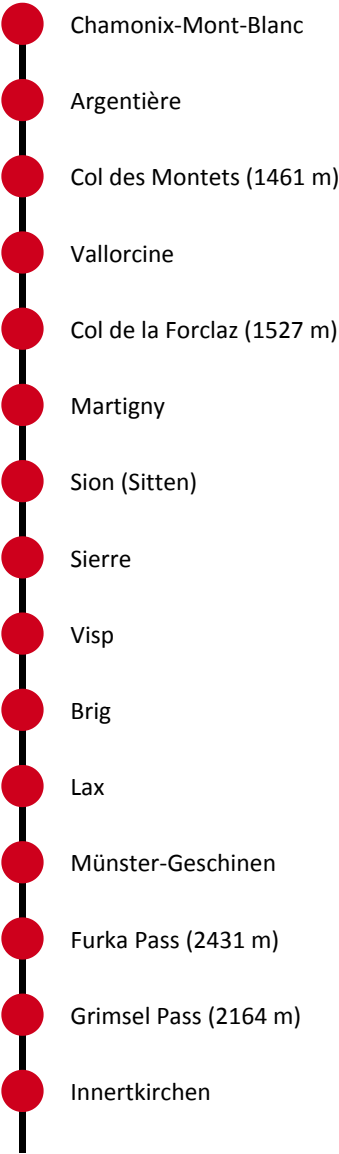


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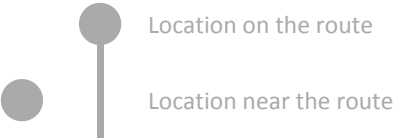
ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Route




Legend



ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



- 
- Susten Pass (2224 m)
 - Wassen
 - Andermatt

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



RIDING DAY 7 : ANDERMATT - GALTÜR

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Standard Route (305 km / 189 miles)

Today, three countries are on your agenda: Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Austria. Your ride begins with a beautiful pass, the Oberalp Pass, which is just over 2000 m high.

Your ride follows the Vorderrhein, which has carved itself deep into the rock here. Where the Vorderrhein and Hinterrhein join, you turn right and follow the picturesque, narrow road that leads to the Viamala gorge. Here it's worth taking the long staircase all the way down into the narrow gorge.

Over a small pass called Lenzerheide and past the town of Chur, you will then reach Maienfeld. This is the birthplace of Heidi, the famous girl from the children's book. A little theme park has developed here, but it is well worth a visit. Shortly after, you cross the border into Liechtenstein, one of the smallest countries in the world. It is a principality and Prince Hans Adam II resides befittingly in his castle high above the capital. You can't visit it, but you can admire it from below.

Back in Austria, you should take the time in Feldkirch to stroll through the beautiful little old town with its typical medieval row of houses. Then head into Montafon, a valley at the end of which the Silvretta High Alpine Road awaits you. It requires a toll, but it's worth it, because not only are there many wonderful curves, but also the magnificent view at the top, next to the reservoir. While enjoying a coffee here, your gaze falls on the 3,300-meter-high Piz Buin and its glacier. From here it's only a few kilometers to Galtür.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Highlights:

#1: SELF-GUIDED TIPS: Andermatt - Galtür STD

Morning coffee: on Oberalppass, cafe with nice terrace.

Lunch: in Maienfeld at Heidihof or earlier in Lenzerheide, several restaurants by the lake (e.g. "Rest Revier Hotel, Lenzerheide").

Afternoon break: at the dam along Silvretta Alpine Road (WP Silvretta High Alpine Road).

Photo stops: on Oberalp Pass, at the Vorderrhein Gorge (WP Foto Vorderrhein Gorge), at the Viamala Gorge (WP "P Viamala"), in Vaduz near the castle (WP "Foto Vaduz Castle"), at the dam on Silvretta Alpine Road.

Gas: in Schruns (WP Gas Schruns (Shell)).

Extra activities: if you start early enough you have time to walk down into the narrow Viamala Gorge. In Galtür the Alpinarium is a very interesting exhibition and documentation center.

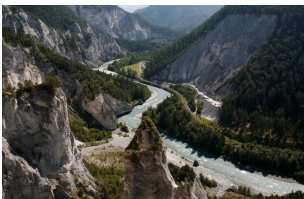
Dinner: In downtown Galtür you have several options, such as Tiroler Stube, Restaurant Auszeit or the Steakhouse-Pizzeria Bierkessel.

#2: Oberalp Pass (2044 m)



Oberalp Pass (Romansh: Alpsu or Cuolm d'Ursera, German: Oberalppass) at 2044 m (6706 ft) is a high mountain pass in the Swiss Alps, connecting the cantons of Graubünden and Uri between Disentis and Andermatt. The Rhine springs from a source nearby (Tomasee) and is marked by a working lighthouse that used to stand in Holland near the Rhine's mouth. It is the highest lighthouse in Europe!

#3: Vorderrhein



A spectacular view will fascinate you on the ride through the small gorge of the Vorderrhein between the towns of Reichenau and Ilanz. Also known as the "Swiss Grand Canyon", this narrow winding road, running along high up the rock cliffs, is among the most impressive landscapes in the canton of Graubünden.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



#4: Viamala / Roffla Gorge



Descending from Splügenpass, stay on the old road following the River Rhine. Here it is a small, but very powerful creek, not too far from its source. The Via Mala is probably the most famous stretch of the road from the San Bernardino Pass towards Chur. Being divided in two by the small Rongellen Basin, each lane runs through its own separate gorge. The upstream defile, the Via Mala proper,

plunges between formidable escarpments connected by four bridges. Leave your motorcycle by the pavilion at the entrance to the galleries and walk to the Second Bridge. Take position on the old bridge dated back to 1739. It spans the gorge, at the bottom of which gushes the Rhine, 223 ft. below. If you want to get as close as possible to the rushing water, take the 30 minutes walk. This means climbing down 341 steps to the base of the gorge. The galleries of the Roffla Gorge (reachable by walking from the gasthaus with the same name) end under an impressive waterfall, which passes just over the spectator's head.

#5: Vaduz



The capital of Liechtenstein is a lively little town at the foot of a steep hill, on top of which the castle of Vaduz is located. The duke has a great view over his country and all the way to Switzerland - not too difficult, because the widest part of Liechtenstein measures 12km/8mils! The castle, which is about 700 years old, has been in the possession of the House of Liechtenstein since 1712. Since

1938, it has served as the residence of the Prince's Family and can therefore not be visited. The House of Liechtenstein is one of the oldest noble families in Europe and also a very successful family of entrepreneurs. The family's art collection is one of the most important private collections in the world. Reigning Prince Hans-Adam II is the first reigning Prince born in Liechtenstein.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



#6: Silvretta High Alpine Road



14 miles long, one of the most beautiful alpine roads in the Austrian Alps, 32 switchbacks on the western ramp, a turquoise artificial lake on top, a place to sit in the sun, drink coffee and enjoy the views, what else could you ask for? It's a toll road, but this awesome ride is well worth the money.

#7: Galtür



The little village of Galtür in Paznaun Valley is well known for a tragic reason - the Galtür Avalanche. It occurred on February 23, 1999. The avalanche killed 31 people and is considered the worst Alpine avalanche in 40 years. We can visit the Alpinarium in Galtür which was founded after the avalanche disaster. It's an integral part of an avalanche protection wall measuring 1,130 ft. in length and 62 ft. in

height. The combination of a wall of protection and an exhibition site make the Alpinarium and its architecture unique.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Optional Route (300 km / 186 miles)

In case Silvretta High Alpine Road is closed or too expensive or if you want to stay away from the traffic in and around Liechtenstein, you can follow this beautiful alternative route. First, you ride along the young Rhine and take a look at the impressive Via Mala (see standard route), but then, instead of heading north to Liechtenstein, you keep going deeper into the mountains. Past Davos (of World Economic Forum fame), you climb up Flüela Pass, take a break by the lake, then descend into the valley of the Inn River. You follow the Inn to Austria and past Landeck, you enter the Paznaun Valley all the way to Galtür, the pretty town where your hotel is located. All in all, a gorgeous ride in fantastic scenery!

If you have some time left you could embark on an afternoon ride up to Bielerhöhe and enjoy the views across Silvretta Reservoir to the snow-clad mountain peaks.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Highlights:

#1: SELF-GUIDED TIPS: Andermatt - Galtür via Flüela Pass

Morning coffee: on Oberalppass, cafe with nice terrace.

Lunch: on top of Flüela Pass at the Hospiz (WP Flüela Pass)

Afternoon break: at Gacher Blick (viewpoint, WP Gacher Blick). Coffee/snacks at the 2nd floor of the "Naturparkhaus" right next door

Photo stops: on Oberalp Pass, at the Vorderrhein Gorge (WP Foto Vorderrhein Gorge), at the Viamala Gorge (WP "P Viamala"), on Flüela Pass and at the Gacher Blick. For the fortress of Wiesberg, you have to pull over to the left and look back (WP Wiesberg Fortress)

Gas: in Landeck along the main road (WP Gas Landeck (Avanti)).

Extra activities: if you start early enough you have time to walk down into the narrow Viamala Gorge. In Galtür the Alpinarium is a very interesting exhibition and documentation center.

Dinner: In downtown Galtür you have several options, such as Tiroler Stube, Restaurant Auszeit or the Steakhouse-Pizzeria Bierkessel.

#2: Vorderrhein



A spectacular view will fascinate you on the ride through the small gorge of the Vorderrhein between the towns of Reichenau and Ilanz. Also known as the "Swiss Grand Canyon", this narrow winding road, running along high up the rock cliffs, is among the most impressive landscapes in the canton of Graubünden.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



#3: Viamala



The Via Mala ("Bad Road") is probably the most famous stretch of the road between San Bernardino Pass and the city of Chur. Being divided into two by the small Rongellen Basin, each lane runs through its own separate gorge. The upstream defile, the Via Mala proper, plunges between formidable escarpments connected by four bridges. Leave your motorcycle by the pavilion at the entrance to the galleries and walk to the "Second Bridge." Take a position

on the old bridge dated back to 1739. It spans the gorge, at the bottom of which gushes the Rhine, 223 ft. below. If you want to get as close as possible to the rushing water, take the 30-minute walk. This means climbing down 341 steps to the base of the gorge. The galleries of the Roffla Gorge (reachable by walking from the Gasthaus with the same name) end under an impressive waterfall, which passes just over the spectator's head.

#4: Flüela Pass (2383 m)



Flüela Pass leads you high above the tree line up to 2,383 m (7,818 ft). Take the time for a picture on your way up to take the beautiful mountain landscape in, or enjoy a cup of coffee and the fantastic views from the Flüela Hospiz. The Flüela Pass was also used as a trading route to exchange alpine products such as cheese, etc. with the sought-after salt. From the 13th century on merchants have been travelling on a mountain track over the Flüela to Austria

and even into Italy. Only in 1867, a road was built over the Flüela Pass to ease traffic, which also supported traveling by stagecoach.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



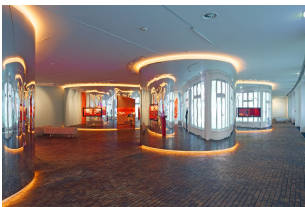
#5: Gacher Blick



Thousands of years ago, people were already coming to the Piller saddle and were captivated by the "sheer view" and the fascinating vista of the Upper Inn Valley. In those times, traveling across the Alps on those demanding paths was hard work, but for us motorcyclists today this road up to the Piller saddle means just great riding fun.

The word "gach" was generally used as a synonym for "sudden". Here, in the Tyrolean Uplands, it also is used to replace "fast" (meaning sudden), "sheer", or "steep". And here at this point, the cliff indeed shows a drop of approx. 800 m (2,600 ft.)

#6: Galtür



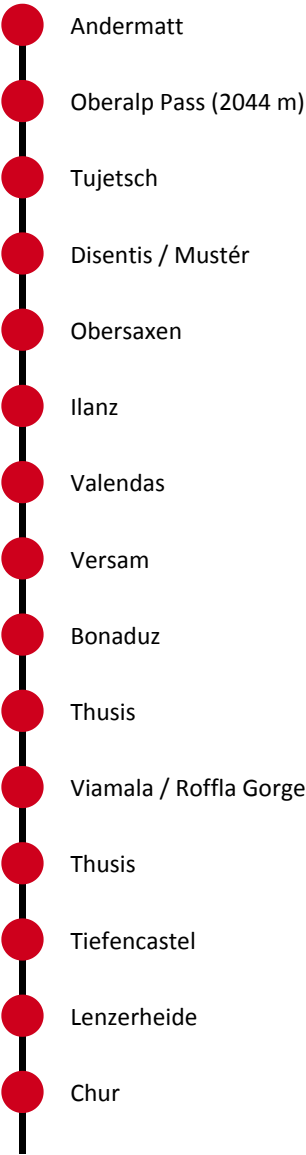
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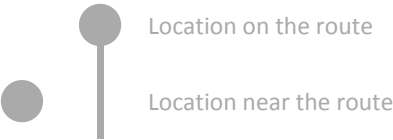
ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Route



Legend



ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



RIDING DAY 8 : GALTÜR - MIEMING

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Standard Route (249 km / 155 miles)

On this tour, which is now almost behind you, you have conquered numerous passes, have ridden untold curves and have become one with your motorcycle. Today is the last day and you could of course make it easy for yourself and ride back to Mieiming within a good hour, but then you would miss a lot. Namely a few more passes and even more curves!

Where the Paznaun Valley meets the Stanzer Valley is the 13th century Wiesberg Castle, clearly visible on a hill. A quick photo, then turn left towards St. Anton am Arlberg, a pretty ski village where you can enjoy a nice coffee break. Continue over the Arlberg Pass and down to Bludenz, where you keep to the right and ride up the Faschinajoch, the second pass today. Now you're in the middle of the Bregenzerwald, which was difficult to access just a few decades ago, where people speak an ancient dialect and cover the walls of their houses with small wooden shingles.

After that, the Hochtannberg Pass brings you to Warth and then you descend into the Lech Valley, famous for its woodcarvers. A small wooden Tyrolean eagle would be a nice souvenir, wouldn't it?

The last pass of the day and the entire tour is called Hahntennjoch and is only about 1900 m high, but the ascent is one big festival of twisties. In the (few) villages along the way you should pay attention to your speed, because police are permanent guests here and hand out piles of speeding tickets! Then you are already in Mieming, where you - sadly, sadly - have to return your motorcycle. Please don't forget to fill up the tank! And enjoy your last Wiener Schnitzel and apple strudel, you've earned it!

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Highlights:

#1: SELF-GUIDED TIPS: Galtür - Mieming STD

Morning coffee: in St. Anton, parking at the train station and cafe in the center.

Lunch: In Warth (WP Rest Älpler Stuba, Warth) or earlier in Damüls (WP Rest Walliserstube, Damüls).

Afternoon break: on Hahntennjoch (WP Rest Pfafflar, Hahntennjoch).

Photo stops: In Wiesberg (WP Foto Wiesberg Fortress), am Hochtannbergpass (WP Foto Big hairpin Hochtannberg).

Gas: in Mieming (WP Gas Mieming (Avanti)).

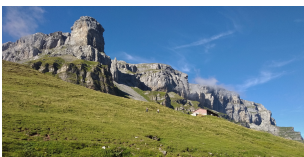
Dinner: good restaurants in Mieming are those in the Hotel Neuwirt, Gasthof Post and Kaysers Tirolresort.

#2: Hochtannberg Pass (1660 m)



This pass marks the watershed between the two major European rivers - the Rhine and the Danube. Used as a trade route from the 15th century, it has only been converted into a road for motor vehicles in 1954. The modern road offers great riding and allows for spectacular views of the Austrian Alps.

#3: Hahntennjoch (1894m)



The Hahntennjoch, well known among motorcyclists, is still an important connecting road between the Upper Inn Valley and the neighboring Tyrolean Lech Valley. The winding and narrow road stretches over 29 kilometers with a gradient of almost 20% and can only be used from May to

October. It reaches its highest point at 1894 meters. Beware, there are often police checks here!

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



#4: Mieming Plateau



Wetterstein, Hohe Munde, Rietzer Grieskogel - with green meadows and singing cow bells – a magnificent landscape to breathe deeply. We cycle at 1000 m above sea level through larch forests and dreamy hamlets. Crystal clear air and a majestic panorama surround us. It is the perfect place for a holiday and for leaving your everyday life behind.

#5: Mieming



Mieming is the headquarter of Edelweiss Bike Travel. Our world has a lot to offer and it is possible to get to know more and more parts of it, and that's what we've been doing this since 1980 together with our tour members.

1980 Werner and Coral Wachter pioneered the concept of guided tours on two wheels. Today the company is still family owned and you continue to feel the family spirit. We at Edelweiss live the passion of travelling on two wheels, and you will feel it on our tours.

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Optional Route (170 km / 106 miles)

The route is about 80 km shorter if you don't continue straight ahead after St. Anton am Arlberg, but turn off to Lech and Zürs. Zürs is the cradle of skiing in Austria, organized ski tourism has been offered here since 1923. In summer, the numerous restaurants and cafes are populated by hikers, cyclists and, of course, motorcyclists.

In Warth the short and the long route meet again. With the 1.5 hours of travel time saved, you now have more time to look for a wooden eagle as a souvenir in the Lechtal...

ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



Highlights:

#1: SELF-GUIDED TIPS: Galtür - Mieming OPT

Morning coffee: in St. Anton, parking at the train station and cafe in the center.

Lunch: In Warth (WP Rest Älppler Stubai, Warth).

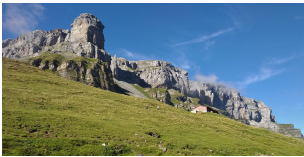
Afternoon break: on Hahntennjoch (WP Rest Pfafflar, Hahntennjoch).

Photo stops: In Wiesberg (WP Foto Wiesberg Fortress), am Hochtannbergpass (WP Foto Big hairpin Hochtannberg).

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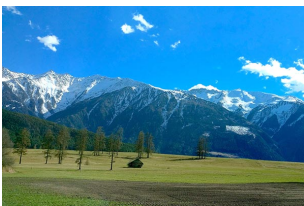
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ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



#4: Mieming



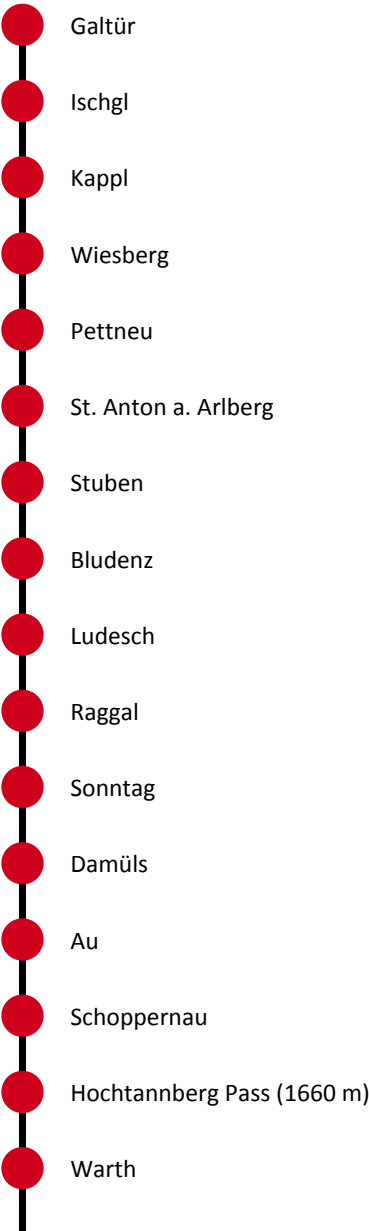
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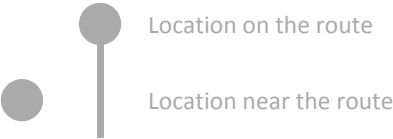
ULTIMATE FRENCH AND SWISS ALPS (SELF GUIDED TOUR)



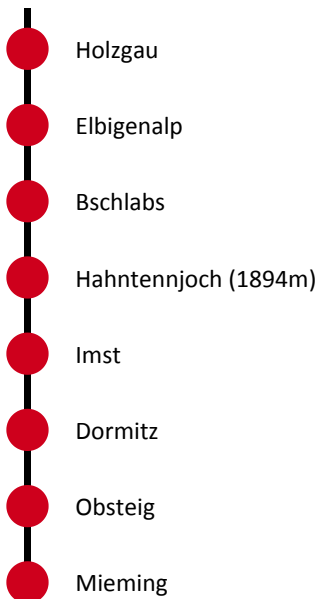
Route



Legend



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