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Dossier: AL/Guided/Hotels/11 days/2024

Austria & Liechtenstein / Guided 11 days

Trip starts: Day 1 at Zurich Airport

Trip ends: Day 11 at Zurich Airport

This new trek links the mountains in the far west of Austria and the little-visited and slightly mysterious country of Liechtenstein. The one-way trip begins in Stuben, heading west along the famous Via Alpina red route which is a long-distance trek linking the paths from Slovenia all the way to France. We then head south into Liechtenstein with high ridges and views of snowy mountains in the distance. The scenery is Alpine meadows, rocky passes, valleys cut by rivers and pretty villages dotted along the trail. You will see the mighty Rhine, towns with old palaces and buildings with fairy-tale turrets. We spend 6 nights in hotels, 1 night in a guesthouse and 3 nights in mountain huts /refuges.

The trekking starts in the Lech and we head immediately to a hut high in the mountains. The trail then crosses a pass and follows a valley west passing small villages with old churches on the way. Our first and only big town is Feldkirch which has a beautifully preserved medieval landscape and is home to pretty streets, churches and a castle. We then cross the border into Liechtenstein and climb high to another hut. The trekking follows the Panorama Trail on to Malbun. The trek ends with the opportunity to climb a trekking peak that straddles the border between Austria, Switzerland Liechtenstein. The trekking distance is around 120km.

We stay at 2-3 star hotels, a guesthouse and spend three nights at mountain huts (Hütte) with shared facilities and small dorms. We include most of your meals when on the trek as we have found it is simpler for you and often costs less overall. There is a rest day in Feldkirch on day six, when you can explore the town or head to Vaduz - the capital of Liechtenstein. Your main luggage is transferred from hotel to hotel when not staying in the mountain huts.



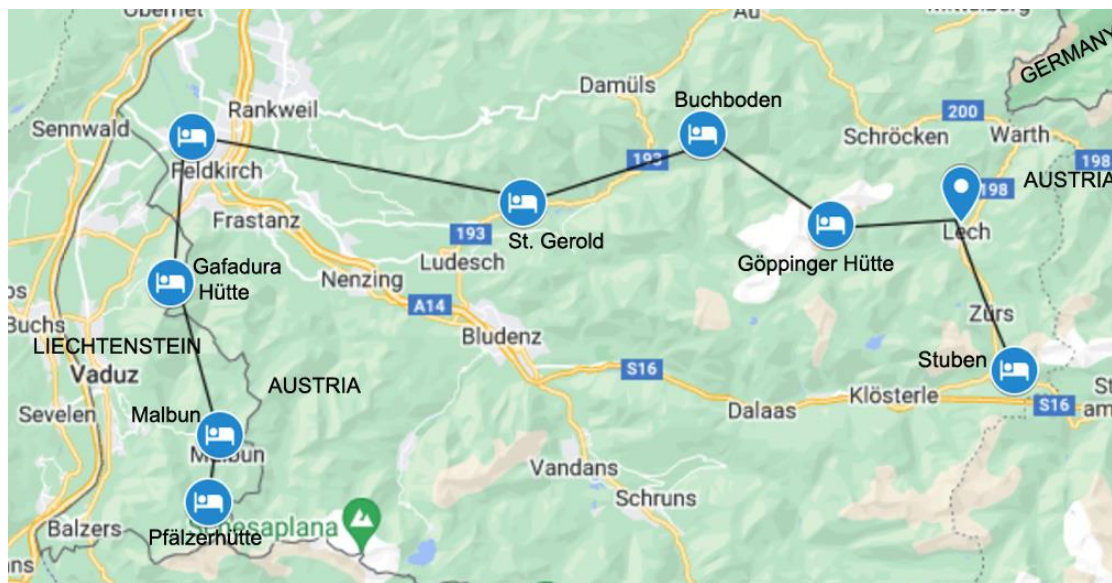
This trek will suit people who have comfortably completed the TMB. You should be happy covering 15-21km (10-14 miles) each day, with a number of ascents and descents. This is a challenging trek and you should be confident of your fitness.

The walking will be mostly on well-established trails, though they are not maintained. It is likely that we will encounter some rougher ground with rocky steps and parts of the trail have a remote feeling. Some ascents will be challenging: several days have ascents over 1300m and you should be confident of climbing 500-1600m each day.

The trip will be led by an experienced and fully qualified International Mountain Leader (IML).

The trip meets at Zurich airport, which is well served by many airlines throughout the world. You could choose to stay in Zurich before or after the trip or continue your journey throughout Switzerland or Germany.

Austria & Liechtenstein



ITINERARY: AUSTRIA & LIECHTENSTEIN

Day 1 Meet at Zurich International Airport: transfer to Stuben (1407m)

Meet at Zurich International Airport at 13:00hrs (1pm). We will meet in **Arrival Area 1 on Level 0 which is the arrivals area for domestic flights within Switzerland and the Schengen area**. Please note that Zurich airport is vast and it can take a bit of time to get from one side to the other.

We will then transfer you by road to our hotel in Stuben - the trip takes 2.15hrs, crossing the border from Switzerland into Austria. Stuben is a small ski village with a smattering of hotels and restaurants.

Hotel. Meals included: dinner

Day 2 Trek from Lech to Goppinger Hutte (2245m)

After breakfast we take a short bus ride to Lech, famous for Princess Diana and its upmarket skiing. We walk east out of town following the pretty Lech River through meadows. Eventually, we cross the river and head uphill to the impressive Goppinger Hutte, which has been continually in use since 1913! The hut sits on the Gamsboden plateau, a high bowl surrounded by Alpine peaks that separate the Lech Valley from the Walser Valley.

You will not have access to your main luggage tonight so pack accordingly: your guide will advise you what to pack.

Hiking time is approximately 5.5 hours. 11km.

Ascent 995m, Descent 188m.

Mountain Hut. Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 3 Goppinger Hutte to Buchboden (910m)

After an early breakfast, we will continue to cross the plateau, threading between limestone peaks and dropping north into the Walser Valley. It gets its name from the Walser people who colonised the area in the 13th century after moving from Valais in Switzerland. The area is pretty and has typical mid-mountain charm.

We arrive at our hotel, tucked behind a small church with an ornate altar. The hotel has a sunny terrace and views back towards the direction we arrived from.

You will have your main luggage tonight.

Hiking time is approximately 4.5 hours. 12km.

Ascent 352m, Descent 1683m.

Hotel. Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 4 Trek the Walser Trail to St Gerold. (848m)

The Via Alpina route here is locally known as the Walser trail. We follow the course of the Lutz stream gradually downhill over meadows and through mixed mountain forests and flood-plain woods, which are still preserved in their natural condition. St Gerold has a nice church and is flanked by meadows and trees.



You will have your main luggage tonight.
Hiking time is approximately 6 hours. 14km.
Ascent 895m, Descent 959m.

Guesthouse. Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 5 St Gerold to Feldkirch. (460m)

Another long day sees us continue west, passing through a variety of woodland, pastures and small villages. As we approach the town of Feldkirch, our route is squeezed between the river and rock walls, used by local rock climbers. Feldkirch is the westernmost town in Austria and boasts the best-preserved medieval townscape in the province of Vorarlberg. Our hotel is situated in a pedestrianised street on the edge of the old quarter.

You will have your main luggage tonight.
Hiking time is approximately 8.5 hours. 21km.
Ascent 800m, Descent 1,200m.

Hotel. Meals included: breakfast, lunch

Day 6 Rest Day in Feldkirch.

Feldkirch is a pretty medieval town with well-preserved buildings and churches. It is a nice place to wander around and take a coffee in one of the side streets or visit one of the galleries or museums. The Tourist Office is very helpful and there are buses that can take you in 45 minutes to Vaduz, the capital of Liechtenstein. There are also trains from to Bregenz located on Lake Constance.

Hotel. Meals included: breakfast

Day 7 Via Alpina Red Route to Gafadurahütte (1428m)

Today we head south alongside the border with Liechtenstein. We will follow the Via Alpina, first out of town and then towards the border, climbing through shaded woods until we reach high-alpine pastureland. We cross into Liechtenstein and reach the Gafadurahütte, which sits at 1428m. Today's ascent is steady and uphill almost all the way.

You will not have access to your main luggage tonight so pack accordingly.
Hiking time is approximately 6.5 hours. 12km.
Ascent 1,400m, Descent 400m.

Mountain hut. Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 8 Panorama Trail: Three Sisters and Alpspitz

We continue on the Via Alpina, also known as the Panorama Trail, which winds through amazing rocky terrain using steps and bridges. The views of the Rätikon range and other distant mountains, and the view along the Rhine to Lake Constance, are spectacular! We pass under the summit of Alpspitz (1942m), where we can still see Liechtenstein's earliest mountain-top cross. There are fixed cables for the less



confident, which are not uncommon in the Alps. It doesn't need us to use scrambling or climbing techniques! We will also be close to the "Mittelpunkt" which geographers have identified as the physical centre of the country! We reach the hamlet of Steg and take a local bus the short journey to Malbun (1600m) and our hotel. This is a big day out with considerable height gain and loss.

You will have your main luggage tonight.
Hiking time is approximately 7 hours. 14km.
Ascent 2100m, Descent 2240m.

Hotel. Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 9 Steg to the Pfälzerhütte (2108m)

Using a local bus, we regain the path where we left it yesterday. We will follow the western ridge above the picturesque Saminatal valley, crossing the tops of small peaks. This area has been used by cattle farmers for hundreds of years and we should hear the clanging of the cattle bells below us in the valley. We finish with a climb up to the Pfälzerhütte and its mountain panorama. The hut is in Liechtenstein, but sits right along the border with Austria. It opened in 1928 and other than during wartime, it's been continuously in use by hikers and climbers.

You will not have access to your main luggage tonight so pack accordingly.
Hiking time is approximately 6.5 hours. 10.5km.
Ascent 1450m, Descent 736m.

Mountain hut. Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 10 Ascent of Naafkopf and Augstenberg, descending to Malbun (1590m)

Our final day's trek starts with an ascent of Naafkopf, at 2,570m: it's the third-highest peak in Liechtenstein and shares the peak with both Austria and Switzerland! We will return to the hut for a short break then continue on the trail. We ascend Augstenberg at 2,365m, which is the highest mountain wholly within Liechtenstein, eventually dropping down towards the summit of Spitz and then finish the Panorama Trail above Malbun. We descend into town for our last night's stay and a celebratory meal together.

You will have your main luggage tonight.
Hiking time is approximately 5 hours. 10km.
Ascent 765m, Descent 1215m.

Hotel. Meals included: breakfast, lunch & dinner.

Day 11 Transfer to Zurich International Airport

After breakfast we transfer to Zurich international airport in 2 hours by private vehicle. We aim to arrive by 12:00hrs (midday)

Meals included: breakfast

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day route as printed above, a degree of flexibility is built into the itinerary. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.



Occasionally, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned. This may be for a variety of reasons – climatic, political, physical or other. In these circumstances we will make the best alternative arrangements possible that maintains the integrity of the original itinerary



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PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Is it for me?

The route is approximately 120km/75 miles. This trip should appeal to you if you regularly take walking weekends and are happy covering 15-21km (10-14 miles) each day, with a number of ascents and descents over varying terrain. On this trek we normally walk for between 6 and 7 hours each day and be outdoors for 8 or 9 hours.

We generally follow good paths that are well-travelled, but they are not maintained by a park authority. You will encounter uneven paths, rocky steps, rocks underfoot and occasional tree roots on the trail. On some short sections, we will encounter fixed equipment, such as cables for hand lines and short ladders. These are normal in the European mountains and our route only follows established hiking trails.

The highest altitude we walk to is around 2570 metres, so you should not feel the altitude apart from a little shortness of breath.

We grade this trip as Challenging

Longer days 16-20km with up to 1000m of ascent and descent. Approximately 6-8 hours of walking each day on a mix of well-worn and uneven paths. There may be some long ascents and descents and, as you will trek to higher altitudes, the effect of any poor weather will bring cold wind and rain. Early-season treks may encounter old winter snow at the highest elevations and a ski pole is useful for balance. Ice axes and crampons are not necessary. You need to be confident of your fitness. As you will trek to higher altitudes the effect of any poor weather will bring cold wind and rain.

If you are not completing the daily treks in the suggested times, you may have to retire from the trip. Poor weather or people having to wait too long for very slow members of the group can all add to the hiking Guide's decision to recommend that someone retires from all or part of the trek: the safety and enjoyment of the individual and the group is paramount.

Staff

Throughout the trip, you will be accompanied by a qualified International Mountain Leader who has a First Aid certificate and carries a First Aid Kit.

Group size

- Minimum 6, maximum 14.

Price and what it includes

- Accommodation on a twin-share basis at all hotels and guesthouses.
- Three nights at comfortable mountain huts in dormitories.
- Transfers to and from Zurich International Airport.
- All transfers when part of the organised trek.
- 10 breakfasts, 8 picnic lunches and 8 dinners.
- Luggage transfers so that you have your main luggage for 7 of the 10 nights.



- The trek is led by a qualified International Mountain Leader (IML).

What is not included

- Dinner in Feldkirch (day 5 & 6).
- Lunch is not included on airport days or in Feldkirch.

Accommodation and meals

We stay in 2-3-star hotels for 6 nights, 1 night in a guesthouse and at mountain huts for 3 nights.

Rooms at the hotels are on a twin-share basis: all have attached, private bathrooms. Most provide dinner or we will go out to a restaurant.

For the nights at the mountain huts you will be in dormitories. The mountain huts have dorms that are mixed sex, as is the case in all European mountain regions.

None of the mountain huts have showers. There are toilet facilities and a cold tap at each one. There is no need to carry sleeping bags, but a sheet sleeping bag is required for each hut. You may like to bring your own lightweight towel and we recommend taking flip-flops or very lightweight shoes for the evenings: all huts have few shoes or you have to pay almost £9/\$11.50 extra to hire them!

Included dinners are normally a set 3-course meal and are eaten in the hotel and huts' restaurant area. Tea and coffee at dinner and all other drinks are not included.

Typical meals at the hotels

Breakfast: tea, coffee, juice, cereals, bread, butter, jam, cheese, ham, ham, yoghurt.
Dinner: starter, main course, dessert. Often there is choice of main course in the hotels.

The hotels sell soft drinks, beer, wine, mineral water, coffee etc.

The hotels offer meals for vegetarian diets. Most of the hotels try very hard to cater to vegan and gluten-free diets, although we cannot guarantee this. If your diet is restricted we suggest you bring supplementary foods with you.

You must advise us at the time of booking of any dietary requirements.

Typical meals at the Huts

There will be a 3-course set menu with vegetarian options. The Huts sell soft drinks, beer, wine, mineral water, cakes and a variety of chocolate bars.

Lunches

We will provide a picnic lunch for 8 days

If you choose not to take or eat any of the meals provided throughout this trip, there is no refund.

Luggage transfers

You will have access to your main luggage for 7 of the 10 nights. This will be at the towns and villages when we stay at hotels.



On the days you do not have access to your luggage (three nights in total) you will need to carry your over-night gear, which will most likely include spare socks, underwear, T-shirt and basic toiletries. This is light back-packing and we recommend you have a 40-litre rucksac – and no smaller than 35 litres. Please note that this happens on three separate occasions and so you only need to pack for one night. You need to bring a sheet sleeping bag.

Please restrict the weight of your main luggage to a single 15-18kg bag. Sports bags and suitcases are fine.

We strongly recommend that you do not leave any valuables or any object of high value in your main luggage. When your luggage is transferred and then delivered to the next hotel, it is likely that it will be left in the reception area or in an unattended backroom. We recommend that you lock your luggage and clearly label it with your name, address and mobile phone number.

Airport transfers

We arrange an airport pick-up from Zurich International Airport on Day 1. Please inform us in advance of your flight number and arrival time. Please let us know if you are extending your stay either at the beginning or end of the trip.

The joining point is at Zurich International Airport at 13:00hrs (1pm). We will meet in **Arrival Area 1 on Level 0 which is the arrivals area for domestic flights within Switzerland and the Schengen area.** Please note that Zurich airport is vast and it can take a bit of time to get from one side to the other. You may fly into Gates E and have to transfer across on the airport Skymetro which can take more than 20 minutes.

If you miss your pre-arranged transfer you should call us for information on how to get to the start of the trek: any costs incurred will be your responsibility. Please note that it is 2.15 hours by road to Stuben: a taxi would be expensive. A train will take over 5 hours.

You are welcome to arrange your own transport to the hotel in Stuben, at your own expense.

We arrange a drop-off at Zurich International Airport on Day 11. This will be by 12:00hrs (midday). Most airlines will require a 2-hour check in. If you need to be at the airport earlier, you will need to make your own arrangements.

Transport during the tour

The transfer from the airport is in a minibus and takes 2.5 hours. The transfer at the end of the trip to the airport takes 2 hours.

We take short public buses that take a few minutes when in Malbun.

Weather

In the summer, daytime temperatures can vary from 15-30°C in the valleys to 0-25°C at higher altitudes (at the cols and ridges it can be cold and windy). It all depends on



whether the sun is out and it can often feel very hot: occasionally it reaches 35°C in the valley and can feel quite muggy in the late afternoon. At night the temperature is 5-15°C in the valley and can drop close to 0-5°C at the night stops at the mountain huts. However, inside the huts it will be warm.

As with all mountain ranges it can rain – either as frontal weather or as thunderstorms after a hot day – and you should come prepared for this. It can be cold and windy at higher elevations and snow is not unknown. We pay special attention to the local weather forecasts and will adjust the day-to-day itinerary if we feel it is necessary, to get the best from your tour.

Clothing and equipment

- Good walking boots: leather or fabric and should be worn-in before you arrive.
- Full set of good-quality waterproofs – jacket and trousers. Gore-Tex is recommended: a ‘pac-a-mac’ is not good enough.
- Trousers or skirts, short trousers.
- T-shirts and tops that includes a jumper or fleece jacket.
- Rucsac that will give you enough room to carry a few clothes plus other items for the overnight periods when you do not have access to your main luggage: 40 litres is recommended – and no smaller than 35 litres.
- Sun hat, sun cream, sunglasses, water bottle, warm woolly hat and gloves.
- Torch, blister kit, any personal medicine.
- Small, lightweight towel.
- Sheet sleeping bag or silk liner for the nights in the mountain huts.
- Flip-flops or very lightweight shoes for the mountain huts.

For the night stops when you will not have access to your main luggage we recommend you carry a change of underwear, socks and T-shirt, basic toiletries and a torch – please remember that you will have to carry it all. You will need to carry your picnic lunch and will probably have your camera and blister kit with you. Although it may be cold outside at night, it will be warm inside and so down jackets are not needed. However, if you intend to do a bit of stargazing at the huts a small, lightweight down gilet or jacket might be welcome.

Extra expenses & money

There are ATMs in the larger towns. Austria is part of the Euro Zone - so you'll need Euros. For your time in Switzerland and Liechtenstein you can use Swiss Francs. You can use credit cards in most places, though Amex seems to get commonly refused.

You will need extra money for drinks, lunches and evening meals when not included. In addition, postcards, souvenirs, snacks you might buy at mountain huts or cafés and any optional activities.

Typical costs

These are approximate costs: you can spend more or less than indicated.

Dinners Allow €30-35 per meal for the two dinners in Felkirch.

Misc Wine (€12-18), beer (€4-7), soft drinks (€2-3), cakes & snacks, coffee.



Passports, visas and insurance

It is essential that you are in possession of an up-to-date and valid passport. You must check the visa and entry requirements of your chosen destination and any countries that you may be stopping off at en-route. Whilst we are able to offer general advice to British citizens, personal circumstances such as criminal records, may affect your eligibility to enter certain countries. It is therefore your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct documentation to gain entry into your chosen destination(s). For any further information, please consult the relevant embassy or for British residents visit: **Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office**.

Adequate and valid travel insurance is compulsory when you travel with us and it is a condition of accepting your booking that you agree you will have obtained adequate and valid travel insurance for your booking by the date of departure. We recommend that you take out insurance as soon as your booking is confirmed.

We recommend that your travel insurance includes repatriation, that you are covered for guided trekking in Austria and Liechtenstein to 2600 metres, helicopter rescue, all the activities mentioned in this dossier and any optional activities you may take part in. You must check with your insurer that you have adequate and valid cover for your tour. Anyone who does not have insurance will not be allowed to take part in the tour until cover is arranged. This is part of our booking conditions.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of this dossier immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from clients. You will be informed of any major changes to your trip but small changes may just be added to this dossier.

