

HIKING JOURNEY

The Romantic Path

WALKING THROUGH THE AUSTRIAN LAKES DISTRICT, THE LEUTASCH VALLEY
AND THE DOLOMITES

14 DAYS



WALKABOUT
GOURMET ADVENTURES

Journey Overview

Holidays in the Austrian Lakes District mean sunshine, dreamlike mountains and swimming in crystal clear lakes. Our magnificent walks take us through gentle rolling fields to majestic mountains, sleepy valleys, alpine streams and quaint villages with geranium-bedecked chalets. Highlights are the Loser peak with views down to Lake Altaussee and Lake Grundlsee and The Three Lakes walk to Lake Toplitz. Enjoy local culinary delights in some of the most romantic settings.

We continue into the friendly Leutasch valley, which stretches along the base of the Wetterstein range of mountains - the border between Austria and Germany. It has a real "country" feel, with small village churches and fields of hay dotted amidst original alpine forest. Our walks will take us into the Gais Valley which is known for its alpine meadows and the spectacular walking areas, as well as being the home of the turn-of-the-century German-language author Ludwig Ganghofer.

The Austrians have a reputation for being high spirited and charming. It takes a lot of willpower to walk past the inviting outdoor cafes, especially with the smell of freshly baked strudel in the air.

We travel via the Brenner Pass into northern Italy to the "King of the Alps" - the Dolomites. These jagged rocky peaks are an inspiring sight, especially at sunset when the mountains take on a breathtaking hue of pink, known as "Alpenglow".

We walk through green meadows, alive with flowers and explore such famous mountains as the Stella group and the Puez Geissler National Park.



Journey Schedule

DAY 1

Munich – Altaussee

DAY 2

Three Lakes Walk

DAY 3

Loser Circuit

DAY 4

Altaussee – Free Day

DAY 5

Dachstein Mountains – Mount Krippenstein – Heilbronner Cross – Five Fingers – Hallstadt

DAY 6

Altaussee – Innsbruck – Leutaschtal

DAY 7

Leutasch Valley – Wildmoosalm – Wildmoos See – Leutasch Valley

DAY 8

Leutaschtal – Rotmoosalm – Wangalm – Wettersteinhuette – Leutasch Valley

DAY 9

Leutasch Valley – Brenner – Val Gardena – Ortisei

DAY 10

Ortisei – Col Raiser – Rif. Firenze In Cisles – Troier Hut

DAY 11

Ortisei – Sella Pass – Rif. Friedrich August – Rif. Sasso Piatto (Plattkofelhuette) – Marmot Hut – Alpe Di Siusi – Ortisei

DAY 12

Ortisei – Free Day

DAY 13

Ortisei – Gardena Pass (Groedner Joch) – Clark Huette – Rif. Puez – Val Lunga (Langental) – Ortisei

DAY 14

Ortisei – Bolzano

Journey Itinerary



DAY 1

Munich – Altaussee

We meet at 10.00 a.m. in front of the Hotel
Courtyard by Marriott Munich City East
Orleans Strasse 81-83,
Munich, Germany
T: 49 489 558 9190

We leave the city and soon after reach the motorway – direction Salzburg where we join the A1 towards Vienna. In Mondsee we turn off and follow the famous Romantic

Road along Moon Lake and Lake Wolfgang, made famous by the musical “Im Weissen Rössel am Wolfgangsee”. We by-pass Bad Ischl which used to be the summer residence of Emperor Franz Joseph and still retains a lot of its old-worldly charm! From here it is not far to Altaussee in the north-western part of Styria and the Styrian Salzkammergut. This small Austrian alpine village is nestled on the shores of the Altaussee Lake, just beneath the Loser Plateau. Altaussee is a place where Austrian tradition still surrounds you - from the daily routine of the miners who work in the local salt mines to the fishermen netting salmon and trout from the crystal-clear waters of the local lake. For many years Altaussee has attracted artists, writers and musicians who felt compelled to return time after time. After checking in to our rooms at our charming Seevilla, we will start and walk the 8 km panorama trail around Lake Altaussee. It is surrounded by fantastic mountains like the Loser, Tressenstein, Ahornkogel and Tresselwand. We stop in one of the lakeside cafés for lunch and enjoy the views across the water, where the green hillside and bare summit of Loser, the mountain, are reflected in the calm lake beyond. This is not a walk to hurry. We continue to skirt the lake on the beautiful path before returning to our hotel just in time for a late afternoon tea in the Brahms Cafe. We have time for a swim in the heated indoor pool, sauna or hamam, before we meet for our welcome drink and dinner.

 **3 HOURS**

 **ALTAUSSEE, AUSTRIA**



DAY 2

Three Lakes Walk

After a substantial Austrian breakfast, we drive the short distance to Grundlsee. It is one of a small cluster of lakes, surrounded by breath-taking alpine mountains and lush forested valleys. Formed during the last ice age, this glacial lake is the largest lake in Styria and one in a series of 3 lakes along a short stretch of the River Traun, locally called das Steirische Meer. In Grundlsee we cross the bridge over the River Traun and then follow the marked path along the waterfront. Eventually we climb to join a forest track and pass some attractive, unspoiled and traditionally decorated farmhouses. After the village of Wienern, we make our way down to the lake and continue to the Toplitzsee where we stop for lunch. It is apparently in these dark waters that millions of pounds of counterfeit English money, produced by Nazi forgers during the last war, was hidden. The plan was to ruin the British economy by releasing large quantities of it in Britain. According to reliable local sources, it still remains hidden there. It is optional to take the short trip across the still waters of this little lake on a motorized gondola. At the end you can take a walk up the steps and over the headland to the Kammersee, a tiny, circular lake surrounded by peaks. Here you will see the source of the Traun River cascading down the slope. It is an important tributary of the Danube that runs to Vienna and eventually to the Black Sea. In the early afternoon we join our walking track and pass a beautiful little chapel on our way back to Goessl at the top end of the lake. From here we continue our walk back to Grundlsee or take the boat to the other end of the lake - a trip every bit so lovely as the walk.

 **4-5 HOURS**

 **ALTAUSSEE, AUSTRIA**

DAY 3

Loser Circuit

This morning we leave our hotel in direction of Loser Mountain, considered the symbol of the Ausseerland. We drive along the 9 km scenic road to the Loser Alpine chalet located at 1,498 metres and from here we walk up to Lake Augstsee (1,647m). It is a shimmering small mountain lake, full of fish and rare plants. It is surprising to know that this mountain lake, covered with ice five months of the year, is suitable for diving! We continue on the Loser Geo Adventure Trail where we discover different forms of alpine karst and learn how the ice age shaped the area. Our trail takes us through a variety of high alpine vegetation and past several typical sinkholes. Continuing on a delightful mountain path, we descend to the Bräuning Alm, a group of huts on level terrain, near a number of small springs. After a well-deserved morning tea break, we turn left and take the grassy path winding up to the saddle at the foot of the Bräuning. We turn eastwards and walk past a small limestone escarpment where we stop for lunch. From here we get a bird's eye view of the Salzkammergut. We take the short descent to the Augstsee and from there back to the Loser alpine chalet for a well-earned drink. We return to our lovely hotel for afternoon tea where we could well be tempted by the mouth-watering homemade cakes on display. A spa or a swim might sound tempting to help fully recover before dinner.

 **5 HOURS**

 **ALTAUSSEE, AUSTRIA**



DAY 4

Altaussee - Free Day

Today you can relax at Hotel Seevilla or visit the lovely town of Bad Aussee with its medieval (late Gothic) houses. Also interesting is the 14th century church with a fine altar piece from the 15th century. Bad Aussee was the home of Anna Plochl (1804-85), the local postmaster's daughter who married Archduke Johann and became Countess of Meran. Their long courtship, with the many problems such differing ranks brought, is a fascinating, romantic and perfectly true story. Alternatively, you can walk up to the Altaussee saltworks, (approximately 3.5 kms one way). These were first mentioned in documents back in 1147 and the oldest salt mines are still in operation in Austria. During the second world war works of art of inestimable worth were stored in these tunnels - including works by Michelangelo, Dürer, Rubens and Vermeer. An award-winning multimedia show documents the courage and engagement of the miners who rescued these treasures in April 1945. Of course, a leisurely day at our hotel is quite a desirable option as well. The lake is the perfect setting for a picnic lunch. This enchanting lake with its emerald-green water produces superb reflections of the surrounding mountains. Time to enjoy the wellness and spa area or the beauty area "Refugium", offering beauty treatments of all kinds as well as massages. In the evening we meet again for dinner at our hotel.

ALTAUSSEE, AUSTRIA



DAY 5

Dachstein Mountains - Mount Krippenstein - Heilbronner Cross - Five Fingers - Hallstatt

Situated on the eastern extremities of the alps, the Dachstein Mountains dominate the skyline of the beautiful Salzkammergut region. There are many interesting places to see such as the Dachstein glacier and ice caves and the charming town of Hallstatt where we drive this morning.

From here it is only a short distance to Obertraun and weather permitting, we take the cable car to Mount Krippenstein at 2,100 metres, where our walk starts to the Heilbronner Kreuz. It is said to be Austria's highest walking trail. This is one of the most famous and spectacular walks in the Salzkammergut, with breathtaking and much photographed views of Lake Hallstatt and the Dachstein plateau. The well-worn path leads us over hilly grounds and some fascinating karst landscape to the Heilbronn cross. It is in remembrance of the Good Friday tragedy of 1954 during which 10 school children from Heilbronn and 3 teachers were killed during bad weather.

We continue in a westerly direction via the Hirzkarseelein (small mountain lake) to Krippeneck and then to the Gjaidstation belonging to the Krippenstein cable railway. From here it takes a further fifteen minutes to reach the terrace of the Schlicherhaus.

On the way to the cable car we take the short loop to the Five Fingers, a most spectacular viewing platform close to the Pioneer Cross at the Mount Krippenstein. This is probably the most spectacular viewing platform in the alps and reaches out like a hand over the 400 metre drop. Over 5 platforms (the Five Fingers), each in a different design, we enjoy unique views down over Hallstatt, the Hallstättersee Lake and the inner Salzkammergut region.

The 5 different levels offer spectacular insight and views. One of the platforms is made entirely from glass and another enables visitors to gain their own personal view of the Hallstatt world heritage site through a large Baroque picture frame. We take the cable car back to the valley where we join our buses and return to our comfortable hotel via

the beautiful Hallstadt at the Hallstädter Lake. It must be the site of some of the most popular photographs in the world. Tonight, is a free evening.

Everyone can enjoy dinner at the Seevilla or try one of the other many restaurants in Altaussee.

 **5 HOURS**

 **ALTAUSSEE, AUSTRIA**



DAY 6

Altaussee - Innsbruck – Leutaschtal

This morning we leave our very comfortable hotel and drive to the university city of Innsbruck. Here we allow time to visit this charming capital of Tyrol. In 1964 and 1976, Innsbruck was the site for the Winter Olympic Games. The city was founded in 1180 and since then has gained a reputation as an international trade centre. The cathedral and Hofkirche are amongst the most influential churches in Austria. In the afternoon we drive to the picturesque Leutasch Valley, one of the most tranquil, unspoilt high valleys in the Austrian Tyrol, where we stay for the next three nights. The Karwendl Hotel is a 4-star hotel in a superb location at Leutasch-Ostheim surrounded by mountains and alpine meadows. It is family-run, friendly and efficient. The hotel boasts an excellent indoor pool and spa area. The cuisine is interesting with extensive buffet breakfasts.

LEUTASCH VALLEY, AUSTRIA



DAY 7

Leutasch Valley - Wildmoosalm - Wildmoos See - Leutasch Valley

Our walk today takes us into idyllic lush alpine meadows, wooden chalets and babbling brooks, overlooked by jagged mountain peaks. From our hotel in the Leutasch Valley our path crosses larch covered glades, scattered clumps of birch, fairyland pine groves and beech. In summer the forest floor is covered with wild bilberries and in autumn it is a favourite area for gathering mushrooms. If we watch carefully it is possible to see red deer grazing. We walk across the ski runs below Katzenkopf and head towards Wildmoosalm, a very popular mountain inn. The owners, like the Austrians in general, are very welcoming and each guest receives complimentary schnapps upon arrival. Be sure to try their delicious "Apfelstrudel". It has to be one of the best in Austria! In the afternoon we walk across alpine meadows on to Wildmoossee and return through the forest to the Leutasch Valley. Once again, we have spectacular views towards the Hohe Munde Mountain, which rises just behind our hotel.

 **5 - 6 HOURS**

 **LEUTASCH VALLEY, AUSTRIA**



DAY 8

Leutaschtal - Rotmoosalm - Wangalm - Wettersteinhuette - Leutasch Valley

After breakfast we drive the short distance to the Gaistal Valley car park at the Salzbachbrücke. From here we walk along the stream on a nice woodland path, bypassing the hut Hämmermoosalm. After a relatively flat start through the meadows, we soon reach a fork and continue on the upper path. It takes us through open, gently inclining pastures and further on across lightly forested pastures to the Leitenbach stream. A trail takes us to a pasture path and further on to our first destination – the spectacularly situated Rotmoosalm at the southern wall of Leutasch’s highest mountain, the Hochwanner. After a short stop for morning tea, we continue through lush green alpine pastures, which are home to the alpine cattle during summer and the echo of cowbells is a familiar sound in the alps. On top of the col and the highest point of our Southwall Panoramic Path, we stop for a well-earned break and can enjoy magnificent views of the Wetterstein and Mieminger Mountains. After lunch, we embark on a stunning balcony walk which offers us panoramic views of the surrounding mountains and valleys. Time permitting, we stop for a cool drink at the Wangalm and take in the glorious views. From here we start our gradual descent through the picturesque pine woods and our trail brings us down to the Stupfer car park where we re-join our buses.

 **7 HOURS**

 **LEUTASCH VALLEY, AUSTRIA**

DAY 9

Leutasch Valley - Brenner - Val Gardena – Ortisei

This morning we depart from the quaint alpine village in the Leutasch Valley and drive back in the direction of Innsbruck. From here we follow the Wipptal towards the Brenner Pass. We cross the border into Italy and continue down this fertile valley. On either side, steep slopes support lush farmland and picturesque rural villages. On the steeper sections, thick conifer forests rise up to the tree line. In Ponte Gardena we turn up the Gardena Valley and make our way to Ortisei. The rugged, bare peaks, which are so characteristic of the Dolomites, suddenly come into view. This world-famous valley is one of the most beautiful holiday regions in the alps. The Alpe di Siusi, the Sella and the imposing Sasso Lungo are just a few of the better-known attractions. The charming alpine meadows, bubbling mountain streams and deep fir forests all add to the atmosphere of this area. The inhabitants of the three main villages, Ortisei (St. Ulrich), St. Christina and Selva (Wolkenstein) speak their own historic Thaeto Romanic language as well as the other two official languages – Italian and German.

ORTISEI, DOLOMITES, ITALY



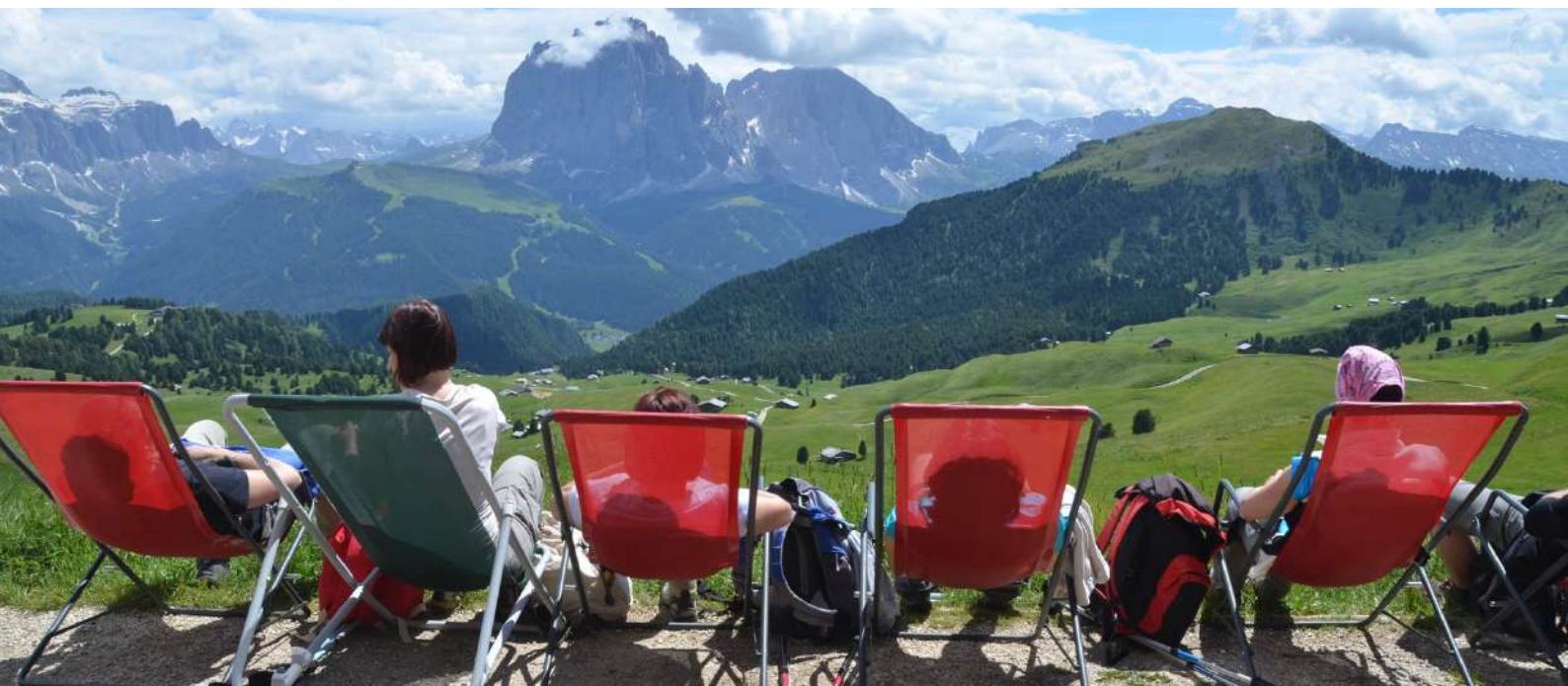
DAY 10

Ortisei - Col Raiser - Rif. Firenze In Cisles - Troier Hut

At an altitude of 2,125 metres, Col Raiser is a particularly beautiful area, famous for its lush alpine pastures. During winter the slopes are a hive of activity with downhill skiers. In summer, the farmers bring their cattle up to graze the alpine meadows. Our circuit walk takes us to Rif. Firenze in Cisles (Regensburger Huette) at the base of the nature park Puez Geisler, where we have a good opportunity for some morning tea. From here we follow the path across the fields towards the Geisler group of mountains. Along this section, hidden amongst rocky outcrops, one can still find an alpine flower that is becoming increasingly rare - the Edelweis. We continue on to Troier Hut, a shepherd's refuge for lunch. You can try some fresh milk, this time from Italian cows! After lunch we begin our gradual descent back towards Ortisei. This is real postcard scenery - manicured meadows - each with their own quaint wooden barns, babbling mountain streams flowing into alpine tarns and lines of dark evergreen pines. Looking beyond Val Gardena, the Sasso Lungo (Langkofel Mountain) stands out like a soldier on guard.

 **5 - 6 HOURS**

 **ORTISEI, DOLOMITES, ITALY**



DAY 11

Ortisei - Sella Pass - Rif. Friedrich August - Rif. Sasso Piatto (Plattkofelhütte) - Marmot Hut - Alpe Di Siusi – Ortisei

Today we discover the southern side of Val Gardena. We catch the bus to Ponte so Sella where we follow the Friedrich August path to his namesake's hut. During this section we have superb views of the Sasso Piatto (Plattkofel). Further to the south, the covered Marmolada is surely the Queen of the Dolomites. At Refugio Sasso Piatto we have our lunch break. It is quite a busy little mountain inn and a favourite place for lunch as it is at the crossroads of a number of walking tracks. One of their most popular dishes is polenta topped with melted cheese - delicious! In case we are early enough, we can also continue to the next hut - the Marmothut which is a lot smaller but in an extremely beautiful setting. At this point we are just below the mighty rock face of Sasso Piatto. At Piza da Uridl we join a narrow track, which leads us to the head of the Santner Valley. From here we descend across open meadows and walk through some magnificent fir forests. Once we reach the vast Alpe di Siusi, we take the chairlift back down to Ortisei.

 **6 HOURS**

 **ORTISEI, DOLOMITES, ITALY**



DAY 12

Ortisei - Free Day

Today you have the opportunity to stroll around Ortisei for some shopping or you can walk to St. Christina and Selva. You may just like to sit back in the hotel garden and admire the surrounding mountains.

 **ORTISEI, DOLOMITES, ITALY**



DAY 13

Ortisei - Gardena Pass (Groedner Joch) - Clark Huetten - Rif. Puez - Val Lunga (Langental) – Ortisei

From our hotel we drive to the cable car station in Selva from where we catch the cable car to Dantercepies, above the Gardena Pass. Following the “Dolomiten Hoehenweg” we walk up to Jimmy’s Hut for morning tea. At Ponte So Crespeina we have reached the highest point of the walk (2,528 metres). Here we continue across a bizarre plateau with a real lunar landscape appearance. At the Refugio Puez we break for lunch. It is a very isolated location and all supplies are flown in by helicopter. Nevertheless, they still manage to cook up one of the best minestrone soups in the region. After lunch we pass the more familiar alpine meadows as we descend to the Val Lunga. From here we have a very easy stroll down the valley and back to our bus.

 **6 HOURS**

 **ORTISEI, DOLOMITES, ITALY**



DAY 14

Ortisei – Bolzano

This morning we depart from Ortisei and drive to Bolzano where the tour finishes at the main railway station. Expected time of arrival is 11.30 a.m. Bolzano is the capital city of South Tyrol and the largest city in the region. Its archaeological museum is famous worldwide as it is the home of the alpine Iceman "Ötzi". From Bolzano there are very good rail connections in all directions.



Journey Accommodation

Romantik Hotel Seevilla

NIGHT 1 - 5



Alpenhotel Karwendel

NIGHT 6 - 8



Alpenhotel Rainell

NIGHT 9 - 13



Journey Notes

PRICE INCLUDES

- Experienced guides.
- Pick up at 10.00 a.m. in front of the Hotel Courtyard by Marriott Munich City East, Munich (Germany) on Day 1 and drop off at approximately 11.30 a.m. at the main railway station in Bolzano (Italy) on Day 14.
- Price includes transport between Munich on Day 1 and Bolzano (Italy) on Day 14.
- Twin share accommodation for 13 nights, including breakfast (13) and dinners (11).

NOT INCLUDED IN TRIP COSTS

Transport before and after “the walk”, lunch, 2 dinners, evening drinks, in-between meal snacks, personal clothing, laundry, medical expenses and items of a personal nature and entry fees.

WHAT TO BRING

Daypack, walking boots, thick socks, waterproof raincoat (Gore-Tex), sun hat, sunglasses, sun cream and bathers. We can also recommend telescopic walking sticks as being useful.

As we are restricted with the amount of luggage we can carry in our vehicles, please ensure that your CASES DO NOT EXCEED 20 KG’s per guest AND AVOID OVERSIZED SOFT BAGS!

PRE-WALK PREPARATION

We suggest that prior to your walking holiday you prepare yourself to obtain a level of fitness that will allow you to enjoy your walking holiday.

This, of course, is dependent upon your existing fitness level. Remember, the fitter you are, the more you will enjoy the holiday!

- Start with some short walks which include stairs or hills and increase the length of walks over a couple of months.
- We suggest you carry a backpack with water, camera, jacket, snacks, etc. to assist you with your preparation and allow you to get used to the extra weight on your back.
- We also ask that your boots are comfortable and well-worn in.

- Perhaps enjoy some walks through our local national parks and over uneven surfaces to gain confidence with your boots or new walking shoes.

PLEASE NOTE

All accommodation on tour includes private facilities (toilet and shower/bath). Single rooms can usually be arranged for this tour for a supplement. Please ask for details.

We will endeavour to match people together if they would like to share a twin room with another guest to avoid paying the single room supplement.

However, as this is not always possible, 'single' clients will have to pay the supplement.

All walks during the 14 Day tour are optional or can be taken in parts.

Guests can choose to have more free days than the two already included in the itinerary.

The walking pace on all walks is leisurely. Guests do not have to be experienced, although a good level of fitness is necessary.



Get in touch and book your journey today.

 0461 277 612

 info@walkaboutgourmet.com

Follow the journey.



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