



Swiss Valais (Guided)

Please email us at info@alpineexploratory.com or call us on +44 (0)1729 823 197 to chat about this holiday. You'll find all the latest information at www.alpineexploratory.com/holidays/swiss-valais-guided.html.



The Matterhorn from above the Riffelhorn

About these Holiday Notes

These Holiday Notes help you decide whether this holiday is right for you. Before your trip we send you final detailed information.

Details

Start Arolla
Finish Zermatt
Regions Swiss Valais
Country Switzerland
Length 6 walking days and 7 nights
Typical day 10km (6 miles), 400m ascent
Highest altitude 3,090m
Grade Introductory
Group size 4 to 8 people plus leader

Introduction

Come to Switzerland for a holiday with dramatic mountain views, pleasant walks and comfortable living.

In the Valais region you will find the Swiss Alps of legend. Old wooden barns form the heart of villages perched on the hillside or nestled in the deep valley. Above lie meadows, full of colour in early summer and ringing to the sound of cattle grazing. Higher still are the middle mountains with dramatic paths and panoramic walker's cols. Ever-present to the South is the main Pennine Alps chain of high mountains: famous peaks such as the Grand Combin, Pigne d'Arolla, Weisshorn and Matterhorn.

This holiday explores the best easy walking in this area, staying in a series of good valley bases. Our standard trip spends a week, spread among three villages: Arolla, Zinal and Zermatt. There is a sense of progression to the climax in Zermatt, the famous mountain town above which the Matterhorn is a constant looming presence.

If you join us as a private group, we can book any length of trip and make use of many different bases, or just one. This is a trip open to much flexibility in what we organise for you. Let us know what you like and we'll plan your itinerary to suit.

The Valais region of Switzerland is characterised by a series of roughly parallel valleys running North to the main Rhône valley. The action starts as you pass Martigny on the journey from Geneva. Movement between valleys involves dropping down to the Rhône and back up again; it is easy enough and these journeys are part of the fun.

We give you all you need in order to enjoy your exploration of the Valais to the full.

Our approach

Your route

Our trip starts in Arolla, the highest village in Val d'Hérens and our base for two nights. It then moves on to Zinal in Val d'Anniviers for another two nights before moving to Zermatt for a final three nights. At each base there is a choice of moderate walks. The two travelling days can be combined with short walks. In this way, a natural progression to Zermatt is made, from French-speaking to German-speaking Switzerland and finishing with time to get to know Zermatt, a real destination. The trip includes the good buses and trains that we use to travel between each valley.

Guided walks

Each day your leader will take you on a walk to suit the group, following a chat about what the group would like to do that day. These walks are either circular walks from your base or a local point, or linear walks making use of local transport.

Getting there and back

Your holiday starts in Arolla and ends in Zermatt. Travel to Arolla and from Zermatt is not included in the holiday price - we leave it to you to make the arrangements that suit you best. Geneva is the most convenient airport with several transfer options available. Full information on flight and transfer options will be sent to you on booking.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Arolla

Evening arrival in Arolla. Eat out in this small, high Swiss village. **Hotel in Arolla**

Day 2: Daywalk from Arolla

A gentle but exhilarating first walk could mean a trip up to the hillside above Arolla. Or, visit a

high glacial lake. Valley routes abound and make perhaps the easiest options of all. **Hotel in Arolla**

Day 3: Travel to Zinal

Short walks are very feasible in Val d'Hérens before making the journey round to Zinal. Zinal is a small resort, the highest in Val d'Anniviers and with plenty of options for eating out and exploring quiet back lanes among old barns. **Hotel in Zinal**

Day 4: Daywalk from Zinal

Take paths onto the hillsides, initially through dense woods. Options exist for exploring higher up the hillsides and perhaps reaching a high col for huge views. **Hotel in Zinal**

Day 5: Travel to Zermatt

After a walk from Zinal or nearby villages St Luc and Grimentz, it's a late afternoon's journey round to Zermatt. The final approach to Zermatt is memorable and it's everyone's instinct to seek out that first glimpse of the Matterhorn! **Hotel in Zermatt**

Day 6: Daywalk from Zermatt

Walk through the valley, climb to high viewpoints and stop for cake in huts and mountain inns - rarely without a good view of the Matterhorn. Welcome to walking life around Zermatt. The amenable shops and good restaurants in town make for memorable evenings. **Hotel in Zermatt**

Day 7: Daywalk from Zermatt

The mountain railways and cable cars from Zermatt make life easier still. Superb options exist for largely downhill walks using these forms of uplift. Celebrate a successful week of exploration with a good meal in town. **Hotel in Zermatt**

Day 8: Departure from Zermatt

Morning departure from Zermatt

On a private trip, our usual schedule of accommodation might not be available, especially if there is not much time between booking and your trip starting. We will book accommodation as closely as possible to this itinerary and present you a schedule for you to check before we proceed.

Accommodation

Our standard schedule of accommodation consists of 3 nights in a 4-star hotel, 2 nights in a 3-star hotel and 2 nights in a 2-star hotel. All rooms are ensuite.

Your info pack contains full details of your accommodation including contact details and directions.

The walking**Terrain**

The terrain on your walks comprises wide tracks through forests, the odd country lane, and zig-zagging hillside paths.

We avoid steep, rocky mountain paths and places where the paths are particularly steep and loose (for example on the final approaches to cols) but of course you are always able to explore by yourself and in doing so might meet such harder terrain.

This trip has no *via ferrata* or climbing sections and is a walking trip throughout.

Self-guided days

On this guided holiday there is the option each day for participants to walk by themselves instead of joining the group's walk, either on their own route or following one of Alpine Exploratory's routecards.

Your own routes

While your guided walks and the optional routecards make up the walking for the trip, you are of course free to walk wherever you choose, taking side trips or going by a different route of your own choice. Please note that if you follow your own route you will have left the holiday for the duration.

Food

Meals included are all breakfasts.

For lunches there is lots of opportunity to stock up on ingredients in the villages. You will sometimes find huts and cafés during the walking, useful for lunch stops. Your leader will advise about food shops and refreshment stops along the route.

For eating out there are good options in your villages, especially in Zermatt where you are spoilt for choice. The group will head to a restaurant but people are of course welcome to go off by themselves.

Insurance

Clients must have insurance to cover themselves for helicopter search & rescue, medical expenses and repatriation.

We recommend, but it is not compulsory, that you also have cover for personal liability, cancellation and your baggage and money.

You might find that your annual multi-trip travel insurance covers these items already.

We will send you details of suitable insurance policies on booking.

Passports and visas

UK passport holders do not need a visa to enter Switzerland. Please check that your passport is in date.

Weather

The weather in the Swiss Valais from mid-June to mid-September is generally highly suitable for easy Alpine walking.

While snowfall is possible on higher ground all year round, it is unlikely in July and August. During cold spells in summer, rain can fall as snow on the higher passes and hillsides but is unlikely to affect this trip's routes, because they are lower in altitude. Again, it is possible that patches of snow left over from winter and spring might linger on higher reaches into early summer, but they should not pose problems.

July and August are commonly the hottest months but with greater amounts of rain and greater risk of afternoon thunder storms; the first half of September can be stable, with the chance of some beautifully clear days.

Thunderstorms are a particular danger in summer, occurring most often in the afternoons.

This all means that it is sensible to come equipped and expecting all the types of weather that might be experienced in a typical summer in the UK: from heavy rain storms with a chill in the air, to hot sunshine.

Equipment

You will need the usual equipment for mountain walking in the Alps. Especially important are good walking boots, waterproofs and sun protection.

We will send you an equipment list on booking. Please also see the Equipment page of our website for more information.

Local expenses

Local expenses include food and drink other than breakfasts, plus any attractions and extras.

Hazards**Health**

Switzerland does not require tourists to take any vaccinations. However, it is recommended to keep tetanus vaccines up to date.

Safety

This is adventure travel! This holiday takes you to some wild and remote areas, in particular some areas of upland mountains. The weather can also be a hazard in itself. During any walking, whether following a guided walk or a routecard or making your own route, you are responsible for your own actions and safety and you should join the trip with suitable skills, experience and equipment.

Further information

Please email us with any questions at info@alpineexploratory.com.

Disclaimer

This information is given in good faith and is believed to be correct at the time of issue. Alpine Exploratory cannot be liable for any loss or injury incurred.