



Zugspitze Tour (Self-Guided)

Please email us at info@alpineexploratory.com to ask about this trip.

You'll find all the latest information at www.alpineexploratory.com/holidays/zugspitze-tour.html.



The fields and barns above Ehrwald

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 Garmisch-Partenkirchen

Finish Garmisch-Partenkirchen

Region Zugspitze

Country Germany, Austria

Length 4 walking days, 1 extra day

Total distance 79.5km (49.5miles)

Typical day 20km with 525m ascent

Highest altitude 1,590m

Grade Red3

Introduction

The summit of the Zugspitze (2,962m) is the highest point in Germany; the massif itself is the Wetterstein and is shared between Germany and Austria. Four main towns sit around the base of the mountain and we link them in a pleasing circuit of 4 stages: Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Mittenwald, Leutasch and Ehrwald.

The terrain is predominantly forested and on lower open hillsides. Two highlights come in the form of narrow gorges, the Partnachklamm soon after leaving Garmisch and the Leutaschklamm after Mittenwald. Solid, sometimes precipitous, walkways take us high above the water.

The towns and villages are a delight, two in Germany and two in Austria. The two halves of Garmisch-Partenkirchen are unusual for the size of their centres, especially Garmisch, with restaurants and cafés.

We describe the four stages that make up the circuit and we also give an optional fifth routecard that describes a day's outing to the

top of the Zugspitze. There is a cable car all the way from both the Ehrwald and Garmisch directions, plus a funicular railway that leaves you 430m below the summit for a difficult and loose final ascent that nevertheless avoids *via ferrata* or climbing.

Our approach

Your route

Our trip gives a complete circuit on foot from Garmisch-Partenkirchen, along our Zugspitze Tour. On completion you will also have walked a section of the long-distance trail the Adlerweg through the Austrian Tyrol. On the trek itself, no transport is taken except for any that you would like to add in, to skip certain sections of valley walking or to descend by cable car. The routecards explain these places; none are necessary to complete the route. We offer an optional day to climb the Zugspitze from the highest point reachable on public transport – other than the summit itself – which is a difficult 430m ascent. This Zugspitze ascent involves the funicular railway or cable car, payable locally.

Routecards and maps

Each day's route is explained in detail on your routecards, to bring you to your night's accommodation. We give you the real German or Austrian maps for you to follow.

Getting there and back

Your holiday starts and finishes in the mountain town of Garmisch-Partenkirchen. Travel to and from Garmisch-Partenkirchen is not included in the holiday price - we leave it to you to make the arrangements that suit you best. Munich is the most convenient airport, with good quick trains to Garmisch-Partenkirchen; Innsbruck airport also works, with a good train link, but has fewer flights. Full information on flight and transfer options will be sent to you on booking.

Itinerary

Arrival day:

Arrival in Garmisch-Partenkirchen

Evening arrival in Garmisch, the main mountain resort of Germany and the Bavarian Alps. There is masses of scope for dining out in the town centres of either Garmisch or Partenkirchen. **Hotel in Garmisch**

Stage 1:

Garmisch-Partenkirchen to Mittenwald

(23km with 660m ascent)

We start from Garmisch through the local gorge called Partnachklamm, tall and deep. The path climbs to the open hillside for views and then dives into woodland, stretching out to the Ferchensee and Lautersee. These two

lakes give a charming descent into Mittenwald. Painted houses line the bustling main street.

Hotel in Mittenwald

Stage 2:

Mittenwald to Weidach in Leutasch

(14.5km with 250m ascent)

Our shorter second stage has the highlight of the Leutaschklamm. New metal walkways, entirely solid, allow an improbable course high above the gorge (head for heights needed). Flatter wood and meadow trails lead to the spread-out, relaxed, villages that make up Leutasch. This valley is popular for health ('wellness') retreats.

Hotel in Weidach in Leutasch

Stage 3:

Weidach in Leutasch to Ehrwald

(21km with 540m ascent)

We walk West to Gaistalalm and the top of the Ehrwald cable car (optional), straight along the Southern flank of the Zugspitze. The mountain looms above especially in the second half of the walk. Ehrwald is a ski and mountain town at a junction of valleys.

Hotel in Ehrwald

Stage 4:

Ehrwald to Garmisch-Partenkirchen

(21km with 640m ascent)

Our last stage re-enters the woods, climbing steadily to a viewpoint over the Eibsee, a lake in the valley above Garmisch. A cable car option via the Zugspitze summit is a way to cut the distance and see the high views. The walk down into Garmisch-Partenkirchen is gentle and completes our circuit.

Hotel in Garmisch

Optional day:

Ascent of the Zugspitze

(1.5km with 430m ascent)

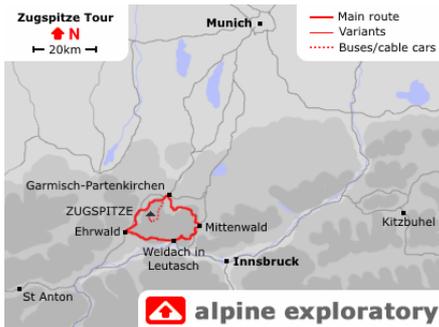
The last 430m of the Zugspitze has a scree and ridge path, popular as the sharp end of the ascent from Garmisch. Taking the funicular railway to the glacier ski area (a popular day trip in its own right, with a cable car going right to the summit) lets us start this optional ascent. The difficulty is substantially higher than the Zugspitze Tour itself, calling for confidence on loose and steep ground. It is not a *via ferrata* but at some points metal handrails and cables help on the steep zigzagging path. Descend to Zugspitze by cable car and train to complete a super day.

Hotel in Garmisch

Departure day:

Departure from Garmisch-Partenkirchen

Departure from Garmisch after breakfast.



Our normal schedule of accommodation might not be available, especially for busier times or at shorter notice. We book accommodation as close as possible to this itinerary and give you a schedule to check before we proceed.

Accommodation

Our standard schedule of accommodation consists of 6 nights in 3- or 4-star hotels.

You will have a private room each night, with an ensuite bath/shower room.

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

The walking

Terrain

The Zugspitze Tour's terrain is at the gentler end of the spectrum of Alpine walking, staying below the 1,600m contour on our main route. Much of the distance is completed on forest paths and tracks (wider). There are stretches on good, solid, mountain paths with hardpack – or mud – and occasional roots and rocky steps. Completing the picture are country lanes on tarmac.

The optional day to climb the final 430m to the Zugspitze summit (2,962m) is at a different grade altogether – we give it our Black2 grade for the highest difficulty of terrain on our routes – and suits those who are comfortable on loose and steep paths including scree and narrow ridges.

The Zugspitze Tour has no *via ferrata* or climbing sections and is a trek throughout.

Your own routes

While your 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 plus 1 evening meal (in Weidach).

For lunches there is lots of opportunity to stock up on ingredients along the route. You will often find huts and cafés during the walking,

useful for lunch stops. Your routecards give information about food shops and refreshment stops along the route.

For eating out on the nights when dinner is not included, there are good options in the village or town.

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

Passport holders of the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore do not need a visa to enter Austria or Germany.

Weather

The weather in these parts of the German and Austrian Alps from mid-July to mid-September is generally highly suitable for Alpine walking. While snowfall is possible on higher ground all year round, it is unlikely in the Summer season.

During cold spells in summer, rain can fall as snow on the higher cols and even down to valley level. This is unlikely on the Zugspitze Tour. Additionally, patches of snow left over from Winter and Spring might linger into July, but 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, good waterproof jacket and waterproof trousers, and sun protection. For any huts you will need a sheet liner. No *via ferrata* equipment is needed. 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 those meals that are included, plus any local transport, attractions and extras.

Guided days

Hire one of Alpine Exploratory's leaders to join you on this self-guided holiday, for one or more days. A leader helps plan and carry out each day's walking and adds interest to your holiday by pointing out local features. Please contact us for prices and more information.

Groups

Walk by yourself or in your own group, or see if we can match you up with other like-minded walkers on the same holiday. Any group will be a maximum of 8 people.

Hazards

Health

Germany and Austria do 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 where navigation can be difficult in poor weather. The weather can also be a hazard in itself. During any walking, whether following 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.