

Things you may like

The combination of skiing, ski touring and freeriding makes for an unforgettable experience in stunning landscape. The guided tour is limited to six participants at most and includes ascents of up to 1.5 hours covering a maximum of 400m in altitude. We will explore the regions from north to south: Kleinwalsertal, Bregenzerwald, Arlberg, Klostertal, Montafon.

Professional mountain and ski guides accompany and guide the small party. They share useful tips and hints about the hazards of avalanches and how to avoid them, about riding technique and ski touring in open terrain. Moreover, you will learn many interesting facts and fascinating stories about the local area.

A team manager is responsible for looking after things in the background (e.g. transport of luggage from hotel to hotel). Rides on lifts and cable-cars make mounting easy; your week will be rounded off by comfortable hotels and fine dining.

Hotels, ski lifts, shuttle bus and luggage transport included.

Participants

Proficient skiers who are confident doing short and long turns in different types of snow and different terrains.

Gear

All participants must bring along the main basics: airbag, avalanche beacon, probe, shovel, freeride boots, rucksack, helmet, headlamp, gloves, cap, first-aid kit, ski/sunglasses, water bottle. Some gear can also be rented (Kästle skis, freeride boots, avalanche beacon, shovel, airbag etc.).

Information

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The tour at a glance

Day 1

Starting in Dornbirn (Bodensee-Vorarlberg region) the team bus takes you to Kleinwalsertal where you receive your equipment.

Day 2

Check of equipment, evaluation of ability, intense avalanche course, test ride in open terrain, familiarisation with the group.

Day 3

Crossing from Kleinwalsertal to Bregenzerwald via the Hoher Ifen area. Descent to Schoppernau.

Day 4

From Bregenzerwald via Hochtannberg/Auenfeld to the area of Lech Zürs am Arlberg.

Day 5

From Lech Zürs via Stuben to Maroi-köpfe into the Klostertal valley, then via Sonnenkopf to Silbertal in Montafon.

Day 6

In Montafon via Hochjoch/Zamang to the Valisera area to Gargellen.

Day 7

Joint departure on the team bus to Dornbirn.

The legs descriptions serve as orientation only. The aim is to cross Vorarlberg. The itinerary may be altered depending on weather and snow conditions.

Crossing Vorarlberg on skis

From Kleinwalsertal in the north to Montafon in the south: In the "Ski Ride Vorarlberg" tour, winter sports lovers can explore the high alps in winter in a small group and accompanied by a guide. The route takes them through open terrain and on-piste ski areas – a skiing, sporting and nature experience beyond compare. Each day, the group faces new challenges when skiing, ski touring and free riding, always in search of the best trail, always heading for the next adventure. That's the way it ought to be!

www.vorarlberg.travel/en/activity/skiride



Disclosure

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Partner



Vorarlberg

Nestling in Austria's very west, Vorarlberg enjoys an abundance of natural snow each winter. It is mountainous, pleasantly small in size, and surprisingly multi-faceted. Here, the art of skiing has been cultivated for over 100 years, and the art of hospitality for even longer.

Your trip starts in the Bodensee-Vorarlberg region in the Vorarlberg Rhine valley. The feel here is urban, open to the world, full of surprises, with a vibrant cultural life and a thriving economy. Densely populated, but with lots of free space. Fairly flat, but mountains everywhere on the horizon. A startling wealth of modern buildings in the four cities of Bregenz, Dornbirn, Hohenems and Feldkirch and the towns and villages in between. A string of museums which host interesting exhibitions all year round. Kunsthaus Bregenz, a stronghold of contemporary art, the vorarlberg museum which chronicles Vorarlberg's past and present, or the interactive inatura museum in Dornbirn where visitors can explore natural science. A number of small and large theatres offer cultural inspiration, also in winter. Definitely not to be missed!

"Ski Ride Vorarlberg" takes you to the following regions:

Kleinwalsertal

The Kleinwalsertal is a corner of Austria which literally stands apart, since it can be reached by road from Germany only. Imposing peaks line the valley. The Kleinwalsertal owes its name to the Walser people who settled here in the 13th century. Originally from the Swiss canton of Wallis, the Walser came to cultivate the remote and high-lying areas of Vorarlberg. The valley lies at an altitude of no less than 1,000 to 1,200m. The highest peak is Widderstein at 2,533m; the Hoher Ifen plateau, through which your onward journey to the Bregenzerwald will take you, is genuinely striking.

The Walser heritage has been preserved to this very day. The Walser-influenced dialect sounds different than other – also Alemannic – dialects spoken elsewhere in Vorarlberg. "Önsche Walser Chuche" (our Walser cuisine) is the motto some restaurants and inns which source their products at regional farms have subscribed to. Local beef and game are the signature specialties served in the Kleinwalsertal.

Tourism is the backbone of this picturebook mountain valley, both in summer and in winter: visitors will find plenty of opportunities to explore nature, hiking or skiing, and to (re)set their inner pace.

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Bregenzerwald

Some 30,000 people inhabit the 22 quaint villages. The northern part is characterised by gently rolling hills; in the southern part, which you will explore, the valley narrows and takes on a more alpine aspect, featuring numerous towering peaks. Since time immemorial, the locals of the Bregenzerwald have made sure to develop the place they live and the agriculture-dominated cultural landscape soundly. Not every mountain peak is accessible by lift or cable car. The villages are eye-catching by their harmonious blend of traditional and contemporary architecture. Timber and glass are the materials mostly used in building. Many of the traditional houses still have facades which are clad by wood shingles.

Architects and craftspeople are driven by innovation, especially that 85-member group which has teamed up in the Werkraum Bregenzerwald. Examples of their work can be seen in the Werkraum Haus in Andelsbuch. This hall-like construction was designed by the Swiss architect Peter Zumthor. Many hotels offer a blend of trad & mod, also in their interior decoration. Cheese is the culinary ambassador of the Bregenzerwald, mainly the spicy mountain and alp cheese.

You will leave the Bregenzerwald tracing the footsteps of 19th century ski pioneer Johann Müller.

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www.bregenzerwald.at

Arlberg

A name which resounds in the ears of winter sports devotees. Skiing was literally invented on the Arlberg in the early 20th century. Pioneers such as Hannes Schneider were instrumental in developing alpine skiing techniques. Back in history, Lech and the Tannberg area (like the Kleinwalsertal) were settled by the Walser who took up farming. Until 100 years ago, Zürs – at 1,700m altitude – was only inhabited by a handful of mountain farmers. Today, the ski area of Lech Zürs am Arlberg is among the most famous worldwide, it extends to Stuben and St. Anton. Opened in the winter season 2013/14, the Auenfeld jet now connects the Arlberg with the Warth-Schröcken ski area in the Bregenzerwald.

Skiers appreciate the wide runs and the sheer endless opportunities for etching a trail in open terrain. Similar to other ski regions in Vorarlberg, the ski schools offer courses and professional guides. The highest lift-served points in the ski area lie at 2,800m altitude. From there, and from many other spots, sublime views of a myriad of peaks unfold in the horizon.

Both Lech and Zürs boast a wide choice of hotels, particularly in the high-end range. The atmosphere can best be described as rural elegance.

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www.lech-zuers.at

Klostertal

Alpenregion Bludenz is made up of three family-friendly mountain valleys – Brandnertal, Klostertal and the Grosses Walsertal biosphere park, as well as the alpine city of Bludenz. Back in 1870, Vorarlberg's first alpine shelter was opened by the Austrian Alpine Association in the Brandnertal, at lake Lünensee to be more precise. Thoroughly revamped in the meantime, Douglasshütte hut carries the name of its builder: John Sholto Douglass, a factory owner, naturalist and mountaineer who lived in Thüringen near Bludenz.

The Klostertal, which you will get to know on your tour of Vorarlberg, has gone down in the history of transportation. The 30km long valley stretches from the Arlberg in westerly direction to Bludenz, lined by steep mountains to the north and south. The road from Vorarlberg to Austria's east passes along the villages. Since 1978, the Arlberg road tunnel, at 13km Austria's longest road tunnel, cuts travelling time short. The railway line on the north side of the Klostertal runs along the mountain and is justly considered a feat of engineering. The rail road and the Arlberg rail tunnel were opened in 1884.

From Sonnenkopf (2,000m) stunning panoramic views of the Vorarlberg mountains unfold. The region has leisurely ski slopes as well as a number of challenging runs for free-riders.

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Montafon

From Silbertal, your first stop in the Montafon, the views extend across the main village of Schruns-Tschagguns to imposing mountain scenery. Ernest Hemingway was one of the first to sing the praises of ski tours in the Raetikon and Silvretta massifs. During his early years, he spent two winters in the Montafon and immortalized his memories in his writings. Attentive observers will note two peculiarities in the Montafon: the traditional houses are built of timber and stone, and the village names and geographical names such as Schruns-Tschagguns, Gaschurn-Partenen, Valisera, Silvretta right to mount Piz Buin (at 3,312m Vorarlberg's highest peak) sound different than elsewhere in Vorarlberg. Why? Because the Montafon was settled by the Romansh people (who originated from the Swiss canton of Graubünden). When it comes to cheese as well, the Montafon is different. A regional specialty is Sura Kees (literally translated as "sour" cheese), a low-fat cheese of mild or spicy taste, depending on how long it has ripened.

Mountaineers and skiers flock to the Montafon both in summer and in winter. It is popular all year round as a venue of international sport competitions. On your tour across the extensive Silvretta Montafon ski area, you will reach Gargellen as your final destination. Freeride spots can also be found at Golm, Kristberg and the Silvretta Bielerhöhe heights.

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