

SWISS ALPS

Via Tremola, Furka & Grimsel Pass (Jul/Aug 2024)



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SPORTS & TOURS

www.sierrasportsandtours.com

AUS: +61 3 9016 9830

ESP: +34 679 236 928

Swiss Alps – Where the Mountains Touch the Sky!



To expand on our successful collection of Explorer cycling tours we are pleased to present after a Covid-forced delay our Swiss Alps cycling tour. This tour includes a great selection of rides that pass through the heart of the alps. The tour begins with Mont Blanc in your sights and at 4810m elevation it is Europe's highest mountain. Cervino (aka 'Matterhorn') is by far the most spectacular for its famous pyramidal shape. And last but not least is Eiger (aka 'Ogre') named as such thanks to its brutal 1800m high north wall of crumbling rock and ice. Amazing views are all around but when combined with beautiful valleys, pastoral land, forests and glaciers the cycling is going to be out of this world!

When compared against the Dolomites, French Alps and Pyrenees many of the Swiss climbs remain relatively unknown. The education will be swift though as in an instant you appreciate the iconic standing of climbs such as Sanetsch Pass, Nufenen Pass, Old Tremola Road / San Gottardo Pass, Furka Pass, Grimsel Pass and Gross Scheidegg.

This is the perfect trip for road cyclists who have explored France, Italy and Spain (the 3 pillars of road cycling) and are now looking forward to something truly spectacular!

Swiss Alps – Starting and Finishing in Geneva!



TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Travel through the heart of the Swiss Alps
- Experience the Aiguille de Midi cable car to Mont Blanc
- Ride mountains, through valleys, national parks and up to pristine glaciers
- Test yourself on the most famous Swiss cols, including Sanestch, Nufenen, Tremola, Furka, Grimsel and Gross Scheidegg
- Visit mountain top villages like Zermatt with all the charm in the world
- Enjoy breathtaking views with the famous mountain summits of Mont Blanc, Matterhorn and Eiger all around!
- Finish in UNESCO Bern, an urban gem without equal!

ITINERARY

DAY ONE – Wed 24 July 2024 – Collect from Geneva (Switzerland)

We will meet you all at Movenpick Hotel & Casino Geneva (Geneva Airport) at 9:30am. Geneva is located on the boundary between the French and Swiss Alps. The tour begins with a 1hr drive through France to nearby Chamonix for what will be a very scenic lunch break as the towering Mont Blanc (4810m) awaits us all. The 20min cable car to Aiguille de Midi will lift you up to 3842m and deliver 360° views of the French, Swiss and Italian Alps! Following lunch another quick transfer in the vans to the Swiss border to set-up the bikes and get things going with a 45km valley ride through to the hotel. During dinner the program for the week ahead will be presented along with all the tour goodies.

Meals: Dinner included

Destinations: Mont Blanc

Today's Ride: 45km cycling

Accommodation: Sierre (Swiss Alps)

DAY TWO – Thursday 25 July 2024 – Sanetsch Pass (Swiss Alps)

Road cycling is often focused around the main passes used in the big races like the Giro d'Italia and Tour de France. But today will prove that it should not always be that way with the spectacular climb to Sanetsch Pass. The mountain road is basically used for access by hikers and a few local workers only so you can expect quiet roads during the 25km climb. The cycling begins by climbing through the Swiss vineyards and as the road continues rising up and up one begins to take in the big mountain views with the Diableret glacier a major feature! The descent includes some beautiful gorge cycling before encountering the hairpins which will deliver you to the valley floor and the conclusion of a great day on the bike.

Meals: Breakfast included

Destinations: Col du Sanetsch

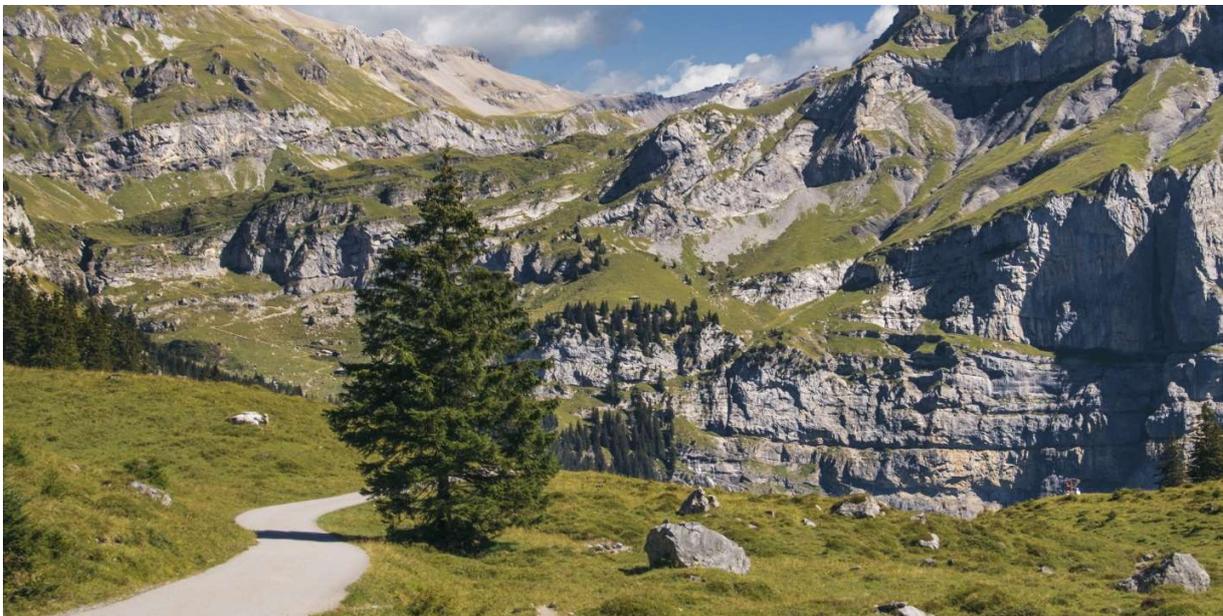
Today's Ride: 90km cycling (2000m elevation gain)

Accommodation: Sierre (Swiss Alps)

DAY THREE – Friday 26 July 2024 – Lago des Dix (Swiss Alps)

Riding out from the hotel is a 15km warm up to the base of what is known as the Barrage de la Grande Dixence. Again, a no-name climb in the scheme of things but one which you will never forget. Another epic 26.5km climb that finishes at a huge lake at 2140m altitude. The forests and switchbacks plus the 3km of flat terrain in the middle make this climb particularly enjoyable. If any of you have ever ridden the Stelvio Pass in Italy you will know the feeling of having ridden through the forest, before turning and seeing the summit still all that distance away. Well you will be fighting with the same sensation when the huge Lake Dix comes into view and the final 10km are still to ride. Hopefully you rode the middle section wisely as the final 3km up to the dam wall average a whopping 10%.

To top off an amazing day in the mountains we will include a late afternoon excursion to Zermatt. This is a car free mountain village resting at 1600m elevation and located at the foot of the Matterhorn (Cervino). The train shuttle up to Zermatt in itself is a major highlight and the mountain views all around will provide a unique dining experience!



Meals: Breakfast & Dinner included

Destinations: Zermatt

Today's Ride: 85km cycling (2150m elevation gain)

Accommodation: Sierre (Swiss Alps)

DAY FOUR – Sat 27 July 2024 – Nufenen Pass & Old Tremola Road

Most tourists visiting the Swiss mountains skip Nufenen Pass in preference for the nearby Grimsel Pass and Furka Pass. But for the road cycling enthusiast Nufenen Pass is another must! Standing at 2478m altitude it is the second highest asphalted mountain pass in Switzerland after only Umbrail Pass (2501m). It is also a regular pro cycling feature and is frequently used during the Tour of Suisse. The 13km climb has a constant 8.5% grade up to a high plateau with impressive views over to Finsteraarhorn at 4275m elevation.



From Airolo those who love adventure and history will be in their element. The Tremola Pass historically was the only way to get over the grand San Gottardo Pass. As one gets high on fresh mountain air you will enjoy scaling the 37 switchbacks and granite cobblestones that were laid back in 1827. Just another 12.5km at 7% average grade to finish off what will be a truly memorable day!

Meals: Breakfast included

Destinations: Nufenen Pass & San Gottardo

Today's Ride: 90km cycling option (2250m elevation gain)

Accommodation: Andermatt (Swiss Alps)

DAY FIVE – Sunday 28 July 2024 – Furka & Grimsel Pass

It is difficult to say that things just keep getting better but what can you say about the opportunity to ride Furka Pass (2436m) and Grimsel Pass (2165m) one after the other! These are two of the most beautiful high passes in the Swiss Alps with Furka Pass being the fourth highest paved road in Switzerland. Both of these climbs offer a complete series of amazing switchbacks and as you climb Furka you might just remember footage of James Bond and the sniper scene from Goldfinger. Once at the top of Grimsel Pass it will be time to evaluate the condition of the group as another 6km is on offer up to Oberaar. This is a tight switchback road and while not overly steep at 3.5% average gradient the views across to Oberaar Glacier are well worth the extra effort!



Meals: Breakfast & Dinner included

Destinations: Oberaar Glacier

Today's Ride: 80km cycling (1850m elevation gain)

Accommodation: Lake Thun (Switzerland)

DAY SIX – Monday 29 July 2024 – Lake Thun (Switzerland)

After several very challenging days on the bike one can decide to take a rest on the shores of Lake Thun or join our guides for a flat ride around this impressive alpine lake which measures 17.5km long by 3.5km wide. The 65km route will take you out towards Interlaken and our first coffee stop. Back at the tour hotel and for those looking for more there is always the Diemtigtel Geschäftsstelle Nature Park just around the corner.

Meals: Breakfast included

Destinations: Interlaken

Today's Ride: Min. 65km cycling

Accommodation: Lake Thun (Switzerland)

DAY SEVEN – Tuesday 30 July 2024 – Gross Scheidegg wonderland!

Today begins with some easy kilometres around Lake Thun and back towards Interlaken. The next section of our cycling route though starting from Grindelwald has to be seen to be believed! The perfectly asphalted road narrows and only cyclists and the occasional postal van have access up the Gross Scheidegg Pass (1960m elevation). One of the features of this climb are the alpine pastures with surrounding views to some of the biggest European mountains including the Jungfrau and north face of the renowned Eiger (aka Ogre).

The Eiger tops out at 3960m elevation and its north face is a 1800m vertical wall of crumbling rocky limestone and ice. For climbers it is considered Europe's greatest challenge and today you will be cycling in its presence! At the top of Gross Scheidegg Pass we can enjoy some lunch and take in these views in what truly is cycling paradise. Just another day where it feels like the roads have been built for cyclists only!

Meals: Breakfast included

Destinations: Gross Schiedegg

Today's Ride: 100km cycling

Accommodation: Lake Thun (Switzerland)

DAY EIGHT – Wednesday 31 July 2024 – Gantrisch Nature Park

The tour hotel is located on the edge of the Gantrisch Nature Park and we will spend the day cycling beautiful mountain loops before descending down to Bern. The 90km ride today passes through expansive forests up to the Gurnigel Pass. You will have earned your lunch break after cycling this 11.5km climb (average grade of 7%). After lunch the ride continues north with the fun descent down to UNESCO Bern. The historic old town dates back to the 12th Century where it was built on a hill overlooking the Aare River. Its grand 15th Century arcades and 16th Century fountains provide the perfect location to celebrate what has been a tour full of amazing mountains, glaciers and alpine lakes.



Meals: Breakfast & Dinner included

Destinations: Gantrisch Nature Park

Today's Ride: 90km cycling (2000m elevation gain)

Accommodation: Bern (Switzerland)

DAY NINE – Thursday 1 August 2024 – Goodbyes - Geneva

Following breakfast the Sierra guides will be available to transfer you 2hr to Geneva International Airport. From here we will say our goodbyes before you continue on your own adventures. Thanks for joining us through the Swiss Alps!

Meals: Breakfast included

TRIP DETAILS

REGION: SWISS ALPS (Switzerland)

PRICE: 3850 € p.p. (twin)

TOUR DATES: 24 JULY – 1 AUGUST 2024

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: 750 €

DURATION: 9 DAYS / 8 NIGHTS

OPTIONAL EXTRAS:

Carbon Road Bike Hire: 400 €

HOTELS: Sierre (x3), Andermatt (x1), Lake Thun (x3), Bern (x1); 3/4 Star Hotels

INCLUDED

Van transport (incl. arrival / departure)
8 nights accommodation (twin share)
8 breakfasts
4 dinners (with beer & wine included)
8 guided cycling stages with van and mechanic
Food & drinks during cycling stages
Commemorative Sierra cycling jersey

NOT INCLUDED

Airfares & Train Tickets
Pre or post Tour Accommodation