



UNIQUE SMALL GROUP ADVENTURES – KIWI SPIRIT

TRANZALPINE – SWISS, AUSTRIAN & ITALIAN ALPS

LUZERN TO GRAZ - TRIP DURATION: 21 nts/22days

NEAREST INTERNATIONAL ARRIVAL AIRPORT: Zurich Kloten International Airport

NEAREST INTERNATIONAL DEPARTURE AIRPORT: Graz, or Vienna

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Lake Luzern** and **Pilatus** mountain railway excursion
- Wander the coastal walkway of the Cinque Terre and its colourful villages
- Spend time in the ancient **walled city of Lucca** and visit **Pisa**
- Sample a real **Swiss fondue**
- Enjoy spectacular walks around Zermatt and the **famous Matterhorn**
- Hike with the locals **off the beaten track** in Austria and Italy
- Ride Europe's **highest cog railway**
- Stay in a little known **Austrian village** with spectacular scenery
- Walk through the stunning **Italian Dolomites**
- Enjoy a unique visit to the tour leader's **family winery in Austria**
- **SHARE STORIES AND ENJOY EACH OTHERS COMPANY!!!**

THE STYLE OF TRIP:

Our unique small group tours are designed for the relatively fit and healthy and use mostly local transport, so the fast and comfortable trains in this case. Typically the hotels are small, cosy, family run B&B's and guesthouses with private facilities. There may be two home stay nights at the end of the tour (this depends on group size) and one multi-share night if we stay in a mountain hut in Austria, with shared bathrooms. So if you enjoy a unique itinerary with lots local experiences in a small group. If you love stunning mountain scenery, tasting delicious regional dishes and really getting to the essence of the countries you're visiting, then this is for you. You must also be able to walk for 4 to 6hrs at a time in hilly terrain to get the best out of this trip. It's early summer, so be prepared to deal with what the weather has in store in the alps, sun, rain, snow or wind. All highlighted with stunning alpine meadows.

WELCOME TO THE SOUTHERN EXPOSURE TOURS EXPERIENCE

DAY 1.

ARRIVAL DAY LUZERN

Today is arrival day so you are free to arrive at any time. In the evening we will have a short meeting, then a welcome dinner in one of the lovely riverside outdoor restaurants. Spend time savoring the medieval town center of Luzern. If not all tour participants have arrived yet, the included dinner will be tomorrow. **D**

DAY 2.

LUZERN BOAT TRIP AND MOUNTAIN EXCURSION

Traverse the lake on one of the original paddle steamers (or normal boat if not available) and then ride the cog railway up to Mount Pilatus for spectacular views and a short hike for a picnic lunch stop. From the top we take a cable car down the other side and/or walk part of the way

through picturesque mountain scenery, forests and there's even time to stop for a beer at in a mountain pub on the way. In bad weather we have the option of taking a longer boat trip or visiting the mountain village of Engelberg. **B**

DAY 3.

LUZERN TO GRINDELWALD

Train departure 9.55am, arrival 12.39pm

This morning depart on a beautiful train trip over the Brunnig Pass to Interlaken and Grindelwald. Start your exploration of the area at the Glacier Gorge of Grindelwald, a short but surprisingly unusual walk that is an interesting introduction to the Jungfrau Region. **B**

DAYS 4 & 5

GRINDELWALD WALKS AND JUNGFRAUJOCH COG RAILWAY

From here we include a visit to the uniquely U shaped valley of Lauterbrunnen and the Trummelbach Falls which drain the Eiger, Monch and Jungfrau mountains. Ride up an elevator inside the mountain to see them! A stunning train ride up to Jungfrau Joch, the highest cog railway in Europe takes us though the north wall of the Eiger mountain as we gain height. At the top, the glacier stretches for miles out behind the Monch, and there are ice caves complete with sculptures. Walks in this region can include the spectacular Eiger Trail underneath the north face, or a walk towards Lauterbrunnen through alpine pastures. We may take the cable car up to First and walk along a high trail to Grosse Scheideg. On either of these two days if the weather doesn't cooperate, we have the option of a day trip to Interlaken and/or Bern the picturesque riverside capital of Switzerland. **2B**

DAYS 6 & 7

GRINDELWALD TO ZERMATT

Train departure 8.50am, arrival 11.52am

A four hour traverse of Switzerland to the mountain village of Zermatt, home of the famous Matterhorn. We will hopefully be rewarded with a sunset glimpse of this majestic peak. Our day walk with plenty of rests and photo opportunities takes us up the lower sunny slopes in the morning and then crossing over to the other side of the valley for a longer but gentle up hill through a forest then spectacular views of the Matterhorn from a different perspective. If you only want to do half the hike there is time for an optional trip up in the cable car to the Kleine (small) Matterhorn at an altitude of nearly 4000m. After this awesome day we include a well deserved feature dinner – Swiss Cheese Fondue. **2B, 1D**

DAYS 8 & 9

ZERMATT TO CINQUE TERRE

Train departure 7.39am, arrival 3.27pm

Our train journey today takes us through the alps, into Italy and on to Vernazza, one of the five Cinque Terre villages where we stay for the next two nights. The area is so unique that it has been named a UNESCO world heritage site and is a group of five fishing villages clinging to the cliffs overlooking the ocean. Our main hike takes us along the ancient pathway joining the villages of Monterosso, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola and Riomaggiore. We will walk among the steep terraces that allow for cultivation of olives, grapes, and chestnut trees. Enjoy the breathtaking views and colourful painted houses of the villages. Sample the fresh pesto, delicious focaccia and wines of the region. The path is well marked so if you wish to go at your own pace and take your time exploring the villages or relaxing in a sunny piazza overlooking the sea, then you are free to do so. **1B**

DAY 10.

CINQUE TERRE TO LUCCA & PISA

Train departure 11.06am, arrival 12.54pm

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast and a swim in the bay, or spend a further morning exploring the region around Vernazza then it's only a couple of short train rides to the ancient city of Lucca, hemmed in by 16th century ramparts and laced with cobblestone streets. For the next two nights we are lucky enough to stay inside the old town for a more local feel.

DAY 11

LUCCA

The best way to get around Lucca is by bike, as cars are not allowed on many of the streets within the wall. For fabulous views and a great morning walk, bike or run, the 5km loop on the top of the ramparts was once a racetrack and is now paved and tree lined. There is time to visit Pisa which is only 40 minutes by bus from Lucca, perhaps enjoy a wine and olive tasting, and for the September trip we will be in Lucca for one of its most important religious festivals, the feast of Saint Croce. The processions of floats, fireworks and wonderful costumes will enthral you. So relax and explore this wonderful town.

DAY 12

LUCCA TO TRENTO ITALY

Train departure 8.32am, arrival 2.04pm, connecting bus to Monte Bondone

Morning train to Trento and bus to our hotel on the slopes of Monte Bondone. This is an area famous for its scenery, wine making and medieval town with underground Roman ruins. Overnight Monte Bondone. **D**

DAY 13 & 14

MONTE BONDONE AND THREE PEAKS HIKE

We spend time walking in the Three Peaks area for dramatic views. The hike starts high on pastures of Monte Bondone and apart from stunning views also has a rich history from WW2. The three peaks themselves can be goals to summit or we can walk around each one, with the same wonderful views. A day can also be spent exploring Trento, which has ancient Roman ruins under the museum and remnants of a town wall, a castle and one of the best pizzeria/breweries in northern Italy. Or we can hike some other trails in the region. As our accommodation is high above the town, on the side of a mountain, meals are provided **2B, 2L, 2D**.

DAY 15

TRENTO TO STUBAITAL

Bus to Trento, train departure 9.57am, arrival 12.33pm, connecting bus to Stubaital

Our 3 hour train journey takes us to Austria for the start of our stay at Neustift in the magnificent Stubai Valley, staying in a lovely family owned B&B who's owners have spent years as mountain guides in the region. Both have been to the summit of the Matterhorn and its always wonderful to hear about their lives in the mountains! **B**.

DAYS 16, 17 & 18

WALKS TO THE MOUNTAIN HUTS OF STUBAITAL

We take the road less traveled and hike to the alpine club mountain huts throughout the valley. Our base of Neustift allows us to stay at our cozy family run B&B and also have an overnight at a hut. There are too many options to list here and weather will play an important roll as to what routes are chosen. Most of the hikes to the huts are no more than 2 hours each way and we can actually go from hut to hut over rocky mountain passes and some spectacular scenery, depending on weather and group ability. Huts are well maintained, have fabulous food and offer a cozy mountain retreat. Accommodating up to 130 guests, it's always a lively atmosphere and a great way to meet the locals. If we stay down in the valley the entire time, our hikes take us to a different hut each day and may include Franz Senn, Sulzenau, Nuerenberger, Starkenburger and/or Elfer Hut. **3B**,

DAY 19

STUBAITAL TO WEIZ

Bus to Innsbruck, train departure 9.25am, arrival 3.25pm, van to Weiz

This morning we board our train to Graz. It's a scenic journey through central Austria an afternoon arrival where we'll be picked up and taken to our accommodation which, depending on group size, will be a couple of home stays near the tour leader's family winery, or a small Pension in the town of Weiz. Here you can wander the narrow streets, most bordered by houses hundreds of years old and there won't be another tourist in sight. Overnight Weiz, **B**

DAY 20 & 21

WEIZ LOCAL FARM, WINERY AND WALKS

Our final days in Austria are a truly local experience. One day is spent walking in a nearby river gorge. Here we meander through a valley flanked at times by high cliffs on each side, rather than mountains. After a local lunch at a small guesthouse, we have the chance to visit a farm. On the Sunday our 2hr walk through forests outside of Weiz end at the tour leader's family winery. Celebrate the end of a fabulous trip and let your hair down. This special evening in a typical winery or "Buschenschank" as it's called, is a Styrian tradition. It is only allowed to sell what it produces. Your farewell dinner here is included with their wines, schnapps & typical food specialties. **2B, 1D**

DAY 22

DEPARTURE DAY

Direct trains to Vienna depart at 9.26 and 11.26am, arriving at 12.02 and 2.02pm

Trains with one change depart at 10.21am and 12.21pm, arriving at 1.02 and 3.02pm

You can choose flights which either fly out of Graz or take the 2 ½ hour train journey to Vienna to connect with a flight there. If flying from Vienna, please do not schedule a flight before 1pm. **B**

WHAT THE TOUR DOES NOT INCLUDE

Domestic and international flights, airport departure taxes, fuel surcharges and levies, pre & post tour accommodation, visas, vaccinations, personal insurance, meals (except those listed), drinks, laundry, souvenirs, tips, and other items of a personal nature.

JOINING INSTRUCTIONS

LUZERN:

Hotel Alpha

Zehringer Str. 24

Phone +41 (0)41 240 42 80

Please note that Day 1 is an arrival day and people may be joining the group from many different destinations so there are no planned activities during the day. However your Tour Leader will organize a short meeting around 6pm so look for a welcome note at reception. You will meet other tour participants and receive information about general and specific aspects of the trip. Likewise day 22 is departure day and there are no scheduled activities. If you are flying out from Vienna, please do not schedule a flight before 1pm. You may also like to opt for a couple of nights extension in Vienna.

To get to Luzern there are frequent trains directly from **Zurich Kloten Airport**. The train station is downstairs in the airport terminal, just follow the signs and buy your ticket (approx 26 francs) at the ticket windows. Everyone speaks English so ask what the next connections are and get them to print it out for you. This will tell you the departure and arrival time of the trains and which track number to catch your train. **Direct trains depart at 4 minutes and 35 minutes past the hour. Or at 9 minutes past with one change in Zurich about 10mins from the airport.** The trains are fast, clean and always on time. The trip to Luzern takes around 50mins. Once there go outside the train station to the taxi rank for a 5min ride to the hotel (approx 10 – 15 francs).

ITINERARY & TRAIN TIMES

All itineraries and train times are given as a guideline only as our tour leaders may need to adjust the travel plan as the tour progresses due to changes in transport schedules or unforeseen circumstances. The tour leader will also try to be in the best place for local holidays and festivals, etc. We endeavor to incorporate any permanent changes into these dossiers as they happen. Therefore, we ask that you consider downloading the very latest dossier for your tour from our website just before traveling (as stated above, at www.southernexposuretours.co.nz).

WHAT TO TAKE

Special note on baggage: You will be on the go a great deal and travel is by train, so our advice is to pack as lightly as possible. Try and keep your bag to around 15kg, as you will be responsible for moving your own luggage around the train stations, on and off trains, stowing it between seats or on overhead racks, and moving it to taxis and hotel rooms. In Italy there are steps instead of

ramps at the train stations to change platforms and also to get to our hotel rooms in Cinque Terre. **Please be aware that you must be physically capable to move your bags yourselves.** We recommend the use of either a wheely bag or backpack, whichever is easiest for you to carry. Our tour leader uses a backpack as she finds it easier for getting on an off trains and getting around the steps at train stations. The recommended maximum dimensions for your bag to make it easy for stowing and wheeling down train aisles are 61cm x 42cm x 32cm. This is a standard mid sized bag available in NZ in stores such as Briscoes. For hiking a good size daypack of around 20-25 liters to carrying lunch, cameras, water and rain jacket is also essential.

Suggested List:

Documents:

- *Airline tickets (with photocopies)
- *Travel insurance (with photocopies)
- *Passport (with photocopies)
- *Euro and Swiss Francs cash (see personal spending money and local payment)
- *Credit card (see spending money)
- *Debit card (see spending money)
- *Any entry visas or vaccination certificates required

Items Clothing

- First-aid kit** • Fleece top
- Sunblock • Windproof/waterproof jacket
- Sunglasses • Small towel and swim wear
- Toiletries (biodegradable) • 4 shirts/t-shirts
- Watch and alarm clock • Sun hat
- Water bottle • 2 pairs of shorts
- 2 pairs of long trousers • Sleepwear
- 1 set of smart casual clothes for the evenings
- Pocket knife for picnic lunches • 1pair hiking pants/track pants
- Small flashlight • Hiking boots and/or sturdy walking shoes • Sport sandals
- ****First aid kit** should contain lip salve, Aspirin, Band Aids, anti-histamine, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, re-hydration powder, any prescription drugs you may be taking.

Optional

Camera, reading/writing material, binoculars, cover for backpacks, collapsible walking poles

Recommended for this trip:

- Fair sized daypack around 20-25 liters
- Warm hat, mitts or gloves
- Strong plastic bags to help keep gear dry in your day packs
- Anti-inflammatory tablets (e.g. Ibuprofen)

SPENDING MONEY

We recommend Euro30 and Swiss francs 60 per day to cover the cost of meals, snacks, drinks, some souvenirs, laundry, etc. This should be in the form of cash which is preferable for paying dinners as often we cannot get separate bills and we have to work it out amongst ourselves. Smaller denominations are advisable for every day use, and debit/credit cards are very handy. Credit cards are widely accepted and the best credit cards to take are Visa, MasterCard. They can be used in most places for cash advances and are often the best way to carry your money although we do not recommend that you rely on this as your **ONLY** means of bringing funds. We prefer to use bank debit cards like EFTPOS cards for cash withdrawals at ATM's. In New Zealand you can purchase a "Cash Passport" card through your travel agent which is very convenient.

BUDGET TO HELP YOU:

Meals not included \$580 Euro approximately. You will also need some Swiss francs, 300 will get you started, or if you prefer you can withdraw directly from ATM's as they are everywhere, plus you can change your Euros to Francs if you arrive with just one currency.

Additional sightseeing – most of your activities are covered in the cost of the trip. However if you would like to do any extra sightseeing, your tour leader will be on hand to give recommendations and help organize the activities.

PAYING LOCALLY

Most of our tours involve a local payment. Paying locally allows us to keep the overall cost of our tours competitive and pass the savings on to you. These funds are put towards local expenses.

TIPPING

Many restaurants expect a small tip for service if it is not included in the bill. Your tour leader will advise you on tipping.

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY/FITNESS

This Europe tour is designed for the relatively fit and healthy and the trails are generally on hilly terrain. This trip is suitable for recreational walkers who are comfortably able to walk for 4 to 6 hours on some days. You will only be carrying your day pack with you, and we stop often for rests, photos and refreshments at mountain restaurants. There are some options for shorter or easier trails and they are well defined and signposted, so if you wish to take an alternative option to the group, you may do so. The tour leader will decide on which trails to walk according to group ability and weather conditions. Please be aware that we are NOT allowed to administer first aid or drugs to clients for legal reasons so be fully prepared with your own medical kit.

TRANSPORT AND ACCOMMODATION

We provide you with a unique experience by using local transport on most of our SET tours and this gives you the chance of just lazing back in a comfy European train and sitting in the dining car while we ride past stunning scenery. **It is very important that you are able to manage your own luggage on and off the trains and it's strongly recommended that you adhere to the packing list to keep luggage manageable.** Any bus journeys on our Europe trips are short and on local connection buses. Your accommodation while not being 4 or 5 star, is clean and comfortable. Chosen for its local flavor and welcoming hosts. We generally stay in family run hotels and B & B's. If you stay in the mountain huts you will be multi sharing for that night with shared bathroom facilities also.

FOOD

Eating out is one of the highlights of any tour. Therefore we do include a selection of typical highlight dinners so you can experience some truly local and seasonal cuisine. Otherwise you are free to choose which type of restaurant to eat in, in order to give you flexibility in the type of cuisine you prefer. During the trip you can make your own arrangements with the advice/recommendations from our Tour Leader. You can eat as a group, with friends or with the locals. Since it's all about you, you can cater for your own tastes and around your budget.

WEATHER

This tour covers 2 main climatic zones; the lowland cities and alpine valleys which may have the odd snowfall during our time there. As it is early summer, the days can provide you with a challenge when deciding what to wear. Layers are the best way to go and will ensure you can be warm, dry and comfortable no matter what the elements have in store for you.

INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS AT BEGINNING OR END OF A TOUR

Please note that your joining/departure city will have interesting sights to see so if you have the time it is nice to allow a day or two extra in these cities and this will also allow you time to relax before your tour begins. For our New Zealand clients we offer airfares and stopover options, so please enquire.

EMERGENCY CONTACT

Should you need to contact S.E.T during an emergency situation, Silvana's mobile is +64 21 643 652. Email sil@southernexposuretours.co.nz A list of hotel contact numbers and itinerary will be given to all tour participants. Emergency email for Nick White co-director of SET is nick@southernexposuretours.co.nz Phone within NZ is 0800 874 748 or if phoning from outside NZ +64 3 5281330 These numbers are for Andrea Livingston at Motueka WildSide Travel who has a list of tour participants emergency and hotel contact numbers.

The information supplied in this dossier is subject to change. It is an indication only and cannot be viewed as a contractual obligation on the part of the company. For the most up to date and current dossier, visit www.southernexposuretours.co.nz