

Guided Via Claudia Bike Tour

Duration: 8 Days/7 Nights

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hiking and cycling in italy

Germany to Austria and Italy on Bike Paths

The Via Claudia Augusta is an ancient road built by a Roman Emperor to connect Rome with the northern German territories. Construction began in 15 BC and was completed in 60 years. The Via Claudia winds through the gentle valleys of Bavaria, crosses Alpine passes in Austria, and enters the wealthy German enclaves of Italy. Today the Germans, Austrians and Italians have created 700 kilometers (440 miles) of bike paths, both paved and unpaved. On this tour you cycle almost exclusively on bike paths. You roll through the dramatic Bavarian countryside passing the fairy tale Neuschwanstein Castle which inspired Walt Disney to create his Magic Kingdom. You stay in small villages in Alpine valleys. You ride past mountain lakes and streams. The tour ends at a spa town in Northern Italy. Come and experience this delightful mix of German and Mediterranean culture.

Route Rating

Moderate: 20-35 miles (32-57 km) per day cycling over hilly terrain.

Meet / Finish

Augsburg, Germany /
Merano, Italy

Highlights

- Thermal spa in Merano
- Cycling almost exclusively on bike paths
- Spectacular Alpine scenery (Note: We shuttle over the two mountain passes)
- German, Austrian, and Italian cuisine



Day 1 Augsburg, Germany

We rendezvous at our hotel in Augsburg, Germany (30 minutes by train from Munich). Augsburg dates back to the Roman Empire. In 15 BC a son of Emperor Augustus set up a military camp on the banks of the Lech River. The town became known as Augusta, which is what Italians call the city to this day. Augsburg's fashionable Maximilianstrasse lies on the Via Claudia Augusta, where the town's former wealth is still visible in its ornate architecture. This ancient Roman road is now the town's main shopping street and has two monumental and elaborate fountains. Our hotel is in the lively historic center. The center is full of piazzas, fountains, shops and restaurants. We have an introductory aperitivo before going to dinner in an authentic German restaurant located in the historic vaults of the city's old town hall.

Day 2 Landsberg am Lech, Germany

Augsburg to Landsberg am Lech

20 miles (46 km)

591 ft (262 mt) climb, 262 ft (80 mt) descent

We cycle south following the Lech river. The riding is completely on bike paths and the elevation gain is slight, just 591 ft (262 mt). Riding south you can see the majestic Austrian Alps marking the border between Germany and Austria. Our destination is Landsberg am Lech, a fortified medieval village on a broad alpine river. The town looks much like it did 850 years ago, with 500 historic buildings surrounded by fortress-like walls dating back to the 15th century. A commanding Gothic gateway still stands sentry to the old city. Our hotel sits on the whimsical main square where you will find an 18th century fountain surrounded by bustling restaurants and cafes.

Hotel

City Hotel Ost am Kö
Augsburg, Germany
(1 night)

The City Hotel Ost am Kö is located on a square at the edge of the historic center. This hotel features a sauna and relaxation area. The train Station is just 500 metres away.
www.ostamkoe.de/en

Hotel

Arthotel ANA Goggl
Landsberg Am Lech,
Germany (1 night)

The hotel is located in a historic building on the town's main piazza just steps away from all the sites.

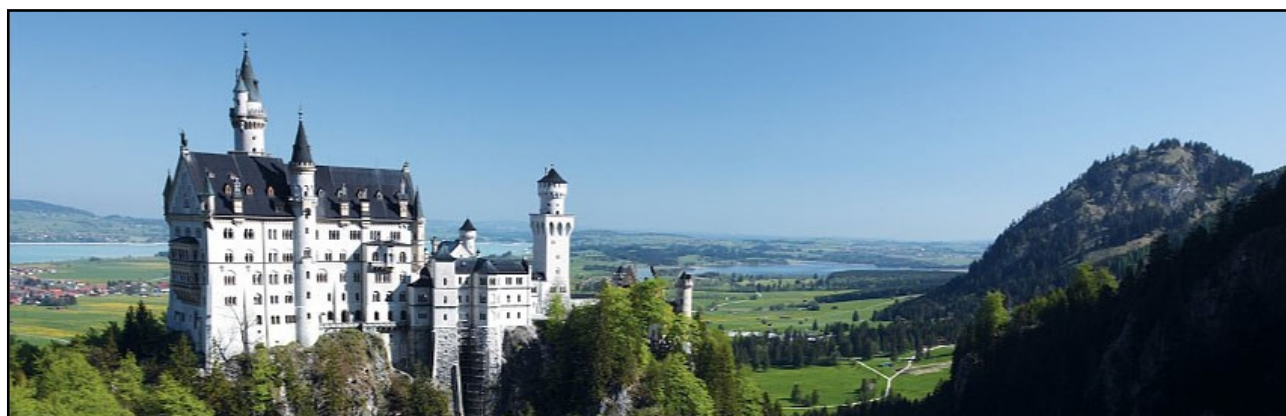
www.ana-hotels.com/goggl-landsberg

The Ride

Day 2, 20 miles (46 km)

A bike path connects Augsburg and Landsberg. The path parallels the Lech river and climbs 262 ft (80 mt).

Neuschwanstein Castle



Day 3 Schongau, Germany

Landsberg am Lech to Schongau

20 miles (32 km)

1,148 ft (350 mt) climb, 755 ft (230 mt) descent

We continue riding south following the Lech River. We cycle through open farmland and small villages. Our ride ends in Schongau, a town bursting with medieval charm. This enchanting town, surrounded by well-preserved walls, is a living example of medieval architecture and culture. With its picturesque half-timbered buildings, cobblestone streets, and breathtaking Alpine views, Schongau offers a perfect combination of history, natural beauty, and tranquillity. Our hotel is in the historic center near the main church.



Hotel

Hotel Blaue Traube

Schongau, Germany

(1 night)

A small inn in the historic center, the Blaue Traube offers comfortable quiet rooms just steps from the main sites of Schongau.

www.blaue-traube-schongau.de/

The Ride

Day 3, 20 miles (32 km)

Today we are on a mix of bike paths and quiet country roads. We follow the Lech River south with sweeping views of the Bavarian Alps. The terrain is rolling with a couple of short steeper climbs.

Site of Interest

Schongau Town Center

Schongau has a perfectly preserved Medieval center surrounded by ancient walls.



Church Tower in Lake Resia

Day 4 Fussen, Germany

Schongau to Füssen

29 miles (46 km)

1,312 ft (400 mt) climb, 1,017 ft (310 mt) descent

The cycling just gets prettier and prettier as we approach the Austrian Alps. The riding is once again all on bike paths away from the main roads. The path rolls through cultivated fields, past lakes, and old timber barns. Our destination is Füssen, at the base of the Alps. Füssen is gorgeous, with a cluster of gabled houses sheltering on medieval lanes beneath a fine Gothic castle. The historic center is car free and bursting with cafes, shops, beerhouses, and restaurants. While in Füssen we visit the spectacular Neuschwanstein castle. This is a newer castle, built in the late 19th century, but it is one of the prettiest castles in Europe. It is the castle of your childhood imagination.



Site of Interest

Neuschwanstein Castle
Neuschwanstein Castle is a 19th Century rom-anesque revival castle on a rugged hill near Füssen, Germany. It is one of the most visited castles in Europe. The castle inspired Walt Disney to create the first Magic Kingdom.



Hotel

Hotel Sonne

Fussen, Germany
(1 night)

This 4-star hotel is super comfortable with a creative design touches and a superb buffet breakfast.
www.hotel-fuessen.de/en

The Ride

Day 3, 29 miles (46 km)

A ride of breathtaking beauty rolls through pastures and fields at the base of the Alps. More climbing today as you go up 1,312 ft (400 mt). The ride is completely on bike paths.



Day 5 Imst, Austria

Fussen to Imst

34 miles (55 km)

2,034 ft (620 mt) climb, 1,903 ft (580 mt) descent

Today we cross from Germany to Austria. We climb steadily following a river and pass a 13th century castle. We ride through a high alpine valley before a well-deserved picnic below the snow capped mountains. A 30-minute shuttle takes us over the Fernpass where we regroup for a fun downhill. Rolling downhill we enter the narrow Oberinn valley. A dirt bike path leads through woods and lush green meadows before arriving in Imst, a small town with a modern center. From Imst you can see gorgeous snow topped peaks.

Other Questions?

Toll free 1 888 421 2418

info@charnestours.com

Hotel

Eggerbräu City Hotel

Imst, Austria (1 night)

The Eggerbrau has been run by the same family for 4 generations. The hotel has been painstakingly renovated and features a sauna and steam room.

www.eggerbraeu.at/en/

The Ride

Day 4, 34 miles (55 km)

The Fernpass separates Germany and Austria. There is no bike path over the pass so we take a 30-minute shuttle. Today's ride is spectacular, with soaring mountains and white-water rivers.

Day 6 Glorenza, Italy

Imst to Glorenza

30 miles (49 km)

1,378 ft (420 mt) climb, 2,822 ft (860 mt) descent

After breakfast, a riverside bike path leads us to the Landeck train station near the base of the Reschen Pass. This pass separates Austria and Italy. We shuttle 50-minutes over the pass as there is no bike path. We have lunch in a high alpine village before continuing our ride. We cycle past a 12th Century castle, a ski area, and the abandoned custom's offices at the Austrian-Italian border. The bike path is stunning as it winds through Alpine fields bursting with wildflowers. A curvy and scenic descent takes us to the shores of the Reschensee reservoir. This man-made lake was built in 1950 and submerged three villages. The water is deep, but not deep enough to cover the 14th Century Graun church steeple, which rises majestically from the blue lake waters. Our ride ends as we pass through a stone gate and enter the fortified medieval town of Glorenza. This town is still encircled by its Renaissance walls, complete with fully preserved ramparts and picturesque gate towers. Our hotel is in a 500-year-old building that has been impeccably restored. The hotel has a rooftop spa. In addition to a steam room and sauna, there is a hot tub on a terrace with spectacular Alpine views.

Hotel

Belvenu Boutique Hotel

Glorenza, Italy (1 night)

The Belvenu Boutique hotel sits on the main piazza in the center of a castle called Glorenza.

The hotel has a rooftop spa with alpine views.

www.belvenu.com/en/

The Ride

Day 5, 30 miles (49 km)

Ride 20 km on a riverside bike path to our shuttle pick up. After a 50-minute shuttle a gentle climb leads to the Austrian/Italian border. Then a long spectacular, scenic, curvy descent to Glorenza.

Fussen, Germany



Day 7 Merano

Glorenza to Merano

35 miles (57 km)

328 ft (100 mt) climb, 2,297 ft (700 mt) descent

Today's ride is almost all downhill following the fast-flowing white water of the Passer River. The path zig zags as it follows narrow streets through historic hamlets. The gushing sound of water accompanies us as we roll downhill. Soon the path leads through sprawling apple orchards. Warm days and cold nights give these organic apples brilliant colors and a sweet taste. Red, yellow and gold apples add a splash of color against a backdrop of frosted peaks. Our final destination is Merano. The bike path leads us to the Trauttmansdorff Throne. This scenic terrace offers a perfect photo-op, with its stunning views over Merano and the surrounding area. The city spared no expense creating its bike paths. We pedal car free, into the historic center of town. Our hotel is right on the river, directly across from the famous Merano Thermal baths. At these baths you will find 25 indoor and outdoor pools. Merano was part of Austria before being ceded to Italy as part of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles. Here at the base of the Alps, German culture runs head on into Italian style. The people speak Italian with German accents, and the food is a delightful mix of Alpine and Mediterranean traditions.

Hotel

Hotel Aurora

Merano, Italy (1 night)

This perfectly located hotel has comfortable rooms, outdoor seating on the riverside promenade, and a close proximity to the town's spa.

www.hotel-aurora-meran.com/welcome

The Ride

Day 6, 38 miles (61 km)

An easy downhill leads to Merano. The bike path follows a fast flowing mountain river.

Merano, Italy



Day 8

Bike Tour End

Departure Day

Our bike tour ends in Merano. From Merano you can travel north to Germany or south into Italy. Frequent busses and trains are available. We will be happy to assist you with your travel plans. Sample travel times are listed below.

Merano to Milan: 4 hours (train)
Merano to Venice: 4 hours (train)
Merano to Munich: 5 hours (train or bus)

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