

Germany, Austria & Switzerland: Bavarian Alps & Lake Constance

Bike Vacation + Air Package

Shimmering lakes and soaring alpine peaks set the stage for a soul-stirring bike tour of Germany, Switzerland and Austria. Enjoys views of the fairytale castle of Neuschwanstein near Füssen. You'll cycle into charming Bavarian villages that hold historic treasures, passing wildflower meadows, dairy country, fragrant forests, and pristine waterfalls on an easy route from Füssen to Constance. Ride the invigorating downhill stretches of the scenic Bodensee-Königssee Bike Route, coasting into an intimate home-hosted lunch with ample generosity and warmth. Marvel at the baroque splendor of St. Gallen's Abbey. Farm-fresh cuisine – organic and freshly picked – fuels your days. Austrian wines from famed wineries and renowned beers from local brewers flavor your nights. And centrally located hotels place you at the heart of historic Old Towns and picturesque parklands.

Cultural Highlights

- Marvel at the three stunning crystalline lakes around Füssen – Forggensee, Alpsee and Schwansee
- Share a lunch at an inn in the Bavarian countryside
- Cycle to Lindau Island on Lake Constance via the Bodensee-Königssee Bike Route, a mostly downhill spin through magnificent alpine landscapes
- Enjoy a lunch of local delicacies on a Swiss organic apple farm
- Visit the magnificent St. Gallen's baroque cathedral and abbey library, a UNESCO World Heritage site

What to Expect

This tour offers easy terrain on bike paths and bike lanes, and on roads in the neighborhoods and countryside in the Bavarian Alps and surrounding Lake Constance. Longer optional rides and some rolling hills on a couple of days offer fun for more avid bikers. This tour is ideal for both beginning and experienced cyclists. Our VBT support vehicle is always available for those who would like assistance.

Average Daily Mileage: 15 - 35 miles

Average Cycling Time: 01:30 - 03:30

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

May 65°/46°, Jun 70°/52°, Jul 74°/55°, Aug 72°/54°, Sep 65°/49°, Oct 54°/42°

Average Rainfall (in.)

May 3.5, Jun 4.5, Jul 4.9, Aug 4.6, Sep 3.6, Oct 2.7

FLIGHT DAY: Depart from the United States or Canada

All you have to do is get to the airport. On our Air Packages, we'll take care of the rest, handling all the logistics, so you can travel with peace of mind. Spend your first night aloft and arrive refreshed for an unforgettable trip.

ARRIVAL DAY: Arrive in Munich

Start off your first day in Munich right by having a VBT representative greet you at the airport. A complimentary car service will whisk you to your hotel.

DAY 1: Füssen

After an included breakfast, meet your VBT representative and the rest of the group in the lobby of your Munich hotel at 11:30 a.m. for a prompt 12:00 p.m. departure by motorcoach. Your VBT representative will be holding a VBT sign and will be easy to recognize. From Munich, travel to Füssen (two hours, depending on traffic). Please plan to eat lunch before this journey. Please bring your cycling clothes (including your pedals or saddle if you use your own) in your day pack so you can change before beginning the warm-up ride.

Meet your VBT trip leaders at 2:00 p.m. at your hotel in Füssen for a bike fitting and safety review followed by your warm-up ride. Please note that check-in time is 4:00 p.m., and your room will not be ready. You will be able to leave your bags with the reception desk.

Your first ride in this magical realm leads you into a lovely countryside and to a pristine lake. Breathtaking alpine vistas and charming narrow farm roads provide an ideal preview of the stunning cycling ahead!

Later, gather with the group for a welcome cocktail reception and dinner at the hotel.

Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon Warm-up — 21 km (13 miles)

What to Expect:

Today's ride is a pleasant countryside loop from our hotel, mostly (90%) along bike paths. Cycle past meadows and forest, along some packed gravel to a picturesque lake with stunning alpine views. You cross a few wooden bridges and railroad tracks before a gradual climb. Your ride ends along small farming roads and a lightly trafficked secondary road.

Cumulative Distance Range: 21 km (13 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 2: Füssen / Cycle around Lake Forggensee / Neuschwanstein Castle

After breakfast, enjoy an invigorating spin through the scenic district of Eastern Allgäu. Marvel at views of the magnificent Neuschwanstein Castle, cycle around the shores of pristine Lake Forggensee, the largest in the Allgäu, and savor postcard-perfect views of the Bavarian Alps. Lunch is on your own today.

Our longer option follows the 2,000-year-old Via Claudia, or "Emperor's Road" from the days of trade between Venetian and alpine emissaries. It is pure pleasure to cycle between the many mountain villages of Bavaria, each more charming than the last, punctuated by onion-domed steeples rising against a backdrop of emerald-green mountain slopes. This is truly a working farm region that carries on traditions from generations past. Each September, a procession of 30,000 cattle return to the valley's farm stables from the high mountain pastures of the Allgäu Alps, where they have been feeding all summer on high-nutrition grass and herbs that grow at higher altitudes. Still, you will no doubt coast past dairy cows with their tell-tale bells around their necks. After so many miles of enchantment, you may wish to swim in the lake before returning to the hotel.

This afternoon, enjoy an optional bike ride to the nearby village of Hohenschwangau. From here, walk up to the hilltop Schloss Neuschwanstein for a 30-minute audio-tour (fee applies). Your trip leaders will facilitate with purchase of tickets this morning, subject to availability. This renowned fairytale castle was commissioned by Ludwig II of Bavaria, inspired by the sweeping operas of Richard Wagner. It was to be the king's retreat, but he died before its completion.

Dinner is on your own tonight.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning Füssen to Lake Forggensee — 34 km (21 miles) | Füssen to Lake Forggensee Plus — 58 km (36 miles)

Afternoon Füssen to Hohenschwangau to Füssen — 8 km (5 miles)

What to Expect:

You ride on bike paths throughout the day, circumnavigating Lake Forggensee and taking in fabulous views of Neuschwanstein Castle. The morning route is slightly undulating, passing meadows, smaller swan-dotted lakes, and tiny villages with onion-domed churches. After lunch, cross a hydro-electric dam and follow the Via Claudia. The short option follows the lakeside bike path back to Füssen. The long option offers some challenging climbing and rewarding panoramic alpine views and well-deserved descents.

Later this afternoon, you may do an optional ride from Füssen to Hohenschwangau to visit Neuschwanstein Castle on your own and then ride back to your hotel in Füssen.

Cumulative Distance Range: 34 – 66 km (21 – 41 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3: Travel to Röthenbach / Cycle the "Bodensee-Königssee Bike Route" from Heimenkirch to Lindau

After another delicious breakfast, you travel about an hour to Röthenbach, Germany. Upon arrival, enjoy a spin along the Bodensee-Königssee Bike Route, a mostly downhill ride to Lindau brimming with lush green pastures surrounded by mountain streams and breathtaking views of the Alps. You pause along the way for lunch at an inn in the Bavarian countryside.

Later, you follow the shores of Lake Constance, Europe's third largest freshwater lake. Its waters reflect heat, creating a Mediterranean-style climate conducive to growing Pinot Noir and white Müller-Thurgau grapes. Its shores are also renowned for the gardens that grace residential areas, lakeside parks, and the botanical island of Mainau. Upon arrival at this remarkable lake, you cycle to your 5-star Hotel Bayerischer Hof and its sister property, the 4-star Reutemann Seegarten, sit right on the waterfront in the heart of

Lindau Island, a charming medieval town with a picturesque harbor and Bavaria's only lighthouse. These hotels have been operated by the Stolze-Spaeth family for more than 150 years. Join your group for dinner at a local restaurant.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning Röthenbach to Lindau — 42 km (26 miles)

What to Expect:

Follow mostly bike paths today, traversing some softly undulating hills through pretty farm country, orchards, forests and typical Bavarian villages, as stunning views of the German, Swiss, and Austrian Alps unfold. After a home-hosted lunch, you have a short challenging climb before a flat and mostly downhill spin to Lindau.

Cumulative Distance Range: 42 km (26 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4: Bike into Bregenzerwald, Austria

After a hearty breakfast, shuttle 50 minutes to the start of a bike path in the alpine village of Schoppernaut, located on the upper reaches of the Bregenzerach River. It's a different world here at 2,500 feet (762 meters) in the Austrian Alps. A sophisticated country lifestyle is prevalent here in the mountains high above Lake Constance. During a day of mostly downhill spinning on a well-marked paved path, admire high mountain scenery, passing small family farms, meadows of wildflowers, forests, villages, waterfalls, wooden bridges, and a unique architectural blend of customary chalet styles and über-modern design. This region is known for its traditional crafts, including fine lace, woolen textiles, and especially finely wrought woodwork such as toys, shoes, carvings, and carpentry. Cows, sheep, and goats are also important to the local economy—which explains why today's inspirational route is called the "Cheese Road."

After lunch on your own, our longer option leaves Bregenzerwald and continues to Lindau, crossing into Bavarian Germany. Tonight's dinner is on your own in Lindau.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning Bregenz Forest to Egg – 31 km (19 miles) | Alberschwende to Lindau – 28 km (17 miles)

What to Expect:

Our morning ride follows a flat and slightly downhill paved bike path along a glacial river. After lunch on your own, the longer option begins with a 7-km (4.5-mile) shuttle ride to Alberschwende. Cycle a quiet paved mountain road with two short ascents and a breathtaking descent. Once you reach the valley, enjoy a flat and easy ride back to Lindau via Bregenz and the eastern shore of Lake Constance.

Cumulative Distance Range: 28 – 59 km (17 – 36 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5: Cycle to Friedrichshafen, Meersburg, and Constance

Begin today's ride along the lakeshore, passing the many impressive villas of Wasserburg and Nonnenhorn. Your route on this small peninsula affords lovely views of picturesque houses and a small castle before you continue on to Kressbronn and Langenargen.

Coast into Friedrichshafen, a city whose history is tightly linked to World War II. Its aviation industry and strategic location made it an important center for Nazi Germany. The city was heavily bombed and largely destroyed in April 1944 by 1,086 tons of bombs. Today's "modern" city, therefore, exudes a 1950s air in its architecture. A loftier side of Friedrichshafen's history can be found in its modern Zeppelin Museum, housing the world's largest aviation collection. The zeppelin airship was born here on July 2, 1900, the creation of Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin. Zeppelins took to the air once again in 1993. On a clear and quiet day, you're sure to see them drifting quietly through the sky. Perhaps you will pause here for a refreshment in one of its many cafés.

(If you'd like, you can book a Zeppelin flight by visiting www.zeppelinflug.de months in advance. Should you choose to organize a Zeppelin flight, you will be responsible for getting yourself from our Lindau hotel to the airport and then to our Constance hotel at the end of the day. This is best done by taxi, which can be organized through our Lindau hotel. You will miss today's bike ride.)

Cycle to Meersburg, a baroque fortress town on the lake and home to the longest inhabited castle in Germany. The fortress ruins are perched high on the cliffs above, a reminder of ancient ties with the Carolingian Empire. After lunch on your own in this charming town where flowers spill from window boxes, you ferry across the lake and continue cycling to your final destination in Constance. The hotel is

on our biking route along the Rhine River just outside the city center, ideally located for a perfect stroll into town later this evening. Explore the city and enjoy dinner on your own at one of the great local restaurants nearby.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning Lindau to Freidrichshafen — 25 km (16 miles) | Freidrichshafen to Meersburg — 29 km (18 miles)

Afternoon Meersburg to Konstanz ferry and ride — 6 km (3 miles)

What to Expect:

An early morning spin along a well-marked bike path leads you along the lakeshore through quiet villages, fruit orchards, and lovely harbors. Pause in Friedrichshafen, then ride another easy route to Meersburg. After a ferry across Lake Constance, ride a flat stretch to your hotel.

Cumulative Distance Range: 6 – 60 km (3 – 37 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6: Bike through Switzerland / St. Gallen

This morning, resume your bike tour of Switzerland, Germany, and Austria with a short train ride to St. Gallen, Switzerland, located near the point where Switzerland, Austria, and Liechtenstein meet. The city has been a major religious center since the seventh century. A guided tour of the Abbey of St. Gallen, a celebrated UNESCO World Heritage site, reveals the treasures of the baroque cathedral with its fantastic ceiling frescoes. For centuries, this was an Imperial Benedictine Abbey and a center of Western science, art, and high culture. The rococo Abbey Library, equally ornate, is the oldest in the country and one of the world's most significant monastic libraries. Later, stroll the traffic-free Old Town replete with brightly painted oriel windows, pretty boutiques and world-famous embroideries.

Back on your bicycle, enjoy a scenic spin to the charming Swiss village of Steinebrunn, where you stop for a traditional Swiss lunch at a local organic apple farm. Afterwards, continue your ride back to Constance, where you have more time to explore this beautiful city on your own. You might find this to be the prettiest, most cozy corner of Lake Constance, the perfect place to end your journey.

Tonight, we raise a glass and say "prost!" to a magnificent week during a festive farewell dinner.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning St. Gallen to Constance — 41 km (25 miles)

What to Expect:

After a 45-minute morning train ride on the famed Swiss Railway, enjoy time to explore St. Gallen and its abbey complex. Then our route follows gently rolling terrain through the heart of Switzerland's brown cow country.

Cumulative Distance Range: 41 km (25 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7: Constance

Remain another day in Constance to explore on your own. We highly recommend a visit to Mainau Island, nicknamed locally "Blumeninsel," or the flower island. This 111-acre, pedestrian-only private island – crisscrossed by inviting trails – is a lavish display of plants and manicured gardens, blossoming in tune with the seasons. A baroque castle with a church featuring notable artworks marks one end of the island. Tulips, orchids, and rhododendron burst in a riot of color in May, followed by 350,000 other late spring and summertime blooms, including potted plants and fuchsias. Dahlias and roses arrive in September. It's a feast for the eyes that will enchant even the most seasoned gardener.

You may also visit the falls of the Rhine River in Schaffhausen, Switzerland, accessible by boat or train from Constance. Embark a ferry from the harbor in Constance to Schaffhausen, then return later in the day by train. These are the largest falls by water volume in Europe. Thermal bath lovers might want to take the waters at the Bodensee Thermalbad in Constance. The infinity pool overlooks the lake and the hi-tech water features and jets work wonders for biking muscles. It's the perfect place to relax for an afternoon.

The alleys and squares of Constance's Old Town are lively and bustling. For a bird's-eye view, ascend to the top of the Münster church. For a few euros, you can walk up the stairs and look through the telescope across the lake to many of the destinations where you cycled this week. You're also sure to find myriad keepsakes in charming shops. If you'd like to take in some local culture and history, Constance boasts museums, galleries, and historic buildings. If you have not had enough cycling, you may rent cruiser bikes from a small bike shop across the street from your hotel. The shop owner can suggest routes to suit your

desire.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DEPARTURE DAY: Departure

After an included breakfast this morning, complimentary transportation to the Zurich airport will be provided (an approximately 50 to 60 minute drive, depending on traffic) for your departing flight.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Moma 1890 Boutique Hotel (Day: 1)

This design hotel in Munich is across a park from the Ostbahn, the metro stop that whisks you to the Marienplatz, Munich's main square, in just five minutes. Built in a historic building, the Moma 1890 hotel retained many of its Art Nouveau features. It rests on the beautiful and vibrant Orleansplatz, lined with cafés, restaurants, art studios, and shops. Each room is elegant and stylish, mixing a traditional sensibility with a modern touch to create a warm, welcoming feeling. Throughout, guests can access free WiFi. However, as the building is listed in the city as a cultural monument, it is not equipped with air conditioning.

Hotel Hirsch (Days: 1,2)

Set in a scenic countryside amidst alpine splendor, the 4-star Art Nouveau Hotel Hirsch has been run by the same family for four generations. Enjoy a unique blend of elegantly modern comfort and traditional Bavarian ambiance during your stay. Indulge in the hotel's fine dining in their classic restaurant. Enjoy a delightful meal in the traditional Bavarian pub or relax in the authentic setting of the beer garden. Each air-conditioned spacious room has been stylishly refurbished for your utmost comfort and includes free WiFi connections.

Bayerischer Hof (Days: 3,4)

The 5-star Hotel Bayerischer Hof and its sister property, the 4-star Reutemann Seegarten, are right on the waterfront and promenade of Lake Constance, in the heart of the historic city of Lindau. Operated by the Stolze-Spaeth family for more than 150 years, each offers generous amenities to make the close of each day truly rewarding. Stroll the lovely gardens, take a dip in the heated swimming pool, relax in the wellness center, or unwind with a drink on the lakefront terrace café and bar, with fresh breezes coming

off the lake. Rooms are non-smoking and spacious, with free WiFi connections. Most rooms are air conditioned.

Harbr Hotel (Days: 5,6)

Conveniently located in a regional park, Harbr. Hotel is known for its impeccable hospitality, superb service, and attention to detail. The nautical themed hotel is perfect for anyone who wishes to escape from the haste of everyday life, take a breather, and refuel. Stroll through the park, hire a Schindelhauer bike for free, rent a Schwalbe electric scooter for the day, or unwind with a drink or a nibble at Spelunke. The air-conditioned rooms are non-smoking and spacious, with free WiFi connections.

47 Grad (Day: 7)

The beautiful Hotel 47 Grad is located in a cosmopolitan neighborhood on the north side of the Rhine. The hotel looks out over the Rhine River as it flows out of Lake Constance and is located directly on VBT's bike path. The interior of this brand-new property has a decidedly modern atmosphere with an excellent breakfast spread. Just outside the hotel's doors, the bike-and-pedestrian path takes you over a small bridge and into the heart of the Old City.