

An Alpine Adventure *and* the Oberammergau Passion Play Experience



Relax over 3 nights in Grindelwald, in the heart of the Bernese Oberland

20 Exciting Days Zurich to Munich

Discover the breathtaking scenery of the French and Swiss Alps from the remarkable Aiguille du Midi, to the meadows of the Bernese Oberland, see Zermatt and the mighty Matterhorn and ride across the breathtaking Alps on the Glacier Express. Explore delightful Lake Garda, Innsbruck, and Bavaria's 'fairytale' castles. Experience the extraordinary Oberammergau Passion Play!

AVERAGE 126 KMS PER DAY

- Tour commences
- Overnight stays
- Included excursions

THE BERNESE OBERLAND

Days 5, 6 & 7

- Stay 3 nights in a superb spa hotel in Grindelwald
- Drive over the spectacular Forclaz Pass
- Enjoy a guided tour of Byron's Château de Chillon in Montreux
- Explore hilltop Gruyères, one of the great sights of Europe
- Relax in Grindelwald with a day at leisure to explore the spectacular Jungfrau Mountain region
- Visit lovely lakeside Luzern
- Wander the medieval cobbled streets of Bern

ZURICH

Day 1

- Stay 1 night in Zurich
- Meet and get to know your Tour Manager and fellow travellers over dinner

OBERAMMERGAU

Days 18 & 19

- Drive over the stunning Fern Pass into the Bavarian mountains, visit Ludwig's 'fairytale' Neuschwanstein Castle
- Relax in the ancient medieval town of Füssen and visit the most beautiful church in Europe, Wieskirche - the 'Church in the Meadows'
- Your 'grand finale' - stay 2 nights in selected 4 star accommodation and enjoy Category 1 'best in house' seating for the marvellous Oberammergau Passion Play

INNSBRUCK

Days 16 & 17

- Stay 2 nights in the cobbled streets of Innsbruck
- See the famous Golden Roof and visit the pretty town of Hall - the oldest in the Austrian Tyrol



THE FRENCH ALPS

Days 2, 3 & 4

- Stay 3 nights in Chamonix under the shadow of the Mont Blanc massif
- Explore the Swiss city of Geneva and see the Jet d'Eau fountain
- Experience two incredible mountain rides - a cable car to the top of the stunning Aiguille du Midi (3,842 metres high!) & the famous 'Little Red Train' up to Montenvers station
- Visit the exclusive, chic ski resort town of Megève
- Enjoy a guided tour of the delightful lakeside town of Annecy

ZERMATT

Days 8 & 9

- Stay 2 nights in the stunning village of Zermatt with views of the mighty Matterhorn
- Visit Lauterbrunnen, in the magnificent 'Valley of the Waterfalls'
- See the thundering Trummelbach Falls inside a mountainside
- Experience the spectacular scenery of 'Le Valais'
- Enjoy a day free to explore the chic mountain resort of Zermatt and surrounding areas

KLOSTERN

Days 10 & 11

- Stay 2 nights in a chalet style hotel in the mountain resort of Klosters
- Ride in panoramic carriages on the amazing Glacier Express, passing over chasms and through the mighty Alps
- Explore Chur, Switzerland's oldest village

LAKE GARDA

Days 12, 13, 14 & 15

- Stay 4 nights beside stunning Lake Garda
- Enjoy lunchtime in centuries old Bolzano
- Spend a day at leisure exploring the lakeside port and villages of Lake Garda
- Enjoy a guided tour of Romeo and Juliet's Verona
- Enjoy a morning visit to historical Salo
- Enjoy a wine tasting & lunch at the Redaelli de Zinis wine estate



Message from the Mo

Are the mountains calling you?

This 20 day Alpine Adventure is precisely that – a real Alpine Adventure! It is such a completely different experience to take a leisurely walk on well-worn trails through meadows bursting with spring alpine flowers, or to take an exciting mountain cable car ride to savour lunch on a restaurant terrace, set on a sunny plateau ringed with snow, with views stretching for literally hundreds of kilometres! To do this you need time – and with this unique Alpine Adventure that is exactly what you get!

I have an absolute love of the mountains. Every magical step, every curve and turn opens up a completely new vista, and the character changes all the time. That's why I designed this tour to really experience the complete diversity offered by the French and Swiss Alps. From standing above the clouds on the tip of the remarkable Aiguille du Midi, to being inside the Trummelbach mountain as the thundering waterfall roars down around you, shaking the ground you stand on. From delightful, lakeside Annecy and Château Chillon beside Montreux, to staying in a fantastic spa hotel in Grindelwald with views of the Eiger, or Zermatt beside the Matterhorn, and especially experiencing the incredible Glacier Express panoramic train ride that cuts through the glorious Alps.

And just when you think you have seen it all then up comes the delightful Austrian Tyrol and Bavarian Alps, and those gorgeous 'fairytale' palaces and churches in the meadows. Ahhh... the sheer pleasure of it all! Enjoy!



Take a cable car up the Aiguille du Midi

DAY 1 Zurich welcome

Your tour commences this evening in Zurich. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers Meals: D

Your Zurich Hotel – Swissotel or similar

Conveniently located just a five minute train ride from either the centre of Zurich or the Airport, this 4 star hotel features contemporary rooms that reflect an elegant & modern style, featuring panoramic views of Zurich and the Swiss Alps.



DAY 2 Geneva and Chamonix

We arrive in Geneva around lunch time. You will have time at leisure to explore Switzerland's second largest city and once home of the Red Cross. Make sure you take a walk along the beautiful foreshore of Lake Léman (Lake Geneva) to see the city's symbolic 140 metre high Jet d'Eau fountain which is set offshore in the lake. Crossing back into France we continue deep into the heart of the mighty French Alps and the Chamonix Valley in the Haute Savoie, to Chamonix, where we stay the next three nights. Set at an altitude of 1000 metres, and surrounded by a dozen world class ski resorts, Chamonix is the world capital of skiing and mountaineering. Meals: B, D

Your hotel in the French Alps – Le Refuge des Aiglons or similar

This 4 star hotel is only a short walk from the pedestrianised centre & offers magnificent mountain views.



DAY 3 Aiguille du Midi and the 'Sea of Ice'

Today we have included not one, but two incredible mountain rides. The first, arguably one of the world's greatest mountain rides, is by cable car up to the very tip of the Aiguille du Midi – the 'Needle of Midday'. At an altitude of 3842 metres (12,605ft) you are seemingly within reach of Mont Blanc and the views across the French, Italian and Swiss Alps are astounding. The second ride is on the famous 'Little Red Train' – a funicular railway that follows a scenic route through the forests of conifers up to Montanvers station. Soaring high above you is the spike of the Drus Mountain and the massive rock wall of the Grands Jorasse. Filling the valley below you is France's largest Glacier, the 'Mer du Glace' or 'Sea of Ice'. You can even take a cable car (subject to opening) down to explore the hand carved ice caves, beautifully illuminated deep inside this glacier*. The less adventurous can of course relax in Montanvers panoramic restaurant or enjoy an afternoon at leisure exploring the shops and boutiques of lovely Chamonix. Meals: B

**From the foot of the cable car you need to go down a large number of steps to access the ice caves entrance.*

DAY 4

Chic Megève and lakeside Annecy

First stop this morning will be in the exclusive, chic ski resort of Megève. Running from the delightful cobblestoned central square, the main pedestrian street is lined with medieval buildings, al fresco cafés and some hideously expensive designer boutiques. The rest of the day will be in the delightful French lakeside town of Annecy. A local guide will show us around the cobblestoned streets, half-timbered and beautifully painted houses that sit beside picturesque canals which are criss-crossed with stone bridges. With a back drop of mountains and the turquoise lake, the Vieille Ville (Old Town) is incredibly pretty. **Meals: B**

DAY 5

Château de Chillon, Montreux and Gruyères

Driving over the spectacular Forclaz Pass into Switzerland we reach Montreux. Our first stop will be to enjoy a guided tour through Château de Chillon. Made famous in Byron's poem 'The Prisoner of Chillon', this 13th century fortress juts out imposingly into Lake Geneva. The rest of the morning is at leisure on the grand lakeside promenade and foreshore of Montreux. In the afternoon we visit the fortified village of Gruyères, which rises out of the flat valley floor, perched on top of a steep rocky hill. The broad cobblestoned main street, flanked by centuries old houses, is an astounding time capsule and one of the great sights of Europe. Later we drive deep into the heart of the Bernese Oberland to Grindelwald where we stay the next three nights. Grindelwald is known the world over for its dramatic setting surrounded by massive snow covered peaks and meadows. The views of the north face of the Eiger are exceptional! The village is full of restaurants, cafés and shops. **Meals: B,D**

Your Grindelwald hotel – Sunstar Hotel or similar

This superb hotel is in a central location with unspoilt views of the north face of the Eiger. The atmosphere is charming and features traditional alpine design with large, comfortable rooms and modern amenities.



DAY 6

'My Time' in the Bernese Oberland

We have left this day entirely free for you to enjoy the spectacular Swiss scenery. Perhaps go for a walk in the hills or catch a train to explore nearby Interlaken. Alternatively, take the cog train which tunnels up inside the mountain to the snowbound Jungfrauoch. At 3454 metres (11,333 feet) high there is a large restaurant complex and the views are breathtaking. Here you will also find an ice cave, curling rink with ice bar and a fascinating mountain museum. **Meals: B**

DAY 7

Lakeside Luzern and medieval Bern

Our morning will be spent at leisure exploring the lovely lakeside town of Luzern with its quaint old town and the famous Chapel and Mill wooden bridges which cross the river. In the afternoon we set off to explore the medieval cobblestoned streets of Bern. A UNESCO World Heritage Listed landmark, this capital city is set on a spectacular bend above the River Aare, and boasts kilometres of sheltered arcaded shopping ways, an intriguing clock tower and the famous 'Bärengraben' bear pits. **Meals: B**

DAY 8

Lauterbrunnen, Trummelbach Falls and Zermatt

Our first stop of the day will be in the nearby delightful village of Lauterbrunnen. Set spectacularly with 304 metres (1,000 feet) sheer cliffs rising either side, this valley is often called the 'Valley of the Waterfalls' – these are the cliffs that James Bond keeps leaping off when he is being chased by the baddies. Here we visit the unusual Trummelbach Falls. Taking a funicular up inside the cliff face we then walk through the mountain caverns that are still being carved by these 'living waterfalls' which thunder right beside us, down through the inside of the mountain. An extraordinary sight and sensation! Later we drive through spectacular scenery into 'Le Valais' and Taesch where we catch a cog railway train up to the world-famous alpine resort of Zermatt. Set at an altitude of 1620 metres (5,315 feet), the village is surrounded by a dozen huge peaks and dominating all is the mighty Matterhorn. Petrol-driven vehicles are banned from the village and as such the peace and quiet enhances the beauty of the wooden chalets and small winding village streets. Stunning! **Meals: B,D**

Your Zermatt hotel – Hotel National or similar

This distinctly first class hotel is superbly located in the heart of the stunning village of Zermatt.



continued



Mountains are meant to be conquered!

Fortunately, nowadays we can so easily capture that exhilarating mountain experience without any effort at all. Like our ride up the astounding Aiguille du Midi. To give you an idea of what a feat of engineering this is, the steel cable or hawser on just the second cable car stage is an unbelievable, continuous 7 kms long! On top, at an altitude of 3,842 metres (12,605ft), you will find observation platforms, a café, mountaineering and alpine exhibition, plus a glass bottom observation booth. Stand on that if you dare, and you will 'feel' the whole world dropping away beneath your feet! Far below you can see where the massive 'Mer du Glace' or 'Sea of Ice' is born and how it snakes its way down the valley. And 'down there' is where we go on our afternoon adventure on the Little Red Train. The Glacier moves 70 metres a year so each season they hop back inside the glacier and re-carve the cave labyrinth, lining it with blue carpets, beautiful lighting shows and adding ice sculptures and chairs. A fantastic experience! See Day 3.



Spend time in the pretty town of Annecy

"This was a magic trip... beyond expectations! Everything was just perfect, the weather, tour manager and the group we travelled with. I saw so much and loved every second of it. Thank you Albatross!"

Helen



The mighty Trummelbach Falls

Lauterbrunnen village is in a spectacular setting but the highlight of the day is actually a visit where sunlight never penetrates. Inside the sheer mountain walls, like a scene from 'The Lord of the Rings', a massive waterfall is channeled by nature to pummel down through the core of the mountain, vigorously carving and expanding the rock chambers. On carefully constructed walkways (yes, safe) you will be amongst it, right by it, feeling the sheer power and ferocity as the vibration and energy engulfs you. An extraordinary sight, feeling and sensation! [See Day 8.](#)

DAY 9 'My Time' in Zermatt

Today has been left free for you to explore the town, walk on the well sign posted hiking trails to mountain restaurants and waterfalls, and relax in the crisp clean air. Alternatively pamper yourself in the hotel's excellent indoor pool, spa and wellness centre. Looking for another classic mountain ride? The Sunnegga Paradise cable car is situated right beside the hotel, or maybe jump on the nearby funicular train which takes you up to the Gornergrat station and terraced restaurant with its massive views across to the Matterhorn. Alternatively if you want to spend a day skiing, maybe catch a cable car ride up the Kleine (little) Matterhorn, where there are twenty-five kilometres of pistes and eight ski lifts which remain open all summer long! **Meals: B**

DAY 10 Glacier Express, Chur & Klosters

This morning we board the famous Glacier Express train which takes us along the 'Valais' through Switzerland's finest mountain scenery. Ranked as one of the world's top train trips, you will be seated in panoramic carriages as we cross some of the 291 bridges, the 2033 metre Oberalp Pass and go through 91 tunnels. Early afternoon we arrive and have time to explore Switzerland's oldest city, Chur. The traffic free zone in the old town has a wonderful atmosphere with its boutiques, shops, bars and restaurants. Later we continue to Klosters where we stay two nights. **Meals B,D**

Your Klosters hotel – Hotel Alpina or similar

Set in the centre of town, this family run, chalet style hotel offers traditional Alpine ambience.



DAY 11 'My Time' in Klosters

Your day is free to relax and explore Klosters. **Meals: B**

DAY 12 Bolzano and lakeside Bardolino

Today we go to Italy! Passing through the Alps, we enjoy lunchtime in the centuries old town of Bolzano. Influenced by both Tyrolean and Italian cultures, you will find intricately carved gables, painted timber façades and an elegant arcaded main street. Later we continue to the charming lakeside town of Bardolino, where we stay the next four nights. Dinner tonight will be in our hotel restaurant. **Meals: B,D**



Your Lake Garda Hotel – Hotel Caesius Therae & Spa Resort, Bardolino or similar

Situated on the shores of Lake Garda this 4 star resort & spa hotel offers spacious and comfortable air conditioned rooms.

DAY 13 'My Time' in Lake Garda

We have left today entirely free. Do as little or as much as you want. Lake Garda is Italy's largest and perhaps most beautiful lake, and its shores are lined with quaint villages and colourful ports. The shopping is excellent and the cafés, lakeshore restaurants and shady gardens, all have that distinctly Mediterranean feel. Perhaps catch a ferry across the lake and wander around Gardone Riviera with its botanical gardens on the hill, or explore the characterful 'picture postcard' ports of Lazise or Sirmione. **Meals: B**

DAY 14 Lakeside Salo and Redaelli de Zinis

This morning we visit the delightful lakeside town of Salo to explore its historical centre filled with lanes and little squares with noble houses, elegant shops and the longest promenade on Lake Garda. Later we continue to Redaelli de Zinis in Calvagese della Riviera. This is a famous local winery and restaurant. Here we enjoy a wine tasting and sample some of the locally sourced produce before lunch. The rest of the day is at leisure to explore lakeside Bardolino. **Meals: B,L**

DAY 15 Verona and the lakeside town of Garda

Skirting the lake we will visit Romeo and Juliet's Verona. A local guide will bring to life this beautiful city, where these tragic lovers avowed a love that spanned the centuries. After free time to explore and find a restaurant for lunch, we return to glorious Lake Garda and enjoy an afternoon visit to the delightful lakeside town of Garda, after which the lake is named.

Meals: B,D

DAY 16 The Brenner Pass, Europa Bridge and Innsbruck

Driving north over the Brenner Pass into Austria we cross the 190 metre high Europa Bridge and descend into the Inn valley and Innsbruck, where we will stay the next 2 nights. Mid-afternoon your Tour Manager will take you on a brief walking tour of the old city centre, with its cobblestoned streets, stone archways and the renowned Golden Roof. **Meals: B,D**

**Your Innsbruck hotel –
Hotel Grauer Bar or similar**
This 4 star hotel is in a superb location right in the heart of the historical city centre.



Enjoy 'My Time' in Zermatt



See the ornately painted murals in Oberammergau

DAY 17

The pretty town of Hall and Innsbruck 'My Time'

This morning we board our coach and drive along the dramatic Inn Valley to the 800 year old town of Hall. Surrounded by the rolling Tyrolean hills, Hall is often considered the most beautiful town in the Tyrol. Your afternoon will be at leisure in Innsbruck's wonderful Altstadt (old town) where you will have 'My Time' to explore the sights such as the Hofburg Imperial Palace, and shop in the covered arcades. **Meals: B**

DAY 18

Neuschwanstein 'Fairytale' Castle, Füssen and the 'Church in the Meadows'

We start the day with a drive over the stunning Fern Pass to Hohenschwangau into Bavaria. On one hill overlooking the little village you have the neo-gothic castle of Hohenschwangau and on the other side above the village is a wooded mountain spur and Neuschwanstein – the fairytale castle of 'mad' King Ludwig. We take a leisurely stroll up the wooded road to enjoy a guided tour through Neuschwanstein Castle's state rooms, king's apartments, halls and throne room; all reminiscent of a Wagner operatic saga. Lunchtime will be spent exploring the ancient town of Füssen. In the afternoon we will drive through Bavarian farmlands and forests to make a stop in arguably the most beautiful church in Europe, Wieskirche – the 'Church in the Meadows'. Surrounded by green fields, the interior of this World Heritage Listed church is an astounding Rococo creation. Later we continue to your 4 star hotel, where we stay the next 2 nights, in preparation for an incredible 'Oberammergau Passion Play experience'. **Meals: B,D**

Your hotel in the Oberammergau area

As an appointed Tour Operator for the 2020 Oberammergau Passion Play, and handling such a large number of Oberammergau packages, we have been fortunate to be allocated stays in a variety of excellent, 4 star hotels in Oberammergau itself, as well as in the nearby towns of Murnau and Garmisch-Partenkirchen.



Please note: The guided tour through Neuschwanstein Castle incorporates climbing up and down a number of staircases and, as there are no elevators, the inside visit to the castle this morning may not be suitable for those with walking difficulties or limitations.

DAY 19

An incredible Oberammergau Passion Play Experience

An easy start to the day before we enjoy time exploring the colourful village of Oberammergau with its beautiful houses and buildings adorned with "Lüftlmalerei" – ornately painted murals depicting assorted religious scenes. Throughout the afternoon and evening we enjoy the huge spectacle that is the Passion Play from our Category 1 seating. The famous Passion Play has been performed every ten years since 1633, a time when the Thirty Year's War and Bubonic Plague were ravaging Europe causing so much suffering and death. With a backdrop of Kofel Peak and surrounded by the Ammergau Mountains, the massive open-air stage erupts with colour, music, song and up to 2,000 local inhabitants enacting the story of the Passion of Christ. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 20

To Munich

This morning we drive to nearby Munich where your tour ends on arrival. Drop off points will be in the city centre and Munich airport. We recommend you book flights or trains that depart Munich after 2pm. **Meals: B**



Enjoy the incredible Passion Play
Oberammergau Passion Play 2020

2020 Dates & Prices

Note: 2020 prices subject to final confirmation in August 2019.
See page 9.

20 days from \$10,754

per person twin share

Single supplement \$1,821

Land only prices in AU dollars

Starts Zurich	Ends Munich	Per person twin share
24 May	12 Jun	\$10,754
7 Jun	26 Jun	\$10,754
21 Jun	10 Jul	\$11,187
26 Jul	14 Aug	\$11,187
21 Aug	9 Sep	\$11,187
6 Sep	25 Sep	\$11,187
13 Sep	2 Oct	\$11,187

Book early and SAVE!
See page 9.

**Over \$2,200
value of extras
already included**

- Category 1 seating for the Oberammergau Passion Play
- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 19 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- 30 Meals – including breakfast daily (B), Lake Garda wine estate lunch (L) and 10 dinners (D)
- Welcome drink in Zurich
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences – Lake Garda wine tasting, Cable car excursion to Aiguille du Midi, Glacier Express train, fairytale castle visit
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- WiFi on most coaches and at hotels

No additional costs!