

Self-Guided E5 Alpine Trek: Oberstdorf to Merano

Trip Code: SGE5

Version: Self-Guided E5 Alpine Trek: Oberstdorf to Merano



WALK & TREK



SELF-GUIDED



MODERATE



HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience the most beautiful stages of the E5 long distance trail
- Walk in three countries in just one week: Germany, Austria & Italy
- Cross the highest and longest foot suspension bridge in Austria

- Admire the diverse flora and fauna in ever-changing mountain environments

AT A GLANCE

- Self-Guided
- 6 days trekking
- Max altitude 2996m
- Suitable for 2+ travellers
- Thursday and Sunday departures
- Join at Oberstdorf / End in Merano

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- 7 Breakfasts
- 7 nights Hotel

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

Spanning Western Europe from the Atlantic Coast to the Adriatic Sea, the full length of the epic E5 long-distance hiking trail begins at Pointe du Raz in France and ends in Venice; along the way crossing the magnificent Alps of Switzerland, Germany, Austria and Italy. On this one week self-guided holiday, you will hike the most spectacular (and indeed the most challenging) section of this classic route through three countries: starting in Oberstdorf in the southernmost tip of Germany, you will traverse majestic mountain ranges across Austria, and hike over the Tyrolean Alps to reach Merano in Italy.

This is a route that will immerse you into breath taking and changeable landscapes of dramatic valleys, high passes, roaring waterfalls and idyllic pastures. Surrounded by jagged peaks and snow-capped summits, you will truly feel at the heart of the Alpine landscape. Over the week you will be embraced by warm Alpine hospitality in family-run 3* & 4* hotels, and with daily luggage transfers taken care of, you can undertake this fantastic long-distance trek carrying just your day pack, and enjoy the trans-Alpine journey at your own pace.

Is this holiday for you?

This classic Alpine trekking holiday is ideal for active and experienced hikers who are looking for their next long-distance challenge on foot. This is a sustained trek in an Alpine environment, covering an average of 14km each day and with up to 1490m ascent/descent in a day. You will be hiking for around 6 hours each day on average. You should have a high level of fitness, surefootedness and a good head for heights. Experience of hiking in mountainous terrain is a must for this trip. The route is well-signposted but a good knowledge of map reading would stand you in good stead, particularly in changeable conditions. Occasionally in the early season you may come across patches of late snow which will need careful navigation.

Itinerary

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DAY 1

Arrive at Oberstdorf in the Bavarian Alps.

Arrive at your welcoming hotel in Oberstdorf, in the Allgau region of the Bavarian Alps. Positioned at the foot of the Nebelhorn (2224m), this resort town is popular year round with outdoor enthusiasts, and little surprise too as the area boasts an extensive network of summer hiking trails and winter skiing opportunities. Depending on your time of arrival, enjoy a walk around the characterful village and its car free centre to stretch your legs and drink in the fresh Alpine air.

OBERSTDORF FESTIVALS: Over the summer months, Oberstdorf hosts a number of festivals bringing an exciting buzz to the town. The Oberstdorf Photo Summit takes place in June; Culture in the Park in July; the Oberstdorf Summer of Music over July and August; and the Village Festival in August.



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 2

Cross the Mädelejoch pass (1977m) and tackle the longest suspension bridge in Austria on your way to the Lechtal valley.

Fuelled up with a hearty breakfast and full of excitement this morning, you will strike out on the first stage of your E5 trek. A short bus journey takes you the start point of the trail, from where you make your way up the prettily wooded valley of the Trettach river - a good warm up for the legs before you start your committing ascent.

From the tiny stone-built chapel of Maria am Knie, the impressive trail climbs through the Sperrbachtobel ravine to reach the Kemptner Hütte (1846m), a route that calls for surefootedness and a good head for heights. The way is steep and rocky, and sometimes rather wet - difficult or slightly more exposed areas are fitted with steel safety cables to aid your ascent.

Emerging from the head of the gorge and on reaching the welcoming mountain hut, you can take a refreshment break here in the knowledge that you only have a further short climb to tackle to reach the high point of the day, the Mädelejoch pass at 1977m, also the German-Austrian border. Entering your second country of the week, sumptuous views accompany you on your descent into the Lechtal valley. The trail will take you across the spectacular suspension bridge of Holzgau - the longest and highest pedestrian suspension bridge in Austria at 200m in length and more than 100m above the valley floor - a truly memorable Alpine experience! Reaching the valley floor, make your way to your hotel where you

can settle in for a good night's rest.

Meals: **B**

 Accommodation Hotel	 Ascent 990M	 Descent 900M	 Time 6 hours	 Distance 14KM
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DAY 3

Walk through idyllic alpine pastures to reach Landeck.

Today's hike takes you off the beaten track and deep into the dairy pastures of the Lechtal Alps, with the gentle ringing of cowbells providing a musical backdrop to your day. From your hotel, a transfer by public bus takes you to the trailhead. The path undulates through wooded glades and peaceful meadows abundant with wild alpine flowers. Leaving the valley floor, you start your steady ascent to reach the high point of the day at Leutkircher Hütte (2251m), positioned in the wide saddle between the imposing peaks of Hirschpleiskopf (2549m) and Weißschrofenspitze (2752m). From this vantage point, you gain a stunning vista over the rugged granite peaks of the surrounding ranges, and of the Arlberg valley below where you are headed. The trail then descends past the Putzenalpe hut to reach the Tyrolean town of St Jakob am Arlberg, where you can catch a local bus for the scenic journey through the valley to reach your hotel in Landeck, at the confluence of the Inn and Sanna rivers.

Meals: **B**

 Accommodation Hotel	 Ascent 900M	 Descent 1100M	 Time 6 hours	 Distance 14KM
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DAY 4

A stunning ridge hike from Venet to Wenns.

From Landeck, take the cable car to reach Venet (2212m). With most of the ascent taken care of, you can enjoy a stunning hike along the ridge with a fantastic 360 degree panorama of snow-capped mountains and jagged peaks. A steady climb takes you to the summits of Glanderspitze (2512m) and Piller (2480m); from here you might be able to make out the hut of Galflun Alm on your descent path. After a brief rest to savour the superb mountain views, drop down from the ridge and begin your descent, making your way through picture-postcard pretty meadows and forested trails. Soon enough you reach Wenns, where you might like to enjoy a refreshing beer before taking the bus to your accommodation further down the Pitztal valley.

Meals: **B**

 Accommodation Hotel	 Ascent 350M	 Descent 1490M	 Time 5 hours	 Distance 11KM
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DAY 5

Trek over the Pitztaler Jöchel (2996m) to reach the pretty resort town of Sölden.

After breakfast, hop on a public bus to reach the trailhead. A gradual ascent takes you up the picturesque valley and past the thundering Pitze waterfall, becoming steeper to reach the Braunschweiger mountain hut. Here you might like to have a refreshment break ahead of hiking to the highest point of the trip: the rocky pass of Pitztaler Jöchel at 2996m.

Achieving the crux of your trek, take a moment here to catch your breath and drink in the awesome Alpine panorama. Your descent takes you past glacial lakes and the impressive slopes carved by the Rettenbach glacier. From the Gaislachkogel middle station, you can make your way either on foot to the resort town of Sölden, or end your hike here and take the bus or cable car into the valley and your home for the night.

Meals: **B**

 Accommodation Hotel	 Ascent 1250M	 Descent 950M	 Time 6 hours	 Distance 13KM
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DAY 6

Hike into Italy over the Timmelsjoch pass (2474m) via an old smugglers' trail.

This is the day you will cross the border into Italy and your third country of the week.

A short bus journey from Sölden takes you to the start point of your hike, where you will take the old smugglers' trail via the Timmelsjoch pass (2474m) that crosses from Ötztal in Austria into Passeier in Italy. There is evidence to show that this ancient path had been in use as far back as 6300BC and served as a trade route over the centuries. Along the way you will pass the distinctive cube-shaped Smugglers landmark and the Timmelsjoch Pass Museum, both giving you an insight into the history of the High Alpine Road and the incredible endeavours of the pioneering Ötztaler Kraxenträger (basket bearers).

From the pass, you descend into Italy's South Tyrol surrounded by magnificent Alpine scenery of flower meadows and towering rock faces. The gradient eases off by the time you reach Moos (Moso) in the Passeier valley, from where it's a gentle walk alongside the Passer river (Passirio in Italian) to your welcoming hotel in San Leonardo.

Meals: **B**

 Accommodation Hotel	 Ascent 1000M	 Descent 1000M	 Time 5-6 hours	 Distance 15KM
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DAY 7

Take the panoramic high path from Riffspitz to Hirzer and descend to Merano.

Today you will follow in the footsteps of freedom fighter Andreas Hofer, born in San Leonardo in Passiria, who was a key figure in the Tyrolean Rebellion of 1809 when South Tyroleans rose against Bavarian rule. When the battle at Mt Isel was lost, Hofer fled to the Pfandler hut where he hid in the mountains before he was captured by French troops and subsequently executed.

Setting off on foot from your hotel in the valley, you walk along forested trails to ascend the flank of the Riffspitz and past the Pfandler hut, gaining height to reach a breath taking trail hugging the mountain range at around an altitude of 2000m. You can enjoy the wonderful far-reaching views as the high path undulates above the treeline to eventually reach the Hirzer hut (1983m). You might like to enjoy a well-earned refreshment break here to savour your last moment high in the mountains, before the short hop to the cable car station to descend to Saltaus (Saltusio) in the valley. Once in the valley, make your way to your hotel in Merano by public bus; or if you prefer you can also walk the final section along the picturesque Passirio valley, passing lush vineyards and charming villages on your way to Merano.

Settling in to your hotel, you can enjoy a celebratory meal at a restaurant of your choice this evening, and reflect on your achievements and highlights over the last week.

Meals: **B**

 Accommodation Hotel	 Ascent 1490M	 Descent 250M	 Time 6 hours	 Distance 14KM
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DAY 8

Departure day.

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before checking out of your accommodation and making your onward journey. If you would like to enjoy this magnificent region a little longer, we would be happy to assist with arranging additional nights' accommodation for you. You could even tag on another Italian adventure to your week, such as [Self-Guided Walking in Italy: Wine & Alpine Pastures](#), or [Self-Guided Cycling from Bolzano to Venice](#). Just speak with one of our sales team for further details.

Meals: **B**

Holiday Information

What's Included

- All accommodation as described
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Self-guided information pack containing your map and route notes
- Luggage transfers
- One original Lechweg cheese per person from the Sojer organic dairy farm in Steeg
- Cable car ascent to Venet (Day 4)
- Cable car descent from Hirzer (Day 7)

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Travel to Oberstdorf
- Travel from Merano
- Visas (if applicable)
- Local transfers by public transport (allow approx. €15 per person)
- Tourist Taxes may apply and are usually under 5 Euros per person per night
- Some meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Personal equipment
- Any additional activities/excursions indicated as optional

Your Self-Guided Pack & Route Notes

Each self-guided holiday comes with comprehensive route notes and a map or pocket guidebook of the area you are exploring. The route notes contain information about the places you will visit, about the local transport you might need, along with the detailed route notes for your daily walks or cycle rides. We even include some tips for the best places to stop for lunch.

You can expect to receive your Self-Guided Pack containing your route notes, a map or guidebook and all your relevant documents no later than 3 weeks before your holiday start date. We will send your documents using signed for courier so that you can track your package and know that they are safely on their way to you. For bookings of more than 4 people we will send an additional Self-Guided Pack. If you do not need this additional pack please inform our sales team. Your pack will be sent to the lead booker so please remind them to pack it before you set off.

Should your self-guided trip be part of a longer adventure requiring you to leave home more than three weeks before your holiday start date, please do inform our sales team so that we can make alternative delivery arrangements.

Self-Guided Families

Our Self-Guided Holidays are perfect for your next family holiday and are suitable for children of all ages.

Our partner hotels and accommodations are able to provide cots for young children, and some offer family rooms. We can also arrange hire of children's bikes and tag along bikes for our self-guided cycling trips and with trips such as Lake Constance and the Danube offering routes on designated cycle paths you can rest assured in keeping your family safe.

As a parent we trust that you know your own child's capabilities, please read the itinerary details to ensure the distances covered each day are suitable for your family. If this is a first time walking holiday for your family, a centre based trip is a fantastic option as it allows you to easily opt out of a days walking if a day of building sand castles, swimming in the pool or visiting museums is calling.

Please discuss this further with our sales team who will be happy to assist in picking the best trip for your family.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The trip starts in Oberstdorf, Germany and ends in Merano, Italy. All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. The nearest airport for the start of this trip is Munich Airport with many departures from regional UK airports.

From Munich Airport, it typically takes around 3 hours to reach Oberstdorf by train, with one change at Munich Central Station.

At the end of the trip, you can return from Merano to Munich Airport with Flixbus via Innsbruck (journey time approx. 7 hours 15 minutes).

Alternatively, the closest airports to Merano are Verona or Venice Marco Polo. If you are flying out of Verona, you can take the train from Merano via Bolzano to Verona Porto Nuova station, from where you can take the shuttle bus to the airport. To reach Venice Marco Polo, continue on the train to Venezia Mestre railway station from where you can pick up the shuttle bus to the airport.

If you wish to return to Oberstdorf from Merano, the train journey takes approximately 8 hours, with 3 changes. We can also arrange a shared transfer from a central location in Merano to Oberstdorf, please contact our sales team for a quote. A minimum of 2 passengers is required for this transfer.

Meal Plan

This trip is on a bed and breakfast basis to allow you the most flexibility during your holiday.

Your lunch supplies can be purchased before you set off on your hike, or it may also be possible to have lunch at one of the mountain huts along the way. You should carry some cash if you plan to take your lunch at mountain huts, as they are not able to take card payments at huts. Evening meals can be taken at your hotel restaurant or at a local restaurant in town.

Food & Water

Water is drinkable from the taps on this holiday. Please fill your personal bottles for your day in the morning. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

One of the great things about this trip is being able to delve into the subtle cultural influences in the local cuisine as you travel through the three countries of Germany, Austria and Italy. The abundance of Alpine pastures lends itself to dairy farming and cheese production - on this holiday we have even included a sample of the organic Lechweg cheese for you to enjoy. Utilising regional produce, you can expect the menu to contain plenty of meat and dairy, with hearty and filling fare involving tender roasted or braised meats served with dumplings, potatoes or noodles. There is also plenty of variety, from the German inspired delicacies of South Tyrol such as Speckknödel, Gröstl and Apfelstrudel, to typically Italian pasta dishes.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your diet with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Accommodation

On this holiday you will stay in carefully selected 3* & 4* hotels, each chosen to showcase the wonderful traditional Alpine hospitality of the three countries you will walk through in just one week. All hotels offer comfortable double or twin rooms, some with Austrian style twin beds (two beds within one bed frame and separate bedding), varied breakfast buffets to fuel you each morning, and WiFi connectivity for sharing those stunning holiday snaps. Nestled in picturesque valleys and surrounded by idyllic mountain landscapes, each family-run establishment makes for a lovely space for you to rest and relax at the end of each day. Many also offer pool or wellness facilities - just the ticket to soothe your muscles after a good day of trekking.

It is possible to arrange additional nights accommodation if you would like to extend your stay in Oberstdorf or Merano. Please speak to one of our sales team for further details.

Baggage Allowance

Your main luggage will be transferred between each of your hotels while you are out on your walk. We ask that you please ensure your luggage is under 20KG and that your luggage is ready for collection each morning. You will also need a daypack to carry your daily essentials such as waterproofs, etc with you.

General Information

Passport & Visas

Europe

Your passport must meet 2 requirements. It must be:

- less than 10 years old on the day you enter (check the 'date of issue')
- valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the 'expiry date')

For the latest details on visiting countries within the EU or the European Economic Area (EEA), please check the UK Government website

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

Health & Vaccinations

Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations.

GHIC / Medical cover

UK residents should carry a free Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). This entitles you to state provided medical treatment when you're visiting an EU country or Switzerland. This is not a substitute for medical travel insurance which is vital when travelling overseas.

Severe Allergies

Please inform our KE Sales and support team of any severe allergies you may have before travel. We will always do our best to help but we are unable to guarantee an allergy free environment on our KE trips. We advise that you always carry your own treatment for the allergy with you such as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' if required. We also recommend that you discuss this with your accommodation on arrival so that they can better assist you.

Currency

The currency for part or all of this holiday is the Euro.

Preparing for your Holiday

Getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. You should be aerobically fit and comfortable with walking 5-6 hours for consecutive days. Hill walking, with a good amount of ascent and descent, is the best training. Running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardio vascular fitness and stamina.

Climate

This trip is offered during the summer months, when you are most likely to experience good, stable weather with pleasant daytime temperatures between 11°C to 25°C on average. It can be somewhat cooler in the evenings. The weather is usually stable during the hiking season between July and September, but mountainous areas do generate their own weather systems and occasional rain and even stormy weather cannot be ruled out. You should be prepared for all eventualities!

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

Cicerone Guide: Across the Eastern Alps: The E5 - Gillian Price

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Please note that a paper copy of your travel insurance is required if you are travelling to Huaraz and the Huayhuash region.

Equipment Information

Self Guided Equipment List

- Hiking boots with good grip soles
- Functional base layer
- T-shirts
- Hat
- Windproof jacket
- Fleece / extra layer
- Long/short hiking trousers
- Hiking socks
- Waterproof Jacket
- Waterproof Trousers
- Rucksack (approx. 20 l)

- Small first aid kit for your rucksack
- Sunscreen
- Water bottle or hydration pack
- Camera (batteries/memory card)
- Mobile Phone (ensure your data package covers your destination)
- Power bank
- Waterproof phone cover
- Sun glasses
- Personal wash kit
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping to avoid the use of plastic bags
- Tupperware for picnics
- Walking poles
- Headtorch & spare batteries
- Your self-guided route notes

Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers. [>> Find out more](#)

Land Only Information

Please note our 'from price' listed is based on 4 persons on double or twin occupancy, however this trip is suitable for groups of 2 or more travellers, contact our sales team for a quote.

All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. You may even wish to make this holiday part of a bigger adventure or pair it with one of our other holidays. We can arrange additional nights accommodation before or after your self-guided trip, ask our sales team to find out more about this.

Our sales team will be happy to provide you a quote for scheduled flights or alternatively you may wish to book your own flights with a low cost carrier from your nearest regional airport.

Please DO NOT book your flights before you have received your booking confirmation and your deposit has been taken.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

Experience this classic long-distance Alpine trek with just a daypack and the flexibility of walking at your own pace. At the end of each day, you can look forward to superb Alpine hospitality and a comfortable space to rest at each of our hand-picked selection of 3* & 4* hotels.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 16/06/2024 and the trip is subject to change