

Mountains and Lakes Tour - Italy, Austria and Slovenia **(Intermediate)**

Another great European adventure tour through some of the most stunning parts of Europe. Yet more fantastic mountain roads, beautiful scenery and stop overs in interesting and beautiful town and cities.

We will be running this tour once in 2014.

Tour Highlights

- ride the famous B500 from Baden Baden through the heart of the Black Forest
- take high alpine roads through the skiing Mecca's of Kloisters, Davos, Julian Alps, Bavarian Alps
- conquer the mighty Stelvio and Gavia passes
- spend serene nights by the shores of Lake Constance, Lake Como, Lake Garda and Lake Bled
- Rest day off the bike in Bologna - visit the famous Ducati factory/museum, Lamborghini factory/museum,
- ride through the heart of the Dolomites
- Visit Kehlsteinhaus (The Eagle's Nest) Berchtesgaden

DAY 1: Calais to Pont a Mousson.

The first day on tour is always an interesting time. The group needs to get used to each others riding style and the day is fairly long. We try and make things as interesting as we can whilst crossing Northern France. For the first 86 miles we do use the motorway to get us out of Northern France but then after a short comfort break we are onto 'D' roads for the rest of the day. If there is sufficient time and the weather is good we will stop at the French First World cemetery at Verdun. Our usual first hotel is a very impressive monastery - a really beautiful building set in an unspoiled and authentic French town. We are regulars at the local and busiest restaurant in town - they are always very pleased to see us and the food is top notch.

DAY 2: Pont a Mousson to Lake Constance.

For today's ride we will be heading South through the northern part of the Vosges and into Baden Baden. From there we will take the famous B500 through the Black Forest. The B500 is a superb road especially if you are on a sports bike or sports tourer - great road surface, sweeping corners, good visibility - I am sure you get the idea! We will be heading towards the Feldberg which at 4,900ft is the highest mountain in the area. Then it is into Switzerland where we will stop briefly at Schaffhausen to visit the mighty Rheinfall which at over 150 ft wide and 75 ft high is the largest plain waterfall in Europe. Our evening stop will be by the shore of beautiful Lake Constance.

DAY 3: Lake Constance to Lake Como.

A beautiful and unforgettable day in the Swiss mountains. We will cross through the middle of the small principality of Liechtenstein before climbing into this part of the Swiss Alps. Those skiers amongst us will recognise the exclusive resorts of Kloisters and Davos. The mountains of Gotschnagrat and Madrisa should be clearly visible - some of you may have even skied down them!! Then its back into Italy and a gentle ride along the shores of Lake Como before our overnight stay by the shores of this world famous and beautiful lake.

DAY 4: Lake Como (exploration day).

A chill out day by the shores of Lake Como. The perfect spot to relax and take in the beautiful scenery. Alternatively, if you fancy jumping on your bike then there are plenty of things to see and do in the immediate area. In particular you may wish to visit the Moto Guzzi museum located at Mandello del Lario, right on the shore of Lake Como.

DAY 5: Lake Como to Stelvio Pass to Gavia Pass to Lake Garda.

We start the day by riding along the shores of Lake Como before heading back into the Swiss and Italian mountains. We will pass through the famous town of St Moritz and will have fantastic view of Piz Corvatsch before heading into the Stelvio National Park. We will travel over the infamous Stelvio pass (9045ft) which many consider to be the finest of all the Alpine passes. The road itself is also a marvel of engineering skill, the huge rises on both sides being overcome by some fifty hairpin bends on either approach, the 48 on the north side between the summit and Trafoi being probably the finest continuous hairpin sector in the Alps. Then after a fuel stop at Bormio we tackle the narrow but very beautiful Gavia Pass (8599ft). Then its out of the mountains towards beautiful Lake Garda and our hotel for the night.

DAY 6: Lake Garda to Modena to Bologna

A short days ride along the shores of Lake Garda and then into the Italian city of Modena. There is the option of visiting the Lamborghini factory and museum which is located on the outskirts of Modena. From a Modena it is only a short ride to our hotel in the beautiful and cultural city of Bologna.

DAY 7: Activity/Rest Day in Bologna

A free day to do as you wish. Bologna is a fascinating city with lots to see and do. Bologna is a lively and cosmopolitan college city with a rich history of architecture, art, music, food and culture. It boasts one of the largest and best preserved historic centres in Europe. It is also a designated 'European capital of culture' and UNESCO 'city of music'. We would recommend that you visit the Ducati factory and museum in the morning (we will organise a group booking for this) and then explore the delights of old Bologna in the afternoon and evening.

DAY 8: Bologna to Leifers

Its back on to the bikes as we head back into the mountains and the beautiful Dolomites. We will have two full days to explore these beautiful mountains and the fantastic twisty roads which wind their way through the various mountain passes and hidden valleys. The mileage for this part of the tour are not huge so we will have plenty of time to enjoy this splendid part of Northern Italy.

DAY 9 : Leifers to Lienz

Another day spent enjoying the beautiful Dolomites before heading into Austria. Again the mileage is not great so you will have plenty of time to take photos, chill out and enjoy the beautiful roads and great scenery.

DAY 10 : Lienz to Lake Bled

Another exciting day on the bikes as we head towards Slovenia. We have a real treat ahead as we enter Slovenia and the Triglav National Park. This unspoiled part of the world is staggeringly beautiful and the road that goes through it is a fabulous motorcycling road. From the park it is only a short ride to beautiful Lake Bled and our overnight stop. On the way into town we will take the time to visit Bled Castle which has a fantastic view over the Lake.

DAY 11 : Lake Bled to Berchtesgaden

Today we head over the Julian Alps out of Slovenia through Austria and into Germany and the Bavarian Alps. Yet more fabulous mountain roads before our overnight stop in Berchtesgaden.

DAY 12 : Berchtesgaden to Eagles Nest to Berchtesgaden

Today is a rest day but we do encourage people to visit the Kehlsteinhaus (Eagles Nest). Built as a gift for Hitler's 50th birthday, it is located 6000ft up on the ridge of the Kehlstein mountain. The house can be reached on foot (two hours walking) or you can catch a bus which will take you nearly to the top. In our opinion the walk is the best option - beautiful mountain scenery and the reward of a beer or two at the top!!

DAY 13 : Berchtesgaden to Stuttgart

We are now heading northbound towards home. We will ride cross country out of the Bavarian Alps past Munich and northwards to the large city of Stuttgart. A night out in Stuttgart can be lively - there are certainly lots of bars and restaurants!

DAY 14 : Stuttgart to Verdun

For the penultimate day on the bikes we will take you back through the Black Forest and Vosges mountains before our overnight stop at the historically important town of Verdun. We will enjoy final tour meal, drink a few beers and say our goodbyes.

DAY 15 : Verdun to UK

Motorway I'm afraid as we head back to Calais, the ferry and our homes in the UK