

The Tour de Monte Rosa – *Hiking in the Swiss and Italian Alps.*

Itinerary in full:

Day 01: Arrival Day

Arrival in Zermatt, briefing and welcome dinner in our Zermatt hotel.

Day 02: Zermatt to Randa

We will start with an easier day from Zermatt to Randa via the Taschalp, to get those leg muscles warmed up for the days to come. Elevation gain 750m (2500ft)

Day 03: Randa to Grachen

We begin by heading down the valley to the hamlet of Herbriggen before entering the cool of the pine forests and traversing the mountainside. After a steady climb we reach the charming community of Grachen, which like Zermatt has banned motorised traffic from its historic village centre. Elevation gain 450m (1500ft).

Day 04: Grachen to Saas Grund

This morning we climb through the forests to Hannigalp and pick up the Hohenwegg path, high above the Saastal. This is a wonderful walk clinging to the mountainside amid larch, alpenrose, and pine. There are some exposed sections to be dealt with and care needs to be taken. The views change again as we round the ridge into the next valley and we are re-united with the Weissmies and the rocky Lagginhorn. Elevation gain 1000m (3300ft), descent 1000m (3300ft).

In case of bad weather, we have the option to take a lower traverse, which is less stunning, but safer. Elevation gain 500m (1650ft)

Day 05: Saas Grund to Macugnaga

We begin our trip with a short ride on the post bus to our starting point at Mattmark. We stroll along the lakeside, before beginning our first climb to the pass at Monte Moro at 2868m where the statue of the Madonna of the Snows waits for us on the summit. Here we hope to see our first views of Monte Rosa and its impressive east face – one of the highest in the Alps. We descend through rocky ground and pine woods until we reach the ancient path which takes us to the charming village of Macugnaga.

Elevation gain 600m (1980ft), descent 1500m (4950ft).

Day 06: Macugnaga to Alagna

Today we head up to the lake at Quarazza, before wandering along the river through spruce forest to the pastures at Alpe Piana where cows may ask for some of your picnic! Next it's onto the ancient road, which takes us to the Colle del Turlo at 2738m. The 'road' is a wonder of engineering and craftsmanship and you can't help but be aware of history as you make your way upwards to the pass. This is a long day, but thankfully the 'road' continues down the other side where it meanders past ancient settlements to Alagna. Elevation gain 1450m (4785ft), descent 1300m (4300ft).

Day 07: Alagna to the Guglielmina Refuge

We begin our day by heading up into the Valle d'Otro, again passing some wonderful old buildings in the high meadows before beginning our climb proper to the Passo Foric at 2432m. After a brief descent we skirt round the mountainside and begin to climb to the superbly preserved mountain refuge of Guglielmina which has been owned by the same family for three generations and was previously Italy's highest hotel.

Elevation gain 1770m (5850ft), descent 150m (500ft).

Day 08: Guglielmina Refuge to Gressoney La Trinité, free afternoon

An easy day today, to make up for three long days. After a leisurely start at the Guglielmina Refuge we head over the Colle d'Olen at 2895m keeping a look out for ibex en route. We will probably take in a morning coffee before making our way past the green waters of Lago Gabiet and down to the charming village of Gressoney La Trinité arriving around lunchtime. The rest of the afternoon is free allowing you to relax, and explore the village. Elevation gain 150m (500ft), descent 1600m (5300ft).

Day 09: Gressoney La Trinité to Resy

We take on old path out of the village, and head up to zig zag path to the Passo del Rothorn at 2689m. This is the less frequented way over the mountain and we prefer it to walking through the ski area above Stafal. Once at the pass with views into the Ayas Valley laid out before us we head down through the boulders and around the mountainside to the wonderful rustic Refuges at Resy and a terrace with a stunning view down to the valley.

Elevation gain 1170m (3800ft), descent 700m (2300ft).

Day 10: Resy to Plan Maison, Cervinia

We begin with a short descent before heading off towards Alpe Varda and Alpe Mase and views of the glaciated slopes of the Breithorn. After climbing through larch woods and high meadows, where the cattle graze, we climb above the green waters of the Gran Lago to the Colle Superieur delle Cime Bianche at 2982m. Here we expect our first views of the famous Matterhorn, before heading down past the lake to Plan Maison and our accommodation for the night. Elevation gain 1100m (3630ft), descent 620m (2050ft).

Day 11: Plan Maison to Zermatt

We have an easy morning taking the cable car to the Testa Grigia. This is a hut situated 200m higher than the Teodulo Refuge. It provides views of the Breithorn and lies just below the Klein Matterhorn. We meet our Guide here for the glacier crossing. Descent 1900m (6300ft). (lift option for part of descent).

Day 12: Departure day

All guests will be leaving from Zermatt train station.