

AUSTRIA: THE DACHSTEIN ALPS

CHALLENGING ALPINE WALK

8-day / 7-night self-guided inn-to-inn walking holiday in Hallstatt and the Salzburg hinterland



The Dachstein Alps, in beautiful Upper Austria, the hinterland of Mozart's Salzburg, offer arguably some of the best alpine hiking in Europe. This tour starts at Ramsau am Dachstein, a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts, with easy access to the superb hiking on the Dachstein plateau and on the flanks of the 2995-metre Mount Dachstein. The route takes you over high altitude plateaus with wonderful views, past gorges with ancient rock art, and by clear glacial lakes. You stay two nights in remote mountain refuges, accessible only on foot.

Spend two nights in the picture-postcard village of Hallstatt, between Mount Plassen and Lake Hallstättersee. Listed as a UNESCO World Culture and Natural Heritage site, tiny Hallstatt feels wonderfully remote from the modern world: it is connected by ferry to the nearest train station and very little traffic mars the peace of the village. Ivy-covered guesthouses and cobbled lanes surround the town's picturesque square. You have a free day to discover Hallstatt – visit the salt mine in a valley above the town for the history of how Hallstatt grew rich from the salt trade; or there are plenty of short walks, including one to nearby Obertraun for a tour of the caves.

Departs: Daily on demand from 15th June to 2nd October

Early or late season walks may be affected by snow. Some cable cars may not be operational in September/October. Some mountain huts and lodges have restricted hours in October.

Cost from: \$1360 per person twin share. Single room supplement from \$155 (no single rooms in huts)

Starts: Ramsau am Dachstein **Ends:** Gosau

Includes: 5 nights' accommodation in 3-star inns / hotels in twin room with ensuite, 2 nights in mountain huts in communal bunk rooms with shared facilities; 7 breakfasts; 7 dinners; luggage transfers; guidebook, route notes and maps (one set per room); emergency service hotline; Schladming-Dachstein Summer Card (provides discounted access to regional transport and activities); train ticket Bad Mitterndorf to Bad Aussee; ferry ticket Obertraun to Hallstatt; ticket for the Hallstatt salt mine funicular.

Not included: Lunches, drinks, personal expenses, entrance fees, transport other than that listed.

Getting there: Salzburg is the closest airport: take bus or taxi to Salzburg Station, then train to Schladming (about 1.5 hours) and local bus or taxi (7km) to Ramsau. Ramsau is also accessible from Munich or Vienna.

Level of difficulty & fitness: Graded as moderate to challenging, this is true Alpine walking through high terrain. Suitable for those used to hill walking 3 to 8 hours daily, with a daily height gain/loss of up to 1400 metres. Day stages are on average 6 hours' walking. You will find some steep, stony trails and occasional exposed sections.

You may shorten some walks by using cable cars, local trains or post buses. These are not included in the cost; however some may accept the Schladming-Dachstein Summer Card (included in the tour) for a reduced rate.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details & reservations

What to bring: Be sure to bring appropriate equipment for high Alpine walking and be prepared for changes in the weather. Carry your mobile phone, map and hiking guidebook with you at all times, and also carry and know how to use a compass or GPS in case of fog or snow. Generally the trails are well marked and signposted. In June and sometimes early July there can be snow patches on higher trails (above 1300 metres), while new snowfalls are possible from September. Some walks have lower-level alternatives in case of inclement weather.

On two days you will need to carry your overnight essentials with you, as luggage transport to the mountain huts is not available. You will also need to carry a lightweight silk or cotton sleeping bag liner – the mountain huts have adequate blankets/duvets but do not supply linen.



Suggested Itinerary:

Day 1: Arrive Ramsau

Plan to arrive at your first hotel in the afternoon, in time for dinner. Your accommodation is a 3-star hotel perched next to the Dachstein cable car station; most rooms have a balcony with spectacular views.

Day 2: Ramsau to Guttenberg Hut

Walking @ 9.5km (4 hours) - ascent 265m, descent 865m

Carry your overnight essentials and sleeping bag liner with you today for tonight's stay at the mountain hut at Guttenberg. Your luggage will be transferred to Gröbming. Take the Dachstein cable car to the glacier (paid locally, cost @ €23, check for a Summer Card discount); the gondola windows offer panoramic views. As time permits you may like to visit the suspension bridge or the glass-floored Sky Walk jutting out above a 250-metre cliff face. Walk towards the Gjaidestein, with outstanding views over the Schladming and Hallstatt glaciers. Expect some challenging walking over rocky terrain surrounded by impressive mountains and glaciers before a descent to Guttenberg mountain hut, a remote mountain refuge only accessible on foot, with views extending down to Feisterscharte Valley below. In inclement weather there is an alternative route at lower altitude over the Ramsau plateau, approximately 6.5km with 1045m of ascent and 70m of descent.

Day 3: Guttenberg Hut to Gröbming

Walking @ 13km (6 hours) - ascent 555m, descent 860m

A beautiful and challenging high altitude hike over Am Stein plateau, past the Grafenbergsee, a tiny emerald glacial lake, and through typical alpine scenery complete with meadows and ancient stone shelters. Descend to the Stoderzinken to your accommodation, a family-run guesthouse perched above the town of Gröbming.

Day 4: Gröbming to Steinitzenalm Hut

Walking @ 17km (6 hours) - ascent 555m, descent 1370m

Carry your overnight essentials and sleeping bag liner with you today (your main luggage will be transferred to Hallstatt). Start the day with an ascent into larch forest and through the Notgasse, a rocky gorge some 500 metres long, engraved with ancient rock art, then to the Viehbergalm (1445m). Soon after, you descend through meadows and forest to Steinitzenalm mountain hut or, if the hut is fully booked continue on to your confirmed accommodation at Bad Mitterndorf (an hour further).

Day 5: Steinitzenalm to Hallstatt

Walking @ 15km (4 hours) - ascent 170m, descent 290m

From Steinitzenalm descend to Bad Mitterndorf where you catch the local train to Bad Aussee, a charming and picturesque little town where inhabitants regularly wear traditional dress – if you've ever wanted to own a dirndl or lederhosen, this is the place to purchase it. From Bad Aussee walk through the Koppen valley to Obertraun, where you take the ferry for the ride to the picture-postcard village of Hallstatt.

Day 6: Free day in Hallstatt

The day is yours to explore Hallstatt. There are many walks accessible from the village. You may like to use cable cars and the Obertrauner Hohenweg to visit an 'Ice cave,' the 'Mammoth cave' and Mount Krippenstein, with more walking opportunities and views to the Dachsteins and their glaciers. Alternatively from the town a steep gradient leads you up to the salt mine, which originally gave the town its wealth. You may like to tour the salt mine (entrance fees not included) to learn more about the history of the region. Return via the 'Solweg' path. Or, the local museums and churches are worth visiting especially the charnel house with its macabre history.

Day 7: Hallstatt to Gosau

Walking @ 13km (6 hours) - ascent 820m, descent 905m

Take the funicular railway from Hallstatt up to the entrance of the salt mine (one ascent per person on the funicular is included in the tour cost). Then walk along the flanks of Mount Plassen to the Rossalm, an idyllic mountain farmhouse amidst beautiful Alpine meadows, with a cosy beer garden, an ideal lunch stop if time permits. From here the path descends steeply into the picturesque village of Gosau along the banks of the Gosaubach River.

Day 8: Tour ends in Gosau

Tour ends after breakfast. From Gosau you can reach Bad Ischl, Salzburg, Munich, Graz, Linz or Vienna using a combination of post bus and train. Alternatively, a transfer back to Ramsau is available for a supplement – ask for details when booking.

There are several days' worth of wonderful hiking from Gosau, including a 8km walk to Vorderer Gosausee (Front Lake Gosau) from where there are magnificent views of the Dachstein massif. Extra nights can be added at additional cost at Gosau or any other town on the route – please ask when booking.

Please note the accommodation described is our usual choice; occasionally due to availability we may use other properties, possibly with a supplement. If this happens we will let you know at the time of booking.



Other walking holidays – guided in small groups or self-guided with inn-to-inn luggage transfers and meals are available in many parts of Europe through **Outdoor Travel** including in Austria the **Seefeld Plateau** and the **Zillertal Alps**, in Switzerland the **Tour du Mont Blanc**, the **Val d'Anniviers** or the **Bernese Oberland**. Easier walking is available in the **Loire Valley** or **Burgundy** in France, **Cinque Terre** or **Amalfi** coast in Italy.

For long distance routes we offer the **Camino de Santiago**, the **Way of St James** walk from Le Puy in France to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, the **Via Francigena**, the pilgrims' Road to Rome, or Wainwright's challenging and rewarding **Coast to Coast** walk in England. We also offer trails in the footsteps of famous painters such as van Gogh in **Provence** or literary walking routes following the paths of writers such as Robert Louis Stevenson on Stevenson's Trail in the wild and remote **Cevennes** in France.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more itinerary details and reservations:

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