

# Trek like a Roman along Switzerland's Via Sett!

Trip# 2149 September 12-24, 2021



the village of Soglio in the magnificent Bregaglia Valley

## **Trip overview:**

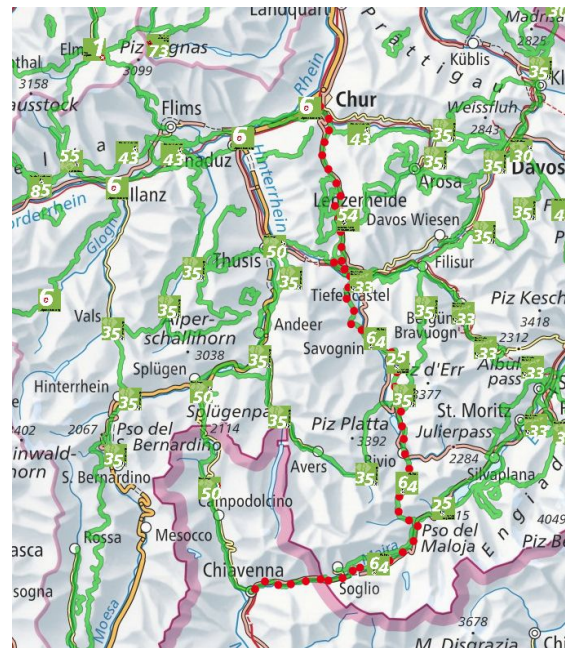
The Via Sett is a nationally recognized Swiss hiking path that traces one of the most important trans-alpine trade routes active from Roman times up through the Middle Ages. This route, used by traders, armies, kings, and emperors, is located in the southeastern region of

Switzerland that borders on Italy. Besides the spectacular scenery, this route allows us to experience three distinct cultures - German, Romanisch, and Italian - and visit many sites and artifacts of historical significance.



The map to the left illustrates the general location of our trek within Switzerland.

The red dots on the adjacent map show our specific route through the Graubunden region. Our trip begins in Chur, the oldest town in Switzerland and ends in Chiavenna, Italy. Along the way we will traverse the open spaces of the high plateau in Surses, the rocky landscape of the Septimer Pass and the Mediterranean mountain valleys of Bergell and Val Chiavenna. We will walk mainly on mountain paths. The hiking trails undulate and pass through green flower-filled meadows, forests, mineral springs, ancient quaint villages, and historic churches and castles. Although the route is mainly in Switzerland it is said that the soul of the people is Italian.



The trip is rated at [vigorous/strenuous](#) with typical daily hikes traversing 11km to 20km (6.5 to 12 miles) with gains from 150m to 1400m (500' to 4600') while carrying a day pack.

## Trip highlights:

- Hike eleven days in exceptional surroundings
- Sleep well each night in nice hotels, two persons/room, with luggage transfer between hotels
- Participate in a guided tour of Chur, the oldest city in Switzerland
- Enjoy two days in the Val Bregaglia, recently voted the most beautiful valley in Switzerland
- Visit several regional museums and other points of interest
- Benefit from 1) an inclusive trip price that includes all lodging, all breakfasts, all local transportation, and all but one dinner and 2) your trip leader's experience of having lived in Switzerland for three years and fluency in German, the predominant language for this part of Switzerland

## Daily Itinerary

Each day's itinerary will include a summary of the approximate hiking time, elevation gain and loss, and points of interest. When route numbers are listed, they refer to routes listed in Kev Reynolds' book [The Engadine](#) published in 2019 and highly recommended.

### Day 0 (9/11/21 Saturday)

Depart from USA to Zurich

### Day 1 (9/12/21 Sunday)

Arrive Zurich - train to Chur

From Zurich airport the train to Chur runs approximately every 30 minutes. See [train schedule](#). The train takes approximately 1.5 hours. Trip starts. We will meet for a group dinner this evening.



### Day 2 (9/13/21 Monday) Chur

get acquainted and  
sightseeing

Chur is considered to be Switzerland's oldest city. The old town is mainly traffic free with a Mediterranean-style atmosphere. There are many points of interest to entertain from retail boutiques to restaurants, bars, museums, and galleries. In the morning we will have a guided

city tour. In the afternoon we will take a cable car to the high plateau of Brambruesch at 2200 meters with a beautiful city overlook. An optional cozy alpine mountain restaurant offers a sunny terrace for lunch. Dinner on your own.

### **Day 3 (9/14/21 Tuesday) Chur-Lenzerheide**

From the episcopal town of Chur we hike up to the Passugg spa hotel with its mineral springs and past the Strassberg Malix castle ruin, once a customs post on the Septimer route. Onwards to the Churwalden Abbey over the Parpan heights and around the Heidsee lake to the mountain pasture village of Lenzerheide.

Stats: 20km, 1300m/-380m, 6h 20 min



### **Day 4 (9/15/2021 Wednesday) Lenzerheide to Tiefencastel**

In the morning we will take a chair lift up to Piz Scalotta and enjoy a leisurely 2 to 3 hour alpine hike to Piz Danis. We will get an early lunch on the mountain top of Piz Scalotta before taking the chair lift back to Lenzerheide to begin our trek to Tiefencastel.

In the afternoon as we go south from Lenzerheide we enter Parc Ela, Switzerland's largest nature park. We cross flower-filled meadows that lead to the chapel of St. Cassian and the mountain village of Lenz – once a transport cooperative on the Septimer route. We then continue past the Carolingian church in Mistail near Tiefencastel.

Stats: 18km, 555m/-1175m, 5hr 10 min

### **Day 5 (9/16/2021 Thursday) Tiefencastel-Savognin**

The trail climbs up to Del and then leads past the [Riom Castle](#), home of the «Origen» Roman music theatre. Savognin, today's destination, hosts a [regional museum](#) that we can visit.

Stats: 12 km, 780m/-420m, 4hr

### **Day 6** (9/17/2021 Friday) Savognin-Bivio

The route leads to the impressive high plateau of Alp Flix, the location of one of Europe's most significant high moorlands. Grand views repeatedly open up across the Surses, a valley region in Bivio. The trail then continues through larch forests to Bivio at the foot of the Julierpass.

Stats: 21 km, 1400m/860m, 7hr 10 min

### **Day 7** (9/18/2021 Saturday)

Bivio-Vicosoprano

Our hike today will trace in the footsteps of past centuries from Roman times. Emperors, kings, armies and traders, all crossed the Alps via the Septimerpass (image to the right). After crossing the Septimerpass on the old Roman road, we will enter another valley, a different cultural region. The language is mainly Italian though some German is spoken in Vicosoprano as well.



Stats: 20 km, 620m/1300m, 5hr 45min

### **Day 8** (9/19/2021 Sunday) Day hike to the Muretto Pass

From Vicosoprano we take a short bus ride to Cad'Mate. Our hike will take us to the Muretto Pass which is a divide between the Bernina and Bregaglia Alps. It stands on the Swiss Italian border and is part of an old trading route used since the 14th century. We will be treated to views of the ice-clad Monte Disgrazia standing at (3678m), the dominant mountain of the Bregaglia Alps. [route 2] Overnight in Vicosoprano.

Stats: 14km, 747m/-747m, 5.5 hrs

### **Day 9** (9/20/2021 Monday) Vicosoprano to Capanna da l'Albigna

Today's hike is a leisurely climb following the left bank of the Albigna river up a valley past forest pines up to the Maloja Pass. We will have lunch at the Capanna Da L'Albigna mountain hut, explore the area, and take the gondola down when we are done. [route 21] Depending on the

time available we may wish to visit the regional museum in Sils that features the art of Andrea Robbi [1864-1945], a prominent local artist. Overnight in Vicosoprano.

Stats: 8km, 1269m/-50m 3.5 hours

### **Day 10** (9/21/2021 Tuesday) Vicosoprano to Soglio

Today we continue to the magical village of Soglio. Soglio is an enchanting mountain village nestled on a sunny mountain terrace. The Italian painter, Giovanni Segantini, coined Soglio “the gateway to paradise”. We will spend the next two nights at the Stua Grande mountain hotel. The hotel offers terrace dining with spectacular views. We will settle in for two nights and enjoy this charming village. The after is left open to explore trails starting from Soglio. Stats: 7km 377m/-375m 2.5 hours excluding local Soglio hikes

### **Day 11** (9/22/2021 Wednesday) Soglio day hiking



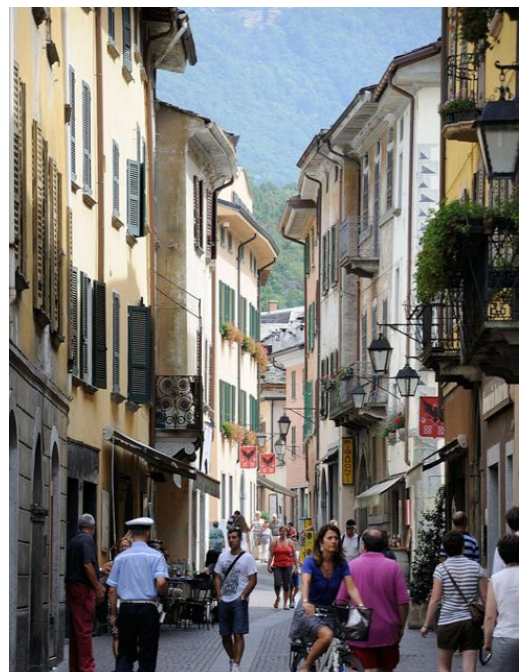
The Sentiero Panoramico (left), considered one of the most spectacular routes in the Val Bregaglia region, climbs above the valley floor and then follows the valley contour, offering beautiful views of the southern mountains.

Stats: 14km, 142m/-500m, 5 hrs [route 9]

### **Day 12** (9/23/2021 Saturday) Soglio to Chiavenna

The last stage of the Via Bregaglia is mostly on Italian soil. A highlight of today’s hike is the chestnut forest with beautiful old trees at the border in Brentan. The chestnut trees are still perfectly maintained by the locals and the annual chestnut festival takes place in autumn each year. We follow an educational walking trail through the forest pass through Castasegna. It is the last village on Swiss soil after which we enter Italy proper.

The hike ends in Chiavenna, “the key of the Alps”, which was already an important hub for the Romans



on their journey to the Rhine basin. Today, it is a flourishing tourist and cultural town with an exceptionally well-preserved historical city centre.

Stats: 14km, 290m/-769m, 5.5hrs

**Day 13 (9/24/2021 Saturday) Chiavenna to Milan - Depart for USA**

Our trip ends after breakfast. Trains from Chiavenna to Milan run approximately every 1.5 hours and take <2.5 hours. Transportation to Milan's Malpensa airport takes 3-4 hours.

**Trekking Summary** (1 meter = ~3.3 feet, 1 kilometer = ~.6 mile)

Day	Date	Segment	Time	Distance	Gain	Loss
1	Sa, 9/11	Depart US to Switzerland				
2	Su, 9/12	Arrival in Zurich; Train to Chur ; Departs Zurich every 30 min. Check-in to hotel; Trip starts. Welcome dinner	1.5 hr			
3	M, 9/13	Chur - sightseeing day				
4	T, 9/14	Chur-Lenzerheide	6.3 hr	20km	1300m	380m
5	W, 9/15	Lenze-Piz Scollota- Piz Danis-Tiefencastel	5.2 hr	18km	555m	1175m
6	Th, 9/16	Tiefencastel-Savognin	4.0 hr	12 km	780m	420m
7	F, 9/17	Savognin-Bivio	7.1 hr.	21km	1400m	860m
8	Sa, 9/18	Bivio-Vicosoprano	5.8 hr	20km	620m	1300m
9	Su., 9/19	Vicosoprano route 2	5.5 hr	14km	747m	747m
10	M, 9/20	Vicosoprano route 21	3.5 hr	8km	1269m	50m
11	T, 9/21	Vicosoprano -Soglio	2.5 hr	7 km	377m	375 m
12	W, 9/22	Soglio route 9	5.0 hr	14 km	142m	500m
13	T, 9/23	Soglio-Chiavenna	5.5 hr	14 km	290m	769m
14	F ,9/24	Chiavenna to Milan Airport				

## Participants Profile

You should enjoy traveling with a group for extended periods of time and be comfortable traveling in areas which are unfamiliar to you. You should recognize that you may find yourself in closer quarters or be less comfortable than you are used to at home. You should make it a priority to help others on the trip and contribute to their having a great time. If you do that, we guarantee that you will have a great time!

This is a [vigorous/strenuous](#) hike, suitable for those with recent hiking experience and at least intermediate to advanced hiking skills. While no technical climbing is required, the trail is rated as both rugged and difficult. Participants should be comfortable with trails that have steep drop-offs. There is a possibility of stream crossings. While the pace will be moderate, you should be able to be active up to 5-7 hours per day, with brief breaks, for 13 back-to-back days, with sometimes little shade.

Since breakfast, dinner and lodging are provided, we will be traveling light, with daypacks in the range of 10-15 pounds fully loaded. Typical daily treks will include four to six hours of hike time excluding breaks, with between 11km to 20km and an altitude gain between 150m-1400m.

## Leaders Right to Change the Itinerary

While the itinerary in this prospectus is what the leaders have planned at the time of this writing, various factors may require changes for reasons of safety, transportation, or lodging availability, and unforeseeable circumstances. The leaders reserve the right to make such changes as necessary.

## Experience & Risks

We will hike at an elevation up to 7579' with gains between 500' to 4600. Weather is likely to be warm and sunny during September with average daily temperatures in



the 60's, and nightly temperatures in the 40's. Mountain climate is unpredictable and can change rapidly so participants should pack accordingly.

As participant safety is a high priority for all AMC-sponsored events, procedures and policies have been developed to attempt to limit participant risk. Participants are expected to work with volunteer leaders to reduce risks and make the experience successful for all. Participants should be aware that there are risks associated with outdoor adventure activities, including but not limited to adverse weather and environmental conditions, remote locations of our trips and camps, and transportation in vehicles, on foot, by boat, or on a bike. When you apply for acceptance onto a trip, please carefully read and sign the Adventure Travel Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risks and Release and Indemnity Agreement and call if you have any questions.

When you participate in this activity, you should be prepared both physically and mentally, and equipped with the appropriate gear. You should always be aware of the risks involved and conduct yourself accordingly. We are not responsible for your safety—you are.

Nonetheless, it may happen on any trip that a trip member is or becomes unable to participate in one or more of the planned activities. Leaders in their sole judgment have the right and obligation to refuse participation in any activity to any group member for reasons of group or individual safety. Illness, injury or lack of proper gear or fitness for a particular activity are examples of some conditions that might result in a participant being unable to perform one or more activities. Leaders may try to find a substitute activity for the trip member, but this may not always be possible.



Prior to your being accepted as a participant in this trip, you will be asked to discuss your capabilities and experience with us. Please do not be offended by our questions.

*Left - "The Church of Sils-Baselgia" by Andrea Robbi, a well-known 20th century artist of the region. A museum devoted to his work is located on our route in Sils.*

## Trip Price

Price is \$3,950 per person shared occupancy for AMC members and \$4,050 for non-members. Non-members can [join](#) for \$50, and get the same price.

Deposit of \$1,500 is due with application. A check payable to the Appalachian Mountain Club should be sent to: Stephen Cohen 2802 Arbor Drive #2 Madison, WI 53711. Your check will not be deposited until you are accepted onto the trip. A telephone conversation will take place after your application is received with the leader/co-leader to determine if you are a good fit. The final balance of \$2,000.00 will be due April 1, 2021.

The price will be adjusted in accordance with the best final arrangements we can make and currency fluctuations. Any savings we achieve, as well as any cost increases, will be passed back to you. Our cost estimates are conservative, and so a refund is considerably more likely than a price increase.

### Price includes:

- 13 nights of lodging
- All breakfasts and all dinners excluding the one on 9/13/2021. This will be a free evening to explore Chur and do some sightseeing, leisurely walking, and shopping.
- Local bus transportation as needed
- Emergency medical & evacuation insurance coverage.

### Does not include:

- Airfare. The trip leaders will advise you as much as you need and will facilitate group travel. At this time, we estimate that the cost for a round trip ticket between the US East Coast and Zurich, Switzerland will be in the range of \$1,000 - \$1,500.
- Lunches, beverages, & incidental expenses
- Local transport between arrival airport & beginning of trip
- Local transport between end of trip & departure airport
- Insurance for travel delay, interruption, cancellation, or for baggage loss. If the possibility of such problems concerns you, individual travel insurance is suggested. The AMC has a recommended vendor whose material will be sent to you if your application is accepted.

## Registration

We expect a group size of 10 people, including the 2 leaders. This trip is likely to fill quickly. If you are interested, you should apply as soon as possible. When registration is complete, we will send all participants the names, addresses, and phone numbers of all those going on the trip.

To apply, you need to download, complete, and submit the [Application Documents](#) which consist of:

- Application

- Confidential medical form
- Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risk and Release form
- Supplemental Medical Questionnaire (optional)

You will not be accepted and your check will not be deposited until the leaders have determined by telephone conversation with you, that you and the trip are a good match. Deposit checks from waitlisted applicants will not be cashed until a spot is available, the applicant is accepted onto the trip, and they confirm their continued interest.

### **TRIP CANCELLATION POLICY**

The AMC Adventure Travel cancellation policy is based on the premise that your cancellation may not raise the cost to other participants or the leaders. After notification that the trip will run as scheduled the minimum cancellation fee is \$200. If actual costs (expenses already incurred on your behalf and any unavoidable future expenses that will be incurred as a result of your registration and cancellation) are higher, they will be assessed instead. Should the leaders be able to replace you with another acceptable participant, you may be charged a reduced penalty. This will generally not be determined until after the trip. Failure to make trip payment(s) in a timely manner will be considered a cancellation.

On rare occasions AMC Adventure Travel may need to cancel all or a portion of a trip due to *force majeure* [e.g. terrorism, local health conditions, natural disaster, changes in local regulatory environment, etc.] In the event of such a cancellation, your trip fee will be refunded less any trip expenses already incurred plus any non-cancellable future trip expenditures. AMC Adventure Travel is not responsible for additional expenses incurred by you in preparing for the trip (including non-refundable air tickets, visa fees, gear or medical expenses, etc

### **Other information**

AMC Adventure Travel trips are run on a nonprofit basis. Leaders are not compensated except for their travel and administrative costs associated with the trip. A program fee is assessed toward AMC Adventure Travel program and administrative expenses.

Prior to your being accepted as a participant in this trip, you will be asked to discuss your capabilities and experience with us. Please do not be offended by our questions.

AMC Adventure Travel trips are run in a manner supportive of and consistent with the conservation, recreational and educational principles and mission of the Club. Trip leaders encourage participant conduct consistent with Leave No Trace environmental and conservation principles and local regulations.

## Trip Leaders



**Steve Cohen** has been an active AMC adventure travel leader since 2012. He has led 23 hiking/ trekking-oriented Adventure Travel trips to such destinations the Haute Route (from Chamonix, France to Zermatt, Switzerland), the Alta Via II through the Italian Dolomites, the tour of the Jungfrau region (Switzerland), Patagonia, the high mountains huts of Austria, etc. He lived in Europe for four years and is fluent in both French and German. Steve is chair of Adventure Travel. To learn more about Steve's past and upcoming trips

visit: [www.adventuretravelwithsteve.com](http://www.adventuretravelwithsteve.com)



**Annemarie Langan** is an active AMC adventure travel co-leader. She volunteers with the AMC as a hike and backpack leader for her local Worcester chapter. She also volunteers with the AMC as a program and information volunteer at the Highland Center, Pinkham Notch, and White Mountain Huts. She has co-lead several Adventure Travel trips including Bulgaria, Guadalupe National Park and SE New Mexico, as well as Sedona, AZ.