

Engadin Scuol Zernez – powerful

(Standard text)

Original, powerful, authentic: The Engadin Scuol Zernez vacation region lies at the southeasternmost end of Switzerland, embedded in the border triangle with Italy and Austria. Here, where the Inn makes its way along picturesque villages and through the narrow gorges of the Lower Engadin towards the national border, the nature and tradition of the region unfold their concentrated power. The home of Switzerland's only National Park, the Inn offers natural experiences away from the tourist streams in winter and summer. In the winding alleys and between the sgraffito-ornamented Engadin houses of Guarda, Ardez, Ftan or Susch, customs and craftsmanship are still alive today. And while the mineral springs around Scuol and Tarasp-Vulpera attract wellness and water enthusiasts from all over the world, this natural idyll is also a source of inspiration for artists and free spirits. From Lavin, Sent, Ramosch, Vnà or Tschlin, these carry the Romanesque culture in music, pictures and words beyond the language and national borders. Creative, wild and of intoxicating beauty – that is the Lower Engadin.

Elementary forces – back to the origin

The Engadin: One common name, two different worlds

Although the word «Engadin» officially has no plural, the high valley in the southeast of Switzerland comprises two different worlds: Here is the glamorous Upper Engadin, the «Engiadina'Ota», the flat and wide high plateau with its idyllic lakes and the international flagships St. Moritz and Sils Maria. There, the original Lower Engadin, the «Engiadina Bassa», the narrower and much more steeply inclined trough valley (from 1600 to 1000 m above sea level) with its wild gorges, medically effective mineral springs and the Swiss National Park; the latter extends with the Val Trupchun to the Upper Engadin. The two different valleys are connected by the «Punt Ota» (high bridge) near the village of Brail: The historical court border also represents the linguistic separation between the Rhaeto-Romanic idiom Puter, spoken in the Upper Engadin, and the Vallader, which is predominant in the Lower Engadin. The Romansh language and culture are more firmly anchored in the Lower Engadin than in the neighboring region, which is particularly popular with the international (mass) public, and are still actively lived in the Lower Engadin villages, which are still characterized by authentic originality and tranquility. Upper and Lower Engadin share the Inn, the eponymous lifeline of the entire region. But while the river glides peacefully in the Upper Engadin, it transforms into a white-water paradise in the narrows of the Lower Engadin. In addition, nature lovers can expect the unique diversity of the Lower Engadin flora and fauna from Zernez, the gateway to Switzerland's only National Park, to Martina.



Sun, snow, stable weather – a climate zone of its own

Known for its sunny climate, the Lower Engadin is one of the driest regions in Switzerland, with an average rainfall of a modest 690 liters per year. Height and cold weather, in turn, ensure that the snow stays on the ground for a long time in winter. The village of Ftan at around 1650 m above sea level, which is extremely reliable for snow, is particularly spoiled by the sun. In contrast to the higher-lying Upper Engadin, which is under the influence of southern Alpine weather, temperatures in the Lower Engadin are often somewhat warmer, winds are weaker and the seasons more pronounced thanks to the north-westerly currents. With less than 15 thunderstorm days per year, the inner-alpine dry valley, together with the Val Müstair, is also considered the region with the least number of thunderstorms in the Alps. Shielded by the mighty Silvretta group to the north and the Engadin Dolomites to the south, the Lower Engadin thus forms its own small climatic province. The good climate in winter as well as in summer is one of the main reasons for the development of the Lower Engadin from a spa resort to a diversified tourist destination. On the traces of soft tourism – from the spa to the year-round destination.

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The mineral water springs, first mentioned in a document in 1369, laid the foundation for the beginning international spa tourism in the Lower Engadin from the 1860s onwards. In Scuol, Tarasp-Vulpera, Nairs and the Val Sinestra, spa houses and hotels were built around the numerous mineral springs; well-known writers, poets and nobles gladly took on the long journey to the Engadin for exclusive drinking and bathing cures. As in other parts of Graubünden, the development of tourism in the Lower Engadin went hand in hand with the development of the region's transport infrastructure. The expansion of the road through the Engadin in 1860 and over the Flüela Pass in 1866/67 as well as the opening of the Rhaetian Railway (1913) shortened the journey by hours. However, the two world wars and new medical treatment methods severely impacted the summer health resort business, which is why the first winter season started in 1950/51 – with success. In 1956 the first mountain railroad was built in the Lower Engadin. Especially with the emerging winter tourism in the ski resort Motta Naluns in the 1970s, tourism became one of the most important sources of income in the region. Thanks to the Vereina tunnel with car transport, the Lower Engadin can be reached quickly and safely all year round. But regardless of the season, water is still a mainstay of the region's economy.

A region in its element – healing springs and wild water

The Lower Engadin is completely under the sign of water. Thanks to geology, mineral springs spring up here in such a small area and in a variety as nowhere else in Europe: in the vicinity of Scuol alone, more than 20 of them bubble up, the springs of the Inn canyon near the Spa House in Nairs are the richest in minerals in Switzerland. Since the 19th century, the bubbling happiness has attracted spa guests from all over the world to the Lower Engadin, and in the «Bogn Engiadina» mineral bath in Scuol, you can let yourself drift in a relaxed atmosphere for over 25 years. No wonder that the wellness and spa facilities are among the greatest strengths of the vacation region according to a survey by Tourism Monitor Switzerland. But there's also more adrenaline: the spectacular canyons of the Inn Valley, with their mixture of powerful water and technical rapids, are among the best whitewater and rafting areas in Europe – making it difficult for Rafting guides and Kayakers to escape the pull of the Inn, one of the most water-rich rivers in the Alps. Whether at

Giarsun, Brail, Ardez or Scuol, each canyon has its own unique character and is home to a wealth of plants and animals that can only be discovered in the Engadin – the «Garden of the Inn».

Leading the way in sustainability

Surrounded by intact nature, Rhaeto-Romanic traditions and tourism-driven value creation - the Lower Engadine attaches great importance to maintaining its livelihood for future generations. Sustainability is nothing new for the holiday region. For many years, various businesses and the entire region have been focusing on a development that harmonises the three pillars of ecology, economy and social issues. It is therefore not surprising that the Lower Engadine regularly plays a pioneering role in sustainable awards. It was the first in Switzerland to achieve certification with TourCert as a «Nachhaltiges Reiseziel» in 2022. One year later, it succeeded in being awarded the highest possible "Level III - leading" as a Swisustainable Destination - again in the pioneering role. The labels and classifications testify to the sustainability measures implemented in the region. Various representatives of tourism stakeholders founded a sustainability council in 2021, which initiates regional projects and regularly consults on local development. The strength of the region is based on a large number of businesses that have committed themselves to sustainability and make it tangible for their guests.

Powerful natural spectacle

Carefully protected – the only National Park in Switzerland

The Swiss National Park is a symbol of the region's unique diversity and a magnet for nature lovers and hikers alike. The largest wilderness area in Switzerland comprises 170 square kilometers of unspoiled natural landscape and 100 kilometers of marked hiking trails. Founded in 1914, the national park is not only the only one in Switzerland, but also the oldest in the Alps and Central Europe. This unique natural oasis is characterized by a unique high alpine flora and fauna: Deer, marmots, bearded vultures and the national park's heraldic animal, the nutcracker, live here all year round, while the rich flora is particularly flourishing in July and August. The high plateau «Macun» at 2600 m above sea level above Lavin with its more than 20 mountain lakes also belongs to the national park – it is especially rich in ibex and chamois. Together with the Val Müstair and parts of the Lower Engadin municipality of Scuol, the Swiss National Park was also officially recognized as the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Engiadina Val Müstair on June 13, 2017. Another natural highlight of the Lower Engadin is the «God da Tamangur», the highest closed Swiss stone pine forest in Europe. Its gnarled, up to 800-year-old trees defy the extreme temperatures at the very back of the Val S-charl at 2200 m above sea level. This primeval paradise, which can only be reached on foot, has already inspired numerous musicians and artists to reach creative heights.

Active from summer to autumn on the road

The range of sporting activities on offer in the Lower Engadin in the warm season is as varied as the natural blaze of color in the autumnal national park: from walks and hikes to (e-)mountain bike tours or wild rafting adventures – active sportsmen and women get their money's worth in the Engadin Scuol Zernez vacation region. If the National Park invites you to go game viewing in July and August, you could imagine yourself in Canada in autumn: Bearded vultures circle in the sky, the roaring of the stags penetrates the forests of the remote Val Mingèr and the mild temperatures, golden larches and white mountain peaks form the backdrop for hiking happiness. Thus, the Lower

Engadin section of the «Via Engiadina» high-level trail (approx. 110 kilometers from Brail to Vinadi) on the sunny side of the Inn Valley is one of the top hiking experiences in Switzerland. The terrain is neither too steep nor too flat and therefore perfect to get into the right flow also with (e-)mountain bikes. Passionate mountain bikers, on the other hand, climb the Flüela Pass to Davos or the Ofen Pass via Val Müstair and Umbrail to Stelvio.

Winter and World Cup fever in the cradle of snowboarding

When the days become shorter and winter covers nature in a thick blanket of snow, time seems to stand still in the Engadin Scuol Zernez vacation region. In the subdued solitude the Engadin villages and forests present themselves from their most romantic side. Breathtaking views are promised on guided snowshoe tours – for example to Tarasper's local mountain Crap Putèr (2400 m above sea level) – or on the three panoramic winter hiking trails on Motta Naluns. On the sunny slopes of the extensive ski area between Ftan, Scuol and Sent, you can also enjoy a particularly enjoyable swing. Motta Naluns offers direct access to the idyllic Engadin villages of Ftan and Sent, as well as magnificent views of the Engadin Dolomites on the other side of the valley. With 70 kilometers of slopes, a children's area and a fun park, Motta Naluns guarantees hours of fun for young and old alike. 12 cross-country ski runs with a total of 90 kilometers each – 4 of which are night runs – are available for cross-country skiers who like to train here for the legendary Upper Engadin Ski Marathon at the beginning of March. A special winter highlight is the FIS Snowboard Alpine World Cup, which takes place in Ftan every January. Because snowboarding has its cradle in Scuol, so to speak: in 1986 not only the first snowboard school in Europe was opened in the village, but also the Scuol world champion brothers Cla and Fadri Mosca as well as the Ardez Olympic champion Nevin Galmarini come from the Lower Engadin.

Creative forces and the power of tradition

«Cun tradiziun e stil» – lived customs and Romanesque tradition

The Engadin Scuol Zernez vacation region owes its charm not least to its picturesque villages and its roots in customs. The Engadin houses decorated with artistic sgraffiti and fountains, most of which are decorated with carnations, helped among other things Schellen-Urslis home Guarda win the Wakkerpreis in 1975 and transform the other villages into open-air museums. But there is no other trace of museum character: customs like the «Chalandamarz» on March 1st, the burning of the «Hom Strom» (straw man) in Scuol or the Ftan village festival «Schüschaiver» at the beginning of February are still actively lived in the villages today. The liveliness of the Romanesque culture can be seen not only in the language – the Rhaeto-Romanic idiom Vallader is still spoken in all villages – but also in the handicrafts and regional products: From Bernard Verdet's basket weaving in Lavin, the cutler's shop in Guarda or the numerous confectioneries, to the dried meat of the cult butcher Ludwig Hatecke, to the hand-picked meadow tea from Guarda, the Ardez wool from the protected black-nosed sheep or the Tschlin beer and the product range «Bun Tschlin».

Creative high-flyers with Lower Engadin roots

Like the mineral-rich water, creativity bubbles up in the Lower Engadin. The canyons of the Inn valley, the pine trees of the «God da Tamangur» and the unadorned beauty of the striking mountain landscape have always been a source of inspiration for artists. Friedrich Dürrenmatt, for example, incorporated the Scuol surroundings into his work, and the German writer Angelika Overath now

lives in Sent. Here, in the stronghold of Romanesque, the internationally renowned artist Not Vital was born in 1948. Since 2016, the widely travelled artist nomad has also been the owner of the Lower Engadin landmark Tarasp Castle, which he has transformed into an art and cultural center. Contemporary art is also the focus of the Muzeum Susch, which opens in 2019. The literary works of the Tarasper Schiller Prize winner Rut Plouda and Romana Ganzoni from Scuol, winner of the Grisons Literature Prize 2020, as well as the projects of the artist Curdin Tones, who commutes between Amsterdam and his native Tschlin, or the music of «Ils Fränzlis da Tschlin» carry the Lower Engadin out into the wide world.

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About TESSVM

TESSVM is the tourist marketing organisation for the Lower Engadine, Samnaun and Val Müstair. On behalf of the shareholders, TESSVM primarily promotes the demand for tourist offers and services both nationally and internationally. TESSVM and all local stakeholders are responsible for the communication of offers and guest care in five political communities with over twenty holiday resorts. The organisation with its headquarters in Scuol launches and coordinates joint projects with regional partners and service providers and ensures coordination with Graubünden Ferien and Switzerland Tourism. With a budget of approximately CHF 5.5 million, the company employs around 40 full- and part-time staff, including one intern and three apprentices. The Engadin Samnaun Val Müstair holiday region contributes around 1 million overnight stays, which is almost 10 % of the total number of overnight stays in Graubünden.

Taking responsibility: CSR and three-dimensional sustainability

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is the voluntary contribution of companies to sustainable development, with voluntary commitment at its core. TESSVM acts according to the principle of three-dimensional sustainability: economic, social and environmental. TESSVM is "climate-neutral" by striving to reduce its CO2 emissions and offsetting unavoidable emissions through myclimate carbon offset projects. Wherever possible, purchases are made in the region and orders are placed with local partners. Within the company itself, TESSVM promotes young talent with apprenticeships and internships.