

INTRODUCTION:

The Suldén Valley is a high-altitude valley surrounded by more than 20 three-thousand-meter-tall summits. It extends to the west, south, and east and can be regarded as an ideal hiking area.

Because of its high elevation (1,900 meters above sea-level), it offers ideal hiking temperatures even in mid-summer.

In the Suldén Valley, hiking is literally "pleasure on a higher plane."

With over 80 km of hiking trails, the Suldén Valley has something for everybody.

Our number-one concern is that you enjoy every aspect of your vacation. Your relaxation and well-being are our top priorities.

We do everything we can to achieve that goal, and that's the secret of our success.

The lush green foliage on the floor of the valley leads us to larch and stone pine forests. Extensive fields of alpine rose offer a glimpse of exquisite beauty amidst the dull mats. The summits of the 3,000-meter-high mountains bear a sparkling crown of eternal ice.

And the reward for your efforts: A pristine sky of deepest azure blue..

For those vacationers who want to test their mettle or who simply want to climb mountains, we also offer mountaineering expeditions in every category of difficulty.

If you are interested in expeditions to the glaciers or summits, basic classes or guided hiking tours, we can recommend the "Ortler Alpine School" as a competent partner. (Information: info@alpenschule-ortler.com // phone: ++39 0473 613004 – www.alpenschule-ortler.com)

And if you need a map of all of the hiking trails in the Ortler region, we recommend you obtain a copy of the "Panoramakarte der Ferienregion Ortler" ("Panorama Map of the Ortler Vacation Region").

For hiking routes extending beyond the Suldén Valley, you might want a copy of the "Tabacco" hiking map number 08 for the Ortler area.

AND A FEW MORE TIPS FOR OUR HIKING FANS:

- × Always remain on the marked hiking trails.
- × Take your trash with you back into the valley.
- × Please avoid making unnecessary noise.
- × Keep your dog leashed.

... That's the only way we can all help preserve the natural beauty of this unique vacation area for future visitors.

Enjoy the pristine air, the hospitality, the flowers on the edge of the trail, and our alpine world, **It's what makes your vacation really worthwhile!**

P.S.: In order to maintain the high air quality, 99% of all of the buildings in our mountain village are heated by a district heating plant powered with wood waste. As a consequence, the purity of our air can be seen and smelled the whole year around.

OUR HIKING TIPS:

To the Kälber Meadow

We begin our hike at the mouth of the Zay Valley where trail number 25 branched off from trail number 5 to the Düsseldorf Cabin. Trail number 25 goes gradually uphill at first, passing through a larch forest, until we traverse the so-called "Swallow Valley." After that, it gets a little steeper, and we pass through a high-elevation stone pine forest. At the forest's edge, in the "Marltbrunn," we're already in the meadow area. We pass along babbling brooks and continue along the edge of the wood downhill slightly to the Kälber Meadow at an altitude of 2,248 meters.

At the meadow, there's an opportunity to stop and refresh yourself (food and drink). Also, there's an unbelievable panoramic view of the Ortler right across the way.

From now on, we continue downhill towards "Waldruhe" on trail number 24, passing the old shelter on the lower meadow. We again go through the old stone pine forest, the Rumwald Wood, and then reach the lower shelter, of which only low stone walls can still be seen. Some distance farther downhill towards the "Finster Valley," then along a sinuous trail through a light spruce forest, and we reach the "Waldruhe" at 1,858 meters above sea-level (here, you can stop in at the restaurant). We now continue on the level trail number 6 towards Sulden until we reach the road. From there, we return to our starting point in Sulden.

elevation differential: approx. 450 meters

total walking time: approx. 4 – 4.5 hours

orientation and degree of difficulty: Marked paths, only.

The ascent is a little difficult.

Via the Kälber Meadow to the Valnairer Meadow

Another hike on the eastern side of the valley. This time, the hike begins right behind the Hotel Marlet. Trail number 19 is the motor vehicle route to the Kälber Meadow; after the forest barrier, it continues slightly uphill to the "Hohlen Kofel." The first bench with a view provides us with a promising panorama. After a couple of curves, trail number 18 intersects the motor vehicle route at "Tampus" (number 18 is a nice alternative to number 19; it begins at the "Schöneck" house and continues on via the "Scheibenstein" to trail number 19). After a few curves, we pass by the "Halben Schnitt," an alpine meadow right in the middle of the woods. In no time at all, we have reached the Kälber Meadow, with an elevation of 2,248 meters above sea-level. (The meadow has facilities where you can refresh yourselves, including food and drink.) We now follow the wide trail number 18, which crosses the "Rumwalder Wood" almost perpendicularly just above the forest line, continuing to "Stierlückl." After a brief rest at the alpine meadows or the little brook, we continue on downhill towards the "Valnairer Meadow." After this pleasant descent, we enter steeper territory and reach trail number 6, which we follow until we come to "Unterthurner Lawinengraben" and pass through "Putzen Graben." We have now reached the "Valnairer Meadow," which is situated at 2,004 meters above sea-level on the edge of a beautiful alpine meadow with a wonderful view. Back towards Sulden on trail number 6, we traverse the churning "Razoybach" brook above the "Ratschöll" country farm. We continue slightly downhill and reach the "Waldruhe" at 1,858 meters above sea-level. (There are facilities here

where you can refresh yourself, as well as visit the restaurant.) From there, we continue downhill on motor vehicle route 6 until we reach the road to Sulden.

elevation differential: 450 meters

total walking time: 5 – 5.5 hours

orientation and degree of difficulty: Easy in every respect

Schöneck via the Düsseldorfer Shelter

To save time and strength, we travel with the chair lift to the "Kanzel" ("Pulpit") at an elevation of 2,348 meters above sea-level. From there, the wide, easy trail number 12 takes us to the left and down into the Zay Valley towards the Düsseldorfer Shelter. The shelter lies in the middle of the Upper Zay Valley on a rocky bar at an elevation of 2,721 meters, and there's an opportunity to stop and refresh yourself (food, drink, accommodations). If they wish, really fit hikers can instead go by foot to the shelter by passing through the Zay Valley via the "Zaywiese" and the "Windegger." After a brief stop with refreshments, we cross the Zay Brook in a northerly direction. On the slope across from the shelter, we ascend slowly the sinuous path, always following the yellow markers, and approach the summit of the "rear" Schöneck. The climb is not especially demanding, but there are a few slightly exposed spots at the upper end, so you had better be sure-footed and have no fear of heights. With an elevation of 3,128 meters above sea-level, the "rear" Schöneck is one of the 22 three-thousand-meter-high summits of the mountains surrounding the Sulden Valley. After making a stop at the summit, across from the mighty Ortler "Dreigestirn" ("Triumvirate"), we descend via the western ridge, taking the steep, short, sinuous path down to the Kälber Meadow. After a short time, while always keeping to the ridge, we reach the "front" Schöneck (2,908 meters). Continuing on alpine meadows, we reach the Kälber Meadow at 2,248 meters above sea-level.

We return to Sulden on trail number 18.

elevation differential: 1,280 meters

total walking time: 6 – 6.5 hours

orientation and degree of difficulty: Relatively easy orientation.

You must be sure-footed and have no fear of heights. Good physical condition necessary.

Ascending the Rosim Glacier

The hike to the Rosim Glacier begins with the turn-off at the sign-post at the road near the Hotel Cristallo. We continue on past the Villa Alpenfriede and to the left of the Zay Brook on trail number 5. The path leads us first along the brook until we reach the Zaywiese Meadow, which we pass through until we get to the intersection with trail number 14 below the "Windegger." We now proceed to the right on trail number 14 through sparse woods towards the lift to the "Kanzel" ("Pulpit") until we reach the motor vehicle route. We cover the last bit to the lift on the motor vehicle route. At the "Kanzel" alpine restaurant (elevation: 2,348 meters), you have the opportunity to enter and dine. For those preferring a less-strenuous ascent, there is the option of taking the "Kanzel" lift up to this point. We then follow trail number 12 down slightly towards the "Kanzele" ("Little Pulpit"), and then descend into the Rosim Valley. In doing so, we first traverse a steep slope and pass below the "Untere Schwarze Wand" ("Lower Black Wall") to the Rosim Base at 2,439 meters above sea-level. This is a wonderful, extensive level area with little brooks and a breath-taking view. The path crosses the base and then rises in a steeper and steeper sinuous path through barren, rocky terrain until we approach the glacier at an elevation of approx. 3,000 meters.

ATTENTION: Do not walk onto any glacier without proper mountaineering equipment! There is a danger of falling into crevices!

We descend to the Rosim Base by taking the same way. We then proceed along winding trail number 11 until we reach the "Rastl." The trail later passes through the wood and towards the aerial lift.

elevation differential: 1,150 meters

total walking time: 5 – 6 hours

orientation and degree of difficulty: Easy in every respect.

Hintergrat Shelter

Trail number 3 begins just above the old St. Gertraud Church. After a few bends and turns, we come to the "Kaser Knott." We follow trail number 3, passing by the "Kaser Brook," until we reach the upper "Schreibbach Boden." Shortly afterwards, we reach the climbing grounds of the Ortler Alpine School. We continue along the forest edge to the ski slopes of the Langenstein lift until we reach the alpine restaurant at 2,330 meters, where there's an opportunity to stop and refresh yourself (food and drink). Those of you preferring a less-strenuous ascent might wish to take the Langenstein lift up to this point. We now proceed along trail number 3 over the talus slope of the "End der Welt Ferners" ("End of the World Glacier") towards the Hintergrat Shelter.

We cross the lower part of the "Hintergrat Kopf" and reach the Scheibenkofel. We then traverse the "Schönleiten," with a view of the Sulden Brook 760 flowing meters below us. Soon, we will reach the "Hintergrat" Shelter, which is situated on the shores of the Grat Lake at an elevation of 2,661 meters, directly in front of the North Wall of the Königspitze. Here, there's an opportunity to stop and refresh yourself (food, drink, and accommodations). We take trail number 2 downwards, passing by the upper and lower lake. The path then becomes more sinuous and steeper as it approaches the talus. We now have the option of descending via trail number 2A on the orographic left side, the very interesting "Ertl" trail, or trail number 2 and then number 2. The "Ertl" trail is not far from the Sulden Brook gorge; it is partially secured, and offers a unique experience. After finally arriving down below, you can take trail number 7 and return to the starting point in just 2 km.

elevation differential: 820 meters

total walking time: 4,5 – 5 hours

orientation and degree of difficulty: All in all no problems, but there are a few exposed spots!

Hintergrat Shelter – K2 – Tabaretta Shelter

The next hike to a shelter begins at the Sulden aerial lift. Trail number 1 to the Schaubach Shelter starts at the upper parking lot. It takes us along the "Rosim Brook" and under and through the "Marderfall" and continues steadily upwards until we reach the mid station of the aerial lift at an elevation of 2,172 meters. We now follow trail number 2 towards the Hintergrat Shelter, cross the Sulden Brook and the talus, and ascend via numerous twists and turns over alpine meadow mats to the lower and the upper lake. The Hintergrat Shelter is situated at an elevation of 2,661 meters, and offers the opportunity to stop and refresh yourself (food, drink, and accommodations). We can cool our feet in the Grat Lake and continue our hike to the Langenstein via trail number 3. The first segment over the "Schönleiten" presents us with an awe-inspiring view of the valley. After the "Scheiben Kofel," the path descends steadily until you reach the K2 Shelter at the Langenstein (2,330 meters above sea-level) after the talus slope of the "End der Welt Ferners" ("End of the World Glacier.") Here, too, there's an opportunity to stop and refresh yourself (food and drink). We continue northwards on trail number 10-4A to the Kuhboden on our way to the Tabaretta Shelter. Trail 4A leads from the Langenstein lift over the Kuhboden, past the "Schnecken

Pleissen," to the talus of the "Marlt" moraine. Before ascending the last steep, sinuous path to the Tabaretta Shelter, we reach the memorial for the people who have been fatally injured while climbing the Ortler north wall. The Tabaretta Shelter is situated at an elevation of 2,556 meters. There, you can stop and refresh yourself (food, drink, accommodations) and enjoy the breath-taking view from their terrace of the Ortler north wall, the upper Vinschgau Valley with Reschen and Haider Lake, and of the Ötz Valley Alps. We descend into the valley by taking trail number 4, crossing the "Ladum" and the "Knappenloch" before coming to the old St. Gertraud Church. From there, you can take trail number 7 and return to the starting point in just 2 km.

elevation differential: 1,000 meters

total walking time: 5.5 – 6 hours

orientation and degree of difficulty: Easy in every respect, except for 2-3 exposed spots.

ADDITIONAL HIKING ROUTES SHOULD BE TAKEN ONLY UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF LOCAL GUIDES!

Düsseldorfer Shelter – Zay Ridge – Laaser Valley

We can hike along trail number 5 or take the chair lift to the "Kanzel" ("Pulpit") and then continue on trail number 12 to the Düsseldorfer Shelter at 2,721 meters above sea-level. Proceeding through the upper Zay Valley, below and past the Tschengelser Wall and to the "Kleiner Angelus Ferner" ("Small Angelus Glacier.") We pass around this glacier on the left-hand side (or cross it, depending upon the season) and then come to the Zay Ridge at 3,224 meters. Now, after having reached the highest point of the excursion, we start down again, descending into the Laaser Valley on trail number 15. We first proceed along a segment equipped with safety guards and then continue on trail number 15, past the shepherd's hut, to the Ferner Shelter at 2,094 meters. We then go on to the "Unterer Laaser Alm" ("Lower Laaser Meadow") at 1,825 meters. We are still taking trail number 15 as we reach the lift to the Marmorbruch at approx. 1,378 meters and then continue on to Laas at 885 meters.

elevation differential: uphill 1,375 meters, downhill 2,340 meters

total walking time: approx. 9 hours

orientation and degree of difficulty: Participants must be very physically fit and sure-footed. The hike can be made less strenuous by spending the night in the Düsseldorfer Shelter. Guide with local knowledge highly advisable.

Remark: In the Laaser Valley, NONE of the shelters have service!

Tabaretta Shelter –Zumpanell Mine – Aussersulden

This roundtrip hike takes up to the abandoned Zumpanell magnesite mine which was only recently equipped with information boards and redesigned with visitors in mind. We take trail number 4, starting at the old St. Gertraud Church or, alternatively, taking the "Langenstein" chair lift to the Tabaretta Shelter at an elevation of 2,556 meters (here, there's an opportunity to refresh ourselves, including food, drink, and accommodations.) From here, we continue along a well-worn sheep path (without markings) northwards away from the valley. We cross three large talus slopes with large grass hillocks in between in order to reach the mine. Here, at an elevation of 2,360 meters, we recommend a tour of the mine with the left-behind relicts and information boards. We now have two options for the descent: We can go first on trail number 26 past the Shepherd Shelter on the edge of the woods towards Aussersulden, or we can take the Herrensteig to Gomagoi.

elevation differential: uphill 700 meters– downhills 940 meters

total walking time: approx. 6 – 7 hours to Ausersulden

orientation and degree of difficulty: From the Tabaretta Shelter to the mine, orientation is very difficult. The course of the trail is by no means easy to discern. In the event of rain, one must reckon with falling rocks on the talus slopes. The hike – conducted by guides having a knowledge of local conditions – can be very worthwhile, especially because of the beautiful views and also because of the opportunity to escape from the well-travelled tourist trails.

Remark: Guide with local knowledge highly advisable.

To the Madonna via K2

Trail number 3 to the K2 Shelter on the Langenstein begins just above the old St. Gertraud Church at an elevation of 1,850 meters above sea-level. The hiking trail provides plenty of wonderful views, and displays numerous twists and turns as it passes through the sparsely wooded Kirchwald to the "Kaserknott" before continuing on to the upper "Schreibbachboden." From there, you can go on to the lower edge of the moraine of the "End der Welt Ferners" ("End of the World Glacier") and all the way to the mountain station of the Langenstein aerial lift with the K2 alpine restaurant at 2,330 meters (opportunity for refreshment and food/drink). After a little snack, we continue our hike above the restaurant on trail number 23. We ascend slowly and carefully, since the trail is much steeper, as you will quickly appreciate. The trail is sinuous, and continues uphill past the avalanche guards, always near the ridge, towards the "Marlgrat." Just before reaching our goal, we cross the majestic Wiesensattel and then stand in front of the shear wall of the Marlgrat with the statue of the Madonna at 2,568 meters. We enjoy the immediate nearness of the mighty mountain and the splendid view. For the descent, we take the same trail (number 23) back to the alpine restaurant. From there, we continue on trail number 10 towards the "Kuhboden" and to the upper "Schmalzboden" in order to get to trail number 4. We now take trail number 4, passing by the "Knappenloch" and going over the Wiege to St. Gertraud. We have now reached the starting point of our hike.

total walking time: approx. 5 hours

elevation differential: 720 meters

orientation and degree of difficulty: Easy in every respect

From Gampenhöfen to the Tabaretta Shelter

We begin at the lower parking lot of the Sulden aerial lift, cross the Sulden Brook, hike on the orographical left-hand side on trail number 7 a few meters on the side away from the valley. After the trail intersection, we follow trail number 9, which ascends slightly through Grünerlen, but then leads us through a high mountain wood. After a short time, we cross the racing "Schreibach" brook, and then a little later the quiet "Kaserbach" brook, finally reaching the "Kaserknott".

We continue on trail number 9 over the ski slope and through the "Gatterlauf" below the avalanche guard, arriving at the "Knappenloch." We follow trail number 4 to the Tabaretta Shelter. After reaching the memorial, we overcome the steep grassy hill and arrive at the splendid terrace of the Tabaretta Shelter at an elevation of 2,556 meters above sea-level. Here, there's an opportunity to refresh yourselves (food, drink, and accommodations).

When descending, we take the same path (trail number 4) until just before the memorial, where we take a left turn (see signpost). From now on, we stay on trail number 8 until we reach the "Kranebittbödele" and continue on to the "Wassereck." The trail becomes more

level, now, until we reach the "Rossbödele." Just three more bends in the path until we get to the "Platz für Fleissige" ("Place for Industrious People"). We then take trail number 8 (the "Lazy Climber's Trail") until we come to the old St. Gertraud Church at 1,850 meters (which also serves well as a starting point.) The last part of the way is on trail number 7 until we return to the starting point at the Sulden aerial lift station.

elevation differential: 710 meters

total walking time: 4,5 – 5 hours

orientation and degree of difficulty: Easy in every respect

Remark: Trail number 8 from the memorial to Wassereck is under renovation until the spring of 2004. It is being repaired and marked.

Tabaretta – Payer – Bergl Shelter

This time, we will undertake a hike of the various shelters all the way to the neighboring Trafoi Valley. Our starting point is the old St. Gertraud Church at an elevation of 1,850 meters above sea-level. We take trail number 4 to the Tabaretta Shelter. This hiking trail soon crosses the "Wiege" ("Cradle") and then the "Kössler Wasser" before continuing on to the lower "Schmalzboden" and the "Knappenloch" ("Squire's Hole,") a remanent from the age of squires, which is located at the intersection with trail number 9, lying hidden above the path. We continue on trail number 4 until we reach the benches at the outlook point "Schöpfgraben" and immediately afterwards the "Ladum." Right above the "Ladum," we find the alpine trail number 4A to "Langenstein." (For those preferring an easier hike, you can take the the Langenstein lift at 2,330 meters above sea-level.) We then cross the Marlt moraine and, at the foot of the grassy slope leading to the "Marltscheid," stand at the memorial for mountain climbers who have been fatally injured. After many twists and turns of the trail, we arrive at the Tabaretta Shelter on the "Marltscheid" at an elevation of 2,556 meters. Here, there's an opportunity to refresh yourselves (food, drink, and accomodations). We now follow a long transverse path until we reach the "Barenkopfscharte" ("Bear's Head Notch") at 2,871 meters above sea-level. Here, we are opposite the Stilfser Ridge and on the "Normal Trail" to the "Ortler." We are now in the "Trafoi Valley." We continue via the exposed rocky path to a notch with a unique view of the Sulden Valley. Now all we have to do is take a few last twists and turns until we reach the Payer Shelter at 3,029 meters, the starting shelter for the normal ascent of the Ortler. Here, too, there's a chance to refresh yourselves (food, drink, and accomodations). For the descent, we use the same trail until we come back to the aforementioned notch. But there, we turn into the "Trafoi Valley" on trail number 185. After a few bends in the path, we take another left turn onto trail number 186 and continue over a flat stretch in a southwestern direction towards the Bergl Shelter. (Another option is to stay on trail number 185 and to pass by the abandoned "Edelweiss Shelter" at 2,481 meters and the derelict "Alpenrosen Shelter" at 2,029 meters on the way to Trafoi.) We then cross the Tabaretta Ridge, enter the avalanche ditches below the "Hinteren Wandlen" and are now in visual contact with the shelter. After another crossing, we come to the Bergl Shelter at 2,188 meters above sea-level. You can refresh yourselves here (food, drink, and accomodations). We then complete our descent by taking a few bends as we approach the "Heilige Drei Brunnen" ("Holy Three Springs") at 1,605 meters. From now on, we take the nearly flat supply road to Trafoi.

elevation differential: ascent 1,180 m – descent 1,500 m

total walking time: approx. 6 hours

orientation and degree of difficulty: Orientation is without a problem.

There are a few exposed spots to contend with. However, good physical condition is a prerequisite.

From Sulden to Prad on Trail Number 6

This hike involves only a light elevation differential during the ascent, but a considerable elevation differential during the descent. We begin at the Hotel Post at 1,850 meters above sea-level or at Reinhold Messner's "Alpine Curiosa" Museum. The first segment of trail number 6 leads along the lower edge of the forest, past the Schönblick Pension, until we come to the road, which we then follow for approximately one kilometer. There, there is a turn-off on the right side which leads to the "Waldruhe" – again on trail number 6. We follow the Forstweg all the way to the "Waldruhe" at 1,858 meters above sea-level. After that, we take a hiking path offering a lot of change in scenery, passing through spruce forests. We then cross the thundering "Razoy" Brook (below, we see the "Ratschöll Hof," a desolate alpine farm at 1,843 meters) and come to the "Unterthurner Lawinengraben" (avalanche ditch). Just a little bit later, we come to the "Valnairer Alm" (alpine meadow) with the large cross at 2,007 meters above sea-level. We have now attained the highest point of our hike; from now on, it's downhill all the way. Trail number 6, the former meadow path, is relatively steep as it descends along the edge of the lower alpine meadow, leading to the "Hochstücklwald" forest. Again and again, we encounter short segments with support ropes as we proceed towards the "Prader Berg" until we reach the road near the "Untervalnairhof" at approx. 1,340 meters. From now on, we will follow the road as we traverse the meadows and pass by the farmhouses on our way towards Prad, until we reach the "Dürrer Ast" at 1,050 meters. Here, you can refresh yourselves (food, drink). During the last segment of our hike, we follow the road through the "Theinenwiesen" meadows downhill and pass by the St. Johann Church on our way to Prad.

elevation differential: uphill 160m – downhill 1,100m

total walking time: approx. 6 hours

orientation and degree of difficulty: Orientation is not a problem.

Because of the lengthy descent, however, good physical condition and proper footwear are advisable.

Schaubach Shelter – Madritsch Ridge – Zufall Shelter

We take trail number 1 to the Schaubach Shelter at 2,581 meters above sea-level or take the Sulden aerial lift to the alpine station. From here, we take trail number 151 through the Madritsch ski area until we reach the Madritsch Ridge at 3,123 meters. We now begin our descent through the long Madritsch Valley until we reach the Zufall Shelter at 2,265 meters – still on trail number 151. For the last segment from the shelter to the road (Schönblick at 2,055 meters), we take trail number 150.

elevation differential: uphill: 1225m – downhill 1068m

total walking time: 6 - 7 hours

orientation and degree of difficulty: Easy in every respect

Hikes to the individual shelters and alpine restaurants are not described in detail. However, the trail numbers and starting points are marked in the panorama map (and hiking maps).

MOTHER NATURE'S TREASURY AND THE SULDEN CULTURE PROMENADE

In celebration of the 200th anniversary of the first ascent of the Ortler by Josef Pichler (Pseirer Josele) in 1804, the Sulden Culture Promenade was established – in part, on already-existent hiking trails. The Sulden Culture Promenade is a roundtrip hiking trail with a

slight elevation differential. It will take you all around the Sulden Valley floor and to several excellent look-out points and places of interest. You can choose from a number of different starting points.

WE BEGIN OUR PROMENADE AT THE ST. GERTRAUD CHURCH.

The St. Gertraud Parish Church: Built between 1896 and 1902 at the initiative of the curate Reverend Johann Eller. Construction was paid for chiefly by the pastor, himself, and his sister as well as by the Hotel Eller. The main contribution of the citizens of Sulden was their labor. At the right-hand side in front of the entrance to the church, we see the grave and the monument of Curate Johann Eller, a lover of the Alps and the builder of this church. This monument was donated and constructed by the German and Austrian Alpine Association. On the left-hand side, we see the monument for his two sisters, Philomena and Katharina Eller. Next to that, there are memorial plaques for Gawen Kenway, who donated the church steeple clock in memory of the "best and most-loyal alpine guide," Peter Dangl.

In the immediate vicinity of the church, we find the "**House of the Mountains**," which is the home of the **Ortler Alpine School**. At the entrance, there is the "**Gallery of Honor**" of renowned Sulden alpine guides. These are portraits and drawings of those Sulden mountaineers who have done especially much to promote tourism in the area (installed by the Ortler Alpine School).

The **old church from the 14th Century**. With old marble gravestones in the cemetery and frescoes from the 14th and 15th Centuries inside the church. You will find the **Memorial Stone of Fatally Injured Mountain Climbers** in the cemetery of the old St. Gertraud Church. This is a metal book in which the names of those who have died while mountaineering in the Ortler region have been entered. It was installed and is maintained by the Sulden Alpine Rescue Organization.

In the immediate vicinity, we find the **Payer Monument**. This is a marble memorial stone plaque donated and installed by the German-Austrian Alpine Association in 1892 for the Bohemian cartographer and alpine researcher in recognition of his survey work in the Ortler region and his accomplishment of ascending all of the summits in the area.

Above the Payer Monument, one comes to the **Lourdes Grotto**, a grotto cut into the side of the mountain, with statues of the Mother of God and of Bernadette. The grotto was erected at the initiative of Katharina Eller and consecrated in 1892 by the Bishop Aichner. (By the way, this is also a good place for a personal prayer and quiet reflection.)

We now stroll towards the valley floor, taking trail number 7 with the uniform marking for the Culture Promenade. Along the entire length of the promenade, benches where you can rest and enjoy the view have been stationed at suitable spots.

After a short while, and after crossing the Kaser Brook, we come to the **Forest Hut in the Kirch Forest** and the **botanical garden**.

Continuing along, we cross the Schrey Brook and go through the wood until we reach the **copper bust of Christomannos** – a monument erected by the Alpine Rescue Organization in memory of the **famous alpine pioneer**.

We cross the Sulden Brook and continue slightly uphill near the "Rosim Brook until we reach the Bäckmann Memorial near the civil defense center.

Bäckmann Memorial: This is a marble commemorative plaque dedicated to the memory of the Russian Consul Carl Bäckmann. The memorial plaque was erected by the alpine guides of Sulden in gratitude for the gift of the Bäckmann Shelter at the Hinterer Grat donated by Carl Bäckmann in 1892 as a bequest to the alpine guides.

Right next to that, we find the **Külken Memorial** at the former Rosim lift. This is a memorial plaque in memory of the famous Vorarlberg winter sports pioneer. He was the founder of Sulden's first ski school and the main initiator of winter tourism in the Ortler region. The plaque was erected by the Ortler Ski School and the Sulden Ski School.

After just a short stroll, we come upon the **Protestant Chapel** near the Sulden Hotel of the alpine pioneer Otto Schmid of Vienna. He built it in 1904 for his Protestant wife. During the summer months, services are held in the chapel by a Protestant pastor.

We continue above the Sulden Hotel, passing the Hotel Zebbru and crossing the "Zay" Brook to the **outlook platform**. This is a place of unusual beauty where you can stop and rest, with a panoramic view of the Ortler. **Panoramic maps, regional maps, and explanatory notes.**

We pass by the Hotel Marlet and come to the Hotel Post and the Alpine Curiosa.

Alpine Curiosa: In the village, at the foot of the Ortler, Reinhold Messner has built a small building which is under historical protection: the "Flohhäusl" ("Flea's House"), a museum with alpine curiosities. At 13 stops, the "alternative history of Alpinism" is explained – a story which, according to Messner, is at odds between the ideal and the actual acts of the best mountain climbers. Reinhold Messner intention was to "give mountain climbing back its human dimension." With these alpine relicts, he would like to draw attention to the other side of history and its inherent contradictions.

Nearby, in the basement of the school building, we find Konrad Knoll's **"Museum for the Ortler Region."** This museum represents the passion for collecting and the enormous efforts to portray the events of World War I in the Ortler region between 1915 and 1919. It is a place dedicated to exploring the region's roots a declaration of love to one's homeland, as well as a quiet expression of respect and admiration for the great accomplishments of the pioneers of that time. A trip through the history and culture of the Ortler region, as well as a special presentation of the alpine front during the First World War and an unusually beautiful collection of minerals from the Ortler region and its surroundings. The museum will accompany you through one hundred years of tourism of the Ortler region whose supporters and pioneers have made this alpine village at the foot of the Ortler famous all around the world...

The trail then follows the alpine promenade to the Schönblick Pension, after which it climbs the slope to the Restaurant Jak & Yeti. **Messner's Ice Museum** is close by. This museum, which is mostly underground, explores the world of ice and snow, and will be inaugurated next summer by its builder, Reinhold Messner, during the 200th Anniversary Celebration.

We continue through the meadow away from the valley floor, cross the Sulden Brook to the other side of the valley, pass by the Ortlerhof and along the edge of the woods, and then again towards the valley floor on the Faulenzer Trail to the old **Parish Church**.

En route, on the side of the trail, we come upon the **Stüdel Monument**: A commemorative plaque honoring the president of the German-Austrian Alpine Association, Section Prad. Stüdel was a pioneer in the construction of alpine shelters (e.g. the Payer Shelter) and the establishment of hiking trails in the Ortler region. He also assisted greatly in the establishment of mountain guide organizations, training for guides, and support for financially-strained miners.

Just a little bit farther, and we return to our starting point, the **St. Gertraud Church**.

Possible starting points:

- ☛ the St. Gertraud Parish Church
- ☛ the Recreation Center
- ☛ the fork in the trail at the Villa Rosim
- ☛ the Civil Defence Center
- ☛ the Hotel Zebro
- ☛ the Hotel Post
- ☛ the Restaurant Jak & Yeti

total length: approx. 8 km

trail width: approx. 120 cm

highest point: 1,950 meters

lowest point: 1,820 meters

THE ROUNDTRIP TO ALL OF THE SULDEN SHELTERS

The roundtrip visit of all of the Sulden shelters presented here is unusual in some respects: For one thing, the course of the trail is out of the ordinary because you'll have to leave the established trail for part of it. Additionally, you will pass by lonely spots and experience high elevations from up close and from unusual perspectives. By the way: The hike takes about one week. We will hike from shelter to shelter and spend the night at some of them.

1st Day (Day of Arrival)

Our starting point is in the Trafoi Valley, at the "Holy Three Springs" (1,605 meters). We take trail number 186 to the Bergl Shelter at 2,188 meters (and spend the night there).

2nd Day

We take trail number 186 and traverse the Tabarettakopf, continuing until we reach the Edelweiss Shelter at 2,481 meters. We continue on trail number 185, descending to the fork at "Herrensteig – Zumpanell" and proceed to the mine at 2,361 meters. We then go over the "Egger" towards the south and take the unconsolidated path leading to the Tabaretta Shelter at 2,556 meters (where we spend the night).

3rd Day

(Depending upon your physical fitness, you can also make a detour to the Payer Shelter at 3,029 meters.) On trail number 4, we proceed to the K2 Shelter at the Langenstein at 2,330 meters, continuing over the Kuhberg on number 23 until we reach the "Mother of God" at the Marlt Ridge at 2,568 meters. We now traverse the top-most part of the Marlt Glacier and the talus slope located to the south of it in order to reach the Hintergratkopf at 2,813 meters. Descent to the Hintergrat Shelter at 2,661 meters (where we will spend the night).

4th Day

Traversal of the Sulden Moraine below the König Peak, continuing to the Schaubach Shelter at 2,581 meters above sea-level. We then proceed along the Steckner Trail to the ice lake peak at 3,230 meters, and continue along the Langen Glacier down to the Zufall Shelter at 2,265 meters (spending the night there).

5th Day

From the Zufall Shelter on trail number 151 towards the Madritsch Ridge at 3,123 meters and the Schaubach Shelter at 2,581 meters. We take the aerial lift into the valley at 1,900 meters and continue on trail number 12 via the "Kanzel" alpine restaurant to the Düsseldorf Shelter at 2,721 meters (where we will spend the night). (Of course, you can also take the chair lift to the "Kanzel").

6th Day

Ascent to the "Hinterer Schöneck" at 3,143 meters. Descent via the "Vordere Schöneck" at 2,908 meters and the "Kälberalm" ("Calf's Meadow") at 2,248 meters. We then take trail number 19 to Sulden.

Of course, you are free to omit or change individual segments of the trip. However, we recommend always having a guide with you (some of the paths are unmarked, other paths are on unconsolidated surfaces, and a few of the trails are only rarely used). You should also select your routes according to the physical fitness of the participants.

**In any case, this hike requires good physical fitness and sure-footedness.
For more information, please contact the Ortler Alpine School.**

The Archaic Trail:

"Archaic" means "ancient, old, primeval." We follow the route of an ancient path, the so-called "Wormision" Path, connecting the Etsch Valley with Veltlin. There were mining activities along this route. Wood was hewn and animals were taken to pasture, as a result of which farms and settlements sprang up. There are signs of human habitation in this area extending from the Bronze Age up to modern times.

From the Stilfser Bridge (1,125 meters above sea-level), a steep mountain trail passes between the houses to the "Weiberbödele," a historical site where sacrificial rites were performed dating back to the Bronze Age. After a 15-minute stroll, you reach Stilfs' "Rhaeto-Romansh Village." Intensive mining activities dominated this area for centuries.

Stilfs is situated at an elevation of 1,311 meters above sea-level. We cross it in a northeasterly direction. At the end, we can admire the impressive Ortler Group, the alpine forests, and the post-Ice Age moraines. We now continue along the "Archaic Trail" to the "Kaschlin-Bühel" visible in front of us, a settlement of hunters, gatherers, and miners of the Chalcolithic Age.

Via "Kaschlin," we reach, after a 1 ½ hour walk, the "Unterbrunnquelle," where an approx. 300-meter-long segment of an old road over the Stilfser Ridge has been uncovered. From there, we descend to the Agumser mountain farms and, after a 45-minute hike, we reach Prad.

Walking time: Approx. 3 hours; approx. 5 hours when taking the Bergwaal hike

Best time: April to November

Difficulty: Often simple and rather narrow paths in slightly downhill, but wooded terrain.

Because of the danger of falling rock in short segments, take care during very rainy weather.

The Meadow Trail:

The communities of the Upper Vinschgau are among those richest in meadows in all of Tyrolia. Butter and cheese are the primary products. When the animals are driven down from the higher elevations in autumn, the farmers receive butter and cheese according to the amount of milk they deliver.

Trafoi (1,543 meters above sea-level) on the Stelvio Pass Road is the starting point of our high-altitude hike up to the edge of the forest.

From here, the forest trail takes us up to the Furkel Shelter, which can also be reached with the chair lift from Trafoi. The Ortler Massive and the Madatsch Glacier as well as the Trafoi Ice Wall present an impressive backdrop.

In this segment of the trail, we come across alpine livestock on the summer meadow in the high-altitude meadows (2,200 to 2,700 meters above sea-level).

From the Furkel Shelter, we come to the Prader Meadow and continue via a narrow mountain path, after about 1 ½ hours of walking, to the Stilfser Meadow (2,064 meters). In both meadows, intact farm buildings as well as a pig pen, manure ditches, water troughs, etc. can be seen.

Via the Ochsenberg or from Stilfs, we come to the Dörfer Meadow and then to the Glurnser Meadow. After St. Martin near Glurns, we begin descending.

Walking time: Approx. 9 hours for all of the meadows, but you have the option of omitting some segments of the trip.

Best time: From mid-June until late-September.

Difficulty: In part, the path crosses very narrow, steep terrain.

Farms Trail

To hike around the Stilfser and Lichtenberger alpine farm estates is like returning to the Middle Ages. You will experience landscapes, buildings, work techniques, and even a language which have been forgotten by time and space. The narrowness and steepness of the fields makes only a limited use of modern technologies possible.

From the little village of Gomagoi (1,260 meters), we first come to a forest trail and then ascend, after 1 ½ hours of walking, to the Fraggles Estate at 1,650 meters above sea-level. Like so many of the alpine farms ahead of us, the Fraggles Estate, too, was set up as winter headquarters by shepherds, lumberjacks, and meadow people. By the 17th Century, at the latest, it had become a permanent settlement.

From there, we take the forest road to the "Fraggles" wildlife preserve, which is maintained by the Stilfserjoch National Park. From here, we take an old forest trail downhill to the hamlet of "Platz," which was first mentioned in a document dating back to the 14th Century. Despite the access trail which we are now taking, the hamlet of "Vallatsches" (at approx. 1,720 meters above sea-level) is still quite ancient in appearance, and modern technology is almost nowhere to be seen. Extremely steep but lovingly cared-for fields and small meadows once supported by stone walls can be seen. After three hours on foot, we now descend via a forest trail to the hamlet of "Faslar" at 1,520 meters above sea-level. Here, we can see just how small the parcels of land are in Stilfs. The first segment of this hike from estate to estate can be concluded after about 4 hours of descending into the village of Stilfs.

The second segment will take us to additional farms along a forest trail and to the Schart Meadows. We will be en route for about 1 ½ hours before we begin descending steadily for another 2 ½ hours to Lichtenberg via land cleared in medieval times and past the ruins of the Lichtenberg castle.

Walking time: About 5 hours per segment.

Difficulty: For the most part, just simple hiking trails, easy even for children.

Best time: Only from May to November insofar as the snow remains for a long time in the shadow of the slopes.

Prad – Agums – Lichtenberg – Prad (Frauwaal)

Prad (907 meters), Agums (931 meters), Pinethof (1083 meters), Lichtenberg (927 meters)

Elevation differential: About 200 metres during the ascent and again as many during the descent.

A simple, comfortable hike.

Total walking time: Approx. 3 hours

From Prad, you begin hiking towards Agums, but just after reaching the bridge, you should no longer follow the main road and instead take a left turn and ascend briefly towards Gargitz. After a short time, you will arrive at the old "Kreuzweg," which is marked with a sign and of course can be recognized by its "stations." Now taking the "Kreuzweg," you come to the St. George's Church, which houses an enormous cross – the "Great Lord God of Gums" – from the 14th Century which miraculously survived undamaged the fire of 1971. From the church, the only slightly steep trail number 9 (marked) will lead you to Pinethof, the highest point of the hike. From here, you can descend to St. Christina's Chapel, which was probably erected on an old pagan ceremonial site. The view of the still-mighty ruins of Lichtenberg Castle and the village of the same name (formerly called "Suvendes") is impressive and unforgettable.

The castle, with its lengthy history, has, since recently, been undergoing renovation. Most of the once ornate frescoes have been removed and can now be found in Innsbruck. But many of the frescoes have left traces so that, on certain days with a special light, one is surprised to still recognize their lines.

We now descend from the church hill, cross the brook, and direct our attention to the very interesting parish church beneath the castle (which itself cannot be toured). We then continue our hike, descending to Lichtenberg with its many characteristic corners (that is one of the positive aspects you can appreciate in the relatively slow economic growth of many a village in the Vinschgau). Just before coming to the road to Glurns, there is a trail on the right-hand side marked "number 14" which leads back to Prad on almost completely level ground.

Prader Roundtrip Hike

Duration: 3 hours

Difficulty: Easy

Behind the "Stern" Hotel to the left, following the asphalt field trail number 7 (marked) until you come to the Nickkreuz. From there, take path number 4 (slightly uphill) until you come to the "Nauhof." From there, continue following the "number 4" marking until you reach the so-called "Schweinböden" and then the "Dürrer Ast" snack station. You can descend via trail number 1 through the alder forest until you reach the Hotel Prad. Then walk along the main road or the Suldenbach Damm back to the village.

"Lotter" Path

Duration: 3-4 hours

Difficulty: Comfortable

From the St. Johann Church, proceed to the "Dürrer Ast" and from there, go to the Schweinböden, following the "number 5" marking until you come to the Platzgernun Farm, the Egg Farm, and the Standleier Farm. You can descend via the Standleier Meadows until you come to the Nittkreuz and trail number 7 all the way back to the village.

The "Fragges" Wildlife Preserve – Upper Stilsfer Meadow – Prader Meadow – "Fragges" Wildlife Preserve

Duration: approx. 4 hours

Difficulty: Comfortable

From the Wildlife Preserve, we ascend gently to the Upper Stilsfer Meadow. From there, we take trail number 4 until we reach the Prader Meadow. You can descend via the forest trail until you arrive back at the Wildlife Preserve.
