

Cycling stage Lachen - Walenstadt approx. 30 km

Description of the tour

Today you will leave Lake Zurich and continue onwards in an easterly direction. The impressive summit of the Speer Mountain will serve you as an orientation point along the first section of the journey. The 1950 metre high mountain is a big change from the landscapes which you have seen along the trip to date. The mountainsides come closer to one another, the valley narrows and the peaks are higher and higher. Leaving Lachen you will cycle along the Cycle Route No. 32 passing through Schübelbach, Reichenburg and Niederurnen to Ziegelbrücke and then along the Red Route No. 9 to Weesen.

If you wish to cycle a slightly longer route follow the Cycle Route No. 76 from Schübelbach in the direction of Uznach, where you can visit the Kaltbrunner Riet region. This low-moor bog is located like an island in the agricultural region of the Linth Plain and is the remains of the swamp which once stretched from Lake Zurich to Lake Walen. As early as 1939 the Swiss environmental conservation group Pro Natura bought 25 hectares of land here in order to preserve this native landscape. Today the protected area is double this size and serves as a habitat for numerous endangered plants and animals. Visitors have a great view of the Kaltbrunner Riet from the viewing towers at the sea-gull pond and on the duck lake. From Uznach on you will follow along Cycle Route No. 9 through Schänis and on to Weesen.

In this town on the western shore of Lake Walen you will board a ship and be able to sit back and enjoy the fantastic view. Lake Walen is sandwiched in between the Mürtchenstock and Flumserberg Mountains on the southern shore and the Churfirsten Mountains to the north. The Churfirsten Mountains in particular are a stunning sight. The rock-faces rise almost vertically from the lake to a height of over 2300 metres. On the boat trip to Walenstadt the boat will stop at a number of places including Quinten. The small car-free town on the northern shore of the Lake can only be reached by foot or by boat and is a popular place from which to start hikes.

Note:

Please note the ferry timetable on page 29.



Attractions along the route

Schänis Convent

The convent is a former type of convent for noble women, which was founded at the start of the 9th century by Count Hunfried von Rätien to house a relic of the cross which was later sent to the island of Reichenau. The abbess was the only spiritual member of the convent. The noblewomen all came from southern German noble families and could only attain a place in the convent upon payment of a large fee. The convent closed down in 1811 and the church was taken over by the local parish.

Gallus Tower in Schänis

The 15 metre tall Romanic tower is the only surviving part of the Chapel of St. Gallus, which was probably built here in 1100. In 1824, the chapel was destroyed during a fire in the village and only the tower was spared. In the following years the tower also fell into disrepair until in 1889 the local priest had it renovated. The bottom part of the tower is square whereas the upper parts of it appear round as the corners were rounded off.

Weesen

Weesen is located on the western shores of the Walensee and in the foothills of the Speer Mountain. The region was also inhabited early in history as remains of a Gallo-Romanic temple found in 1962 prove. From Weesen, traffic from Chur to Zurich could be easily checked and policed, as all traffic had to cross the Lake. After the road over the Kerenzerberg opened in 1848, a land connection existed between the two cities and Walen developed into a tourist attraction. Today about 1500 people live in the lakeshore town.



Ferienregion Heidiland

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Walensee

The Walensee is located almost fjord-like between the steep cliffs of the Churfirten in the North and the Kerenzer Mountain or Mürtschenstock and Flumserberg in the South. The peaks are around 2300 metres high, whereas the Lake in the valley is at 420 metres. The narrowness of the valley made transport since ancient times a challenge. The Lake also was located on the important transport route between Zurich and Chur and on through the Rhine Valley and over the Alps to northern Italy. As there were little or no roads along the lakeshore, people and goods were transported by boat over the Lake. Therefore the person who controlled the Lake also controlled the flow of traffic and could also demand high tolls. Today there is a road over Kerenzer Mountain and also a railway track and motorway from Weesen to Walenstadt along the southern shores. The northern shore still has no transport connections. The village of Quinten at the foot of the Churfirten felt this lack of transport the most. While other villages after the Second World War experienced an economic boom, many inhabitants of Quinten left due to the lack of transport connections. In 1835,

171 people still lived here, whereas today only 50 people live here. As Quinten is a car-free zone and can only be reached by foot or by boat, it is very popular with tourists and is a great place to start or end a hike. Due to its location on the southern slopes of the Churfirten, the small village benefits from a Mediterranean climate where figs, kiwis and other exotic plants can be grown. Not far from Betlis are the Seerenbachfälle Waterfalls, a cascade of three waterfalls with a total height of 585 metres making them one of the highest falls in Europe. The middle waterfall has a total height of 305 metres and is the highest free-falling waterfall in Switzerland. Originally the Seez was the main river feeding into the Walensee, leaving it as the Maag and then shortly afterwards joining the Linth. Extensive clearing of forests in the catchment area of the Linth led to erosion and mudslides which caused deposits to build up in the Linth between the Walensee and Lake Zurich. The Maag could then no longer flow as usual and was dammed in from the deposits which led to the water level of the Walensee rising. As well as dealing with regular flooding, the population suffered from

Malaria and Tuberculosis. At the start of the 19 century a construction project began which saw the canalisation of the Linth from Mollis on and which opened into Walensee by way of the Escher Canal. The path of the Maag was also canalised so that the Linth Canal was now the new connection between Zurich and the Walensee. Hans Conrad Escher took over the management of the project. Johann Gottfried Tulla, who managed the straightening of the Upper Rhine, was also involved in the project. With the canalisation of the Linth the water level in the Walensee sank by 5.5 metres and flooding ceased. Shipping traffic was once again possible between Walenstadt and Zurich. The Walensee formed a linguistic barrier between the Alemanni in the West and the Retho-romanics (the Welschen), in the west. The Lake got its name from here as Walensee means literally the Lake of the Welschen. The water temperature is a few degrees lower than that of the neighbouring lakes due to the rocks faces and seldom rises above 20 °C even in Summer, which means bathing in the Lake is always a refreshing experience.

Emergency Number: +49-(0)7531 - 81 99 3-53

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Walenstadt

Walenstadt is located on the eastern shore of the Walensee and has a population of 5000 along with the other three communities of Walenstadtberg, Tscherlach and Berschis. The town was first mentioned in the year 831, as Walenstadt was first mentioned under the name Ripa Vualastad in a goods account from the Franconian King Ludwig dem Frommen. There is an unusual peace monument in Walenstadtberg, which is towered over by the Churfürsten peak of Hinterrugg. In 1924 the Swiss artist and graphic designer Karl Bickel began work on his masterpiece, the Paxmal, a place of inner reflection which was finished in 1949.

In 2005 a lakeshore stage was built which has shown Heidi-The Musical. A second part was also shown in the open air against the backdrop of the Churfürsten and the Walensee. In Summer 2010 the story of the black brothers („Geschichte die schwarzen Brüder“) by Lisa Tetzner can also be seen as a musical in Walenstadt.



Attractions in Walenstadt

museumbickel

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Opening Hours

Friday	17.00 - 20.00 h
Saturday, Sunday	14.00 - 17.00 h



Tourist Information

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Boat trip Weesen - Walenstadt

18.04. - 19.10.2014 Sunday and Holidays						19.04. - 24.05.2014 Tues, Thurs, Sat. 26.05. - 18.10.2014 Monday - Saturday		
						*change in Quinten with stay 11.55 - 13.20 h		
dep. Weesen	10.20	12.00	13.35	15.20	17.12	11.15*	14.00	15.40
arr. Walenstadt	11.45	13.20	15.05	16.45	18.35	14.00	15.30	17.00

Times according to March 2014 and no liability for errors or omissions is accepted!