

Graubünden



Switzerland, we are told (and often can't help feeling), is so utterly tidy, so irritatingly perfect that it feels like you shouldn't touch anything for fear you'll spoil the postcard. Graubünden (Grisons, Grigioni, Grishun), many Swiss from other cantons will tell you in admiring tones, is so, well, wild.

The roads are mostly narrow, winding and often pockmarked. In the countless valleys that slice up the rugged landscape are scattered villages that retain a rough-diamond rural edge largely lost in the picture-perfect hamlets of the rest of the country. Or should that be rough-emerald? Great carpets of deep-green felt seem to have been draped over the valleys and lower hills of this, the country's biggest canton. From the little explored western valleys to the picturesque Engadine, much untamed beauty and bucolic village charm awaits discovery.

Beyond the ancient capital, Chur, the canton is a little short on high culture but boasts more than 11,000km of walking trails, 1500km of downhill ski slopes and more than 600 lakes. Graubünden is also home to the country's only (and Europe's oldest) national park, the Swiss National Park (Parc Naziunal Svizzer).

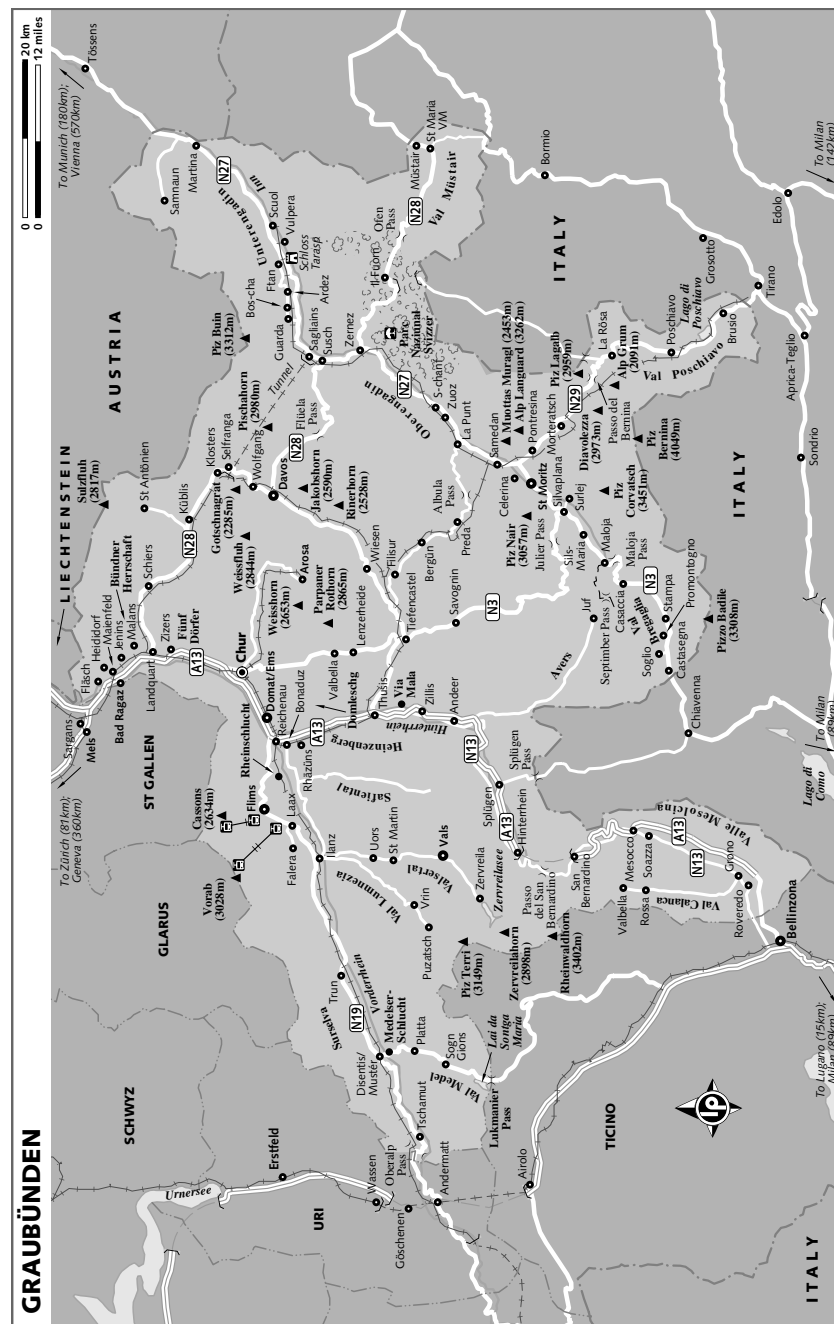
But Graubünden is wild in another way. If many country villages still get by on small-scale farming, others have been propelled to wealth by the dazzling winter-sports industry. Indeed, half the population is involved in tourism. Who hasn't heard of the ultra-chic ski resorts of St Moritz, Davos and Klosters? And don't forget the thermal baths. Several are scattered across the canton, led by those of Vals and Scuol.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Indulging in winter sports and one's self in the resorts of **Davos** (p276) and **St Moritz** (p282)
- Wandering the wild open spaces in the **Swiss National Park** (p280)
- Taking the waters at Thermo Vals in the picturesque town of **Vals** (p271)
- Discovering the pretty villages that line the valleys of the Engadine region, especially **Zuoz** (p281), **Scuol** (p279) and **Guarda** (p278)
- Being mesmerised by the vivid Carolingian and Romanesque frescoes at the monastery of **Müstair** (p280)



■ POPULATION: 186,100 ■ AREA: 7105 SQ KM ■ LANGUAGE: GERMAN, ROMANSCHE & ITALIAN



History

The canton's openness to all-comers today is a far cry from its inward-looking and diffident past. Down through the centuries, the people of this rugged area lived largely in isolated, rural pockets, mistrustful of outsiders and, aided by the near impregnable mountain terrain, able to resist most would-be conquerors.

In medieval times the region was known as Rhaetia, and was loosely bound by an association of three leagues (Drei Bünde). The modern name for the canton derives from the *Grauer Bund*, or Grey League. Graubünden joined the Swiss Confederation in 1803.

However, much more important was the year 1864, when a local hotel owner in St Moritz invited summer guests to stay over for the winter – for free. In this way, winter tourism in Graubünden, and later all Switzerland, was launched.

Orientation & Information

Two major rivers traverse the rugged terrain: the Rhine (with two main source rivers in the canton) and the Inn. The Alps stretch out across most of the region, which explains why the canton is so sparsely populated – around 26 inhabitants per square kilometre. The Septimer Pass, Julier Pass and Maloja Pass have been key transit routes across the Alps since Roman times.

Chur, the capital, houses the cantonal tourist office, **Graubünden Ferien** (☎ 081 254 24 24; www.graubuenden.ch & www.rhein.ch; Alexanderstrasse 24; ☎ 8am–5pm Mon–Fri), located in the building marked 'Publicitas', 200m east of the train station.

Language

In the north (around Chur and Davos) German is spoken, in the south Italian and in between (St Moritz, Lower Engadine and parts of the Vorderrhein Valley in the west) mostly Romansch. German speakers account for 65% of the Graubünden population, with those speaking Romansch around 15% and around 20% Italian.

Getting There & Around

Three main passes lead from northern and western Graubünden into the southeast Engadine region: Julier (open year-round), Albula (summer only) and Flüela (year-round,

but may close in bad weather). These approximately correspond to three exit points into Italy: Maloja, Bernina and Fuorn/Ofen (all open year-round). The Oberalp Pass, the route west to Andermatt, is closed in winter but, as at Albula, there is the option of taking the car-carrying train instead. Carry snow chains or use winter tyres in winter.

Graubünden offers a regional transport pass (Sfr120/150) valid for seven or 14 days from May to October. You get two/four days respectively of unlimited free travel on all Rhätische Bahn (RhB) trains (which serve the canton), the SBB line between Chur and Bad Ragaz, the RhB bus between Tirano and Lugano and postal buses within the canton. For the remaining days of validity you pay half price. Throughout the pass's validity you will pay half price on most cable cars and funiculars, the Furka-Oberalp line between Disentis/Mustér and Brig, and Davos city buses.

A winter version issued from 1 November to 30 April (Sfr90) gives two days' free travel and three days' half-price travel on RhB trains in a seven-day period. It also gives you five days' half-price travel on postal and Engadine buses.

CHUR

pop 31,900 / elevation 585m

Chur (pronounced 'ch' as in a Scottish loch) is Switzerland's oldest continually inhabited city. The old centre still retains a few medieval reminders and is a pleasant concentrate of history and culture in a region otherwise largely bereft of urban interest. The city was almost destroyed by fire in 1464. A wave of German-speaking artisans arrived to rebuild and, in the process, managed inadvertently to suppress the local lingo. So it was *abunansvair* Romansch and *Guten Tag* to German.

Orientation & Information

INTERNET ACCESS

Street Café (☎ 081 253 7 14; Grabenstrasse 47; per 20min Sfr5; ☎ 9am–midnight Sun–Thu, 9am–2am Fri & Sat)

LAUNDRY

Malteser's Wäsch-Egga (Grabenstrasse; wash/dry Sfr7/4; ☎ 9am–midnight Mon–Sat, noon–midnight Sun) Self-service laundry.

MONEY

You can change money at the **train station** (☎ 7am–8pm). A handy central bank with ATMs is the UBS branch on Poststrasse.

POST

Post office (Postplatz, ☎ 7.30am–6.30pm Mon–Fri, 8am–noon Sat) Just outside the Old Town.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourist office (☎ 081 252 18 18; www.churtourismus.ch; Grabenstrasse 5; ☎ 1.30–6pm Mon, 8.30am–noon & 1.30–6pm Tue–Fri, 9am–noon Sat) Has a town map that carries potted explanations of every conceivable sight.

Sights & Activities

Apart from three surviving medieval towers and the late Romanesque-Gothic cathedral, the bulk of the old city dates to the 16th century. A stroll reveals brightly painted façades along the mostly pedestrian-only streets. Aside from what is mentioned below, the city is home to a series of second-tier museums, whose subjects range from wine to sewing machines!

The **Obertor**, just in from the Plessur river, marks the main medieval entrance into the old town. Along with the stout, stone **Maltesertor** (once the medieval powder and munitions tower), on the corner of Grabenstrasse and Engadinstrasse, and the **Sennhofturm** (nowadays part of the city's prison), it is all that remains of the city's defensive walls. Just inside Obertor, a produce market is held on Saturday mornings.

The **Kathedrale** (cathedral; ☎ 081 258 60 00; www.bistum-chur.ch in German; Hof; ☎ 7.30am–6pm) was established in 1150 on the site of earlier churches, dating back as far as the 5th century AD. The modern exterior, added centuries later, is nothing to write home about but inside are some notable treasures. Of the church's seven altars, the High Altar is the most important. Built by Jakob Rüss from 1486 to 1492, it contains a splendid triptych. The striking stained-glass windows over the west entrance to the church were done in the late 19th century. Although it is possible to enter a side aisle, the bulk of the church is off limits while restoration work continues, at least until late 2006.

Some of the religious art and reliquaries once housed in the cathedral crypt are now on show in the **Rätisches Museum** (☎ 081 257 28 89; www.rm.gr.ch in German; Hofstrasse 1; adult/

senior & student/child under 16yr Sfr6/4/free; ☎ 10am–noon & 2–5pm Tue–Sun). Over three floors and in the loft spreads a permanent exhibition that encapsulates much of what is known of the canton's history. Displays include a few Roman artefacts, coins, weapons and armour, household items from down the centuries and a section on Alpine rural tools and gizmos.

The nearby 1491 **St Martinskirche** (Martinplatz; ☎ for services) contains three stained-glass windows by Augusto Giacometti.

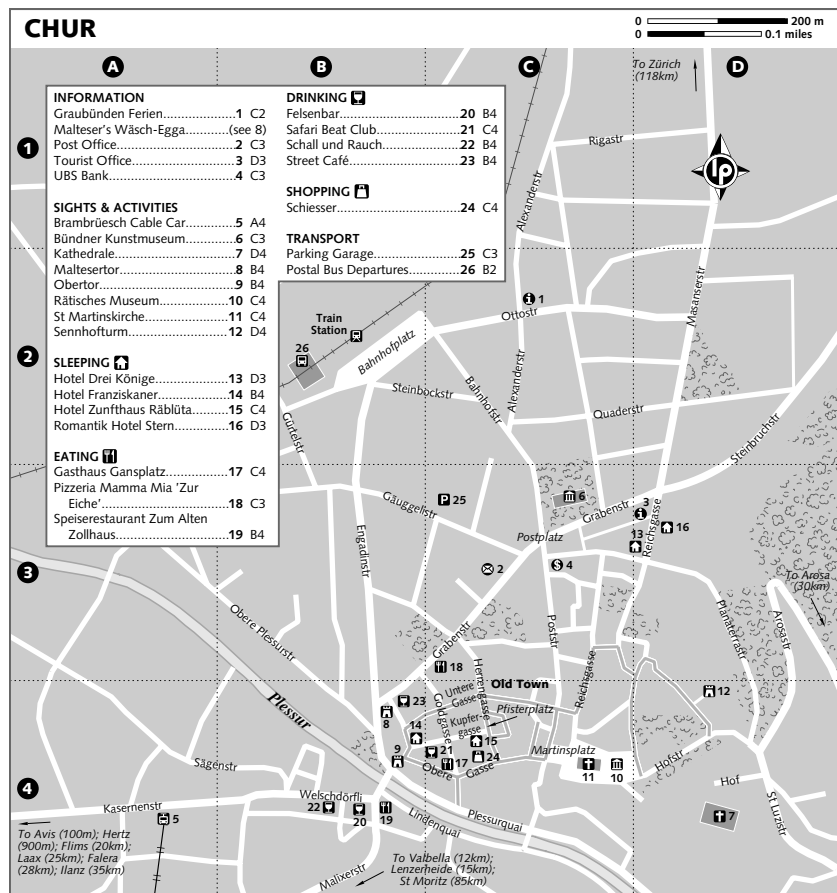
To get a better idea of the artistic legacy of Augusto (1877–1947), his cousin Giovanni (1868–1933) and Giovanni's son Alberto (1901–66), head for the **Bündner Kunstmuseum** (Museum of Fine Arts; ☎ 081 257 28 68; www.buendner-kunstmuseum.ch; Postplatz; adult/senior & student/child under 16yr Sfr10/5/free; ☎ 10am–noon & 2–5pm Tue–Sun, to 8pm Thu). The Giacometti clan, and Alberto in particular (all born in the Val Bregaglia in southern Graubünden), are the only local artists to have made an impression worldwide and their works occupy much of the top floor of this art museum (housed in a delightful 19th-century mansion) dedicated to Graubünden artists. A room on the ground floor is given over to works by Chur-born Angelika Kaufmann (1741–1807), and in the basement are works by a host of contemporary artists, including Lenz Klotz and HR Giger.

Had enough of enclosed spaces? Take the cable car up to **Brambrüesch** (☎ 081 250 55 90; www.brambruesch.ch in German; Kasernenstrasse 15; return fare adult/child Sfr22/11; ☎ 8.30am–5pm mid-June–late Oct) for a hike in the heights (1600m). In winter it is in action again, in combination with a couple of ski lifts, to allow locals a little practice before heading off for more serious ski action elsewhere in the canton.

Sleeping

Hotel Zunfthaus Räbliuta (☎ 081 252 13 57; www.rebleuten.ch in German; Pfisterplatz 1; s/d with shower Sfr80/140) It oozes 500 years of history, but never fear; this classic has been redecorated once or twice since it was built! The 12 rooms are fresh and inviting. Especially romantic (but don't bump your head) are those in the loft.

Hotel Franziskaner (☎ 081 252 12 61; fax 081 252 12 79; Kupfergasse 18; s/d Sfr65/110, d with bathroom up to Sfr160) This hotel in the Old Town is neatly positioned over a pretty but somewhat



boisterous square (on Friday and Saturday nights) inside Obertor. The rooms are bright, comfortable and clean, with pine furniture.

Hotel Drei Könige (☎ 081 252 17 58; www.drei.koenige.ch in German; Reichsgasse 18; s/d Sfr120/160; P) Room décor varies from the timber-lined to plain bright white. The hotel has been greeting guests since the 18th century. The bar/café has a laid-back charm, occasionally with live jazz nights.

Romantik Hotel Stern (☎ 081 252 57 57; www.stern.chur.ch in German; Reichsgasse 11; s/d Sfr145/290; P) Although it's been in the business for several centuries, this attractive hotel on the edge of the Old Town has a fresh, crisp feel. Rooms are generally light and decked

out with warm timber furniture. The hotel restaurant is also worth a visit.

Eating

Speiserestaurant Zum Alten Zollhaus (☎ 081 252 33 98; Malixerstrasse 1; meals Sfr60-70; ☎ 11.30am-midnight) Welcome to what is easily the most atmospheric of Chur's old-time eateries. Black-and white-clad waitresses bustle beneath centuries-old timber beams serving up local and Swiss German dishes. In autumn there's an extensive hunters' menu, with all sorts of freshly hunted game.

Gasthaus Gansplatz (☎ 081 252 14 57; Obere Gasse 34; meals Sfr60-70; ☎ 9am-midnight Tue-Sat, 11am-5pm Sun) Lacking the smoky, centuries-old atmosphere of the Zollhaus, this spot is nev-

ertheless good for local cuisine, including such oddities as *capuns* and *bizochel* (see p51).

Pizzeria Mamma Mia 'Zur Eiche' (☎ 081 252 22 20; Grabenstrasse 39; pizza & pasta Sfr13-22; ☎ daily) To set you in the mood, a statue with dribbling fountain greets you inside the entrance. Pizzas and pasta are the order of the day, but you can have a perch fillet (*Eglifilet*) and a brief range of meat dishes. When it's warm, make sure to eat in the garden terrace.

Drinking

A restless student population has led to high-density bar activity in the Old Town. Until midnight Sunday to Thursday, the scene is on Untere Gasse, basically a row of bars. On the weekend, here and elsewhere in town, it gets a little sillier with generalised 2am closing. Down on Welschdörfli they don't have to wait for the weekends. However, with a few notable exceptions, it is dominated by girly-bars.

Street Café (☎ 081 253 79 14 14; Grabenstrasse 47; ☎ 9am-midnight Sun-Thu, 9-2am Fri & Sat) This is one of the trendier hang-outs for the earlier part of the evening. There's foosball and computer games. It's best to sit outside if weather permits.

Safari Beat Club (www.safari-beatclub.ch in German; Kupfergasse 11; ☎ 8pm-midnight Wed-Thu & Sun, 8pm-2am Fri & Sat) Wander into what seems a half-derelict arcade and look (to your left) for the pitiless armoured door – yank it and you're in. The club, whose innards are quite visible from the street and is littered with flora gamely suggestive of safari territory, sometimes pumps out music beyond 2am on the weekend.

Schall und Rauch (www.schallundrauch.ch in German; Welschdörfli; ☎ 5pm-2am Wed-Sat, 3pm-2am Sun) 'Sound & Smoke' attracts all sorts. Lounge lizard music, such as Gotan Project, wafts across the red and orange stage-lit bar. At one end is a mezzanine, at the other a flat-screen TV with a loop fireplace sequence to give you a warm feeling even without imbibing.

Felsenbar (www.felsenbar.ch; Welschdörfli 1; ☎ 8pm-2am Tue-Thu, 8pm-4am Fri & Sat) The all-black décor and inevitably sociable set around the horseshoe bar give this spot a busy, underground feel. Throw in some dance music as the night wears on and the atmosphere becomes pleasantly rowdy.

Shopping

Schiesser (☎ 081 252 35 73; Obere Gasse 22) So impressed by local meat and sausage specialities that you'd like to take some home? Head for Schiesser, where there is wind-dried *Bündnerfleisch*, *Rohschinken* (cured ham) and all sorts of *salsiz* (sausage) to salivate over.

Getting There & Away

There are rail connections to Klosters and Davos (Sfr30, 1½ hours), and fast trains to Sargans, for Liechtenstein (Sfr9.80, 22 to 25 minutes), and Zürich (Sfr36, 1¼ to 1½ hours). Postal buses leave from the terminus above the train station. The A13 motorway runs north from Chur to Zürich and Lake Constance.

Getting Around

Bahnhofplatz is the hub for all local buses, which cost Sfr2.20 per journey (valid for changes for 30 minutes). At around 8pm the routes combine and services become less frequent.

The old centre is mostly pedestrian-only. For parking, look for signs to several parking garages on the edge of the old quarter (eg on Gäuggelistrasse).

CAR RENTAL

If you plan to hire a car, try **Avis** (☎ 081 252 39 73; Kasernenstrasse 37), in the Claus Carrosserie car body shop; or **Hertz** (☎ 081 252 32 22; Triststrasse 15).

AROUND CHUR

Chur is within easy access of a number of ski areas.

LENZERHEIDE & VALBELLA

elevation 1470m & 1540m

These linked resorts, on either side of Heidsee, bombard you with their beauty. There's a woodland wonderland, as well as plenty of soaring peaks. Skiing on the 155km of slopes is mainly geared towards beginners and intermediates. A one-day ski pass costs Sfr55 for adults, Sfr50 for seniors, Sfr37 for youths and students, or Sfr18 for children to 12 years old.

The **Parpaner Rothorn** (2865m) is the highest point reached by cable car. Several walking

trails wend their way from the summit. In summer, you can lose yourself along 170km of marked hiking trails.

The **Lenzerheide tourist office** (☎ 081 385 11 20; www.lenzerheide.ch; Voa Principala; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-noon Sat) is on the main road.

Eating & Eating

There are 23 hotels in Lenzerheide and Valbella, and more in nearby towns. You could also opt for longer stays in holiday apartments and chalets.

Hotel Pöstli (☎ 081 384 11 60; www.stall-lenzerheide.ch in German; Hauptstrasse 37; s/d Sfr84/158) A pleasant option in central Lenzerheide. Rooms are full of timber and the downstairs restaurant dishes up local cuisine and national favourites like fondue and raclette. If you want early nights it might not be for you, as they sometimes crank up the après-ski music.

Hotel Guardaval (☎ 081 385 85 85; www.guardaval.ch in German; meals Sfr100; ☎ closed May) In Sporz, about 3km southwest of Lenzerheide, this hotel offers high cuisine, with meat and fish options, in a charming setting. Try for a table on the open timber gallery.

Getting There & Away

Either resort is easily reached by an hourly bus from Chur (Sfr9.80, 40 minutes). They're on the route from Chur to St Moritz spanning the Julier Pass.

AROSA

pop 2270 / elevation 1800m

Once a near inaccessible rural settlement and then, from the late 19th century, a sanatorium for the unhealthy wealthy, Arosa is today a mid-level ski and hiking resort. Plans are in the air to build a linking lift with the Lenzerheide and Valbella ski stations. Although only 30km southeast of Chur, getting there is nothing short of spectacular. The road climbs about 1100m from Chur in a series of curves so challenging that Arosa is one of the few sizeable settlements in the country not reached by postal buses. The scenic train ride from Chur makes an excellent alternative. Some hotels and restaurants close for lack of interest in the off season.

Orientation & Information

Arosa has two parts: Ausserarosa (Outer Arosa) is the main resort, grouped around

the shores of Obersee (Upper Lake) at the train terminus; and Innerarosa is the older section of the original village. The train station has money-exchange counters, luggage storage and bike rental.

From Oberseeplatz, go along Poststrasse, heading uphill in the direction of Innerarosa. Within five minutes you'll reach the **tourist office** (☎ 081 378 70 20; www.arosa.ch; Poststrasse; ☎ 8am-noon & 1.30-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat plus 2-4pm Sat mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 9am-noon Sun May-Nov, 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat, 4-5.30pm Sun Dec-Apr).

The post office is at Oberseeplatz.

In summer, grab the Arosa Card (Sfr8) which gives unlimited access to the two ski lifts in operation, local buses, pedalos and rowing boats available on the Obersee. If you stay overnight you get the card for free from your hotel.

Activities

Arosa has 100km of **skiing**, suitable for mixed abilities, based on three main mountains. Beginners have a good choice of runs. Contact the **ski school** (☎ 081 378 75 00 50; www.ssa.ch; Seeblickstrasse; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Sat) for lessons. The highest skiing point is the Weisshorn at 2653m. Ski passes cost Sfr55 for one day and Sfr276 for one week (there are senior/youth reductions). In addition to downhill and cross-country skiing, Arosa features several ice-skating rinks (natural and artificial), curling and tobogganing (from Tschuggen down to the village).

Arosa has 200km of maintained **hiking** trails, with good options even in winter. The walk up to Weisshorn from the village takes about 3½ hours and the panorama is extensive. From the **Hörnli** top station (2513m) via the Hörnli Express cable car you can embark on several circuits or even walk west to Lenzerheide (p267), a hike of around three hours. A 1½ walk will get you to Weisshorn.

Sleeping

Praval (☎ 081 377 11 40; www.praval.ch in German; Innere Poststrasse, Innerarosa; s/d Sfr120/240) A pleasing mountain chalet-style house, the Praval offers comfortable rooms; the best easily are those south-facing doubles with balconies and wide views over a deep valley. It's just off the road and fairly close to the Hörnli Express ski lift.

Sonnenhalde (☎ 081 378 44 44; www.sonnenhalde-arosa.ch in German; Innerarosa; s/d Sfr82/248; (P) A

three-storey, dark timber house, it's located just by the Brüggli bus stop. The single rooms are small and have shared bathroom facilities. The doubles are rather more generous, with timber beds and carpet. Best of all are the family suites with four beds, private bathroom and balcony.

Hotel Alpensonne (☎ 081 377 15 47; www.hotelalpensonne.ch in German; Innere Poststrasse, Innerarosa; s/d Sfr178/376; (P) Sfr12) Also close to the Brüggli bus stop, this place offers tempting south-facing doubles with balconies and breathtaking views. The cosiest are those on the top loft floor, with sloping timber ceilings. They also have a steam bath and sauna on the premises.

Eating

Restaurant Grishuna (☎ 081 377 17 01; Poststrasse, Innerarosa; meals Sfr35-50; ☎ Wed-Mon, closed mid-Sep-Oct) This corner spot near the Brüggli bus stop may first catch your eye because of the enormous cowbells hanging in the window. But they whip up a storm in the kitchen. Swiss German dishes prevail, but a handful of pasta options are thrown in and a series of **Kinderteller** (at Sfr11) for kids.

Alpenblick (☎ 081 377 1428; meals Sfr40-50; ☎ daily) Sitting right below the Hörnli Express cable car, this country-style chalet makes good on the Alp views from the terrace and serves up solid meat dishes, fondue and a killer homemade **Apfelstrudel**.

Orelli (☎ 081 377 12 08; Poststrasse; salad buffet per plate Sfr14, veg dishes Sfr16-22; ☎ Thu-Tue) Known for its all-too-healthy salad bar and alcohol-free policy, Orelli's also serves up a limited range of vegetarian dishes and carnivorous options with organic products. Rooms with shower and TV are also available for up to Sfr175 per person half-board.

Getting There & Away

The only way to get to Arosa is from Chur; take the hourly narrow-gauge train that leaves from in front of the train station (Sfr13.40, one hour). It's a winding, scenic journey chugging past mountains, pine trees, streams and bridges. The train crosses the oldest steel and concrete rail bridge ever built. At 62m high over a ravine, it is a dizzying engineering feat completed in 1914.

Buses in the resort are free if you have the Arosa Card or ski pass. Drivers should note a traffic ban from midnight to 6am.

FLIMS, LAAX & FALERA

They say that if the snow ain't falling anywhere else, you'll surely find some around Flims, Laax and Falera. These three towns, 20km west of Chur, form a single ski area known as the Weisses Arena (White Arena), with 220km of slopes catering for all levels. Laax in particular is known as a Mecca for snowboarders, who spice the local nightlife up too. The resort is barely two hours by train and bus (less by car) from Zürich airport.

Orientation & Information

The three towns that make up the backbone of the ski resort are strung north-east to southwest over 15km. Flims is the biggest, divided into the larger, residential Flims Dorf to the north, and the leafier Flims Waldhaus, 1km away. The ski lifts lie between the two. Laax is also divided into two. The sleepy old town, Lag Grond, with its pretty houses and peaceful lake, lies to the south; and Laax Murschetg, where the lifts are located, is 1km to the north. The third of the towns, Falera, is the smallest and quietest. There are **tourist offices** in all three, the main one in **Flims Dorf** (☎ 081 920 92 00; www.alpenarena.ch; Via Nova; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-4pm Sat May-Oct; 8am-5pm Mon-Sat Nov-Apr). Another useful website is www.laax.com.

Sights

FALERA

Those in search of a touch of history will be drawn to the Romanesque **St Remigiuskirche** in Falera, set on a grassy hill that has been a site of worship since prehistoric times (as attested by the line-up of modest menhirs leading up to it). Inside the shingle-roofed church, the left wall is completely covered by a mid-17th-century fresco depicting the Last Supper. From the cemetery you can see deep into the Vorderrhein valley.

LAG DA CAUMA

Known in German as Caumasee, this turquoise lake is about a 15-minute hike or a five-minute stroll and then ride by lift, south of Flims Waldhaus in the midst of thick woods. It is a pretty location and great for a cool summer swim. You can hire a rowboat and eat at a restaurant terrace overlooking the lake.

Activities

SKIING & SNOWBOARDING

The ski slopes range as high as 3000m and are mostly intermediate or easy, although there are some 45km of more challenging runs. A one-day ski pass includes ski buses and costs Sfr62 (plus Sfr5 for the KeyCard that you use to access the lifts). There are 60km of cross-country skiing trails. Laax was the first Swiss resort to allow snowboarders to use the lifts back in 1985, and remains a Mecca for the snow surfers, with two huge half-pipes (one said to be the biggest in the world) and a freestyle park huddled around the unfortunately named Crap Sogn Gion peak. The season starts in late October on the glacier and, depending on snowfalls, in mid-December elsewhere.

HIKING

In summer, the hiking network covers 250km. At the Cassons summit there is a circular walking route, the *Naturlehrpfad*, that yields a flush of flora and fauna.

RIVER RAFTING

The raging Rhine (Rhein in German) has two main sources, both in Graubünden: the Vorderrhein (which rises just south of the Oberalp Pass in the far west of the canton) and the Hinterrhein (which itself has several sources in the south of the canton). Try river-rafting on the 17km turbulent stretch of the Vorderrhein between Ilanz and Reichenau, taking you through the **Rheinschlucht** (Rhine gorge), somewhat optimistically dubbed 'Switzerland's Grand Canyon', but impressive enough nevertheless. In summer, **Swissraft** (☎ 081 911 52 50; www.swissraft.ch) offers half-/full-day rafting for Sfr109/160. The meeting spot is Ilanz train station. You can get the same dramatic views of the gorge on westward-bound trains, but without the thrills and spills.

Sleeping

There is just one hotel in Falera, more than a dozen options in Laax and 30 hotels in Flims. The area is teeming with holiday houses and apartments that sleep up to eight people. Book through www.alpenarena.ch.

Riders Palace (☎ 081 927 97 00; www.riderspalace.ch; Laax Murschetg; dm Sfr30-60; d per person up to Sfr200; 📍) It may look like some awful 1970s housing estate, but this place, a magnet for

partying snowboarders, is a curious slice of designer cool for the snow party animal (hotel motto: sleeping is for dreamers). You can go for basic but comfortable bunk-bed accommodation or stylish rooms (with baths by Philippe Starck). The pricing system is a trifle complicated and can include your ski pass. The so-called Multimedia rooms are doubles/triples with Playstation, video recorder, DVD player and Dolby surround sound. The whole place is wi-fi enabled and located 200m from the Laax lifts.

Hotel Grischuna (☎ 081 911 11 39; www.hotel-grischuna.ch in German; Promenade, Flims Waldhaus; s/d Sfr100/200) On the road linking Flims Dorf with Flims Waldhaus and a short walk from the ski lifts, this is a simple family affair with a rustic restaurant (meals Sfr35 to Sfr55; open Tuesday to Sunday). It serves a three-course daily menu for Sfr28 as well as regional specialties à la carte.

Hotel Cresta (☎ 081 911 35 35; www.cresta.ch; Via Passadi, Flims Waldhaus; s/d Sfr145/290) Modern digs tucked away in the wooded back lanes of Waldhaus, this place is a water-baby's dream, with saunas, steam baths, Jacuzzis, pool, solarium and massage options. Oh, and they have rather nice rooms too.

Eating

Restaurant Pöstli Laax (☎ 081 921 44 66; www.poesstli.ch in German; Via Principala 54; lunch Sfr25-35, dinner mains Sfr35-40; 📍 Tue-Sun) An endearing building in the old part of Laax, this spot (aside from seven charming rooms) offers local cooking presented with care. Choose between the warm dining area, with heavy wooden beams, the vaulted cellar or the covered winter garden.

Restaurant Barga (☎ 081 928 28 28; www.adula.ch; Via Les Sorts Sut 3, Flims Waldhaus; tasting menus Sfr75-110; 📍 mid-Dec-Apr, mid-May-mid-Nov) Housed in the Hotel Adula, this classy French gastro-palace is the place to come for a fireside romantic meal. Opting for one of the set tasting menus takes the complication out of choosing from a long list of local and French-oriented dishes.

Drinking

Bars are generally shut from mid-April to June and late September to mid-November.

Riders Palace (☎ 081 927 97 00; www.riderspalace.ch; Laax Murschetg; 📍 4pm-4am) Its lobby bar opens for the après-ski scene and continues until

well into the night, and occasionally with live acts.

Crap Bar (☎ 081 927 99 45; Laax-Murschetg lifts; 📍 4pm-2am) A hit with skiers and snowboarders coming off the pistes in Laax. Made out of 24 tonnes of granite, it is right by the Laax Murschetg lifts and makes a great place to end the day and/or start the evening.

Getting There & Away

Postal buses run to Flims and the other villages in the White Arena area hourly from Chur (Sfr12.40 to Flims Dorf, 30 minutes). A local free shuttle bus connects the three villages.

WEST OF CHUR

The mainly Romansch-speaking Surselva area west of Chur stretches out along the lonely N19 highway that snakes its way west towards Uri canton and, not far beyond, to the great southern Alpine canton of Valais. Beyond the ski fun of Flims, Laax and Falera (p269), the pickings are slim along this road, although a few points along the Vorder- rhein river are worth a stop. More impelling are a couple of wild valleys extending south of the road, which itself trails out in Alpine wilderness as it rises to the wind-chilled **Oberalp Pass** (2044m) that separates Graubünden from Uri. About 4km south of the pass, near the tiny Lai da Tuma lake, lies hidden the source of the Vorderrhein river.

ILANZ

A bustling town with a pleasant enough old centre, Ilanz is for most visitors largely a transport hub. The main N19 road ribbons westward, passing through various towns in the predominantly German-speaking Obersaxen area before reaching the Romansch monastery village of Disentis/Mustér (p272) Ilanz is also the departure point for exploration of two pretty southern valleys.

VALSERTAL & VAL LUMNEZIA

Initially following the course of the Glogn (or Glenner) stream south, the Valsertal (Vals Valley) drive is delightful, passing a handful of hamlets, such as Uors and St Martin, before arriving at the star attraction, **Vals** (1252m). After St Martin, the valley tightens and deepens. A dense web

of forest folds its canopy over the narrow, snaking road. About 2km short of the village, you emerge into one of those typically Graubünden Alpine plains, green and liberally scattered with houses and summer shepherds' huts.

Vals, home to the Valser mineral water, stretches 2km along its glittering stream. The secret of this place and its soothing waters is well and truly out since Basil-born architect Peter Zumthor created Therme Vals, the unique thermal bath installation that opened in 1996 on the site of the old baths.

Sights

Therme Vals (☎ 081 926 80 80; www.therme-vals.ch; Vals; admission Sfr30, most treatments Sfr55-255; 📍 11am-8pm Tue-Sun, 11am-9pm Mon mid-Jun-mid-Apr) is a must. Using 60,000 stone sheets of local quartzite, Zumthor created the most magical setting for baths in a country that has no shortage of fine thermal bathing installations.

Aside from the main heated indoor and outdoor pools, which are a treat in themselves, you will discover in this grey-stone labyrinth all sorts of watery nooks and crannies, cleverly lit and full of cavernous atmosphere. Try the deep heat Feuerbad (42°C), the perfumed Blütenbad or the hideaway Grottenbad. Have a hum in the latter and enjoy the otherworldly acoustics! Sweat out all those impurities in the Dampfstein (steam rooms with rising temperatures).

Less well known than the baths is an exhilarating 8km trip south to the impossibly turquoise lake of **Zerrveilasee**. The drive takes you up through a claustrophobic 2km tunnel that would be more at home in a coalmine. Access is generally only possible from June to October. From above the lake, various hiking options present themselves. There is some modest downhill skiing in the heights above Vals.

Running parallel to the Valsertal from Ilanz, and then gradually branching away to the southwest, is the **Val Lumnezia**, as generously broad and sunlit green (in summer) as the Valsertal is deep and narrow. The road runs high along the west flank of the valley. Where it dips out of sight of the valley you arrive in **Vrin**, a cheerful huddle of rural houses gathered around a brightly frescoed church. The asphalt peters out 8km further on in Puzatsch.

Sleeping

Apart from holiday houses for rent, Vals offers eight hotel options.

Gasthaus Edelweiss (☎ 081 935 11 33; edelweiss.vals@bluewin.ch; Dorfsplatz; r per person Sfr59) Located right on the village square this place has timber-lined rooms and bathrooms on each floor. It has its own good restaurant serving up local dishes such as *capuns* and variations on *spätzli*. The hotel can get you Sfr5 off entry to the baths.

Hotel Therme (☎ 081 926 80 80; www.therme-vals.ch; s/d Sfr245/410) In this frightful 1960s colossus, Peter Zumthor has redesigned the rooms. In some cases, the hotel's annexes have not been given the Zumthor makeover, and are consequently cheaper and, frankly, ugly. Use of the bath facilities is included in the price.

Hotel Pensiu Pez Terri (☎ 081 931 12 55; s/d Sfr60/120) Located in Vrin, on the road through the middle of the village, this is a cheerful and rustic old place. Rooms are all loaded with timber and soft beds. Chomp on the hearty local cooking downstairs.

Getting There & Away

Postal buses run more or less hourly to Vrin (Sfr12.40, 47 minutes) and Vals (Sfr11.40, one hour) from Ilanz (itself reached by regular train from Chur, Sfr14.20). The Vals bus goes on to Zervreila from June to October, taking an extra 25 minutes.

DISENTIS/MUSTÉR & VAL MEDEL

An average sort of village by the picturesque standards of the canton, Disentis or Mustér ('monastery' in Romansch), boasts a far-from-average Benedictine monastery

AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Hotel Alpsu (☎ 081 947 51 17; www.hotelalpsu.ch in German; s/d Sfr72/136; 📍) On the main street smack in the middle of Disentis, this place is a gem. With lots of woodwork, rooms are cosily appointed and each quite unique. In one you find a grand four-poster, in another exposed wood beams and an open plan situation with bubble bath opposite the bed. Just as good is the restaurant (meals Sfr50 to Sfr60; open daily). The friendly staff do fine renditions of *capuns* and *bizochel*.

MAGIC MUSHROOMS

There was a time when there were customs stations on the passes that lead from Graubünden to Ticino. They are long gone but, come autumn, cantonal police are again stationed on some passes, in particular the Lukmanier Pass, on the lookout for 'bandits' sneaking out kilos of luscious mushrooms. No, it's not drug-trafficking. The magic of these mushrooms is the flavour they bring to a risotto. The people of Ticino and their Italian cousins can't get enough of them and they pour across the cantonal border to fill up their picnic baskets with the autumn crop. There's just one hitch. The legal limit is 2kg per person per day. And the police take a dim view of cheats. On one early September weekend in 2005, 30 people were fined for excessive picking – one mushroomer was caught with 70kg of the tasty tubers!

with baubly baroque church attached. As early as the 8th century a modest monastery stood on this site. The present immense complex dates to the early 18th century. To the immediate left of the entrance into the church is a door that leads you down a corridor to the **Klostermuseum** (admission free; 🕒 2-5pm Tue, Thu & Sat Jun-Oct, 2-5pm Wed Christmas-Easter), filled with memorabilia on the history of the monastery. Then head left upstairs to the **Marienkirche**, a chapel with Romanesque origins which is filled with *ex-voto* images from people far and wide in need of (or giving thanks for) some miraculous intervention from the Virgin Mary.

You can follow the road south of Disentis down the **Val Medel** valley, which starts in dramatic style with the **Medelser-Schlucht** (Medel Gorge). You pass through several villages, of which **Platta** is noteworthy for its shingle-roof Romanesque church. About 20km on, by the **Lai da Sontga Maria** lake and surrounded by 3000m peaks, the road hits the **Lukmanier Pass** (Passo di Lucomagno, 1914m) and crosses into Ticino canton.

Disentis/Mustér is where Matterhorn-Gothard trains from Brig via Andermatt (Sfr16.80, 50 minutes) in Valais terminate and local RhB trains heading to Chur (Sfr26, 1¼ hours) start. They leave in both directions every hour. Five buses a day rum-

ble over the Lukmanier Pass, four of them heading on to Biasca in Ticino.

SOUTH OF CHUR

The main route south of Chur passes castle ruins and the town of Zillis (whose church is a treasure trove of Romanesque art), and heads on into the remote Italian-speaking Mesolcina valley on the way to Ticino.

VIA MALA & AVERS VALLEY

The A13 motorway and railway south of Chur at first head west to Reichenau before swinging south along the Hinterrhein river between the Domleschg mountain range to the east and the Heinzenberg to the west. A string of villages and ruined robber-knight castles dot the way to **Thusis**, a busy town whose main interest lies in the fabulous views from the **Obertagstein** castle ruin about an hour's walk from the centre. Trains from Chur en route for St Moritz call in here, before swinging east to make for the ski resort via Tiefencastel.

South of Thusis, take the N13 rather than the motorway to get an idea of how the Via Mala (Bad Way), through a deep gorge, must once have been as scary a route as chroniclers down the centuries suggest. It opens out just before the town of **Zillis**, known for its **St Martinskirche** (adult/child Sfr4/2; 🕒 10am-6pm Apr-Oct). This modest church is of interest for its wooden Romanesque ceiling, which is divided into 153 extraordinarily vivid painted panels depicting the life of Christ until, oddly, his crowning with thorns, followed by scenes of the life of St Martin.

To really get out into the wild, head south another 8km past **Andeer** (known for its modest thermal baths and home to five hotels and a camping ground) for the junction with the road into the remote **Avers valley** (four hotels in hamlets along the way). This lonely trail snakes 24km south, at first amid thick forests and then in a bare Alpine valley, through tiny hamlets to reach **Juf** (2126m), a disappointing huddle of houses claiming to be the highest permanently populated village in Europe.

Postal buses run between Thusis and Bellinzona in Ticino (Sfr38, two to 2½ hours) stopping at Zillis, Andeer, Splügen and towns along the Valle Mesolcina. Buses from Andeer run to Juf (Sfr15.20, 55 minutes).

SPLÜGEN & VALLE MESOLCINA

From the Avers turn-off, the main roads branch west into an area known as the Rheinwald (Rhine Forest), whose main town is **Splügen**. The Via Mala Ferien website (www.splugen.ch in German) covers Splügen and around, the Avers area, Andeer and Zillis. Splügen is an intriguing place for its mix of dark timber Walser (people from the Upper Valais) farm houses and bright-white mansions of trading families made wealthy by 19th-century commerce with Italy over the nearby Splügen and San Bernardino mountain passes. Apart from the riverside camping ground you could stay at **Hotel Prätigiana** (☎ 081 664 14 76; Hauptstrasse 1; s/d Sfr80/160; 📍), a stout white building in the centre and one of five hotel options.

The road south of Splügen leads 9km to the like-named pass into Italy, while the main roads continue west 8km before swinging south to the Passo del San Bernardino (you can take the tunnel when the pass is closed) that drops into the **Valle Mesolcina**, the most Italian part of Graubünden. The main towns of Mesocco (look out for the hilltop castle ruins nearby, which are visible from the highway), Soazza and Roveredo are not overly interesting, although the latter has some lively eateries and bars.

Just north of Roveredo, the wild and barely visited **Val Calanca** opens up to the north, with a 19km road that terminates in the hamlet of **Rossa**, from where a dirt track continues another 5km north past **Valbella** into the wilderness. Several wild and woolly hiking trails roll out in the heights above the narrow valley. From Roveredo, it is about 10km to Bellinzona (p288), the capital of Ticino canton.

See Via Mala & Avers Valley (left) for transport information. In addition, buses run every 1½ hours or so up the Val Calanca to Rossa from Bellinzona (Sfr16.20, 1½ hours) via Roveredo (change at Grono, on the intersection with the Val Calanca road).

NORTH OF CHUR

A quick trip north will bring you to the region's premier wine region, the Bündner Herrschaft, and the kitsch delights of Heidi-land. You can also take the waters at nearby Bad Ragaz.

BÜNDNER HERRSCHAFT

The A13 motorway blasts northward from Chur and through the wine-growing region known as the **Fünf Dörfer** (Five Villages), of which **Zizers** is perhaps the prettiest. The road runs into the industrial town and transport crossroads of **Landquart**, in which you won't want to waste time stopping.

Instead follow the narrow country lane out of Landquart for Malans, which takes you into territory known as the Bündner Herrschaft. This is the canton's premier wine region, dominated by the Blauburgunder (aka Pinot Noir) grape variety that makes for some memorable reds. This is also, rather sickeningly, Heidiland.

Malans & Jenins

Through vineyards and woods you arrive in **Malans**, dominated by the private castle of the Salis dynasty, a name in local wine and historic rivals to the Planta clan, whose townhouses line the village square. The **Weisskreuz** (☎ 081 322 81 61; Rathausgasse 148; meal Sfr60-100; ☎ daily) is a renowned local eatery in an atmospheric 17th-century building with terrace. A few kilometres north is **Jenins**, a less noble looking village worth a stop for a glass or two of the local tipple and perhaps a snooze in **Gasthaus Zur Traube** (☎ 081 302 18 26; Unterdorf 1; s/d Sfr47/94; restaurant & bar ☎ 11.45am-midnight Mon-Wed, 4pm-midnight Fri, 10am-midnight Sat & Sun).

You can get trains from Chur to Malans (Sfr6.60, 21 to 34 minutes), some requiring a change in Landquart. To push on to Jenins (from Sfr9.20, 33 minutes from Chur) you have to get a connecting postal bus from Landquart, Malans or Maienfeld.

Maienfeld & Heididorf

The most impressive of these wine towns is **Maienfeld**, another 2km through magical woods and vineyards. Dominated by a colourfully frescoed **Rathaus** (town hall) and haughty church, it is worth hanging out for the local cuisine. Head for **Schloss Brandis** (☎ 081 302 24 23; meals Sfr50-80; ☎ 11am-midnight Mon-Tue, 10am-midnight Wed-Sun), a mighty medieval tower (in the square off a street called Vorderwinkel) that houses one of the canton's best restaurants. The full menu, dripping with meaty suggestions, is available from midday to 2pm and 6pm to 10pm, and a limited menu the rest of the time.

A series of set menus are around Sfr40 to Sfr50, excluding wine. If you feel like a little wine-tasting, try the personable **Vinothek von Salis** (☎ 081 302 50 57; Kruseckgasse 3; ☎ 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-4pm Sat), where you can try if you want to buy. If your German is up to it, Frau Möhr will tell you everything you need to know about the local tipples.

Each year the four Bündner Herrschaft towns (Maienfeld, Malans, Jenins and Fläsch) take turns to celebrate the **Städlistfest**, a lively wine harvest celebration with much drinking, eating and merrymaking in the otherwise normally dead quiet streets, held on the last weekend of September.

OK, we have held out, but Maienfeld is where to start your Heidiland experience. Johanna Spyri (1827-1901) had the idea of basing the story in the countryside around Maienfeld, and the locals had the worse idea of identifying one local village as Heidi's. It is now called, oh dear, **Heididorf**, a 25-minute walk from Maienfeld (signposted) across pretty country. In peak periods you might be able to get the Heidi Express bus, which will pass by the rather awful Heidihof Hotel. Apart from the **Heidihaus** (☎ 081 330 19 12; www.heidi-swiss.ch; adult/child 6-16yr/child under 6yr Sfr5/2/free; ☎ 9am-5pm Mar-Nov), where of course she never lived because she never existed, you could visit the HeidiShop and buy some Heidi colouring-in books, Heidi videos or just plain Heidikitsch. Then you could follow the Heidiweg (Heidipath) into the surrounding hills (Heidialp). When you're done, you might be in need of some Heidiwein for your Heidiheadache...or perhaps just hit the N13 road and Heiditail it out of here north into Liechtenstein.

Maienfeld is on the Chur-Bad Ragaz train line.

Bad Ragaz

pop 5041 / elevation 502m

The perfect cure for a case of Heidiness could be the baths of Bad Ragaz, a couple of kilometres west of Maienfeld. **Tamina Therme** (☎ 081 303 27 41; www.resortragaz.ch; baths only adult/child under 12yr Sfr17/12; ☎ 7.30am-9pm) is a couple of kilometres south of the town centre (local buses run hourly from the train station). In the bath business since 1840, Bad Ragaz has attracted the likes of Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford. Children under three may not enter. Bad Ragaz is on the Chur-Zürich

train line. Trains from Chur via Maienfeld run hourly (Sfr7.80, 15 to 20 minutes).

KLOSTERS & DAVOS

Following the N28 road east away from Landquart you enter the broad plains valley of the Prättigau, which stretches east to the understatedly chic ski resort of Klosters. Several valley roads spike off the highway before Klosters, and the one leading to **St Antonien** is the most attractive. There are no specific sights, just high Alpine country dotted by villages and Walser houses, the typical burned wood constructions raised by this rural folk since migrating here from the eastern Valais from the 13th century on.

KLOSTERS

pop 3800 / elevation 1194m

Britain's Royals love this ski resort because of its old-fashioned charm and lack of a brash and flash nightlife. The slopes don't get much more sophisticated.

Orientation & Information

Klosters is split into two sections. Klosters Platz is the more important, grouped around the train station. Right of the station is the **tourist office** (☎ 081 410 20 20; www.klosters.ch; Alte Bahnhofstrasse 6; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-4pm Sat). The post office is opposite the station.

Two kilometres to the left of the station is the smaller enclave of Klosters Dorf, with several hotels, a tourist office and the Madrisa cable car. Klosters buses are free with a Guest Card (which also gives discounts on local sport activities and other items) or ski pass.

Activities

There are 315km of **ski runs** in the Davos/Klosters region, which is covered by the general Regionalpass (adult/youth/child Sfr61/41/21 a day). One-day passes for specific areas are marginally cheaper.

Above Klosters at 2300m is the Gotschnagrät, accessible from the cable car by the train station. It gives access to the gulp-inducing Gotschnawang. Not only is the word hard to say, but the ski run is one of the most difficult there is. On the other side of the valley, the Madrisa region has runs favouring beginners and intermediates, as well as a kids' day care centre **Kinderhort Madrisa**

(1st hr Sfr10, each hr after Sfr5; ☎ 9.30am-4pm). The Klosters' runs are linked to the Weissfluh area in Davos (p276). For more information on skiing in the resorts, check out www.davosklosters.ch. Hiking and mountain biking are options in summer.

Sleeping

The tourist office supplies lists of private rooms (from Sfr20 per person) and numerous holiday apartments.

Soldanella (☎ 081 422 13 16; www.youthhostel.ch/klosters; Talstrasse 73; dm incl breakfast winter/summer Sfr42/28.50; ☎ reception closed 10am-5pm, hostel closed btwn seasons) Soldanella, the SYHA hostel set in two mountain chalet-style buildings, is a 12-minute, mostly uphill trek from the station. Half of the straightforward rooms are singles and doubles and there's no curfew.

Rustico (☎ 081 410 22 88; www.rusticohotel.com; Landstrasse 194; s/d Sfr77/92; ☎ P) The 10 double rooms here are spacious, with parquet floors and comfy beds. The ones in the loft, with timber ceilings, are the cosiest. The hotel, near the Gotschnabahn ski lift in Klosters Platz, has a sauna.

Hotel Alpina (☎ 081 410 24 24; www.alpina-klosters.ch; Bahnhofplatz; s/d Sfr285/450; ☎ late Nov-mid-Apr & mid-Jun-mid-Oct; ☎ P) Opposite the station, this hotel has luxurious rooms. Prices are highest in the guesthouse section, but you will appreciate the Jacuzzis. Some may also like the Feng Shui layout, parquet floors and non-smoking status of some rooms. Use of the swimming pool, sauna and fitness room is included.

Eating

Hotel Alpina (☎ 081 410 24 24; www.alpina-klosters.ch; Bahnhofplatz; meals Sfr62; ☎ daily) This hotel's restaurant is considered one of the best in eastern Switzerland (along with the nearby Walserhof) and serves a mouth-watering array of international dishes.

Salzi's Sonne (☎ 081 422 13 49; Landstrasse 155; meat mains Sfr35-40; ☎ Wed-Sun) Along the road towards Dorf from Platz, Salzi's Sonne serves a broad selection of dishes, including pasta, fondue (Sfr28 per person) and richly flavoured regional dishes. One of the house specialities is beef stroganoff.

Gasthaus Bargas (☎ 081 422 55 77; Kantonsstrasse 8; meals Sfr35-50; ☎ Wed-Sun) A typical timber fronted house for the region, this is a good spot for simple local fare on the road into

Klosters Dorf. When the sun is shining, eat on the terrace, with its views across Klosters and the countryside.

Getting There & Away

See Davos (p278), as Klosters is on the same train route between Landquart and Filisur. Klosters and Davos are linked by free buses for those with Guest Cards or ski passes.

DAVOS

pop 10,900 / elevation 1560m

Nine kilometres on from Klosters, Davos is the brasher of the two resorts and frankly not that attractive. Once a famous health resort, it has recently got a name for itself as the annual meeting point for the crème de la crème of world capitalism, the World Economic Forum (WEF to those in the know).

Global chat fests aside, the serious business here is skiing. Those bold of body and swift of ski brave some savage slopes, including the legendary Parsenn-Weissfluh area, where runs descend up to 2000m.

Orientation & Information

Davos is a 4km-long strip beside the train line and the Landwasser river. It comprises two contiguous areas, each with a train station: Davos Platz and the older Davos Dorf. The **main tourist office** (☎ 081 415 21 21; www.davos.ch; Promenade 67; ☎ 8.30am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm Sat, 10am-noon & 3-5.30pm Sun) is in Platz. Hours are reduced in low season (spring and autumn). Another tourist office, opposite the Dorf train station, is closed on Sundays. The **post office** (Bahnhofstrasse 3; ☎ 7.45am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-noon Sat) is in Davos Platz.

The Visitor's Card allows free travel on local buses and trains, as does the general ski pass (and the Swiss Pass). There's a self-service laundry, **Waschsalon** (☎ 081 416 32 70; Promenade 102; ☎ 8am-6.30pm Mon-Fri). **Expert RoRo** (☎ 081 420 11 11; Promenade 123; per 20/60min Sfr5/12) has Internet access.

Sights

Davos is mostly an outdoor experience. But if you want some time away from fresh air, there are compact museums with limited opening hours in and around town – such as the ski-obsessed **Wintersportmuseum** (☎ 081 413 24 84; www.wintersportmuseum.ch in German; Promenadestrasse 43; adult/child Sfr5/3; ☎ 4.30-6.30pm Tue, Thu & Sat Dec-Mar & Jul-Oct).

Kirchner Museum (☎ 081 413 22 02; Ernst-Ludwig-Kirchner-Platz; adult/senior & student/child Sfr10/8/5; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Christmas-Easter & 15 Jul-end Sep, 2-6pm Tue-Sun rest of year) displays the world's largest collection of works by the German expressionist painter (1880–1938). Kirchner, afflicted by pulmonary problems and later a weakness in the hands that made painting difficult, first came to Davos for treatment in 1917. He later returned and, as the Nazis rose to power in his home country, remained and painted some extraordinary scenes of the area around Davos. When the Nazis classified Kirchner as a 'degenerate artist' and emptied German galleries of his works, he was overcome with despair and took his own life in 1938.

Activities

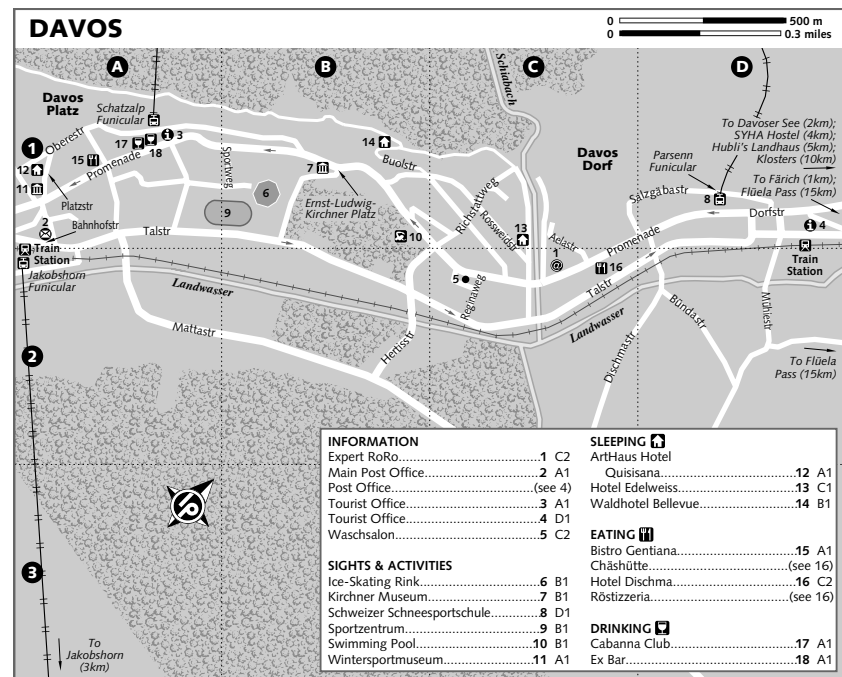
The Weissfluh ski area goes as high as 2844m, from where you can **ski** to Küblis, more than 2000m lower and 12km away. Alternatively, you can take the demanding run to Wolfgang (1629m) or the scenic slopes to Klosters. Across the valley, Brämabüel and Jakobshorn (the latter beloved of snowboarders) offer equally good skiing, and the nearby areas of Pischa and Rinerhorn are within easy reach of Davos. See p275 for ski pass prices.

There are several ski and snowboard schools, including the **Schweizer Schneesportschule** (☎ 081 416 24 54; www.ssd.ch; Promenade 157). Some 75km of cross-country trails open from December to April.

The mountains of Davos and Klosters together provide 450km of marked **hiking** paths and 600km of **mountain bike** tracks. Other possible activities, depending on the season, include swimming, para-gliding, hang gliding, wind-surfing and sailing on **Davoser See** (Davos Lake), ice-skating, tobogganing and more. At the **Sportzentrum** (☎ 081 415 36 00; Talstrasse 41) you can get into handball, volleyball and more – it is free for overnight guests.

Festivals & Events

Davos hosts an **International Music Festival** from late July to mid-August, featuring a variety of classical works and young performers. It is preceded by a week-long jazz festival. In December there's a Nordic skiing World Cup event.



Sleeping

Hubli's Landhaus (☎ 081 417 10 10; www.hubli.ch in German; Kantonsstrasse, Davos Laret; s/d Sfr157/244; ☎ P) Between Davos Dorf and Klosters, this is a gorgeous country inn with appealing, light rooms decked out in dark timber furniture. There are cheaper rooms without a private toilet. There's a sauna and just nearby is a peaceful mountain lake. The Davos bus stops virtually out the front. What's more, they have a fine restaurant (meals Sfr45 to Sfr60; open Tuesday to Sunday) with a Michelin star. What about *gebratene Lachsschnitzel* *an Balsamicsauce* (roasted salmon fillets in balsamic vinegar sauce)?

Hotel Edelweiss (☎ 081 416 10 33; www.edelweiss-davos.ch; Rossweidstrasse 9; s/d Sfr115/190; ☎ P) The hotel is a friendly, middle-sized place where finding a room should be no problem. The better rooms in this one-time sanatorium have generous, south-facing balconies. There are also some spacious family rooms for up to four. The water is solar heated.

ArtHaus Hotel Quisisana (☎ 081 413 51 04; www.arthaushotel.ch; Platzstrasse 5; s/d Sfr149/258) Two themes dominate the rooms: light, timber

furnishings and art on the walls. The sun-filled rooms are otherwise quite different in shape and décor from one another. The owner, Diego do Clavadetscher, is an artist and the entire interior of this bright-red building is liberally sprinkled with his works and nice designer touches.

Waldhotel Bellevue (☎ 081 415 37 47; www.waldhotel-bellevue.ch; Buolstrasse 3; s/d Sfr265/450; ☎ P) One of the nicest things about this one-time sanatorium (which became the Magic Mountain in Thomas Mann's eponymous 1924 novel) is pampering yourself in the Wellness centre, with various baths, saunas, steam baths and more. Rooms are comfortable, if a little on the standard side, although the bathrooms are stylishly designed. From your balcony there are nice views of the mountains.

Eating

Bistro Gentiana (☎ 081 413 56 49; Promenade 53; meals Sfr35-55; ☎ Thu-Tue summer, daily winter, closed May) This bistro specialises in snail dishes (*Schnecken*) and meat and cheese fondues. A dish of six juicy snails oven-cooked in mushroom heads costs Sfr29.50.

Hotel Dischma (☎ 081 410 12 50; Promenade 128) brings several eating choices together under one roof. For a reasonable pizza or rösti try the **Röstizzeria** (meals Sfr25-35; ☎ Dec-Apr, dinner only Jun-Oct). The downstairs **Chäsütte** (meals Sfr35-40; ☎ dinner only Dec-Apr), or cheese hut, specialises in bubbling fondue.

Drinking

Ex Bar (☎ 081 413 56 45; Promenade 63; ☎ 6pm-3am daily Dec-Apr) There's Europop on the jukebox, free salty popcorn at the bar, a chandelier on the ceiling and a huge stuffed toy reindeer hanging over the door. It frequently stays open later than the official closing time.

Cabanna Club (☎ 081 415 42 01; Promenade 63; ☎ 8pm-3am Dec-Apr) Located in Hotel Europe, this is a busy disco in winter, but if you've had enough of jiving, there are always the pool tables. Closing time seems equally flexible here.

Getting There & Away

For trains to Chur (Sfr26, 1½ hours) or Zürich (Sfr49, two hours 25 minutes), you will change at Landquart. For St Moritz (Sfr27, 1½ hours), take the train at Davos Platz and change at Filisur. For the hourly service to Scuol (Sfr27, 1¼ hours) in the Unterengadin, take the train from Davos Dorf and change at Klosters.

THE ENGADINE

The almost 3000km long Inn river (En in Romansch) has its source in the Graubünden Alps around the Maloja Pass and gives its name to its long valley, the Engadine (Engadin in German, Engiadina in Romansch).

The valley is carved into two sections: the Oberengadin (Upper Engadine) from Maloja to Zernez; and the Unterengadin (Lower Engadine), stretching from Zernez to Martina, by the Austrian border.

The Oberengadin is dominated by the glitz and glamour of chichi skiing in St Moritz and neighbouring resorts, while the Unterengadin, actually comprising two valleys and home to the country's only national park, is characterised by its pretty villages with sgraffito decorated houses and stunning countryside. It is one of the best places to hear Romansch spoken, although the lingua franca is German.

Chaladamarz, a spring and youth festival, is celebrated in the Engadine on 1 March. The **Schlitteda**, an ancient custom involving a procession of colourful horse-drawn sleds, can be seen in St Moritz, Pontresina and Silvaplana in January.

UNTERENGADIN

Known to the Romansch-speaking locals as the Bassa Engiadina (Lower Engadine), this thickly wooded eastern end of Switzerland just like a wolf's snout into neighbouring Austria and Italy. From Davos, the N28 highway climbs up to the barren Flüela Pass (2383m) in a series of loops before dropping over the other side, opening up majestic vistas of crags and valleys, with silver slivers of mountain streams and patches of brown Alpine grass.

The road descends to **Susch**, close to the exit point of Sagliains for the car train that passes along the Vereina Tunnel from Selfranga (just outside Klosters), the only way to make the trip when snow falls close to the pass. The trains run every 30 to 60 minutes during the day and cost Sfr27 to Sfr40 per car, depending on the season.

From Susch you can head 6km south to Zernez and then east into the Swiss National Park and Val Müstair, or further southwest to the Oberengadin.

Or you can follow the Inn on its gradual eastern progress to Austria.

From Guarda to Scuol

pop 170 / elevation 1653m

Six kilometres east of Susch, a side road bends up north of the N28 to **Guarda**. The cobblestone streets of this impossibly pretty village are lined by quaintly squat houses draped in light-hearted sgraffito decoration. It lies above the valley floor on a winding route that leaves the main road and offers sweeping views. Guarda is 30 minutes' walk from its valley-floor train station by the steep footpath, or you can take the postal bus (Sfr2.60), which runs every two hours in the daytime. It makes for a peaceful overnight stop and a good place to go hiking. A trail leads 8km north to a spot in the foothills of the Piz Buin peak (3312m). So now you know where the name of the sun screen comes from!

Plenty of pretty lodgings are available in the traditional houses of Guarda. At the top (eastern) end is the **Hotel Piz Buin** (☎ 081 861 30

00; www.pizbuin.ch; s Sfr105, d Sfr140-220). Its singles are a little pokey, though comfortable, and there is a range of doubles. The house is full of rustic clutter, while the rooms are lean and clean, the best of them clad in stone pine (Arvenholz).

A couple of wooded kilometres east is the hamlet of **Bos-cha**, but by car you can't get any further. To continue on the high road you first have to return to the low road and follow the signs up to **Ardez**, a small village set in striking country and with a ruined medieval tower just on its flank. Another 8km brings you to **Ftan** (with several accommodation options), from where the narrow road slithers down to the main attraction of the valley, Scuol.

Scuol

pop 2160 / elevation 1250m

Attracted by one of the best thermal bathing complexes in the country (second only to Vals, see p271), visitors to Scuol are pleasantly surprised by the ingenious beauty of the sgraffito decoration of the town's houses, many of them centuries old and gaily restored in the past few decades.

ORIENTATION & INFORMATION

The train station is more than 1km west of the village centre. The **tourist office** (☎ 081 861 22 22; Stradun; ☎ 8am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat, 10am-noon & 2-5pm Sun) is in the centre of town, above the Old Town that is gathered down around the river.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Lower Scuol (the Old Town) has quaint Engadine dwellings and cobblestone squares. There's a **museum** (☎ 081 861 22 22; Dorfplatz; adult/child Sfr5/2) devoted to the Unterengadin, open limited hours in summer and winter. The mighty **Schloss Tarasp** (☎ 081 864 93 68; admission Sfr5, tour adult/child Sfr7.20/3.20; guided visits 2.30pm Jun-mid-Jul, 11am, 2.30pm, 3.30pm & 4.30pm mid-Jul-Aug, 2.30pm & 3.30pm Sep-mid-Oct) castle, a 6km drive to the south and out of view of the town, was built in AD 1040 and controlled by the Austrians until 1803.

Engadin Bad Scuol (☎ 081 861 20 00; Via dals Boggs; adult/child 6-16yr/child under 6yr/child under 1yr Sfr25/18/5/free) presents various options. The standard bathing entry gives 2½ hours in a series of pools with all sorts of gadgets that turn on and off, from a whirlpool that drags

you around the outside pool to various massaging jets and waterfalls. You can also use the sauna. The big attraction is the 2¼ hour Roman-Irish bath, which combines a series of different baths, massages and relaxation, all done naked. You must book this in advance (people aged 16 and over).

There is **skiing** above Scuol up to 2800m, with a total of 80km of runs – the longest is 12km. A one-day pass costs Sfr50/40/25 for adults/youths and seniors/children. **Engadin Adventure** (☎ 081 861 14 19; www.engadin-adventure.ch) offers a choice of **white-water rafting** trips from Sfr95.

SLEEPING & EATING

Three attractive hotels are bundled together in the Old Town of Scuol. Plenty more line Stradun, the main street of the modern town.

Hotel Traube (☎ 081 861 07 00; www.traube.ch; Stradun; meals Sfr30-40; ☎ noon-10.30pm Mon & Thu-Sun, 6-10.30pm Tue-Wed) This is a simple eatery (with rooms upstairs), on the main road at the junction with Via de l'Osperial. Staff offer local and more general Swiss dishes.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

The train from St Moritz (Sfr25, 1½ hours), with a change at Samedan, terminates at Scuol-Tarasp station. There are direct trains from Klosters (Sfr24, 45 minutes). From Scuol, the train to Guarda (Sfr6.60) takes 12 minutes. Postal buses from the station

AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Hotel Engiadina (☎ 081 864 14 21; www.engiadina-scuol.ch; d Sfr178-380) This boutique charmer is the pick of the Old Town crop. You can opt for a simple double with shower and loo or go for a fully renovated stone pine room. Some are white-washed and vaulted, in the style of the old Engadine houses; others have warm timber ceilings. Bathrooms are modern and stylish. Best of all is the award-winning restaurant (tasting menu Sfr78; open Tuesday to Saturday), where you can try a mix of local and international cuisine in candle-lit surroundings. The **Ftaner Lammrücken mit Tomatenkruste auf Rataouille und Olivengnocchi** (a juicy lamb cut in a tomato crust with ratatouille and olive gnocchi) is delicious.

operate year-round to Tarasp (Sfr4.60, 26 minutes), Samnaun and Austria (as far as Landeck).

Samnaun

pop 819 / elevation 1377m

The drive east along the Inn to the Austrian border is beautiful if otherwise eventless. You could choose to make a detour that takes you briefly into Austria and then back into a remote corner of Switzerland to the incongruous duty-free town of Samnaun. In winter there is a little skiing but for the floods of local Swiss and Austrians who pour in, it's the tax-free goods (from petrol and cigarettes to watches and clothes) that attracts the traffic.

Müstair

pop 830 / elevation 1375m

It seems extraordinary that one of Europe's great early Christian treasures should be tucked away in such a remote corner of central Europe. But when Charlemagne supposedly founded a monastery and a church here in the 9th century, this was a strategically placed spot below one of the mountain passes (Ofen Pass) that separate northern Europe from Italy and the heart of Christendom.

Just before the Italian border at the end of Val Müstair, you could reach Müstair from Samnaun by dropping down through

a brief stretch of Austrian territory and a slice of Italy. Or approach from Zernez through the national park (see below).

For information on lodgings along the Val Müstair, check with the village **tourist office** (☎ 081 858 50 00; www.muestair.ch).

The Carolingian (9th century) and Romanesque (12th century) frescoes that plaster the interior of the church of the **Kloster St Johann** (St John's Monastery; ☎ 081 851 62 28; admission free; ☞ 9am-noon & 1.30-5pm), known in Romansch as the Baselgia San Jon, are remarkable for their lively colour. Beneath the Carolingian representations of Christ in glory in the apses, are Romanesque stories that concentrate on the grisly end of John the Baptist, St Peter (crucified), St Paul (decapitation) and St Steven (stoned to death). Above it all reign images of Christ seated in heavenly majesty. Next door, the **museum** (adult/child Sfr12/6) takes you through part of the monastery complex, with bits and pieces of Carolingian art and other objects.

Postal buses run along the valley between Zernez and Müstair (70 minutes).

Swiss National Park (Parc Naziunal Svizzer)

The road west from Müstair stretches 34km over the Ofen Pass (Pass dal Fuorn, 2149m) and through the thick woods of Switzerland's only national park and on to Zernez, which is home to the **Chasa dal Parc Naziunal**

Svizzer (National Park House; ☎ 081 856 13 78; www.nationalpark.ch; ☞ 8.30am-6pm daily, to 10pm Tue Jun-Oct). It is on the main road just as it leaves the east end of town and is open the same months as the park. It provides hiking details with locations to see particular animals.

There's no charge to enter the park and parking is free. Walkers can enter by trails from Zernez, S-chanf and Scuol. Deviating from the paths is not permitted. Regulations prohibit camping, littering, lighting fires, cycling, picking flowers, bringing dogs into the park or disturbing the animals in any way. Fines of up to Sfr500 may be imposed for violations.

SLEEPING & EATING

There are several hotel and restaurant options in Zernez and a couple in the park itself.

Chamanna Cluozza (☎ 081 856 12 35; cluozza@hotmail.com; dm Sfr27, d per person Sfr37, half-board per person Sfr68; ☞ late Jun-Oct) With 70 beds mostly in typical Alpine hut dorms, this timber-fronted but basic sleeping option is great for walkers who want to wake up in the middle of it all. It's about a three-hour hike from Zernez.

Hotel Bär & Post (☎ 081 851 55 00; www.baer-post.ch; s/d Sfr90/160) In business since 1905, this is one of the best options in town and on the main road. The best rooms are particularly spacious, the local stone pine predominates and there's also a sauna on the premises. The restaurant, decked out in typical timber style for the region, is a good place to sample local cooking (mains up to Sfr40; open daily).

Il Fuorn (☎ 081 856 12 26; www.ilfuorn.ch; dm Sfr19, s/d from Sfr75/140, half-board extra Sfr30; ☞ Jun-Oct) In the middle of the national park by the main road, it is a handy hulk of a place with surprisingly pleasant rooms. Unless you want to opt for the very basic dorm with huddled together mattresses. Trout is big on the **stübli** menu.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Trains run regularly from Zernez to St Moritz (Sfr16.80, 50 minutes), stopping at S-chanf, Zuoz and Celerina. For the latter and St Moritz, change at Samedan.

OBERENGADIN

As much as the Unterengadin is loaded with rural charm, the Oberengadin is charged with skiing adrenaline. St Moritz, possibly

the most chichi resort of the lot in Switzerland, is joined by a string of other skiing resorts along the Oberengadin valley and nearby Pontresina. A regional ski pass thus covers 350km of downhill runs.

Zuoz

pop 1224 / elevation 1750m

Zuoz, a small town 13km southwest of Zernez, is fully in the Engadine tradition, with colourful sgraffito decorated houses and windows in the church chancel designed by Augusto Giacometti. Skiing from here is limited but the town is one of the prettiest in the Oberengadin.

You'll find several hotels, private rooms and restaurants. **Hotel Belvoir** (☎ 081 854 20 23; www.hotel-belvoir.ch; s/d Sfr165/310; ☞ Jun-mid-Oct, Dec-Apr) is a somewhat sprawling affair at the entrance to town from the main road, vaguely rose-coloured and with spacious rooms. Better still, the hotel has a Wellness centre with whirlpool, sauna and small gym.

Occupying one side of the central square is **Hotel Crusch Alva** (☎ 081 854 13 19; www.hotel-cruschalva.ch; r up to Sfr115 per person; ☞ Jun-Oct, Dec-Apr). The 13 rooms in this beautifully maintained 500-year-old Engadine house are full of timber-flavoured rustic charm. On the 1st floor the little *stüiva* (parlour) is like a 19th-century drawing room and is where to sit down to a meal of fondue, meat or fish (set meals from Sfr25; open Thursday to Tuesday).

Celerina

This resort (Schlarigna in Romansch) by the Inn River is about a 45-minute walk north-east of St Moritz and shares the same ski slopes. Known for its Olympic **bob run** (☎ 081 830 02 00; www.olympia-bobrun.ch), the 1.6km-long bobsleigh run is the world's oldest and the only one made from natural ice. It starts by St Moritzer. One 130km/h 'taxi-ride' trip costs Sfr210. The **cresta run** (☎ 081 833 46 09; www.cresta-run.com) was created by British tourists in 1885. Over 1km, it starts near the Schiefer Turm in St Moritz. A set of five rides costs Sfr450 (and Sfr44 a ride thereafter).

The **tourist office** (☎ 081 830 00 11; www.celerina.ch; cnr Via Maistra & Via da la Staziun; ☞ 8.30am-noon & 2-6.30pm Mon-Fri, plus 10am-noon & 3-5pm Sat in season) is in the village centre.

There are several hotels and restaurants in and around Celerina, although it is not

A LITTLE ANIMAL MAGIC

If you'd like a break from people and their playthings, the Swiss National Park provides an ideal spot far from the madding crowd. It's a place to enjoy the vast, untrammelled countryside.

The park was established in 1914, the first such park to be created in Europe. At 172 sq km, it is smaller than most American and Canadian national parks, but the command of conservation is more rigorously adhered to. The key principle is to keep things natural. This even means holding down the number of paths to a minimum, to lessen the impact of human curiosity.

Such care has led to a flourishing of flora and fauna. You can also view a number of animals that are not usually seen – ibex, marmot, chamois and deer roam through the park at will.

A three-hour walk from S-chanf to Trupchun is especially popular in October when you can get close to large deer. The Naturlehrpfad circuit near Il Fuorn gives an opportunity to see bearded vultures, released into the wild since 1991.

In summer 2005, one of the descendants of the handful of Slovenian brown bears released into the wild in northern Italy since the 1990s caused a storm by wandering over the border into the Val Müstair near the Ofen Pass (Pass dal Fuorn). He came to join the small number of wolves that have again been roaming the east of the canton since 2002. The appearance of the bear attracted floods of animal spotters, but the hullabaloo was short-lived, as the bear wandered back into Italy. In September he was back and upsetting locals by killing a dozen or more sheep to keep hunger at bay.

the most attractive location and a little on the quiet side.

Hotel Cresta Run (☎ 081 833 09 19; www.hotel-cresta-run.ch; Via Maistra; d Sfr80; (P)) is on a minor road directly linking Celerina and St Moritz, about 500m south of Celerina's town centre. It's a simple family hotel with its own restaurant and pizzeria set right by the finish of the Cresta bob run.

Celerina is easily reached from St Moritz by train (Sfr2.80, three minutes) or by local bus.

ST MORITZ

pop 5010 / elevation 1856m

St Moritz (San Murezzan in Romansch) is where the wealthy come to enjoy their riches. With its smugly perfect lake and aloof mountains, the town also looks a million dollars. Those still waiting to make their first billion usually stay around the lake in St Moritz Bad.

Visitors can enjoy a huge variety of winter and summer sports. There is diverse downhill, plus cross-country skiing. Health treatments are also part of the package.

After all, those wealthy boys and girls want to be around as long as possible to keep spending all that lovely lolly.

Orientation & Information

St Moritz exudes health and wealth from the slopes overlooking the lake that shares its name (St Moritzer See in German, Lej da San Murezzan in Romansch). Uphill from the lakeside train station on Via Serlas is the post office and five minutes further on is the **tourist office** (☎ 081 837 33 33; www.stmoritz.ch; Via Maistra 12; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat, 4-6pm Sun Dec-Easter & mid-Jun-mid-Sep, 9am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat rest of the year). St Moritz Bad is about 2km southwest of the main town, St Moritz Dorf. Local buses run between the two, as do postal buses. Not much stays open during November, May and early June.

Sights

The **Engadiner Museum** (☎ 081 833 43 33; Via dal Bagn 39; adult/child Sfr5/2.50; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon Sun Dec-Apr & Jun-Oct) gives a good introduction to the style of dwellings and simple interiors you may encounter if

you explore the Engadine Valley. Traditional stoves and archaeological finds complete the collection.

The **Segantini Museum** (☎ 081 833 44 54; www.segantini-museum.ch; Via Somplaz 30; adult/student/child Sfr10/7/3; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-6pm Tue-Sun Dec-Apr & mid-May-mid-Oct) is devoted to local 19th-century artist Giovanni Segantini (1858-99), who specialised in majestic mountain scenes.

Activities

SKIING

The **downhill skiing** area adjacent to St Moritz centres on Corviglia (2486m), accessible by funicular from Dorf. From Bad a cable car goes to Signal (shorter queues), giving access to the slopes of Piz Nair. A ski pass for both areas costs up to Sfr61 (child/youth 13 to 17 Sfr30/55) for one day. If you ski on Piz Corvatsch, above nearby Silvaplana, you can ski back down to Bad via the demanding Hahensee run. The first Swiss ski school was founded in St Moritz in 1929. Today skiing or snowboarding tuition (Sfr70 per day) can still be had at one of several ski schools, such as the **Schweizer Skischule** (☎ 081 830 01 01; www.skischule.ch; Piazza da Scuola 16; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat).

You can get a general ski pass to cover all the slopes including Silvaplana, Sils, Celerina, Zuoz, Pontresina and Diavolezza. One day costs Sfr70/47/24 in high season for adults/youths aged 12 to 17/children, although you couldn't possibly touch more than a fraction of the area in one day. Seven days costs Sfr376/252/128.

The region also boasts 160km of cross-country trails. The famous **Engadine Ski Marathon** takes place on the second Sunday in March. It starts at Maloja, crosses over the frozen lakes at Sils and Silvaplana, passes by the southeast side of St Moritzer See and finishes between Zuoz and S-chanf, a distance of some 42km.

Visit the website www.skiengadin.ch for more information about skiing facilities and services.

HIKING & OTHER ACTIVITIES

There are 120km of marked hiking paths. Many are open in winter. The tourist office has a map giving suggestions (in English) for walking throughout Oberengadin. Above St Moritz soars Piz Nair (3057m), and the summit provides a marvellous perspective of Alpine peaks and the lakes and valley below.

You can play golf, fish, paraglide and indulge in many other sports. Enjoy the experience of a 'treatment' in the **Medizinisches Therapiezentrum Heilbad** (☎ 081 833 30 62; www.heilbad-stmoritz.ch; Piazza Paracelsus 2; admission to mineral water baths Sfr35; ☎ 8am-noon & 2-7pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat).

Sleeping

Chesa Chantarella (☎ 081 833 33 55; www.chesa-chantarella.ch; Via Salastrains; s/d Sfr95/190; ☎ Jun-Sep & Dec-Apr; (P)) High up over the town, this is a charming, knock-about sort of place that also happens to house one of the town's better value eateries for local cooking and fondue.

Hotel Eden Garni (☎ 081 830 81 00; www.edenstmoritz.ch; Via Veglia; s/d Sfr138/284; (P)) Smack in the heart of St Moritz Dorf, this is a reasonable midrange option with an attractive central atrium. The views from the fairly standard top-floor rooms are great.

Hotel Waldhaus am See (☎ 081 836 60 00; www.waldhaus-am-se.ch; s/d Sfr170/320; (P)) Brilliantly located in grounds overlooking the lake and a short walk from the train station, this place has pleasant rooms, many with enticing views over the lake and mountains. It has its own sizzling restaurant too, with grilled meat specialties.

Eating

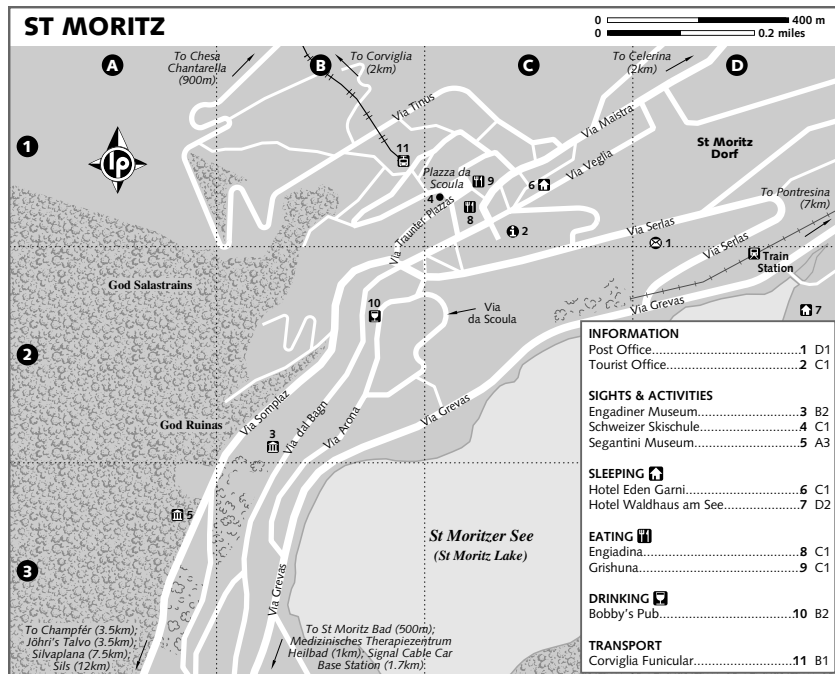
Engiadina (☎ 081 833 32 65; Piazza da Scuola 2; ☎ Mon-Sat) This comfortable, cosy place is famous for fondue, and that's the best thing to eat here (from Sfr32 per person - Sfr38.50 with champagne!). It's open year round.

Jöhrli's Talvo (☎ 081 833 44 55; Via Gunels 15; ☎ Tue-Sun) This place, beyond Bad in nearby Champfèr, is the best valley restaurant, serving up fish and local dishes in rustic surroundings.

Grishuna (☎ 081 837 04 04; Via Maistra 17; mains Sfr25-40; ☎ daily Jun-mid-Oct & Dec-Apr) Housed on the first floor of the not-too-promising looking Hotel Monopol, this place is appreciated by local residents as much as visitors for its elegantly presented local dishes.

Drinking

Around 20 bars and clubs have dancing and/or music. While you bop to the beat your wallet might also be waltzing itself wafer-thin, because nights out in St Moritz can be nasty on the banknotes.



Bobby's Pub (☎ 081 834 42 83; Via dal Bagn 50a; ☎ 10-1am) This vaguely pub-type place, with undulating bar and a wide selection of beers, attracts young snowboarding types in season, and just about everyone in town out of season, being one of the few places open year round.

Getting There & Away

The **Glacier Express** (www.glacierexpress.ch) links St Moritz to Zermatt (Sfr129, plus Sfr9 reservation fee) via the 2033m Oberalp Pass. The majestic route takes 7½ hours to cover the 290km and crosses 291 bridges. In summer you pay Sfr15 or Sfr30 reservation fee, depending on the train.

Regular trains, as many as one every 30 minutes, run from Zürich to St Moritz (Sfr67, three hours 20 minutes) with one change (at Landquart or Chur) along the way. Those via Landquart pass through Klosters, Zernez, Zuoz and Samedan. Via Chur they take a different route via Reichenau, Thusis, Tiefencastel and Celerina.

Postal buses run every 30 to 60 minutes from St Moritz southwest to Maloja (Sfr9.80, 35 minutes) with stops at Silvaplana (Sfr3.80, 14 minutes) and Sils (Sfr6.60, 21 minutes). For Pontresina and beyond, see Bernina Pass Rd (right).

SILVAPLANA, SILS-MARIA & MALOJA

Sitting between two lakes 7.5km southwest of St Moritz, **Silvaplana** (Silvaplana in Romansch) is a centre for water sports, especially windsurfing. Across the causeway is **Surlej**, providing access to ski slopes and marvellous views from Piz Corvatsch (3451m).

Another 4km brings you to **Sils-Maria** (Segl in Romansch). It has two parts: Baselgia by the lake and Maria at the foot of the mountains, where most amenities are located. A cable car ascends to Furtshellas (2312m), where there is a network of hiking trails and ski slopes.

Sils might be a quiet lakeside country village now, but the rumble of existential philosophy once reverberated around these mountains, courtesy of fiery Friedrich Nietzsche. The German giant of the inner mind spent his summers in Sils from 1881 to 1888, writing essential texts concerning the travails of modern man, including *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (*Thus Spake Zarathustra*). The **Nietzsche Haus** (☎ 081 826 53 69; www.

nietzschehaus.ch; adult/student & senior/child under 12yr Sfr6/3/free; ☎ 3-6pm Tue-Sun mid-Jun-mid-Oct & late Dec-mid-Apr) has many photos of and letters penned by the man with the mighty moustache, as well as other memorabilia.

In Sils you could stay at one of several places. About the cheapest is **Pensiun Schulze** (☎ 081 826 52 13; s/d Sfr85/160), on the main street in Sils above the Gran Café. It offers simple rooms, the better with their own shower. In another class altogether is nearby **Hotel Pensiun Privata** (☎ 081 832 62 00; www.pensiunprivata.ch; s/d Sfr190/340), where rooms have timber lined walls and ceilings, views over the woods, broad beds and antique-style furniture. It also has a fine restaurant.

For sheer luxury try the century-old **Hotel Waldhaus** (☎ 081 838 51 00; www.waldhaus-sils.ch; s/d with half board up to Sfr395/800; ☎ mid-Jun-Oct & mid-Dec-mid-Apr; ♿ P). This palace of 150 rooms, set on a rise amid the woods, is a jump back into the past. Along with modern installations (pool, sauna, Turkish baths, tennis courts) the owners have been careful to maintain the old charm of the grand public areas (and hire a three-man orchestra to perfume the evening air with light classics). Rooms vary enormously in type, size and décor.

The road from Sils follows the north shore of its lake to the one-street village of **Maloja** and, shortly after, the **Maloja Pass** that separates the Engadine from the Val Bregaglia. The artist Giovanni Segantini lived in the village from 1894. His **studio** (Atelier; adult/child Sfr3/1.50; ☎ 3-5pm Wed & Sun mid-Jun-mid-Oct & Jan-mid-Apr) can be visited. Paintings are also on display in the **Belvedere Tower** (admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm daily Jun-mid-Oct & Jan-Apr). There are several places to stay and eat here.

All these towns are on the postal bus route from St Moritz.

BERNINA PASS ROAD

The road runs from Celerina southeast to Tirano in Italy, linking Val Bernina and Val Poschiavo by way of the Bernina Pass at 2323m. There is some great hiking in the bare, brooding mountains – shown in more detail in various hiking maps available from the tourist office in Pontresina.

As many as 10 trains run via Pontresina (Sfr4.50, 11 minutes) direct to Tirano (Sfr27, 2½ hours) in northern Italy.

PONTRESINA & AROUND

pop 1880 / elevation 1800m

Pontresina, at the mouth of the Val Bernina, makes a nice alternative base to St Moritz. Check out the pentagonal Moorish tower and the Santa Maria chapel, with frescoes dating from the 13th and 15th centuries.

From the train station, west of the village, cross the two rivers, Rosegg and Bernina, for the centre and the **tourist office** (☎ 081 838 83 00; www.pontresina.ch; Rondo Bldg, Via Maistra; ☎ 9.30am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Sat, 3-6pm Sun mid-Dec-Apr, 9.30am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-noon Sat May-mid-Dec).

There's not much skiing from Pontresina's own mountain, Alp Languard (3262m), but use the resort as a base to explore slopes further down the valley, at **Piz Lagalb** (2959m) and **Diavolezza** (2973m). Combined ski passes for the two cost Sfr50/38/19 per adult/student/child (or get the Engadin regional skiing pass mentioned in the St Moritz section, p283). In summer, it's worth getting the cable cars to either for views. A walking trail leads down from Diavolezza to Morteratsch.

Sleeping

Pension Valtellina (☎ 081 842 64 06; Via Maistra; s/d with hall shower Sfr60/112) This old-style Engadine house between the tourist office and post office has 14 quaint, old-style rooms.

Hotel Albris (☎ 081 838 80 40; www.albris.ch; Via Maistra; s/d Sfr145/260; ♿ P) This is a popular three-star place near the post office with spacious, well-appointed rooms featuring timber ceilings, quality pine furniture and modern bathrooms. Downstairs they have a fine restaurant (meals Sfr60 to Sfr70; open daily) and a wellness centre.

VAL POSCHIAVO

Once over the **Bernina Pass** (2328m), you drop into the sunny Italian-speaking Val Poschiavo. A good lookout point is Alp Grüm (2091m), reached on foot (two hours) from the Ospizio Bernina eatery at the pass. Fourteen kilometres south of the pass lies **Poschiavo**, 15km short of the border with Italy. Hang out at a café on the pretty central square, Piazza da Cumün. **Hotel Albrici** (☎ 081 844 01 73; www.hotelalbrici.ch; Piazza da Cumün; s/d Sfr90/140) is an historic lodging whose spacious rooms have polished timber floors, antique furniture and buckets of charm. The restaurant serves up local meals and pizza, or banquets in the 17th-century Sala delle Sibille.

You could pop down from St Moritz one day for a change of speed. Just past the glittering **Lago di Poschiavo**, the town of **Brusio** is known for its distinctive circular train viaduct. Another 5km and you reach **Tirano**, just over the Italian border.

VAL BREGAGLIA

From the Maloja Pass (1815m), the road spirals down into the Val Bregaglia (Bergell in German) valley, cutting a course southwest into Italy. The road then splits, with one arm leading north and back into Switzerland via the Splügen Pass, and the other going south to Lago di Como and on to Milan. The postal bus from St Moritz to Lugano branches off from the Milan road to circle the western shore of the lake.

As you proceed down the valley, the villages betray an increasing Italian influence. **Stampa** was the home of the artist Alberto Giacometti (1901-66), and is the location of the valley's **tourist office** (☎ 081 822 15 55; www.bregaglia.ch; ☎ 9-11.30am & 3-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9-11.30am Sat).

Soglio (1050m), a hamlet near the Italian border, faces the smooth-sided Pizzo Badile (3308m) peak on a south-facing ledge, reached from the valley floor by a narrow road. The village, a warren of lanes and stone houses, lies at the end of a steep, thickly wooded trail away from the main road and is the starting point for **hiking** trails, most notably the historic Panorama Hochweg. It takes around four hours to reach Casaccia, 11km distant and down in the valley. There are several modest accommodation options along with the gleaming white four-storey **Palazzo Salis** (☎ 081 822 12 08; www.palazzosalis.ch; d per person Sfr80-135; ☎ early Mar-late Nov). About 50m up from the post office is this truly regal resting place, with portraits on the walls, suits of armour and ornate furniture. Built in 1630 and in the hotel business since the beginning of the 20th century, it has rooms with stucco or wooden ceilings, antique furniture (some of it four centuries old) and bottles of charm. It also has a restaurant (mains Sfr20-35).

Buses from St Moritz to Castasegna travel along Val Bregaglia. Alight at the post office at Promontogno and take the bus to Soglio from there (Sfr3 each way, six to 10 departures per day, 12 minutes).

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