

**Adventure card**

With this card, you can travel on almost every bus or train line in Valais on the days that you choose. Additionally, you get a 50% discount on most cable cars and other offers. To reserve your passe-partout for your holiday, call +41 (0)27 927 77 77 or go online at [www.mgbahn.ch](http://www.mgbahn.ch)

**Aletsch glacier**

The massive and biggest glacier in the Alps is part of the UNESCO world heritage and despite global warming, its still a whopping 14.5 miles long, over a mile wide and has a volume of 27 billion tonnes. The hike from Belalp, across the glacier up to Riederalp passing through the Aletsch wildlife reserve is spectacular.

[www.wanderweg-riederalp-belalp.ch](http://www.wanderweg-riederalp-belalp.ch)

**Andermatt**

On the other side of the Furka Pass lies a little town called Andermatt. In the next few years, the Egyptian multi-billionaire Samih Sawiris is planning to build a huge luxury holiday complex there, just like El Gouna he built in the desert. It will have a dozen hotels, over 700 holiday homes and an 18-hole golf course. [www.anderstatt.ch](http://www.anderstatt.ch)

**Aqua Park**

If you're looking for some real fun for the whole family, the Aqua Park in Le Bouveret is the right place to go. It's the biggest water park in Switzerland and is open all year round, guaranteeing a fantastic time for every one of all ages. Fun, action and good times with a Caribbean-touch. [www.aquaparc.ch](http://www.aquaparc.ch)

**Arriving (by car)**

You can travel to Valais by train or by car, regardless which direction you're coming from. In the summertime, you can drive over all the different passes, like the Furka or Simplon Pass but you can also put your car on the train from Italy, Andermatt or Kandersteg to reach Valais. The only road that doesn't go through or over the mountains is the A9 motorway coming from Geneva and Montreux to the west.

**Beef jerky (dried beef)**

One of the most important ingredients on a „Walliser plate“ is beef jerky. Butchers spice the meat themselves with their own secret spices and then hang them out to dry for three to four months in air-conditioned cellars. You can taste and buy some of the best jerky in the area when you visit the food markets in Visp on Friday afternoons or Saturday mornings in Brig.

**Berne**

Since the opening of the NEAT (New Alpine Transeval Tunnel) in 2008, the Swiss capital Berne is now only an hour away by train. It's definitely worth a trip, especially to see the Bear pit and the cathedral. [www.bern.ch](http://www.bern.ch)

**Biking**

The Valais is a biker's paradise par excellence. You'll find over 100 different bike routes under [www.rhone.ch/biken](http://www.rhone.ch/biken)

## **Billiards**

Napoleon, Mozart and even Einstein were all fascinated by this game, also known as pool. A calm hand and a good knowledge of geometry and physics are vital requirements to be able to play Billiards. Billiard centre "Giusi" in Naters is the address to go to if you want to test your skills on a real pro table.

## **Binn valley**

This little, almost untouched valley near Fiesch is famous for its crystals and minerals. You're guaranteed to find a nice crystal here, all you need is a hammer and chisel. For more info go to [www.binn.ch](http://www.binn.ch)

## **Botanical Gardens**

Interested in the local flora or which flowers are protected? Then you should take a trip to Orsieres near Martigny and visit the Botanical gardens. Over 3000 different species of plants have been grown here over the last few years and you can walk through the gardens from May until October. [www.fondationaubert.ch](http://www.fondationaubert.ch)

## **Bowling**

Raining outside? No problem! How about bowling with the whole family? The Sports Centre Olympica has seven bowling alleys and a great Pizzeria for a light meal after the game. [www.olympica.ch](http://www.olympica.ch)

## **Brigerbad**

The largest open-air thermal complex in the Alps is just a ten-minute drive from Brig or Visp. A 107°F grotto pool, an Olympic size pool, a white water pool and not to forget the 600 ft long waterslide makes Brigerbad the perfect place to relax, enjoy the sun and guarantees lots of fun for the whole family. [www.brigerbad.ch](http://www.brigerbad.ch)

## **Bungee Jumping**

If you're an adrenaline junky, in Val d'Anniviers above Sion there's an adventure park where you can bungee jump up to 650 feet. Go to [www.bungy.ch](http://www.bungy.ch) for more information

## **Caesar Ritz**

Everybody knows the Ritz hotels. What most people don't know is that Caesar Ritz comes from the tiny village Niederwald in Goms. Being a farmer's son, he came from a very poor family background and started off as a dishwasher in Brig. He worked his way up to the top and opened many five star luxury hotels around the world. The Prince of Wales named him "the Hotel King and King of Hotels". A few chefs in Goms have created some delicious dishes in his honour that you can try in most of the restaurants in the Goms area. [www.caesar-ritz.ch](http://www.caesar-ritz.ch)

## **Carnival**

They call it the 5<sup>th</sup> season of the year, Carnival. It's a very old tradition in Switzerland, (especially in the Catholic parts), to celebrate the two weeks leading up to Lent and that in style too. With lots of masks, fancy-dress parties, carnival music (called Guggenmusik), everyone is out partying, sometimes 5 days non-stop.

A unique experience and a definite MUST for anyone here during that time.

**Casinos**

Rien ne va plus!!!! If you want to try your luck at Roulette or on the Black Jack table visit the Casinos in Montreux or Crans-Montana. [www.casinocm.ch](http://www.casinocm.ch)

**Cellar theatre**

If it's theatre you're interested in, visit the cellar theatre (Kellertheater) in the Stockalper Palace basement. You can see what's on stage at [www.kellertheater.ch](http://www.kellertheater.ch)

**Stations of the Cross**

The majority of people living in Valais still are Catholic. Apart from the impressive churches in every town and village, there are many Stations of the Cross paths with 14 stops on the way. The nicest paths you'll find in Visperterminen and Saas-Fee.

**Chillon castle**

There's not a picture book in or about Switzerland that this castle is not illustrated in. If you go to the beautiful Montreux Riviera on Lake Geneva, you'll see this magnificent castle and its breathtaking location. Guided tours are offered all year round. For more information go to [www.chillon.ch](http://www.chillon.ch)

**Cholera**

No one really knows exactly where this speciality originates from but everyone agrees that this potato-onion-cheese and apple pie tastes divine and no one prepares it better than the women from Goms do. Why not take a trip to Goms and visit one of the local restaurants to try this exquisite dish.

**Circus**

Everybody still has the child within and it comes out when you go to the circus. Every year, the Harlekin circus comes to Valais and performs in Blatten, Belalp and Riederalp. Alpine acrobatics at it's best. [www.circusharlekin.ch](http://www.circusharlekin.ch)

**Classical music**

Valais has a variety of different classical events throughout the year like the Zermatt festival with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra or the International Music Festival in Sion. For an overview visit [www.valais.ch](http://www.valais.ch)

**Climate**

Valais is blessed with having the most hours of sun in Switzerland. Although surrounded by majestic mountains, Valais has a Mediterranean climate, so why not come and experience it for yourself.

**Conferences and conventions**

Why not hold your Annual General Meeting, conference or convention in Brig, Naters or Visp? Find out more at [www.brig-belalp.ch](http://www.brig-belalp.ch) [www.visp.ch](http://www.visp.ch)

### **Copper mines**

In Val d'Anniviers lies a little town called Zinal that you can reach by car or bus. About an hours hike from Zinal are the old copper mines of La Lée. Discover the adventures and the hard labour workers had to put up with whilst exploiting the natural resources in the Alps. [www.zinal.ch](http://www.zinal.ch)

### **Cow fighting**

In the Valais the Eringer cows are queens. It becomes a passion amongst the spectators and animals when they start to fight. The queen of queens is crowned at the end of season final in Aproz every year. Fights start springtime in St-Maurice, Aproz, Raron, Les Haudères, Leukerbad and Martigny. [www.valais.ch](http://www.valais.ch)

### **Cross-country skiing**

Goms is famous for its endless cross-country trails and you can enjoy the beauty of the valley while keeping fit at the same time. It's probably the nicest cross-country area in Switzerland. If you're competitive try taking part in the "Gommerlauf" and ski against the pros. You can register yourself at [www.gommerlauf.ch](http://www.gommerlauf.ch)

### **Crystals**

The best place in the Valais to find crystals is in the Binn valley near Fiesch. A visit in the crystal museum is well worthwhile. [www.binn.ch](http://www.binn.ch)

### **Dom**

At an altitude of 14'911 ft, the Dom is the highest mountain completely on Swiss territory. This intermediate (technical difficulty) mountain is one of the most popular peaks amongst mountain climbers. Book a tour with an over-night stay in the Dom hut at [www.mountain-life.ch](http://www.mountain-life.ch)

### **Domodossola**

This is the first town in Italy only 30 minutes away from Brig by train. Lots of locals and top chefs go there on Saturday mornings to the market where you'll find everything your heart desires. From fresh fish caught the same morning in Genoa to hand made handbags, this market has it all.

After all that shopping, take the time to eat in a "real" Italian restaurant and have a "real" pizza or pasta dish.

### **Eagle**

The huge stone eagle on the Simplon Pass is a monument to commemorate the soldiers from World War II, who had to keep lookout for the enemy during the hard and bitter cold winters. It's a real photo favourite in every hiker's album. [www.simplon.ch](http://www.simplon.ch)

### **Eggishorn**

For the best complete view of the Aletsch glacier, you should take a trip up to the top of the Eggishorn. From the top you can also see the Eiger, Mönch and the Jungfrauoch that freely translated means the „virgin ridge“. If you get up early enough you can book a ride to the top and watch the sunrise above the snow capped peaks of the Alps. An unforgettable experience. [www.eggishorn.ch](http://www.eggishorn.ch)

## **Eringer cows**

Eringer cows are one of the smallest kinds of cow in Europe and have successfully been bred by local farmers for many years. They were introduced in Valais already by the Romans. What makes these cows so unique? They are very aggressive. (See cow fighting)

## **Ernen**

This little town near Fiesch is said to be one of the nicest villages in Valais, rightly so too. During the summer, there are many classical concerts with world-renowned artists and Ernen is also an international meeting point for bestselling authors like Donna Leon. Our tip: make your reservations well in advance because there's a huge demand for seats and they go very quickly. [www.musikdorf.ch](http://www.musikdorf.ch)

## **Fendant**

Even in Japan or the US, this white wine only grown and produced here in Valais is renowned for its fruity and smooth taste. It's the perfect aperitif after skiing or hiking all day and goes hand in hand with a fondue or raclette.

## **Fitness**

If you'd like to do something indoors rather than one of the many outdoor activities, you can visit one of the many fitness studios around the area. Fitness Palace and Sports centre Olympica ([www.olympica.ch](http://www.olympica.ch)) in Gamsen are just two addresses where you'll find the newest equipment for a great workout, as well as other indoor activities such as climbing or badminton.

## **Floods**

Over the centuries, Brig has been flooded by the Saltina River running through town many times. The last time was in 1993 and it completely wiped out the entire town. It took just over a year to rebuild the town to what it is today.

## **Fondue**

Three things everybody knows about Switzerland! Chocolate, watches and of course cheese. Most people would probably say fondue first before saying cheese, but not everyone has had one, (yet)! A proper Swiss cheese fondue is a mix of melted cheese(s) and white wine (Fendant). It's also very common, almost standard to put garlic and a dash of brandy in too. You can enjoy an authentic fondue in almost every restaurant in Valais.

## **Football**

Football is without a doubt the only game in the world that connects everyone. Local player George Bregy scored the first goal in the opening match of the 1998 world cup in the US and it's still a popular video clip on youtube. If you're a real football fan, why not come watch some of the stars of tomorrow as they play in the international U-19 tournament "Cup of the Alps". Info's at [www.cupofthealps.ch](http://www.cupofthealps.ch)

### **Fortress**

In the little town St. Maurice in the French-speaking part of Valais, you can visit one of the biggest mountain forts in Switzerland. Over the past years, the Pro-Fort foundation has bought and restored 58 forts and opened them to the public. It's well worth a visit and a guided tour, especially to the original Swiss artillery fort in Champex-Lac. For more information go to [www.profort.ch](http://www.profort.ch) or [www.fort.ch](http://www.fort.ch)

### **Friday nights on the town square**

Every Friday night from June 'til August, the town throws a big party for everyone on the town square. Concerts, good food and lots of fun are guaranteed and it's the perfect way to begin the weekend. For more information and to see what's happening visit our website at [www.brig-belalp.ch](http://www.brig-belalp.ch)

### **Furka steam train**

Before the tunnel was built connecting the Valais with Uri, the train used to go over the Furka Pass. Once the tunnel was opened, they closed down the line going over the Pass and sold the steam engines. Now, fans, enthusiasts and private investors have rebuilt the line and bought back the rusted and run-down engines that they had to ship back from Vietnam. Now you can take an authentic trip along the original line during the summer months.

For reservations, please call +41 (0)848 000 144 or visit [www.furka-bergstrecke.ch](http://www.furka-bergstrecke.ch)

### **Gemmi**

In the old days, the Gemmi Pass was an important connection between the canton Berne and the Valais but was very dangerous and in some places, the rock face was almost vertical making it impossible to pass. Today, you can take a cable car from Leukerbad to the top of the pass in winter and summer where you'll find a lake and endless hiking trails. [www.gemmi.ch](http://www.gemmi.ch)

### **Gianadda**

If you're an art enthusiast, you must visit the Gianadda art gallery in Martigny. It's internationally renowned and attracts hundreds and thousands of people every year. Interested in Picasso, Monet or Van Gogh? Visit [www.gianadda.ch](http://www.gianadda.ch) for the up to date program.

### **Glacier Express**

An absolute breathtaking experience and one of a kind journey through the Swiss Alps, is taking a ride in the Glacier Express from Zermatt to St. Moritz. This narrow-gauge railway with its panoramic carriages goes through gorges, tunnels and over historical viaducts on its 8-hour trip. It's known as the slowest express-train and if you're looking for something special, you can have an exquisite dining experience on board with multi-course meals prepared by some of the best chefs in Switzerland. Visit [www.glacierexpress.ch](http://www.glacierexpress.ch) or call +41 (0)27 927 77 77 for more information.

### **Glacier grotto**

Visiting Saas Fee is a really worthwhile experience. Not only does it have the highest rotating restaurant in the world that gives you a 360° view of the Alps whilst dining, it also has the biggest glacier grotto in the world. Check out [www.eispavillon.ch](http://www.eispavillon.ch) for more information.

The river Rhone that flows into the Mediterranean Sea springs from the Rhone glacier on the Furka Pass. Here you can visit the glacier grotto in the summer months when the Pass is open. [www.gletscher.ch](http://www.gletscher.ch)

### **Gold mines**

Maybe you'd like to try your hand at gold panning. At [www.goldmine-gondo.ch](http://www.goldmine-gondo.ch) you can book a gold panning course and learn about the history about the gold miners in the 17th century.

### **Golf**

If you're a golfer, you'll love it here. Within an hour, you can be tee-ing off on one of eight different, 18 or 9 hole courses. From the highest golf course in Europe in Riederalp or the world famous course in Crans-Montana, there's something for every golfer. Tee times, green fees and all other information at [www.golf-wallis.ch](http://www.golf-wallis.ch)

### **Goms**

The eastern part of the Valais is known as Goms. Be it winter or summer, it's a true paradise for hikers, mountain bikers, cross-country skiers and Para gliders. This place has it all. [www.goms.ch](http://www.goms.ch)

### **Gondo**

The tiny boarder town Gondo was almost destroyed by a giant landslide caused by torrential rainfalls in 2000 and cost a dozen people their lives. Since then it's been rebuilt thanks to investors and charities from all over the country and is definitely worth a stop over. [www.stockalperturm.ch](http://www.stockalperturm.ch)

### **Gornergrat**

Every year, thousands of holidaymakers make the trip up to the Gornergrat to enjoy the unforgettable view amongst twenty peaks all over 13'000 feet, with the Matterhorn at the centre of them all. It makes you feel like you're a little closer to heaven. [www.gornergrat.ch](http://www.gornergrat.ch)

### **Grächen**

The beautiful alpine holiday destination Grächen is known to have the least rainfall in Switzerland. Located in Matteredal above St. Niklaus, it has endless hiking trails and even has a small animal's zoo for the kids. [www.graechen.ch](http://www.graechen.ch)

### **Grande Dixence**

The gigantic dam built by 25'000 labourers, engineers and miners in Val d'Hérémence, is the biggest dam in Switzerland. It produces more than 2 billion kWh of electricity every year and supplies 18 cantons in the country. You can drive up to the dam in the summer months and even stay over night in the hotel at the foot of the dam.

Bookings and reservations at [www.grande-dixence.ch](http://www.grande-dixence.ch)

## Happyland

The Valais has its very own little Disneyland between Siders and Sion. It might not be as famous as Mickey's place in Paris, but it has all the thrills and spills for the whole family. It's open from April till the end of October. For more info go to [www.happyland.ch](http://www.happyland.ch)

## Herding the cattle

In the summertime, all the cattle graze high up on the mountain prairies and in early autumn, the proud farmers decorate and groom them before leading them down to the valley again. It's quite an experience to see them coming down. Another famous cattle event is the sheep weekend in Belalp, when the Shepherd's come and collect their sheep again. [www.belalp.ch](http://www.belalp.ch)

## Hiking

The Valais is a paradise not only for skiers and riders but for hikers too. You can hike almost everywhere. Visit a local bookshop or the tourist office for hiking guides, maps and recommended routes.

## Horse-drawn sleigh rides

If you don't want to go snow shoeing, how about *dashing through the snow on a one horse open sleigh* all cuddled up under a blanket? Be it a romantic ride for two or an enjoyable ride with the family through a winter wonderland, it's always something special doing it in style. For more information visit [www.riederalp.ch](http://www.riederalp.ch) or [www.zermatt.ch](http://www.zermatt.ch)

## Hot springs

Natural hot springs are not only proven to be healthy for the mind and body, but also to relieve rheumatism, allergies and to relax the muscles. In Brigerbad or Leukerbad you can revitalise yourself in their beautiful pools surrounded by the Alps or take a dip in the saltwater pool in Breiten by Mörel. Go to [www.brigerbad.ch](http://www.brigerbad.ch) [www.leukerbad.ch](http://www.leukerbad.ch) or [www.breiten.ch](http://www.breiten.ch) for more details.

## House of bones

„What you are we were, what we are you will be“ is written in the stone of this very unique kind of place. It was built in 1514 and its purpose was to save space in the cemetery. After a certain amount of years, the bones would be dug up and stacked in the Bone house to make space for the next person. You pass by it when you take the little Simplon Express tour through Brig and Naters.

## Hunting season

Every year in September, the hunting season is open for everyone that has a state license. During this time, all the restaurants through out the state serve deer, roe, ibex and chamois (chami) specialities.

## Igloo

This is a real favourite amongst true romantics. After a day skiing or snow shoeing, why not spend the night in this exclusive hotel built like an igloo. Have a romantic fondue dinner and then relax in the hotels own whirlpool or sauna. We recommend you book well in advance because it's so popular and the vacancies are taken up very quickly. For more information check out [www.zermatt.ch](http://www.zermatt.ch)

## **Jazz**

What used to be called the Golden Rose is now the Montreux Jazz Festival, only an hour and a half from Brig by train. Thousands and thousands of music fans come to the Montreux Riviera on Lake Geneva to this one of a kind music festival every year in July to see stars like Sting, Deep Purple or Eric Clapton. Apart from the many concerts and culinary specialties from all over the world there's also a Samba- and Party boat that cruise around the lake too. It's an event you don't want to miss. [www.montreuxjazz.ch](http://www.montreuxjazz.ch)  
If you'd rather stay local, Visp has it's own little Jazz spot in what's called the „Jazz Chälli“ which literally means Jazz Cellar. [www.jazzchaelli.ch](http://www.jazzchaelli.ch)

## **Jungfrauoch – top of Europe**

Taking a trip up to the highest train station in Europe is a must for anyone visiting Switzerland. From the observation deck at 13'300 feet, you get a breathtaking view of the Aletsch glacier, Mönch and Eiger. In the springtime, you can book three or four-day tours with a local mountain guide that take you from the Jungfrauoch to the Konkordia plateau and up the 14'000ft Finsterahorn. For further information and bookings visit [www.alpincenterbelalp.ch](http://www.alpincenterbelalp.ch)

## **Leukerbad**

World famous for its natural hot springs, Leukerbad is a must for everyone visiting the Valais. Open year round you can enjoy and relax in the hot baths after hiking or skiing. One of the highlights is the “movie in the pool” (Kino im Pool) where you can relax in the pool while watching a movie on the big screen just like in the cinema. [www.leukerbad.ch](http://www.leukerbad.ch)

## **Little Simplon Express**

In the big cities like London or New York you can hop on a double-decker sight seeing bus and see everything without having to get off. Here in Brig there's a train called the Little Simplon Express that shows you all the sights around Brig and Naters. In the summer it runs everyday at 4 and 4.30pm from the town square in Brig and 4.15pm from the market square in Naters. [www.kleiner-simplon-express.ch](http://www.kleiner-simplon-express.ch)

## **Lost souls**

There are countless legends and stories in and of Valais. One of the most famous stories, is the legend of the lost souls that wonder around the mountains. It's about the people that shall never find peace or be at rest because they sinned when they were living amongst us.

## **Massa gorge**

A real adventure and adrenaline rush is taking a guided tour through the Massa gorge between Naters and Bitsch. Jumping of rocks and sliding down natural slides created over thousands of years from the water eating away at the rock face, it's a real breathtaking experience. Call the Alpin Centre Belalp and book a guide.  
+41 (0)27 921 60 45 or visit [www.alpincenterbelalp.ch](http://www.alpincenterbelalp.ch)

## **Matterhorn**

In 1865 the British mountaineer Edward Whymper was the first person to stand on top of it and it's now the most photographed mountain in the world, the Matterhorn in Zermatt. Thousands and thousands of people visit Zermatt every year just to take a snapshot of the „King of all mountains“. For those of you that seek a challenge, you can climb the 14'691 ft peak with one of the many local mountain guides. The most famous local guide was Ulrich Inderbinen who on his 90th birthday climbed the Matterhorn for the 371st time. [www.zermatt.ch](http://www.zermatt.ch)

## **Maze**

From March till November, why not go to the adventure park in Evionnaz, just past Martigny and try your luck in the giant maze they have. [www.labyrinthe.ch](http://www.labyrinthe.ch)

## **Metro Alpin**

The highest cable car on rails in the world runs from Saas Fee to the highest rotating restaurant in the world at 11'482 feet. On a clear and sunny day you can even see Milan from the restaurant that's constantly turning 360° to give you the most awesome view of the Swiss Alps. With a mountain guide you can hike an easy route to the top of the Allalinhorn that takes about two hours. For reservations go to [www.mountain-life.ch](http://www.mountain-life.ch)

## **Milan**

One of the busiest cities in Europe is Milan. Gucci, Prada, D&G or Versace are all under two hours away from Brig. Just hop on the Cisalpino and take a shopping trip to the fashion capitol of the world. Piece of advice; make sure to buy a travel guide of the city before you leave.

## **Miniature train rides**

For railway enthusiasts we recommend you take a trip to Le Bouveret and visit the Swiss Vapeur Park. Here you will find on over 4 acres more than a dozen miniature steam trains that run everyday from March till November. [www.swissvapeurparc.ch](http://www.swissvapeurparc.ch)

## **Mont Blanc Express**

The Mont Blanc in France reaching an altitude of 15'774 feet is the highest mountain in the Alps but it's height varies depending on if it's winter or summer because the peak is just ice and snow. From Martigny you can take the Mont Blanc Express to Chamonix that lies at the foot of the Mont Blanc. [www.tmrta.ch](http://www.tmrta.ch)

## **Museums**

In almost every village and town in Valais there's a museum of some kind. Visit [www.wallisermuseen.ch](http://www.wallisermuseen.ch) for an overview.

## **Natural food market**

Every Saturday morning in the town square in Brig there's a small market where local farmers sell their self-grown natural products. Fresh vegetables, home made cheese and beef jerky are just some of the specialities sold. Local restaurants and top chefs buy their groceries here too. There's a market (Püürumärt) in Visp every Friday afternoon as well which is guaranteed to put you in the weekend mood very quickly. [www.visp.ch](http://www.visp.ch)

## **Newspapers**

Most of the international newspapers like the Times or USA today you can get in the Kiosks at the main train stations.

## **Nordic Walking**

The latest trend in summer sports is Nordic walking. Starting off as a pre season training and exercise for cross-country skiers, Nordic walking has evolved to an activity for everyone. The idea and secret behind it all are the poles used. Specially modified ski poles have been developed to help you use your arms in the same kind of way as a cross-country skier, helping you get a better workout whilst walking and burn more fat than usual. In Goms, the Swiss Nordic Park has lots of trails for all levels of physical condition. You'll find similar trails in Saas Fee, Belalp and Zermatt. Call the local tourist office for further details.

## **Observatory**

If you're interested in Astrology and the stars, visit the observatory on the Simplon Pass or on the Gornergrat in Zermatt. For more information <http://oberwallis.astronomie.ch>

## **Olympic Museum**

If you would like to see some sports history you can take the train to Lausanne and visit the IOC Museum. [www.museum-olympic.org](http://www.museum-olympic.org)

## **Open Air**

For Rock fans the Valais has a few Open Air Festivals to offer, Gampel being the second biggest in Switzerland. To see the line-ups go to [www.openairgampel.ch](http://www.openairgampel.ch) [www.capricesfestival.ch](http://www.capricesfestival.ch) [www.openairlax.ch](http://www.openairlax.ch) [www.openairsimplon.ch](http://www.openairsimplon.ch)

## **Paragliding**

For people that are looking for that extra kick or want to see the Alps from a birds eye view, Fiescheralp is the place to go. Here you can book a tandem flight with a fully qualified pilot and experience the Alps from above.

[www.flyingcenter.ch](http://www.flyingcenter.ch) [www.good-flight.ch](http://www.good-flight.ch) [www.flug-taxi.ch](http://www.flug-taxi.ch)

## **The Pope's Guards**

In the old fortress above Naters, a museum in honour of the pope's guards has been opened showing the 500-year history of the hundred men strong and smallest army in the world. For more information visit [www.zentrumgarde.ch](http://www.zentrumgarde.ch) or call us at +41 (0)27 921 60 30 and book a guided tour of the museum.

## **Raclette**

Amongst the Swiss people, this is the more popular cheese dish because it's a light meal and is served everywhere all year round. Traditionally, Raclette is made with a half wheel of cheese melted on an open fire. The melted cheese is scraped off and served with potatoes and pickles. Typically you drink a glass of Fendant white wine with it and you're almost sure to eat more than one. Don't leave Switzerland without trying it.

## Radio

Radio Rottu Oberwallis (rro) is your holiday radio when you're here. If you're in Zermatt, the Morning Show is in English too, so you get all the info you need about weather, snow- and traffic conditions as well as what's going on in and around Zermatt. Visit [www.rro.ch](http://www.rro.ch) for the frequencies.

## Rye bread

Back in the old days, Rye bread was the main food for the people here and has now become a delicacy that you'll find in every bakery, restaurant or café. In Erschmatt and Blatten by Naters you can visit the old bakeries and on certain days you can try your hand and make your very own loaf. [www.erschmatt.ch](http://www.erschmatt.ch) [www.blatten.ch](http://www.blatten.ch)

## Saffron

Mund, a small village above Brig, is the most northern place on earth where saffron is grown and on 4.2 acres they produce around 3 kilos each year at a price of 14'000 Francs per kilo. Visit the Saffron museum and an absolute must, is a plate of Saffron risotto in the local restaurant. [www.mund.ch](http://www.mund.ch)

## Salt mines

In the little town Bex in the lower part of Valais, is the only salt mine in Switzerland. The 25 mile long mine just shows how important and vital salt was to the people in the 16th century. It's open to the public for guided tours from June till November daily and also has an underground restaurant too. [www.mines.ch](http://www.mines.ch)

## Scooters

These days, scooters come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. Here in the region around Brig there are a few places you can try a new kind of scooting with scooters that have big fat tyres and look like they're some kind of moon vehicle. This special kind of scooter allows you to ride over almost any kind of terrain just like a trials bike. It's a lot of fun for the whole family. To find out more, visit [www.hohsaas.info](http://www.hohsaas.info) or [www.unterbaech.ch](http://www.unterbaech.ch)

## Sepp Blatter

Caesar Ritz is not the only famous person from the Valais. The highest footballer Sepp Blatter, the FIFA (World Football Association) president also comes from here. He was born in Ulrichen and spent his school years in Visp. Every year he organises a football and golf tournament with guest stars like Platini or Beckenbauer.

## Sightseeing flights

The Air Zermatt offer helicopter flights around the entire Alps and it's definitely worth every penny. Get a birds eye view of the snow capped peaks or take a flight around the Matterhorn. You'll never get a better view of the Alps anywhere else unless you're in space. Tel. +41(0)27 935 86 86 [www.airzermatt.ch](http://www.airzermatt.ch)

## Ski touring

Just as the ski season finishes the touring season starts. Book a guided tour for three or four days, staying overnight in different Alpine huts and enjoy some of the best spring skiing you'll ever find. [www.skitouren.ch](http://www.skitouren.ch)

## **Sledging**

Surprisingly, almost half of the people that go on holiday in winter, don't really ski or ride anymore. Instead, they are going back to the roots and are now enjoying sledging on new High-Tech sledges, Ghosky's. This innovative sledge was designed and built by a local guy and it enables you to ride and turn it just like on a skateboard. It's a kind of carving sledge if you like. A real favourite amongst the locals as well as the tourists is enjoying a nice Fondue in one of the restaurants in Belalp and then sledging down in the moonlight or with head flashlights to Blatten again. [www.blatten.ch](http://www.blatten.ch)

## **Snow kiting**

Up on the Simplon Pass you can learn this new trend sport with Kite pros from the Swiss Snow kiting School. Being able to harness and control the power of the wind to move yourself takes snow sports to a completely new level and using the natural elements to your advantage without having to rely on ski- or chairlifts is probably the most cost efficient and environmentally friendly way to enjoy yourself on snow. All you need besides equipment is a wide-open area and wind. Visit [www.snowkiting.ch](http://www.snowkiting.ch) for more information.

## **Snowshoeing**

Everywhere in Valais you can enjoy snowshoeing. Be it on your own or on a guided tour with a Fondue dinner, it's a great way to walk through the winter wonderlands and enjoy the peaceful surroundings and Mother Nature. You can hire snowshoes in most sports shops. Ask the local Tourist Information offices for details.

## **St. Bernard dogs**

Barry was the most famous St. Bernard dog of all. He saved over 40 people's lives on the Great St. Bernard Pass after they were caught in avalanches that were more than frequent during the wintertime on this main and important border crossing between France and Italy. In Martigny, there's a museum about these legendary life saving dogs that carry a barrel of scotch around their necks. [www.museesaintbernard.ch](http://www.museesaintbernard.ch)

## **Stockalper Castle**

Kaspar Jodok von Stockalper was an ingenious capitalist in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and traded any and everything from salt and ore to snails or mercenaries. Whatever it was he had the monopoly of it and the Palace he built in Brig reflects his wealth and riches in a very majestic way. No one else could afford to build anything like it back in those days.

The Stockalper Palace with its three famous towers and beautiful gardens is open to the public year round and we recommend you arrange a guided tour.

For guided tours call +41 (0)27 921 60 30 or visit [www.brig-belalp.ch](http://www.brig-belalp.ch)

## **Summer skiing**

If you're a die-hard skier or rider and need the endless winter you can go to Saas Fee, Zermatt or Verbier and ski on the glaciers. As the conditions are so good and the summer weather is fantastic, you can even go skiing in your bikini. National Ski Teams from many countries come here in summer to start their training for the coming season.

[www.valais.ch](http://www.valais.ch)

## **Tennis**

Roger Federer, the world's best tennis player in history may not come from Brig, but he has inspired many people to take up tennis. In and around Brig there are in- and outdoor tennis courts open to you. Call the local Tourist Office for further details.

## **Trekking**

Trekking with animals is a great experience for the whole family. Around the Brig region you can choose between trekking with lamas, donkeys or even experience a bit of Tibet trekking with Yaks. More information at [www.valais.ch](http://www.valais.ch)

## **Tschäggätä**

Tschäggätä is the name given to the young men in Lötschental that dress up in sheepskins, scary wooden masks and go on a rampage during carnival time trying to scare everyone. According to the legend, people dressed up as a Tschäggätä to drive the winter away. The masks are still hand made today and they're a very important part of the tradition in Lötschental. For more details visit [www.masken.ch](http://www.masken.ch)

## **Tyndall**

British explorer John Tyndall was the first person to climb the Bietschhorn and was fascinated by Belalp and the Aletsch glacier. Upon returning to London Tyndall became one of the members that founded the first mountaineers club in the world, the Alpine Club.

## **Underground lake**

The biggest underground lake is in St. Léonard between Siders and Sion. It's a half hour tour and is open between March and October. [www.lac-souterrain.com](http://www.lac-souterrain.com)

## **Visp**

With the opening of the NEAT (New Alpine Transval Tunnel), Visp has become a very important junction and gateway to and from Valais. From here you can reach Milan or Geneva in less than two hours. The biggest employer in Valais is the chemical company Lonza that have their main plant here in Visp. The highest footballer, FIFA president Sepp Blatter also comes from here and is regularly seen around town. Visp has a beautiful old town and that's well worth a visit on Friday afternoons when the market takes place. [www.visp.ch](http://www.visp.ch)

## **Visperterminen**

The highest vineyards in Europe are found in this little village above Visp and its white wine "Heida" is known throughout the world. [www.heidadorf.ch](http://www.heidadorf.ch)

## **Wall**

Because the Valais was a very important trading route to the south, it was fought over for many years and that meant for the people two possibilities; They could either give in and bow down to aristocracy or join together and fight back. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century the people from Brig, Mörel and Goms built a wall to defend and protect them from their enemies. As they didn't want to condemn themselves to hiding behind a wall forever, they finally fought back and won the battle in Visp, forcing their enemies to retreat. In Gamsen a part of the wall has been restored and can easily be reached by bus from Visp or Brig. [www.landmauer.ch](http://www.landmauer.ch)

## **Waterways**

It's hard to imagine but Valais suffered very long periods of drought forcing the people to get their water from the glaciers way up high and somehow transport it back down to the valley so they could water their fields. You can see the remaining wooden canals that were built along the rock faces in Ausserberg and Eggerberg in the Baltschieder valley and those from Ergisch in the Turtmann valley. [www.suone.ch.vu](http://www.suone.ch.vu) and [www.destination-monfrom.ch](http://www.destination-monfrom.ch)

## **White-water rafting**

If you don't mind getting a little wet when having a blast and adrenaline rush at the same time, book a white-water rafting trip from Oberwald to Glüringen in Goms on the river Rhone. [www.garbelyadventure.ch](http://www.garbelyadventure.ch)

## **Wine**

Not many people know that Switzerland has some of the best wines in the world and they have won many gold medals, mostly awarded to wines from the Valais. Specialities that you won't find anywhere else in the world are Dole, Fendant and Heida (Heida coming from Visperterminen, the highest vineyards in Europe). Another wine, that's also exclusively from the Valais is the wine produced especially for the Americas Cup winner Alinghi. A great way to spend the day is to take the wine path from Siders to Salgesch with a visit to the wine museum and of course the wine tasting at the end of it. Contact the local tourist office for more information.

## **Witches downhill race**

Legend has it, that a witch used to live in the surrounding woods and was burnt at the stake after being accused of killing her husband. Since 1983 the craziest and funniest downhill skiing race in remembrance of the old days is organised and is a whopping 7.5 miles long. More than 1500 skiers take part in this phenomenal race dressed up as witches and in all kinds of costumes. If you're up for a challenge and a good time [www.belalphexe.ch](http://www.belalphexe.ch)

## **Women's right to vote**

Because the people have the last word on important issues, such as building the NEAT tunnel or voting for politicians, Switzerland was one of the last countries in Europe to let women have the right to vote. In 1957, Katharina Zenhausern from Unterbaech was the first woman to place a vote in the ballot box. Her vote wasn't counted because the right for women to vote wasn't officially inducted until 1971.

**Yellow buses - (Postauto)**

The big yellow buses take you any- and everywhere the train doesn't. They all leave from the main station in Brig and go as far as Domodossola in Italy. Check out [www.postauto.ch](http://www.postauto.ch) for timetables and all other information.

**Zermatt**

Almost every skier and rider in the world knows about Zermatt and those people that don't pursue winter sports know it because of the Matterhorn. Luxury, some of the best skiing and riding in the world, mountain biking, hiking, climbing and dinning, Zermatt is just unbelievable and has it all. Visit [www.zermatt.ch](http://www.zermatt.ch) for more information.