

In and around Liechtenstein

Since the turn of the last century, Liechtenstein has identified tourism as a lucrative industry using the natural beauty of the surrounding area. It was also at this time that the British were setting up the Swiss summer and winter tourist industry in nearby Klosters, Davos, St. Moritz and Unterwasser to name but a few. The winter sports industry in Liechtenstein came later.



The First World War destroyed the industry for obvious reasons, and the post-war depression hindered any growth between the wars. It was after World War Two, therefore, that the tourist industry really took off in Liechtenstein, with Vaduz and Malbun growing with the influx of the tourists and their money.

Liechtensteiners also found an ingenious way of expanding the income opportunities in a time where countries were increasingly moving away from stamping passports, the Liechtenstein tourist office will stamp your passport until now!

Sightseeing

Most tourist sites appear to be either in Vaduz or Malbun, unless you know where to look.

Starting in the north of the country, in the Unterland, Schellenberg offers a wealth of history, having been the capital of the Duchy of Schellenberg, one of the two countries that were joined to form the modern Liechtenstein. Why not visit the Biedermann House, reported to be the oldest house in Liechtenstein, and converted into a museum to show how Liechtensteiners lived in centuries gone by.

You could also visit the ruins of the fort in Schellenberg. This is where the Knights of Schellenberg ruled their country. Most of the walls still stand, and give a good impression of the layout of the fort.

Earlier remains exist in Nendeln, where the foundations of a Roman villa have been uncovered. Go up the hill to the primary school, where the foundations are free to view.

Eschen, Mauren and Bendern all have interesting centers with old historic buildings. All the villages in the Unterland also provide ideal starting points for walks, especially around the Eschnerberg which dominates the area.



Moving South, Schaan – the largest village has some great sporting facilities, and Dux, an area overlooking the village offers fantastic vistas and a peaceful location for many sports, and an ideal starting point for mountain walks.

Vaduz is the most touristic village in Liechtenstein, so if you don't have much time in Liechtenstein, and want to be a tourist – Vaduz is the place to go. The castle dominates the village, and there is a path to walk up to the castle from village centre, though please note that the castle is not open to the public, and there are no facilities available at the castle.

Most of the country's museums are in Vaduz and are easy to visit as they are in a small area in the centre. If you want to walk from Vaduz, there are paths into the mountains – for example past the castle and into Triesenberg, or to the older castle in Vaduz – The Wildschloss or wild castle, which is about two hours walk from Vaduz.

Triesen and Triesenberg offer visitors picturesque village centers and wonderful views. The centers are full of old houses and restaurants that are well worth visiting. Triesenberg also offers great access to the mountains, especially in its outlying villages of Gaflei, Masecha, Steg and, of course Malbun.

Malbun is a village that has grown thanks to tourism, but it doesn't feel like an Alpine Costa-del-Sol, the development has been sympathetic to the area, even if it has taken off in previous years. Take a trip up the chairlift to Sareis, and if you are up to it, walk back down the track to the village centre (Sareis offers a chance to refresh yourself, or to get some Dutch courage).

In the south of the country, Balzers is dominated by its castle which is open to the public at certain times.



Natural Sights

Liechtenstein's natural sights involve the impressive mountain landscape, and the Rhine valley that contrasts it. Most tourists visiting Liechtenstein arrive in Vaduz, wander around the centre and complain at the lack of 'unspoiled areas, and the prices!' There is another option!

Take a bus from the centre of Vaduz up to Triesenberg, or better still to Malbun, or travel to the next village of Schaan and walk up the hillside to Dux. Alternatively, take a bus to the Unterland and enjoy the hilly landscape of the Eschnerberg.

Liechtenstein is not Vaduz, so don't follow the sheep. There's so much more to the country. Here is a list of possible excursions – possible during a day or two day-trip to the country.

Take a bus up to Malbun and then the chairlift to the top of Sareis. Have a drink in the restaurant there. Stop off before you get to Malbun, in the village of Steg and walk around the village, or up to the mountain dairy at Sücka. Take a ride to Schaan, and then follow the road up past the church to Dux. You can stop in the restaurant or walk up into the woods and the activity areas there. Take a trip to Gaflei (via Triesenberg) and climb the observation tower. Take a trip up to Planken and then walk (give about 1–2 hours) up the track to Gafadura where you can have a meal, a drink and enjoy the views and fresh air. Go to Ruggell in the north and hire a bicycle to enjoy the flat terrain, you can cycle all the way to Balzers alongside the Rhine! Get a map and walk from Steg, into the mountains to Schönberg (2104 m) and back round to Malbun (if you are not confident of navigating yourself, ask at the tourist office in Malbun or Vaduz). If you are a more adventurous walker, try the Fürstensteig from Gaflei across the mountain face. There are sheer drops here, so you must be confident. You can also continue on to the Drei Schwestern and come down via Gafadura to Planken. Visit Schellenberg and picnic at the ruined fort there. Walk directly from Vaduz to the Wildschloss (wild castle) high on the mountain side between Schaan and Vaduz. If you only want a stroll – why not walk up to the Castle in Vaduz, then along the Fürstenweg (a track above the field opposite the castle) and then back down through the old part of Vaduz – this should take the average walker about 1–2 hours.

<http://www.about-liechtenstein.co.uk>

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