

# Travel

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'It's pretty amazing to swim lengths while looking down on airliners nosing to their gates'

Will Pavia checks in to the new TWA hotel at JFK

TIMO SCHWACH/HOTEL VILLA HONEGG

## Summer in the Alps

### 30 great holidays



Hotel Villa Honegg, Switzerland **2**

Soak up the views from a Swiss spa, stay in a chic Italian chalet, or hike through mountain meadows in Austria. **Gemma Bowes** has the pick of the trips

#### Cool hotels

##### **1 Chetzeron** Crans-Montana, Switzerland

The crowning glory of Crans-Montana, a large, sunny resort overlooking the Rhône valley, has to be the Chetzeron, an impressive conversion of the old ski-lift station near the top of the Cry d'Err cable car, 2,112m above sea level. Where once skiers queued for cable cars, now pampered guests luxuriate in a cavernous concrete space. Eco credentials include a solar-powered water system, a wellness area and two restaurants with four terraces from which to spot the Matterhorn and Mont Blanc. Crans-Montana has a wealth of activities, from

a golf course at altitude and walks along the old bisces (irrigation waterways), to a miniature railway museum.

**Details** B&B doubles cost from SwFr320 a night (chetzeron.ch)

##### **2 Hotel Villa Honegg** Ennetbürgen, Switzerland

The views from the outdoor infinity pool and terrace of the Hotel Villa Honegg are unrivalled in the Swiss Alps. There are no gimmicks at this elegant art nouveau villa, high above glittering Lake Lucerne — and why would you need them with a location like this? Instead



Chetzeron, Switzerland **1**

the hotel focuses on doing the simple things well. There are 23 bedrooms, a small spa and an acclaimed restaurant serving food sourced from the valley. A ride up the Hammetschwand lift to the summit of Mount Bürgenstock is not to be missed.

**Details** B&B doubles cost from £460 a night (villa-honegg.ch)

##### **3 Armancette** St Gervais, France

With 17 rooms furnished in rare natural stone and old brushed wood, the lovely new five-star Armancette is a stylish addition to the village of Saint Nicolas de Vérocé, near ▶

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Saint-Gervais and the Mont Blanc massif region. It's easy to reach, being just 80 minutes from Geneva, the main airport hub for the Swiss and French Alps Switzerland. Get some laps in with a view of the mountains in the spa's indoor pool, then feast the night away in the gourmet restaurant La Table d'Armante. **Details** B&B doubles cost from €312 (£278) a night (armancette.com)

#### 4 Bühelwirt South Tyrol, Italy

The South Tyrol is really starting to carve a niche with its architecture and contemporary design. A case in point is the Bühelwirt, whose new angular six-storey extension in blackened larch, with asymmetric windows and roof, won it a German design award this year. Pine-heavy rooms have quirky slanted window seats and hyper-modern lighting and furniture. Guided walks into the surrounding Ahrntal countryside are among the activities on offer. The hotel sauna has a large glass window giving views of the steep mountainside. **Details** B&B doubles cost from €90 a night (buehelwirt.com)

#### 5 Hotel Hubertus South Tyrol, Italy

Six swimming pools are at your disposal at the Hotel Hubertus in Valdaora, including the new cantilevered Sky Pool, which projects 17m, 12m above ground and has a glass window in its floor. Stupendous views of the Dolomites and the immediate Val Pusteria scenery continue the drama in the country-house style rooms. An impressive wine cellar, modern reworkings of traditional restaurants and a 5,000 sq m park with fruit trees, wooden bowling alley, indoor/outdoor pools and a seven-sauna spa make this a rather fancy resort. **Details** B&B doubles cost from €138 a night (hotel-hubertus.com)

#### 6 Brücke 49 Vals, Switzerland

Alpine kitsch be gone. Pared-back rusticity is the look at the four-room Brücke 49 in Vals in Graubünden, the region that's home to glitzy St Moritz and the Bernina Glacier. Chalky wood panelling is offset by Jielde lights, maroon velvet armchairs and minimalist white bathrooms; the Swiss-Danish owners describe it as being "like the inside of an Apple computer". From August three new apartments will open in a neighbouring chalet. **Details** B&B doubles cost from SwFr240 a night, including free rides on the gondola lift and half-price entry at Therme Vals. A week in an apartment costs from SwFr1,975 (brucke49.ch)

#### 7 Vila Planinka Jezerko, Slovenia

Cosy-cool rooms with rocking chairs, exposed larch and views of towering pines and small forested peaks are the order of the day at Vila Planinka, a new, sustainable boutique hotel in Jezerko in Slovenia's Kamnik-Savinja Alps. The range is known for its curative, manganese-rich mineral waters (bottled on site for guests to drink) and, like the Julian Alps and the Dolomites, is part of the Southern Limestone Alps. Hiking and fishing can fill your days, while the garden-to-table restaurant promises good food for the evening, using ingredients from nearby eco-farms. **Details** B&B doubles cost from €193 a night (vilaplaninka.com)

#### 18 Anako Lodge, Switzerland



#### 4 Bühelwirt, Italy



#### 14 Ufogel, Austria



#### 7 Vila Planinka, Slovenia



#### 8 Terminal Neige Refuge Chamonix, France

Ride the red cog mountain train up above Chamonix and you're faced with the imposing Mer de Glace glacier. Metal staircases lead down to ice caves at its fringes; a cool café, Le Panoramique, overlooks the ice; and, rather incongruously, there's the Terminal Neige Refuge. It has glam/kitsch interiors and yoga on the terrace, and cocooning rooms of exposed wood and leather that are particularly peaceful once the day-trippers have left and guests have the mountain tops to themselves. **Details** Half-board doubles cost from €160 a night, dorm beds from €90pp (refuge.terminal-neige.com)

#### 9 Das Kranzbach Germany

At the bottom of the Zugspitze, Germany's highest mountain, within pine forest scenery, this large Bavarian hideaway is the place for a relaxing

break. Built in the Arts and Crafts style by an English violinist in 1913, its interiors were updated recently by the British designer Ilse Crawford. The expansive grounds have huge lawns dotted with sunloungers and pools, a Japanese-style mirrored meditation house tucked between the trees and forest bathing sessions. Light meals suit those on the spa and detox retreats. **Details** Half-board doubles cost from €172 a night (daskranzbach.de)

#### 10 Hotel Gebhard Tyrol, Austria

The sleepy Tyrolean villages of Fiss, Ladis and Serfaus have free shuttle buses and mountain ski lifts for summer visitors to make the most of their excellent walking, cycling and outdoor pursuits. They share a high plateau, where activities range from mountain Segway tours and e-biking to romantic outdoor feasts. Try Hotel Gebhard, a modern reinvention of a typical chalet-hotel, where neutral greys, beiges

and rustic exposed wood rule. There is smartly presented food and a sauna. **Details** Half-board doubles cost from €147 a night (hotel-gebhard.at)

#### Chalets and huts

#### 11 Baita 1697 Pragelato, Italy

In an off-radar corner of the Italian Alps, the small, chic and foodie resort of Pragelato (which links to Sestriere and Sauze d'Oulx in the ski season) is home to Baita 1697, a posh 17th-century Piedmontese farmhouse remodelled by an Italian interior designer of note. Five master en suite rooms and a children's dorm sleeping six, plus a media room that converts to sleep two more, are furnished with rock'n'roll aplomb, with huge portraits, deep tubs and cowhide rugs. Add a hot tub and roof terrace and it's the perfect party pad for families. **Details** A week costs from £8,800 sleeping 18 on a catered basis (including canapés and pre-dinner drinks, five



6 Brücke 49, Switzerland



5 Hotel Hubertus, Italy



17 Brigitte's Mazot, France



evening meals and afternoon tea) or from £5,800 self-catered (alpineguru.com)

## 12 Hof Alpenjuwel Nauders, Austria

The exposed wood ceilings, thick bare stone walls and rafters of an old 13th-century farmhouse lend warmth and character at Hof Alpenjuwel, an intriguing holiday property in Nauders in the Austrian Tyrol. There are two apartments, each sleeping 11 or 12 people in three bedrooms, a sauna and a glass window in the common stairwell looking into a barn space where the farm's sheep live. Borrow bikes to explore the trails of the Alpenjuwel region.  
**Details** From €155 a night self-catered (alpen-juwel.at)

## 13 Chalet F'Net Saint Gervais, France

Evenings under the stars in the outdoor wood-fired hot tub are a big sell at

Chalet F'Net, a rustic little two-bedroom hideaway where strings of dangling lightbulbs, a copper splashback in the kitchen and zebra-pattern rugs lend zippy uplift to the antique timber interior. In an acre of its own woodland on the trail towards the Prarion mountain, the chalet overlooks Saint Gervais, a low-key neighbour of fancy Megève, and is an hour from Geneva. Grab a local "Pass Leisure", which gives access to ski lifts, the St Gervais pool, ice rink and museums.

**Details** A week's self-catering for four costs from £700, or from £150 a night (oneoffplaces.co.uk)

## 14 Ufogel Nussdorf, Austria

For a rather wacky take on the chalet stay, Ufogel in the eastern Tyrol bills itself as a "sculpture you live in". An angular larch cabin on metal stilts seems to float above a meadow, with a large panoramic window that folds round the exterior wall between the lower living space and kitchen and the upper mezzanine bedroom with double bed. There's a separate bunk room and shower room. Nearby Lienz is known as the "pearl of the Dolomites", with castles, the Roman site of Aguntum and hiking trails leading up into the Hohe Tauern national park.

**Details** A night's self-catering costs from €140 for two or €180 for four (ufogel.at)

## 15 No5 Les Gets, France

The Boutique Chalet Company is good for smart French properties for larger groups. In Les Gets, for example, among the lovely scenery of the Haute-Savoie, No5 sleeps ten in the centre of town. Be sure to buy a Multipass Portes du Soleil,

which covers 60 activities, 12 ski lifts and various shuttle buses, swimming pools and tennis courts in 12 resorts in the region for €2pp a day in summer. From August 5 to 18 the Lounge Music Festival hosts 50 free jazz, funk and soul concerts in the resort, while children will love the Wibit aqua park on sunny days, with inflatables on a lake.

**Details** A week's B&B for ten costs €3,200 all through the summer (theboutiquechalet.com)

## 16 Chalet de la Cloche Tignes, France

The full-throttle winter resort of Tignes keeps pumping the adrenaline through summer, with a dry ski jump into the lake, skiing on the Grand Motte glacier's 20km of pistes (from €35 a day) and activities from trampolining to archery. Last summer the resort added two open-topped gondolas for surveying the Vanoise national park from above (€20pp, including funicular). So, where to stay? We'd go for Chalet de la Cloche, with its small indoor pool, hot tubs, bar area, balconies and table tennis, in the centre of Les Brévières.  
**Details** A week's half-board for 16 costs £12,000 through the summer (alpsinluxury.com)

## 17 Brigitte's Mazot Chamonix, France

Stay in a cute converted mazot, an old outhouse used to store valuables and crops by Alpine farmers centuries ago. In Chamonix the specialist Collineige has three, including Brigitte's Mazot, which sleeps two, on the Brévent mountain side of town. While you're in Chamonix

check out the new 3,000 sq m QC Terme public spa, with several pools, indoor and out, and go for a drink on the terrace of the new Folie Douce hotel.  
**Details** A week's self-catering for two costs from €655 (collineige.com)

## 18 Anako Lodge Val d'Hérens, Switzerland

The Val d'Hérens is a gorgeous and untainted corner of the Swiss Alps, where the steep pastures afford views of 4,000m peaks. Anako Lodge is the brainchild of a local architect who has rescued pretty *greniers*, *raccards* and *granges* (old farm sheds) from across the region, reinventing them as holiday accommodation, with concrete kitchens and bathrooms, wood-fired hot tubs, colourful modern furniture and even a climbing wall on one of the balconies.  
**Details** Two nights' self-catering for two costs from SwFr250, extra nights from SwFr125, or a week from SwFr800 (anakolodge.ch)

## 19 Aadla Schröken, Austria

The linked Arlberg resorts of Warth and Schröken received a boost a few years ago when they were connected by ski lift to Lech, and thus on to St Anton. In summer the little villages are even more delightful, with fabulous walking between mountain inns. Tiny Schröken has a new collection of high-standard wooden chalets, including Aadla, with private saunas, terraces and hot tubs. Sitting in the culture-rich Bregenzerwald region, the villages have activities such as canyoning and rock-climbing.

**Details** One night's self-catering for four costs from €390 (aadla.at)

## 20 Yurts on the Alp Flix Lenzerheide, Switzerland

St Moritz might be Graubünden's most glittering resort, but it's the smaller enclaves such as Arosa, Lenzerheide, Scuol, Grisons and Vals that make the area truly special. And the hero-sized mountains, of course. Piz Bernina tops out at 4,049m, the highest peak in the eastern Alps. The Graubünden tourism website (graubunden.ch) has links to mountain huts so you can arrange your own trek through the area, but be sure to include Yurts on the Alp Flix, a collection of Mongolian-style tents with wood-burning stoves on a mountaintop farm at 2,000m. It is only 30 minutes' drive from Lenzerheide and is accessible by bus.

**Details** A night in a yurt sleeping two costs from SwFr140 (agrotour.ch)

## Holidays

### 21 Monte Rosa hiking tour Alagna, Italy

No time to hike the whole Monte Rosa circuit, a stunning route around the eponymous peak through Italy and Switzerland? Choose a shorter group trek through the Italian section around gorgeous Alagna, a pretty village with amazing food where the local tourist board offers a trip. Taking in old settlements, the five-day hiking tour involves two to five hours of trekking a day and nights at hotels in Alagna, Rima and Macugnaga, plus the Valle mountain hut.  
**Details** Four nights' half-board costs from €480pp, from June-September (alagna.it)

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