



Epic Cycling Climbs

Epic Cycling Climbs Route 10: Two-Day Alpine Cycling Loop: Furka, Grimsel, Nufenen & Sankt Gotthard - Switzerland



This spectacular 132 km route with 4,200 m of climbing showcases one of Switzerland's most concentrated clusters of high Alpine passes at the source of Rhone and Rhine rivers. With four major climbs above 2,000 m and scenery that borders on the surreal, it's an unforgettable journey through the heart of the Central Alps. The Furka, Grimsel, Nufenen, and Sankt Gotthard passes sit within a remarkably compact area just south of the Rhône Glacier, whose icy tongue once reached the road near the historic Belvedere Hotel as recently as the 1990s. The hotel now stands closed — a quiet marker of the glacier's retreat and a reminder of the region's changing landscape. Just over 150 years ago, the Rhone Glacier reached nearly all the way to Gletsch, the start of the Grimsel Pass road.

While some riders tackle Furka, Nufenen, and Sankt Gotthard in a single day, adding the Grimsel Pass and spreading the effort over two days creates a more relaxed itinerary and allows time to truly appreciate the dramatic surroundings.

[See the complete route here](#)



Day One: Hospental → Furka Pass → Grimsel Pass → Ulrichen (72km, 2,100m climbing)

The journey begins in the small village of Hospental or Andermatt at the base of the Sankt Gotthard. The road climbs steadily through the valley toward the [Furka Pass](#), passing the iconic viewpoint made famous in the James Bond film *Goldfinger*. Just above it sits the Belvedere Hotel, perched dramatically on a switchback and used to offer views of the Rhône Glacier.

From the top of the Furka, the panorama is classic high Alps: ice fields, sheer cliffs, and the distinctive grey granite that defines the region. The ascent of the Grimsel Pass is visible from here, adding a sense of anticipation for what lies ahead.

After descending the western side of the Furka, the route turns sharply right and begins a 400 m climb to the [Grimsel Pass](#) via a tight series of switchbacks. Instead of returning the same way, the route continues down till the old Grimsel road — partly cobbled and wonderfully atmospheric — dropping to around 1,500 m. The scenery here is exceptional and worth lingering over.

The day concludes with a [climb back to the pass](#) and a final descent into Ulrichen, a quiet Alpine village ideal for an overnight stop.

Day Two: Ulrichen → Nufenen Pass → Airolo → Sankt Gotthard → Hospental (60km, 2,100m climbing)

The second day begins with the long, steady [ascent of the Nufenen Pass](#). Climbing roughly 1,130 m over 13.7 km to 2,482 m, it's a demanding start and one of Switzerland's highest paved passes. Though less dramatic than its neighbours, it offers wide-open views and a satisfying sense of scale.

From the summit, the descent leads toward Airolo and the start of the legendary [Tremola Road](#) — a true bucket-list climb. This historic cobbled route snakes up the mountain in a series of beautifully engineered hairpins, offering one of the most memorable cycling experiences in the Alps. Traffic is minimal, gradients are more challenging on the cobbles, and the atmosphere is unmistakably old-world Alpine. Reaching the Sankt Gotthard Pass at 2,109 m after nearly 930 m of climbing feels like a genuine achievement.

The final descent back to Hospental can be taken via the smooth, modern main road or partly down the cobbled Old Gotthard Road, depending on weather conditions and equipment.

[You can check out the route on Komoot here.](#)

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Four passes in the heart of Switzerland – 2 day...



↔ **132 km** ↗ **4,200 m**

Further riding at the birth place of the Rhone and the Rhine - Europe's largest rivers

Andermatt is an ideal base for exploring the mountainous heart of Switzerland, with a remarkable collection of high passes within easy reach. This 269 km route, with around 7,080 metres of climbing, can be ridden over three days and takes in six classic Alpine passes.

The route heads west over the Oberalp and Lukmanier passes, crossing the high valleys around the source of the Rhine, before returning towards Andermatt. To the south-west, the Sankt Gotthard Pass is climbed via the historic Tremola Road, one of Switzerland's most memorable mountain roads, with its beautifully preserved cobbled switchbacks.

The second part of the journey forms a spectacular circuit around the Rhône Glacier and the source of the Rhône River, crossing the Furka, Grimsel and Susten passes. Each has its own character, from the exposed high-altitude landscapes of the Furka to the dramatic reservoirs and mountain scenery of the Grimsel and the sweeping northern approach to the Susten.

Together, these six passes make an exceptional three-day tour through some of the finest cycling country in Switzerland. Andermatt's central location also makes it the ideal location , easy to reach by train, but the route can be started from any of the towns en route.

[See the complete route here](#)



Stage 1: Andermatt to Chiggiona, 111km, 1,960m elevation gain.

The first day eases you into the mountains with a 550-metre climb to the Oberalp Pass, followed by a longer ascent of around 800 metres to the Lukmanier Pass. From here, the road plunges deep into Ticino, Switzerland's predominantly Italian-speaking canton, with the landscape becoming warmer and more Mediterranean in character.

The route then turns north through the Leventina Valley, climbing steadily towards the Sankt Gotthard Pass. This section can be busier, as the valley forms an important transport corridor between Italy and northern Europe, but quieter side roads and cycle paths help to keep the riding enjoyable.

The day finishes in Chiggiogna, or nearby Faido, after passing through a succession of picturesque Ticino villages. With their stone houses, church towers and Italianate character, they provide a fitting end to a day that crosses several distinct landscapes and cultures.

Stage 2: Chiggiogna to Gletsch, 69km, 2,410m elevation gain (ride total: 180km, 4,370m elevation gain).

This is a shorter but exceptionally dramatic stage, climbing the Sankt Gotthard Pass via the historic Tremola Road, where long sections of the route remain cobbled. From the summit, the road continues towards the magnificent Furka Pass, passing the abandoned Hotel Belvédère and the remains of the Rhône Glacier, a landscape made famous by the James Bond film *Goldfinger*.

Few rides in Switzerland bring together so many layers of Alpine history and scenery. The Sankt Gotthard is one of Europe's oldest and most important mountain passes, while the Tremola's cobbles provide a tangible link with its past. The Furka is spectacular in its own right, but the shrinking Rhône Glacier adds a more poignant dimension. The abandoned Hotel Belvédère stands as a stark reminder of how dramatically the Alpine environment is changing.

This short stage is, in many ways, a microcosm of the Alps — connecting their history, landscape and uncertain future. The day ends in Gletsch, whose name comes from the German *Gletscher*, meaning glacier. The name is a reminder that the Rhône Glacier once extended much further down the valley. It is a fitting place to rest before the long final stage.

Stage 3: Gletsch to Andermatt: 89km, 2,720m elevation gain (ride total 269km, 7080m elevation gain).

The final stage is no easy finish, with a steady 3% gradient over the course of the ride and two major Alpine passes before the final return to Andermatt. The day begins with the relatively gentle climb to the Grimsel Pass, gaining around 350 metres in altitude — just enough to warm the legs before a long descent towards Innertkirchen.

Part of the descent follows the old pass road, including around 1–2 km of cobbles. It is a memorable section for those who enjoy a touch of history beneath the wheels, while riders who prefer smoother tarmac can remain on the main road.

From Innertkirchen, the Susten Pass provides the main challenge of the day, climbing around 1,600 metres over 27 km through increasingly spectacular mountain scenery. A fast descent then loses around 1,200 metres before the final 500-metre climb back to Andermatt.

It is a long day in the saddle, but a hugely satisfying conclusion to a magnificent tour through the heart of the Swiss Alps — six great passes, dramatic valleys and some of the finest mountain roads in Switzerland.

[See the complete route here](#)

Or you can scan the QR code below:

Check out this activity

**Three day Swiss
mountain bonanza incl....**



↔ **269 km** ↗ **7,080 m**



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