



Epic Cycling Climbs

Epic Cycling Climbs Route 14: Crossing the Bavarian Alps West to East



This wonderful **562 km journey across the Bavarian Alps** runs from **Lindau in the west to Salzburg in the east**, with around **8,790 metres of climbing**. It can be ridden in **five days** by stronger cyclists, although six days allows more time to enjoy the landscape and the many places worth stopping along the way.

The route broadly follows the German–Austrian border, occasionally crossing into Austria to take in passes and mountain roads that mark the frontier between the two countries. In addition to Alpine climbs, the journey explores the rich variety of the lower mountains: countless small climbs and saddles, sparkling lakes, hidden valleys, rivers and open farmland and pastures.

This is classic Bavarian cycling country, with castles and monasteries, picturesque villages and traditional beer gardens providing plenty of opportunities to stop and refuel. The landscape is particularly appealing in the transition between the rolling hills of the Allgäu and the higher mountains further south. The journey culminates dramatically in Berchtesgaden, with the climb to the Rossfeld Panorama Road, Germany's highest road and a fitting finale to the tour.

Both ends of the route are easy to reach by train. Lindau has good rail connections, while Salzburg is particularly convenient, with direct links to Munich and the wider European rail network.

The route makes every effort to use quiet side roads and cycleways, although around 133 km are on state roads. Traffic is therefore an unavoidable part of cycling in this busy corner of the Alps, particularly around the larger valleys and transport corridors. Nevertheless, these sections are outweighed by the peaceful lanes, mountain roads and beautiful, almost dreamlike landscapes that make this such a memorable journey through Bavaria.

[See the complete route here](#)



Stage 1: 93km, 2,220m elevation gain - Lindau to Sonthofen: The first day is a demanding introduction to the journey, with three climbs between Lake Constance and the Allgäu. The route begins in Lindau, following the shores of the lake before crossing into Austria for the climb to Pfänder Alpe. The ascent is rewarded with magnificent views across Lake Constance and the surrounding mountains.

A delightful descent brings the route to Scheidegg and back into Bavaria, before the road climbs again towards Sulzberg, high on the Austrian border. From here, the route winds through the beautiful Bregenzerwald, with its rolling green hills and traditional villages, before crossing back into Germany for the final and most demanding climb of the day.

The Riedberg Pass, at 1,407 metres, is the highest pass road in Germany and provides a fitting finale. From the summit, the route descends towards Sonthofen, where a well-earned rest awaits after a memorable first day in the Alps.

Stage 2: 124km, 1,470m elevation gain (ride total 217km, 3,690 elevation gain) - The second stage stays mainly in Germany, with a short excursion into Austria, and combines three smaller climbs with some of Bavaria's finest cultural highlights. From Sonthofen, the route climbs over the Oberjoch Pass before descending towards Füssen, where the magnificent Neuschwanstein Castle comes into view across the valley. It is an ideal place to stop, explore the castle and enjoy the spectacular setting.

The route then crosses into Austria, heading towards the beautiful Plansee and over the Ammer Sattel. Back in Germany, the road passes Linderhof Palace, another worthwhile stop before continuing through the mountains to the historic Ettal Abbey. From here, the route turns south towards Garmisch-Partenkirchen, set at the heart of the Bavarian Alps and beneath some of Germany's highest mountains.

The final kilometres provide a fitting sting in the tail, with a sharp climb to the Eibsee, where the stage comes to an end beside the beautiful turquoise waters of the lake, overlooked by the Zugspitze.

Stage 3: 111km, 1,270m elevation gain (ride total 328km, 4,960 elevation gain) - Eibsee to Schliersee: The third stage is defined by rivers, lakes and beautiful Alpine valleys, with highlights including the ride along the Isar and Valepp rivers and the spectacular views over Lake Tegernsee.

The day begins by following the B2 towards Klais and Wallgau, using cycle paths wherever possible. From Wallgau, the route leaves the busier roads behind and follows the Isar through a wonderfully peaceful valley. The landscape is so wild and expansive in places that it can feel more like Canada than southern Germany.

The road continues alongside the river towards Sylvensteinsee, a beautiful mountain reservoir surrounded by forested slopes. From here, the route crosses the Achen Pass before reaching Tegernsee, one of Bavaria's most attractive lakes, framed by rolling hills and higher mountains.

The route then heads into the romantic Valepp Valley, following quiet roads through an increasingly secluded mountain landscape before tackling the final climb over the Spitzingsattel. The descent leads to Schliersee, another beautifully situated Alpine lake and a perfect setting for the end of the stage.

Stage 4: 132km, 1390m elevation gain (ride total 460km, 6,350 elevation gain) - Schliersee to Bad Reichenhall: This stage takes a gentler approach to the mountains, with a couple of

smaller climbs providing the main challenges. The route begins with the ascent of the Sudelfeld from Schliersee before rolling through the Chiemgau, a beautiful landscape of wooded hills, open meadows and small lakes south of Lake Chiemsee, Bavaria's largest lake.

A stop in the charming village of Aschau is well worthwhile, particularly for a glimpse of the imposing Hohenaschau Castle, which rises above the surrounding countryside. From here, the route continues through the lower Chiemgau Alps, where quiet, winding roads weave between forests and small lakes, with the mountains frequently appearing above the trees.

The stage ends in Bad Reichenhall, a historic spa town renowned for its salt. The surrounding borderlands between Bad Reichenhall and Salzburg have been shaped by the salt trade for centuries, which brought considerable wealth to the region. The town's historic Old Salt Works are well worth visiting and provide an interesting cultural finale to a day of gentle Alpine riding.

Stage 5: 102km, 2,440m elevation gain (ride total 562km, 8,790 elevation gain) - Bad Reichenhall to Salzburg: The final stage is the toughest of the journey, with around 2,440 metres of climbing and a day almost entirely devoted to the mountains. The route begins with the climb over the Schwarzbachwacht Pass, followed by a descent to the tranquil Hintersee before climbing again towards the Hirschbichl Pass through the beautiful Klausbachtal Valley. The quiet valley, surrounded by steep wooded slopes and high peaks, is one of the most scenic sections of the entire route.

The route then retraces its path towards Königssee, arguably the most spectacular lake in the German Alps, before passing through Berchtesgaden and beginning the major climb of the day. The road rises towards the Rossfeld Panorama Road, the highest paved road in Germany, where magnificent views open across Königssee and the surrounding Alpine peaks.

A long descent finally carries the route towards Salzburg, bringing the journey to a fitting conclusion in the historic borderlands between Germany and Austria. After several days of lakes, valleys, castles and Alpine passes, it is a memorable finish to a magnificent crossing of the Bavarian Alps.

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

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Crossing the Bavarian Alps West to East from...



↔ 562 km ↗ 8,790 m



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