

Lake Loop Trail in Combination with a Visit to the archeoParc

Duration:	approximately 2 3/4 hours.
Change in elevation:	The starting point of our hike is at 1,700 m (5,600 ft.) and the destination is at 1,500 m (4,900 ft.)
Trail marking:	Seerundgang [Lake Loop Trail]: trail no. 13b and 13a, and to Madonna: no. 15.
Difficulty:	The hike does not make any particular demands, but it nevertheless requires some concentration and suitable footwear.



Drive into the Val Senales valley through the village of Madonna, which is located 14 km (9 miles) from the beginning of the valley, and where the archeoParc has its headquarters, and after 2.5 km (1.5 miles) you will reach the village of Vernago. Tour buses can park here next to the restored St. Nepomuk chapel. From here, the path starts around the Vernago reservoir, which you can begin as you like, either to the left or to the right. For the purposes of our description, we will choose to start out on the path toward the orographic left, the sunny side.

For the most part, the trail leads directly along the shores of the reservoir, which was built between 1948 and 1962. During the summer months, its gigantic basin fills up until it reaches its maximum capacity of 43,000

: Ötzis Lebensraum entdecken *Tracking Ötzi's trails*

cubic meters (35 acre-feet). In the winter, on the other hand, it empties out almost completely in order to ensure the generation of electricity in the Naturno hydroelectric plant. From the parking lot, the trail at first descends and crosses a meadow to then climb up to the road located above. The road is crossed, and the trail briefly leads along the mountain slope. The Leiter River is crossed on a pedestrian bridge to then go back across the road to arrive at the shores of the lake. From this location, it is possible in the late winter months and in the springtime to see the remains of the peak of the tower of the Leiter church, which was flooded by the creation of the reservoir along with seven farmhouses.

The path continues on over meadows and through a larch forest. The first suspension bridge is soon reached, which leads over the Finail River. Now basically at the western shore of the lake (which at its longest locations is 2,600 m/1.6 miles long and 700 m/nearly half a mile wide), the trail briefly climbs and leads to the second suspension bridge which crosses the Senales River. The gorge beneath the bridge offers a spectacular view. The raging waters reveal the literally ice-cold temperature of their source: the Senales River originates from the Palla Bianca range from as high as 3,738 m (12,264 ft.) Continuing on through larch and mountain pine forests, the trail once again descends slightly in the direction of the lake shore.

On the opposite slope of the mountain, meadow areas and an old farmstead come into view. That is the Finailhof, which is situated at 1,952 m (6,404 ft.). Grain was still grown here as late as 1960. The path gets smaller now, and by continuing on single file, the elevation of the reservoir overflow is reached, which has the form of an oversized funnel. After a brief ascent, the trail gets level again, and on the other side of the mountain, the view is clear into the Tisen Valley and to the two farmhouses of Raffenhof (left) and Tisenhof (right). The Tisen Valley is the valley where 5,300 years ago, Ötzi wandered through in order to reach the hollow in the rocks at the giogo Tisa ridge of the same name in which his life came to an end as a result of being wounded by an arrow in his shoulder.

A rock pyramid can be seen from here with the naked eye, which marks the site where Ötzi was discovered. It lies approximately in the middle of the mountain ridge that closes off the valley, along the horizon. With a slight descent, the dam is reached. It is made of hard-packed earth and is 64 m (210 ft.) high and 460 m (1,509 ft.) wide. To make it back to the bus, turn left here, walk along the dam, and in that way you will reach the starting point of the hike. Those interested in history should be sure to take a look at the plaques with photographs of the farmsteads that were once here which disappeared under the water. We will then continue our hike to the right. Following trail no. 15 toward Madonna di Senales, our path heads down through a larch forest and over scree. Concentration is necessary here for approximately 200 m. (around an eighth of a mile), especially if you are underway with a group of children. We soon reach a fork in the trail with a logging road suitable for vehicles, and we continue down into the valley with the left path. From here, it is just five minutes to the archeoParc.

Anyone who wishes to take the hike in the opposite direction, and thus wants to start from Madonna after visiting the archeoParc, should calculate approximately 15 minutes more for the hike.

Questions?

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archoParc Schnalstal Val Senales

archäologisches erlebnismuseum mit freigelände
parco museo archeologico didattico
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