

# Uela – Welcome home to Andermatt!



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If you're greeted with a hearty "Uela!", go ahead and reply the same way – "Uela!" That's how to answer an Andermatter grüezi, hello or good day. Welcome home!

"Uela!" It's a folksy greeting, often heard in the Uri mountain village: traditional, unmistakable, charming – and thoroughly modern. Locals are rarely exuberant, but always warm and open. In short: Andermatt is an innovative and contemporary year-round destination, with long-established, down-to-earth traditions.

At Andermatt Swiss Alps, the values of passion, entrepreneurial spirit and responsibility guide our

actions, including when welcoming our guests and fostering the community of apartment owners and locals.

In Andermatt, a variety of languages and cultures have always intermingled, and people from around the world have been making their way to the Ursern Valley for centuries. Situated between peaks and passes, lakes and bluffs, the village is a hub not only for various cantons and countries but also for various cultures.







# Destination

## Far away and yet so close

Does the perfect location exist for a destination in the Alps? Somewhere that is easily accessible from anywhere, yet secluded and quiet? In the mountains, but close to a city? Reliable snowfall in winter, and pleasantly cool in summer?

You would be right if you said that a place like that doesn't exist. However, Andermatt comes very close to being the perfect location: It's high up, at over 1,400 metres above sea level, providing fresh summers and snow-blanketed winters. It's sheltered between mountains, yet situated in an open, broad valley. Andermatt is indeed "off the beaten track", and by car it can be reached only via winding pass roads. Despite this, the village is located right in the heart of Switzerland and is easy to reach from all points of the compass during summer and winter.

From Andermatt, alpine passes lead in four different directions into four cantons: Grisons, Ticino, Valais and Bern – crossing language borders. The Gotthard massif links with the broader world in another way, too. From amongst its snow-capped peaks and rugged cliffs spring four major rivers of Europe: the Rhine, Rhone, Reuss and Ticino. They irrigate entire valleys and ultimately empty into the North Sea or the Mediterranean.

There are approximately 1,890 hours of sunshine per year in Andermatt – making it one of the top ten sunniest places in Switzerland. If the rain does come, you can easily visit Ticino, go shopping in Milan, the Italian fashion and design metropolis, try out the flight simulators at the Swiss Museum of Transport in Lucerne, watch the elephants bathe at the Zurich Zoo, or marvel at the impressive monastery of Disentis.



## Just a train ride away

Andermatt has excellent connections to the main national and international traffic routes. From Stuttgart or Munich, the journey takes four hours, and from Milan just two hours. Zurich is only 90 minutes from Andermatt. Andermatt can also be reached by train from all directions. The mountain village is less than 10 minutes from the north-south motorway exit. The airports at Zurich, Basel and Milan are just one to two hours away, while the Buochs airport, with service for private jets, is only 45 minutes away. The Matterhorn Gotthard Railway stops at Andermatt, as does the Glacier Express, right at the mid-point on the route between St. Moritz and Zermatt.

Walks are short in Andermatt – it should stay that way: Andermatt Reuss is car-free, and an underground car park offers plenty of parking spaces. The cableways, shops, restaurants, and public parks can be reached easily on foot at any time of the year. In the middle of Andermatt Reuss is Piazza Gottardo. It is a meeting spot, the heart and starting point for all sorts of activities.





## All year round

Andermatt has been a popular destination for international visitors for centuries. Guests come in winter, summer, spring and autumn. They come with family, with friends, solo or as couples for mountain adventures, sport, and culture, as well as for pleasure and relaxation.

Winter is a peak season in Andermatt – and no wonder: Winter lasts somewhat longer here than elsewhere. With snow usually falling by late autumn, the slopes on the nearly 3,000-metre-high Gemsstock open early. In the winter months from December to February, Andermatt is known to be particularly assured of snow.

Owing to the lift connections on both sides, the Andermatt+Sedrun+Disentis ski area extends from Andermatt over the Oberalp Pass to Sedrun in the canton of Grisons and further on to Disentis. It is both a family ski region and a paradise for ambitious skiers. Andermatt's cross-country skiing centre is located in the Nordic House on the valley floor. The 28-kilometre trail extends to Hospental and Realp. From there you can ride the train for 20 minutes to Obergoms and enjoy the cross-country trails in the neighbouring canton of Valais.

In spring, when the snow begins to melt on the valley floor, this does not in any way mean the end for

winter sports. While the golf course – one of the most challenging courses in the area – attracts the first golfers in May, high up on Gemsstock the pistes and powder runs are still in top condition. Spring not only brings the first golfers to Andermatt but also road bike “climbers”, for whom the pass roads are an insider tip. As soon as the roads have been cleared of snow, they are wide-open for rides.

During the summer months and into autumn, the Ursern Valley offers the ideal terrain for hikers, mountain climbers and bikers on roads and trails. The summits of the Gotthard massif rise to more than 3,500 metres and pose some of the toughest challenges for alpinists. Mountain bikers find their flow on the many new and expanded trails. Ambitious road bikers work their way up the numerous steep pass roads. The hiking trails are rich in variety, passing on level ground through the valleys and winding steeply over the mountains.

Those who prefer something less strenuous can drive a sports car through the alpine passes or explore the surroundings on a trip to the roughly 40 mountain lakes in the region. Andermatters who know the area are happy to guide guests on a historic tour of the village or out to search for crystals. Of course, visitors can also fish, swim, play tennis or enjoy paragliding in the Andermatt region.



## From vision to destination

When the Egyptian investor Samih Sawiris came to Andermatt for the first time, he had a vision: preserving nature in this wild and mystical valley while continuing to develop Andermatt as a tourist destination. It was important to him that his vision incorporated nature and the structures already in place.

That was several years ago, and Sawiris' vision has since become reality. By the end of 2022, CHF 1.392 billion had been invested in building the dream, stone by stone, beam by beam. Two hotels offer luxurious accommodations for guests: The Chedi Andermatt, a five-star deluxe hotel built in the village centre on the site of the former Grand Hotel Bellevue, and the Radisson Blu Reussen, a four-star superior hotel, with the Gotthard Residences and

Penthouses in the village quarter of Andermatt Reuss.

Many apartment buildings have been built in Andermatt Reuss, with designs that highlight the alpine-chic style. These properties offer guests modern and diversified accommodation options and are sought-after investment properties. They range from practical studios to spacious apartments and penthouses.

Locals and guests alike benefit from the modernised railway station and make frequent use of the public indoor pool, the convention facilities, the concert hall, and of course the unmatched 18-hole golf course, not to mention the richly varied ski area Andermatt+Sedrun+Disentis.







# With passion, entrepreneurial spirit, and trust: That is Andermatt Swiss Alps

The management company Andermatt Swiss Alps cares deeply about the people of the Ursern Valley and its environment, but also about the region's economy. The company is not any sort of anonymous investor firm. It is staffed with committed people: approximately 160 employees, with Raphael Krucker as CEO, an 6-member, expanded management, and Samih Sawiris at the top as Chairman of the Board of Directors. Together, they consciously take responsibility, true to the values of Andermatt Swiss Alps, which can be summarised in three letters: LUV, which in German stand for passion, entrepreneurial spirit, and trust.

These are not just nice words but a promise that is truly practised every day by every employee. Nicole

Kunz, Customer Service Director: "Everything I do is based on these values. Take trust, for instance. For me, trust is nearly as important as the air we breathe." Her colleague, Stefan Kern, Chief Communication Officer, says: "These values help to orient us and set the right priorities. They are a unifying element and help to keep me focused on the big picture every day." And Andreas Meier, General Manager of Radisson Blu Hotel Reussen, describes it this way: "Passion ensures that we are guided by more than just considerations of profit. I make an effort to be a model of passion, to motivate my team, to go one step further than necessary – and to celebrate success together."



In the spirit of these values, Andermatt Swiss Alps launched Andermatt Responsible, an initiative for environmentally friendly, sustainable tourism in the region. It is intended to help implement sustainability and climate protection projects, to network the players involved, and to inform guests, the population and suppliers about this and to raise their

awareness. Our aim is to facilitate tourism operations in a way that preserves resources. This is because we are convinced that it is in the interest of all of us to protect Switzerland's mountain environment. The progress report details the individual measures and goals.



# History of Andermatt and the region

## From Valais settlers to international travellers

People come to Andermatt and are fascinated by the rugged beauty of the mountain scenery in the Ursern Valley. Many return time and again, some stay forever. "Of all the places I know, this is the dearest and most interesting to me," wrote Johann Wolfgang von Goethe about Andermatt and the Ursern Valley some 250 years ago.

But many centuries earlier, Andermatt was visited by shepherds from Lombardy, settlers from Valais, and friars from Grisons. Later visitors included the Russian general Alexander Suvorov with his army, Queen Victoria of England, and James Bond portrayer Sean Connery.

The area was probably first settled around the year 1000, but certainly at least by the 13th century. The freedom-loving people of Valais, accustomed to high altitudes, began to settle in the high valley and make it arable, clearing the slopes and cultivating the highlands. The mountain dwellers knew how to deal with the avalanches, floods and wind storms common to this rugged high valley. Their skills as trail blazers opened access to the Schöllenen Gorge and the Gotthard Pass to the "lowlanders" – paving this route between north and south.

This brought more people to valley, along with commerce and money – and in the year 1799, war: On September 25, Napoleon's soldiers fought in







the Schöllenen Gorge against Russian troops led by General Suvorov. The Gotthard Pass became navigable for horse-drawn carriages in 1830, after which Andermatt blossomed as a commercial, holiday and spa location, and soon illustrious guests such as Queen Victoria began gracing the Grand Hotel Bellevue.

When the Gotthard railroad tunnel opened in 1882, traffic over the pass abruptly dwindled, and in 1885 the Swiss Army stepped into the breach and began developing Andermatt into one of the country's most important military bases. One of the first ski lifts in Switzerland opened in the Nätschen-Gütsch area in 1937, and Andermatt soon gained international allure. In 1964 Sean Connery raced over the Furka Pass as James Bond in the legendary chase scene in "Goldfinger".

Many legends and myths shroud Andermatt and the Gotthard region. Even today, every child in Switzerland knows the story of the Devil's Bridge, according to which the devil helped the luckless people of Ursern to build a bridge across the Schöllenen Gorge. The devil's condition: The first soul to cross the bridge would belong to him. The resourceful people of Ursern chased a goat across the bridge, whereupon the devil became so angry

that he blasted down a boulder to destroy the new bridge. But it only got as far as Göschenen, where it still lies today on the valley floor.

Andermatters don't allow themselves to be beaten down by wind or weather, by the devil or even by the authorities. This is shown by the story of a proposed reservoir that would have flooded the entire Ursern Valley. In 1946 the people of Andermatt voted against the project, and a furious mob forced the dam engineer to run the gauntlet out of town, casting aspersions at him as he fled.

Today, Andermatt Swiss Alps is reaching further historic milestones in the region. At the beginning of 2000, rumour had it that a rich Arab had bought the entire valley. And not without reason: The Egyptian investor Samih Sawiris was as fascinated by the valley as Goethe once was. Sawiris was determined to introduce more people to the rugged natural beauty of the mountains of the Ursern Valley. In 2013 the five-star deluxe hotel The Chedi Andermatt opened its doors, and today Andermatt Reuss, with apartment buildings, hotels and chalets, continues to grow.