

WELCOME TO THE SUNNY SIDE.

LIVING AND WORKING
IN VALAIS.



ENGRAVED ON MY HEART.

Spend every day where others come on holiday.

This brochure provides a range of general information on living and working in Valais, together with numerous useful links.

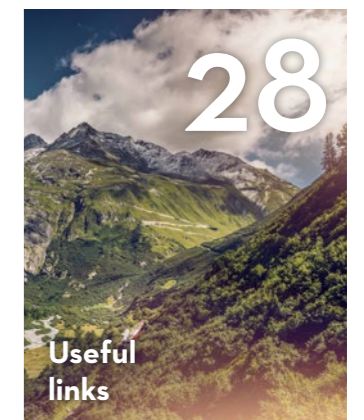
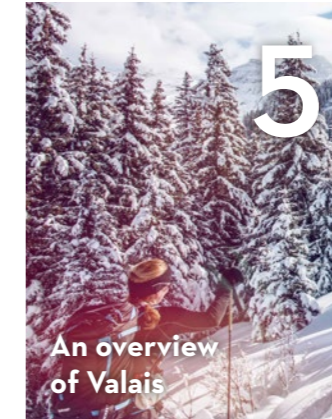
Why would it be worth your while moving to live and work in this south-western canton of Switzerland?

What particular advantages does it offer as a living environment, and what are the main financial considerations?

Why is Valais so good for young families in particular, and how do leisure and work, sun and activity, peace and nature sit so well side by side?

Enjoy browsing the following pages to find the answers.

Contents.





Where the focus is on quality of life.

It's well worth taking a closer look at this canton in the south-west of Switzerland, where work and relaxation are in incredibly close proximity to one another. And unlike the urban centres such as Zurich or Geneva, Valais stands out for its low

cost of living. The excellent public transport connections with the rest of Switzerland and Europe ensure maximum mobility with short travel times. Town or country? The canton is both starting point and retreat - dynamic and relaxing in equal measure.



Living in harmony with nature.

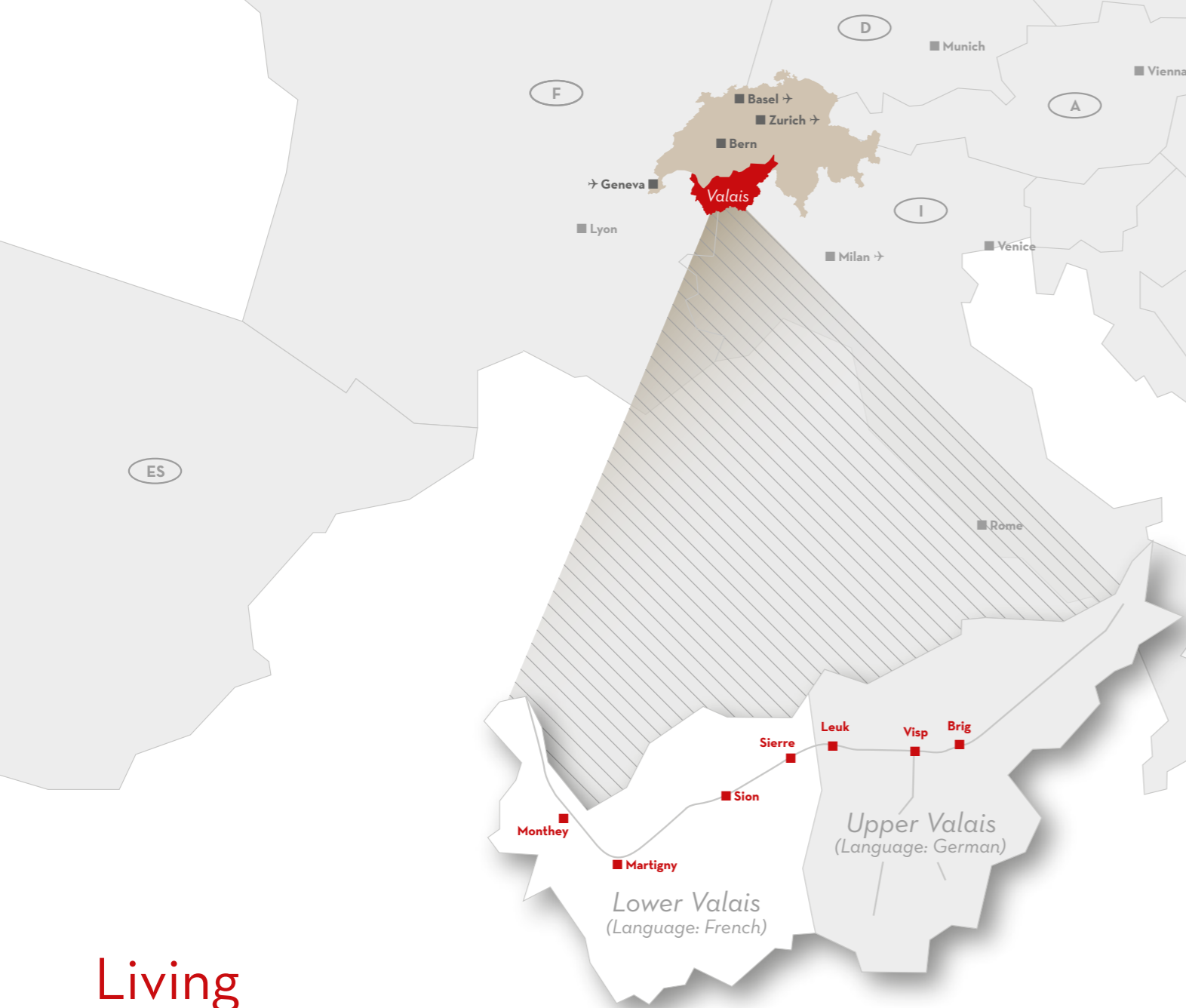
Yes, it's true - our canton is often called the sun centre of Switzerland, and for good reason. The dry, mild climate brings the Valais population an average of 300 days' sunshine per annum. Mediterranean summers, snow-white winters, glorious spring flowers and spectacular autumn displays - experience the seasons here in all nature's colourful glory. And there

are some unique features, such as the Aletsch glacier, the longest Alpine glacier and heart of the UNESCO Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch World Heritage Site, an incredible variety of flowering plants, and 45 spectacular mountains over 4,000 metres high, including the distinctive Matterhorn. Unlimited variety for relaxation and outdoor sports!

Innovation and progress in the heart of the mountains.

The Alps, mountains, forests, meadows - Valais lives from its landscape and its expertise in making the most of it. The variety of natural resources and the unspoilt natural landscape are also essential assets for tourism, one of the most important contributors to the economy. A strong energy industry uses the huge water reserves in the mountains for environmentally-friendly electricity generation. Valais is home

to large, internationally-active companies such as the Lonza pharma and chemical group in Visp and DSM in Lalden, Synthes (medical technology) in Raron and the Bosch works (power tools) in St. Niklaus, as well as numerous SMEs operating within a wide variety of sectors including commerce, industry, construction and agriculture - a lively economic structure with a mix of tradition and innovation.



Living in Valais.

Demography

- > A population of around 300,000 (80,000 in Upper Valais, around 36,000 of whom are in the Brig-Visp-Naters agglomeration)
- > Above-average population growth, especially in regional centres
- > Cantonal capital: Sion
- > **Language:**
68% French, 24% German (predominantly in German-speaking Upper Valais), 8% others

Climate and geography

- > Plenty of sunshine: the surrounding Valais and Bernese Alps make the Rhone Valley one of Europe's driest valleys, and with 300 days of sunshine per annum it is the sun centre of Switzerland
- > A breathtaking mountain landscape with 45 peaks over 4,000 metres
- > The "water tower of Switzerland": 80% of Swiss glaciers are on Valais soil

Mobility

- > A reliable public transport network provides the towns and villages with an excellent infrastructure
- > Convenient connections ensuring short travel times to the rest of Switzerland and beyond (including to airports in Zurich, Geneva and Milan)
- > **Journey times from Visp (by rail):**
Bern 55 mins, Zurich 2 hrs, Geneva 2.5 hrs, Zermatt 1 hr, Milan 2 hrs
- > 30 mins to the ski slopes
- > Less than 4 hours to the Mediterranean

Safe and secure living.

Switzerland is an affluent country and its salary levels are correspondingly high. The gross salaries are among the highest in Europe, while the social security contributions and taxes are considerably lower than those of, say, Germany.

Employees can depend on an outstanding social welfare system, which guarantees financial support for situations ranging from unemployment and accidents at work to retirement. These are not the only things which make Valais such an appealing place to work. The varied, affordable housing stock, the low cost of living, the relaxing natural surroundings, the Valais blend of deep-rooted belonging and dynamism... We have our own currency - 100 percent quality of life!





Idyllic surroundings with plenty going on.

The decision on where to base yourself involves a lot of factors and needs careful consideration. The benefits of cities are different from those offered by rural areas, and both are combined in Valais. Reliable, efficient transport

networks mean that urban centres are within easy reach, while the natural world, with all its opportunities for relaxation, is on the doorstep. Valais is a place that gives you peace and quiet to concentrate on living.

Comparative cost of living (typical household*, CHF)

	Visp	Bürchen	Bern
<i>Income</i>			
Income from employment, gross	150,000	150,000	150,000
Transfer payments (health insurance subsidies, family allowances)	16,800	16,800	12'480
Investment income	3,550	4,105	180
Gross income	170,350	170,905	162,660
<i>- Taxes and statutory contributions</i>			
Income tax	14,693	16,272	20,729
Wealth tax	1,108	1,104	773
"Second pillar" pension fund contributions	9,750	9,750	9,750
Social security contributions	11,704	11,704	11,704
Compulsory health insurance premiums	10,239	10,239	14,518
Disposable income	122,956	121,836	105,185
<i>- Fixed costs</i>			
Living costs	22,183	19,066	41,108
Ancillary costs: water, sewage, refuse collection	1,757	1,922	2,737
Electricity and energy	2,454	2,454	2,979
= Net disposable income	96,563	98,394	58,361

A comparison of the net disposable income of a typical family of four shows that **in Valais you have the most left over**, in regional centres such as Visp or mountain communes such as Bürchen.

* Based on a typical family of four (2 children), income CHF 150,000, assets CHF 300,000, average standard single-family house.

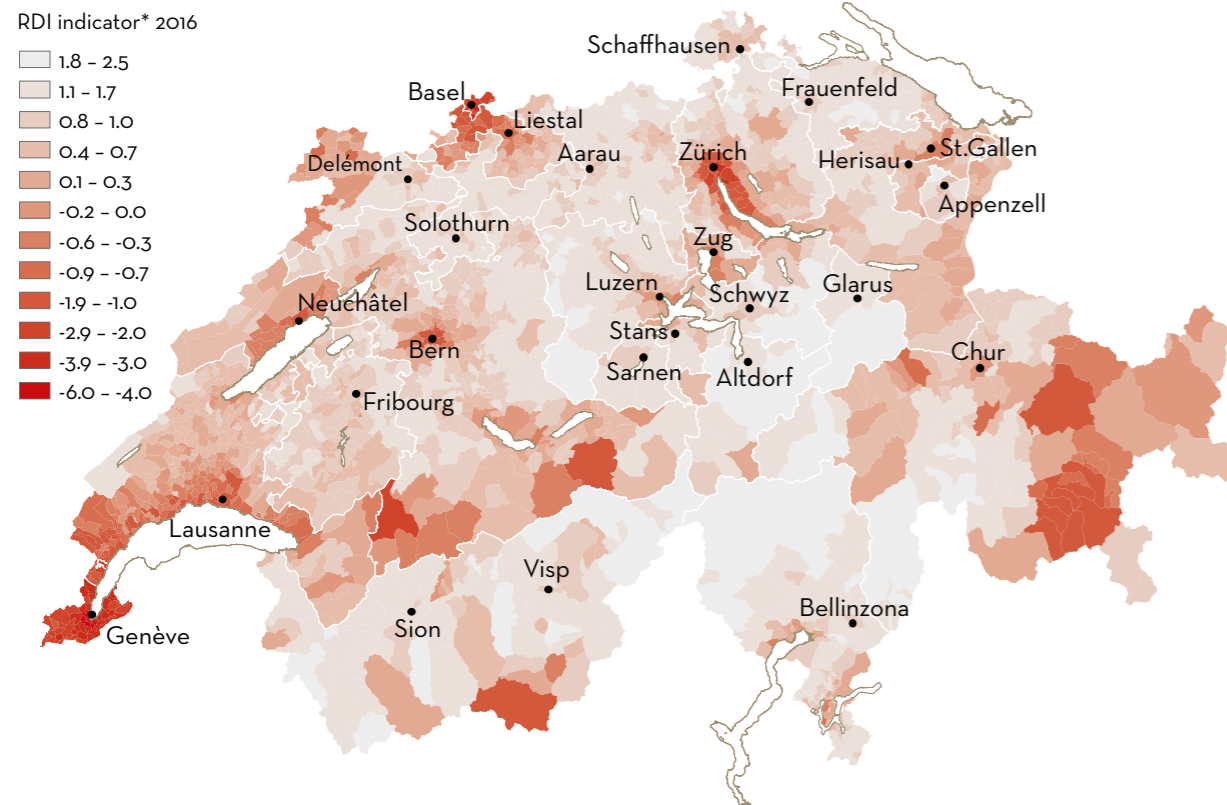
Source: Credit Suisse, 2016: Swiss Issues Regions. Disposable Income 2016 – Housing, Commuting, Childcare: Where's the Least Expensive Place to Live? Published by: Credit Suisse Economic Research.

More life at a lower cost.

Salaries and living costs vary within Switzerland. This means it is always worth making sure you do your research thoroughly – after all, it is what you have left at the end of the month that counts. And in this regard the regions vary widely – urban centres of population may offer attractive high salaries, but at the same time the

cost of living there is incredibly high. Zurich and Geneva are among the most expensive cities in the world, with their property costs, health insurance premiums, taxes, childcare costs... A detailed comparison shows that a family in Valais has more net disposable income than in most other parts of Switzerland.

Net disposable income in Switzerland



Valais communes have a high net disposable income, while the population of the major centres of Zurich, Basel, Bern, Lausanne or Geneva are those with the least left in their pockets for spending.

* The RDI (Regional Disposable Income) indicator measures net disposable income taking account of all compulsory taxes and contributions, location-specific fixed costs, childcare expenses and the cost of commuting to the nearest centre. The higher the RDI indicator, the higher the net disposable income.

Source: Credit Suisse, 2016: Swiss Issues Regions. Disposable Income 2016 – Housing, Commuting, Childcare: Where's the Least Expensive Place to Live? Published by: Credit Suisse Economic Research.

Economy and employment market.

Economy

- > 70% services
- 26% industry and construction
- 4% agriculture and forestry

Agglomeration Brig-Visp-Naters

- > There is a long-standing tradition of the chemical, pharmaceutical/ biotechnology, metal, mechanical engineering, energy and transport industries, and many more
- > Around 36% of Upper Valais businesses and 47% of jobs are located here
- > The biggest employer is the Lonza pharma and chemical group in Visp with around 3,000 employees

Mountain towns and villages

- > Tourism and construction are the key sectors in non-urban communes
- > Leading international destinations such as Zermatt, Saas-Fee, Leukerbad, Crans-Montana, Verbier and the Aletsch area
- > Small-scale rural economy is strongly rooted in nature





A paradise for families.

Nowhere can give an absolute guarantee of happiness, but when it comes to your family, how much value do you place on being close to nature, where they can put down roots in a safe environment? The family is close to the hearts of the people of Valais - and not only emotionally. The canton of Valais leads the way in supporting young families: no other canton gives higher family allowances, and nowhere else do

working families who need childcare have such a good standard of living. A rapidly growing provision of childcare facilities in Upper Valais, with 16 daycare centres already established in central locations, ensures that career and childcare can be effortlessly combined.

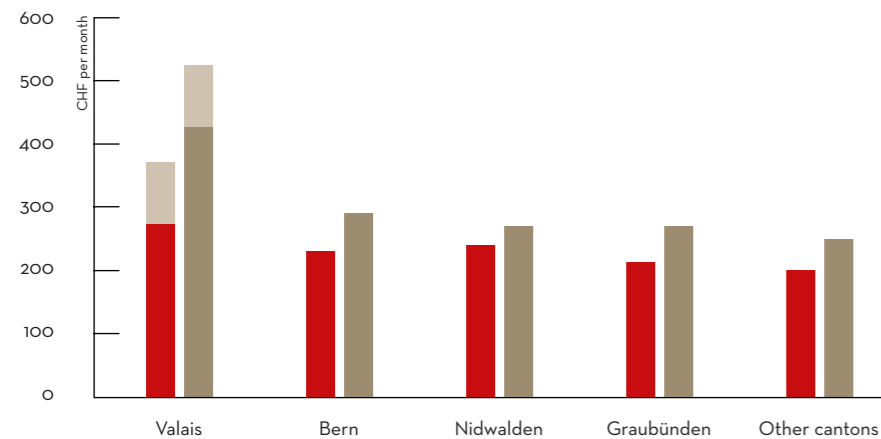
Allow your children to play out in carefree safety. Valais offers your kids space to live and play as suits them. So, out to play!

Great prospects for old and young.

Varied and multilingual – the Valais education system covers all levels, from primary school to a University of Applied Sciences, with excellent schools coverage. Short travelling distances mean that children enjoy more freedom, independence and safety. Valais students only have to leave the canton if they wish to go to university – and the outstanding transport facilities keep travel times

down even then; the University of Bern is just an hour away by train. Valais is a bilingual canton, and the Upper Valais schools give special attention to the teaching of French and English as a second language from primary school level. With a broad-based primary education, a choice of secondary and vocational schools and a wide range of adult and further education, Upper Valais is the place to learn!

Child benefits in comparison with the other cantons



- **Child benefits** for children up to and including 16 years of age (legal minimum CHF 200 per child per month)
- **Education allowances** for children in education from 16 to 25 years of age, inclusive (legal minimum CHF 250 per child per month)
- **From the third child**

The family allowances of the canton of Valais are the highest in Switzerland – child benefits are CHF 275 per month (CHF 375 from the third child) and allowances for young people in education aged 16-25 are CHF 425 (CHF 525 from the third child). In addition, the canton of Valais gives young families the most generous support, with a one-off CHF 2,000 birth or adoption allowance (CHF 3,000 per child in the case of multiple births).

*Most of the other cantons in Switzerland pay the legal minimum. Detailed information can be obtained from the cantonal AHV (social security and pensions) offices.

Source: Federal Social Insurance Office (FSIO), 2017; Arten und Ansätze der Familienzulagen nach dem FamZG, dem FLG und den kantonalen Gesetzen 2017 (Types and levels of family allowances in accordance with the Swiss Family Allowances Act (FamZG), the Swiss Act on Family Allowances in Agriculture (FLG) and the cantonal laws, 2017). www.bsvadmin.ch



A place that bustles with life.

What do you imagine a family paradise to be like? Plenty of scope for relaxation on the doorstep? A large, widely varied range of leisure facilities? Then we have what you're looking for – in Valais you will find every imaginable kind of leisure and sports facilities for young and old, all within easy reach – whether outdoors, under cover, in mountains or valleys. The real feel for unity and community among the Valais population is reflected in the range of lively associations. A wealth of clubs and societies offer a wide choice of activities covering sports, the arts, theatre, folklore, culture, music and more.



Fascinating people with deep roots and warm hearts.

You don't have to worry about culture shock, but a little advance information on the Valais ways won't do any harm - as well as their local dialect, "Walliserdeutsch", Valais people are characterised by their down-to-earth outlook and sociability, kindness and strength

of character. They also love to keep their traditions and customs alive; these include colourful carnival celebrations, Alpine festivals and cow fighting. The lively arts and cultural scene is also enriched by a number of large and small venues, and a wide range of exhibitions and events.

A group of friends are gathered around a long table in a rustic, warm-toned restaurant. The table is covered with a red and white checkered tablecloth and is set with white plates, glasses, and a pepper mill. A man on the left is pouring wine from a bottle into a glass held by a woman. In the center, a man is laughing heartily while holding a glass. To his right, a woman is smiling and looking towards him. Further right, another man is holding a glass, and a woman in the foreground is also holding a glass. The background features a window with red and white checkered curtains, a lantern hanging on the wall, and a large, colorful tapestry depicting a scene with a teapot and other figures. The overall atmosphere is warm and convivial.

AMONG FRIENDS



Body and soul in harmony.

Beautiful views and surroundings - as an outdoor sports paradise Valais attracts thousands of enthusiasts to its fantastic mountain landscape in summer and winter. The people of Valais are passionate about sport and love open-air activities - among them hiking, climbing, downhill skiing and ski touring, mountain biking, cycling, snowshoeing, or simply relaxing in the soothing thermal spas. Spiritual needs are as well-catered for as

physical ones - variety is the spice of life!

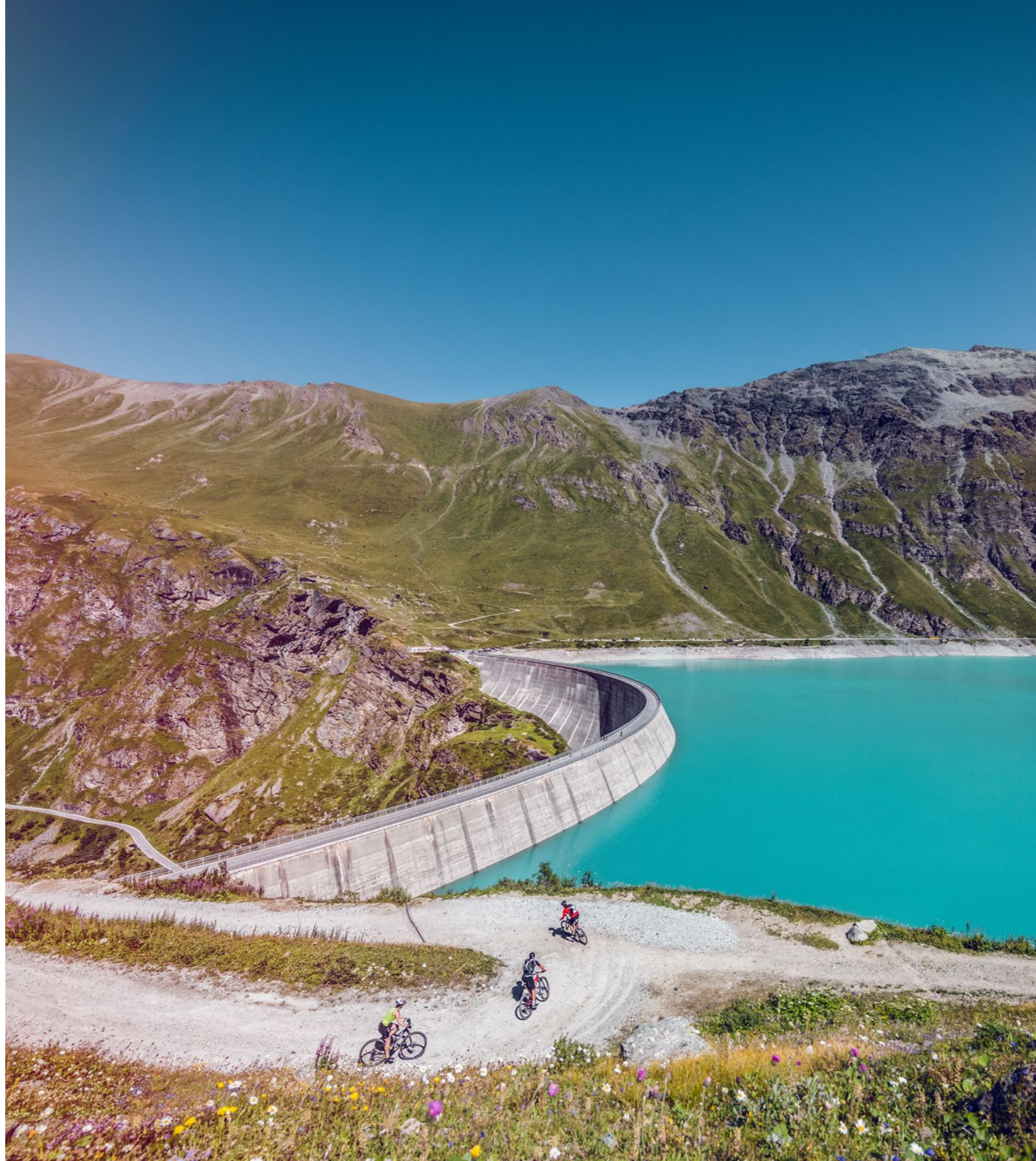
Those who feel the call of the city from time to time can soon reach the rest of Switzerland or neighbouring countries thanks to Valais' central location. The excellent public transport networks enable museum visits in Zurich, concerts in Geneva or shopping trips in Milan to be enjoyed at any time.



A passion for the finer things in life.

Do you know about Valais wines? Almost half of all Swiss wines come from our sun-kissed canton, such as the fruity Valais white, Fendant, or the fine Pinot Noir from the red wine capital of Salgesch. With a wealth of traditional local specialities, Valais is capable of surprising even the keenest wine connoisseurs. When both the wine and the food are perfectly suited to the occasion, you know you are in the

heart of culinary Valais. A creamy, melting raclette, spiced dried meat with tasty rye bread and regional delicacies such as the Goms Cholera Pie are as prized as the Mund saffron used to flavour the traditional local risotto. Genuine origin-protected products carry a part of authentic Valais within them. The Valais gastronomy, whose hosts include a number of renowned top chefs, is there to be seen and tasted. Enjoy!



Discover Valais.

Sports and nature

- > 2,000 km of ski pistes in the highest-altitude ski areas of Switzerland – with guaranteed snow!
- > Over 8,000 km of hiking trails amidst breathtaking mountain scenery
- > A comprehensive network of mountain bike and cycling trails connecting scenic and cultural attractions
- > Mountaineering, climbing and ski touring in the breathtaking Valais mountains, with 45 peaks over 4,000 metres
- > Spa region with thermal springs from the mountains
- > Major sporting events including the Ice Climbing World Cup in Saas-Fee, the Patrouille des Glaciers ski mountaineering race, numerous mountain running events and the Belalp Hexe, Switzerland's biggest public downhill ski race

Culture

- > Internationally-renowned art at the Fondation Pierre Gianadda in Martigny, with changing exhibitions of artists such as Picasso, Miró, Chagall etc.
- > UNESCO World Heritage Site visitor centre and other museums giving an insight into the unique natural, cultural and historical heritage of Valais
- > Cultural events of international renown: the Leukerbad literary festival, classical music in the music village of Ernen as well as Saas-Fee and Zermatt
- > Popular festivals such as the Open Air Gampel rock and pop festival with over 115,000 visitors and the Zermatt Unplugged acoustic music festival

The wine region of Valais

- > A huge range of local speciality wines: 49 grape varieties are origin-protected, including Cornalin and Petite Arvine
- > Experience the delights from vineyard to wine cellar with wine-related events, tastings, trails and guided tours

Cuisine

- > Valais AOC (designated origin-protected) speciality products: Valais raclette, rye bread and dried meats, abricotine (apricot liqueur), Mund saffron and more
- > Top cuisine: the canton boasts over 1,000 Gault-Millau points – the highest percentage per person in Switzerland!



Useful information and further links.

General

Official website for the Canton of Valais
vs.ch

Valais/Wallis cantonal promotion site
visitvalais.ch

Working, living, cost of living

Comprehensive information portal from the Swiss authorities
ch.ch

Residence and work permits
sem.admin.ch

Embassies and consulates
fdfa.admin.ch

Social security
bsv.admin.ch
ahv-iv.ch

Taxes
estv.admin.ch
ch.ch/en/tax-calculator

Switzerland as a place to live and work
s-ge.com
compareyourcountry.org

National comparison of the cost of living in the Credit Suisse "Disposable Income" survey
credit-suisse.com

Transport

Swiss Railways (including transport timetable information; Valais car train through the Lötschberg tunnel, Furka pass, Simplon pass)
sbb.ch

PostBus Switzerland
postbus.ch

Car sharing (4 locations in Upper Valais)
mobility.ch

Healthcare, medical care, social services

Hospitals in Valais health network
spitalwallis.ch

Sozialmedizinisches Zentrum Oberwallis (Upper Valais social and healthcare centre)
smzo.ch

Social services information for Switzerland
sozialinfo.ch

Education

Primary schools:

Kindergartens and primary schools in almost every commune
 Lower secondary schools (intermediate schools) in all the major centres



Middle schools (secondary stage II) in Upper Valais:

“Kollegium Spiritus Sanctus” upper secondary school in Brig
Offers possibility of taking the bilingual (German-French/German-English) baccalaureate
spiritus.ch

“Kollegium Spiritus Sanctus” sports upper secondary school in Brig
spiritus.ch/de/sportschule

“St Ursula” Upper Valais middle school
oms.brig.ch

Vocational schools (secondary stage II) in Upper Valais:

Vocational schools in Brig (construction, hospitality management, business and service industry) and Visp (technology, chemistry, healthcare)
berufsbildung-vs.ch

Landwirtschaftliche Berufsschule (agricultural college) in Visp
vs.ch/landwirtschaft

Universities of Applied Sciences:
University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland in Visp, Leukerbad, Sierre and Sion
hevs.ch

Teacher Training College in Brig
hepvs.ch

ECAV School of art and design in Sierre
ecav.ch

HEMU School of music in Sion
hemu.ch

Distance Learning University in Brig
ffhs.ch

Universities in Switzerland
swissuniversity.ch

University campuses in Sion:
École polytechnique fédérale de

Lausanne (EPFL)
valais.epfl.ch

University of Lausanne
unil.ch

University of Geneva
unige.ch

Swiss Distance Learning University, study centre based in Brig
distanceuniversity.ch

International schools/colleges:
“César Ritz Colleges Switzerland” international hospitality management school in Brig
cesarritzcolleges.edu

Les Roches International School of Hotel Management in Bluche
lesroches.edu

European Graduate School (EGS) in Saas-Fee
egs.edu

Private / International schools in Bratsch, Sion, Montreux and Crans-Montana
gd-vs.ch
ardevaz.com
buissonnets.ch
stgeorges.ch
leregentcollege.com

Child daycare centres in Upper Valais
“Sunnämeijä” Reckingen
gemeinde-goms.ch

“Gogwärgi” Lax
lax.ch

“Gletscherfloh” Bitsch
bitsch.ch

“Mogli” Naters
naters.ch

“Ringelreija” Brig (3 facilities)
ringelreija.ch

“Spillchischta” Visp
spillchischta.ch

“Goldgüegi” Stalden
stalden.ch

“Murmeli” Saas-Fee
3906.ch

“Kinderparadies” Zermatt
kinderparadies-zermatt.ch

“Marzipan” / “Puderzucker” Zermatt
fea-zermatt.ch

“Sunnublüamu” Steg
haus-der-generationen.ch

“Purzilböim” Leuk
kitaleuk.ch

“Thermi” Leukerbad
leukerbad.ch

Information on further daycare centres, childcare, etc. can be found on the website for each municipality

Nature, culture and events
Valais/Wallis Promotion - official tourist information site (including events and highlights)
visitvalais.ch

Pfyn-Finges Nature Park
pfyn-finges.ch

Binntal Nature Park
landschaftspark-binntal.ch

UNESCO Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch World Heritage Site
jungfraualetsch.ch

Culture Valais (including all institutions and cultural diary)
culturevalais.ch

The contents of this brochure can also be found at leben-wallis.ch

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