**Title** - Resort review: Nendaz, Switzerland

**content -** Nendaz is not one place but many: the Haute-Nendaz resort plus 17 surrounding villages. It is in the central part of Switzerland’s vast 4 Valleys ski area and is popular with Swiss families — many of whom have chalets or apartments here — in addition to visitors from further afield.

The majority of tourists come to Nendaz in the winter months for skiing and snowboarding, but winter sports are far from the resort’s only offering: there’s local heritage and gastronomy, and summertime guests can experience everything from trekking and trail running to cheese-making, outdoor swimming, and mountain biking.

Who should visit Nendaz?

Adventure seekers should put Veysonnaz high on their bucket list. This is a location with spectacular, unspoiled natural landscapes, and the combination of impressive mountains plus favourable weather conditions — plenty of powdery snow in the winter, and long, warm sunny days in summer — mean that you will want to spend as much time as possible outdoors. It doesn’t matter if you want to learn new skills or are already an accomplished skier, climber, or mountain biker, because there are opportunities for all levels of skill and fitness, plus guides and instructors who will help you reach the next level.

Winter activities in Nendaz

Nendaz SwitzerlandNendaz Switzerland

Skiing from Nendaz is fun! Yes, there are some runs that will make your knuckles turn white and certainly give you an adrenaline boost, but you can also enjoy the seven free tracks, fun park, and three snow gardens.

The exhilarating Mont Fort zip line starts at an altitude of 3,330m above sea level — the highest point in the 4 Valleys —and reaches a top speed of more than 100 km/h. If you prefer something a little more sedate, or at least slower, there are around 100 km of winter walks through the picturesque villages, pastures, and forests.

A particular highlight is night time snowshoeing from the village of Siviez, where a guide leads you up the mountain after dark and rewards your efforts with raclette melted over an open fire. It may be chilly, but it is certainly a memorable and well-earned meal.

Summer activities in Nendaz

Cycling in Nendaz, SwitzerlandCycling in Nendaz, Switzerland

Nendaz’s summer season begins in May when the days are already long and warm. If you are interested in local traditions, there is the annual Valais Drink Pure Alphorn Festival, where you can hear the distinctive sounds of the alphorn, a traditional musical instrument; and also a chance to learn about cheese making, cow bells, and even cow fighting when you walk along the 6 km Herens Cow Path. Visitors with more time and energy can embark on a 3-4 day self-guided walking tour, staying each night in mountain cabins, or explore some of the 200 km of mountain biking trails.

Where to stay in Nendaz

Hotel Nendaz 4 Vallees SwitzerlandHotel Nendaz ,4 Vallees, Switzerland

The majority of tourists who stay in Nendaz opt to rent a chalet or apartment, but there are also guesthouses, mountain cabins, B&Bs, and some excellent hotels. We highly recommend Hotel Nendaz 4 Vallees & Spa, which has rooms from CHF 309 / £278 in low season (rising to CHF 534 / £476 in high season), but if your budget won’t stretch quite that far, try the 3\* Mad Mount Hotel which opened in December 2022. It is an eco-friendly property with charging stations for e-bikes and electric cars.

Where to eat out in Nendaz

As a predominantly agricultural area, local ingredients feature prominently on menus in Nendaz. There are 36 restaurants here, 11 of which are on the mountain, and one of which has received the prestigious Gault & Millau award. We enjoyed Clos de Cimes in Haute-Nendaz and Combatseline, at an altitude of 2,240m on the mountain. In wintertime foodies looking to earn their feasts can book the Rando’Miam, a gastronomic package that includes a walk from Siviez to Tortin with three breaks along the way, one each for a starter, a main course, and a desert. You can book this experience via the Nendaz tourist office anytime from 7 January until mid April.

How to get to Nendaz

Nendaz is perched on the side of the Rhone Valley above the town of Sion (15 km away by road), and you can get between the two by bus (40 minutes) or taxi (20 minutes). Sion has a small international airport and also a train station with regular trains to/from Geneva (2 hours 10), which has more flight connections and tends to be less expensive.

More information

To find out more about Nendaz, see the resort’s official website, www.nendaz.ch.

You may also like: Resort Review: Veysonnaz, Switzerland

**readtime** - 360 seconds

**writtenby** - Sharron Livingston

**date** - May 1, 2023

**Link**: https://www.thetravelmagazine.net/nendaz/

**Title**: Exploring Venetian Waterways by Boat and Bicycle, Venice, Italy

**Content**: Of course, everyone is familiar with the iconic city of Venice but it’s almost too popular for its own good. It gets very crowded but you can find more of its magic on the mainland and the other islands in the lagoon.

What’s more, a new sustainable tourism initiative, Slow Flow Veneto Waterways Experience, is encouraging exploration of the surrounding Venetian waterways at a slower pace – the aim is to encourage low-impact forms of transportation like rowing boats, kayaks, and bicycles. It sounds worth a try.

Altinum

National Museum of Altino

I start in Altinum near the town of Altino. It was founded in the first millennium BC by the ancient Veneti and later became a Roman city and flourished from the 1st to the 5th century AD. It’s at the crossroads of two important Roman roads, Via Annia and Via Claudia Augusta. The port was close to the lagoon of Venice and other waterways, and it soon became an important commercial hub in the northern Adriatic.

The National Archaeological Museum of Altino tells the sad story of its demise. After the fall of the Roman Empire, continuous invasions from the north forced its inhabitants to take refuge on the islands in the lagoon. Previously these had only been home to fishermen and salt harvesters, but the city exodus led to the founding the city of Venice in the fifth century.

Burano

Retracing the route of these refugees, I set out from Altinum, on a “Bragosso”, a traditional flat-bottomed boat. It passes through the reed beds of the Santa Maria Canal before entering the Venice Lagoon. We’re surrounded by flocks of pink flamingos and skirt the lost islands of Costanziaca and Ammiana before arriving at Burano.

The island is celebrated for its brightly coloured houses, a tradition dating from the 16th century. Local fishermen began painting their homes to make them more visible from the sea. It’s small enough to explore on foot, a kind of mini-Venice without the grand buildings. The skyline is dominated by the leaning bell tower of the Church of San Martino, 30m high, located in the Piazza Galuppi. In the early 20th century, the tower was reinforced to prevent further tilting.

Lace making is a specialty here and the Museo del Merletto demonstrates the history and artistry of the Venetian laces. On display are rare and precious pieces, from the 16th century to the present day. It’s still a living tradition and, in their shop in Via San Mauro, I watch as Sandra Mavaracchio and her 16 year old granddaughter, Ludovica Zane, demonstrate their art.

Dolo

Back on the mainland, I overnight in the town of Dolo. It was an important trading post on the Brenta River, linking Venice to Padua and cities further inland. In the 16th century the river was diverted from its path to make it more navigable and a series of locks was installed.

This Naviglio de Brenta, or Brenta Canal, soon became lined with over 2000 villas, built by rich Venetian aristocrats, escaping the summer heat of the city.

To see these villas close up, I set out from Dolo on a bicycle following the Brenta Canal. One of the most impressive is the neo-classical Villa Pisani, built in the 18th century for the Pisani family. Many others are in various states of dilapidation, but there’s much restoration taking place. I take a welcome pause at the Ape Agricola farmhouse in Stra to taste their honey and drink the beer from the Biofevari craft brewery.

Then it’s onwards to now Stra’s town hall, before dumping the bike and visiting the Shoe Museum. This occupies the seventeenth-century Villa Foscarini Rossi, itself worth a visit. The collection includes over 1500 pairs of women’s luxury footwear, dating from 1947 onwards. Highlights include a Vera Wang shoe designed for Sharon Stone’s wedding and Yves Saint Laurent Pilgrim shoes worn by Catherine Deneuve in Belle de Jour.

From here it’s a boat back to Dolo and a second chance to observe the villas of the Brenta Riviera from the water. There’s also time to navigate the locks on the other side of the town before admiring the historic buildings on foot. The Tower of Dolo stands over 25m tall with a clock face on each of its four sides. The painter Canaletto came here in the early 1740’s and immortalised it in a series of etchings.

Other historic landmarks include the Villa Ferretti Angeli, the Church of Santa Maria dei Servi, and the Church of San Rocco. There’s also the sunken oval basin which contained the original locks, and the subject of a famous painting by Canaletto. It’s now filled in, but perfectly preserved, surrounded by some of the original buildings in the picture.

Another way of exploring the waterways is to hire a self-drive houseboat complete with a kitchenette and bedrooms. Apparently, there’s no need for a boat license and that way you can enjoy the scenery at your own pace. Just be aware of the other traffic and wave at the Italians as they pass by.

Factfile

GO: Ryanair has direct flights to Venice Marco Polo from London Stansted.

INFO:

Slow Flow Veneto Waterways Experience has information about various modes of transport.

**Read time:** 402 seconds

**Written By:** Rupert Parker

**date:** Apr 23, 2023

**Link:** https://www.thetravelmagazine.net/exploring-venetian-waterways-by-boat-and-bicycle-venice-italy/

**Title:** Travel Guide: El Salvador, Central America

**Content:**

In El Salvador they say that nothing is more than 40 minutes away and it’s just the traffic around San Salvador that might hold you up.

For most people, the only reason they’ve heard of El Salvador is the Oliver Stone film of the same name, which is set during the civil war in the 80’s and 90’s. There’s been peace here since 1992 and tourism is still in its infancy.

El Salvador street entertainersStreet entertainers in El Salvador

Until relatively recently, security was a problem as gangs imported from the USA made it dangerous to go out at night. That seems to have been solved as thousands of gang members are behind bars and there’s a new sense of freedom. That means that everywhere you go, you receive a fantastic welcome – there’s no hassle and the locals seem genuinely surprised that you might want to visit their country.

San Salvador

The bustling capital of El Salvador, San Salvador, saw a major earthquake in 1986, so there’s hardly anything left of the colonial city. Most of the churches have been rebuilt, but there are a handful of interesting early 20th-century buildings. Just outside the town is the memorial to the murdered and disappeared. A black wall has their names etched into the stone and it’s still an important place of pilgrimage.

The Monsignor Romero City Tour visits locations linked to the life and legacy of Archbishop Oscar Romero. He was a crucial figure in the struggles of the civil war, taking the side of the poor and oppressed until he was assassinated in 1980 whilst holding mass in a chapel in a local hospital. Celebrated as a 20th Century Martyr, with a statue in Westminster Abbey, he’s now canonized as a Saint.

Joya de Cerén

If you’re coming to El Salvador to see Mayan ruins, then you might be sadly disappointed as they can’t really compare to the sites in neighbouring Guatemala and Honduras. What’s unique, however, is Joya de Cerén, the Pompeii of Mesoamerica. This was a small Mayan farming village, nestling in a fertile valley, until the nearby volcano of Loma Caldera decided to erupt in 590 AD. The inhabitants fled, leaving their houses and fields to be buried under 4-8 metres of volcanic ash.

12 structures have been excavated so far, and include living quarters, storehouses, workshops, kitchens, and a communal sauna. The volcanic eruption was so sudden that everyday Mayan life was frozen in time. Artefacts used for cooking, for storage, even for drinking chocolate, were found where they were left. Several cultivated fields containing maize plants and fruit trees have also been uncovered.

San Andres

Just five kilometres from Joya de Cerén, the San Andrés Archaeological Park is one of the largest pre-Hispanic centres in El Salvador, and was a regional capital between 600 and 900 AD. The site includes the Acropolis, which is an elevated square with pyramids and houses in the upper part. There is also a large square on the north side where other pyramids are located, including one in the form of a bell.

Tazumal Archaeological Park

In the K’iche’ language Tazumal means ‘pyramid where the victims were burned’ and this 10 square km site was first settled around 5000 BC. Much of it is still buried but the two main pyramids were excavated in the 1940’s and covered in the cement to preserve them. That’s been recently removed to reveal the original stone-and-mortar construction. A chain fence prevents access directly onto the pyramids, but you can still walk around them to get a sense of scale.

Ruta de las Flores

Winding through the hills in the North West of the country is the Ruta de las Flores, connecting a number of small villages, set amid coffee plantations. Red tiled roofs and cobbled streets confirm to the classic colonial style, with a white washed church dominating each village square. On weekends they hold food festivals, but even during the week, it’s still worth seeing how they make Chorizo in the local market.

Ataco is home to an amazing display of colourful murals which cover almost every wall. The story goes that a hippie couple, after serving time in prison for drugs offences, came here to start an art gallery and painted the outside of their shop. The locals liked it so much that soon the whole town was covered. Nearby Juaya also has a few, but its claim to fame is the regular weekend Feria Gastronomica .Here you can sample some of El Salvador’s typical dishes such as Pupusas and Carne Asada.

Cerro Verde National Park

El Salvador is a land of earthquakes and volcanoes and Cerro Verde has three of them – Izalco, Santa Ana and Cerro Verde. The last is long extinct and you can take a trail around the crater, through the forest, which takes about an hour. You’ll need more time and a guide to climb the other two.

Santa Ana is the highest in the country standing at 2381m and takes around two hours to get to the top. Inside is a steaming crater lake and there are tremendous views to the Pacific. Izalco, just opposite, has been in continuous eruption for 160 years with last one in 1966. It’s known as the “Lighthouse of the Pacific” as its fire could be seen by ships between 1770 and 1958.

Suchitoto

47 km north of the capital are the cobbled streets and whitewashed buildings of this pleasant colonial town. This area saw some of the bitterest fighting of the war and some of the airplane wreckage has been preserved. The town is now making its name as an artistic centre with an annual arts and culture festival every February. There are boat excursions on Lago Suchitlán and it’s one of the most laid back spots in the whole of El Salvador.

Pacific Surf

Of course the first tourists to make it back here were surfers, determined to take advantage of the phenomenal breaks. These days, La Libertad is known as “Surf City” and stages surf competitions for all levels. The sea is warm all year round and the black volcanic sand lends a stark beauty to the coastline. Boutique hotels are sprouting by the sea and the whole area is moving upmarket. You can still find cheap restaurants, however, where you can feast on ceviche to your heart’s content.

Factfile

GO: There are no direct flights from London, so fly via Dallas with American Airlines or via Madrid with Iberia.

INFO: El Salvador Travel has tourist information.

STAY: San Salvador – Hyatt Centric is brand new.

Cerro Verde – Casa 1800 has spectacular sunset views of the volcanoes.

Ataco – Casa Degraciela is a colonial mansion right in the centre of town.

La Libertad – Casa de Mar is right on El Sunzal Beach.

EAT: Santa Ana – Lovers Steak House is good for meat.

Cerro Verde – Crater Coffee Bistro is just below the Santa Ana volcano.

Ruta de las Flores – El Jardin de Celeste serves good local food near Ataco.

San Salvador – Relajo is a typical Salvadorean restaurant in Zona Rosa

La Libertad – Mercado del Mar has fish specialities straight from the sea.

**ReadTime**: 552 seconds

**WrittenBy:** Rupert Parker

**Date:** Apr 6, 2023

**Link:** https://www.thetravelmagazine.net/el-salvador/

**Title:** Hotel Review: The Cascades Golf Resort, Spa & Thalasso, Somabay, Egypt

**Content:** When I arrived at the 5\* Cascades Golf Resort, Spa & Thalasso hotel, I was struck by the drama of its sunburnt orange building draped across the highest point of the Somabay peninsula.

It sits unabashedly amid the incredibly lush green fairways of the Gary Player-designed Championship Golf Course. It’s a verdant landscape embellished with a waterfall and shimmering lakes that unfurls as far as the eye can see right up to the edge of the Red Sea.

Cascades sits at the foot of the golf courseCascades sits at the foot of the golf course

Cascades hotel is part of the private Somabay complex and from every direction offers a view of a pleasing array of natural colours hewn thoughtfully out of desert land.

Who for

First and foremost, golfers. And those looking for reliable sunshine to fly and flop and indulge in the luxurious thalasso spas (seawater therapies). Young families too would enjoy the kid’s club.

Accommodation

There are 159 spacious rooms in this sprawling resort that are at least 44msq each. They range from Standard, Deluxe, huge Gary Player suits, junior suites, executive suites and the Imperial Suite which is a whopping 340m2. The executive suites have access to the executive lounge.

Mine was a deluxe room with all mod cons such as a tv, hairdryer, dressing gown etc, a spacious bathroom with a tub, a separate shower and sweet-smelling toiletries. It had lovely views over the golf course and every morning I sat on the small sun-blessed balcony sipping a cuppa before the day started. I was always surprised to see golfers on the course no matter how early I awoke.

Food & Drink

Spikes restaurantSpikes restaurant

There are a few dining options at the Cascades. The main restaurant is where buffet breakfast (including cooked eggs as you like them), lunch and dinner are served with plenty of variety and themed cuisines.

The Spikes, a pleasant outdoor space just off the 18th green and by the main pool is great for casual but quality lunchtime dishes.

Also, on the private Cascades beach is Seashell restaurant with a lovely menu of seafood that tasted all the better with the sea breeze in my hair.

In the evenings I headed to the Eagles’ “pub” for leisurely cocktails and nibbles and sat on its large balcony eyeing up Somaby peninsular now cloaked by the inky blue starry night.

Facilities

Championship golf course

The Championship golf course is a major draw and no wonder. The 18-hole, par 72 golf course was designed by retired American professional golfer Gary Player and though verdant with pretty lakes, it hasn’t lost its desert quality. Some holes are played on the edge of the Red Sea adding an extra challenging twist.

There’s an impressive driving range, a 5,000sm scoring arena, a pitch and putt practice area and an area dedicated to football golf. The latter is played with a full-size football but golf rules are followed. It’s incredibly fun to play as a group or with a young family. Mohammed explains:

Thalasso Spa

The relaxation experience started by simply walking into the spa building where I got two hits of dopamine; firstly aesthetically – it’s a beautiful space with an impressive chandelier, and secondly, by a sensual aroma of mango and pineapple scents. Almost involuntarily I felt myself shift down a gear, easing into what I thought would be a highly relaxing seawater-based experience.

The Cascades thalasso-tonic hydrotherapy pool is at 750sm, the largest in Africa. It contains 830sm of water divided into distinct water pools of jets, pressure showers, currents and counter-currents said to comfort and “regenerate and tone” the body.

Under instruction from the thalasso therapist Mahmoud, I moved from one high-pressure jet to another designed to “regenerate” different parts, say the leg or the stomach. This was an hour’s worth of full-body pummelling. Later I rested by the spa seawater pool sipping a cup of herbal tea to calm down.

There are 65 treatment rooms with tens of different treatments. I had a fabulous Swedish massage in one of them.

Swimming poolMain pool

Other facilities include a pool so big it never feels busy, tennis courts, paddle tennis, a gym a hairdresser and free wifi. Incidentally, the free wifi extends to their private beach too.

**Written By:** Sharron Livingston

**Date:** Mar 24, 2023

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