WALK THIS WAY

From village strolls to mountain treks, have an alpine adventure this summer
THE ONLY WAY IS UP THIS SUMMER

You can sweat on a packed beach — or roam free in the fresh air of Europe’s mountains. Robert Ryan selects holidays that hit the heights.
PHOTOGRAPHY IN SPAIN

Learn to snap wildlife like a pro on a course for beginners and improvers with the Spanish photographer Sergio Padrà. The seven-night trip will have you taking high-quality close-ups of flowers, birds and butterflies, as well as landscapes, night shots and more. He promises to wean you off that “auto” setting once and for all. Based in a converted 17th-century building in Berdún, a hilltop village in the Aragonese Pyrenees, you’ll enjoy daily picnics at suitably photogenic spots. Departing in May or September, the trip costs €1,250pp, full-board, including flights, transfers and tuition, with Naturetrek (01962-733851, naturetrek.co.uk). Bring your own camera.

RAFTS IN THE DOLOMITES

The Rosa Alpina hotel, in the Italian ski resort of Alta Badia, has a fantastic children’s programme that includes fossil hunts, orienteering, biking, dam-building, swimming, picnics, cookery classes with Michelin-starred chefs — and building a raft to float out on an Alpine lake. Adults can tackle the steeper mountain hiking trails via ferrata routes, or just catch up on a good book. Original Travel (020 7878 7733, originaltravel.co.uk) has seven nights for £1,625pp, B&B, based on a family of four staying in two rooms and including car hire, a guided day on the via ferrata and a night at a mountain lodge with a barbecue. The kids’ club costs £15 a day or £30 for a week.

ARIA IN SWITZERLAND

The lakeside mountain resort of Arosa, which Arthur Conan Doyle put on the skiing map when he visited in the 1890s, hosts a series of events during the summer, including its Music Theatre Festival at the end of July (from €14; kulturkreisarosa.ch/arosamusikfestival). Its atmospheric forest stage was built in the woods for local muscians about 50 years ago, and more recently has provided the setting for operas and arias by Mozart, Verdi and Haydn. This year sees the turn of the German composer Johann Simón Mayr. An international crowd of spectators comes to hear the voices echoing through the dark woods, and there’s a wealth of daytime activities, including swimming in the lake, electric bike safaris (with foodie pit stops) and hiking... with goats. For more details, visit arosa.com.

WATER SLIDES IN THE TYROL

Area 47 may sound like the setting for an alien autopsy, but the only unidentified flying objects here are the bodies拧ing themselves down the slides at this water park and activity centre near the Oetztal Valley, in Austria. Also on offer are tubing, a climbing wall, high ropes, go-karting, kayaking, canoeing and mountain bikes... and “blobbing”, where you sit on the edge of a giant inflatable, then a friend leaps onto the other end and you’re catapulted into the water. Daily passes start at £13 or €18 for children aged 6-14 (00 43 5266 87676, www.area47.at). Stay on site in a seven-bed wooden tepee for £18.50pp a night, B&B, or in a log-cabin sleeping four from £29pp. The nearest airport is Innsbruck, served by Easyjet (0843 104 5000, easyjet.com). Oetztal station is easily reached by train from Innsbruck (30 minutes; one-way fares from £8). From there, a cab to the park costs £8.50.

LLAMAS IN AUSTRIA

They’ll stick to your side as you negotiate the steepest slopes. They’ll even carry your picnic. So it’s no wonder trekkers can find it difficult to part with their new best woolly friend.

0955, swiss.com), BA (0844 493 0578, ba.com) and EasyJet (0843 104 5000, easyjet.com), then take the train to Arosa, booked through Swiss Travel Centre (073 7420 9394, stc.co.uk).

The end of a trip, such as the companionship offered by a llama. If that sounds right up your mountain path, the Aurelio Hotel & Spa (00 43 5583 2264, aureliohoch.com), in Lech, a smartly contemporary take on the chalet-hotel, has a number of llama-trekking options. Choose from three-, five- and seven-hour walks; the last of these is a grand hike from Oberlech, which stands at 5,600ft, to the rugged shores of the Bodensee, a lake 7,000ft above sea level. The llamas set the pace, but don’t worry, they’re in no hurry. Trek prices start at £349pp, and doubles at the Aurelio start at £400 in summer — but that’s half-board, and the food is good. The hotel also offers fishing, climbing, yoga, mountain bikes, a spa and a children’s programme.

A seven-night fly-drive to Munich in summer costs £259pp with BA (0844 493 0578, ba.com) or fly to Memmingen with Ryanair (0871 246 0000, ryanair.com), then hire a car. Hertz (0870 444 8844, hertz.co.uk) has a weekly rental from about £210.