

5. Maria Alm – Bischofshofen (Variant via St. Veit im Pongau)

Length of Stage: ca. 60 km

Total Gain: 1,690 m

Our route crosses the Griessbach right at the entrance to Maria Alm, leading us on in the direction of Krallerwinkl. After about 2.5 km, we branch off to the right. The paved road ends after the last farm. The subsequent forestry road emerges from the forest after some 2 km, at which point a wildlife feeding station affords us the opportunity to observe stag and deer. Right after this, we will reach our next major waypoint, Gasthof Jufen (elev. 1100 m). Just above this inn is a crossing for numerous hiking trails, including trekking route 01A. This is actually the parking area for the inn, and also where the paved road starts once again. Unfortunately, we currently have to drop down from here into the valley about 100 vertical meters, then ride along the main road (watch out for traffic!) up to Hinterthal.

Once there, we pedal into the village as far as the church, where we head uphill to the right, then make another right once we come to the edge of town. This is the start of a dirt path, first taking us downhill to the stream, then making a rather steep climb. The trail conditions are not the best. At the last bend prior to the Filzensattel, we will reach the main road (1200 m). For the final 90 vertical meters, we have to make do with this heavily traveled main road. 50 m prior to the Filzensattel (1290 m), we branch off to the right, again leaving the main road. But we still haven't reached the highest point of this stage. Now on a broad forestry road, we again climb about 100 vertical meters. Only easy ascents and descents follow from this point on, as we catch glimpses of Dienten am Hochkönig time and again. At the turn-off before the Grüneggbach, where the main route branches off to the left and down to the Grünegg inn, we continue riding virtually parallel to the hillside, until we come to the paved road at Scheibegg farm, following this via Hirscheegg and down to the valley. We now stay on the road for about 3.5 km until, some 500 m beyond the Feroli, we branch off to the left. Climbing gradually, we come to the shores of the Böndlsee (several refreshment opportunities). Along the road to St. Veit which follows, there are no climbs or descents worthy of note. When we reach the small village of Urpass, we keep left until, now above St. Veit, we make a sharp left-hand turn (from here it is another 20.8 km to Bischofshofen – where we join up with the main route once again).

Our route now climbs steeply, only becoming flatter after Pointleiten and as far as Hubertuskapelle chapel. This is where the paved road ends. We switch to a forestry road, which climbs steeply for the next few kilometers (highest point of this stage is around 1400 m above sea level). After this, things get easier. Relatively flat or gently downhill, we cycle past the Pronebenalm (beautiful view out towards the Hochkönig Massif and Mühlbach) through Hengstbachwald Forest. At the next trail fork, we keep left, not making a right until we come to the turn-off for Mühlbach. After a short climb (ca. 200 m), there come several flat passages and gentle downhills until, now below the Kohlmaisshöhe, we begin a significant climb again. With this last climb under our belts, we are greeted by a steep downhill (be careful – deep furrows caused by water run-off cross the trail, so there is a significant danger of falling!). Above the Englmaier (magnificent views of the Salzach Valley), the paved road begins once more, though we continue to ride steeply downhill. At the crossroads in Mitterberghütten (Lutz-Halle), we turn right, riding down to the main road, which we then cross. We now continue to the left, but make an immediate right, which takes us through a railway underpass, and then turn left onto a gravel path alongside the Salzach, passing the power plant and finally coming back to the paved road, which takes us back to the center of Bischofshofen (where we re-join the main route).

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