

Saas-Fee

Canton of Valais · Switzerland

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Saas-Fee is a car-free alpine village at 1,800 meters in Switzerland's Saas Valley, ringed by thirteen peaks over 4,000 meters. All traffic stops at a parking garage on the edge of town, so the streets inside are quiet and walkable, lined with traditional wood chalets. Known as the "Pearl of the Alps," the village is built around its glacier: cable cars lift visitors from the valley floor to ski runs and viewpoints in minutes.

The glacier above the village stays open for skiing through summer, one of only a handful in Europe, drawing both holiday skiers and racing teams for warm-weather training. The rest of the year suits hikers, with trails running from the village edge straight into high alpine terrain, at a quieter pace than Switzerland's larger resort towns.

When to visit

Winters are cold and reliably snowy, with the ski season running from around late November to April. Summers are cool and pleasant for hiking, and the glacier ski area above the village stays open even in July and August. Spring and autumn are quieter, with more unpredictable weather at this altitude.

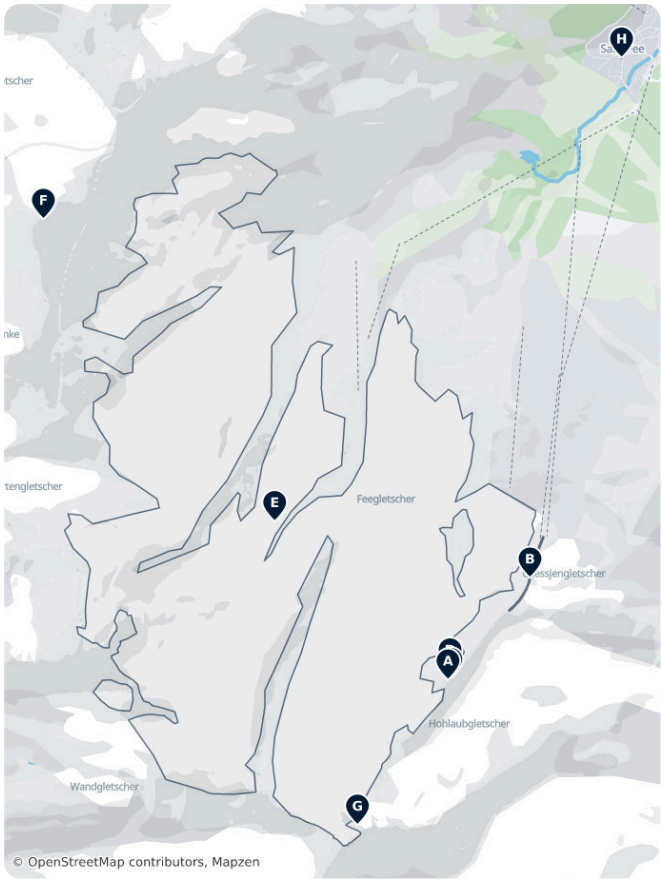
Plan around late January if you want a spectacle: Saas-Fee regularly hosts a stage of the UIAA Ice Climbing World Cup, drawing top international climbers to ice towers built for the event.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Great Great for skiing	-3° / 1° Feels like -8°	-12° / -19°	Dry air · Calm winds
February	Great Great for skiing	-3° / 3° Feels like -7°	-12° / -21°	Dry air · Calm winds
March	Great Great for skiing	0° / 7° Feels like -4°	-8° / -17°	12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
April	Good Good for skiing	5° / 12° Feels like 1°	-3° / -11°	15 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
May	Poor Poor for hiking	10° / 16° Feels like 7°	1° / -4°	20 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
June	Fair Fair for hiking	15° / 20°	6° / 0°	18 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
July	Fair Fair for sightseeing	17° / 21°	7° / 1°	18 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
August	Good Good for hiking	16° / 21°	7° / 1°	16 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
September	Fair Fair for hiking	13° / 18°	4° / -3°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
October	Fair Fair for skiing	8° / 14° Feels like 5°	0° / -6°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
November	Great Great for skiing	2° / 8° Feels like -3°	-6° / -15°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
December	Great Great for skiing	-2° / 3° Feels like -7°	-11° / -19°	12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

These figures describe the wider municipality, which climbs past 4,000 meters at its glaciers; the village itself, lower at 1,800 meters, is noticeably milder than the numbers above suggest.

Top sights



Perched at 3,500 meters, A Mittelallalin is the summit station at the top of the ski area, the highest point most visitors reach without climbing gear.

The B Metro Alpin funicular runs entirely inside the mountain and is one of the highest underground railways in the world, connecting the mid-station at Felskinn to the glacier summit in a few minutes.

At the top, C Drehrestaurant Allalin claims the title of the world's highest revolving restaurant, completing a full turn every hour while you eat.

Next to it, D Eispavillon is carved directly into the glacier ice and is billed as the world's largest artificial ice cave, with lit chambers and sculpted passageways below the surface.

Below the peaks, E Feegletscher spills down from the summits above and is the glacier visitors ski, walk, and photograph from the village itself.

To the west, F Dom rises to 4,545 meters and is the highest mountain lying entirely within Switzerland, a serious objective for experienced climbers only.

G Allalinhorn is a gentler four-thousander reached partly by the Metro Alpin, often climbed as a first "easy" 4,000-meter summit.

For a change of pace, H Saaser Museum traces the valley's history inside a former rectory, with exhibits on Saas Valley traditions and daily life.

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What to experience

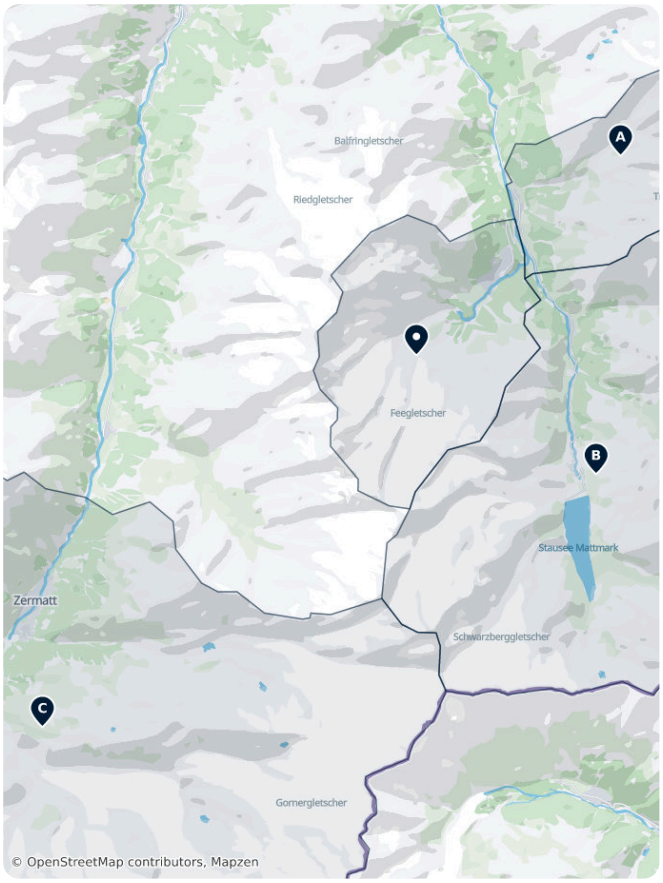
Saas-Fee's setting invites a few things you cannot easily do elsewhere in the Alps.

- Skiing or snowboarding on the glacier in summer, when most of the Alps are green — a rare chance to ride lifts in July and August.
- Watching, or trying, ice climbing on the frozen towers built each January for the UIAA Ice Climbing World Cup, when the sport's best competitors climb through the village.
- A soak and swim at Aqua Allalin after a day on the mountain, with pools, saunas, and steam baths looking out at the peaks.
- Riding the cable cars up to Hannig or Plattjen for sunset, when the surrounding four-thousanders turn pink with alpenglow.

Day trips

The Saas Valley's other villages make an easy trip within an hour, and two mountain icons are within reach for a longer day out.

- A Saas-Grund — a short postbus ride down the valley, this is the Saas Valley's gateway village, with gentler trails and a paragliding launch site.
- B Saas-Almagell — around 15 minutes by postbus, the valley's southernmost village, a quieter base for hikes toward the Italian border.
- C Zermatt — about 2 hours by postbus and train via Stalden and Täsch, for views of the Matterhorn from a fellow car-free resort.
- The Aletsch Glacier, the longest ice stream in the Alps and part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is roughly an hour away by car via Fiesch or Bettmeralp, with cable cars up to viewpoints over the ice.



Where to explore

The Saas Valley holds a handful of small villages worth a look beyond Saas-Fee itself.

- Saas-Grund sits on the valley floor and is the transport hub where the postbus from Visp arrives.
- Saas-Almagell lies further south, close to trailheads into the high mountains along the Italian border.

Getting there

- **By air**: the nearest major airports are Zurich (ZRH), Geneva (GVA), and Milan Malpensa (MXP), each around three hours away combining train and postbus.
- **By train**: trains from across Switzerland and neighboring countries run to Visp, the main rail gateway to the valley; Brig-Glis, a major stop on the Simplon line from Italy, is a useful alternative.
- **By bus**: PostBus line 511 runs from Visp directly to Saas-Fee about every 30 minutes, taking around 45 minutes up the valley road. PostAuto Saastal
- **By car**: Saas-Fee itself is car-free. Drivers leave their vehicle at the parking garage at the village entrance and continue on foot or by hotel shuttle; expect around a three-hour drive from Zurich or Geneva.

Getting around

- **On foot**: the village is compact and traffic-free, so walking covers most of it; hotels and rental agents typically move luggage by electric cart or small shuttle.
- **Cable cars**: lifts to Hannig, Plattjen, Längfluh, and the glacier run through both winter and summer, doubling as transport to trailheads and viewpoints; a multi-day pass covers most of them.
- **Taxi**: electric taxis serve the village for guests and luggage transfers, since regular cars cannot enter beyond the parking garage.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The village itself is car-free and compact, so almost everything is within a short walk; steep alleys near the cable-car stations are the only real climbs.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Low

Steep alpine terrain and the lack of a through-road limit road cycling; mountain bikers instead use lift-served trails above the village.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: no — Saas-Fee itself is car-free, so a car adds nothing once you have arrived; it is useful only for reaching the valley or side trips to Zermatt or the Aletsch region.
- **Parking**: leave your car at the parking garage at the village entrance (covered and open sections, 2.25 m height limit); short stops are free, a full day costs around CHF 15, and multi-day guest cards give a discount.
- **Restrictions**: private cars cannot enter the village itself — only taxis, delivery vehicles, and hotel shuttles are allowed beyond the garage.

Food & drink

Saas-Fee's kitchens serve Valais specialties alongside standard alpine fare: raclette and cheese fondue are on most menus, and dried alpine meats and Valais wines from the Rhone valley below are easy to find.

For something memorable, Drehrestaurant Allalin above the glacier serves a full meal while turning through 360 degrees — reserve ahead, since seats are limited and the view depends on clear weather. Otherwise, look for the restaurants along the pedestrian main street through the village center, where most everyday dining clusters.

What to eat & drink

BREAKFAST

Birchermüesli
A raw-oat, fruit, and yogurt breakfast invented by a Zurich doctor around 1900, now standard on breakfast buffets.

LUNCH

Rösti
A fried, shredded-potato cake, originally a Bernese farmer's breakfast, now a national side dish.

DINNER

Cheese Fondue · Fondue
Melted Gruyère and Vacherin cheese in a shared pot, eaten by dipping bread cubes on long forks.

Raclette
Cheese melted tableside or under a grill and scraped over boiled potatoes, pickles, and onions.

Zürcher Geschnetzeltes
Sliced veal and mushrooms in a creamy white-wine sauce, traditionally served with rösti.

Älplermagronen
Alpine herder's macaroni gratin with potatoes, cheese, and cream, often topped with fried onions and served with apple sauce.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Cervelat
Switzerland's best-known sausage, usually grilled and often called the country's unofficial national dish.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Swiss Chocolate · Schweizer Schokolade
Switzerland pioneered milk chocolate in the 19th century; look for small-batch chocolatiers alongside the big national brands.

Basler Läckerli
A dense, spiced honey-and-candied-fruit biscuit from Basel, traditional around Christmas.

DRINKS

Swiss Wine · Vin Suisse
Mostly consumed domestically rather than exported; Valais and Vaud, along Lake Geneva, produce the best-known Chasselas whites.

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Safety & health

Saas-Fee is very safe, and petty crime is rare even in high season. The main risks are environmental: altitude, strong alpine sun, and rapidly changing mountain weather. Always check conditions and take a marked trail, or hire a mountain guide, before heading onto the glacier or into high terrain — crevasses are a real hazard even in summer.

History

Saas-Fee's history as a resort begins with *Johann Josef Imseng*, a 19th-century priest who spent his life in the Saas Valley. In 1849 he made what is considered the first ski descent in Switzerland, using self-made wooden boards to reach someone who needed help. He also hosted early travelers in his own rectory and pushed for the valley's first hotels, opening the way for the tourism that followed.

Mountaineering built on that start: Dom and Allalinhorn drew climbers from across Europe once the peaks around the village were mapped in the mid-1800s, and mountain guiding became one of the valley's main trades. That tradition carries through to the cable cars of today and the Metro Alpin, opened in 1984, which turned a serious mountaineering objective into a ride anyone can take.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Switzerland at a glance:

CURRENCY
CHF CHF

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY

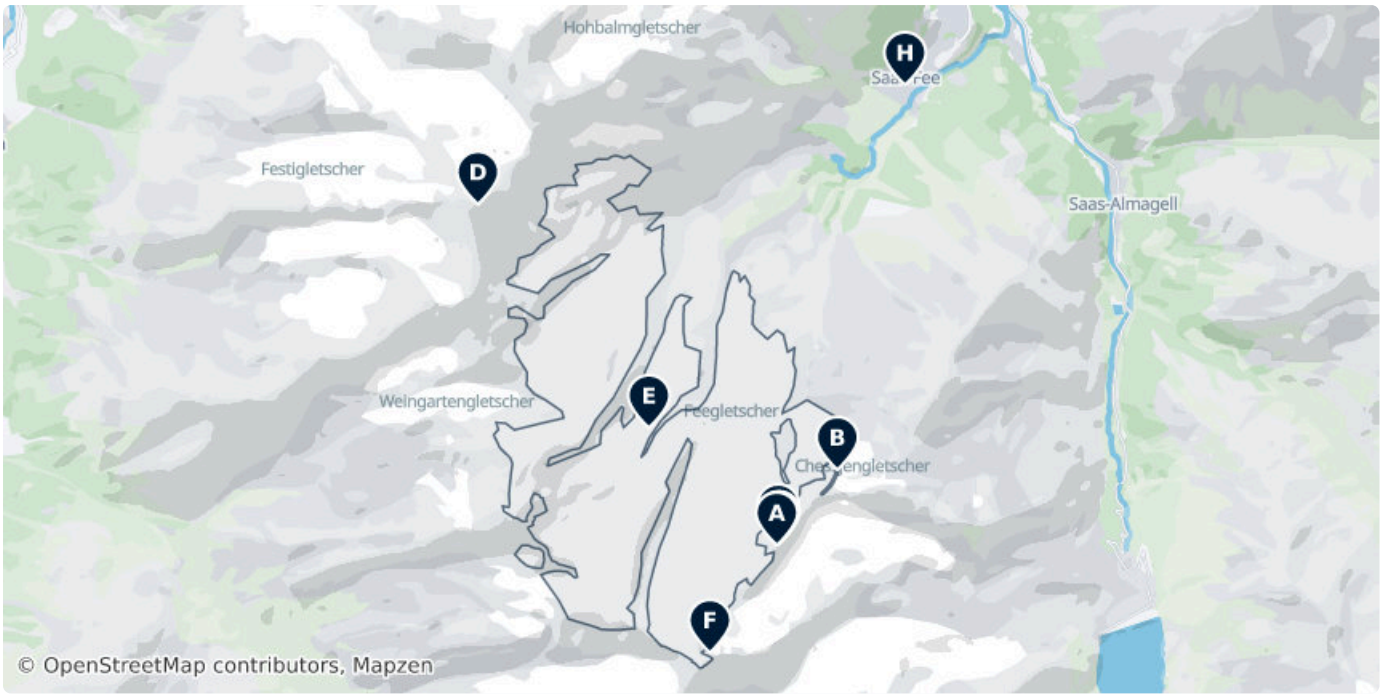


Type C / Type J
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
German, French, Italian, Romansh

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Top sights





Ⓐ Mittelallalin

The Mittelallalin is a minor summit below the Allalinhorn situated above Saas Fee.

3906, Switzerland (46.05755, 7.90488)



Ⓑ Metro Alpin

World's highest underground funicular railway and subway connecting the Felskinn station to the Mittelallalin. It provides access to high-altitude landmarks including the world's highest revolving restaurant and largest ice pavilion.

Felskinnweg, 3906 Saas-Fee, Switzerland (46.06560, 7.91420)

saas-fee.ch/en/services-informationen/pr... , +41279581100



C Allalin Revolving Restaurant

World's highest revolving restaurant situated at an altitude of 3,456 meters in a high alpine environment. The dining area completes a full 360-degree rotation every hour.

Zustieg Hohlaubgrat, 3905 Saas-Almagell, Switzerland (46.05767, 7.90520)

saas-fee.ch/en/summer-activities/summer-ski/training-p...



D Dom

High-alpine peak featuring challenging climbing routes. It is a classic objective known for its demanding length and glaciated terrain.

3928, Switzerland (46.09393, 7.85887)



E Fee Glacier

Large alpine glacier in the Mischabel group featuring summer skiing areas and the world's largest ice pavilion. It spans approximately five kilometers in length and reaches altitudes of up to 3600 meters.

3906, Switzerland (46.07006, 7.88517)

saas-fee.ch/en/



F Allalinhorn

4,027-meter-high mountain peak featuring a summit cross and known for being one of the most accessible four-thousanders. It is reachable via mountain railway and guided tours.

3906, Switzerland (46.04609, 7.89458)

saas-fee.ch



G Ice Pavilion

Glacier cave with a volume of 5,500 cubic meters, making it the largest of its kind in the world. It is situated at an altitude of 3,456 meters within a high-alpine environment.

3906, Switzerland (46.05842, 7.90511)

+41279581100

H Saaser Museum

Local history museum housed in a historic former rectory dating back to 1732. It focuses on the cultural development, traditions, and history of the Saas Valley.

Dorfstrasse 6 (46.10666, 7.92461)

Mo–Su 08:00–19:00

saas-fee.ch/de/kultur-brauchtum/saaser-... , +41279581188

DATA SOURCES

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- Dom — "Mount Dom" by Sunna, cc-by-sa-3.0
- Fee Glacier — "Alphubel seracs" by Zacharie Grossen, cc-by-sa-4.0
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