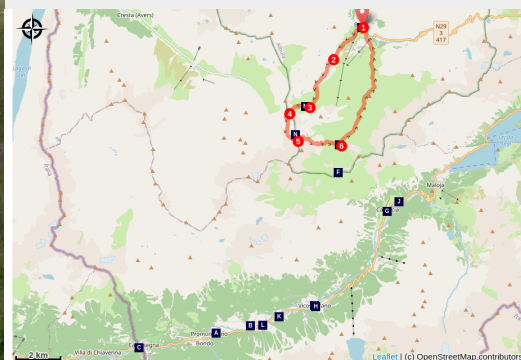


## 29. Bivio-Lake Colomban-Bivio region

Switzerland - Graubünden



(Kolumbansweg)



*This challenging 18 km loop (1,075 m of ascent and descent) connects Lake Colomban, Fuorcla da la Valletta (2,585 m) - Forcellina (2,671 m) - Septimer Pass (2,310 m) before returning to Bivio. Another less challenging option (11 km and 720 m elevation gain) is a round trip from Bivio to Lake Colomban. The trail is marked with yellow hiking signs.*

This loop crosses the Alpine ridge to reach the highest point of the entire European Way of St. Columbanus. The Septimer Pass was already one of the most important Alpine passes in Roman times. This route offers the opportunity to stop for one or more days to get to know this magnificent region better.

### Useful information

Practice : Pedestrian

Duration : 6 h

Length : 17.6 km

Trek ascent : 1096 m

Difficulty : Difficult

Type : Boucle

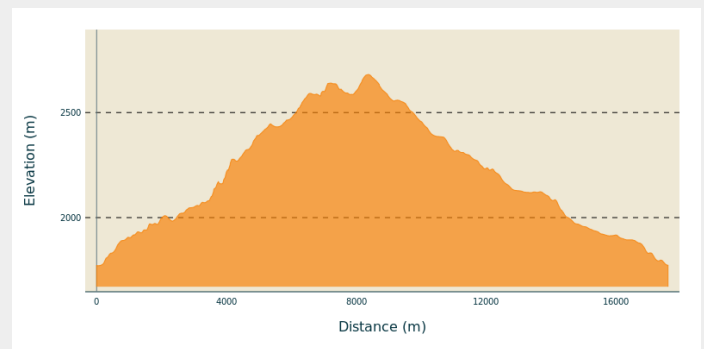
Themes : St Colomban

**Departure** : 7457 Bivio

**Arrival** : 7457 Bivio

**Cities** : 1. Graubünden

## Altimetric profile

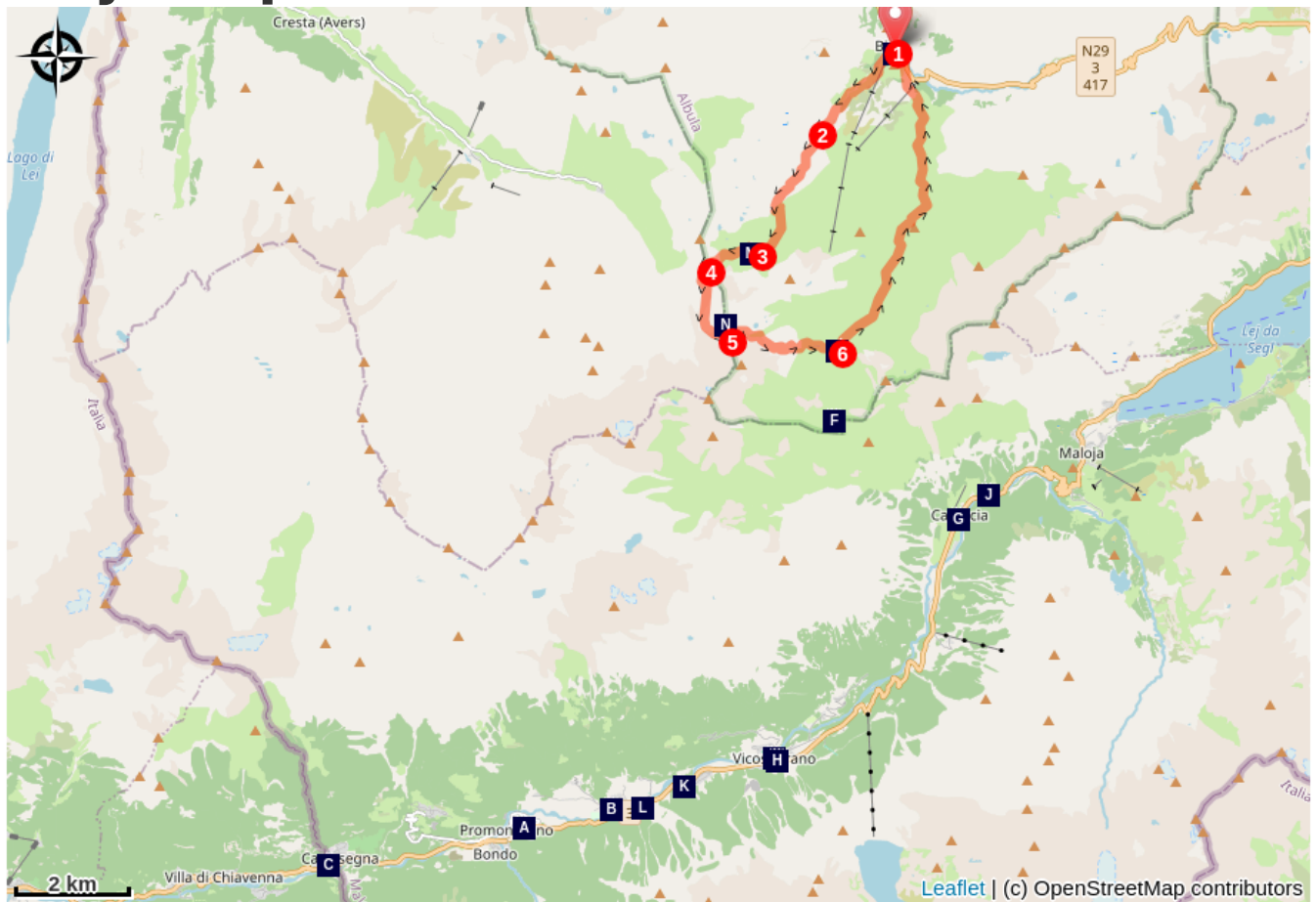
















Min elevation 1771 m Max elevation 2681 m

The starting and finishing point is in front of the Reformed Church in Bivio on the main street, Julierstrasse (at No. 60):

1. Walk down Julierstrasse to the fountain near the Volg shop, turn left twice in succession to follow Vea Viglia street and leave the village at the ski lift. Follow the yellow-marked trail that climbs up the valley on the right bank of the Beiva stream. Leave the hamlet of Val Beiva on your right and continue to the next houses in Valletta.
2. Shortly afterwards, cross the Beiva stream and follow the other bank for 1 km. Cross the stream again and climb up the other bank through the mountain pastures to Lake Colomban, which can be the destination for the day to enjoy the magnificent setting before descending by the same route.
3. After the lake, continue climbing the path towards the Fuorcia de la Valetta pass (2,586 m), which closes the valley and opens up new horizons.
4. After the pass, follow the path southwards, which passes below Pic Colomban (2,848 m) before turning eastwards to cross the ridge again at the Forcallina Pass (2,671 m).
5. Descend eastwards for 2 km to reach the Septimer Pass (2,310 m), where there is a plaque dedicated to Saint Colomban, marking one of the historic places he visited, as in Bangor (Northern Ireland), Luxeuil (France) and Bobbio (Italy).
6. Reach Bobbio via the track and then a path taken to the right after a calvary.

# On your path...



- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Castelmur Castle (A)      |  Castelmur Palace (B)        |
|  Perched village (C)       |  Bivio (D)                   |
|  Septimer Pass (E)         |  Roman road (F)              |
|  Casaccia (G)              |  Vicosoprano (H)             |
|  Senvelen Tower (I)        |  Church of San Gaudenzio (J) |
|  Saint George's Church (K) |  Museum Ciäsa Granda (L)     |
|  Colomban Lake (M)         |  Columban Peak (N)           |

# All useful information

## How to come ?

### Access

Bivio, located on Route 3 of the Julier Pass, is accessible by car or bus.

# On your path...

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## Castelmur Castle (A)

The five-storey square keep was built around 1300 probably on a Roman site called Murus and the site of an ancient fortress listed in a 988 document. This fief castle of the Castelmurs (Castello Muro) lost its strategic importance on the road to the Septimer when the Viamala opened in 1473 over the Splügen and St. Bernard Pass.

[To find out more about it.](#)

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## Castelmur Palace (B)

In Coltura, the northern part of the Castelmur Palace was built in 1723, the southern part in 1850-55 by Baron Giovanni Castelmur. The Moorish Gothic style and the towers decorated with battlements give the building the appearance of a castle, the beautiful gardens complete this impression. Today the Palace houses the Historical Archives of the Valley.

[Find out more about it.](#)

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## Perched village (C)

First village perched on the Italian side of the Alps.

Attribution : Amis St Colomban

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## Bivio (D)

Bivio means bidirectional because the village is at the crossroads of valleys that descend from two passes, the Septimer and the Julier. In history, the settlement of the village already mentioned in the 9th century is a function of the traffic towards these two passes. This place is also at the crossroads of different languages and cultures: the 200 or so inhabitants of Bivio speak three languages: Italian, Rhaeto-Romanic and German.



## ↖ Septimer Pass (E)

At 2310m altitude, the Septimer Pass is the highest point of the entire Via Columbani across Europe. This pass has always been one of the most important transit routes due to its ease of crossing (low altitude, speed and accessibility). In Roman times it was crossed by a Roman road maintained and guarded in summer by a Roman camp excavated at 2340m. Later, the possessions and customs revenues on this axis of the Septimer, from Chur to Chiavenna, were the source of the power and wealth of the Bishop of Chur from 960 onwards. Traders and armies, kings and emperors, Otto the Great and Frederick Barbarossa, all crossed this pass, the most important transalpine transit route of the Early Middle Ages with the Great St. Bernard and the Brenner. From 1938 onwards, the Swiss army built fortifications at the Septimer to prohibit the crossing from Italy. This dam was abandoned in the 1990s. A plaque commemorating the Way of Saint Columban was erected in 2008 to mark the passage of Saint Columban at this location.



## ⛪ Roman road (F)

Remains of a bridge and Roman road in the descent of the Col du Septimer.

Attribution : Amis St Colomban



## ⛪ Casaccia (G)

A small mountain village with characteristic chalets, Casaccia at 1450m was first mentioned in 1160. Casaccia was an important transit station until the 19th century due to its position at the junction of the Maloja and Septimer passes. The ruins of the medieval tower of Turraccia above the village are a reminder of this function. The old hospice was located near the ruins of the ancient San Gaudenzio sanctuary on the road to the pass. It was mentioned in a document in 1336, but it is probably much older.





## Vicosoprano (H)

Near the church of St. Cassian, a Roman altar of Mercury from the 2nd half of the 4th century has been found. Until 960 the inhabitants of Como were subordinate to the bishop of Chur. Vicosoprano was then the capital of the community of the Bergell Valley, a transit centre and residence of important families (Castelmur and Prevost). The bailiff of the bishop of Chur dispensed justice in the Senwelenturm, the only medieval round tower in Graubünden, which dates from the 13th century and was first mentioned in 1314.



## Senvelen Tower (I)

The only round tower in Graubünden, it dates from the 13th century. The bailiff of the bishop of Chur rendered justice there.

[More about.](#)



## Church of San Gaudenzio (J)

In the 4th century, Gaudentius Christianized the Bergell valley where he had found refuge to escape from the Arians. The church of San Gaudenzio is dedicated to him and was for a long time a place of pilgrimage. The ruined building today dates from 1518, but the presence of a chapel is mentioned in 831 in an imperial register of Charlemagne.

[For more information.](#)



## Saint George's Church (K)

The church of San Giorgio was rebuilt in 1694. The interior is decorated with a stained glass window in the choir's lunette, the work of the famous regional artist Augusto Giacometti. In the nearby cemetery are the graves of the family of artists of two generations: Giovanni, Augusto and Alberto Giacometti.

[Find out more.](#)



### Museum Ciäsa Granda (L)

The museum, housed in an imposing 16th century house, is dedicated to artists from a family from Borgonovo, a small mountain village, and of world renown: Giovanni Giacometti (1868-1933), his brother Augusto (1877-1947) and Alberto (1901-1966) son of Giovanni.

[Read more about.](#)



### Colomban Lake (M)

The name of the lake and the nearby mountain peak indicate that the monks chose this route across the Alps.

Attribution : Kolumbansweg



### Columban Peak (N)

The name of the summit and that of the nearby lake indicate that monks chose this route to cross the Alps.