

Piz Danis (HB/GR-104) and Stätzer Horn (HB/GR-105)

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Summary: Very attractive ridge hike with two SOTAs, easily done in one day even when using public transportation.

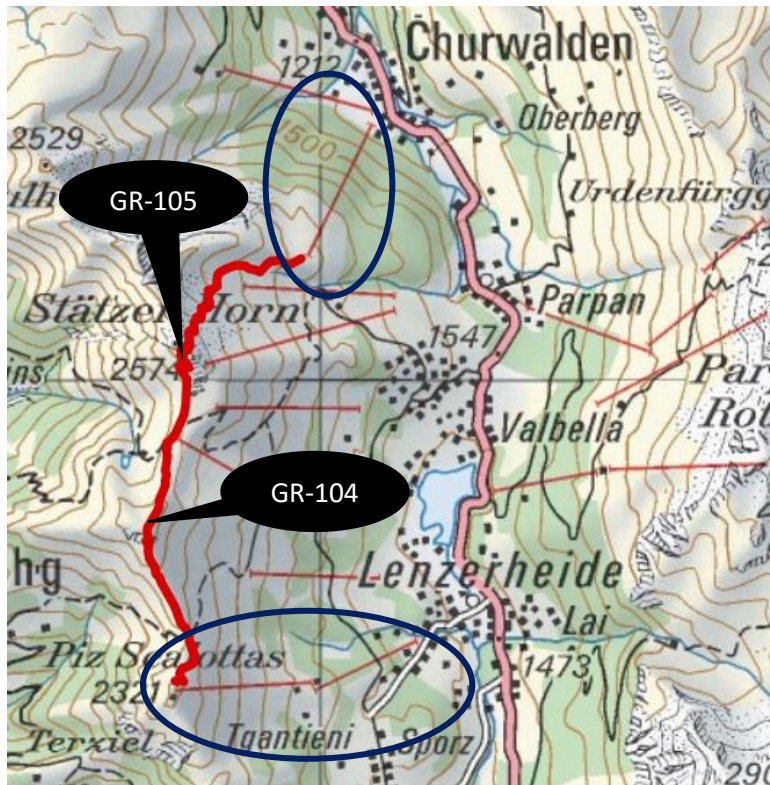
For visitors, I would rate this as the #2 SOTA ridge hike in Switzerland that involves multiple activations in one day. The #1 spot is taken by the route between Chlingenstock (HB/SZ-017) and Fronalpstock (HB/SZ-018) for two reasons (see separate report on the HB9SOTA website). First, logistically SZ-017/018 is a bit easier because you end up right where you started, whereas here after the second summit you need to take a bus or find some other way back to your car. Second, from a technical standpoint it is also easier -- almost anyone can handle the SZ-017/018 hike whereas the one described in this report is a tad more difficult (T3) and will definitely involve using your hands at several points along the way.



Lenzerheide (valley) with Piz Danis (center) and Stätzer Horn (right).

In summary, you travel to Lenzerheide and take one chair lift to Tgantieni and a second chair lift to Piz Scalottas. Hiking north, you reach Piz Daniz in somewhat over an hour. After that activation, you continue north for just over an hour to Stätzer Horn for the second activation. Then you hike down roughly an hour to Wasserböden and ride a gondola down to Churwalden. This hike is rated T3 (for just several short spots, otherwise a T2). I recommend doing it only when conditions are dry because wet

rocks can be slippery and there are some exposed sections. Further, if the weather is nice, there will be tons of people because this is a popular route. Now examine each stage of the hike in detail.

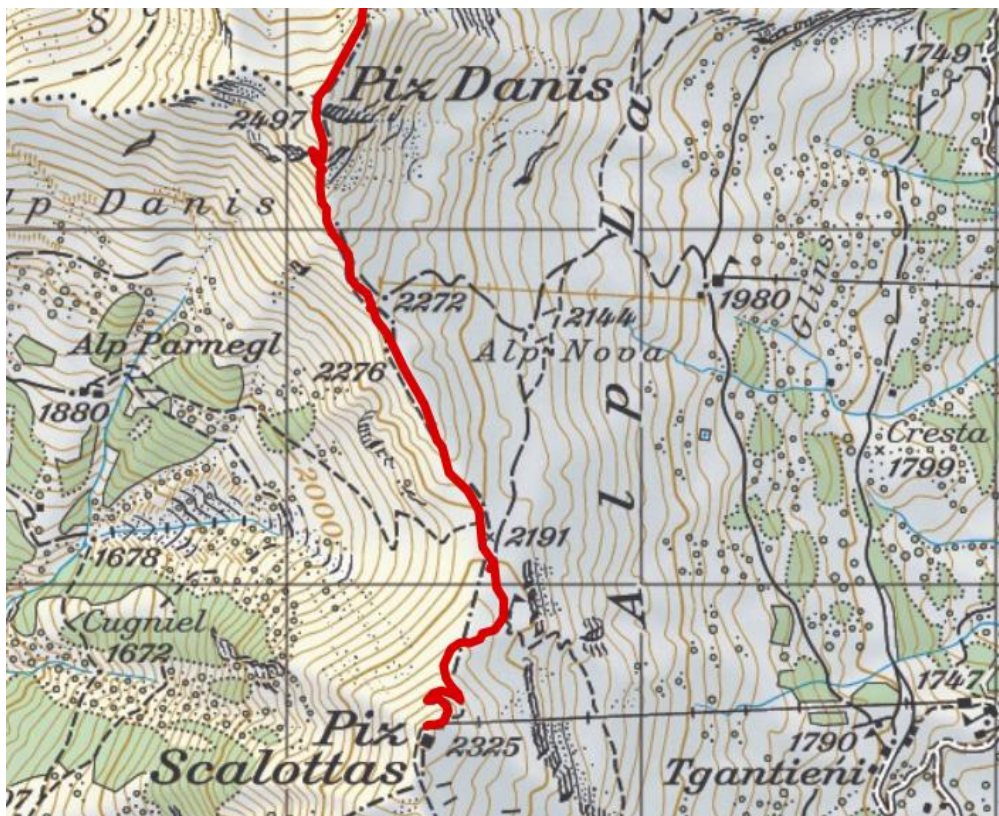


There are good bus connections from Chur to Lenzerheide, and there also is parking at the chair lift valley station. If you park elsewhere in Lenzerheide or in Valbella, note that in peak season there is a free "sports bus" that runs from Lenzerheide to Valbella and then back to Lenzerheide with a stop at "Alp Sporz" where you get on the chair lift. As noted, you take one chair lift to Tgantieni, and a second to Piz Scalottas. Note that there is a restaurant at Tgantieni and again at Piz Scalottas, which is the last source of food or water you will see until the very end of the day when you get back to Churwalden. So if you need supplies, stock up here.



Piz Danis (left) and Stätzer Horn (right).

As you can see in the previous photo, the hike to Piz Danis is quite easy for most of the way. You start out by descending 134 meters, going behind and underneath the chair lift station and then start climbing again. The route is 2.3 km with an overall ascent of 318 meters. It takes roughly 75 minutes.



Just south of Piz Danis there is a rock face you must hike up. It looks very difficult but I saw several families with kids about 8 or 10 years old do it. In several places you will need to take your hands out of your pockets and grab onto rocks to pull yourself up and steady yourself. Just take your time and follow the trail.



You climb up beyond where these two hikers are. About a third to the top, before the very rocky section in the shadows starts, the trail turns to the west (here, left side), and then you continue to the top.

After getting to the top of the rock face, it is less than a quarter hour to the summit. The activation zone is relatively large, but there are no good antenna mast supports. There is a cairn...

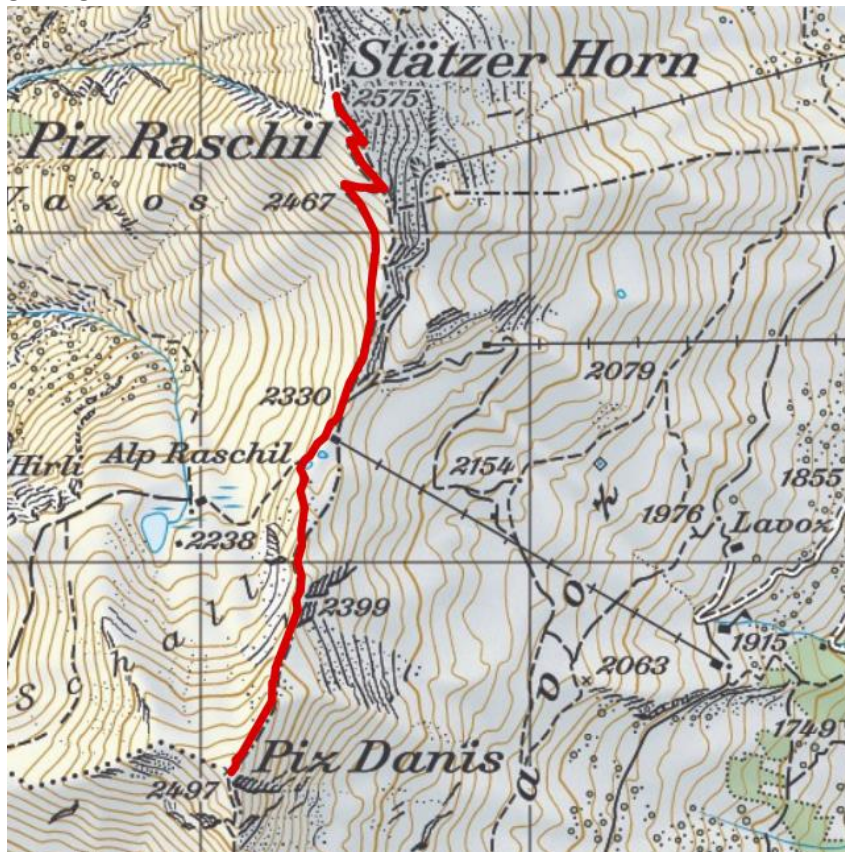


...but it is not sturdy and it would be difficult to lash a mast to it. About 10 meters beyond the cairn, though, there is a pipe pounded into the ground and it provides the only convenient, solid antenna support. Another advantage is that it is away from the crowds you will see on the peak.



My operating position on Piz Danis, HB/GR-104.

Now off to the next summit, Stätzer Horn. This is again just a tad over an hour, and it is much easier than getting to Piz Danis. The route is 2.5 km with an overall ascent of 274 meters.



Stätzer Horn (in the center) as seen from Piz Danis.

On this route, at Point 2399 there is a short section where you again will probably need your hands, but this is quickly passed by.



You drop into a gap at Point 2330 and start the final ascent, which is a steady climb on a good trail.



Here on GR-105 the activation zone is moderately sized, but there are almost no good mast supports.



The only exception is the metal pipe identical to the one I found on Piz Danis:

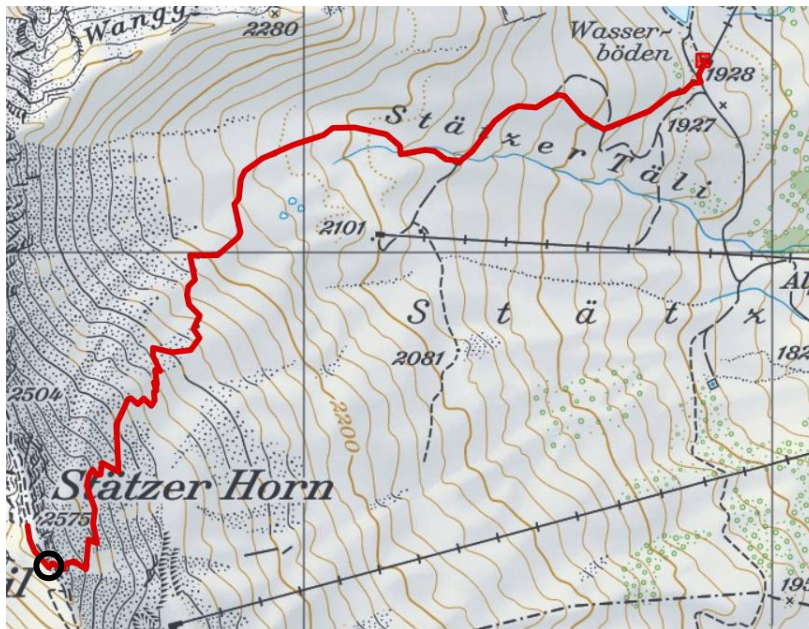


If the summit is very crowded, if you have multiple ops looking to spread out or for whatever reason you do not wish to set up an antenna on the actual summit, to the south of the summit there is a hiking signpost (which you will need anyway to get to the final cable car). My GPS unit puts its elevation at 2556 meters, a few meters within the activation zone. You could lash your mast to this pole and not bother anyone.



Alternative setup location just below the summit of Stätzer Horn; see the circle on the map below.

Now it's time to head home -- or at least the gondola summit station at Wasserböden. Remember how you took two chair lifts up in the morning? Here there's only one cablecar down, which also means you have to hike half way down: 648 meters descent covering 2.7 km and just over an hour.



Come down to the hiking signpost just shown and turn east. The first section is quite rocky, so watch your footing (can be very tricky if wet).



The trail zig-zags through this rocky terrain.

You continue following the trail markers through the rocks and then some meadows until you reach a dirt road that leads to a large rectangular metal building that looks like a huge barn but is actually the gondola summit station. It runs until 17:00 local time, so if you get an early start in the morning you can get here in plenty of time, even without rushing the activations. Ride down to Churwalden. Then either pick up the bus to Chur (as I did) or ride back to wherever you parked your car.