



ADVENTURES
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DAY HIKING THE SWISS ALPS

Trip Summary

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hiking a diversity of the Swiss Alpine trails
- Staying in two lovely and quite different Swiss villages in 3 star hotels
- Sampling local specialties, including Alpkase (mountain cheese) and chocolate
- Hiking to the base of two legendary Swiss Mountains, the Eiger and the Matterhorn
- Taking advantage of the excellent Swiss transport system

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TRIP AT A GLANCE

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| Location: | Grindelwald and Zermatt, Switzerland |
| Activities: | Hiking |
| Arrive: | Zurich Airport (ZRH) at 9:30 a.m. on Day 1 |
| Depart: | Zurich any time on the last day |

Trip Overview

The Swiss Alps, with their jagged peaks and myriad trails, have long been a magnet for hikers. On this trip we'll hike some of the premiere trails in both the Berner Oberland and the Valais, returning each night to a hearty dinner and warm bed. We'll take advantage of the excellent Swiss transport system to offer shorter and longer hikes each day - you will definitely get all the hiking you want on this trip! The towns of Grindelwald and Zermatt offer lots of other possibilities too, so your most difficult decisions may be just how to spend your time.

Maximum group size: 12

Rating

This trip is rated both a 3 and a 4 because of the choice each day of longer or shorter hikes. No previous hiking experience is required - in fact, the Swiss Alps are a great location for learning and practicing hiking techniques. However, there is very little flat hiking so you must exercise regularly to fully enjoy the trip. You should also be free of serious knee problems and significant fear of heights. To have the option of participating in all activities offered, you might want to prepare for a rated 4 trip. Prior to beginning the trip, participants should be engaged in aerobic conditioning for at least 40-50 minutes 4-5 times a week. Additional endurance exercise (e.g. going for a 2-hour hike once a week) and/or strength training is usually required.

Rating: 1 2 [3](#) [4](#) 5.

What's Included

- 1 experienced AGC guides and 1 in country guide based on group size
- Nine nights double occupancy accommodation
- All breakfasts and dinners, from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on the last day
- A 30-day Half Fare Card and all other transportation required for hikes on the itinerary

What's not included: Travel to and from Switzerland, beverages, lunches, guide gratuities, travel insurance, and additional activities

OUR ITINERARY

Below is the itinerary we have planned for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

DAY 1

Plan to arrive Zurich not later than 8:30 a.m. on the first day of the trip for an on-time group meeting of 9:30 a.m. We will meet in the airport train station (connected to and directly across from the airport arrival hall) and take the train, about a 3-hour ride, to Grindelwald.

We'll go through Interlaken and past the magnificent lakes of Thun and Brienz, where we change onto the mountain railroad that takes us up the Grindelwald Valley. Our hotel is near the train station and after checking in (or dropping our luggage off if it's too early), we'll start getting to know each other. We'll then have a couple of hours to explore this small town. We'll gather in the evening for a trip orientation before enjoying a four-course dinner and what will likely be an early bedtime for most of us (D).

DAY 2

We spend much of today with nonstop views of the trio for which this region is known: the Eiger, Monch, and Jungfrau. We start the day with a cable car ride up to Mannlichen, the obvious peak across the Grindelwald Valley and known for its panoramic views of the area. We'll first walk to the top of Mannlichen Peak, about a 30-minute hike with stunning views in all directions. From there we return to a well-maintained path that follows the ridge with gentle ups and downs to Kleine Scheidegg, the pass between the Grindelwald and Wengen Valleys. At this point we'll be ready to stop for lunch and consider our options, of which there are many.

If it's a clear day and taking the Jungfrau Railway up to the highest train station in Europe is on your list, this is a perfect afternoon to do it. If you've had enough for the day, you can return by train to Grindelwald. Alternatively, you can hike the path that climbs the moraine ridge up to Eigergletscher (the name of the glacier on the Eiger), about 850 feet in an hour. With the Eiger always in front of you, and the glacier above and valleys below coming into view with every step, frequent stops are a must. Returning to the Kleine Scheidegg we'll take the train back down to Grindelwald for that wonderful hot shower and dinner in town (B, D).

Walking: 3 - 6 hours, 850 feet elevation gain, 850 - 3,500 feet elevation loss

DAY 3

Today we continue to experience the many options provided by the excellent Swiss Transport system. We'll start with taking the train down to Lauterbrunnen, a cable car to Grutschalp, and a train to Murren. We'll walk through the car free village of Murren, which is perched on the opposite wall of the Lauterbrunnen Valley, to the Allmendhubel funicular. At the top is an Alpine Flower garden (and the flowers will be abundant in July) and the start of the North Face Trail. The trail follows a contour around the valleys and meadows at the base of the Schilthorn with placards that describe the history and show the climbing routes of each of the north faces of the mountains.

We'll stop at the Schiltalp to enjoy homemade hot soup and the local alpkase (cheese made from the milk of cows that graze in mountain meadows) for lunch. The trail loops back down to Murren, where we catch a different cable car that takes us down into the magnificent Lauterbrunnen Valley, so named because of the many waterfalls that cascade off its steep cliffs. From there we'll visit Truemmelbach waterfalls, the only waterfalls in Europe actually located inside a mountain. Those who have had enough can take the bus back to Lauterbrunnen and spend some time exploring that town before returning to Grindelwald by train.

Alternatively, the 2-mile walk back through the Valley is quite lovely and it is fun to watch the paragliders perform aerial tricks as they ride the updrafts. Although it may sound like we are forever on transport, the coordination of the system assures that we are quickly whisked wherever we are going - and the non-stop views along the way never stop enchanting (B, D).

DAY 4

Both hikes today start with taking the slow and scenic cog railway up to Schynigge Platte, one of the single most scenic spots in the Jungfrau region. Those wanting a shorter hike will head uphill from the train station, climbing about 500 feet up to great views first of Interlaken and Lake Thun. As the path climbs, we see Lake Brienz and the mountains rising from the Lake. The path then continues along the ridge to Oberberghorn, where we can choose whether to scramble to the summit with the aid of ladders. The reward for this is a 360-degree panorama with views that include the Jungfrau, Eiger and Monch and many other peaks. From the Oberberghorn the path descends gently to the base of Loucherhorn and then returns through alpine meadows, passing the alpine farm of Oberberg, to Schynigge Platte. There is an alpine garden and restaurant that can be visited before returning on the cog railway. This hike is about 3 hours with a 500-foot elevation ascent and descent. Those wanting a longer hike can hike along the ridge to First, by way of Faulhorn. At first the path is moderately up and down, and then starts gradually up until it reaches Berghaus MÃ¼ndlenen, a mountain hotel in a beautiful setting where lunch or refreshments are available. From here the trail climbs more steeply onto a rocky plateau and then traverses over to the Faulhorn. The Faulhorn is home to the oldest mountain hotel in Switzerland and if we have time and energy we can climb the additional 100 feet to enjoy its views and refreshments. From here the trail descends steadily all the way to First, passing the beautiful small glacial lake of Bachalpsee. Although we could choose to complete the trail down to Grindelwald on foot, the gondolas at First will save our knees and serve up fantastic views as we are whisked down in three stages (B, D).

Hiking: 6 hours, 3,200 feet elevation gain, 2,500 feet elevation loss

DAY 5

Today we bid farewell to the Berner Oberland as we take the train to the canton of Valais and the town of Zermatt, one of the most beautiful villages in Europe. Zermatt is nestled at the base of the Matterhorn, unarguably the most easily recognized of all mountains. This car free mountain town has a unique personality that offers a great base for hiking.

Arriving in early afternoon, we can either take today as a rest day from hiking or take a short, steep, and spectacular hike. For those wanting a rest day, you can explore the town and/or visit the Alpine Museum in the center of town, to help you get acquainted with alpine history as well as the history of the area. For those who want to hike today, we can hike to the Edelweiss Hotel. Built in 1898, it has the distinction of being the only building in the Trift valley that is visible from Zermatt. The lack of cable cars makes it only accessible by foot. From Zermatt it is steep uphill for about an hour to the restaurant: it's fabled carrot cake and location (it sits exposed on a rock face with a fantastic view over the town) make it well worth it. We'll return by a steep path and then all meet up to share our first dinner in Zermatt (B, D).

Hiking : 0 - 3 hours, elevation gain and loss 0 to 1,100 feet

DAY 6

We begin this morning with a ride up the Sunnegga Tunnel and then to the Blauherd platform where we'll take the Seenweg trail. This trail will take us past three beautiful high mountain lakes famous for not only their beauty but for the reflection of the Matterhorn in their clear waters. The 3rd lake, Grindjisee is perfectly situated for a late lunch with plenty of opportunity for foot soaking. After lunch the trail continues through a beautiful old growth forest and on to the Gornergrat Railway – the highest cogwheel railway in Europe.

We will be entering the railway at one of its stations as it ascends/descends to a height of nearly 10,000 feet. Here we'll have to make one of those dreaded decisions -- up or down? Up will take us to the viewing platform at almost 10,000 feet which offers one of the finest panorama views to be had in Europe: The Monte Rosa Massif and a view over the second-largest glacier in the Alps, the Gornergletscher, as well as 29 peaks higher than 10,000 feet. There is also a restaurant, an observatory and even a shopping mall -- hard to believe! Down takes you back to Zermatt and maybe ice cream? Either way is an excellent choice (B, D).

Hiking: 3 - 6 hours, 1,000 feet elevation gain, 1,000 - 6,000 feet elevation loss

DAY 7

Today we head back to the Sunnegga lift but this time we go all the way to the top! Up to the Rothorn Paradise platform where the views are once more amazing: down to Zermatt, over to the Matterhorn, and up to the Findelen Glacier. We continue from the top of the Rothorn to the trailhead for the Oberrothorn, the highest point that a hiker can achieve without mountaineering. The trail is short and steep, and the view of the surrounding peaks and glaciers is well worth our effort. Lunch at the top will be hard to leave but as always, more beautiful vistas await us.

Returning to the beginning of the trailhead we will once again have the opportunity to choose our afternoon adventure. You can return to the valley via the lift system and have a free afternoon to wander the streets, sit in the sun along the river in town, visit the museum, take the Schwarzee lift up to the Kleine Matterhorn where the Ice Palace awaits and skiers and snowboarders are playing (there's a zip line there too!) or whatever looks appealing.

This afternoon just cries out for relaxation and exploration. Or, you can join your AGC guides in hiking down from the Paradise platform to the Blauherd platform and enjoying the continuous views of the Matterhorn (where you'll be hiking to tomorrow) and watching for marmots. Again, no bad choices here! (B, D)

Hiking : 3 - 6 hours depending on your choices

DAY 8

Today we head for the magnificent Matterhorn with a choice of two wonderful hikes, both of which bring us up close to this stunning mountain. We will take the Schwarzsee lift to the lake of the same name where we begin our hike to the Hornlihutte, the highest you can get on the Matterhorn before donning mountaineering gear. The hut is where climbers will spend the night before leaving in the early morning to make their summit bid. Here we can enjoy a drink while watching the climbers arriving after the challenge of one of the world's most famous mountains.

Or, if you prefer a hike that is a bit more relaxed, you might choose the Matterhorn Glacier trail. For this trail, we take the lift even higher to the Trockener Steg. This loop hike passes through the dramatic "moonscape" by the side of the Furgg and Theodole glaciers and offers a fascinating insight into how the landscape has been shaped by snow and ice. It also gives the most incredible views of the Matterhorn as you are right underneath the mountain with the chance for spectacular photographs. A wonderful end to your trip to Switzerland whichever hike you choose on this your final day in Zermatt (B, D).

Hornlihutte hike: Hiking 5 - 6 hours (to hut and back), 2,250 feet elevation gain, 2,250 feet elevation loss (to the lift)

Matterhorn Glacier trail: Hiking 3 - 3.5 hours, 1,200 feet elevation loss

DAY 9

This morning we have to say goodbye to Zermatt and journey back to Zurich by train. We will arrive in time to drop our baggage off at the hotel and then return to the Zurich Old Town for an afternoon stroll with a short orientation to Zurich, and our final farewell dinner (B, D).

DAY 10

Our hotel is quite close to the airport and has an airport shuttle, and you are free to leave any time (B).

ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION

Getting There

If you are flying into Zurich:

- The airport in Zurich is Zurich International Airport (ZRH).
- Please plan to arrive no later than 8:30 a.m. to insure an on-time meeting with your group at 9:30 a.m. The first group meeting is on the lower level of the train station which is connected to/across the street from the airport.

Arriving to the Zurich train station from a pre-trip hotel and/or other European destinations:

- Please be sure to arrange your transportation to the Zurich train station early enough to insure an on-time group meeting on the lower level of the train station at 9:30 a.m.
- Detailed information will be included in your Pre-Departure document that will be sent 6 months prior to the trip beginning.

Getting Home: Our hotel is quite close to the airport and has an airport shuttle, and you are free to leave any time on Day 10.

If you would like assistance with airfare, we recommend contacting our AirDesk Partner, [Exito Travel](#). Start by submitting this [form](#). Just fill in your dates and destinations, including any additional notes about preferred carriers, class of service, possible stopovers, etc., and an agent will typically respond via email within a few hours. If you prefer to call, the number is 800-655-4053; be sure to tell them you are traveling with Adventures in Good Company.

Please note: Most of the international airlines are in-network for Exito, so they do not charge extra for their services (and often have access to discounted rates). When necessary, processing fees out-of-network carriers are minimal at around \$35-\$50 per ticket.

Accommodations

In Grindelwald and Zermatt our hotels are small 3 star family run hotels, that offer great meals and warm hospitality. Both are well located near the center of town. Our hotel in Zurich is near the airport, a short train ride from central Zurich, and offers an airport shuttle so you can depart at your convenience. We will spend 4 nights at the [Jungfrau Lodge](#) in Grindelwald, 4 nights at the [Hotel Bristol](#) in Zermatt, and 1 night at the [Best Western Airport Hotel](#) in Zurich

Travel Insurance

We recommend that you purchase a travel protection plan to help protect you and your travel investment against the unexpected. For your convenience, we offer travel protection through Travelex Insurance Services. For more information on the available plans or to enroll, visit www.travelexinsurance.com or call 1-800-228-9792 and reference location number 06-0331.

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