

Walking holidays in Europe

Expressions



Walking holiday in the Bernese Oberland



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7 NIGHTS / 8 DAYS

HIGHLIGHTS

- Four self-guided walking itineraries
- The Panorama Trail
- The Eiger Trail
- Firstbahn gondola
- One 4-course dinner at your hotel
- Bernese Oberland regional pass
- Special discount on Jungfrauoch ticket to Top of Europe



Bernese Oberland

This seven-night self-guided walking holiday will inspire any trekking enthusiast looking to combine stunning alpine scenery with luxurious accommodation. The mountains of the Bernese Oberland are famous around the world and count several iconic peaks amongst them such as the Eiger, the Monch and the Jungfrau. This summertime walking holiday for individuals includes itineraries which explore the area via a variety of trails, promising magnificent views of sparkling lakes, rocky ridges, mighty glaciers and soaring peaks around every corner. Return to your luxury hotel each evening to indulge in delicious local cuisine and relax in the hotel's spa.

HOTEL INCLUDED

Romantik Hotel Schweizerhof, Grindelwald
5 star (4 star options are available in neighbouring Wengen)

PRICES

From £3,025 per person including air and rail

From £3,065 per person including rail from London and back

Sample prices are per person based on two people sharing a double or twin room for 7 nights.

First class upgrade possible including standard premier on the Eurostar from London to Paris return at £390 per person. Fly-rail first class supplement for rail travel in Switzerland £230 per person.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Scheduled flights with British Airways from London to Zurich return, economy
- Return rail travel from Zurich airport to Grindelwald, standard class
- 7 nights' bed and breakfast in a comfort double room at the Romantik Hotel Schweizerhof in Grindelwald
- One four-course dinner at the hotel (beverages not included)
- 6-day Bernese Oberland regional pass
- Route notes for self-guided walking itineraries in the Bernese Oberland
- Concierge service and Expressions Holidays regional helpful hints

THE JOURNEY AND HOW YOU GET THERE

There are flights with British Airways from London Heathrow to Zurich several times a day. From here there are regular hourly services via Bern and Interlaken to Grindelwald. It is also possible to use flights into Basel or Geneva. Travel by rail from the UK starts with taking the Eurostar to Paris. Here you change stations and take the TGV-Lyria to Basel and then connect onto regional services via Interlaken to Grindelwald.

DATES

Although this holiday can be arranged throughout the year, we recommend travelling between June and early October for the best trekking conditions.

HOLIDAY CODE

FHCH01

DAY ONE Arrive in Grindelwald

This holiday can be arranged with flights from the UK to Switzerland or with rail travel from London to Switzerland. If travelling by air, your holiday starts with a flight to Zurich airport (Geneva is also possible) where you catch a direct train to Bern. Change here to head south, into the Bernese Oberland, arriving into Interlaken Ost station just under an hour later. If travelling from the UK by rail, you leave London on a morning Eurostar to Paris at around 8am. Take a local taxi from Gare du Nord to Gare de Lyon and catch the afternoon TGV-Lyria service to Basel. You arrive here mid-afternoon and take a local train to Interlaken Ost. A straight-forward platform change here sees you board a smaller train which takes you up the hillside to arrive in the chocolate-box village of Grindelwald, a little over 1,000m above sea level. Surrounded on three sides by majestic peaks, the village of Grindelwald spills across the wide hanging valley, towered over by the dramatic northern face of the Eiger. Your hotel is located near to the train station and you head to your room to settle in and relax after the day's travelling.

DAY TWO Mannlichen to Kleine Scheidegg

We recommend starting your trip with an easy hike to stretch out your legs and dip your toe into the delights of the Bernese Oberland. Today's route takes you from Grindelwald and up the world's longest passenger-carrying gondola to Mannlichen, (covered by your Bernese Oberland regional pass). The top gondola station is on a small ridge at 2,222m above sea level and gives fantastic views. To the east, you look back over Grindelwald to see the Eiger, Monch, Wetterhorn and the Schrekhorn. To the west, the Lauterbrunnen valley sits below with the Jungfrau, Breithorn and the Tschingelhorn rising above. The shorter version of today's walk is around 2.8 miles and travels along the Panoramaweg path to Kleine Scheidegg. A longer version includes on The Royal Walk which takes you from Mannlichen gondola station to the summit and viewpoint. This option adds on 1.2 miles in total (round trip) and 120m of ascent but is well worth it for the panoramic views from the top. Returning to the gondola station, you follow a wide gravel track on a gentle descent through pretty alpine meadows. The section of this route between Lauberhorn and Kleine Scheidegg has truly fantastic views and on a clear day you can see the gleaming silver building of Jungfraujoch – Top of Europe high above on the saddle between the Jungfrau and the Monch. The path brings you to Kleine Scheidegg, launching point for the Jungfrau railway, and you take the train back down the mountain



JungfrauBahn

from here to Grindelwald (covered by your Bernese Oberland regional pass).

DAY THREE The Eiger Trail

Today's route takes you along one of the most popular hikes in this area, The Eiger Trail. The walk is about 5.7 miles although this can be shortened by taking the train from Kleine Scheidegg to Eigergletscher train station (not covered by your pass). We recommend starting the walk by taking the train from Grindelwald to Kleine Scheidegg and following the clearly signed route to the start of the Eiger Trail. This section before the official start of the trail takes you past the pretty lake of Fallbodensee which is an unmissable photo opportunity and gives the opportunity to visit an interesting exhibition about rock climbing on the Eiger. From here you continue uphill and walk along the moraine to take in views of the Eiger Glacier below, before joining the official Eiger Trail at Eigergletscher train station. The trail cuts below the Eiger's impressive northern face, leading you under a ski lift and past a wall devoted to the climbers who have attempted this feat of mountaineering. The hike takes you across scree-covered slopes, past pretty waterfalls, bubbling streams and through flower-filled meadows. Ever-present on the skyline are the mighty peaks of the Wetterhorn, the Lauberhorn, Faulhorn and the Eiger above. You reach a point where the trail descends rapidly via a series of switchbacks and looking up here you will be able to see the summit of the Eiger. It's about another 30 minutes to arrive in the tiny hamlet of Alpiglen, a small station between Kleine Scheidegg and Grindelwald, from where you catch the train

back to the village.

DAY FOUR At leisure

We include two rest days within this walking holiday, although of course you can choose to swap the days around as you please. If the weather is clear, we highly recommend using one of your rest days to take the train up to Jungfraujoch – Top of Europe. Your Bernese Oberland regional pass entitles you to a special price on the return ticket from Kleine Scheidegg to Jungfraujoch so be sure to take this with you to the ticket office. Take some warm clothes with you and board the train which takes you up nearly 1,500m from Grindelwald. The Jungfrau rack railway is an impressive feat of engineering which takes you right through the heart of the Eiger and Monch mountains to arrive at the station, a lofty 3,454m above sea level. You arrive in a world of snow and ice with distant views reaching to the Aletsch glacier, Mittelland and Vosges. Within the Top of Europe you will find an ice palace, Lindt chocolate shop, observation deck and glacier adventure trail which crosses a huge crevasse in the Aletsch glacier via a suspension bridge. There are several restaurants for lunch and those looking for an extra thrill can go sledging, skiing or snowboarding in the Snow Fun Park (even in summer!). Return to Grindelwald via the rack railway to Kleine Scheidegg and continue by train back to Grindelwald. We include one four-course dinner at the hotel's restaurant during your stay which can be enjoyed on an evening of your choice.

DAY FIVE Grosse Scheidegg to Bussalp

The third walk of your trip is more challenging and is 8.9 miles if completed in full. There is about 500m of ascent in total and about 640m of descent, making this a harder walk as well as longer. Those looking to shorten the walk can easily do so, with the shortest option being 3.5 miles instead. We recommend getting an early start for today's one-way trip as clouds often gather over the mountains in the afternoons, concealing the peaks. You start the day by taking a bus from Grindelwald to Grosse Scheidegg (covered by your pass) and pick up the Hohenweg 2400 route to First (3.5 miles). This clearly signed route gives beautiful views of the Mattenberg, Eiger and Monch to the south-west, with the village of Grindelwald sprawling across the pastures below. Walking through alpine meadows, over charming wooden bridges and along rural tracks you slowly make your way up the hillside to arrive at First, the stop station of the Firstbahn cable car. We recommend heading to the terrace by the restaurant where information signs will help you to identify the jagged peaks which surround you. It is possible to finish the walk here and take the cable car back to Grindelwald after looking around First. Continuing with the walk, you now follow a wide, open track heading gently uphill. After about 50 minutes you reach the south-eastern end of Bachalpsee lake which is the perfect place to stop for a few photos. On a still day the lake perfectly reflects the Schreckhorn and many visitors and families bring their picnics up here from First. If you are tiring or the weather is changing, it is possible to turn around here and head back to First for the cable car (7.3 miles total). The third section of the walk takes you up another 140m before dropping on a steep descent for about 600m to Bussalp. Along the way you tackle the small summit of Spitzen which has an incredible panorama of the Obers Ischmeer glacier, Fischerhorn massif, Schreckhorn, Eiger and the Jungfrau. Your highest point at 2,400m is marked by a small mountain shelter and from here you drop down the mountainside with magnificent vistas on all side to reach the hamlet of Bussalp. Head to the Bussalp Restaurant where you catch the bus back to Grindelwald (covered by your pass, about 30 minutes by road).

DAY SIX At leisure

We recommend spending your sixth day at leisure to relax and build up energy for the last walk of the trip. Your Bernese Oberland regional pass gives you lots of options for how to spend today, whether it be relaxing in the hotel's spa or exploring more of the region. You might like to use your pass to take a day



Lauterbrunnen

trip to Interlaken, explore the city and perhaps take a boat trip on Lake Brienz. Alternatively, your pass covers you entirely for travel to the village of Murren (via train and/or cable cars). From here you can use your pass to get a 50% discount on the cable car to Schilthorn – Piz Gloria. Known to many as a James Bond filming location, Piz Gloria station sits at 2,970m. Here you will find spectacular views from the Skyline View Platform, an interactive James Bond themed exhibition and a revolving restaurant giving diners views of more than 200 mountain peaks from their table. Back down the hill at Murren, you might also like to visit the Tummelbach waterfalls which are fed by glaciers or explore the short Allmendhubel Flower Trail.

DAY SEVEN First to Schynige Platte

Perhaps saving the best until last, the final walk of this itinerary is a 10.2-mile trip from First to Schynige Platte. The route takes you amidst towering peaks that touch the sky with summits at over 4,000m above sea level. This is a longer walk which should take around 6 hours in total and is not recommended during threatening weather. The walk starts by taking the gondola from Grindelwald to First and then following the path up to the lake of Bachalpsee. However, this time you take the trail which splits around the eastern edge of the lake and climb steadily up to Faulhorn. We recommend the quick detour to the summit (2,681m) where you can drink in the incredible views of Lake Brienz far below, surrounded by magnificent peaks. The main ascent is under your belt now and the rest of the trail is

undulating on a rocky path before descending into the valleys. The path becomes more ragged after Faulhorn, marked by red and white painted rocks which lead along ridges and over grassy knolls. The trail descends to Mannndlenen where you will find a small mountaineering hut and restaurant, and from there into the Sagistal valley. The route takes you through a wonderful karst landscape of limestone formations and crosses the scar of an old landslide. The last mile and a half of the walk is through pretty meadows, bounded on the right by a ridge. We recommend climbing up this on one of the small trails for some last photographs of Lake Brienz, Interlaken and Lake Thun. The path leads you into Schynige Platte where you will find a hotel, restaurant and botanic garden. Relax here with a drink at the hotel and perhaps spend the rest of the afternoon exploring before using the historic cog railway to descend to Wilderswil (covered by your pass). You catch a train from here back up to Grindelwald to relax and celebrate a successful trip with a delicious final dinner.

DAY EIGHT Travel back to the UK

You enjoy a final breakfast at your hotel before starting your journey home. If returning to the UK by rail you will need to leave Grindelwald around 9am and retrace your steps home via Interlaken, Basel and Paris, getting back to London in the early evening. If flying back from Zurich airport you may have a few additional hours in the morning to relax before catching an afternoon flight home.

HOTELS

In this walking holiday we include a seven night stay in Grindelwald. Other options in the Bernese Oberland are available on request, and additional nights can be added here or in other destinations.

Expressions

ROMANTIK HOTEL SCHWEIZERHOF

5 star

A five star hotel in the chocolate box village of Grindelwald, the Romantik Hotel Schweizerhof is an authentic and charming option in the Bernese Oberland. Jagged icy mountains and towering pine forests provide an imposing and sublime backdrop to the very traditional main hotel building, adorned with Swiss flags, red shutters, and carved wooden balconies. Flanking this grand, authentic chalet are several smaller luxury chalets, connected to each other and to the main building by underground passageways, which are built out of modern light wood, and house bright, contemporary guestrooms within. 'Mittellegi,' 'Ostegg,' and 'Rotstocki,' are the affectionate names of these chalets, which can be booked as a whole for large groups, or by floor for couples or families seeking large suites. In Chalet Rotstocki, look out from your Superior Suite furnished in cutting-edge Italian design onto the Eiger North Wall and its neighbouring mountain peaks. In the main 'Residence' hotel building, the rooms have a much more traditional air. Rich fabrics and colours contrast the neutral palette of the chalets. Wooden furnishings, all of which have been beautifully finished, sit beside plush, regal armchairs and coffee tables topped with fruit baskets. Those travelling with children and who still prefer the traditional style have the option of the two or three bedroom suites in the 'Residence.' The Romantik Hotel Schweizerhof has three main restaurants, the Schmitte, the Gaststubi, and the Alpterrassen. Each has its own unique character. Schmitte serves a varied a la carte menu in a colourful setting, and is represented in the Michelin guide by three forks. Gaststubi serves very authentic and hearty Grindelwald and Bernese Oberland specialties in a homely dining room reminiscent of the famous Swiss stublis. The Alpterrassen restaurant serves a complimentary mix of regional and international dishes in a very light and airy setting. In the summer, guests can also dine in the Schweizerhof Gardens, or on the romantic terrace. Hot drinks, aperitifs, and cocktails are served in the Hotel Bar throughout the day. The specially crafted Swiss wood seen on the exterior and in the rooms is used again in the



Romantik Hotel Schweizerhof

bar to create the warm, welcoming feel of a mountain lodge. The Schweizerhof Spa is a chic haven of tranquillity, centred around the relaxing pool. Whirlpools and saunas, with atmospheric mood-lighting, are tucked into steamy corners, and indulgent massages and beauty treatments are administered in private treatment rooms. With two different hotel styles, which both channel two aspects of Swiss culture, the Romantik Hotel Schweizerhof has something to offer each of its guests. Luxurious accommodation, food, and spa facilities come together to create a truly special five star hotel.

Facts in brief

Official star rating 5

Location The hotel is located in the town of Grindelwald

Annual opening Open all year

Closest airport Zurich International Airport

Distance from airport The hotel is 2-hours' drive from Zurich International Airport

Closest railway station Grindelwald Station

Distance from railway station The hotel is 400 metres from Grindelwald Station

Hotel facilities and services

Schmitte Restaurant, Gaststubi Restaurant, Alpterrassen Restaurant, Schweizerhof Gardens and Terrace, Hotel Bar, and the Schweizerhof Spa.



Gaststubi Restaurant



Hotel lobby



Guestroom

OUR PRICES

The sample prices mentioned in this leaflet are generally a 'from' price based on the cheapest season of travel. However, transport fares and hotel rates can change (up and down depending on offers), so we give you an accurate price for your holiday when we provide you with a quotation. Our sample prices should be used as an indication of how much a particular combination will cost and to show the differences on average between the hotel categories on offer.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Our booking conditions apply to all holidays. A copy can be found on our website and a copy is also sent to you with a written quotation and when you make a booking.

FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Expressions Holidays offers full financial protection for all holidays you book with us. If your holiday includes a flight, the ATOL (3076) covers the costs of the holiday. If the holiday does not include a flight, it is the ABTOT bond that protects the cost of the holiday. We are also members of AITO (the Association of Independent Tour Operators) and ABTA.



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HOW TO BOOK

To make a booking, just phone us on

01392 441250

and we can take you through the details we need and start the booking process. A deposit is required to confirm the arrangements and this can be paid by debit or credit card over the phone. The level of the deposit will be confirmed at the point of booking.