

Full-day walks from

Kandersteg

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www.walkingwiki.org

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5th Edition

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About You

- You have a pair of walking boots.
- You walk in those boots almost every week.
- You are looking for interesting walks that take 4 – 10 hours.
- You can read maps.
- You can look after yourself in the hills.
- You will not need rescue if the sunny day unexpectedly turns into a blizzard.
- You have picked up this book. That's good. Let's go walking!

About the Walks

The walks are all near the village of Kandersteg in the Bernese Oberland. Many of them start from the village, though some require rail or bus journeys. Kandersteg has good transport connections as it is on the main Bern – Lötschberg – Simplon rail route, just north of the original Lötschberg tunnel. One of the great advantages of Kandersteg is that the mountains are high enough to affect the weather so if conditions are bad around the village there may still be sunshine at the other end of the tunnel!

Each walk has a description and a map. The maps are just there to indicate the route. They are not detailed enough for navigation, so you should get the appropriate 1:25,000 Wanderkarte.

We have included typical walk timings: these assume moderate

fitness and allow some time for admiring the view. Paths are well signed in the Kandersteg area, and we generally find that the times given for bergweg routes match our speed very well.

Walking signs generally show time rather than distance, and they assume that people using harder routes will be faster and fitter than those using easy routes. All-yellow signs can be followed by any moderately fit person with good shoes. Signs with white-red-white stripes indicate routes where more fitness and good boots are needed. White-blue-white denotes alpine routes: these can include vertical ladders, narrow bridges and sheer drops: in this book only the Jegertosse – Doldenhornhütte route includes such a path.

Place Names

This is mainly a German-speaking area, though elements of French and Romansch can also be heard in the Berner Oberland dialect. The spelling of place-names varies depending on who is doing it, and this can be confusing to visitors. Some of the standard umlaut conversions are commonly used, such as 'oe' in place of 'ö' and 'ue' in place of 'ü', but a number of other variations show up for less obvious reasons.

In this edition we have tried to follow the spellings used on official maps, but those used on signposts are sometimes quite different. Here are a few examples:

Üschenegrat	Ueschinengrat
Eggeschroand	Eggenschwand
Gasteretal	Gasterntal
Gfelalp	Gfalalp, Gfallalp
Chüeroeid	Chuweid, Kuhweid
Schroarzgrätli	Schwartzgrätli



Gasteretal, Selden and Gfelalp



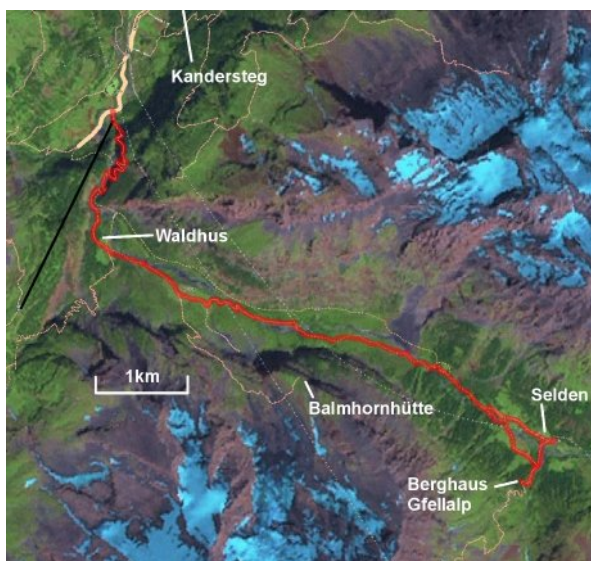
Walk south or take the bus from Kandersteg to the Sunnbüel cable car base station and take the route to the left of the building. The path climbs the gorge beside the Kander Klus waterfall to the magnificent Gasteretal valley, where the view opens out at Waldhus. Dramatic waterfalls pour out of the side of the mountain, fed from the Balmhorn above and contributing in their turn to the raging torrent of the Kander. About an hour along the valley the path climbs again through woodland for about 15 minutes to join the road into Selden. You may find alpine strawberries along this section in July, and the wild flowers

can be amazing – the meadows are harvested for hay much later than in Kandersteg.

You can stop at Selden or go on another 50 minutes to Berghaus Gfelalp which has wonderful views over to the Kanderfirn glacier. If you are going to Gfelalp, there are two options: you can take the right-hand fork at Chalet Weidli or you can continue along the road into Selden and then cross the river using the suspension bridge. Watch out for Martagon lilies and *Trollius* (butterball) buttercups.

The walk is fairly easy, with about a 20 minute climb up the Kander Klus waterfall, 15 minutes

in the woodland climb and about 50 minutes climb from Selden to Gfelalp. The distance is about 10km from the centre of Kandersteg to Selden and less than 1km further distance to Berghaus Gfelalp, although it is a 300m climb! Kandersteg to Selden is signed as 2 hours 30 minutes with an extra 1 hour from Selden to Gfelalp. You will want extra time for the breathtaking views at Berghaus Gfelalp so plan on at least an 8 hour day.



Time	Height	Location
10:15	1175	Kandersteg Church
10:45	1194	Eggenschwand
11:15	1358	Waldhus
12:15	1420	Base of woodland climb in Gasteretal
12:45	1535	Suspension bridge near Selden
		Lunch for 30 mins
13:55	1847	Berghaus Gfelalp
14:55		Depart Berghaus Gfelalp
15:20	1540	Selden – Hotel Steinbock
15:55		Depart Steinbock
16:20	1420	Base of woodland climb
17:20	1358	Waldhus
17:50	1194	Eggenschwand
18:25	1170	Kandersteg

Refreshments are available at Waldhus and there are two restaurants in Selden. Berghaus Gfelalp is now part of the Scout Centre so it does not provide refreshments, though walkers are welcome to use the terrace.

Transport is available from the centre of Kandersteg to the cable car station, using the local bus. If you really want to cheat, there is the Gasteretal Bus service which will take you all the way to Selden and back. If you do that, try to walk up and ride back – the view is magnificent as the valley opens out at the top of the waterfall.

Lake Thun Shoreline



Long-distance path 26 goes all the way around Thunersee. You can find details by searching the Internet for *Panorama Rundweg Thunersee*. This pair of relatively gentle walks use part of that route. Both start from the station at Spiez, returning by train.

Spiez - Interlaken

From the station, head downhill towards the swimming pool. Enjoy the gardens by the pool where the main features are attractive vegetables rather than flowers. At the lake shore, turn right along the Strandweg towards Krattigen. At Güetital you have a choice: either stay by the lake through Leissigen or follow path 26 up through Krattigen, climbing 500m and crossing a spectacular suspension bridge. Both

routes take you to Därligen and then Interlaken, where you can catch a train home from Interlaken West station. The high route will add 1-2 hours to the times shown here.

Spiez - Thun

Head down to the swimming pool and turn left along the lake to Schloss Spiez, which is well worth exploring. Climb through the vineyards at the back of the castle to Speizberg which is a wooded ridge overlooking Lake Thun. Continue on path 26, which crosses the road and the railway through open meadows; the view to the south is dominated by the Niesen. Einigen is a small lakeside village with an ancient church. The path now takes you to Strättligsteg and across the River Kander. Before reaching Gwatt,

take time to see Strättlitturm which is a 13th-century hilltop castle.

From Gwatt the path runs right beside Lake Thun to Schadau Park where the lake ends and the River Aare flows through the town of Thun.

The railway station is about 20 minutes from here.

Occasionally this route is a little short of signposts; if in doubt, follow the yellow wanderweg signs or yellow diamonds.

Time	Height	Location
10:05	628	Spiez Bahnhof
10:30	560	Swimming pool
11:15	560	Faulensee
13:25	580	Leissigen
13:55		Depart Leissigen
14:30	660	Egghubel
14:55	605	Därlichen
16:10	563	Interlaken West

Time	Height	Location
11:05	628	Spiez Bahnhof
11:20	560	Spiez / Bucht
12:00	660	Spiezberg
12:20	621	Spiezmoos Nord
12:50		Lunch in meadow
13:20	572	Einigen
14:10	655	Strättlitturm
14:25	630	Gwatt
15:30	630	Schadau Park
16:30	630	Thun Bahnhof



Höhenweg Südrampe: Hohtenn to Eggerberg



This is a relatively easy one-way walk, returning by train. There are lots of options to either extend or shorten the route.

Start at Hohtenn station and follow signs for the Höhenweg Südrampe BLS. After a good hour the path arrives at Rarnerchumma where there is a restaurant. You are largely following the railway – sometimes above and sometimes below – but there is an alternative for the more adventurous: follow signs to the Hängebrücke 25 minutes out of Hohtenn. This path drops through Lidu to join a water channel and uses stairs, tunnels and a rope bridge to rejoin the main path at Brägji. Another half hour brings you to Riedgarto where stone tables provide

an early lunch spot. This section includes the spectacular Bietschtal viaduct which the path shares with the railway.

Ausserberg is the big decision point: catch the train home or continue on? Look for the hydrants in Ausserberg: the local children have painted several of them. Ausserberg has a very different atmosphere from Kandersteg. There are several ways through the village but continue to follow the Höhenweg Südrampe BLS signs towards Eggerberg. There is a lot of serious irrigation equipment in the Rhone valley and on this section you can get very wet dodging the powerful water jets! Note that you should not follow signs for Trogdorf unless you are

equipped for it: the path from Trogdorf to the Baltschieder valley passes through a 1.5km tunnel with no lighting.

The Höhenweg will take you to Eggerberg by the shortest route, but a more interesting option is to go up Baltschiedertal following the route of the suonon – irrigation channels carved into the face of the mountainside. A signpost marked Pt1099 denotes the first opportunity to cross the river, though it is more interesting to continue up to Älum at 1216m and follow the *Gorperi Suon* down the eastern side.

You will find several short tunnels – one of them has an alternative route in the form of a hollowed out tree trunk with a sheer drop beneath. It is clearly marked *Nur für Schwindelfrei*, and this may be considered an understatement...

Wirtschaft Egga provides refreshments as you reach the road just outside Eggen. Make sure you take the green path down between the amazing wooden chalets with

Time Height Location

09:55	1079	Hohtenn
11:00	1000	Rarnerchumma
11:30	975	Riedgarto
12:35	960	Ausserberg Bigstatt
12:50	931	Ausserberg
13:15		Depart Ausserberg
14:45	1099	Pt 1099
14:50	1216	Bridge at Älum
15:10		Depart bridge
15:50		Sign above Eggen
16:14		Wirtschaft Egga
16:40	810	Eggerberg

their profusion of garden flowers and gnomes. From Eggen there is a steep 200m drop to Eggerberg and the railway station.

It is about 10km from Hohtenn to Ausserberg, and another 10km to Eggerberg via Älum. Hohtenn to Eggerberg is signed as 4 hours 45 minutes, and going to Älum will add at least 1 hour. Be prepared for it to be much hotter on the Höhenweg Südrampe than around Kandersteg, and take plenty of water.



Allmenalp –Üschenetal – Schwartzgrätli



This walk covers a lot of ground including one fairly hard climb up to Schwarzgrätli. Start by taking the cable car to the Allmenalp and follow the path up and left towards the Üschenetal. There are wonderful views of the Blümlisalp range and the Oeschinensee. There is a restaurant at Steinweidli about 15 minutes from the top of the cable car.

As you cross the summit at Ryharts and start to descend, the whole Üschenetal valley opens out before you. Restaurant Lohner at Usser Üschene

Time	Height	Location
09:50	1175	Allmenalp cable car base
10:05	1725	Undere Allme cable car top
10:20	1795	Steinweidli
10:40	1746	Ryharts
11:05	1595	Usser Üschene
11:45	1780	Inner Üschene
12:05	1897	Underbäche
13:20		Signpost to Tällisee 15 mins rest
14:00	2383	Schwarzgrätli
14:50		Depart Schwarzgrätli
15:35	2060	Schwarenbach
16:25		Depart Schwarenbach
16:50	1953	Arveseeli
17:20		Depart Arveseeli
17:50	1937	Sunnbüel
18:10	1194	Eggeschroand
18:20		Local bus back to town

provides another refreshment opportunity. If necessary, you can descend back to Kandersteg from here.

Follow the road up the Üschenetal until it turns back just beyond Underbäche. The route to Schwarzgrätli is a fairly hard climb for about an hour and a half but the path is generally good.

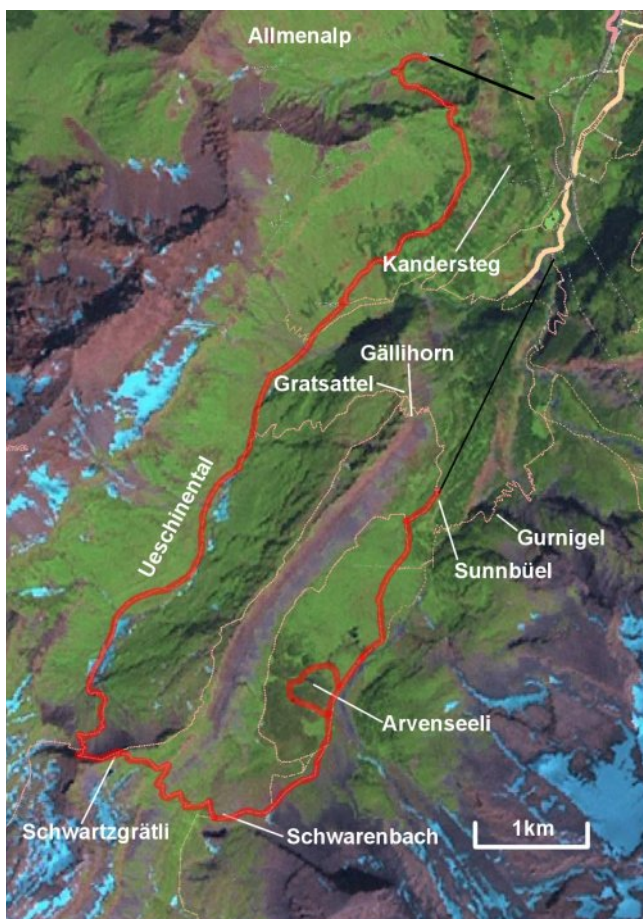
15 minutes from the top you pass the sign for Tällisee; continue to the left for Schwarzgrätli. When you reach the summit

you can see most of the route that you have travelled so far, and there are superb views along the Gemmi and across to the southern Alps. In July, gentians and alpine pansies can be found amongst the carpet of alpine flowers. Just below you on the Gemmi side is a stunning blue alpine lake. The way from here descends for about 40 minutes to Berghotel Schwarenbach where refreshments are available (their fruit tart is excellent!). Return to the Sunnbüel cable car along the Gemmi. If you have time, take a detour around the

blue lakes at Arveseeli where you may find alpine marmots in addition to a wonderful flower display.

The walk covers about 14 km with a 500m climb up to Schwarzgrätli and needs to be timed to ensure you catch the last cable car from Sunnbüel - otherwise you have a long walk back down into Kandersteg!

Plan on an 8 - 9 hour day to enjoy everything.



Fründenhütte



This is a strenuous walk, gaining 1000m using a superbly built path which zigzags its way up from the Oeschinensee. There are excellent views over the lake most of the way up. The path from the Hotel Oeschinensee descends to the lake and follows the shore through sparse woodland to the base of the climb. As you gain height, the vegetation becomes grass and alpine flowers. A natural rest point is beside a large rock with a white-red-white round marker (the "target" rock). From here, the path gets rather steeper with less grass and more rock but the zigzags continue until you reach a massive rock face. A path is cut into the rock

with rope hand-holds to bring you to the last part of the climb up to Fründenhütte. Only small alpine flowers survive along the rock path now. You pass the Fründenhütte water butt about 10 minutes before you get to the hut itself.

The way looks impossible from below but the path is excellent, providing rope hand-holds on the few occasions where it is particularly steep at the top. You cannot see the glacier until you actually reach the hut and you then find yourself looking *down* at it.

The Oeschinensee gondelbahn from Kandersteg takes you up the first 400m, providing panoramic views of the peaks west of

Kandersteg. The distance walked is barely 4km each way, and a third of it is covered in the first 25 minutes from the top of the gondelbahn to the Oeschinensee itself. Fründenhütte is signed as 2 hours 45 minutes from the Oeschinensee so plan on 6 – 7 hours walking in total.

There are some magnificent waterfalls that you cross on the way up. Watch out for steinbock on the higher part of the zigzag path – there are usually a few around.

Time Height Location

09:40	1682	Top of Oeschinensee gondelbahn
10:00	1593	Oeschinensee
11:00		First waterfall
11:15		Target Rock 15 min pause
12:20		Rock ledge
12:50		Fründenhütte water butt
13:05	2562	Fründenhütte
14:35		Depart Fründenhütte
15:50		Target Rock
16:00		Upper waterfall
17:10	1593	Oeschinensee
17:35	1682	Top of gondelbahn
18:00	1170	Hotel Blümlisalp

Refreshments are available at the top of the gondelbahn, at the Oeschinensee and at Fründenhütte.

