

Alps 2003

Itinerary details and route descriptions

I now have 10 copies of the map sections required each day, which should be enough to go round .. bearing in mind that Richard and I both have original maps. Until they arrive, if you'd like to look at maps just now, the SwissGeo website is really good for small local areas. Try this one for starters ... fire up on www.swissgeo.ch then enter "Grindelwald" in 'Localité' and hit Go! It'll come up with "3818 Grindelwald" on the right .. hit the 'Map' button and it'll load the section. You can now use the zoom buttons at the top to alter the scale and the direction arrows to move to neighbouring frames. Happy mapping!

Day 3 Thursday 28 August Grindelwald to Mürren

There are several choices today depending on the weather ...

1. **Jungfrauoch**

- 0849 train from Grindelwald to Jungfrauoch
- 1200 train down to Lauterbrunnen
- Walk up to Mürren via Grütschalp

2. **Männlichen**

- Cable car to Männlichen and visit summit (2343m)
- Walk to Kleine Scheidegg (2061m)
- Descend to the Lauterbrunnental via the Trümmeltal
- Ascend by cable car from Stechelberg to Mürren

3. **Tourist route**

- Walk up to Kleine Scheidegg (2061m)
- Descend to Lauterbrunnen (795m)
- Funicular to Grütschalp
- Train to Mürren

... or combinations of the above!

1. If the weather is *really* good, with no cloud likely on the summits, it may be worth the expense to visit the Jungfrauoch (3454m) by the famous cog railway that tunnels through the Eiger and Mönch, and which is a holiday highlight for many visitors to Grindelwald. The journey is incredibly expensive .. but if we take a special fare called the "Good-Morning-Ticket" with which we have to leave the Jungfrauoch on the 1200 train at the very latest, it may be a memorable trip. The cost is SFr120.80 (about £60), and I can't find out yet whether our Swiss Cards will get us a reduction .. but I doubt it! You can read more about the Jungfrauoch on www.jungfraubahn.ch.



The 'Sphinx' at Jungfrauoch

If we **do** take the trip, we're paying down to Lauterbrunnen (795m), so it wouldn't make sense to get off before then and walk some of the way down. We change at Kleine Scheidegg both up and down, so you've got about 10 minutes there each time to take in both the view and the commercialism.

The 1200 train arrives in Lauterbrunnen at 1400 hours, so the day's walk would be up to Grütschalp and on to Mürren, where we're booked in to the Eiger Guesthouse. The phone number is 0041 33 856 5460 and the website is at www.muerren.ch/eigerquesthouse.

Kev Reynolds describes the route ...

The path up to Grütschalp begins near a bakery in Lauterbrunnen's main street a short distance up-valley from the railway station. It takes you up past a number of houses, over a stream and on a traverse towards the right. Ignore a left-hand alternative, go under the railway, and then in tight zig-zags uphill through the forest. After about 50 minutes you'll come to Alpweg (1068m) and a junction of trails. Take the left-hand trail which continues its steep upward route, crossing the funicular again, and with more zig-zags eventually brings you to another crossing path. Go right here, crossing the railway yet again, then bear left for the final uphill to Grütschalp Station (1486m).

The walk on to Mürren (1638m) is the gentlest kind of walking you may hope to find in the Alps .. almost without any steep ascent, but with a most exquisite panorama that takes in the Jungfrau, Ebnefluh, Mittaghorn, Grosshorn and Breithorn. There's also the spear wedge of the Eiger and the snowy bulk of the Mönch and, as you draw nearer to Mürren, the lovely Gspaltenhorn. The valley plunges away in a spectacular gulf; there are forests alive with birdsong and pastures rich in flowers.

Leaving the station, cross the railway tracks and take the footpath heading left, signposted to Mürren. No further description is necessary, except to say that at every path junction adequate signs are given and it's almost impossible to lose the way!

Distance:	7 km
Height gain:	843 m
Likely time:	3¼ hours

2. If the weather is *reasonably* good, with cloud likely at 3000m but not at 2000m, we can take the cable car up to Männlichen (2225m) and visit its summit at 2343m. Heading south, the footpath to Kleine Scheidegg gently descends through alpine pastures and contours round the crags of Tschuggen and Lauberhorn. The pastures are rather developed with cable lines and the path is very touristed, but the mountain views are superb. After 25 minutes the views become even better with the Jungfrauoch (the highest railway station in Europe) visible in good conditions on the saddle between the Jungfrau and Mönch.

Ten minutes beyond the Rotstockli hut and restaurant, you drop down to the bustling shops, restaurants and station at Kleine Scheidegg (2061m). We'll cross the lines to the left of the station buildings and descend an easy track beside the railway. A signpost directs you to Wengernalp and Wengen .. the views are now dominated by the Mönch and Jungfrau. For 30 minutes the track accompanies the railway, then at Wengernalp we'll take paths westwards across the Biglenalp then south to the Trümmeltal. We'll descend steeply to the Lauterbrunnen valley, then head south on the road for 1½km or so to the Schilthornbahn station just north of Stechelberg and ascend to Mürren via Gimmelwald. You can read about the cableway at www.schilthorn.ch .. and you may even be using it again tomorrow!

We're booked in to the Eiger Guesthouse as noted above. The time for this route is difficult to estimate, but it looks like 4 hours or so actual walking from the Männlichen top station to the Stechelberg bottom station, with little ascent and much descent!

3. If the weather isn't particularly kind, we can take the tourist route up to Kleine Scheidegg and down to Lauterbrunnen, then take the funicular and train to Mürren. Kev Reynolds says that crossing the Kleine Scheidegg pass is one of the classic Oberland traverse routes .. in fact it's Section 7 of the Alpine Pass Route, and it's well worth the day's walk despite the hordes of tourists and the relatively unchallenging terrain!

What makes the crossing so special is the close proximity of so many magnificent high peaks .. the Eiger, Wetterhorn, Mönch and Jungfrau, with the Gspaltenhorn across the Lauterbrunnental. He describes the route ...

Distance:	18 km
Height gain:	1027m
Height loss:	1240m
Likely time:	6½ hours

Go down from Grindelwald's main street to the station of Grund in the valley below. Cross the river nearby over a bridge with a road leading from it and bear left immediately on a narrow tarmac track that climbs steeply between

chalets, crosses the Kleine Scheidegg railway, and maintains its sharp gradient towards Alpiglen. As the chalets begin to thin out, so the way takes you between hay meadows and pastures.

After an hour or so, the path enters woods then comes to a service road, but breaks off a few paces later on the continuing path. Once again rejoin the road which forks moments later. Take the left branch, but when a path cuts off to the right, follow this uphill among woods still. On emerging by the railway, pass beneath it, then bear left and walk alongside it as far as Alpiglen (1616m, 2h20min, refreshments).

The path recrosses the rail lines a short way above the Berghotel Alpiglen, climbing more gently now past clusters of weather-beaten mountain pines and the farmhouses in the hollow of Mettla (1809m). Make your way on up to the ski lifts of Arvengarten, where you meet the "Weg 2000" .. a path contouring the mountainsides at roughly 2000 metres .. before sidling up around the slopes below the rail line to arrive at Kleine Scheidegg (2061m, 3h 50min, refreshments etc).

Cross the lines to the left of the station buildings and descend an easy track beside the railway. A signpost directs you to Wengernalp and Wengen .. the views are now dominated by the Mönch and Jungfrau. For 30 minutes the track accompanies the railway, then at Wengernalp, leave the main track to cut down to the left on a narrow path that crosses a steep and rough patch of pasture heading towards forest. Continue with the path into the trees and you'll shortly come to a track that in turn leads to the sunny level terraces of Mettlenalp.



Gspaltenhorn



Schilthorn

From here, there are fine views across to the Gspaltenhorn and Schilthorn above Mürren, and to the Breithorn at the head of the Lauterbrunnental. Continue along this track as it curves round a shoulder of hillside .. it leads all the way to the car-free mountain resort of Wengen (1275m, 5h30min, refreshments etc).

From Wengen train station, follow the signposted walking track back under the rail lines onto a narrow road. The route soon begins a steep descent in short spirals through tall forests of spruce and maple, twice crossing the railway in quick succession. Drop on down through open slopes to cross the raging torrent of the Weisse Lütschine on a footbridge a short way before

coming out at the main street in Lauterbrunnen (795m, 6h30min, refreshments etc).

The Grütschalp funicular hauls you up to 1489m in just 7 minutes. If weather allows, you may wish to walk the hour to Mürren, or take the train .. the cost from Lauterbrunnen to Mürren is a bargain at around £2, and the Eiger Guesthouse is just opposite the station.
