

Alps 2003

Itinerary details and route descriptions

Day 7 Monday 1 September
Gemmipass to Engstligenalp via the Rote Chumme (2628m) and the Chindbettijoch (2623m)

Slightly possible peak ... Tschingellochtighorn (2735m)

The crossing of the Rote Chumme and the Engstligengrat is one of the classic walks of this area, and is described as an energetic, but not necessarily difficult, route for experienced mountain walkers. The Lonely Planet Guide to Walking in Switzerland has a good description of the route ...

Distance: 11 km
Height gain: 420m
Height loss: 770m
Likely time: 5 hours



Take the trail down to the western side of the Daubensee and cross the stream on a wooden footbridge near where it enters the lake. Head on around the western shore, climbing high over scree slopes before swinging left away from the lake. Paint markings guide you on up through a long rocky-grassy gully that ends with a steep ascent of switchbacks to arrive at the Rote Chumme (2628m, 1h45min). This barren gap near a striking monument-like rock marks your return into Bernese territory. Before you lies the heavily glaciated upper valley of Tälli, whose most interesting features are the receding ices of the Tälligletscher and a small lake, the Tällisee. Small herds of ibex may sometimes be spied loitering around this seemingly inhospitable area.

Drop down to the left over loose moraines to cross the freezing stream, then cut back rightwards up the well-trodden scree slopes above the Tällisee to another pass, the Chindbettijoch (2623m, 2h45min). At the signposted junction a few paces down from here, you get a nice view of the Engstligenalp.

Continue around to the right below the Chindbettihorn (2691m) to begin a surprisingly easy and spectacular high traverse along the Engstligengrat. Following this bare ridge, the route steers past the odd rock outcrop as it rises over a broad hump before cutting left across the scree slopes under the 2735m Tschingellochtighorn. Head down along the sharper and grassier spur of the Ärtelengrat to where it peters out above sheer cliffs falling straight into the upper Engstligental. A short and milder descent leftwards over hillside

meadows brings you down to the hotels at Engstligenalp (1954m, 5 hours) where we're booked in to the Berghaus Bärtschi. The phone number there is 0041 33 673 1373 and they're listed (in German!) at www.engstligenalp.ch/deutsch/Bibliothek/essen.html.



Possible ascents

It may be possible to visit the Chindbettihorn (2691m) from the Engstligengrat after passing through the Chindbettijoch. The Tschingellochtighorn (2735m), which we pass below on the walking route, may be worth a closer look, but I don't think we'd make one of the summits ... have a look at www.peakware.com/encyclopedia/peaks/addapeak31.htm .
