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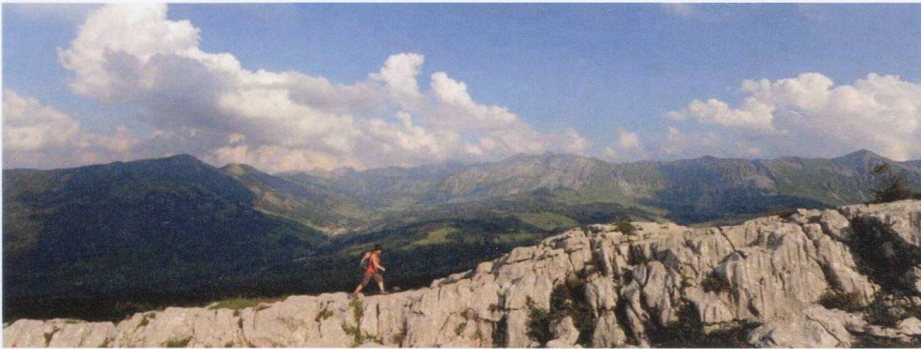
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The Schrattenfluh in the Entlebuch



The Schrattenfluh, a six kilometre long mountain chain, rises prominently above the southern Entlebuch and forms part of the alpine foothills. The northeastern slopes are very steep, while the barren karst fields of the Schrattenkalk (Schratten limestone) decline gently towards the southwest. Many caves dot the landscape and are the target of many a speleologist (cave explorer). The Schrattenfluh offers many exciting routes for hikers and bicyclist.

www.wandersite.ch/2tageswanderung/300_Entlebuch.html

www.biosphere.ch

The Legend of the Schrattenfluh



The stony desert on the southern side of the Schrattenfluh was once the most beautiful "alp" (mountain farm) of the Entlebuch. Hannes and Jost, two brothers, inherited the alp from their beloved parents. But Hannes was greedy. Each year, he took a piece of land from his brother, who was born blind. Tragically, Hannes passed his proud and greedy character on to his beautiful daughter Rösi. She demanded of her many admirers the impossible - to climb the "Schibengütsch" (a peak of the Schrattenfluh). Quite a few of them fell to their death. Despite the anger and bitterness of their community and neighbours, neither Hannes nor Rösi changed their ways.

One day, a farm worker decided to tell the blind brother, Jost, about the ongoing theft. When challenged by Jost, Hannes cursed: "May the devil utterly destroy the alp if I ever took a grain of my soil wrongfully!" With this curse, a massive black cloud built up above the Schibengütsch, and thunder and lightning broke. The mountain trembled as if it would disintegrate into a thousand pieces. The devil ripped the green meadows from the rocks with his sharp claws, and threw Hannes and Rösi into the caves under the Schibengütsch.

From that time, a stony desert has covered the southern side of the Schrattenfluh and the devil's claw marks continue to mar the land. Hannes and Rösi remain captive in the cave and can be seen only once a year at the cave entrance during the week before Easter, when the bells of Marbach ring for the "Gloria".

Adapted and translated by Susie Wood

Sources: *Entlebucher Sagen*, Schnyder-Studer Frieda, 1977
www.myswitzerland.ch

www.biosphaere.ch/de/natur-landschaft/karst/sagen

Ski Touring to the Schrattenfluh:

A personal experience

When I met Pia (Wittwer), we went on ski tours from the Axalp (above Brienz) or we went to the Schrattenflueh in the Entlebuch. Everything was packed the night before and we had an early rise. We drove by car as far up as we could. Ski touring requires special bindings which allow the heel to be lifted and you have special ski boots, too. You can use normal skis, but you need a skin. The skin is made of fur or synthetic material which sticks to the underside of the ski. It is directional, meaning that while you can slide forwards, you can't slide backwards: You can basically "walk" up the mountain.

Once you are ready to go, you start walking up the mountain. If there is fresh snow, you have to take turns within your group as there is no prepared piste, so the first person has a lot of ploughing to do. The others in the group usually follow in his/her tracks. You start as early as you can to make it up to the peak by mid morning. Once you arrive at the top, you enjoy the view, morning tea and a glass of wine (it helps for the downhill part, trust me!). You then take the skins off the skis, block the bindings into the downhill position and then you enjoy the downhill ride off the piste. If you do this in spring, take note that there can be frost on top but the snow can be soft underneath.

We had many wonderful excursions! The picture shows groups walking up to the Schrattenfluh.

By Adrian Blaser

