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WALKING THE LINE

WANDERING FROM WENGEN

Pete delivers the next article in his long-running series of things to do after you have got off the train.

Although we had often passed through Wengen, we had never actually stayed there; it has since given us happy memories of a walkers paradise involving all transport forms. We travelled out from Zurich Flughafen via Luzern and Meiringen and returned via Bern and Olten to add variety. With a large handy Co-op supermarket, it is also an ideal base for self-catering.

1. TO THE TOP AND BACK AGAIN

Being so near the Jungfrau, Wengen has the advantage of it being easy to catch the first train up to the Jungfraujoch without rising too early. It was cheaper too on this train. Just

think about it - if it's a gorgeous morning and, as its only 90 minutes to the summit it will probably still be great when you get to the top. Take my advice and go straight to the Sphinx lift - on a clear day you can see forever. . .

There are many side attractions but wanting a bit more adventure, we returned to Kleine Scheidegg for lunch before setting out walking to the Männlichen round the foot of the Laubhorn about 80 minutes away. If it's dry and a pleasant day, the steep path down into Wengen takes about 2 hours and you may catch sight of deer and chamois near Parwengi. If damp, don't attempt it, use the cablecar but note that the last service down leaves about 1800.

The early, very early, morning view from Eigergletscher over Wengen. September 2004.

Photo: Toggenburg





ABOVE: The view from the top. Taken from the Sphinx. 01.09.04

BELOW: The view under the top. JB 209 at Jungfrauoch Station. 01.09.04

Both photos: Toggenburg





Isenfluh (1084 m) in the Bernese Oberland. View from Sulwald above the village onto Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau mountains. To the left, the resort of Wengen, in the valley below the resort of Lauterbrunnen.

Photo©ST/swiss-image.ch

Lauterbrunnen, crossing the rails at Mittelberg, or you can take the Gimmelwald / Stechelberg cable cars into the valley below. In 2001 buses were infrequent after 18:55 from Stechelberg for Lauterbrunnen. Warning: On part of this walk we were met by an amorous goat who followed us for 5km before re-hitching.

3. GRINDELWALD

Leaving Wengen by the 'backdoor', we climbed up to the Leiterhorn to the north of the village then headed east above the Lütschental, past the dairy at Späтели before meeting up with the Grindelwald railway at Burglauenen, then continuing eastwards

entered Grindelwald 4 hours later. From here, we had the option of returning by train either via Zweilütschinen, or Kleine Scheidegg, or gondelbahn to the Männlichen then cablecar into Wengen. We lazed around and chose the first option.

2. MULLING AROUND MÜRREN

On the opposite side of the valley beneath the Schilthorn lies Mürren, and a really full day's walking can be achieved on that side in a round about way. We got the train down to Lauterbrunnen and caught the Isenfluh bus (don't look for a large bus as it's a white ten-seater). After a short walk to the equally small cablecar station, it only takes 5 minutes to be whisked up to Sulwald. The path to Mürren via the Soustal and Bietschenenalp takes about 5 hours. Take the Oberberg path at Marchegg (for Grütschalp leave here) then keeping to the west continue on to the path for Allmendhubel - a wonderland of alpine meadows, before descending into Mürren. No one can deny you the right to claim the most wonderful views imaginable of the terrible three (Eiger / Mönch / Jungfrau), not forgetting the Schilthorn (of "007" fame). It takes just under 2 hours to walk back into

4. EIGERGLETSCHER & STALDEN

Another pair of good walks uses the train to Kleine Scheidegg. The first involved us walking up to the Eigergletscher Station following the railway (45 minutes), before heading west in the direction of Wengernalp Station. Pick up the path heading SE to Biglen right under the towering Jungfrau, then head west once again for Mettla, Stalden (outstanding views here of the entire Lauterbrunnental, stopping in at Mary's Cafe (where the Men's Downhill ski racers hope to finish off the Lauberhorn run in one piece, then marvel at the 4 hours downhill you've just had. Inciden-

tally on this walk just below the Eigergletscher station two chamois literally brushed past us on the ridge path.

5. DOWN TO GRINDELWALD

The other walk from Kleine Scheidegg takes only 150 minutes or so but really wears the knees out, hugging as it does the foot of the north face of the Eiger into Grindelwald.

6. FROM GRINDELWALD

We have long wanted to walk from Schynige Platte to Grindelwald First but have always been thwarted by snow. However, if one starts at Grindelwald and uses the gondelbahn (I wish they had kept the chairlift) to First one can do parts of it in comfort. From First there are many options for wonderful walks.



ABOVE: Mountain restaurant Allmendhubel (1907 m) above Mürren in the Bernese Oberland. The majestic peaks of Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau loom in the back.

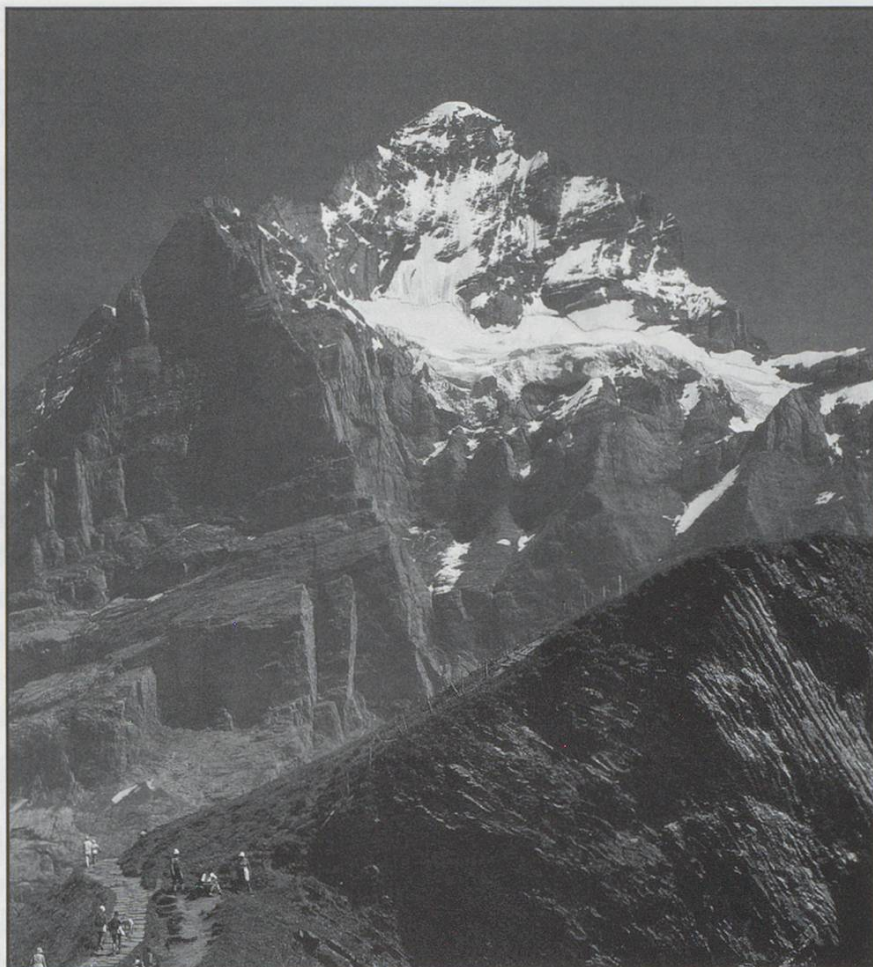
Photo©ST/swiss-image.ch

BELOW: Kleine Scheidegg station taken from a descending train. 01.09.05

Photo: Toggenburg



1. You can either head east for the Grosse Scheidegg before heading SW back into Grindelwald (the wanderweg cuts all the corners off the road back to town on a 4 hour ramble).
2. Head NW to the Bachsee then initially south to Uf Spitzen, then west to Oberlager before arriving after 3 hours at Bussalp for the Bus (what else!!) back to Grindelwald.
3. If one is really adventurous, from the Grosse Scheidegg one can head NE for Meiringen via Rosenloui. The bus takes 80 minutes and I have used it twice, but have never done the walk. It is an extremely attractive valley trek down the Giessbach and its tributaries.



ABOVE: Hikers in the First region at 2167 m above Grindelwald in the Bernese Oberland. On the way to Lake Bachalp with the Wetterhorn (3701 m) in the background. BELOW: Bachalpsee lake (2265 m) above Grindelwald in the Bernese Oberland, with the Wetterhorn (3701 m), Schreckhorn (4078 m) and Finsteraarhorn (4274 m).

Photos © ST/swiss-image.ch

Whatever one does on these day trips, especially those involving red / white mountain paths, please take note of the weather forecasts and advise locals if you are staying in a hotel what your intentions are, just in case you fail to return when they expect you to. Take adequate food and refreshments - that place where you had hoped for a drink might not be open, and take a whistle with you.

Of course, being members of the Swiss Railways Society you will know all the transport times - won't you???

