

Mürren to Griesalp

Start: Mürren

Distance: 17 km

Altitude: ↑3320 ft, ↓4180 ft

Grade: strenuous

Destination: Pension Waldrand 676-1208

Character: A long uphill hike brings you from Mürren to the steep and rocky Sefinenfurke pass. From there, a long, steep descent over loose rocks leads to the quiet Kiental valley. This traditional valley is dotted with beautiful chalets, amazing waterfalls, and mountain views.



Description: This is a steep walk into high country, and is by no means to be taken lightly. Do not attempt it in bad weather, and do not be afraid to turn around if the weather starts to deteriorate before you reach the pass. The area around the pass is steep, with lots of loose rock, so a good head for heights is needed. If the weather is foggy or stormy, it is easy, safer, and much more enjoyable to return to Mürren, and take the train (and bus) to Griesalp. There is a nice hike with some spectacular waterfalls near Griesalp. With that said, this is a wonderful hike with great views of the mountains. Food can be bought at the Rotstock hut, but you may want to buy picnic supplies before starting out.

From the center of town, follow the main road to the cablecar station and keep on it as it passes the station and starts to wind uphill. This small road leads you up to Gimmel and the small mountain inn across the stream at Spielbodenalp. Pass the inn, and you'll find a small trail leading off to the right towards the sharp peak looming over you. This peak is called Bryndli (or Brunli). The path crosses a rock fence, and then starts a steep, zig-zag ascent up Bryndli. You will pass a bench on the right, make a couple more turns, and gain a ledge where you'll find two large benches looking out at the mountains.

The trail then wraps around to the right. It is easy now, and becomes a delightful stroll. Ignore the barns to your left, and you should reach the hut in a little over 2 hours from Mürren. The hut is privately run, with a small dining room and sleeping dorms upstairs. A local family acts as hut wardens, providing meals and drinks throughout the day.

Continue west from Rotstock hut, crossing the stream, and following the red and white flashings towards the pass. The trail takes you steadily up into rockier and rockier terrain. A small herd of Steinbock mountain goats lives up here, and can sometimes be seen lying on the rocks. The last bit is steep, but brings you up relatively quickly to the Sefinenfurke pass. You can take a last look eastwards to the Jungfrau and her surrounding peaks. On the other side, to the southwest, you'll see the white, angled slopes of the Blümlisalp peaks promising great things to come, and just down to the right from there, the Hochtürli pass awaits tomorrow's hike.

Descending from the pass is steep. It is safe in good weather, but requires a lot of care. Use the fixed rope and take your time - the difficult part is over in about 10 minutes. The trail continues straight over the pass (don't veer left here). It angles down to the right where a minimal wooden staircase sometimes eases the way. You'll pass a small farm at a place called Obere Dürrenberg a little over an hour from the pass, where you can refill your water. The spring is off to the right, behind the barn. You can also buy fresh cheese or drinks when the farmers are in. Watch out for stinging nettles near the barn, and don't cross the stream here. The real trail continues straight down and crosses a little later.

Keep going down, and you'll reach another farm at Burgli, where there is also water available. The trail gets larger here, and you'll continue down to the right. Eventually, you pass a few scattered houses, and you'll enter the small settlement of Griesalp. Once you reach Griesalp, turn left just past the Pension Golderli. A small sign prompts you to cross the stream on your right, and 5 minutes down this trail you'll find the Pension Waldrand.

The Waldrand is one of our favorite inns in Switzerland. The owner, Al, is very friendly and welcoming, and he takes care to provide a quiet, peaceful environment for his guests. We ask that you please respect his wishes by not making too much noise during your stay here.

If you've arrived with time left in your day and you'd like to do some more exploring, we highly recommend checking out the short walk along the Wildwasserweg described below.

If it rains... If the weather's bad, please don't attempt to cross the pass. It is far better to take the train from Mürren to Griesalp. The trip takes about 3 hours, changes trains in Interlaken and Spiez, and finishes with a wonderfully scenic bus ride from Reichenbach up to Griesalp. Have the train station clerk print out the train and bus connections you'll need. In Griesalp, from the inn, walk out along the driveway, and take a right just before the bridge. Walk downhill following the old signs labeled Wildwasserweg ("wild water path"). This takes you along the stream, with fantastic gorges, beautiful forest, and a couple of spectacular waterfalls. You can walk back up the same trail or come up on the road. The round trip to the Hexenkessel and back takes a little over an hour, and is well worth a side trip.