

Trekking in the Bernese

Oberland

Five hut-to-hut hikes – Tours of the Jungfrau Region, Wildstrubel and Wildhorn, the Bärentrek and the Via Berna

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The Bernese Oberland lies at the heart of the Swiss Alps, home to some of the most iconic mountain scenery in Europe. Towering above deep glacial valleys and turquoise lakes are legendary peaks such as the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau, backed by higher summits including the Finsteraarhorn and Schreckhorn. Well-engineered mountain paths cross high passes, circle glacier-clad massifs and link welcoming huts and traditional alpine villages, making this region one of the finest trekking destinations in the Alps.

This guidebook brings together five outstanding multi-day treks in the Bernese Oberland, offering over a month of walking in total. Routes range from classic circuits beneath the great north faces to quieter western ranges and remote high passes. Accommodation options are plentiful, from remote hütten and characterful mountain inns to small valley hotels, while Switzerland's excellent network of trains, buses and cable cars makes access straightforward. Most treks are achievable in under a week, though they can be combined or adapted to suit longer adventures.

The Treks:

- Tour of the Jungfrau Region (TJR) - 119km, 9 stages, ±8250m - A classic hut-to-hut circuit around Grindelwald, Lauterbrunnen and Mürren beneath the mighty Jungfrau massif. Starting and finishing in Grindelwald, under the Wetterhorn and Eiger, this varied route offers superb mountain views, flexible stage options and plentiful accommodation.
- The Bärentrek (Via Alpina, National Route 1) - 82km, 5 stages, +6120m / -5550m - The central section of Switzerland's Via Alpina, linking Meiringen to Kandersteg beneath the Wetterhorn, Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau. Long but straightforward early stages lead to more challenging crossings of the Sefinenfurgga and Hohtürli passes. A tough and rewarding high-level traverse.
- Via Berna (Alpine Section) - 122km, 9 stages, +8280m / -6920m - A linear trek from lakeside Spiez to the remote Sustenpass, using sections of the Via Alpina and sharing stages with the TJR. This mountain-focused section explores the Oberland from Lake Thun through Lauterbrunnen, Grindelwald and Meiringen.
- Tour of the Wildstrubel - 127km, 6 stages, ±7500m - A circuit of the glaciated Wildstrubel massif from Kandersteg via Adelboden and Lenk, crossing the Rawilpass into Valais. Return options include the

Gemmipass or the quieter Lötschental and Lötschenpass.

- Tour of the Wildhorn - 61km, 4 stages, $\pm 4550\text{m}$ - A shorter but wild trek in the western Bernese Alps, beginning at Iffigenalp near Lenk. Crossing high terrain towards the Diablerets and into Valais, this compact route includes a pass at nearly 2900m.

Across all five routes, trekkers encounter classic high passes such as the Hohtürli, Sefinenfurgga and Grosse Scheidegg; tranquil valleys including the upper Lauterbrunnen, Kiental and Kandertal; and beautiful alpine lakes such as Oeschinensee and Bachsee.

The trekking season typically runs from mid-June to late September, with September often offering stable weather and quieter trails, though some accommodation closes at the end of the month.

This guidebook includes:

- Full stage-by-stage route descriptions for all five Bernese Oberland treks, with clear daily distances, ascent and descent figures, route highlights and practical notes to help you plan realistic itineraries
- Detailed mapping and route guidance, enabling confident navigation across high passes, mountain trails and valley approaches, with options for shortening, extending or linking stages
- Comprehensive accommodation listings for huts, mountain inns and valley hotels, including booking advice and guidance on planning overnight stops during the busy summer season
- Extensive planning information covering transport and access, including Switzerland's integrated rail, bus and cable-car network, discount travel passes and advice on reaching start and finish points
- Seasonal and safety advice for trekking in the Bernese Oberland, including guidance on snow conditions, high-pass crossings, fitness requirements and adapting plans to weather or time constraints

From the celebrated peaks of the central Oberland to the quieter western massifs, *Trekking in the Bernese Oberland* offers a diverse collection of classic Alpine journeys. Whether you are planning a first Swiss hut-to-hut adventure or seeking more challenging high-pass crossings, this guide provides everything you need to explore one of the Alps' most spectacular trekking regions with confidence.

About the author

Jonathan Williams, together with Lesley Williams, have made the Swiss and French alps their special subject and explored treks and walks throughout the mountains, turning this passion into a series of guides. For this guide Jonathan has been exploring the Bernese Oberland over the past four years.

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