**Global Adventure Detailed Description**

1. **Describe Your Destination** (this becomes the Route-Place)

**Title:** Trek the Swiss Alps in the Jungfrau Region

**Summary**: *Trek hut to hut or dayhike from villages through the spectacular Bernese Alps under the snowy crags of the Jungfrau and the Eiger. Many long and short trails sample the best of this UNESCO heritage region, offering intense physical challenge rewarded by incredible mountain and valley views, picturesque Swiss villages, high huts and great food. Carry only a daypack.*

**Description**: The Jungfrau-Aletsch region of the Bernese Alps in south-central Switzerland contains some of the highest peaks (8 peaks over 4000m) and the largest area of glacier ice in western Eurasia.  The mighty rock massif of the Eiger, Monch and Jungfrau forms a massive wall overlooking the Bernese Oberland and the towns of Grindelwald, Lauterbrunnen and Interlaken.  The area was designated as the first alpine UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2001 for its scenic beauty, its historical and scientific significance, and its ecological and geological diversity.

Hundreds of miles of developed trails, well-appointed mountain huts and hotels, an extensive transport system and easily accessed villages and resort towns with genuine Swiss hospitality and culture make this a very popular area for trekking.  Still, the very scale of the landscape and the intense physical challenge of some of the trails mean that strong hikers can find solitude along with the exhilaration of challenging themselves among some of the most awe-inspiring landscapes on the planet.  Because of the frequency of huts and hotels with food service, one need only to carry a daypack even for multi-day journeys.  It is also possible to use a town in the area as a base for extended periods of day hiking.

Two well known trail systems - the Alpine Pass Route or Via Alpina and the Tour of the Jungfrau Region, pass through the area as well as many shorter trails that can be connected for weeks to months of trekking.

**Image:**

**Land Manager:** Land Manager TBD

**Land Subdesignation:**

**Parking Permit Required:**

**Maximum Party Size:** 16

**National Forest Ranger District:**

**Starting GPS Coordinates or Place Name:** Schynigge Platte 46.645942, 8.093918

**Ending GPS Coordinates or Place Name:** Blumlisalphutte 46.494732, 7.674436

**Length:**

**Recommended Maps:** None

**Season:** June, July, August, September, October

**Climbing Category:**

**Ski/Snowboarding Category:**

**Snowshoeing Category:**

**Difficulty:** Strenuous/Very Strenuous

1. **Describe Your Specific Outing** (This becomes the Activity)

{This description is for a Global Adventure outing to the identified destination on specific dates with a specific itinerary.}

**Activity Template:** ‘Global Adventures’

**Activity Start and End Dates:** July 22-Aug 5, 2018 (dates subject to change).

**Activity Type:** Global Adventures, Backpacking

**Activity Summary:** *Trek hut to hut for two weeks and 85 miles on a high route in the spectacular Bernese Alps under the snowy crags of the Jungfrau and the Eiger. This very strenuous route samples the best of this UNESCO heritage region, offering intense physical challenge rewarded by incredible mountain and valley views, picturesque Swiss villages, high huts and great food. Carry only a daypack, stay in dorm rooms and shared private rooms along the way with most meals provided.*

**Meeting Place and Time:** Arrive no later than the afternoon of Sunday, July 22, 2018 in Zurich, Switzerland.  We’ll transfer to Interlaken on Monday, July 23, then trek until Saturday August 4 when we take an afternoon train back to Interlaken. On Sunday August 5 participants can depart back to Zurich for flights home, or proceed on their own to other explorations in the area!

**Itinerary Highlights:**  The Jungfrau Region of the Bernese Alps in south-central Switzerland contains some of the highest peaks (8 over 4000m!) and the largest continuous area of glacier ice in the Alps, plus hundreds of lakes, lovely villages and excellent food and culture. The mighty rock massif of the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau forms a massive wall overlooking the towns of Lauterbrunnen, Grindelwald and Interlaken and the Bernese Oberland, one of the most distinctive sights of the Swiss Alps. Hundreds of miles of developed trails, well-appointed mountain hotels and huts, an extensive system of trains, cable cars and cog railways, as well as easily accessed villages and resort towns, make this a very popular area for trekking. Still, the very scale of the landscape and the intense physical challenge of some of the trails mean that strong hikers can find solitude along with the exhilaration of challenging themselves among some of the most awe-inspiring landscapes on the planet.

This two-week, 85-mile very strenuous high route circles under the Jungfrau massif along portions of the Tour of the Jungfrau Region[[1]](#footnote-1) and the Swiss Alpine Pass Route or Via Alpina 1[[2]](#footnote-2). Along the way, we’ll stay in rustic inns and mountain huts, some in classic Swiss valleys and others perched on panoramic ridges or on rocky points high above the valleys and glaciers. The main route is panoramic most of the way, but when weather permits, we will head up from the main trails to traverse along high alternative routes. However, every day we will have the option to head to lower ground by trail or cable car if weather or trail conditions are unsafe.

We will meet in Zurich Switzerland, an ancient city that is now the largest city in Switzerland, a banking center and a transport hub for the country, on Sunday July 22nd. We’ll spend a night in Zurich, and the next morning take a train to Interlaken, an easy 2 hour ride. We’ll take an adjustment day in Interlaken, hiking the Harderkulm balcony trail high above Lake Brienz to get our legs and lungs ready for the challenges to come. On Tuesday July 24th we’ll leave our luggage at our hostel in Interlaken and take a train to Wilderswil and a cog railway – one of the highest in the world! – from there up to the viewpoint of Schynige Platte at 7000’ where we’ll begin our trek in earnest.

For the next six days we’ll circle first east, then south, then west along ridges with near constant views of the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau, climbing as high as 8800’ and dropping as low as 3600’ along the way and seeking higher routes wherever the weather and trail conditions permit. On this section we’ll stay at rustic high-mountain inns along the trail and will climb from the main trail to stay at two high huts on rocky perches over glacier. On day five we’ll traverse over a 7700-foot trekkers peak for panoramic views and then drop steeply through the scenic villages of Wengen and Lauterbrunnen before climbing (by trail or cable car) to Murren, a stunning road-free Swiss village perched at 5500’ high above the Lauterbrunnen valley with unimpeded views of the massif. We’ll spend a free day in Murren on Monday July 30th to soak up the ambiance, take rest, do laundry, or for those feeling energetic, options exist to do a nearby Via Ferrata with a guide or hike or ride a lift up to the Schilthorn (9744’) and back for more panoramic views (on your own, not part of the Mountaineers itinerary).

From Murren we’ll climb back to the main trail for five more days near the crest, mostly on the Swiss Via Alpina. Leaving Murren on the morning of Tuesday July 31st, we’ll walk past Gimmelwald and cross the upper Lauterbrunnen valley to Stechelberg, and climb back toward the walls of the massif to Schmadri Falls and the Oberhornsee at 7400’ before overnighting at Obersteinberg. The next day we’ll circle back to join the Via Alpina at Rotstock Hutte (6688’) and follow a spectacular high section of that trail to Sefinenfurgga pass (8567’), down into the valley of Gamchibach, and back up to the Blumlisalphutte at 9305’ – our most strenuous day with 10 miles and 6258 feet of elevation gain – but oh, the rewards! (As backup in case participant wishes or weather preclude the big climb to Blumlisalphutte, we’ll have another booking at Bundalp about halfway up.) From Blumlisalphutte we’ll drop in a short 3 miles to the incredibly scenic Oeschinensee, a lake at 5176’ surrounded by cliff walls – for our last night on the trail. (Those with the energy and inclination may choose to hike up the side trail to Frundenhutte.) On Saturday August 4th we’ll walk 2.5 miles downhill to Kandersteg and catch a train back to Interlaken (about an hour), rejoining our luggage and sharing a farewell dinner. On the morning of Sunday August 5th, participants can catch a train back to Zurich for flights home, or go their own way for further adventures. (NOTE: we may decide to stay that last night in Kandersteg and allow people to go back to Interlaken and on to Zurich the next morning)

At huts and hotels, bedding and half board (breakfast and dinner) are provided so we only need to carry a daypack with a sleep sack, clothing, water, lunch/snacks and our Ten Essentials for emergencies. We will be able to leave luggage at our hostel in Interlaken and come back to it at the end of our trek.

NOTE: As with any extended travel, but particularly in an area with unpredictable mountain weather and changeable trail conditions, our itinerary can change without notice and sections may be modified or dropped. The priority will always be on safety for all participants.

**Time of Year:** We’ll be visiting during late July, the warmest month of the year in the region. (However, weather in the Alps is notoriously fickle even in summer, so weather can range from warm and sunny to cold, wet and windy in the span of a day or stay miserable for days. ) The temperature in the high valleys ranges from the mid 50s to the low 70s during the day (weather on the high passes and huts can be considerably colder!) .  The region also receives its greatest precipitation during the summer months, but days are long, sunbreaks can be expected even on rainy days and the July-to-early-September ‘high season’ is considered to have the best weather to visit. Some snowfields may remain by late July so we’ll bring trekking poles for stability and microspikes based on the specific snow levels as the date gets closer.

**Lodging:** Five nights in comfortable 3-star hotels or hostels, and 5-6 nights in mountain huts and rustic inns with limited amenities. Shared two person rooms will be available on some of the nights (with shared bathroom down the hall) but some nights will be in dormitory style co-ed bunk rooms.

**Food:**  Hearty breakfasts and dinners are included on all of our trail days. Participants will have the option to purchase sack lunches for the trail at some of our huts and hotels, though we may also stop at trailside cafes and huts for a meal or cappuccino and snack where available. Lunches and drinks, and dinner on our free day in Murren, are not included in the trip price.

**Leader’s Experience:**Cheryl Talbert has led many Mountaineers hikes and several Mountaineers and private backpacks, treks and cultural trips around the U.S. west and worldwide, including a private group trekking trip on the Tour de Mont Blanc high route in 2016. (cascadehiker@earthlink.net)

**Strenuousness or Difficulty rating:** This route is rated very strenuous, due to some very rugged terrain, some moderate exposure, and long days with significant elevation gain. On many parts of this trail, the route ascends, descends or traverses steep rock faces and scree with fixed cables or ladders – those with a fear of heights or who are not confident with their balance will not find this trail a good fit.

**Limit:** Maximum of 12, minimum of eight, including the leader.

**Participant Requirements:** *Must be a current Mountaineers member with an up-to-date waiver on file.* This outing includes ***very strenuous hiking on rugged terrain*** (including some steep moraine and scree slopes) for multiple successive days, so participants need to be in excellent aerobic condition with good balance and confidence traveling on rough, sometimes exposed trail with a pack, and with the experience and willingness to deal with some discomfort, cold and inclement weather for extended periods. Occasional snowfield crossings may be involved, requiring microspikes and trekking poles. Recent experience with multi-day strenuous backpacking or mountain trekking, plus a positive attitude and a demonstrated ability to get along well with groups under demanding conditions, will be very important. NOTE: As a Mountaineers group we will operate as interdependent, capable travelers making our way together and helping one another succeed and be safe. You are responsible for your own safety and that of your fellow travelers. You must have the ability to navigate on trails with a map and compass. See daily trip profile, attached.

**Price:** $3100 including all lodging, transportation (trains, some cable car and cog rail trips where part of the main itinerary), and half-board (breakfast and dinner) along the trek. Your airfare (~$1300), travel insurance ($75-350), lunches, drinks and a few other meals in town (~$250) are not included. International medical and emergency evacuation insurance are required.

**Registration:** Please download and complete the [**application form**](http://www.mountaineers.org/source/atrips/documents/Peru2014_application.doc) and email it to the leader. After the leader’s approval, please pay the 50% deposit ($1500) in order to hold your space on the roster. Registration will close on Nov 1, 2017 or whenever the roster fills. A place on the roster can only be held with payment of the deposit. The balance of the trip payment is due by April 1, 2018.

**Cancellation:** If you cancel from this adventure, you may receive a refund less non-recoverable expenses and a $100 administrative fee.

**Registration Start Date:** ASAP; **Closing Date:** 8/1/2017

**SHORT PARAGRAPH FOR MOUNTAINEERS MAGAZINE:**

**Trek the Swiss Alps in the Jungfrau Region**

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1. #  Reynolds, Kev. 2010. Tour of the Jungfrau Region: A two-week trek in the Bernese Oberland (Cicerone Guide)

 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Reynolds, Kev. 2017. The Swiss Alpine Pass Route – Via Alpina 1: Trekking East to West across Switzerland (Cicerone Guide) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)