



# Tour of the Jungfrau Region including the Eiger Trail by Cheryl Talbert

## Walking the Wild

A joint presentation series by Seattle and Foothills Hiking Committees

June 12, 2024, 7-8:30PM

# The Bernese Oberland



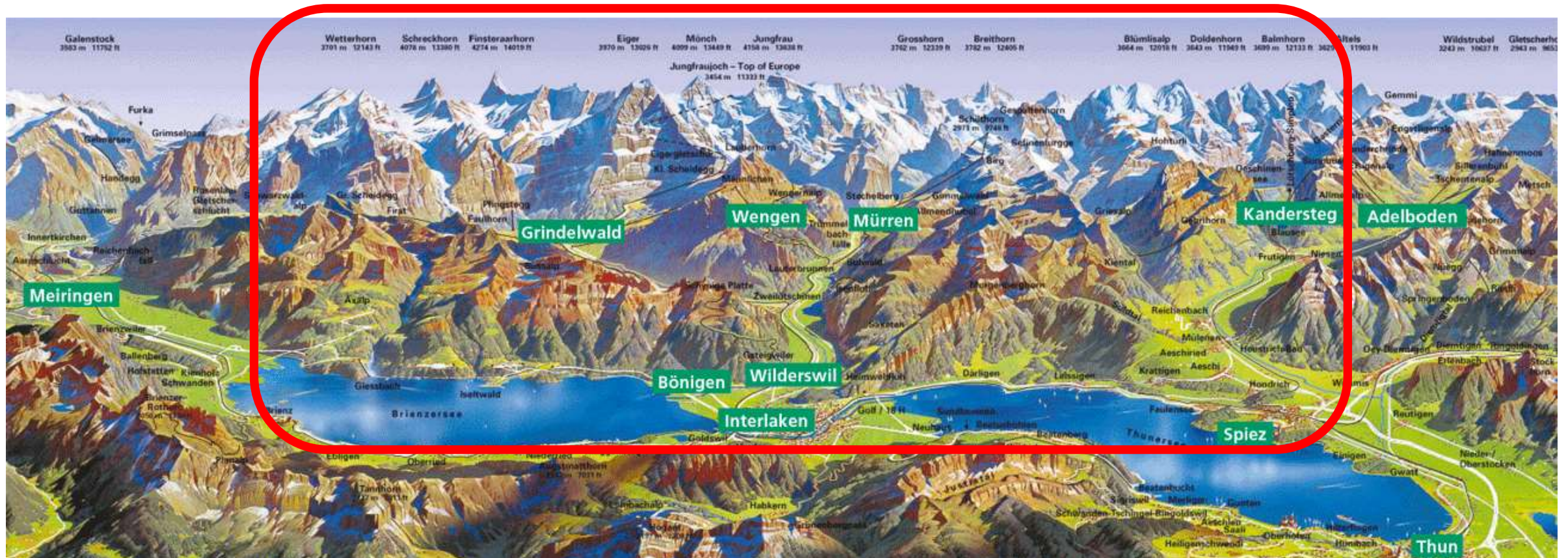
The Jungfrau Region

# The Bernese Oberland (from EarthTrekkers.com)

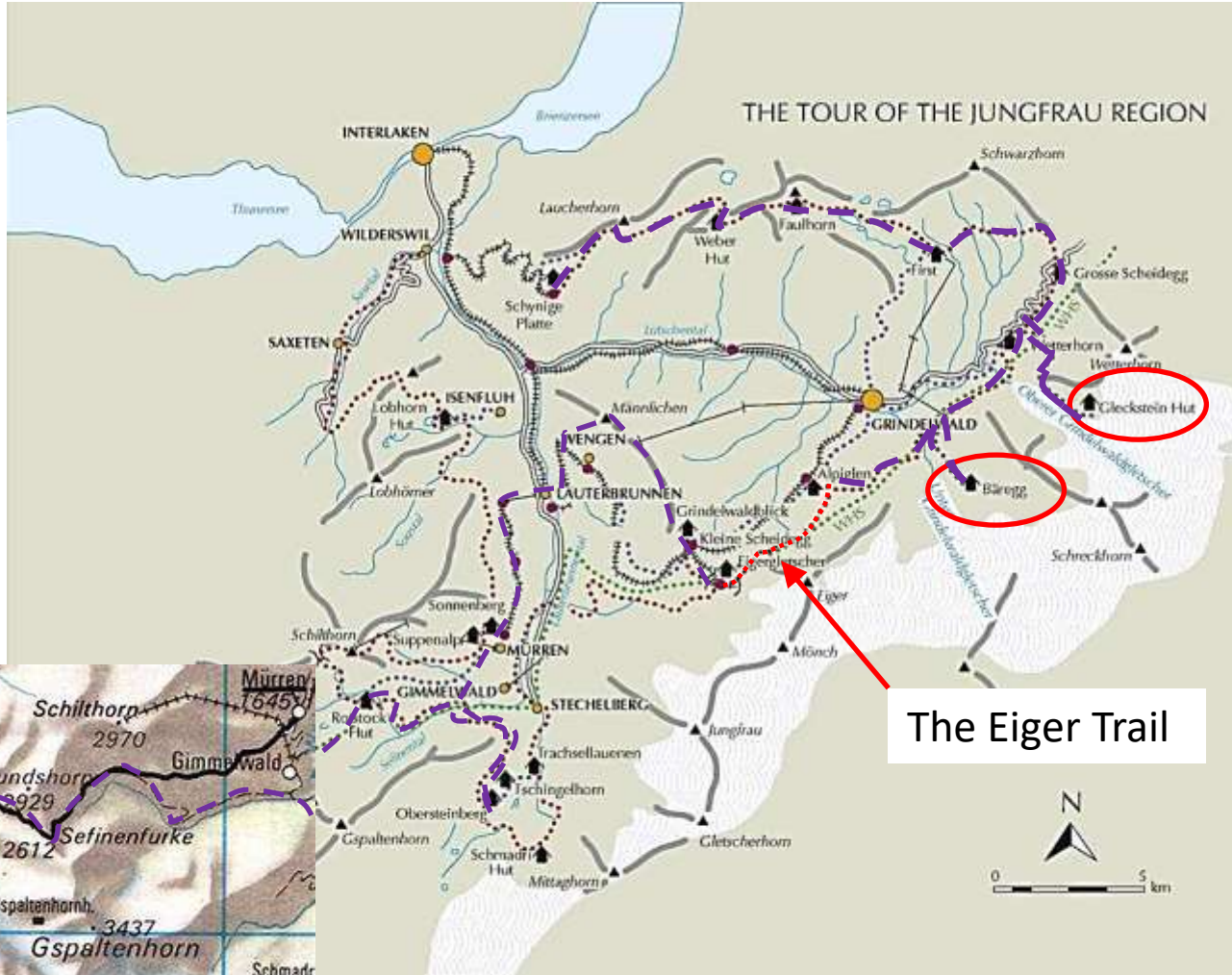
*“The Bernese Oberland....where mighty, snow-capped mountains tumble down into lush, green valleys. Waterfalls spill over the cliffs, cows and their musical bells wander the fields, charming villages dot the hillsides, and hiking trails connect small hamlets and towns.*

*Located in central Switzerland, the Bernese Oberland is home to some of the most dramatic mountain scenery in all of Europe. For many visitors this region is the highlight of a trip to Switzerland. The alpine views, the cozy, charming villages, and the soaring cable cars create a magical destination.”*

The circled section is called the “Jungfrau Region” after the highest peak in the area!



# Tour of the Jungfrau Region – from Cicerone



## We modified the route:

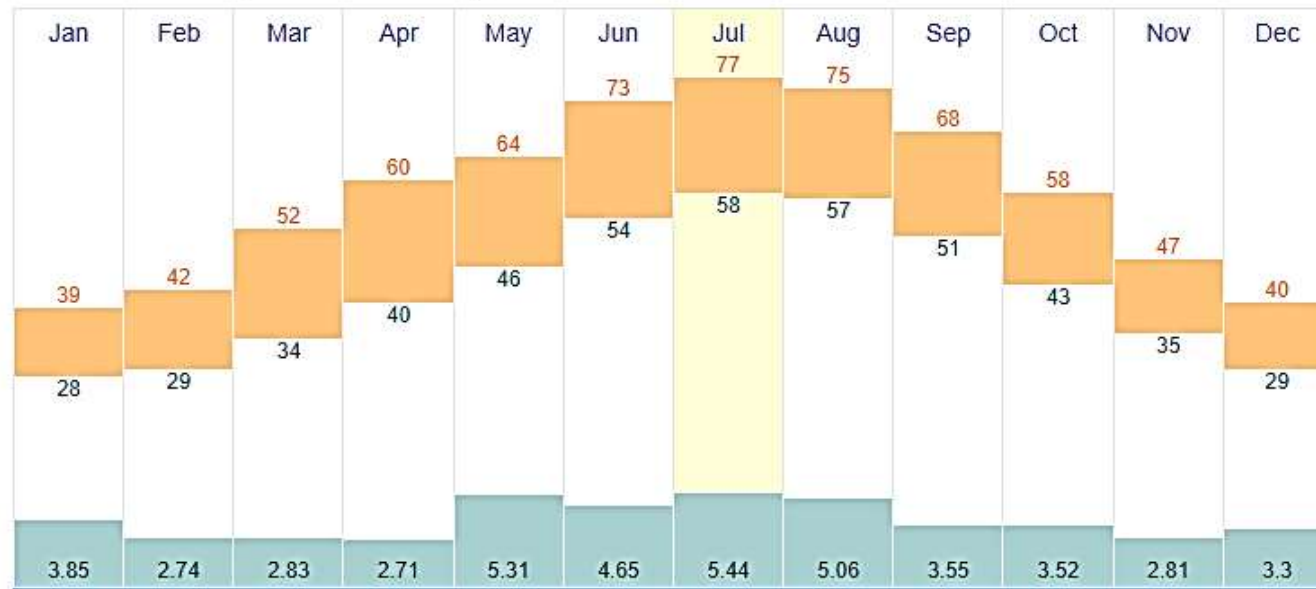
- To spend the night in two high side valleys
- To continue SW past Rotstockhütte to cross two of the highest Swiss passes and visit the glorious Oeschinensee, ending in Kandersteg

# Time of Year to hike the Jungfrau Circuit

- Summer months (June to September): Warmer temperatures and longer daylight hours.
  - June and July: showcase a vibrant display of alpine flowers.
  - Crowds in peak season: Need to plan ahead for accommodations (but after Murren we hardly saw anyone!)
- September: offers stunning foliage and lower rainfall (but mountain huts begin to shut down).
- We chose late July to August for wildflowers and warm temps plus no snow in the high passes

## Annual Weather Averages in Bernese Oberland

Based on weather reports collected during 2012–2021.



## Quick Climate Info

<b>Hottest Month</b>	July (68 °F avg)
<b>Coldest Month</b>	January (34 °F avg)
<b>Wettest Month</b>	July (5.44" avg)
<b>Windiest Month</b>	April (9 mph avg)
<b>Annual precip.</b>	45.77" (per year)

Weather by CustomWeather, © 2024

Getting There: Flight to Zurich, tour day, train to Interlaken

Getting Home: Train Kandersteg to Interlaken, overnight, train to Zurich, flight home



# International Gateway: Zurich, Switzerland



- Largest city in Switzerland – pop 443000
- Founded by the Romans 2000 years ago
- Situated at NW tip of Lake Zurich
- International financial center and transport hub
- Stay within walking distance of Bahnhof



# Next: Interlaken, Switzerland

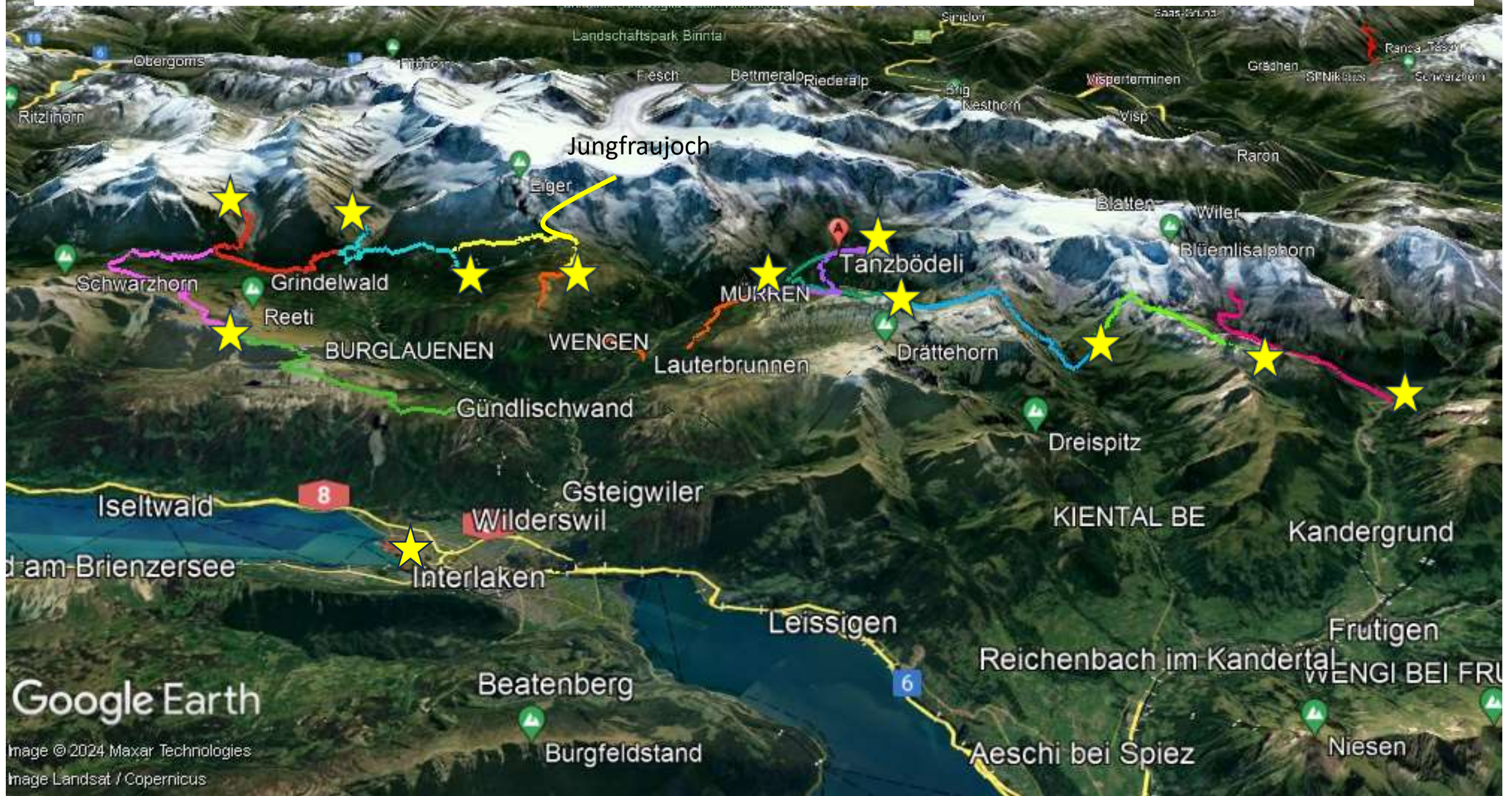


- Gateway to the Bernese Oberland
- Situated between two lakes: Brienz to the east and Thun to the west, and alongside the river Aare which flows between them.
- Built around a monastery in the 1100s
- We took an early morning train from Zurich, then spent a day here to do part of the Hardergrat trail
- Stayed in the outstanding Interlaken Youth Hostel



# Our Mountaineers Global Adventure: 12 days walking + 2 days travel

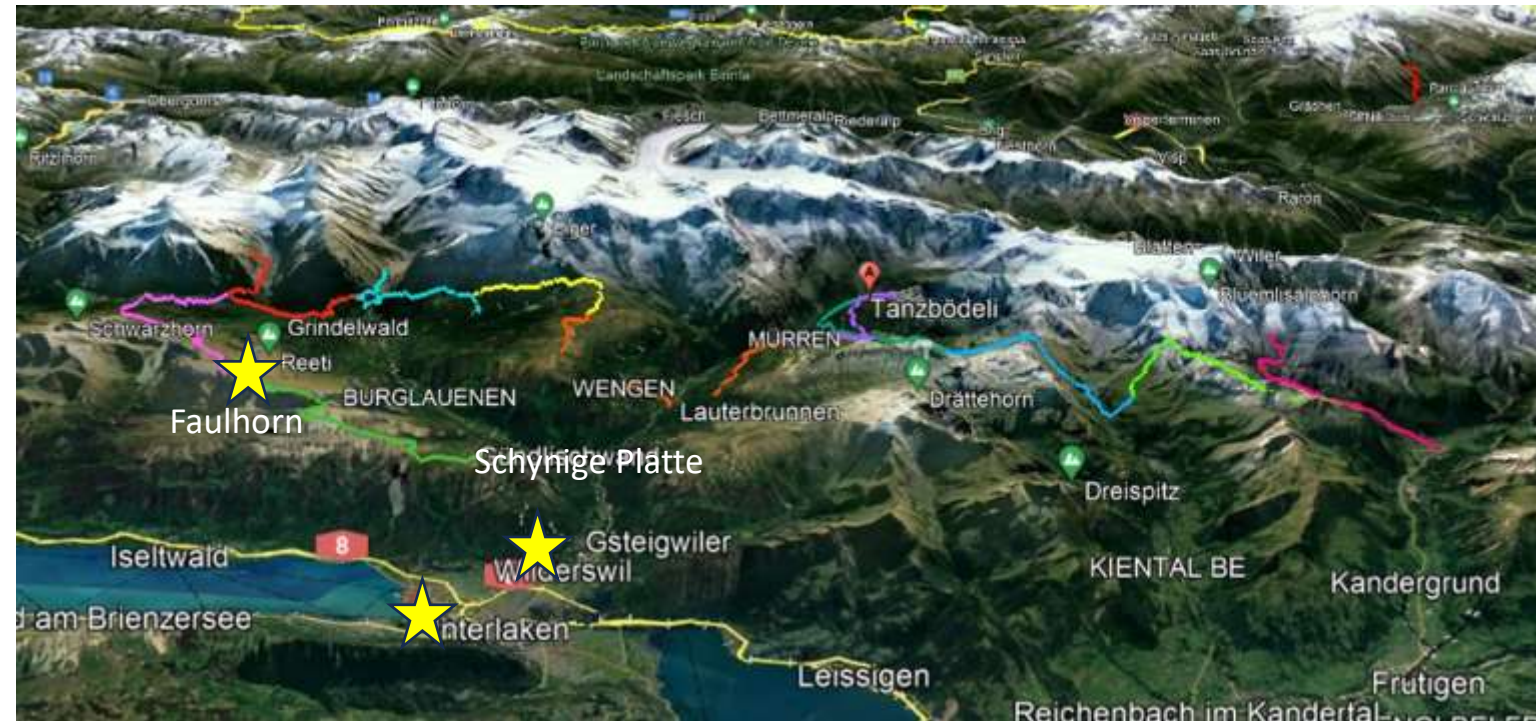
**\*\*99.4 miles, 35383 ft total gain – avg day 8.3 mi, 2949 ft gain\*\***



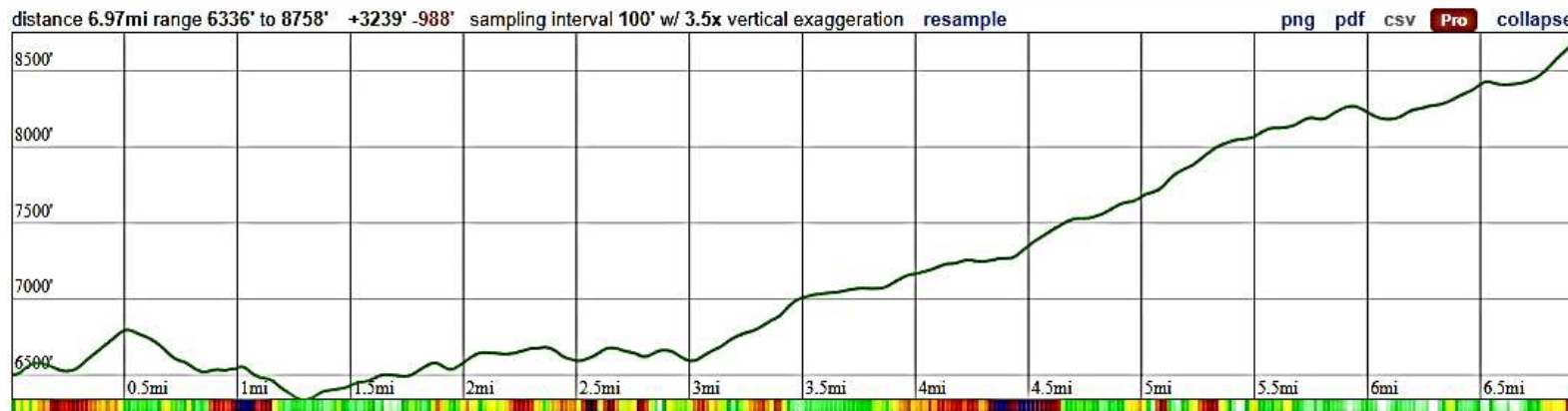
# Our Tour of the Jungfrau trek

DAY	FROM-TO	Daily Miles	Cum Miles	Daily Gain (ft)	Daily Loss (ft)	High Point (ft)	
7/21/2018	Arrive in Zurich						
7/22/2018	Free day in Zurich - walking tour, provision						
7/23/2018	Train to Interlaken - walk the Hardigrut trail to Riggensburg Cutoff	8.0	8.0	1991	4467	5755	
7/24/2018	Early train to Wilderswil, cog rail to Schynige Platte, walk to Faulhorn Hotel	7.0	15.0	3239	988	8758	
7/25/2018	Walk Faulhorn to Gleckstein Hutte	11.6	26.6	3347	4493	8758	
7/26/2018	Walk Glecksteinhutte to Berghaus Baregg	7.5	34.1	2719	4522	7638	
7/27/2018	Walk Berghaus Baregg to Alpighlen	6.0	40.1	2571	3075	5810	
7/28/2018	Walk the Eiger Trail Alpighlen to Grindelwaldblick;	4.9	45.0	2772	1139	7649	
7/29/2018	Train to Jungfrauoch; then walk/Cable cars Grindelwaldblick to Murren	7.9	52.9	1334	2005	11362	
7/30/2018	Walk Murren to Schilthorn & Pitz Gloria - back to Murren	4.7	57.6	4276	25	9660	
7/31/2018	Walk Murren to Obersteinberg via Tanzibodeli	5.7	63.3	3132	2682	7002	
8/1/2018	Walk Obersteinberg to Rotstock Hutte	6.3	69.6	3070	2222	6696	
8/2/2018	Walk Rotstockhutte to Oberi Bundalp via Sefinenfurgga	5.9	75.5	3031	3673	8578	
8/3/2018	Walk Bundalp to Oeschinensee via Hohtürli	6.3	81.8	3254	4019	9119	
8/4/2018	Walk to Oeschiniensee to Frundenhutte, then down to Kandersteg	9.2	91.0	3632	5002	8395	
		91.0		38368			
						7.6	3197

# Day 1. Interlaken → Wilderswil → Schynige Platte → Faulhorn



Day 1. Schynige Platte to Hotel Faulhorn







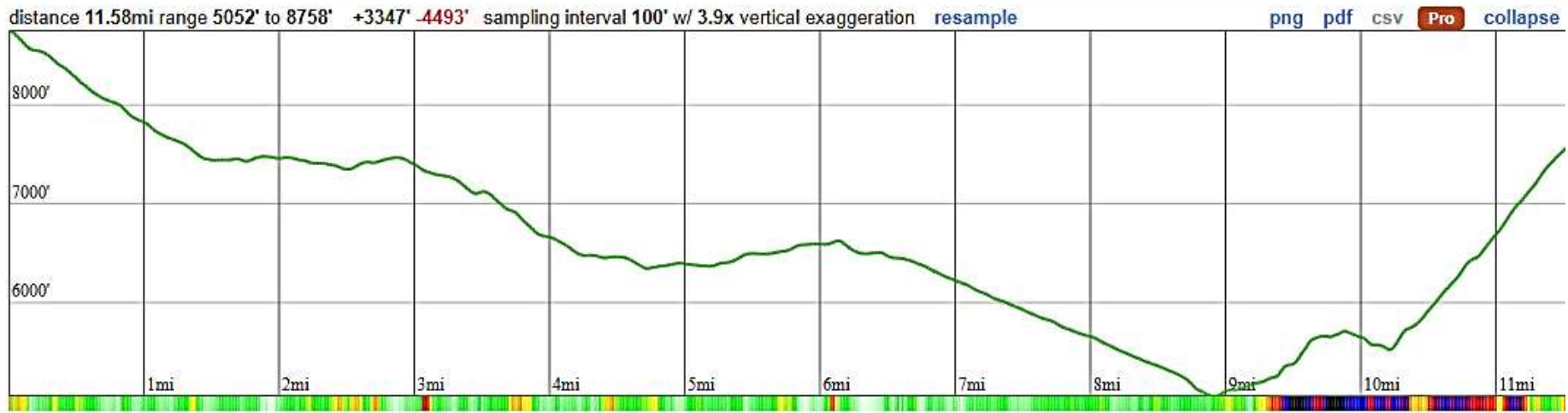




# Day 2. Faulhorn Hotel to Gleckstein Hut



Day 2. Faulhorn Hotel to Gleckstein Hutte













# Day 3. Gleckstein Hut to Berghaus Baregg



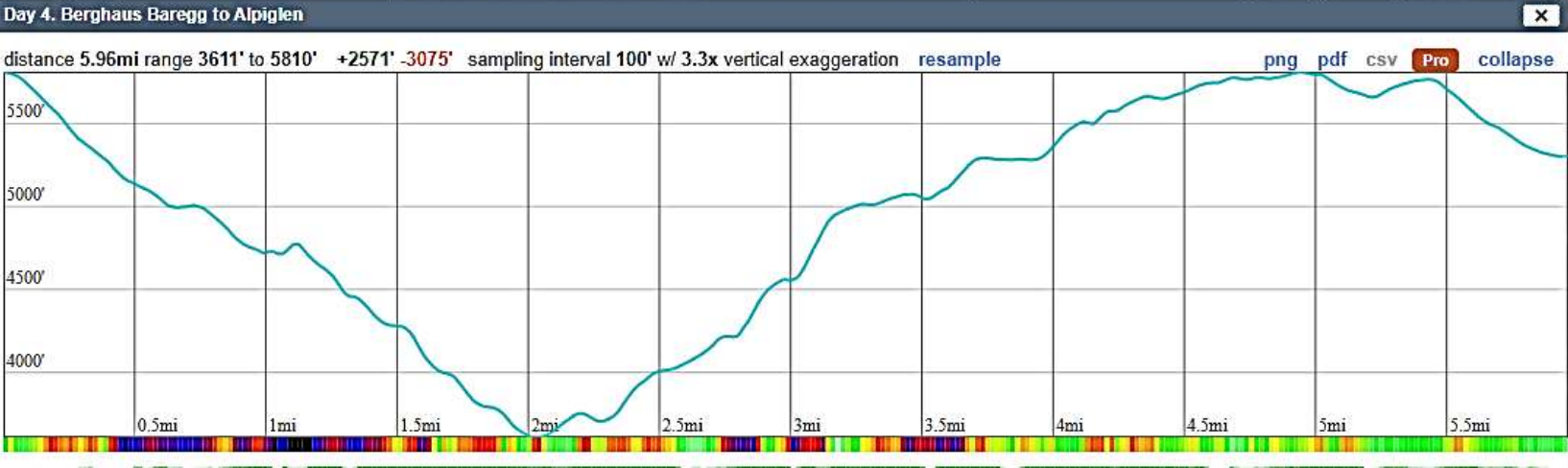








# Day 4. Berghaus Baregg to Alpiglen

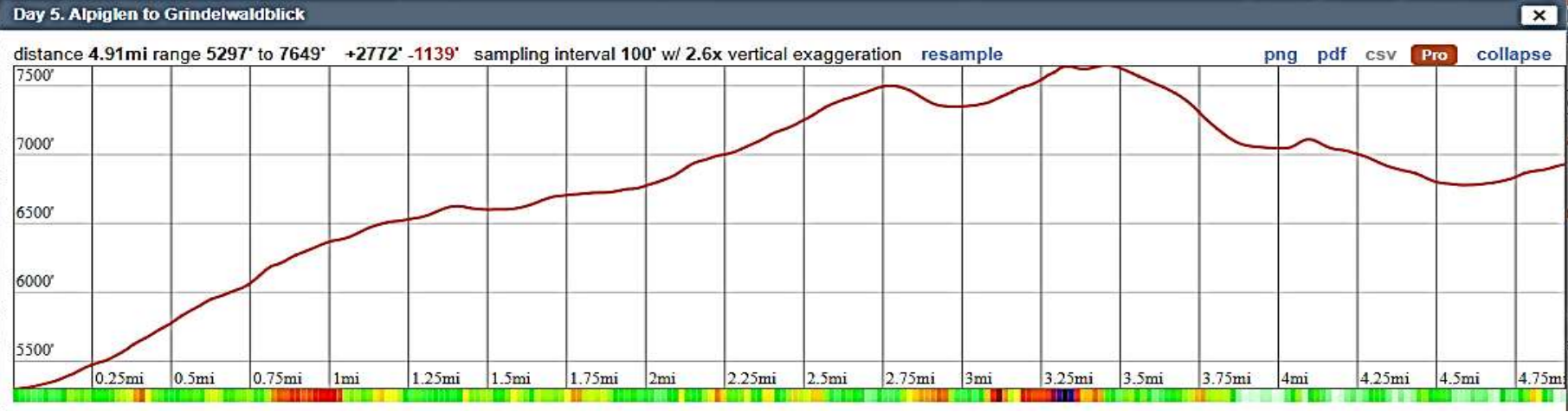
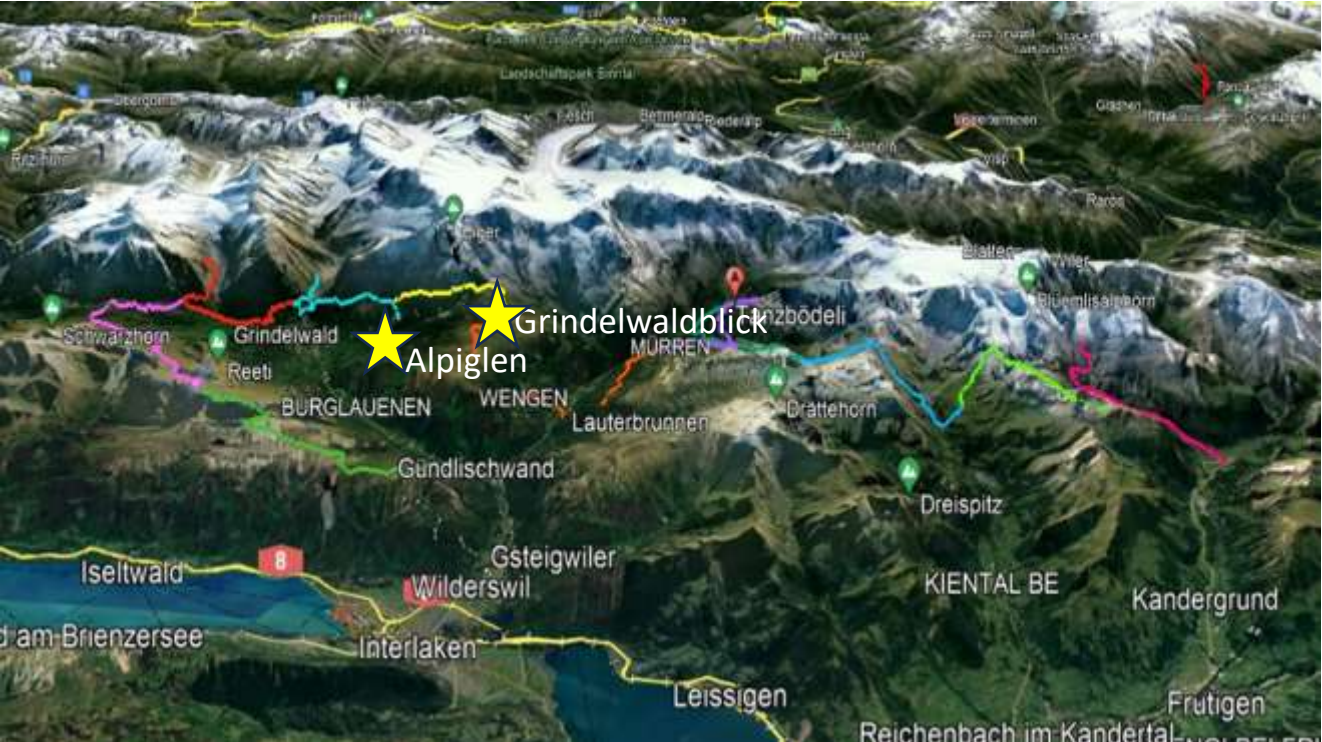








# Day 5. Alpigen to Grindelwaldblick via the Eiger Trail







# Day 6. Train to Jungfrauoch, then walk and cable cars to Murren



7.9 miles walking with 1334 feet of gain (not counting cable cars)  
High point Jungfrauoch 11362 ft (train ride)  
High point walking (Mannlichen) 7692 ft  
Train/ Cable car sections shown in red hash



# Jungfraujoch



Tourist complex on a saddle at 11,362 ft between the Mönch and the Jungfrau, at the top of the longest glacier in Europe. Used by climbers to climb to the top of the Mönch.



Served by a cog railway that runs through a 7km tunnel drilled between 1896 and 1912 through the rock of the Eiger and the Mönch.







**Cable Car Mannlichen  
to Wengen**



**Walk Wengen to  
Lauterbrunnen**



**Cable Car  
Lauterbrunnen to  
Grütschalp**



**Cable Car Lauterbrunnen  
to Grütschalp**



**Walk Grütschalp to  
Mürren**



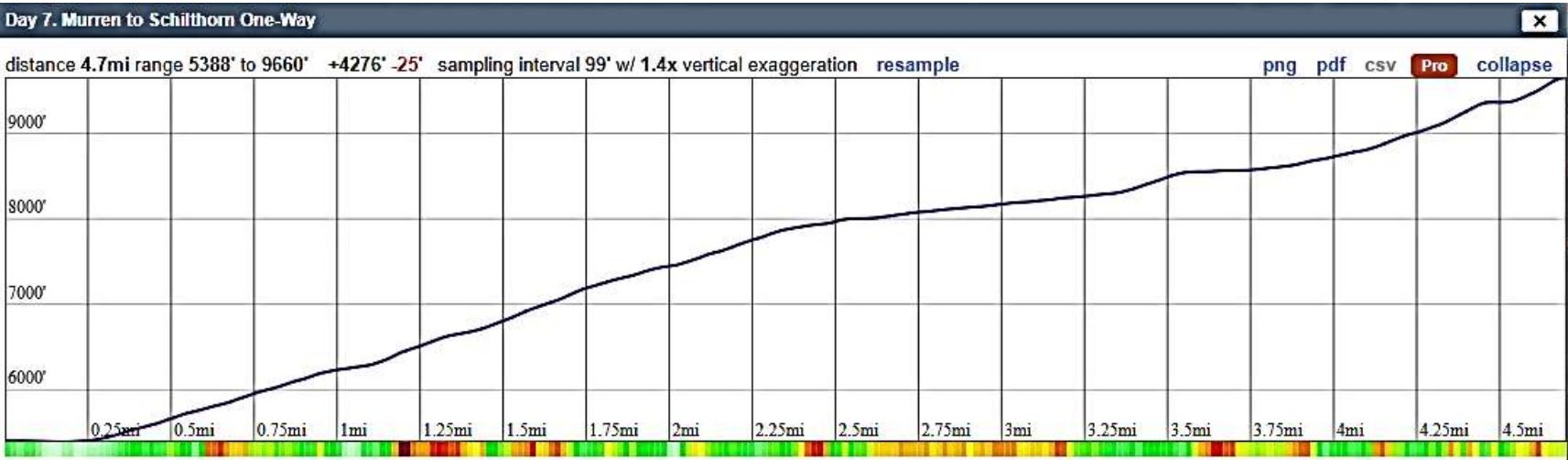
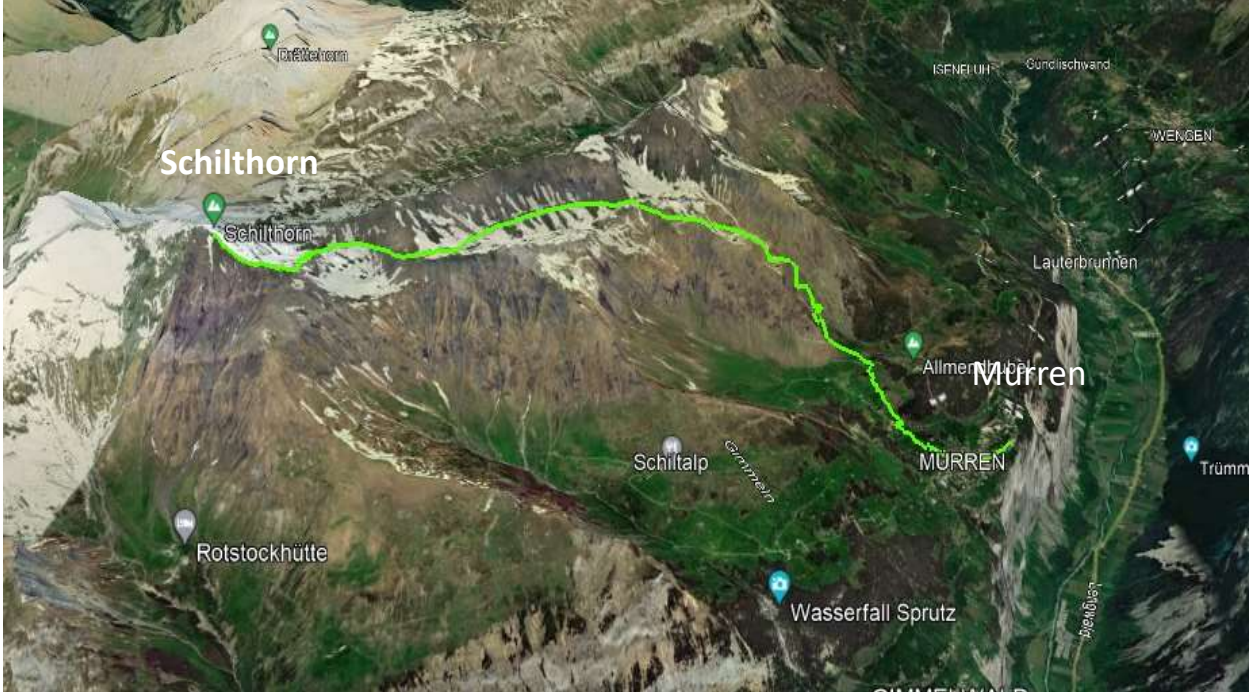
**Coming into Mürren**

# Mürren

- Traditional Swiss village, located at 5372 feet elevation
- Commanding view of the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau across the deep Lauterbrunnen valley
- Not accessible by public road (cable car – cog railway, private roads/paths).
- Year-round population of 450, 2,000 hotel beds.

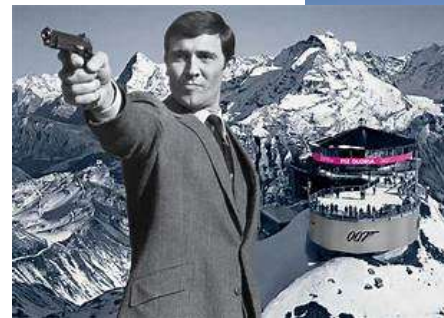


# Day 7. Dayhike from Murren to Schilthorn & Piz Gloria – cable car return



# Schilthorn and Piz Gloria

- The **Schilthorn** (9,744 ft) is the highest peak in the area and offers views all the way to Mont Blanc
- Can be reached by hiking trails (4.7 mi, 4276' gain) or cable cars from Murren
- Traditional start for the world's longest downhill ski race, the "Inferno," which started in 1928 - largest amateur alpine ski race in the world.
- The revolving restaurant at the summit, *Piz Gloria*, was featured in the 1969 James Bond movie *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*.



# Day 8. Murren to Berghotel Obersteinberg via Tanzibodeli



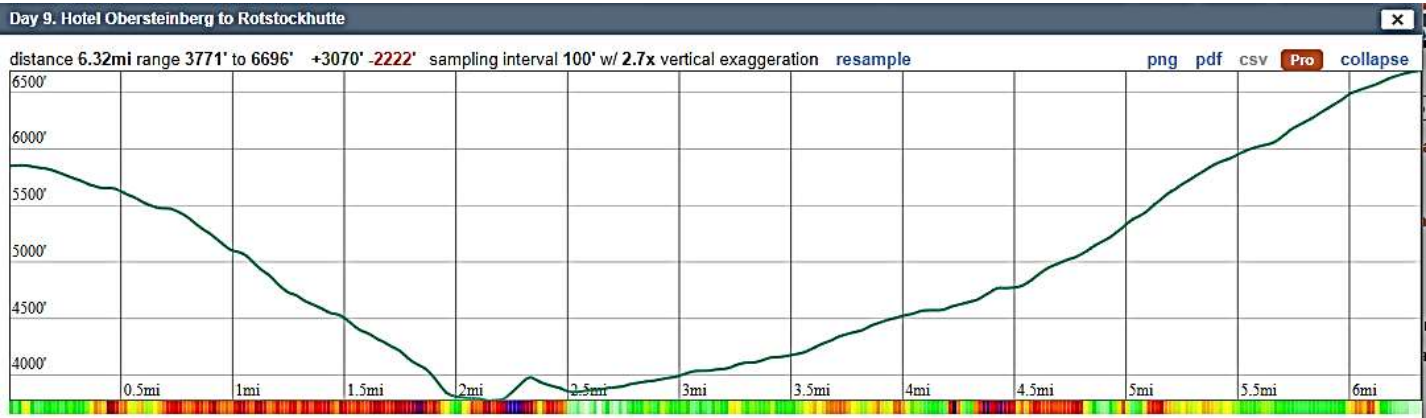
This is the point where our Tour of the Jungfrau diverges from the standard TJR route, which goes south from Murren along the ridge.







# Day 9. Obersteinberg to Rotstockhutte

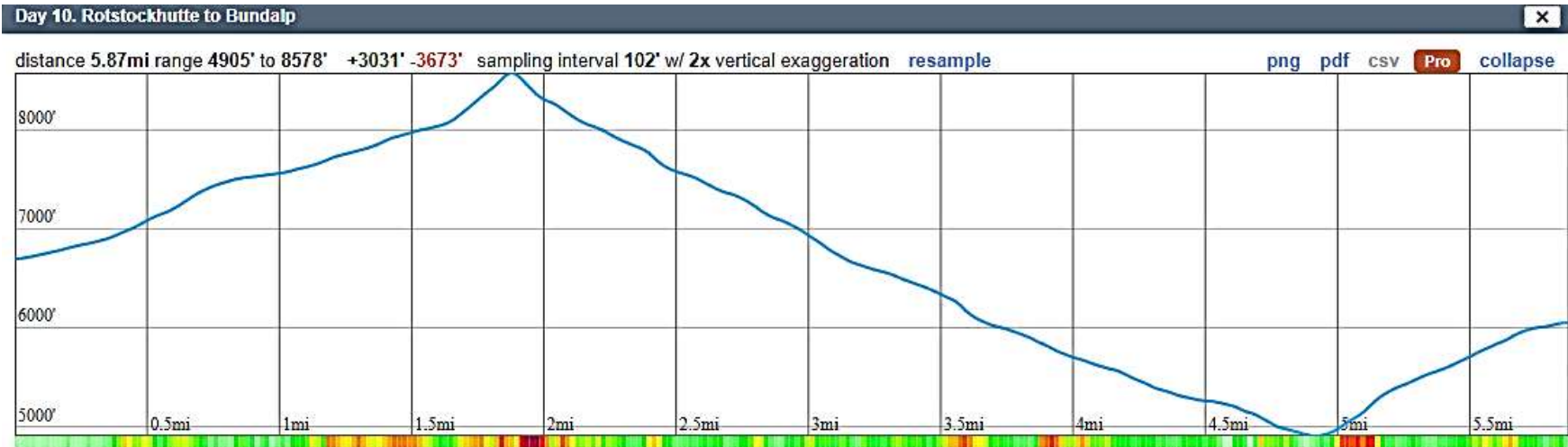








# Day 10. Rotstockhutte to Berghaus Bundalp





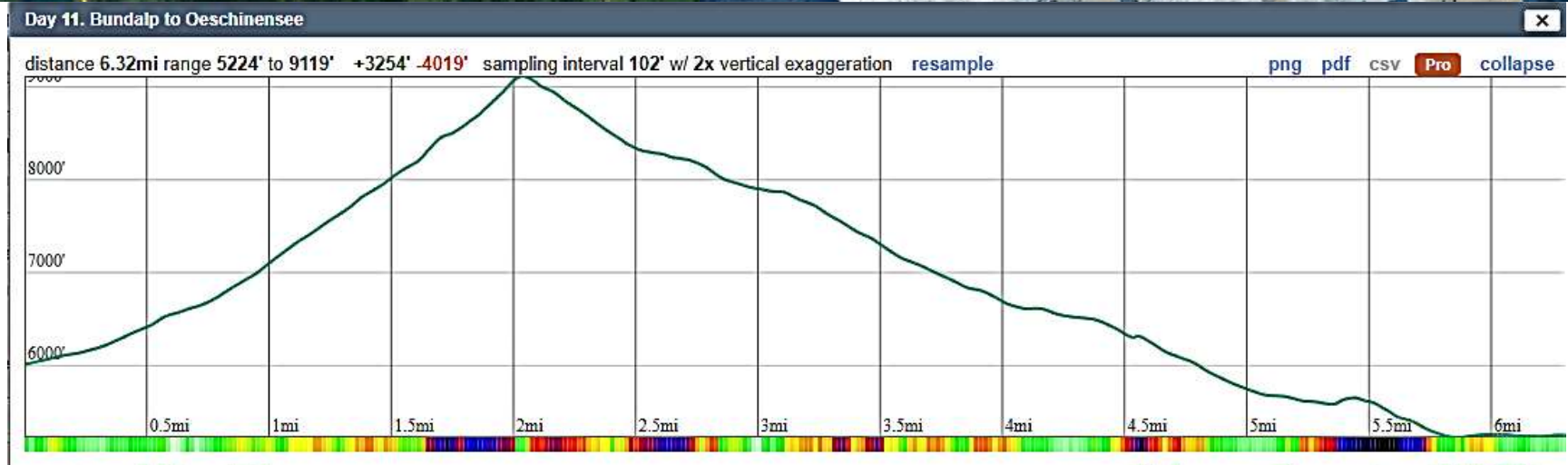








# Day 11. Berghaus Bundalp to Oeschinensee via Hohturli

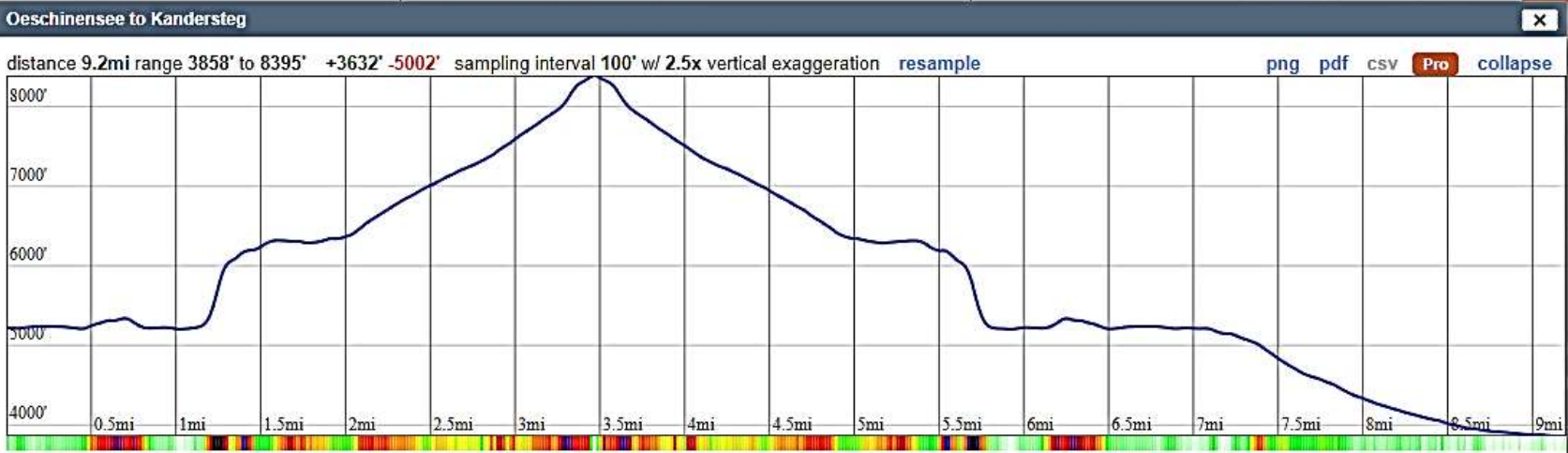








# Day 12. Dayhike to Fründenhütte, then down to Kandersteg & train to Interlaken











# Summary

- Extraordinary views and immersion into the rural life of the Swiss countryside
- Significant physical challenge level depending on your itinerary.
- Hikers in the Alps find exposure, fixed cables and ladders to be 'normal' and don't even call it out.
- If you're willing to 'rough it' at mountain huts and remote guest houses, you'll get closer to the high places and the real rural life
  - *but also leave time to enjoy some of the iconic towns!*
- Switzerland is expensive.
- Camping is generally not acceptable (but a few people do it).

# Trail Difficulty

- All trails well formed and well marked with Swiss trail markers.
- Some very steep ascents and descents on shale – steepest parts have steps.
- There are cables on the most exposed sections (climbing to Glecksteinhutte, Schilthorn).
- Ladders, steep steps and cable sections are considered ‘normal in the Alps and are often not even called out. (Grandmas and kids do them!)

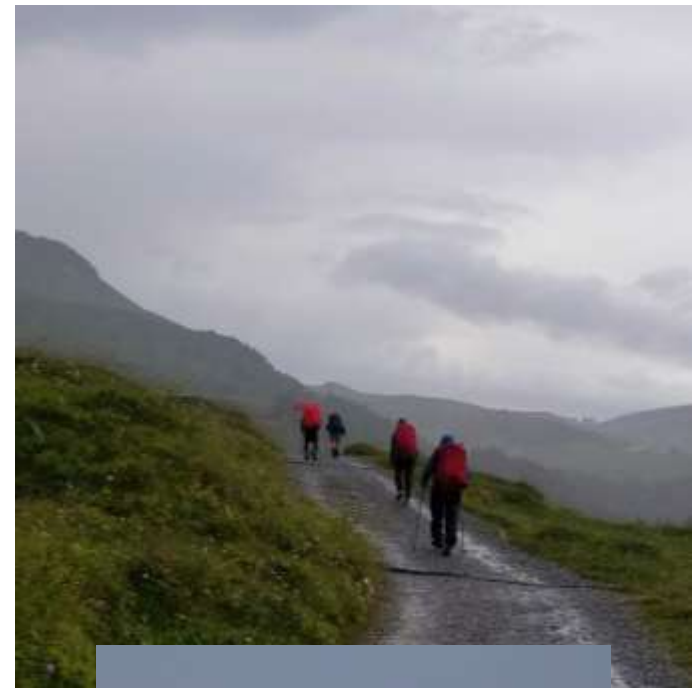
None of the terrain rises to the level of a T3 scramble (though there are some great Via Ferratas to be found near the route).

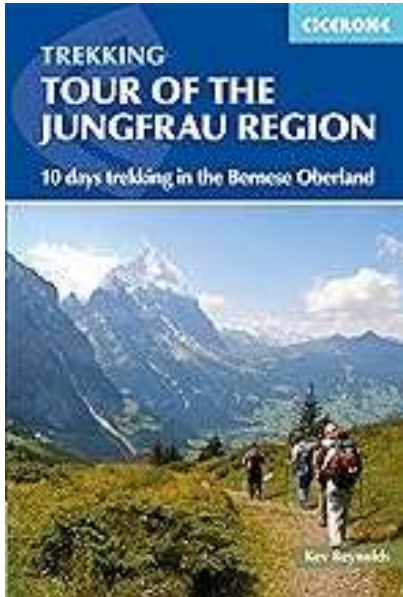
Signage is excellent - but lists hours and not distances between places – and assumes a brisk hiking pace!



# Weather

- I've had good luck with Meteoblue as a weather source in Europe, and I also use the Premium Weather app on my InReach.
- This part of the Alps tends to be wetter than other parts, and July-August are some of the wettest. Visibility can be poor, with fog and rain. Always be ready with an alternative to bail out – some of the high routes would be dangerous if you couldn't see around you.
  - *Plenty of post-buses, trains and cable cars but also very remote sections without them*
- September can be drier but you can also get freak snowstorms that block your path across the high sections. By mid September many mountain huts and restaurants are closing.
- Summer days can get hot and routes are often quite exposed to sun.





## Guidebook and Maps

- I used the Cicerone Guide 'Tour of the Jungfrau Region', plus the Guide "The Alpine Passes Route" for the reroute from Kleine Scheidegg to Oeschinensee and Kandersteg.
- Paper map from Swisstopo #5004 Berner Oberland - \$35 on Amazon
- Alpenventures Unguided provided turn by turn directions and paper maps, and also provided daily online routes on the OutdoorActive app
- There is an excellent Swiss Topo layer on Gaia Pro, and all the trails are well represented.

## Hut Information and Reservations

- I used Alpenventures Unguided (Brittany Haas) to book and pay for our huts, but it's also possible to book yourself by email or a few online (some huts are hard to get in touch with and require cash payment on arrival)
- If there are just a couple of you, you can usually call ahead from the previous lodging or even walk-up; but in popular tourist spots or if you have more people I'd advise booking well ahead

# Accommodations

- WONDERFUL mountain huts and hotels, well situated for the route.
- Conventional hotels in larger towns; some huts and guesthouses have private rooms available (shared bath), others offer Matzenlager or bunk style shared rooms sized for 4 to 20 people
- Huts may not have hot showers; charging facilities may be very limited; most have wifi but not all
- Huts generally offer full or half-board (bed + B-L-D or just bed + B and D)
- Some hotels and guest houses in Switzerland are closed a certain day of the week



# Accommodation Pricing and Payments



- Hotels expensive in Zurich and other major cities – we paid \$220 for a double-room in 2016
- Double rooms at youth hostel in Interlaken (without dinner) \$150 per room – similar for Kandersteg, more in Murren
- Huts and mountain guest houses \$60-90 per night per person for shared 2-5 person bunk or matzenlager rooms with half board (breakfast and dinner) – lunches were ~\$20 more
  - *Least expensive was to book a bunk or mattress in a shared open dorm (sometimes in a room above the cow-barn!)*
  - *Separate price for Alpine club members in mountain huts – not hotels. Reciprocity for other European Alpine clubs*
- It can be very difficult to pay for some of the more remote mountain huts and hotels – credit cards don't always work – local staff may not respond or have an online payment mechanism (this is getting better). We used a booking agent to facilitate this.





# Transportation

- MANY options along most stretches except the most remote
  - *Postbus*
  - *Some trains (yes, they really are as efficient and on-time as you have heard!)*
  - *Many cable cars convenient to cut out long dull grueling climbs and descents - \$10-50 one way*
- Trains can also be a bit expensive, especially for scenic cog railways:
  - *Zurich-Interlaken \$100 RT*
  - *Kandersteg-Interlaken \$30 one way*
  - *Shynige Platte cog rail \$35 one way*
  - *Jungfrauoch \$125 RT with entry to the complex*
- The Swiss Half-Fare card – 190 CHF = \$207 USD
  - *Offers travel for half price on all SBB routes and most other railways as well as on many boats and Postbuses and some cable cars.*
  - *Do the math – what transport will you be using and does it pay to get the card?*



# Food

- Huts generally offer breakfast, picnic lunch and dinner, plus drinks and desserts
  - *Dinners are hearty and filling – often salad even at the huts – but heavy to meat, cheese, pasta, Rosti. Vegetarians should be fine; vegans and gluten-free may need to bring some of your own foods from home*
  - *Hot breakfasts plus yogurt and cereal options*
  - *Packed lunches are often just a piece of bread with a slice of cheese and/or meat. Bring your own condiments and a knife!*
  - *Water may not be potable but bottled water will be available if not (bring a filter, save the planet!)*
- Restaurant meals are excellent in towns but can be very expensive in Switzerland!
- Can find pastry, snacks and drinks at mountain restaurants along the trail
- Charming small grocery stores in most villages





## Gear

- Some steep mountain terrain so grippy stable footwear and trekking poles are very important, but not much boulder-hopping
  - *Water shoes not necessary.*
  - *Be ready to bring microspikes for snowfield crossings, especially early summer (but call ahead – may not be needed)*
- Trails are high and exposed to sun so GOOD sun protection (reflective umbrellas were a godsend!)
- But also be ready for days of rain, even cold and snow at highest points or if later in the season
- Huts and guest houses will require a sleep sack (and you may want your own pillow-cover)
  - *Bring your own towel, soap and washcloth, and modest sleeping clothing*
  - *Hut shoes usually provided but heavy socks also work*
  - *Earplugs are ESSENTIAL! Huts are noisy, with people following their own schedules and snoring in the bunk rooms is common . Be quiet when departing early!*

## Gear (continued)

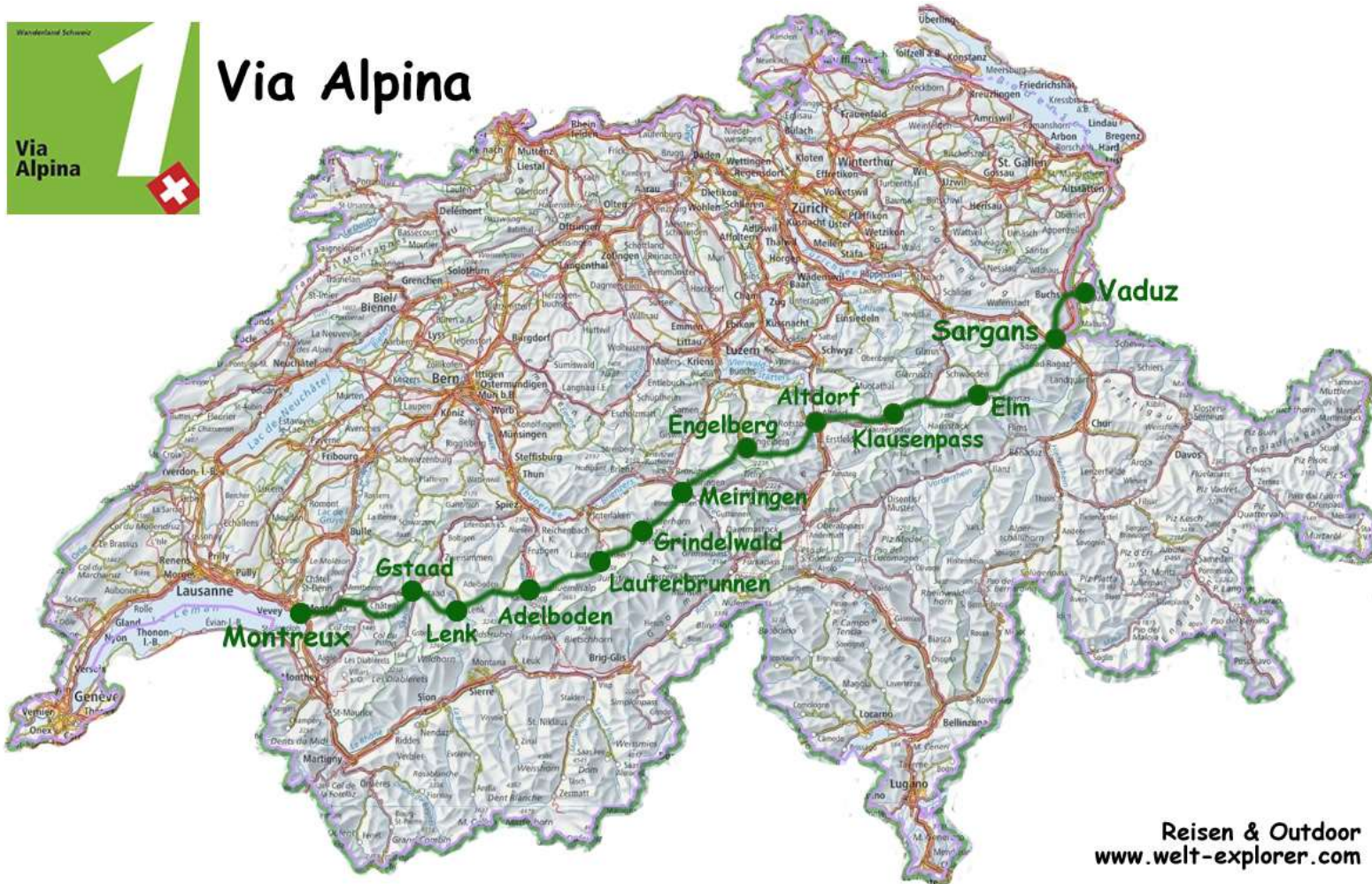
- No stove or gas are needed (unless you want coffee before 7AM!)
- Luggage can be transferred in some places, but expensive and limits where can stay. We left our 'town bags' at our hotel in Interlaken (train stations also have storage).
  - *Mostly you'll want to carry everything you need. But you don't need a lot!!*
  - *We kept our packs to ~25#*
  - *Bring folding bucket or Ziploc, travel clothesline, soap to wash and hang your clothes*



# The Swiss Via Alpina – paired Global Adventures, coming to you in summer 2025!



## Via Alpina



**Stage 1: Sargans to Grindelwald**  
12 days, 96.9 miles, 30377 ft gain  
7 high passes – max elev. 7514

**Stage 2: Grindelwald to Montreux**  
12 days, 96 miles, 32957 ft gain  
8 high passes – max elev. 8576

**Combined: 23 days plus travel**  
Hotels, guest houses and hostels



*QUESTIONS?*