

Bernese Oberland Haute Route - West

Trip Code: WBO

Version: WBO Bernese Oberland Haute Route - West



MOUNTAINEER



GUIDED GROUP



CHALLENGING



HIGHLIGHTS

- Complete a high-level traverse of Switzerland's Bernese Oberland from east to west
- Ascend six 3000 metre peaks, including the Wildhorn at 3248m
- Enjoy breathtaking views of the Eiger, Matterhorn and Mont Blanc
- Led by expert IFMGA guides, this is a perfect first mountaineering adventure
- Combine with [Bernese Oberland - East](#) to complete the full traverse

- [FREE Equipment hire worth £100 is available for this holiday](#)

AT A GLANCE

- 6 days trekking and climbing
- Max altitude 3747 metres
- Join at Plan Morier - Les Diablerets, End in Kandersteg

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- 7 Breakfasts
- 7 Dinners
- 2 nights Hotel
- 5 nights Mountain Hut / Refuge

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

This trek through the heart of the Western Bernese Oberland offers challenging walking, spectacular scenery, small and comfortable mountain refuges, and up to six summits above 3000 metres. This is a wild area, penetrated only on foot in summer or skis in winter. Less frequented than its southern regional neighbour - the Valais Alps - there are outstanding views of the French and Swiss Alps extending from Mont Blanc to the Matterhorn. During this superb high Alpine traverse, we tackle several technically easy trekking summits including Les Diablerets, Wildstrubel, the Arpelistock and the region's highest, the Wildhorn at 3248 metres. There are classic views of the mountains of the Bernese Oberland including the Finisteraarhorn, Eiger, Jungfrau and Monch and to the south we can see the Matterhorn, Weisshorn and Dent Blanche, to name just a few of the 4000m Alpine giants.

Away to the west we can also see Mont Blanc. This superb glacier trek from offers an excellent introduction to Alpine summits and short sections of glacial travel as well as providing one of the best 'off piste' traverses in the Alps. This trek can also be combined with our Bernese Oberland Haute Route - East, to create a two-week 'integrale' Haute Route across the Bernese Oberland.

Is this holiday for you?

This is a demanding trek involving real mountain travel. We generally follow good trails to the snowline. Trekking above the snowline will involve snowslope climbing and glacier travel, where ropes, crampons and an ice-axe will be used. We will also encounter sections of easy scrambling on rock and walking on scree. We average 6 to 8 hours walking each day, with some longer days and challenging but technically easy climbs. A good level of fitness is required for this holiday. Previous experience of walking in crampons is useful but not a pre-requisite. The group will be led by English-speaking IFMGA guides and guiding is at a ratio of 1:6.

Please be aware that routes in the high glaciated mountain regions are subject to changing conditions and difficulties. The Alpine Guides may need to make changes to your planned route at very short notice.

Itinerary

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DAY 1

Meet at the group hotel in Les Diablerets.

Meet at the hotel in Les Diablerets. The holiday begins with the evening meal. Our guide will meet us in the evening, for an informal chat about the week ahead. This is also a chance for our guide to check out your clothing and gear. After this, it will be time to sit down to dinner.

Meals: **D**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 2

Cable car to Sex Rouge (2945m), climb Les Diablerets (3212m) and descend to Cabane Prarochet (2555m).

After breakfast at our hotel, we have a transfer of 20 minutes on a winding road which climbs to the Col du Pillon at 1546 metres. From here, we take the cable car to the Sex Rouge (2940m) where we begin our traverse of the Western Bernese Oberland. A short downhill section leads onto the Glacier de Tsanfleuron, where we will have a brief introduction to the techniques of glacier travel and the use of crampons. We then make the 2-hour ascent to our first peak, the Summit des Diablerets (3209m), a great viewpoint. We descend, initially by the same route and continue to our overnight stop at the Cabane de Prarochet (2555m), a traditional stone-built Swiss Alpine hut with extensive views over the Bernese Alps including the Matterhorn.

Meals: **B D**



Accommodation
Mountain Hut / Refuge



Ascent
560M



Descent
1030M



Time
5 - 6 hours walking








Distance
9KM

DAY 3

Trek across the Col du Sanetch (2252m) & climb the Arpelistock (3035m). Descend to Gelten Hut (2003m).

Today we descend through spectacular karst scenery to the green of the Col du Sanetch (2252m) on the watershed between the river Rhine (flowing north to the North Sea) and the river Rhone (heading south to the Mediterranean). From this pass, we climb a long shale ridge, the Arete d'Arpille, with great views of Mont Blanc and the 4000-metre peaks of the Swiss Valais Alps. As we gain height, the path becomes rocky, clinging to the south-west slopes of the Arpelistock (3035m). It takes us around 3 hours to reach this summit, another good viewpoint, with the Alps of the Eastern Oberland now coming into view. From the summit, we descend in a north-westerly direction towards a small col which we cut off and head for the Gelten Glacier. Avoiding the ice on the left of the glacier, we reach a second col at 2685 metres after a section of snow and/or rocky down scrambling. Finally, we descend into the tranquil Furggetali Valley, crossing scree slopes and the remnants of an old glacier, to reach the Gelten Hut. This small and friendly establishment set in Alpine meadows and surrounded by magnificent waterfalls, has good food, draught beer, showers and hot and cold running water. 8 to 9 hours of walking, on rocky terrain with little sign of a path at times.

Meals: **B D**





	Accommodation Mountain Hut / Refuge		Ascent 820M		Descent 1370M		Time 8 - 9 hours walking
	Distance 13KM						

DAY 4

Trek over Col du Brochet (2753m) and Col des Audannes (2886m) to the Cabane des Audannes (2508m).

After an early breakfast, we leave the hut on a well-marked trail taking us into the hidden Rottal Valley. The ground is level to start with and there is a massive waterfall on the left. We then climb a steep grassy moraine on a good trail, branching off at around 2300 metres at a large rock marked Col du Brochet. Crossing a river, we climb via scree slopes and rocky terraces to the Gelten Glacier at about 2600 metres. In suitable conditions, there is the opportunity to climb the glacier to the summit of the Geltenhorn (3065m). Traversing the glacier to the Col du Brochet, we now cross to the 'Rhone side' of the watershed. Beyond this pass we descend rocky terrain to the Grand Gouilles and from here pick up a good path that steeply zig-zags up to the Col des Audannes. The final ascent to this pass is steep and loose but is aided by some fixed ropes and ladders. We then drop down for close to 400 metres through some amazing geological terrain to the Cabane des Audannes. This is a modern, private hut, owned by local villagers built in a stunning location above the Lac des Audannes. It has cold water only and no showers.

Meals: **B D**

	Accommodation Mountain Hut / Refuge		Ascent 1350M		Descent 850M		Time 7 - 8 hours walking
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Distance
11KM

DAY 5

Climb the Wildhorn (3747m). Descend to Plan des Roses (2350m) and trek to the Wildstrubel Hut (2791m).

This is the big day and an early start is essential! We leave the hut by a short descent, which takes us across the north side of the Lac des Audannes and gives us easy access to a steep zig-zag trail that leads to the Col des Eaux Froides (2640m). From here, we leave all beaten trails behind and scramble up low-angled limestone slabs until we reach the glacier at about 2900 metres. Donning our crampons, we ascend easy glacial slopes and reach the rocky summit of the Wildhorn (3247m) around 3 hours from the hut. Great views yet again from this, the highest summit in the western Bernese Oberland. After a summit celebration and photography, we descend the glacier in a north-easterly direction to an exit point at around 2800 metres. From here, we descend into the 'Valley of the Rocks' and this, eventually, leads us to join the main marked trail coming down from the Schnidejoch. A short respite from the rough terrain follows, with the beautiful Lake Tenchet below us, before a series of limestone pavements demand our attention once again. Finally, we reach the Plan des Roses (2350m) and have a section of straightforward walking along this long green valley, before a final 'sting in the tail' in the form of the 400 metre pull up to the Wildstrubel Hut (2791m). Here, we get a warm welcome from the guardian of the hut. This hut has washing facilities but no drinking water. Originally built in the 1920s it has been cleverly modernised to provide up-to-date accommodation whilst preserving many of the original features of early twentieth century huts.

Meals: **B D**



Accommodation
Mountain Hut / Refuge



Ascent
1300M



Descent
1000M



Time
9 - 11 hours walking



Distance
15KM






DAY 6

Climb the Wildstrubel (3243m) and the Mittlerer Gipfel (3244m). Descend Cabane Lammeren (2501m).

We have a short climb up to the Weisshorn Pass, followed by a descent to the mass of ice known as Plaine Morte. Putting on crampons, we cross this huge flat 'snow lake' for close to 4 kilometres, to the base of the south-west ridge of the Wildstrubel (3243m). The climb of our penultimate peak now follows a good trail on shaley terrain with occasional snow patches to the summit. Time to relax on the summit and take in the view which extends all the way from Mont Blanc to the Matterhorn. Of equal attraction to us will be the nearby Wildhorn. We now descend easy snow slopes for approximately 70 metres to a col

where we begin the climb to our second summit of the day and the final peak of the holiday, the Mittlerer Gipfel (3244m). From this summit, we make an exciting descent of the crevassed Wildstrubel glacier, leading to moraine on the left bank. Off the glacier we pick up a good trail which takes us down to the 'new' Lammeren Hut - the old one (70 metres away) was destroyed by a winter avalanche in 1990. This is a lovely place to relax, with a good sun terrace and views of the Balmhorn and Bietchhorn.

Meals: **B D**

	Accommodation Mountain Hut / Refuge		Ascent 700M		Descent 1000M		Time 6 - 7 hours walking
	Distance 13KM						

DAY 7

Trek across the Gemmi pass (2270m) to the Daubensee (2205m) and take a cable car down to Kandersteg.

A long but easy walk takes us down towards Kandersteg and the end of our journey. First descending to Lammerenboden and passing close to the ski lifts and hotel of the Gemmipass (2322m), we continue along the west shore of the Daubensee. At the northern end of this lake, we pick up a 4WD trail which takes us to a coffee stop at the Schwarenbach Berg Hotel. From here, we descend further to the wooded area of Arven Wald and the grazing pastures of the Spittelmatte. A final short, easy ascent leads to the cable car at Sunnbeil and we take this ride down to the floor of the Kandersteg Valley, with impressive rock faces on all sides.

Meals: **B D**

	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 175M		Descent 1500M		Time 4 - 5 hours walking		Distance 18KM
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DAY 8

Departure day

The holiday ends after breakfast.

Meals: **B**

Holiday Information

What's Included

- Professional IFMGA qualified guide(s) on a 1:6 ratio
- All accommodation as described
- Meals as detailed in the Meal Plan
- All transfers required by the itinerary (except airport transfers)

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Airport transfers
- Some meals as detailed in the Meal Plan
- Cable cars and uplift fees
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

TRAVEL TO YOUR DESTINATION

In some cases you may choose to take a ferry and/or train to your holiday start and end destination. Please see further information on [Travelling by Train](#).

If flying from the UK there are low cost airlines available to the start and from the end of your holiday.

To benefit from full financial protection, ease your holiday planning, and avoid dealing with airlines, we can book scheduled flights from the UK as part of a flight inclusive package. Scheduled flights are usually more expensive than low cost alternatives, however potentially less stressful if your flight is cancelled or delayed. If you book flights through KE Adventure Travel we will [offset the carbon of your flight](#).

Day 1

Meet at the hotel in Les Diablerets.

You should plan to arrive before 6pm on day 1 of the holiday itinerary.

There is a rail station in the airport and a regular train service to Les Diablerets via Aigle.

Day 8

The holiday ends in Kandersteg and there is a regular train service from here to Geneva.

We will provide hotel contact details and an emergency number for all clients, as well as (if requested) directions for those travelling by car.

Meal Plan

All breakfasts and all dinners are included in the holiday price. Packed lunches or hill-food can be bought in the huts. On some days there will also be the possibility of purchasing a late hot lunch when arriving at our overnight halt. We recommend you allow 20 CHF per day for packed lunches plus an additional 30 CHF per day for hot drinks and bottled water. Beer, wine and snacks are available in all the huts.

Food & Water

When in the towns and villages all tap water is drinkable. In mountain huts there is usually not a sustainable drinking water supply. Water in plastic bottles is brought in to the hut. All huts have a recycling point. If you have to purchase water in plastic bottles please buy the largest bottle you can so as to use less plastic. Please take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) to treat your water if you can fill from a local stream. Bottled water is not provided. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles. Local authorities are working to find solutions to using plastic water bottles in huts. We monitor the situation carefully for updates.

As you might expect, the food available in restaurants, hotels and even in mountain huts in this part of Switzerland is excellent. Continental breakfasts and 3-course evening meals are included everyday. Lunches and/or hill snacks can be purchased from the mountain huts or sometimes it is possible to buy a late hot lunch if arriving mid afternoon at the hut. Note that the water from taps in the huts is not drinkable. It is possible to fill water bottles with a refreshing weak tea available after breakfast, or bottled mineral water can be purchased (approximately CHF15 for a one and a half litre bottle).

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your diet with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Accommodation

During this trip the group will have a total of 2 nights in simple hotels at the beginning and end of the holiday. Accommodation here is in twin rooms. If you are travelling on your own you will be paired with another single traveller of the same sex. Whilst in the mountains, there are 5 nights spent in mountain huts where accommodation is on a non-segregated, dormitory-style basis. In some high mountain huts, washing facilities are limited. Single rooms are not available.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by an English-speaking IFMGA guide. Guiding is at a ratio of 1:6.

Altitude

This holiday involves going to moderately high altitude. During the course of your trip you will reach altitudes in excess of 2500 metres. Most people will have no difficulty with this level of altitude but before coming on the holiday, we recommend you read the advice on trekking at altitude on our website which can be viewed via the link below. You can also talk to one of our trekking experts if you have any concerns about altitude. www.keadventure.com/page/altitude.html

Spending Money

You should make an allowance for lunches / snacks, drinks etc and the final evening meal in Kandersteg. Beer, wine and soft drinks are available every night (at an additional charge). We estimate that [250 - 350](#) Swiss francs should cover all personal expenses. Please note that this is Switzerland and the unit of currency is the Swiss franc, although Euros will also be accepted in some places. There are cash point facilities at the Airport in Geneva, Les Diablerets and Kandersteg.

Approximately CHF 90 should be budgeted for cable cars - this is in addition to the above amount.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage and a daypack (of around 30 - 40 litres). For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline. Since group members will carry all personal equipment during the trek, it is important to keep the overall weight of this equipment to a minimum. Neither a sleeping bag nor a camping mattress is needed and it should be possible to keep the weight of your pack to under 10kg.

At the start of the holiday you will leave your main bag and travel clothes in the group's hotel in Les Diablerets and these will be transported to your final hotel in Kandersteg. Luggage with wheels can be useful for this holiday.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

Europe

Your passport must meet 2 requirements. It must be:

- less than 10 years old on the day you enter (check the 'date of issue')
- valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the 'expiry date')

For the latest details on visiting countries within the EU or the European Economic Area (EEA), please check the UK Government website

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations.

GHIC / Medical cover

UK residents should carry a free Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). This entitles you to state provided medical treatment when you're visiting an EU country or Switzerland. This is not a substitute for medical travel insurance which is vital when travelling overseas.

Preparing for your Holiday

It makes a lot of sense to spend some time before coming on a trekking or climbing trip getting some additional exercise. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. This is a demanding trek and we suggest that you adopt a weekly exercise regime leading up to your trip. Long days in hill or back-country is the best preparation for the holiday but regular exercise such as jogging, squash and swimming are also good for developing better stamina. Previous experience of using crampons while not essential is very useful. The techniques of glacier travel required for this holiday will be taught as you go.

Climate

The temperatures that we can expect to encounter during the day will be reasonably warm, ranging from 10 to 25 degrees Centigrade. It can be cool in the evenings at our highest overnight stopping places, falling close to freezing point at night. The weather is usually stable during July and August, but mountainous areas do generate their own weather systems and occasional rain and even stormy weather cannot be ruled out. You should be prepared for all eventualities.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- Bernese Alps - Switzerland: A Walker's Guide. Kev Reynolds. Cicerone.

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your pack to a minimum.

You must bring the following items:

- Mountain Boots (see notes below)
- Crampons - MUST be fitted with anti-balling plates*
- Crampon bag* (when hiring crampons a bag is automatically included / can not be hired separately)
- Ice Axe*
- Helmet*
- Mountaineering harness*
- Screw gate karabiner x 1*
- Trekking poles x 2 (with baskets)
- Gaiters
- Socks - walking socks are best (2/3 pairs)

- Trekking Trousers (i.e. not cotton)
- Waterproof over trousers - with long leg zip designed to put on whilst wearing boots
- Underwear
- Thermal Base Layer x 2 (one long sleeved for glacier travel)
- Fleece jacket
- Waterproof jacket (with hood)
- Extra warm layer - (primaloft or lightweight down)
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Sunglasses - category 3 or 4.
- Thin gloves - leather or thermal
- Very warm winter type gloves or mittens
- Sleeping bag liner/sheet sleeping bag (silk is lightest)
- Rucksack (30 - 40 litres should be sufficient)
- Head torch with new batteries
- Sun Protection (high factor for skin)
- Lip salve - with sunscreen
- Water bottle - 1 litre x2 (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets

- Small, lightweight wash kit and pack towel
- Dry bags(s) for daypack/kitbag contents (to ensure they keep dry)
- Small hand sanitizer gel
- Basic First Aid Kit including: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), painkillers, plasters, blister treatment (zinc oxide tape and 'Compeed').

The following items are optional:

- Trekking poles x 2 with baskets (highly recommended)
- Shorts (for non-glacial travel)
- Rain cover for Rucksack
- Earplugs (particularly if you are not the one snoring!)
- Repair kit - (eg. Pocket knife, needle, thread, duct tape etc.)
- Camera
- Travel Clothes (can be left at your hotel)
- Travel Shoes (can be left at your hotel)
- Small Padlock (for trek bag)
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Notes

Mountaineering Boots: Recommended boots for this trip are comfortable, warm and sufficiently stiff to take a crampon securely (a sturdy B1 or a 'worn in' B2 boot is ideal). Rigid B3 boots are NOT suitable for this trek.

Crampons: Modern strap on crampons are perfectly acceptable for this trek and will fit any boot. All crampons MUST be fitted with anti-balling plates. Grivel Crampons - G10 or G12 with a strap system are

excellent and they come fitted with anti-balling plates. We do not recommend semi-automatic crampons for use with softer boots since with this system, the pull on the heel can lead to blisters. Aluminium crampons are not suitable for this trip (they are not strong enough over mixed terrain).

Equipment hire: Equipment marked with a *can be hired from KE. This can be reserved when you book your trip or closer to your departure but we advise booking hire equipment as soon as possible to ensure availability - equipment hire must be booked through the KE office prior to your departure. Any hired equipment will be collected on arrival from your guide, we do not hire mountaineering boots, but there are several shops in Chamonix renting boots that are suitable for this trip.

Sleeping bags are NOT required as bedding and hut shoes/slippers are provided at mountain refuges. However, you should bring a sheet sleeping bag.

Needle Sports (specialist mountaineering equipment shop)

Needle Sports is the English Lake District's foremost specialist climbing shop supplying mountaineering, rock, ice, alpine and expedition equipment worldwide. Internationally recognised as among the very best of the UK's top technical climbing gear retailers. They have a good range of equipment appropriate for this trip and offer knowledgeable advice both on their website and in store. View

>> <http://www.needlesports.com/>

Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers. >> [Find out more](#)

Land Only Information

We sell this holiday on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. The holiday starts at the hotel in Les Diablerets. Geneva has the nearest airport.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

We were the first to offer this fantastic and little-known route. Be led by our expert IFMGA guide and enjoy a genuine small group adventure, with a max group size of 6. This holiday can be combined with our Bernese Oberland Haute Route East to create a sensational complete traverse of the Bernese Oberland. FREE equipment hire worth £100 is available for this holiday

Please Note This document was downloaded on 18/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change