

# Hiking suggestions

## **Village walk Gimmelwald**

Season: open all year round

Duration: ca. 30min, altitude difference: > 50m ↓ 50m

Category: easy

Note: follow the white signs with the green sticker «Dorfweg»

From the Gimmelwald station, go into the village and follow the road around the village to the former Hotel Mittaghorn. From there you walk down the steps back to the Schilthorn station. Along the way you will find information points at benches with interesting facts about the village, its history and village life.

## **Town Walk in Gimmelwald**

(Excerpted from the 2008 edition of Rick Steves' Switzerland guidebook with some minor updates):

Start this quick walking tour at the cable car station: When the lift came in the 1960s, the village's back end became its front door. Gimmelwald was, and still is, a farm village. Stepping off the cable car, you see a sweet little hut. Set on stilts to keep out mice, the hut was used for storing cheese (the rocks on the rooftop here and throughout the town are not decorative—they keep the shingles on through wild storms). Behind the cheese hut stands the old village schoolhouse. In the opposite direction, just beyond the little playground, is Gimmelwald's Mountain Hostel. Walk up the lane 50 yards, past Gimmelwald's Dali-esque art gallery (the monk in the telephone booth), to Gimmelwald's... "Times Square": The yellow alpine "street sign" shows where you are, the altitude (1,370 meters—that's 4,470 feet), how many hours (Std.) and minutes it takes to walk to nearby points, and which tracks are more demanding (marked with red and white, and further indicated as you explore with red and white patches of paint on stones). You're surrounded by buildings that were built as duplexes. These buildings once housed two families and are divided vertically right down the middle. The writing on the post office building is a folksy blessing: "Summer brings green, winter brings snow. The sun greets the day, the stars greet the night. This house will keep you warm. May God give us his blessings." The date indicates when it was built or rebuilt (1911). Gimmelwald has a strict building code. For instance, shutters can only be certain colours.

From this tiny intersection, we'll follow the town's main street (away from the cable car station).

Main Street: Walk up the road. On the right, there is a big barn, dated 1995. To the left of the door is a cow-scratcher. Swiss cows have legal rights (for example, in the winter, they must be taken out for exercise at least three times a week). This big barn is built in a modern style. Traditionally, barns were small (like those on the hillside high above) and closer to the hay. But with trucks and paved roads, hay can be moved more easily, and farm businesses need more cows to be viable. Still, even a well-run big farm hopes just to break even. The industry

survives only with government subsidies. Small as Gimmelwald is, the postman (who sells stamps) comes daily. Typically locals grew their vegetables—often enough to provide most of their family's needs.

On the next barn, notice the big ceremonial cowbells hanging under the uphill eave. These swing from the necks of cows during the procession from the town to the high Alps (mid-June) and back down (about Sept 20). Beyond that barn, on your right is the Water Fountain/Trough: This is the site of the town's historic water supply. Local kids love to bathe and wage water wars here when the cows aren't drinking from it. Now detour left down a lane about 50 yards (along the fence of the horse pasture) to the next trough and the oldest building in town, Husmättli, from 1658. (The town's 17th-century buildings are mostly on the road zigzagging below town.) Study the log-cabin construction. Many are built without nails. The wood was logged up the valley and cut on the water-powered village mill (also below town). A lot of houses in Gimmelwald are heated with wood and, since the wood needs to age a couple of years to burn well, it's stacked everywhere.

Back on the paved road, continue uphill. Twenty meters along, on the left, the first house has a bunch of Grim Reaper-style hay cutters hanging above the sharpening stone. Farmers pound rather than grind the blade to get it razor sharp--for most efficient cutting. Feel a blade...carefully. A few steps further, notice the cute cheese hut on the right (with alpine cheese for sale). Its front is an alpine art gallery with nail shoes for flower pots. Look up. In the summer a few goats are kept here (not in the high alp) to provide families with fresh milk (2-3 liters per day per goat). The farmers fence off the fields, letting the goats eat only the grass that's most difficult to harvest. On the left (at the B&B sign) is the home of Olle and Maria. Fifty yards farther along is the Alpenrose: this used to be Gimmelwald's first schoolhouse. At the end of town, pause where a lane branches off left leading into the dramatic Sefinen Valley: All the old homes in town are made from local wood cut from the left-hand side of this valley (shady side, slow-growing, better timber).

A few steps ahead, the road switches back at the Gimmelwald Fire Station: The Föhnwacht Reglement sheet, posted on the fire station building, explains rules to keep the village from burning down during the fierce dry wind of the Föhn season. During this time smoking cigarettes outdoors is forbidden. Mürren was devastated by a Föhn-caused fire in the 1920s. Because villagers in Gimmelwald--mindful of the quality of their volunteer fire department--are particularly careful with fire, this is a rare village to not have had a terrible fire in its history.

Continue on the High Road to the Hotel Mittaghorn: The resort town of Mürren hovers in the distance. And high on the left, notice the hay field with terraces. These are from WWII days, when Switzerland, wanting self-sufficiency, required all farmers to grow potatoes. Today, this is a festival of alpine flowers in season (best at this altitude in May and June). Our walk is over. From Hotel Mittaghorn, you can return to Gimmelwald's "Times Square" via the stepped path.

## **Circular hike from Gimmelwald to Gimmelwalder Allmi**

Season: open from beginning of May to end of October

Duration: ca. 1 hour, altitude difference: > 200m | 200m

Category: easy

Note: follow the white signs with the green sticker «Allmiweg»

From the Gimmelwald station, go into the village and turn right at the Gimmelwald Pension. A footpath and stairs will take you to Mittaghorn, where you turn right and follow the road past the top houses of the village. About 50m after a brook crossing, turn left onto a small path that climbs over the meadow and through the forest. After several hairpin bends, cross the small brook over a small bridge and reach the Gimmelwalder Allmi on a forest path. From here you can enjoy a wonderful view down to Gimmelwald as well as the mountain range of Schwarzmönch, Jungfrau, Ebnefluh, Mittaghorn and Grosshorn. To the south opposite is the Busenalp, above it the Tschingelgrat and further back the Gspaltenhorn. Follow the road, which now leads evenly with a slight gradient back to the village. Or take the shorter marked mountain path at the second bench, which leads down through the mountain meadows in zigzag.

### **Day hike from Gimmelwald up to Busenbrand (extra loop to Tanzboedeli) further to Obersteinberg (extra loop to lake Oberhorn) and down via Wilde Egg, Schuerboden and Trachsellaunen to Stechelberg**

Season: open from mid-June to end of September

Duration: ca. 6-9 hours, altitude difference: > 720m ↓ 1120m

Category: difficult, good physical condition required, only for experienced mountain hikers

Note: extra loop Tanzboedeli: +80m altitude difference up and down,

Lake Oberhorn: + 290 altitude difference up and down

From Gimmelwald you hike to Sefinen valley, where you cross the Sefinenlütschine. The mountain path leads steeply up through the forest to Busenalp and on to Busenbrand. Again and again you can enjoy impressive views. At the fork in the path on Busenbrand there is another steep but rewarding ascent to the magnificent Tanzbödeli view point, from where you see the entire Lauterbrunnen valley (there and back approx. 45min).

From Busenbrand the narrow path leads through rocks down to the Berghotel Obersteinberg. Sure-footedness is required here. If you would like to add an extra round from the Obersteinberg, you can hike up to the small lake Oberhorn, which is part of the Aletsch-Jungfrau UNESCO World Heritage Site, in one hour.

For the descent we recommend the route from Obersteinberg via the Wilde Egg down to Schürboden, which offers wonderful views of the Schmadribach Falls. Just below the Wilde Egg, a signpost "Talbachfall" turns right. In a short additional round of 5min you can reach this special waterfall, which falls through a rock hole into a water basin.

From Schürboden the path leads out of the valley to the mountain inn Trachsellaunen and from there down to Stechelberg.

## **Hike from Gimmelwald to Chilchbalm**

Season: open from end of May to mid-October

Duration: ca. 2 hours 45 minutes, altitude difference: > 370m ↓ 370m

Category: intermediate

From the Gimmelwald station you walk down into the wild and romantic Sefinen valley. From there the path climbs steadily up to "Firten". At the fork in the path, follow the watercourse. Towards the end, the path climbs steeper for a short while before a large, flat basin opens up. A very special place of power! You are surrounded on three sides by high cliffs and stand at the foot of the mighty north face of the Gspaltenhorn. Out of the valley you can see the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau from a completely different perspective. The Sefinenlütschine springs from the rearmost part of the valley basin. The Chilchbalm is named after the rock cave on the western edge of the basin, into which a small path leads. Follow the same path back to Gimmelwald.

## **Hike from Gimmelwald up to Mürren**

Season: open all year round

Duration: ca. 55min, altitude difference: > 270m ↓ 0m

Category: easy, suitable for baby carriages

From the Gimmelwald station you walk into the village and either follow the paved road around the village or you take the shorter but steeper footpath, which leads up to the right at the Gimmelwald Pension and into the upper part of the village. From there you follow the evenly rising road up to Mürren. A sunny hike, which always offers unique views to the mountain peaks and down to Stechelberg. If you leave out the shortcuts and always follow the road, this hike is suitable for baby carriages. Often, especially with a baby carriage, this route is also taken in the opposite direction, from Mürren down to Gimmelwald (approx. 40 min).

## **Hike from Gimmelwald down to Stechelberg and on the valley floor via Truemmelbach to Lauterbrunnen**

Season: The trail Gimmelwald-Stechelberg open from beginning of May to end of October; the part Stechelberg-Lauterbrunnen is open all year round, (the Trümmelbach waterfalls are open from April to October)

Duration: ca. 2 hours 20 minutes, altitude difference: > 0m | 550m

Category: intermediate

From Gimmelwald station follow the signs to Stechelberg. The path leads over meadows and later through the forest steeply down into the valley. Again and again you cross watercourses and pass small waterfalls. Just before you reach the bottom of the valley, follow the sign to the left towards Lauterbrunnen. At the hydroelectric power station you cross the Sefinenlüttschine over an arched bridge and then walk along the white Lüttschine out of the valley. At the valley station of the Schilthorn cable car you will pass the highest waterfall in Europe, the Mürrenbach Falls. Right next to it there is also a barbecue area. Continue out of the valley along the course of the river. You will see thunderous waterfalls falling down into the valley over and over again over the high rock faces. If you want to visit the Trümmelbach Falls ([link](#)), follow the corresponding sign to the right. The way leads through the camping site Breithorn and from there a few hundred meters along the main road to the Trümmelbach. After visiting the falls, cross the main road and follow the hiking sign out of the valley to Lauterbrunnen.

If you leave out the Trümmelbach Falls, just follow the hiking trail further out of the valley.

Another sight follows at the entrance of the village of Lauterbrunnen, where you pass at the foot of the impressive Staubbach waterfall. You can climb up to the foot of the waterfall on a secured path and enjoy a wonderful view over Lauterbrunnen in addition to the waterfall itself.

## **Circular day hike from Gimmelwald via Spielbodenalp up to Bryndli and the Rotstock hut, and from there down into the Sefinen Valley and back to Gimmelwald**

Season: open from mid-June to beginning of October

Duration: ca. 5 hours, altitude difference: > 790m | 790m

Category: difficult, good physical condition required

From Gimmelwald it goes up to the Sprutz and further to the Spielbodenalp (see description hike Gimmelwald - Sprutz - Spielbodenalp). The Spielbodenalp is located at the foot of the Bryndlis, Gimmelwald's local mountain. Turn left at Spielbodenalp. The path climbs steeply and there are many hairpin bends up to the Bryndli. Once you reach the top, you are rewarded with a magnificent view: far below is Gimmelwald, a little further out of the valley you can see Mürren and opposite is the mighty triumvirate of Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau. The path now leads at the same level below the Bryndli peak into the valley. After a short time you come to a fork in the path. If you climb up to the right here, you will reach the pointed peak of the Bryndlis in about 15 minutes on a narrow path, partly secured with ropes, which offers a magnificent 360° panorama.

From now on, the path leads at about the same height over alpine meadows to the Rotstockhütte. With a bit of luck, you might see marmots, the golden eagle or even the

bearded vulture, which sometimes circles the Schilthorn. The Rotstockhütte invites you to take a rest. The descent leads along the small stream down to Ozen and Firten and finally to the wild and romantic Sefinental. From here the path climbs a little bit and leads back to Gimmelwald.

## **Circular hike from Gimmelwald down to the view point “Fluh”, to the old sawmill in the Sefinen valley and back up to Gimmelwald**

Season: open from mid-May to end of October

Duration: ca. 1 hour 20 minutes, altitude difference: > 190m ↓ 190m

Category: easy, one option is suitable for baby carriages

Note: follow the white signs with the green sticker «Sagiweg»

At the Pension Gimmelwald turn left and walk down towards Stechelberg. After a short steep descent you reach a road which you follow to the left. You reach the vantage point on the Fluh, which offers a wonderful view into the Lauterbrunnen valley and as far as Wengen. Follow the forest road, which continues to slope gently until you reach the Sefinenlütschine. Follow this road upwards and after a short time you will reach the old sawmill, which is still actively used. It is more than 160 years old and runs on water power. In summer, the tourist office offers guided tours (Link Mürren Tourismus, guided tour of the old sawmill). From the old sawmill, the forest path leads through the forest and along the Sefinenlütschine to the point "Im Tal", where there is also a barbecue area, which invites you to stay. Afterwards you hike up again to Gimmelwald on the evenly ascending forest path.

For the pram-compatible variant, follow the road through the village at the beginning of the hike until you reach the bench view point on the left. There you take the road which leads down towards "Im Tal" before you turn left again at the next fork in the road and finally reach the fork below the village where the lookout point is signposted.

## **Day hike from Gimmelwald via Spielbodenalp and Schiltalp up to lake Grauseeli and to the Schilthorn**

Season: open from beginning of July to mid-September

Duration: ca. 5 hours, altitude difference: > 1610m ↓ 0m

Category: difficult, good physical condition required, only for experienced mountain hikers

From Gimmelwald it goes up to the Sprutz and further to the Spielbodenalp (see description of the hike Gimmelwald - Sprutz - Spielbodenalp). From there the trail leads on the left side of the Schiltbach stream into the valley. After crossing the stream the path climbs up to the rearmost pastures of Schiltalp. At the fork in the trail, turn right and follow a small path steeply uphill to the little lake Grauseeli. At times the path is secured with ropes. From the Grauseeli it goes up to the Seewlifuhre. From here follows the steep and exposed climb to the Schilthorn. If you don't want to go through all this trouble, you can walk from the Seewlifuhre up to the Birg (45 min) and from there take the cable car to the summit. Please note that on the last part of the trail from the Seewlifuhre to the Schilthorn there is usually snow until the end of June or even the beginning of July.

### **Hike from Gimmelwald via Sprutz up to Spielbodenalp, further to Schiltalp and via Blumental to Muerren**

Season: open from mid-June to end of October

Duration: ca. 3 hours, altitude difference: > 590m | 310m

Category: intermediate

From Gimmelwald it goes up to the Sprutz and further to the Spielbodenalp (see description of the hike Gimmelwald - Sprutz - Spielbodenalp). Behind the restaurant Spielbodenalp you follow the blue marked "Northface Trail" in western direction up to Schiltalp. From Schiltalp you continue on the "Northface Trail" and always facing the Eiger, Moench and Jungfrau, over into the Blumental. Not far from each other are the two mountain restaurants Suppenalp and Sonnenberg, which invite you to take a break. From Suppenalp a small hiking trail leads through the forest and meadows down to Mürren. If you go further up to Sonnenberg (10min from Suppenalp) you can walk down the road to a newer big cowshed. From there the most beautiful way leads down to Mürren via the panorama path which turns left. This offers a great view of the village of Mürren, the triumvirate and the mountain range up to the Breithorn.

### **Hike from Gimmelwald up to the Sprutz waterfall and to Spielbodenalp**

Season: open from mid-May to end of October

Duration: ca. 1 hour 30 minutes, altitude difference: > 270m | 40m

Category: intermediate

From Gimmelwald the path climbs through the village and then over mountain meadows, at times steeply up to the Gimmelwalder Allmi above the village. From there, the mountain path, pleasantly shady, leads through the forest up to the waterfall called Sprutz. The Sprutz is a very special place, because here the hiking trail goes behind the waterfall! The trail continues on a zigzag path on the other side of the gorge up to Spielbodenalp. From there you can either walk down towards Mürren (approx. 30 min) or continue walking up towards Bryndli or Schiltalp (see separate descriptions).