Guided Walking in the Swiss Appenzell Alps



Trip style:	Destination:	Walking Grade	Carbon Footprint:
Guided Walking Holidays	Switzerland	3 & 6	615kg CO2

HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Switzerland's postcard-perfect scenery takes centre stage on this relaxed walking holiday in enchanting Appenzell. The region's excellent cable car network makes light work of the steepest climbs, leaving you free to follow your experienced leader on gentle trails through spectacular Alpine landscapes. Walk panoramic paths atop the summit of Ebenalp, see the remarkable Berggasthaus Äscher guesthouse carved into the cliff face, and feel the grass beneath your feet on the famous Barefoot Trail through picturesque alpine meadowlands. From the mirror-like waters of Lake Seealp to Appenzell's rolling green pastures, each day promises unforgettable walks, local traditions, and delicious Swiss cuisine.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Walking the famous Barefoot Trail through the soft peat meadows of the Gonten high valley
- Views of six countries from the Europa-Rundweg trail
- Riding the Kronberg Cable Car, the longest in Appenzell
- The dramatic cliffs of the Alpstein massif
- Learning about local cheese production at the Appenzeller Demonstration Cheese Dairy

- Sampling traditional Swiss gingerbread at a local bakery

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London, including baggage and transfers by rail (flights available from other airports - price may vary)
- HF Tour Manager
- Return luggage transfer service between airport and hotel
- A choice of 2 guided walks per day with local leaders (on walking days)
- 7 nights' accommodation in Appenzell
- 7 breakfasts & 7 dinners

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Day 1 **Arrival in Appenzell**

Fly from London to Zurich. We then travel by second-class rail to our hotel in Appenzell, a journey of approximately 1 hour 40 minutes.

Your main luggage will be transferred separately, so please keep essential items, including your passport, medication and payment cards, in your hand luggage.

After time to settle in, we'll take a gentle guided stroll through Appenzell's colourful streets and stop at Appenzeller Alpenbitter for a complimentary tasting of a traditional Swiss herbal liqueur. This evening, we gather and take a short walk to a local restaurant for a welcome drink and dinner.

Day 2 **The Barefoot Trail and Kronberg**

Morning walk (both groups): Jakobsbad to Gontenbad

Distance: 3 miles (4.9 km)
Ascent: 205 feet (63 m)
Descent: 250 feet (76 m)

Today begins with both groups enjoying a walk together along the popular Barefoot Trail through the peat meadows of the Gonten Valley. Taking the train to Jakobsbad, we set off on a flat trail that leads through soft grass and shallow streams to Gontenbad, offering an unusual and refreshing way to experience the landscape.

We then return to Jakobsbad by train and ride the cable car to Kronberg. Both afternoon options offer impressive views towards Säntis and the rugged peaks of the Alpstein massif.

Option 1: Kronberg and Jakobsalp

Distance: 2.5 miles (4km)
Ascent: 800 feet (250 m)
Descent: 800 feet (250 m)

From the top of Kronberg, we follow easy paths around the summit before descending gently towards Alp Laufte. Our route takes us via Jakobsquelle and Jakobsalp, with far-reaching views across the surrounding mountains. We return to the summit and take the cable car down to Jakobsbad.

Option 2: Kronberg to Jakobsbad

Distance: 4.5 miles (7 km)
Ascent: 80 feet (25 m)
Descent: 2,650 feet (800 m)

Our longer option follows the Kronberg ridge towards Scheidegg before descending through Alpine scenery to Jakobsbad via Chlepfhütte and St Jakob. Although there is little ascent, the route includes a sustained descent from the summit.

Both groups reunite in Jakobsbad before returning to Appenzell by train.

Day 3 Ebenalp, Äscher and Seealpsee

Option 1: Ebenalp and Äscher

Distance: 1 mile (1.5 km)

Ascent: 554 feet (169m)

Descent: 593 feet (181 m)

From Ebenalp, we descend through the prehistoric Wildkirchli caves to the famous Äscher restaurant, dramatically positioned beneath an overhanging cliff. We then return to Ebenalp

Option 2: Ebenalp and Schäfler

Distance: 2.85 miles (4.6 km)

Ascent / Descent: 1145 feet (349 m)

Our longer walk also departs from Ebenalp and continues along the mountain path to up Schäfler. The summit at 1924m (6312 feet) afford sweeping vistas across the Swiss Central Plateau and the Alpstein range.

Both groups meet at Ebenalp where there is time for lunch in the early afternoon after taking the cable car to Wasserauen there is a choice to join an additional walk.

Option 1 : Wasserauen back to the hotel

Distance: 7.5km / 4.6 miles

Ascent: 152m / 498 feet

Descent: 59m / 193 feet

This gentle route takes us through classic Appenzell countryside following the valley north through Schwende and Weissbad before arriving back at our hotel.

Option 2 : Wasserauen to Lake Seealpsee

Distance 6.10km / 3.8miles

Ascent 280m / 918 feet

Starting at Wasserauen, the trail winds upwards through woodland and open pastures the dramatic peaks of Ebenalp, Schäfler, and Säntis can be seen rising above the valley. Our destination, Lake Seealpsee is a stunning alpine lake surrounded by steep green slopes and sheer rock walls. We return to Wasserauen via the same trail.

Alternatively, you may wish to return the hotel by train from Wasserauen.

Day 4 Walking Around Gais

A short train journey takes us to Gais, a village surrounded by green pastures and traditional Appenzell farmhouses, famed for its beautifully preserved architecture and historic centre. Choose between a leisurely circuit through the countryside or a longer walk over Gäbris, one of the area's best-known viewpoints.

Option 1: Pastures and Farmhouses Around Gais

Distance: 3.5 miles (6 km)
Ascent: 450 feet (140 m)
Descent: 2,850 feet (860 m)

Our gentler walk follows quiet paths through the countryside surrounding Gais. Passing traditional farmhouses and rolling pastures, we walk via Zweibrücken, Sammelplatz and Möser before returning to the village.

Option 2: Gais and Gäbris

Distance: 6.5 miles (10.5 km)
Ascent: 1,550 feet (480 m)
Descent: 1,550 feet (480 m)

From Gais, we climb through the rolling hills to Gäbrisseeli and the summit of Gäbris. The route visits locations associated with the region's historic battles and rewards the ascent with extensive views across the Appenzell region.

Both groups meet in Gais at lunchtime. This afternoon, we'll visit a local bakery to taste Appenzeller Biber, a traditional gingerbread filled with almond paste, before returning by train.

Day 5 Free Day

Today is free for you to relax at the hotel, take an independent walk or use your Appenzeller Holiday Card to visit other places of interest.

You may like to travel to St Gallen to see its UNESCO-listed Abbey District and historic library. Alternatively, head to the Urnäsch Valley for a walk around the Osteregg loop, a rewarding circular walk that offers panoramic views of the Appenzell foothills.

Day 6 Hoher Kasten

We travel by PostBus to Brülisau and take the cable car to the summit of Hoher Kasten. Both options offer exceptional mountain scenery, with views across the Alpstein range and into six countries on a clear day.

Option 1: Hoher Kasten to Brülisau

Distance: 3 miles (4.5 km)

Ascent: negligible

Descent: 2,850 feet (880 m)

We begin with the Europa-Rundweg, an easy panoramic trail around the summit. There will also be time to visit the Alpine flower garden before we descend through Ruhesitz to Brülisau.

Option 2: The Hoher Kasten Ridge

Distance: 5 miles (8 km)

Ascent: 400 feet (120 m)

Descent: 3,200 feet (980 m)

Our longer option starts at the summit of Hoher Kasten and descends along grassy mountain paths with spectacular views across the Alpstein peaks and the Rhine Valley. We continue the descent towards Resspass passing through alpine meadows and pockets of forest. Finally, after crossing Appenzell farmland scattered with alpine huts and grazing cattle, we descend into Brülisau.

Both groups reunite at the Brülisau cable-car station before returning to Appenzell.

Day 7 Appenzeller Cheese and Waldstatt

We travel by local bus to Stein to visit the Appenzeller Demonstration Cheese Dairy. An interactive exhibition reveals how the region's famous cheese is produced.

This afternoon, travel by bus to Waldstatt, a south facing sunny village in the Hinterland of Appenzellerland.

Option 1: Around Waldstatt

Distance: 4 miles (6.7 km)

Ascent: 770 feet (236 m)

This walk takes around the village learning about the local woodworking traditions, the different types of timber in the surrounding forests. Along our route, look out for locally inspired works of art.

Option 2: Waldstatt to St Peterszell

Distance: 8 miles (13 km)

Ascent: 1,400 feet (430m)

Descent: 1,800 feet (550m)

Our longer option starts from Waldstatt where trail climbs through meadows and farmland toward Vollhofstatt and Risi. Much of the route follows sections of the historic St. James Way (Jakobsweg). Along the way, you'll enjoy increasingly expansive views across the hills of Appenzell. The final stretch descends through fields and woodland to St. Peterzell, a charming Toggenburg.

Both group return to the hotel via public transport. This evening, we gather and take a short walk to the venue for a farewell dinner.

Day 8 Departure

After a relaxed final breakfast, we travel by train from Appenzell to Zurich Airport for our flight to London. Your main luggage will be transferred separately from the hotel to the airport.

DAILY WALK OPTIONS



Gentle walking grade 3

Slightly longer walks, mostly on well-trodden paths, with some gentle gradients plus stiles and steps possible. Typically, 5-6 miles (8-10km) with around 650ft (200m) of ascent.



Moderate walking grade 6

Longer full day walks with more ascent and varied terrain. Good fitness and agility are needed. Typically, 9-10 miles (15-16km) with around 1,500ft (460m) of ascent.

ACCOMMODATION

Hotel Löwen

Nestled in the heart of Appenzell's charming, car-free old town, Hotel Löwen combines traditional Swiss hospitality with the unique character of the Appenzell region. Housed in a historic building along the picturesque Hauptgasse, the hotel offers a warm and authentic atmosphere, making it an ideal base for discovering the cultural and natural highlights of eastern Switzerland. The hotel features beautifully decorated guestrooms in typical Appenzell style, featuring Wi-Fi, TV, radio and safety deposit box. Each evening, dinner arrangements have been made at local restaurants just a short stroll (approx. 3-minute walk) from the hotel.

VACCINATIONS & HEALTH

Vaccinations & health information

Before booking, you should check with your doctor to see whether any health precautions are needed for your trip. Health advice and requirements can change, so we recommend doing this in good time before travel.

As a general rule, travellers should ensure they are up to date with routine UK vaccinations and boosters, including, for example, MMR and diphtheria, tetanus and polio. Some countries may require you to have specific vaccinations such as Malaria, Rabies and Yellow Fever. Please check with your GP if you are unsure.

Please note that the use or possession of some common prescription or over-the-counter medicines is restricted or banned in certain countries. If you will be carrying medication, you should check with the relevant embassy or consulate before travelling. As an extra precaution, we recommend keeping medication in its original packaging, carrying a copy of your prescription, and, where possible, asking your pharmacist to provide the medication name in the language of the country you are visiting.

For further country-specific health advice, visit www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk or www.traveldoctor.co.uk. If you are travelling from outside the UK, please consult your own doctor and check local entry requirements.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

Passport & Visa information

This information is for those travelling with a full 'British Citizen' passport; for all other nationalities or passport holders, please check with your local consulate for advice.

Passport Requirements

This information applies to travellers holding a full British Citizen passport. Entry requirements vary by destination and can change at short notice. For most EU and worldwide destinations, passports must be valid for the entire duration of your stay. Some countries also require a minimum period of validity remaining on your passport (often up to 6 months beyond your return date), even if you are not staying that long.
We strongly recommend ensuring your passport has at least six months' validity remaining at the time of travel to avoid any issues.

If you hold a different type of British passport or a passport issued by another country, you must check the requirements with the relevant embassy, consulate, or official government website.

Visa Requirements

Visa rules depend on your nationality, destination, length of stay, and purpose of travel, and they can change frequently. It is your responsibility to check whether you require a visa before travelling.
British passport holders should check the latest entry, passport validity and visa requirements for their destination on the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) website:
https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Packing list

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing.

Essentials

- Walking boots
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Insulated jacket/top
- Walking clothing
- Walking socks (plus spares)
- Sunhat
- Gloves/mitts and warm hat
- Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity)
- Headtorch
- High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30)
- Swimcap (compulsory in Itialian resorts)
- Sunglasses with a dark lens
- Rucksack (15-30 litres)
- Mobile phone
- Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.)
- Passport
- Visa (if applicable)
- Copy of your travel insurance policy
- UK Global Health Insurance Card (**formerly known as EHIC**)

Recommended

- Collapsible walking poles
- Swimwear and travel towel
- Snacks
- Dry bags

- Rubbish bags
- Insect repellent

Optional extras

- Camera
- Sit mat
- Flask for hot drinks
- Durable lunch box
- Gaiters
- GPS device (excluding Bhutan, Georgia and India)

JOINING INSTRUCTIONS (WITH FLIGHTS)

With flights

Book your holiday 'with flights' and you can choose to depart from selected UK airports* to your destination. For latest flight times and prices please call us on 0203-974-8865 or email reservations@hfholidays.co.uk

If you choose to book your flights with us, we automatically include return transfers between the destination airport and hotel.

JOINING INSTRUCTIONS (WITHOUT FLIGHTS)

Without flights

If you are booking on a land-only basis, you can join the group transfer at an additional cost. To do so, your arrival and departure times must be in line with the scheduled group flight timings. Guests travelling at different times will need to arrange their own transfers. Please contact us before booking to discuss the available options and costs.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Safety Information

Walking Safety

Walks may be changed for safety reasons and are subject to a maximum and minimum number of guests.

Leaders always consider the safety of the group as a whole and may need to alter or curtail the walk if the conditions dictate. Your leader may refuse to accept a guest where clothing, equipment or behaviour is unsuitable. In the event of a problem all leaders carry a mobile phone, first aid kit, group shelter, spare maps and a compass.

Please note: If you choose to leave the group your leader is no longer responsible for you.

In the event of a problem

If you become separated from your group, please stay where you are. Your leader will retrace their steps to find you.

All our walk leaders carry a mobile phone, group shelter, spare maps and a compass. In the unlikely event your leader is incapacitated, please use any emergency kit in their rucksack and call the emergency services (call 999 in the UK, or 112 overseas).

Please then try to call the hotel where you are staying to let them know there is a problem.

We advise you carry a copy of these trip notes or note down the contact phone number for your accommodation (details in the travel section) should you need them in case of emergency.

If you have any cause for complaints regarding accommodation, you should notify your leader who can then attempt to rectify the problem.

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so before you travel.

For more information about healthcare and its costs, please visit: https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/

Drinking Water

Drinking Water

Standards for drinking water vary widely around the world. In many destinations, tap water may not be safe to drink, brush your teeth with, or use for making ice. Where advised, you should drink only bottled or treated water and ensure that bottle seals are intact before use. If bottled water is unavailable, water should be boiled or filtered.

Staying well hydrated is particularly important in hot climates and during active holidays. Carry water with you and drink regularly.

If you are unsure about local water safety, check official country-specific health advice before travel, or ask your accommodation or local guides for guidance once you arrive.

TRIPNOTE VALIDITY

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred. In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary. The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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