

Walking holidays in Europe



Walking holiday in the Saanenland



Walking holiday in the Saanenland

7 NIGHTS / 8 DAYS

HIGHLIGHTS

- Four self-guided walking itineraries
- Wispile to Lauenensee
- Rougemont to Rossiniere
- Hornleggi to Rinderberg
- Lenk to Turbach
- Sparenmoos to Rellerli
- One tasting dinner at your hotel •
- One wine tasting at your hotel
- 6-day Gstaad Card



Saanenland near Gstaad

This seven-night self-guided walking holiday invites you to explore one of the most beautiful regions of Switzerland. A popular ski resort in winter months, summertime transforms the Saanenland into a walker's paradise. Charming chalet villages are enclosed in verdant alpine meadows where the gentle chiming of cattle bells drifts on the breeze. The surrounding mountains such as the Wispile, Hornberg and Rinderberg are gained by cable car, allowing easy access for stunning hikes along the lofty ridges. This summertime walking holiday for individuals includes itineraries which explore the majestic mountains, wide valleys, sparkling lakes and dense forests before returning to your luxury hotel in the stylish yet traditional alpine village of Gstaad.

HOTEL INCLUDED

Park Hotel Gstaad, Gstaad 5 star (4 star option at the Hotel Alpenrose is available in neighbouring Schoenried)

PRICES

From £2,530 per person including air and rail

From £2,610 per person including rail from London and back

Sample prices are per person based on two people sharing a double or twin room for 7 nights.

First class upgrade possible including standard premier on the Eurostar from London to Paris return at £270 per person. Fly-rail first class supplement for rail travel in Switzerland £100 per person.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Scheduled flights with British Airways from London to Geneva return, economy
- Return rail travel from Geneva airport to Gstaad
- 7 nights' bed and breakfast in a superior double room with forest view at the Park Hotel Gstaad in Gstaad
- One tasting menu at the hotel (beverages not included)
- One wine tasting at the hotel
- 6-day Gstaad Card
- Route notes for self-guided walking itineraries in the Saanenland
- Concierge service and Expressions Holidays regional helpful hints

THE JOURNEY AND HOW YOU GET THERE

There are flights with British Airways from London Heathrow to Geneva several times a day. From here there are regular hourly services via Montreux to Gstaad. Travel by rail from the UK starts with taking the Eurostar to Paris. Here you change stations and take the TGV-Lyria to Geneva and then connect onto regional services via Montreux to Gstaad.

DATES

Although this holiday can be arranged throughout the year, we recommend travelling between June and early October for the best trekking conditions.

HOLIDAY CODE

FHCH02

DAY ONE Arrive in Gstaad

This holiday can be arranged with flights from the UK to Switzerland or with rail travel from London to Switzerland. If travelling by air, your holiday starts with a flight to Geneva airport where you catch a direct train to Montreux. This is a very scenic stretch along the northern edge of Lake Geneva. Change here to head north along the GoldenPass line which climbs the hillside away from the lake, through terraced vineyards to arrive in Saanenland. If travelling from the UK by rail, you leave London on a morning Eurostar to Paris at around 8am. Take a local taxi from Gare du Nord to Gare de Lyon and catch the afternoon TGV-Lyria service to Geneva. You arrive here mid-afternoon and continue to Gstaad via Montreux. Gstaad is an elegant and stylish resort town which has maintained its authentic Alpine character. Here you will find plenty of fashionable shops and characterful restaurants serving delicious local cuisine. The town sits in a wide, alpine valley and is surrounded by open green meadows, chiming cattle bells and magnificent peaks rising around. Your hotel has a peaceful location at the edge of the village, just over the river from the train station. You head to your room to settle in and relax after the day's travelling.

DAY TWO Wispile to Launensee

We recommend starting your trip with an easy hike to stretch out your legs and dip your toe into the delights of the Saanenland. This easy walk is about 9.5 km and should take 3-4 hours. You start by taking the cable car from Gstaad to Wispile and take a moment to admire the view. The panorama around you includes Gstaad far below, the mountains of Stalدهore and Furggespitz to the west, Louwenehore and Giferspitz to the east and the Wispile ridgeline running south. It is along this ridge that your trail takes you. The trail guides you along a wide ridge on grassy meadowland scattered with conifers, hemmed on either side by deep valleys and mountains rising beyond. At the end of the ridge, the trail cuts down a fairly steep slope through woods to Chrine Pass. Rise a little way up the other side of the pass and then ambles its way down the hillside to reach the twin lakes of Lauenensee. There is a restaurant here where walkers can relax with lunch or a snack and the possibility of extending the walk along the Geltenbach stream to see a small waterfall. Catch the bus back to Gstaad.

DAY THREE Valley walk from Rougemont to Rossiniere or adventurous hike from Lenk to Turbach

There is a choice of two routes today dependant on your energy, comfort level and



Above Lauenensee

hiking ability. The first is a 13km low-level ramble along the valley from Rougemont to Rossiniere which roughly follows the course of the River Saane. Start by taking the train from Gstaad to Rougemont and make your way out of the village on quiet roads, farm tracks and footpaths that lead through the meadows. You cross backwards and forwards over the river and walk through several charming hamlets and villages and past the gorgeous Ramclé Waterfalls. The distant mountains are frequently visible above the forests and meadows and this is a very pleasant outing. You eventually cross the river one last time and arrive in the small town of Rossiniere. We recommend spending some time here to explore the sights such as the Grand Chalet de Rossiniere and Protesant church. Perhaps treat yourselves to lunch here before taking the train back to Gstaad. The second option is a more adventurous, high-altitude walk which is not for the faint-hearted. The walk is about 15.6km but has a substantial height gain and loss. The day starts by taking the train to Zweisimmen and then changing here for the train to Lenk. The steep ascent up the mountain is avoided by using the Betelberg cable car which takes you up to a lofty 1,943 metres above sea level. Take a moment to admire the views from here before commencing your walk. To the northwest, the hill slopes down to the Wallbach stream and rises up to another ridge beyond. The high point of Laaglehore (2,348m) can be seen on this ridge and you might catch a glimpse of Giferspitz (2,542m) behind and to the left. To the northeast, the lines of the cable cars head down into the forests and Lenk far below

whilst the far peaks to the southwest form the Pfynges Nature Park, dominated by Mittelgipfel (3,243m) and Wildstrubel (3,244m). The rocky path takes you along a narrow ridge with jaw-dropping views all around, cutting a course through the fascinating Gryden craters. The path here is not overly high but it is narrow with steep drops to the side and can be lose underfoot so care should be taken. You come now to Trutlisbergpass and head northwards to pick up a higher ridge between Louwenehore and Giferspitz. You reach the highest point of your hike at 2,542m and then begin your steady descent down the hillside to the village of Turbach. There is a small restaurant at Turbach where you can enjoy a drink and a snack before catching the bus back to Gstaad.

DAY FOUR At leisure

We include two rest days within this walking holiday, although of course you can choose to swap the days around as you please. Your Gstaad Card gives you plenty of discounts and special offers on local attractions including museums in Saanen, Zweisimmen and Chateau d'Oex. On your first rest day you might like to take the train to the nearby village of Gruyeres. Gruyeres is a medieval town with cobblestone streets and a 13th century castle with knights' hall, towers and ramparts, however it is best known for the cheese produced here. You might like to visit La Maison du Gruyere where guests can watch the cheese making process and take an interactive tour. The menus of Gruyere's restaurants are filled with legendary specialities including fondues, rostis and macaroni de

chalet which should not be missed. Return to your hotel this evening and enjoy a wine-tasting in the hotel's cellar.

DAY FIVE Rinderberg to Horneggli and Schönried

The third walk of your trip is quite easy but offers exceptional views and a constant panorama. The route is a little under 10km and has less than 100m of ascent, making it very friendly. You start the day by taking the train to Zweisimmen and catching the gondola up to Rinderberg. The cable car drops you on the small shoulder between Vordere Spitz and Hindere Spitz, 2,004 metres above sea level. There is a short climb over the Gandlouene ridge to reach your high point at 2,079m from where you follow the comfortable path heading south. This ridge hike is a walker's dream with well-maintained paths and constant panoramic views. To the east you will see the peaks and glaciers of the Altels and Doldenhorn, whilst the south showcases the Diablerets chain and Wildhorn. This route is not all about the distant views however, as you walk through beautiful flower-filled alpine meadows which are home to several rare alpine plants. About halfway along the walk you come to the Berghotel at Hornberg – an excellent spot to stop for lunch as well as the site of a unique, high-altitude wakeboarding centre. Continue from here to the Horneggli cable car station where you can either catch the gondola back down (cutting the walk to 6km) or amble your way down the zigzagging path to arrive in Schönried. Take the train back from here to Gstaad.

DAY SIX At leisure

We recommend spending your sixth day at leisure to relax and build up energy for the last walk of the trip. Perhaps use today to visit Glacier 3000, using your Gstaad Card to get a 50% discount on the ticket. From here you can take in a spectacular view of the Bernese Alps with 24 summits visible that stand over 4,000m high including Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn. Summertime activities here include the amazing Peak Walk suspension bridge, summer tobogganing and short walking trails. This is a popular base from which to start glacier walks, via ferratas and rock climbing and you may see enthusiasts heading out into the mountains all kitted up. There is a restaurant as well as bar making it an exciting day out. Return to Gstaad in the afternoon and enjoy a tasting menu at the hotel's restaurant before settling down for the night.



Rinderberg Horneggli

DAY SEVEN Schönried to Sparenmoos via Rellerli and Bire

Our last walking itinerary in Saanenland is a spectacular trip to Schönried up to the Rellerli and via Bire to Sparenmoos. The route is about 16km in total and should take around 6-7 hours. The Rellerli gives a beautiful 360-degree view of the entire Saanenland mountain panorama, with distant views further north than any of the previous routes have provided. There is a significant ascent to start with as you head up the mountainside from Schönried but it is rewarded with a fairly level walk once on the tops. There are possible refreshment stops on the way and various options for how to get back from Sparenmoos at the end of the day. You take the train from Gstaad to Schönried and pick up a track that weaves its way up the hillside, under the gondola cables. From the Rellerli cable car station there is a small ascent left to reach the high point and the rest of the walk is easy-going. The track takes you eastwards through pockets of woods and grassy meadows, passing quaint shepherd huts and weathered farm buildings. You pass right by the Husbliberg restaurant and we recommend stopping in for a refreshing drink and snack before continuing the last kilometre to Sparenmoos. From Sparenmoos there are several options to get down the hill to Zweisimmen. We therefore recommend either renting a scooter at Site Alp or taking a taxi down the hill. You might like to spend some time exploring the town, gateway to the Saanenland, before heading back to Gstaad. When you've had your fill, walk to

Zweisimmen train station and catch the train back to Gstaad. Perhaps spend the rest of the afternoon in the pool or relaxing in the garden.

DAY EIGHT Travel back to the UK

You enjoy a final breakfast at your hotel before starting your journey home. If returning to the UK by rail you can have a leisurely breakfast as you do not need to leave Gstaad until around 11am. You retrace your steps home via Montreux, Geneva and Paris, getting back to London around 9.30pm. If flying back from Geneva airport you may have a few additional hours in the morning to relax before catching an afternoon flight home.

HOTELS

In this walking holiday we include a seven night stay in Gstaad.

Other options in the Saanenland are available on request, and additional nights can be added here or in other destinations.

Expressions

PARK HOTEL GSTAAD

5 star

The Park Gstaad is a grand hotel built in alpine chalet-style, 5-star, but with a pedigree that dates back to 1910 when the original owners understood that the recently-opened railway line was going to change the fate of this mountain village. When the hotel opened it was exceptional for its era, with its central heating, electricity and lift. Over the years, the hotel has expanded in keeping with its original design, and its lift has been preserved for all visitors to admire. Today there are 84 rooms and 10 suites. We recommend the deluxe mountain view rooms with balcony that face both the Wispile with its cable car, ski runs in winter and walking tracks in summer, and towards the Diablerets glacier. The bedrooms are spacious and very well equipped with plenty of hanging-space and inside seating. The hotel grounds and gardens are kept immaculate, with clipped lawn, shady areas for sitting, flowers and shrubs. In the summer lunch can be taken outside in the gardens with views of the swimming pool. Inside the hotel is spacious but offers a cosy welcome with his wooden floors, walls and ceiling, upholstered seating and large bar with panoramic windows. On the first floor is Avenue Montagne, a gourmet restaurant serving creative menus combining the traditional and the contemporary. An expansive buffet breakfast with cooked to order hot dishes is served here from 7am with non-stop service throughout the day. Service is outside on the south-facing terrace, weather-permitting. A bonus is the indoor, heated, saltwater swimming pool. Spa treatments can be booked and there is also a sauna and gym. One of the benefits of the Park Gstaad is its proximity to town. The hotel's location on a hill just above the southern end of the famous Gstaad Promenade means it's an easy walk down to the shops and restaurants, and a slightly longer walk back up again. If you are spending a longer time here to explore the area then the location is a real plus. It's about a 10 minute walk to the Wispile cable-car, about 10 minutes to the railway station, and there is a bus stop at the bottom of the road which is very handy if you want to walk from the top of the Wispile to Lauenen or



Park Hotel Gstaad

Lauenensee and take the bus back.

Facts in brief

Official star rating 5

Location About 5 minutes' walk on a hillside above the centre of Gstaad.

Annual opening All year except from 15 March to 18 June

Closest airport Geneva International Airport

Distance from airport The hotel is about 3 hours by train from Geneva

Closest railway station Gstaad Station

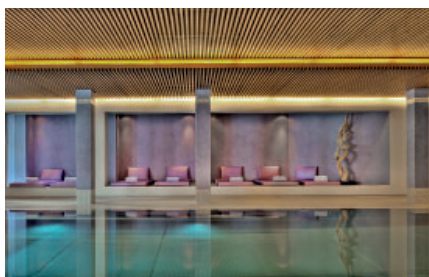
Distance from railway station The hotel is 3 minutes by car and about 10 minutes on foot from Gstaad station

Hotel facilities and services

Gourmet restaurant, Bar with food service, Lunch service in garden (summer), Chalet Waldhuus speciality restaurant (winter), Chubut firewood restaurant (winter), Garden, Outdoor pool, Indoor heated saltwater pool, Fitness room, Sauna, Spa treatments, Room service, Bike lounge, Children's playroom, Underground parking, Ice-rink in grounds in the winter, Golf simulator.



Park Hotel Gstaad, restaurant



Park Hotel Gstaad, indoor pool



Park Hotel Gstaad, south facing room

OUR PRICES

The sample prices mentioned in this leaflet are generally a 'from' price based on the cheapest season of travel. However, transport fares and hotel rates can change (up and down depending on offers), so we give you an accurate price for your holiday when we provide you with a quotation. Our sample prices should be used as an indication of how much a particular combination will cost and to show the differences on average between the hotel categories on offer.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Our booking conditions apply to all holidays. A copy can be found on our website and a copy is also sent to you with a written quotation and when you make a booking.

FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Expressions Holidays offers full financial protection for all holidays you book with us. If your holiday includes a flight, the ATOL (3076) covers the costs of the holiday. If the holiday does not include a flight, it is the ABTOT bond that protects the cost of the holiday. We are also members of AITO (the Association of Independent Tour Operators) and ABTA.



Expressions Holidays
Lynx House, Pynes Hill, Exeter EX2 5JL

HOW TO BOOK

To make a booking, just phone us on

01392 441250

and we can take you through the details we need and start the booking process. A deposit is required to confirm the arrangements and this can be paid by debit or credit card over the phone. The level of the deposit will be confirmed at the point of booking.