




Secret Goms Valley

Twin center upper  and upper   independent walking

- One of Switzerland's best-kept secrets: fantastic twin-center walking right off the tourist trail; choice of level every day
- Snow-capped peaks, postcard pretty villages, meadows ablaze with colorful wild flowers
- Breathtaking 360° Alpine views: Eiger, Eggishorn, Matterhorn and mighty Aletsch glacier
- Welcoming trailside restaurants with panoramic sun terraces for lunch
- Charming ★★★ and ★★★★★ hotels, excellent cuisine, friendly owners



This fabulously scenic independent walking holiday explores the undiscovered Goms Valley in Southern Switzerland close to the Italian border. A long-time favourite with Swiss hikers, it's a region of outstanding natural beauty and, during your week, you will see some spectacular sites: majestic snowy mountains, thundering waterfalls and the Aletsch, Europe's longest glacier. But there are minor discoveries too which are just as fascinating: Gothic churches, Baroque chapels, beautiful mountain shrines and charming wooden villages bedecked with flowers.

For much of the route, you'll be following the well-marked paths alongside the infant River Rhone as it gushes between wooden bridges on its way to Lake Geneva – look out for marmots, red starts and golden eagles circling above. The superb mountain transport system – cable cars, chairlifts and the bright scarlet Matterhorn Gottard Bahn - makes getting around really easy and allows you to choose walking distances to suit how you feel each day.

The places where you'll be staying are as special as their surrounds and you'll sample superb menus every evening. You're sure to appreciate the contrasts between mouthwatering Valais cuisine in Obergesteln and the artistic creations of expert chef (and Everest explorer!), Peter Gschwendtner, in Blitzingen.

"It was a very refreshing week. We returned home rested and relaxed having enjoyed the beauty of the Goms Valley."

Mrs G Eagles



SECRET GOMS VALLEY | DAY BY DAY

Sunday Arrive in Obergesteln

After a panoramic mountain rail journey, we meet you in Obergesteln and take you (5 mins) to the hotel where you'll spend the next three nights. Time to relax over a welcome cocktail before dinner.

Monday The Upper Goms Valley 9km/6mi/2.5hr or 12km/8mi/4hr

All walkers start out together today with a stroll across the valley floor and a gentle climb across the flower-covered hillside. The easier option is to descend to Geschinen – where you can peer into the woodcarver's shop to admire his intricate artwork – before a riverside stroll by the Rhone takes you to Münster. The more energetic walkers climb into the wild and rocky Minstigerbach Valley – a fabulous place for a picnic. Everyone takes the little red train for the nine minute ride back to Obergesteln.

Tuesday Obergesteln Circular Walk 10km/6mi/3hr or 12km/8mi/4hr

From the hotel a path through bluebell-dotted pine woods leads to the charming little village of Oberwald; it's right at the upper end of the valley and overlooked by majestic peaks towering to more than 3000m. After lunch you circle round the valley and back to the hotel with plenty of time to get in the jacuzzi and enjoy an aperitif on the terrace while you admire great mountain views.

Wednesday Obergesteln to Blitzingen 11km/7mi/4hr or 13km/8mi/4.5hr

Today you walk from the Upper to the Lower Goms, with a relaxed start by train to Münster. From there it's a choice - the easier route meanders along above the river before crossing to Gluringen, a picturesque village with pretty church. The longer route winds along the Gommer High Level Path, in and out of striking side valleys and past characterful mountain cafés. There are tremendous views towards the snow-capped Weisshorn as you near the Hotel Castle perched high on the hillside.

Thursday Blitzingen Circular Walks 13km/8mi/4hr or 16km/10mi/5hr

The valley narrows at Blitzingen before opening out to broad mountain views as you approach the sunny, wonky timber-built village of Bellwald set high on an alp. Its warren of narrow flower-filled alleys are a delight to explore. You can take the chairlift up to enjoy a sky-high picnic amid clover and buttercups before rambling back down through Niederwald, the birthplace of César Ritz.

Friday Villages of the Lower Goms Valley 13km/8mi/4hr

Today offers a splendid walk through villages unchanged for centuries on the south-east side of the river. Explore lovely Mühlebach with its traditional Valaisian wooden buildings dating from the 14C. Then it's on to Ernen, Village of Culture and Music, which features murals and friezes on the Tellenhaus – and gasthofs for welcome refreshments!

Saturday Eggishorn and the Aletsch Glacier Various choice of distances

A tremendous finale to your week begins with a ride by cable car to the top of the Eggishorn at 2926m (9600ft), where you will be overwhelmed by the vista. There are full-length views of the mighty Aletsch Glacier, the longest in Europe, and a 360° panorama which includes Eiger, Jungfrau, Finsterhorn and Matterhorn - superb picnic spots right beside the glacier.

Sunday Depart Blitzingen



"This was one of the best holidays we have ever done with you. The wild flowers and butterflies were amazing."

Mrs S Dean

Dates and Prices

Departs Sundays	Tour Only
2012 departures	
Jun 10, 17, Sep 9, 16	\$2,798
Jun 24, Jul 1, Sep 2	\$2,831
Jul 8, 15, Aug 26	\$2,798
Jul 22, 29, Aug 5, 12, 19	\$2,869

Singles: Add \$23 per night for sole occupancy of a double room.

Child: This holiday is unsuitable for children under 12.

Holiday type: Independent walking, twin center, no minimum group size.

Departs: Sundays from Jun 10 to Sep 16.

Duration: 8 days (7 nights).

Meals: Continental breakfast and evening meals.

Other details: You should allow approx \$100 per person for the use of mountain transport. For "What your holiday price includes," see "Holiday Planning" section pp 48-51.

Tailor-made travel choices

Nearest Arrival Airport: Zurich Airport

Flights can be arranged from most US/CANADA airports, with connecting transfers as required, prices and details on request.

The above prices include our standard transfers: Obergesteln train station at 17:16 (transfer to hotel, 5 min, provided). **Return:** Blitzingen train station by 09:14 (transfer provided).

Rail options: Zurich airport to Obergesteln (via Zurich HB, Goschene and Andermatt) 13:47/17:16. Return: Blitzingen to Zurich airport (via Andermatt, Goschene, Arth Goldau and Zurich HB) 09:14/13:13.

Second Class Swiss Rail: Add \$372 per person, round trip.

First Class Swiss Rail: Add \$566 per person, round trip.

Tour only: Transfers included from Obergesteln train station at 17:16, and back to Blitzingen train station departing hotel at 09:00.

SECRET GOMS VALLEY | WHERE YOU STAY



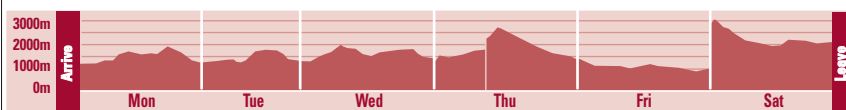
Hotel Hubertus
★★★★
Obergesteln



Hotel Castle
★★★★
Blitzingen

Days 1+2+3 Days 4+5+6+7
For extra nights we recommend both of the hotels above.

SECRET GOMS VALLEY | WALKING DETAILS



Paths, which can be quite narrow, are well-made and very well signposted. They are sometimes rocky with exposed tree roots, so walking boots are essential. Note: Some ski lifts/cable cars do not operate in early/late season when alternative walks will be proposed.



Average daytime temperature (°C):

23 25 24 21
JUN JUL AUG SEP



Average monthly rainfall (mm):

73 67 99 83
JUN JUL AUG SEP

W07SG