



Trip Report: Hiking in Lenzerheide, Switzerland

HIKING

TRAVEL

TRIP REPORTS

By [Kühl Editor](#) on October 4, 2019

When I arrived at the Swiss ski area, Arosa Lenzerheide, in the canton of Graubünden, in early September, I embarked on a memorable Grison Alps adventure. I explored the lush green valley and its pristine alpine lake and also trekked down from the rocky surface of the Rothorn Summit to the midpoint at Scharmoin.

Arosa Lenzerheide

A Room with a View

Checking in at the modern Revier Mountain Lodge was done electronically at a high tech computer console. I had to guess at some of the required responses since the prompts were in German. All of the rooms are arranged on one side of each floor's corridor and are accessed by a multiple digit code obtained during check-in. Each doorway entrance has a whimsical English saying. Two of my favorites were *Follow Your Dreams* and *Tonight is*

the Night.

The focal point of my simple wood-paneled room was an oversized picture window with an incredible view of the fertile valley. The turquoise colored Lake Heidsee glistened against the backdrop of dark green foliage and surrounding mountains. Off in the distance, I could see the telltale sign of ski runs carved into the slopes.



View from Revier Mountain Lodge

Few hotel accommodations offer an unobstructed view of Mother Nature's handiwork. This natural perk offset the Revier's bare bone approach, which did not include a telephone, a minibar, reception desk, or room service.

Lunch at the Reviere Mountain Lodge

Before embarking on my group walk along a path that winds its way around the lake and then heads to the nearby village, we were treated to lunch in the lodge's only restaurant. The limited menu with a few vegetarian options was written in German. Grilled vegetables on focaccia bread was a delicious choice.

Strolling Around Lake Heidsee

To cross the multi-lane roadway in front of the hotel, we took an underground passageway that led to the

pedestrian-only path straddling the perimeter of the lake. The clear water revealed a lakebed filled with medium and large boulders. Schools of small fish darted here and there while families of brown and black and white headed ducks came close to the shoreline looking for food.

A couple of trails led to tiny peninsulas where diverse ecosystems ranged from tall grasses growing out of the water to mature coniferous trees. Short wooden bridges made it possible to maneuver over the wetlands. Deep shades of green were offset by white, yellow, purple, and pink wildflowers.



Lake Heidsee, Lenzerheide, Switzerland

Along our circular route, children had multiple options to enjoy playground equipment. Water sports enthusiasts eagerly rented windsurfing equipment, sailboats, pedal boats, hydro bikes, rowboats, and kayaks. Wakeboarders used a cable instead of a motorboat to propel them across the calm lake. No one in our group had ever witnessed such an activity.

On our way to the nearby village, we passed another playground adjacent to a heavily wooded area running along a fast-moving mountain stream. Here an indigenous population of squirrels has grown accustomed to the immense attention offered by visitors and locals. In the Squirrel Forest, these vivacious animals darted from one group of people to another, often begging for morsels of food.

Eventually, the forested path opened to a small town filled with boutique shops, restaurants, cafes, and lodging. Most of the shops were empty, and only a handful of people were walking on the sidewalk. But then again,

summer was over, and school had started.

A Local Treat

Our Switzerland Tourism tour leader, Sabina Brack, introduced us to a bündner nusstorte at Backerei Sebgondi Konditorei, a family bakery operating for four generations. This traditional round cake made from flour, sugar, eggs, and butter has a thick, sweet filling comprised of sugar, cream, milk, and coarsely chopped walnuts. The shopkeeper sliced the cake into equal pieces so we could taste this regional dessert dating back to the 1920s.

Relaxing at the Lodge

Before I fell asleep that evening, I gazed out my picture window. The nearby mountain ranges had become lost in a sea of darkness while the moonlight and stars shined brightly against the blackened sky.

The Revier Mountain Lodge's daily morning buffet featured muesli, yogurt, fruits, an assortment of cold meats and cheeses, homemade bread from a local bakery and locally sourced soft-boiled eggs.

Downhill Trekking Adventure

Andreas Koffler (Andi), the hiking guide for Pilgris Wanderleiter, led us on an alpine hike that started at the top of Rothorn Mountain and ended at the Scharmoin Middle Station. Andi grew up in the region and currently lives with his family a short distance away. Even though he only escorts four to five English-speaking hiking tours a year and his primary language is German, he had an excellent command of the English language. On a part-time basis, Andi offers tours focusing on birds and wildlife, diverse terrains, and personalized adventures.

To reach the pinnacle, we took two forms of transportation—a gondola to Scharmoin and an aerial cable car to the peak. Luckily for us, the Rothorn Mountain Railway station run by Lenzerheide Bergbahnen was just steps away from our lodge.

From the Rothorn Summit, I looked down on the valley from 2861 meters (9,386 feet) above sea level. Unlike my native state of Colorado, this altitude was above tree line. The terrain was extremely rocky and devoid of vegetation.



Rocky terrain at summit, Lenzerheide, Switzerland

On this crisp morning, the panoramic view was outstanding. As everyone added to their collection of digital images, Andi pointed to numerous peaks while reciting their names and also mentioned that it was possible to see Germany, Austria, and Italy.



View from summit, Lenzerheide, Switzerland

Even though the Alps are considered a young mountain range, the rock formations in the Grisons are very complex. In this region, the deep layers are composed of metamorphic and magmatic rocks. Sedimentary layers are made of lime and slate. During our hike, we traversed a sedimentary region called “Bündner Schiefer” or “Grisons-slate.”



Sandy begins descent from summit. Pictured in [KÜHL ALSKA HOODY](#)

Yellow signs mounted on a metal poles with white-red-white striping offered approximate times to reach specific destinations. Andi led us to a steep winding trail heading downhill that was continually marked with the same pattern of striping. A few areas of snow interrupted the varying shades of grey with large areas of green. We could hear bells clanking in the distant valley but could barely see the source until we trekked a bit lower.



Surrounded by jagged cliffs on descent

The sun rose higher in the sky, and the brisk air became more tepid. We were fully exposed in a wide-open area without any natural protection. Everyone started to peel off the top layer of clothing as the sun's rays penetrated our bodies.

Periodically, I paused to take in the immense natural beauty surrounding me. Jagged grey mountain peaks, splashed with green and rolling terrain mixed with boulders and green vegetation, were seen in all directions against the cloudless sky. Wildflowers, a small patch of alpine grass, or a cluster of berries occasionally captured my attention.



Sandy takes a break on descent. Pictured in [KÜHL SUN BLADE HAT](#), top and leggings.

As we descended into the valley, forests filled predominantly with Norway spruce trees replaced the rocky terrain. European larch, mountain pine, shrubby mountain pine, and Swiss stone pine were part of the enfolding landscape.

While ibex, chamois, red and roe deer, marmot, red fox, and squirrels inhabit this alpine region, I only saw a few marmots and an ibex. Had Andi not pointed out their distant location, I would have missed out. Golden eagles, bearded vultures, northern ravens, and rock ptarmigan, as well as other species, are commonly seen. Since I am not a birder, I cannot say with any certainty what was occasionally flying overhead. Andi shared glossy images of the most frequently seen wildlife and also warned us that there was one type of poisonous snake lurking about.

Until we came closer to the mid-station, we rarely encountered other hikers. Several mountain bikers whizzed down the path, and a couple of hang gliders interrupted the solid sapphire sky for a few fleeting moments. Occasionally, we hopscotched over rocks in fast-flowing mountain streams to reach the other side of the trail.

We eventually came upon the source of the bells. Braunvieh or Brown-Suisse cows grazed near a small pool of water. While I was reluctant to pass through the small herd, I foolishly followed the people ahead of me. One aggressive cow started to nibble on my [KÜHL top](#) and [leggings](#). I swiftly removed myself from this intimidating situation.



Hungry cows, Lenzerheide, Switzerland

Shortly after, we reached the Alp Sanaspans (2,044 meters or 6,706 feet), a small wooden hut where a short list of refreshments is served during the summer season at outdoor wooden picnic benches. To satiate my intense thirst,

I tried an apple-flavored sparkling water while my colleagues chose a round of coffee in red mugs.



Coffee break

From the hut, we enjoyed views of Lenzerheide. Like other places in Switzerland, spigots with free-flowing water cascaded into an open trough where trekkers and mountain bikers did not hesitate to replenish their water bottles.

Refreshed and rested, we continued our trek on a forested trail to the Sanaspans waterfall. A canopy of trees offered relief from the midday sunshine. A triangle-shaped sign warned of rockslides along the narrow, steep path lined with boulders, tree roots, and loose gravel. The waterfall area and adjacent picnic area were crowded venues. Oohs and ahs could be heard as hikers captured a glimpse of water cascading down.

An adjacent rocky path with exposed tree roots led us uphill to the Scharmoin Middle Station. It weaved in and out of the forested terrain. Wooden benches were intermittently spaced along the route. An occasional meadow offered the opportunity to gaze at the village below and admire the mountains ranges in the background.

Lunch at Bergrestaurant Scharmoin

At the Middle Station (1904 meters or 6,247 feet), I sat next to a large picture window in the wood-paneled Bergrestaurant Scharmoin. I watched a steady stream of mountain bikers head downhill while I chatted with two of my writing colleagues and sipped Aperol spritz drinks.



Mountain bike track at Mid Station, Lenzerheide, Switzerland

Our hiking adventure concluded with a delicious three-course meal that started with a medium-sized plate piled high with green and red lettuce garnished with thinly sliced radishes, strips of peppers, small squares of beets and carrot strips. The main course, Pizzoccheri Valtellina with vegetables, was a hefty portion of buckwheat pasta in a buttery-cheese sauce served with carrots, tomatoes, and potatoes. This Italian dish appeared a bit out of place in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. The vanilla ice cream with Bündner Röteli, a local cherry-flavored liquor, added a special touch to my day trekking downhill in the Grison Alps.

Reflections

My day and a half Hiking in Style adventure provided an opportunity to see only a small portion of the more than 300 kilometers or 186 miles of trail options. Despite a limited amount of time to explore the terrain, I left Lenzerheide with an appreciation of the diverse landscape of the Grison Alps. The contrasting textures and colors of the mountainous terrain and high valley set against a vivid blue sky presented countless memories of a beautiful place worth visiting. My digital images and words can only capture part of my extraordinary journey.

Transportation Options

I relied on the efficient Swiss Travel System to reach the Revier Mountain Lodge in Lenzerheide. On-time buses

frequently run between the bus stop just steps from the hotel and the Chur train station. From the train station, it's easy to hop on trains headed to and from Zurich. By car, travel time is slightly less than my commute time of approximately two hours.

Switzerland Tourism hosted Sandy Bornstein's 2-day visit to Lenzerheide and her stay at the Revier Mountain Lodge. All of the opinions expressed in this story are based on the author's experience.

When Sandy Bornstein isn't trekking in Colorado or writing, she's [traveling with her husband Ira](#). After living as an international teacher in Bangalore, India, Sandy published an award-winning book, *May This Be the Best Year of Your Life*, as a resource for people contemplating an expat lifestyle and living outside their comfort zone.

Among other things, Sandy writes about family, intergenerational, and active midlife adventures highlighting land and water experiences. All photos by [The Traveling Bornsteins](#).



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