



kandersteg
international scout centre

Blausee Eco Hike

Welcome to the Blausee Eco Hike. This hike will take you down to Blausee along a beautiful path. Along the way you will see some of the many wonders that make up

Safety: This hike is in an Alpine Environment; extreme weather conditions are possible, the group should be well prepared for all types of weather.

Please note that these route descriptions are not a replacement for map reading. Always carry a map and know how to use it. Maps are available for hire from reception.

Info:

The entry for Blausee is 1 CHF :- per person and there is a deposit on 50 :- CHF for a card that is needed for the entrance.

In this booklet you will find that *hiking information is in italics* whereas information about the area is in normal text.

Enjoy your hike!

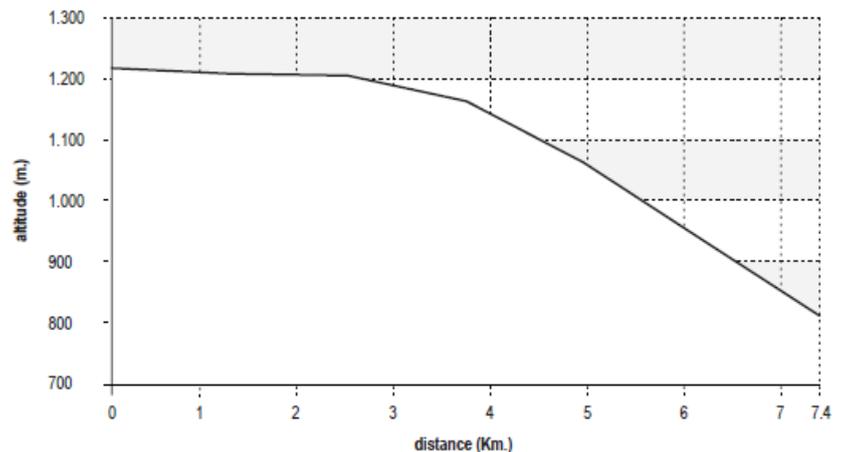


Route:

Start from the Centre (1189m) by following the riverside path (route 1) towards the village (N). Follow the track as it becomes a road through the fields. The road takes you to the tunnel under the railway. Before the tunnel turn left (NNE) and walk to the train station, which is now only 500 meters away.

Altitude profile:

After the train station continue in the same direction (NNE) along the road (route 2). Ignore the three junctions (after 100, 500 and 800 meters from the station) on your left. They ascend to Höh view point.



Twenty minutes after the train station you arrive at a Y shaped junction. Continue to the left and straight after the junction take the first track joining into your path on the right side (signposted to Blausee). Now you are back beside the river Kander. The path (route 3) leads you to NNW and traverses the gentle slope that descends diagonally to your route. Soon the path will leave the river bank and curves quickly NW (1138m). After some 10 minutes it descends back to river side at the place called Underen Büel (1043m). This is the half way point to Blausee. Do not cross the nearby bridge unless you want to go to the main road with frequent bus connections between Kandersteg and Blausee.

After the slightly steeper step down to Underen Büel you walk through woods and across meadows to NNW descending only 32 meters over the next kilometre in distance. The route is sided all the way by a huge rock wall on the left side and by the river Kander on the right side. Walk along for approximately 2 kilometres and you will arrive to a junction with the Blausee signpost (924m). Turn right (NE) here and follow the path to the bridge over the river. You must cross the river here! If you walk straight on without turning you will miss Blausee.

The lake can be seen on the other side of the river, but there is no bridge across. Having crossed the river walk through some fields (NE) and you will finally come to the main road. To get to the Blue Lake (Blausee), turn left and walk along the road for five minutes. The bus stop for your return is at the car park entrance, but now go into Blausee and enjoy!

1. The Wooden Houses

On your way to Blausee you are going to cross the village. Enjoy this opportunity to observe the wooden houses around you. These chalets are typical of the alpine regions in Switzerland and very popular due to its versatility and cost effectiveness. Wood-framed houses enable easy modifications during and after the building process and they also help to save energy (and money) with heating and cooling systems. That's because wood conducts less energy than glass, marble and aluminium. This means less energy 'leakage' from a home. If you want the warmth (or coolness) to remain in your home and you want to spend less money on heating (or cooling), wood is a tremendous alternative to brick, concrete or stone.

Another advantage is that in harsh weather conditions such as heavy rain, snow and icy conditions (just like the swiss climate), wood construction can continue without hindrance.

Houses made of wood are sustainable, renewable and environmentally friendly because the wooden structures absorb and store atmospheric CO₂ and wood is carbon neutral, even taking into account transportation.



2. Trains

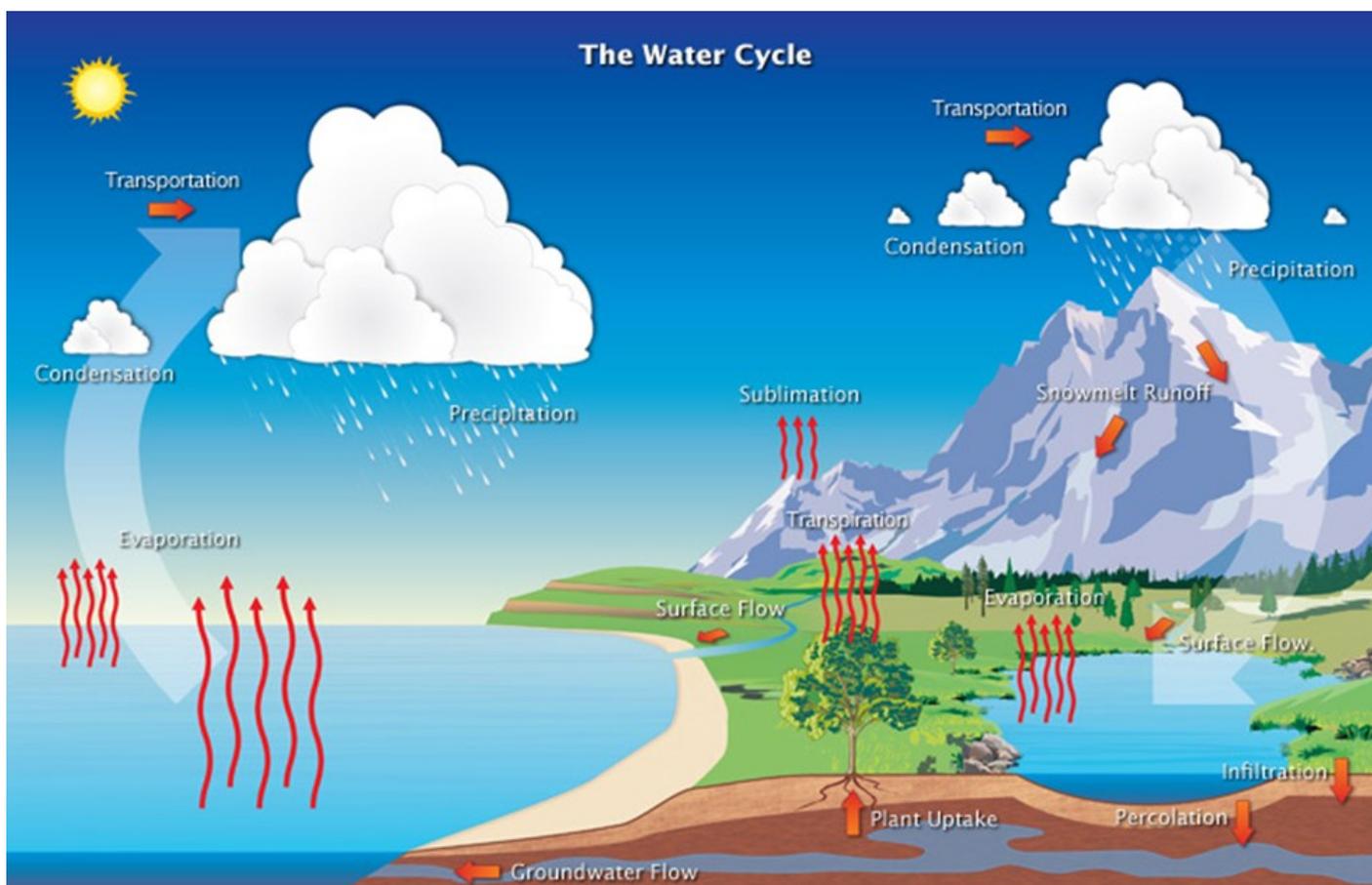
During your stay in Kandersteg you have probably noticed how many trains cross the village and there is also a big chance that you have used them arrive at KISC. That's because the rail transport is largely used in Switzerland for cargo/goods as well as for people. Even though the trains need fossil fuels to work, this kind of transportation does not consume as much energy when compared to road transportation, once the trains have a large carrying capacity. That's why train transportation is cheaper and more environmental friendly for medium and long distances when compared to cars, trucks and airplanes.

An important part of the history of the village is the construction of the Lötschberg Tunnel, which has 14.612 meters long and was the first alpine railway to be built! Work began on the 15th October 1906 and on the 31st March 1911 the two entrances to the tunnel met, but the tunnel was officially opened only on the 15th July 1913. The Old Chalet was accommodation for the workers before it became a Scout Centre.



3. Water Cycle

Did you noticed how much water is around us? Water goes through different phases: liquid (rivers, ocean, rain), solid (ice, snow), and gas (vapor) and it moves from one reservoir to another, such as from river to ocean, or from the ocean to the atmosphere, by the physical processes of evaporation, condensation, precipitation, infiltration, runoff, and subsurface flow, as shown at the picture below. This process is known as the water cycle or hydrological cycle and it describes the continuous movement of water on, above and below the surface of the Earth. This movement involves an exchange of energy, which leads to temperature changes. For instance, when water evaporates, it takes up energy from its surroundings and cools the environment. When it condenses, it releases energy and warms the environment. The water cycle is also essential for the maintenance of most life and ecosystems on the planet.



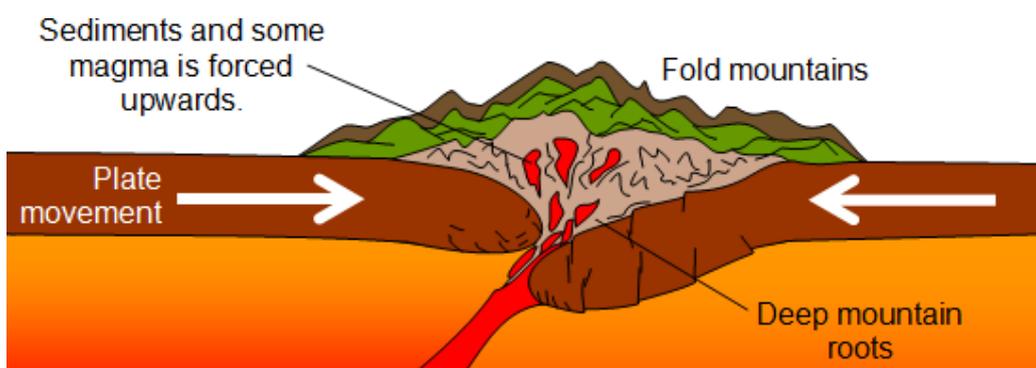
4. Water Power Electricity in Kandersteg

Water can also be used as an energy source. In Switzerland, 55% of the energy comes from water power! Do you know how it works? All we need is falling or fast running water going through a turbine, then it is transformed into energy. Hydropower has been used since ancient times for many kinds of watermills and various mechanical devices, eg. producing flour from grain and sawing timber and stone.

In Kandersteg, the main source of energy is water. In 1903 a group of local men built a small hydroelectric plant, using the underground outflow from the Oeschinensee lake to generate a small amount of electricity for the village. The second phase, the central power station in the centre of the village was completed in 1995. Another large station was built later, together providing 85% of the electricity consumed by the village. In times of high flow, they produce more than 100% of the village's power needs! This machinery gets very hot when producing electricity, and so more water is used to cool it down. This water is then used to fill the village pool, making for a free, eco way of heating the pool!

5. The Alps

Make a quick stop to observe the landscape around you and appreciate these beautiful mountains. They belong to a large mountain chain across Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, Italy, Monaco, Lichtenstein and Slovenia called Alps, which was formed 50 million years ago by the collision of the African and Eurasian tectonic plates. The African plate pushed over the Eurasian plate with great force, making them rise and fold. Note that the pressure from the south (African plate) is stronger than the pressure from the north (Eurasian plate) and so the pressure forced the folded rock to thrust north. That is why in the Alps the north facing routes

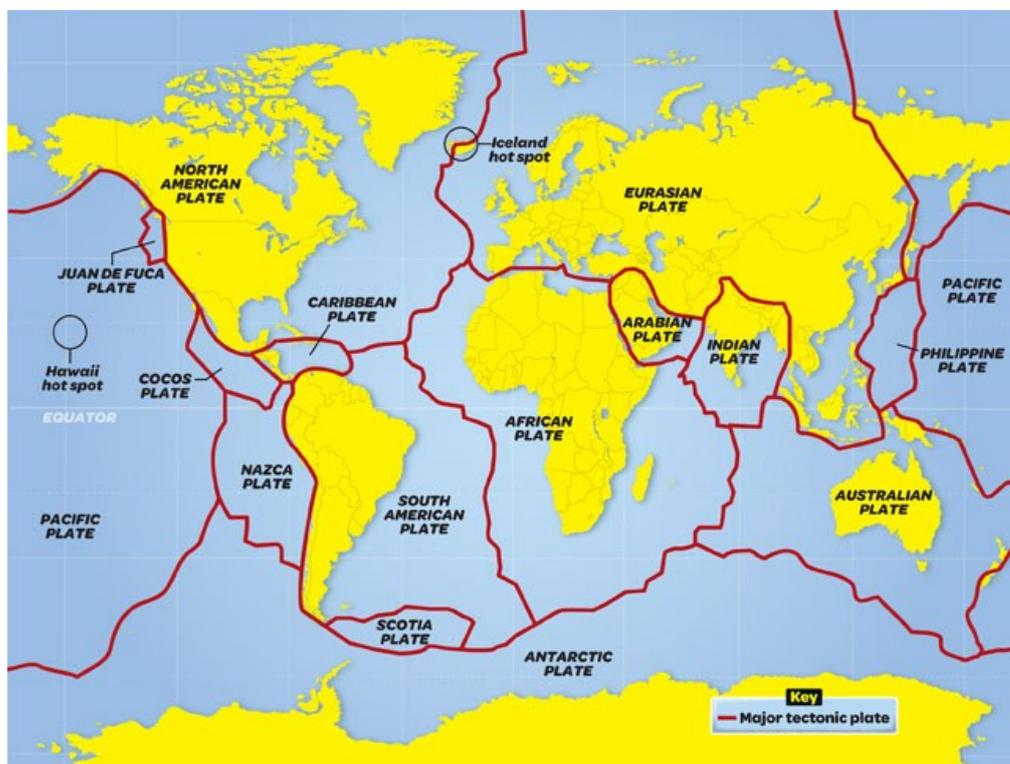


on the mountains are generally much bigger and steeper than the south faces.

Even though the tectonic plates are still moving and pressuring each other, the Alps are not getting higher due to erosion. Erosion is the action of surface processes that remove soil, rock or dissolved material from one location on the Earth's crust, then transport it away to another location. Eroded sediment or solutes may be transported just for a few millimetres, or for thousands of kilometres by the rain, rivers, ice, the oceans or the wind, for example.



In steep landscapes we might also see the result of mass movements (referred to in general terms as a landslide) at rock fall areas. The mass movements are an important part of the erosional process and is often the first stage in the breakdown and transport of weathered materials in mountainous areas. It moves material from higher elevations to lower elevations where other eroding agents such as streams and glaciers can then pick up the material and move it to even lower elevations.



6.The Shape Of The Valleys

Have you ever noticed that most of the valleys in this region have an “U shape”? That’s because they were carved out glaciers! Observe the images below to understand how did it happen.

(Images from Evolving Alps Hike Guide) Stage 1: Landscape before the glaciers arrive. Gentle, rolling hills. Stage 2: Glaciers have formed and they begin to change the landscape. They carve out deep U shaped valleys and bowl shaped cirques, where the ice accumulates. Stage 3: The glaciers have gone and left behind a totally different landscape.

7.Organic Trouts

Once you arrive in Blausee, look for the organic trouts farm. There you will find rainbow and salmon trouts and some information about how they are grown. Don’t

miss it!



The Route

This map is to show you where to stop, and not as a replacement for a full map. You still need to bring a map with you on this hike.

