

Rosenlauri Glacier Gorge

Tour

You'll hike up through the gorge on the well-secured trail. At the top end you leave the gorge through a gate. There are steps to take you up to the rest area in the forest. From there, follow the yellow signpost for 'Rosenlauri' via a forest trail back to the entrance. Tour information:

- Duration: 45 minutes.
- Length: 1.2 kilometres.
- Climb: Gorge walkway, 115 metres in height, over 200 steps.
- Descent: Forest trail, 115 metres in height, over 200 steps.
- Equipment: Trainers or hiking boots, weather-suitable clothing.
- Safety: Please supervise small children and hold their hand if necessary.
- Safety: The tunnel ceilings are low. Watch your head.
- Unfortunately, the gorge is not accessible for prams and wheelchairs.

Guide to the gorge

On the railings of the gorge walkway you'll find 19 signs in German with information on geology, construction and maintenance, as well as interesting facts and sights. Below you will find the translation of the texts. The text number corresponds with the sign number:

1 The trail through the gorge

The well-secured, 573-metre-long trail with 12 tunnels and 215 steps allows you to explore the Rosenlauri Glacier Gorge safely. At the entrance to the gorge, you find yourself 1,370 metres above sea level. The gorge exit is 115 metres higher, at 1,485 metres above sea level.

2 First stage of gorge trail construction

From 1901 to 1902, Rosenlauri hotelier Kaspar Brog had the upper part of the gorge developed by the Tyrolean building contractor Johann Berti. The trail was blasted into the rock with 9,000 rounds of dynamite (180 packages each weighing 2.5 kg). The impressive construction cost CHF 22,000 and opened on 6 June 1903.

3 Second stage of gorge trail construction

From 1930 to 1931, the descendants of Kaspar Brog had the gorge trail extended to its current length by the construction company Abplanalp & Ramoni, Unterheid. The construction costs amounted to CHF 24,000. Since then, the trail has only been lightly renovated and adapted to today's safety standards.

4 Waterfall

This mighty waterfall marks the entrance to the Rosenlauri Glacier Gorge. How many cubic metres of water plunge down here every second? The amount of water is highly dependent on the weather and ranges from less than 1 m³ up to 15 m³ per second. Around every 100 years, floods of more than 25 m³ per second can occur.

5 Stone

On the right side of the trail, the brittle slate turns into solid limestone – an important prerequisite for the gorge's formation. Both varieties of stone originate from deposits in shallow seas. The limestone was deposited 140–145 million years ago, while the clay-like and sandy sediments of the slate were deposited about 40 million years ago.

6 Tunnels

You are about to enter the first of the 12 tunnels. At 34 metres, this tunnel is the longest. It also boasts a second notable characteristic: a 90-degree turn inside the mountain. The tunnels were built in 1901–2 and 1930–1 and are largely in their original condition. Be careful: the ceilings are sometimes very low. Watch your head.

7 What colour is the water?

The meltwater of glaciers transports finely ground rock particles. This rock dust clouds the water and gives it a milky appearance. This is why meltwater from glaciers is often referred to as glacier milk. Here, in the summer months, the glacier milk is clearly visible at high temperatures.

8 Glacier and whirlpool potholes

On the opposite wall, glacier and whirlpool potholes are a testament to glaciers and whirlpools gone by. On the next section of the trail, the stone is layered like roof tiles.

9 Alpine limestone – sometimes rugged, sometimes compact

Here, the gorge is wide, and the rock brittle. The alpine limestone is fractured because it was under immense pressure when the Alps were formed (10–30 million years ago). Look to the right. Further up, the gorge is narrower and the rock is remarkably polished. The alpine limestone is compact because it was exposed to less high pressure during the Alps' formation.

10 Rockslides and rock safety

In 1978, a rockslide occurred on the opposite side. In 1980, the rock slab was fixed in place using 57 rock anchors, each up to six metres long. The site where the rock is secured underwent renovation in 2015 based on a geological report. Visitor safety is our top priority. The gorge will not be opened in spring until all the rocks have been cleaned and inspected.

11 Old entrance to the gorge

From 1903 to 1931, only the upper part of the gorge was open to visitors. You went down steep stairs to reach the gorge trail at this point.

12 Rock formations

The water left remarkable shapes on the steep rock walls. Looking back, a striking rocky nose can be seen on the right. Is it a face – or a hat?

13 Elephant head

To the right of the waterfall, the water once carved the head of an elephant into the rock – the symbol of the gorge. In certain magic moments, the sun bathes the elephant's head in golden light.

14 Dome

You are standing under a large rock dome, reminiscent of a cathedral dome. In the Ice Age, this natural feature was created by meltwater beneath thick layers of ice. This is how all the other cliffs and the gorge itself were created, tens or even hundreds of thousands of years ago.

15 Explore with all your senses

Experience the boundless energy of water with all your senses. Dare to glimpse into the depths and to look up.

16 Will the gorge get even deeper?

The water makes its way between the rocks to the valley with indomitable force. And yet the gorge is no longer becoming measurably deeper. It probably received its finishing touches towards the end of the last great Ice Age. The last great Ice Age began about 115,000 years ago and ended about 11,500 years ago.

17 Maximum height

Further down, at the last tunnel, the rock faces reach their maximum height of 70 to 80 metres. Observe the stunning rock formations all the way up and the large whirlpool at your feet.

18 Trapped stone

As far as we can remember, the debris accumulated up to several metres in height at this narrow spot. A mighty waterfall plunged down over the large rock at the very top. In spring 2024, the rushing waters loosened debris from the bottleneck and washed it away for weeks. Only this great stone at the top was wedged in such a way that it stayed in place.

19 Safety nets

Since 1985, the rock section above the trail to your right has been secured. In 2015, the old steel supports were replaced by safety nets. These offer optimal protection for the walkway. This spot is checked on an ongoing basis.