

GL-023 Gufenstock

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Paul HB9DST and Hugo HB9AFH

Summary: The majority of summits in Glarus (GL) are technically difficult. Hugo came across this one exception -- not technically difficult, but the lack of activations concerns the fact the hike is long with a 1000m ascent.

The weather in the city has been oppressively hot, so we thought an escape to the mountains was in order. Hugo did some research and came up with this summit. Technically it is not difficult at all with only one short section near the summit making it a T3, otherwise a T2. However, the summit is a long hike and requires plenty of endurance; the sign at the start of the trail near the cable car station says 3.5 hours, and the ascent is close to 1000 meters. The trail is very well marked throughout, and only in a few spots did we have to cross shallow patches of snow. On the way back, both Hugo and I remarked that if we had realized what was in store for us in the morning, we might have picked a different summit. When we activated it, there had been only two previous activations – you must be in reasonably good shape to do the job. Key facts: the trail is 5.5 km long, the ascent is 1070 meters, and it took us 3 hours 38 minutes.



We started by driving to Enneda and then take the Äugstenseilbahn, a privately run cable car. Round trip (no discounts) was CHF 19.00. It covers just about 1000 meters in altitude. Note that a 5-minute hike from the summit station there is a small restaurant, which proved handy for these two thirsty hikers on their way back down and desperately needed a beer.

Stage 1: From the cable car station at Bärenboden you start up a somewhat steep section for 320 meters of ascent, with reasonably easy trails (not too many rocks). Tip: leave as early as you can (I believe the cable car starts at 9 a.m.) we were in the morning shade this entire Stage 1, which given the hot weather was a blessing. This stage of the trail ends at Point 1819 with a hut with a spring and a run-down picnic table. Because there were no cows anywhere near that high, we had no problems drinking the cold, refreshing water. In fact, during the hike we ran across several such springs and running streams. Expecting an unusually hot day, we both brought plenty of water, but this was unnecessary. However, when the cows get that high, I might be reluctant to drink that water.



Stage 1: From the cable car summit station to Point 1819, which is visible as the saddle in the middle of the photo.



View after completing Stage 1; the cable car station is visible as a tiny dot near the middle of the photo.

Stage 2: Point 1819 to the saddle at Point 1969. This involves following a large arc, and as the point names indicate, there is another ascent of 150 meters (although it feels like more). This time the trail is a bit rockier but is easy to follow.



Stage 2: ascent to the saddle at Point 1969.

Stage 3: Point 1969 to Bi den Seelenen. This section goes up and down, up and down, but it is essentially flat. It is in a field of limestone, and sometimes you have to watch your footing, but it's not really anything unexpected or unusual for a frequent hiker. At Bi den Seelenen, you run across several small ponds filled by snow runoff. In one of them on the return trip I stopped for some skinny dipping – Hugo and were totally alone, saw only just a few other hikers all day long, so there was not much chance of disturbing people.



Stage 3 involves crossing this rocky plateau to the next ridge.

Stage 4: Bi den Seelenen to the final approach just south of Gufelstock. Here you follow a large bend that involves a gentle ascent. This is the section where we had to cross several fields of snow.



Stage 4: From the small ponds to the final summit approach. Note: the summit is not the ridge on the right but rather the one in the background to the middle left. Lots of hiking left to do!

Stage 5: Final ascent. There is a sign pointing to the summit. You now must climb a final 80 meters, and the sign says it will take you 15 minutes. This ascent is the steepest part of the hike and what makes it a T3, but for an experienced hiker it's not really any problem at all.



Stage 5: The final approach; barely visible is the summit cross.

Summit: The activation zone is not terribly large but there is enough room for two antennas. The summit cross was recently replaced and provided a convenient mast support. From here we enjoyed some fantastic views in all directions along with a refreshing breeze.



The activation zone is sufficiently large to allow for a comfortable setup. The new summit cross, although not very high, gives adequate support for an antenna mast.



It was extremely hot in the valley and warm at the summit. After climbing 1000 meters, I needed some refreshment -- skinny-dipping in a snow runoff pond at an elevation of 2225 meters just above Bi den Seelenen.