



Description of the stations

Tannberg themed trail "In the footsteps of the Walser at Tannberg".

1. Old court – the "White House" of the free Walser of Tannberg

It was a bastion of justice, a symbol of the famous Walser freedoms, and simply known as the "White House." This solid structure was referred to as such as early as 1780, just when the United States had declared its independence. The special legal status of the Walser people allowed them to exercise lower jurisdiction and self-governance, and by 1412, there is documentary evidence of an Ammann (a kind of magistrate) for the "Walser Court of Tannberg." The proud courthouse, known as the "Great House," was the only secular building made of stone in Lech for centuries, with the first mention dating back to 1477. Today, the former town hall of Lech (built in 1520) enchants visitors with its Baroque style, particularly in the ornate courtroom. Additionally, under the same roof until the 20th century, there was an inn known as the "Old" (1741) or "Upper Crown."

2. St. Nicholas – Consecrated guardian for centuries, mighty praise of the Walser

As a mighty fortress of God, the massive natural stonework of the tower rises exactly 100 feet high, proclaiming the unshakeable faith of the Walser people at Tannberg since time immemorial. Even clerics praised the church tower of Lech as "mighty and one of the most beautiful far and wide." Simple yet striking and majestic, it harmoniously corresponds with the character of the landscape. Based on archaeological findings, the construction of St. Nicholas, the oldest and until 1610 the only parish church at Tannberg, is dated to the early 14th century. The richly varied interior, mainly reflecting the splendid Rococo country style of the 18th century, also includes well-preserved late Gothic elements. In 1433, the sacred building was "de novo," or newly consecrated, and in 1694, the tower received its decorative double onion dome.

3. Huber-Hus – The most beautiful Walser home as a treasury of history

A step over the threshold, and you encounter home, with moods and scenes from a time long thought lost coming to life, welcoming the traditional daily life and culture of the Walser people. With the Huber-Hus, the community of Lech has preserved a magnificent Walser farmhouse while simultaneously creating a living repository of history. Through careful renovation and adaptation, the authentic Walser living culture, a museum setting for current exhibitions, and the archives as the historical memory of the community have been successfully united under one roof. In this stately log building, which dates back to 1590, the residents upheld old traditions, such as the cooper's craft, until the end of the 20th century, promising a fascinating and impressive journey through time.

4. Swabian Children – Labour in foreign lands, marked by hard work and homesickness

Year after year, it was a heart-wrenching sight as thousands of children from West Tyrol and Vorarlberg set off to find employment with Swabian farmers. Often poorly dressed, some even barefoot, they began their journey before the spring had even arrived, so that their impoverished families would have one less mouth to feed. As early as 1625, there are reports of crowds from the Montafon region heading towards Ravensburg and Überlingen. It stands to reason that the tradition of the "Swabian Migration" was also well-established at Tannberg, as evidenced in 1814, when the summer school in Lech had to be cancelled "because most of the children are either in the Alps or working as shepherds in Swabia." The children returned around Martinmas (11th November), bringing back with them their wages, shoes, some coins, and a new set of clothes.

5. Schlössle – Sunny walser residence, a name bearing witness to mining history

Even though no castle stands there, the valley bears the same place name, and though there is no fortress, the proud title is historically accurate. To the west, further up the mountain, lies the "Gruaba," leading to the assumption that "Schlössle" refers to the residence of a mining overseer. It is documented that ore was mined in Lech. As early as 1515, Emperor Maximilian I granted Ludwig von Nordholz a fiefdom for a "mine on Tennenberg." Around 1660, a Johannes Beiser lived "on the Schloss," referring to the stately homestead to which the name was transferred. Until the 20th century, this Walser residence at 1,720 metres was one of the highest on Tannberg and enjoyed its splendid location amidst the sunny mountain meadows at the top of Oberlech.

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6. Gaisbühel – Enchanting landscape with biodiverse Walser meadows

If any landscape deserves to be called unique, it is Gaisbühel—this small alpine Arcadia with lush green waves. Gently rising hills, leisurely stretched ridges, bizarrely jutting knolls, and picturesque bogs, along with the most verdant mountain pastures, create a scene that has always captivated hearts. Long before Gaisbühel was mentioned in 1453 as one of the Walser settlements on Tannberg, alpine farming was already flourishing here. The Walser people, well aware of the fertile conditions, cleverly drew irrigation ditches from the ravines to supply the meadows with mineral-rich water. Fertilization was avoided, contributing to the unparalleled biodiversity that still thrives today, as seen in the Gaisbühel meadows at the foot of the eponymous Alp.

7. Gaisbühel-Alpe – Wonderfully preserved alpine building on historic ground

As the morning mists rise over the enchanting landscape of Gaisbühel, emerging from the bogs and wet meadows, the imposing Gaisbühel-Alpe appears almost like an ark on a mighty wave of salt-green. Majestically perched on one of the countless knolls, it overlooks its meadows below. Until 1969, the authentically preserved alpine building was used to produce the finest mountain cheese. The last dairyman was Heinrich Muxel, who began this ancient tradition at the age of 14. As early as 1260, the people of "Gaispuhil" were obliged to pay their dues to the Swabian monastery of Weingarten in the form of cheese. As a relic of the former Walser settlement (1453), the centuries-old block building, likely once inhabited year-round, retains much historical charm, including the large copper cheese kettle.

8. Peat Cutting at Gaisbühel – A natural treasure to fuel the Walser stoves

Soft gurgling between glistening grass tips, golden reflections of sunlight on steaming clods—moorlands have always held a magical, mysterious allure. As remnants of our primordial landscape, they harbour unique flora, like at Gaisbühel, where the country's highest reed bed is found, alongside extensive lowland moors, creating some of Central Europe's most biodiverse habitats. The Walser people, in addition to appreciating this natural splendour, early on recognized the value of peat (referred to as "Turben" in Alemannic), which was extracted in the Hasariad area until the 1930s. After the arduous work of harvesting, the peat was carefully dried on covered racks. Due to the scarcity of wood, the heating value of the peat was crucial for surviving the winter.

9. Wild Chives – Aromatic Walser herb on high alpine slopes

Its vibrant green stalks are among the first heralds of spring; its cultivated cousin is one of the most common kitchen herbs, yet its fresh aroma is unmatched. This is wild chives, a herb highly prized in the vast alpine herb garden of the Walser people. For centuries, chives were not cultivated but diligently gathered in the wild. Preferring calcareous, loamy soils, it thrives in meadows, scree slopes, and snow patches up to 2,000 metres. Accordingly, it is commonly found at Tannberg, especially in the splendid fens and wet meadows at Gaisbühel. Long used by the Walser to enhance the flavour of soups, potato dishes, egg dishes, and homemade cheese, the more pungent wild variety has recently been rediscovered by gourmet chefs.

10. Auenfeldsattel – Former lifeline of the Walser, now a scenic jewel

The view alone is uplifting on this saddle, over which the Walser migrated to their northernmost colonies, and which, as the European watershed, determines the flow direction of the waters. While to the northwest, the Bregenzerach meanders through the picturesque high valley toward the Rhine and the North Sea, to the southeast, the Gaisbach carves its gorge toward the Lech and the Black Sea. The natural scenery, from nearby wetlands to table mountains, is as grand as the significance of this mountain pass in days gone by. At the crossroads of Tannberg—the most beautiful bridge between the Walser communities on both sides—herds of cattle, shepherds, traders, pilgrims, and pioneers travelled along the "Old Horse Road" (1422). Where better to walk in the footsteps of the Walser than across this "historic summit"?

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11. Out of the flames came: "Agatha hi, Agatha har, today the wood must be taken to the yard!"

"Agatha hi, Agatha har, today the wood must be taken to the yard!" shouted the farmer from Kar to his neighbour when the latter reproached him for his sacrilegious actions. It was Agatha's Day, February 5th, a day dedicated to the saint who is believed to protect against fire. Unperturbed by the accusation of working on such a day, the scolded man continued on with his cart, determined to make use of the fine weather to bring his wood from the Bürstegg forest to shelter—up on Karbühel, where once indeed stood two Walser homesteads. As the pious churchgoers sat in their warm homes that evening, the valley was eerily lit by a fiery glow. The house of the transgressor was engulfed in flames, from which a shrill voice was heard: "Agatha hi, Agatha har, today it burns in the Kar!"

12. Schöneberg – Abandoned Walser homestead, a picturesque cultural landscape

The name speaks for itself, and though the Walser people likely appreciated its agricultural value, the name also perfectly reflects its aesthetic appeal. "Am Schönenberg" (At the Beautiful Mountain), as the former Walser settlement was called as early as 1453, welcomes visitors with serene mountain slopes, characterized by varied terrain and lush green meadows. The extraordinary biodiversity, boasting up to 60 plant species, many of which are protected or endangered, is a result of the traditional farming practices of the Walser. Remaining in this valuable cultural landscape is a former dwelling, a compact block building that tells of a once frugal life. Another Walser homestead is evidenced by a stone-covered connecting passage to the former barn, a rare and charming relic.

13. Bodenalpe – Tall Walser building above the roaring lech

In days gone by, this must have seemed like a highly inviting spot to wagoners who would take a welcome break on the old road to Warth—here "in Boda." The old place name refers to the peaceful meadow plateau above the Lech, which begins to carve out its steep gorge to the east. In 1621, Apollonia Zindlein sold a mill "im Boda," and it was around this time that the Bodahus was likely built. Initially much lower in height, this classic Walser block building saw fourteen children born between 1660 and 1688. Soon, the house was enlarged and, around 1800, even incorporated a relocated Walser homestead from Bürstegg. Accordingly, today's Bodenalpe welcomes visitors with beautiful architecture, a charming atmosphere, and hearty fare.

14. Bürstegg – Once a thriving walser settlement, now abandoned, dreamy, and enchanting

As if from a fantastical painting, Bürstegg greets you in a pastoral landscape with the charm of times long thought lost. The small cluster of two homesteads and a chapel forms a rarely enchanting ensemble of preserved Walser culture and was once, at 1,716 metres, the highest settlement in the region. As late as 1835, this Walser settlement, established in 1453 between Gaisbach and Wangtobel, had 68 inhabitants across 13 scattered homesteads. When the last residents, the Beiser family, moved away at the end of the 19th century, their shingled block building remained as a wonderful example of the old dwellings. Architecturally and atmospherically, the current alp, a mighty farmstead, more powerfully conveys the life once lived here, so close to the heavens.

15. St. Martin of Bürstegg – Charming and highest chapel in the region

Though modest in size, the small church's ship is beautifully shingled in true Walser fashion, with the highest church tower in the region, a testament to the deep faith of the Walser people in Bürstegg. For centuries, they demonstrated their devotion through often perilous winter treks to the church in Lech. Finally, in 1695, this narrow sacred building was erected and consecrated in 1781 in honour of St. Martin. In 1726, a chaplain settled here, and his successors enjoyed a well-attended church until 1859. Today, the interior remains surprisingly rich and impressive, an exquisite example of refined, colourful rural craftsmanship and decorative art. A true gem, with the towering Biberkopf mountain in the west standing like a colossal natural cathedral behind it.

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16. Life in Bürstegg – Summer’s toil through winter’s terror

When in summer, the magnificent meadows flourish with precious alpine flora, and fair-weather clouds drift over the pastures and shingled roofs, Bürstegg feels like a small paradise. It’s no wonder that as early as 1453, this location was home to the highest settlement in the region, where the Walser people delighted in the lush grasslands and expansive properties. These resources were not luxuries but necessities to ensure enough hay was stored to sustain the livestock through winter. Stockpiling was essential, as the inhabitants of Bürstegg lived in icy isolation for months. Supplied with essentials—from salt and flour to dried meat, dried fruit, and peat as a substitute for wood for the stove—families hunkered down in their homes, often buried in snow up to the roofline.

17. "Handsome man, fine man, no longer will I herd," the little man proudly said

Across the wide settlement area of the Walser, from their homeland in the Wallis to the Kleinwalsertal, tales of the "Wildmännli," also known as "Butz," are part of their rich folklore. At Tannberg, the wild little man appeared as a dutiful shepherd, who every spring would descend from the walls of the Karhorn. Day in and day out, the shy creature reliably tended the livestock of the Bürstegg people, for which the farmers' wives would place some food on a stone away from the houses as a token of gratitude. One autumn, the farmers also wanted to show their appreciation and laid out new clothes, including a red hooded coat. Dressed in his new attire, the little man admired himself from head to toe and said, "Handsome man, fine man, no longer will I herd." From then on, he was never seen again.

18. Wang-Hus – The oldest Walser homestead through half a millennium of change

Leonardo da Vinci was just beginning his famous mural "The Last Supper" when trees were felled at Tannberg for the Wang-Hus. It was the year 1494, and "Thoma Keller and Katrina, his wife," could never have imagined that their small home would be honored as a historical monument half a millennium later. Renovated by the municipality of Lech in the 1990s, this venerable building offers fascinating glimpses into historical times. The expertly shingled façade and the "Hänzastäcka" (wooden handle) hanging above the entrance exude authentic Walser charm. Rich with discoveries and small secrets, the block building invites extensive exploration—from the stone-floor kitchen to the antique sleeping chamber and the ancient utility area—perched on a sunny slope at Wang.

19. Steiniger Bühel – Primeval meadows in the dance of stone and time

It’s a kind of stone patience game, a centuries-long interaction of powerful natural forces and diligent human hands, which has created a peculiar landscape above the former Walser settlement of Bürstegg. The cause lies in the weathering of the main dolomite, responsible for the striking crags and pinnacles of the Karhorn. Each year, frost-driven rock fragments are sent tumbling down, leaving the steep grass slopes and their extensions as a vast "debris field" after the snow melts. The Walser began to pile the stones into rubble pyramids and sturdy natural walls. The reward for their Sisyphean labor was, and still is, better grazing or haymaking in the primeval meadows with their rare and valuable flora.

20. Yellow Gentian – Walser panacea and distilled elixir of life

It awakens the spirits and is legendary not just among mountain enthusiasts—the Yellow Gentian, or more precisely, its delicious distillate. As the most majestic of all gentians, the plant grows up to 1.4 meters tall and radiates with its bright yellow blossoms from afar. The plant's therapeutic value lies in its roots, which contain amarogentin, a natural compound with the highest known bitterness value. The Romans already appreciated *Gentiana lutea*, and in the Middle Ages, it was considered a universal remedy. Besides using the roots for tea and tinctures, the Walser also knew how to ferment the thick roots. Due to the lack of fruit and grain cultivation at such high altitudes, the Yellow Gentian, thriving on intermittently moist sites like those in Bürstegg, along with herbs and rowan (Türgitsch), provided the best source for a delightful schnapps.

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21. Gehren and Lechleiten – Walser neighborhood without borders

On the sunny slopes of a southwestern spur of the imposing Biberkopf, the Walser settled in Gehren and Lechleiten, two idyllic spots with vast mountain meadows and forest stands. However, they had reason to complain. Although culturally and in daily life connected to the Walser in Warth, from whom they were only separated by a ravine, politically, they belonged to Tyrolean Ehrenberg and initially to the parish of Holzgau. Long treks to court and hours-long pilgrimages to Mass were frustrating, though the clergy showed understanding by incorporating them into the parish in 1626, rewarded by their diligent help in building and maintaining the church and parish house in Warth. For a long time, Gehren also had a tollhouse, as the trade route over the Schrofен Pass to Bavaria was the lifeline of the Tannberg region.

22. Over the Schrofен Pass – Walser mule track, lifeline, and destiny path

For centuries, the mule track from Warth through Gehren up to the Schrofен Pass and down into the Bavarian Rappenalp Valley was the economic lifeline for the Walser on the Tannberg. Until the construction of the Flexen Road in the mid-19th century, trade was predominantly with southern Germany, where livestock, butter, and cheese were sold in exchange for essentials like flour. The path was widened to "six shoe breadths" as early as 1795, remnants of which can still be seen today. Where stalwart Warthers like Ludwina Bargehr carried "half a malter" (about 65 kg) of flour over the mountain saddle on their shoulders in a long trek during the 19th century, today's visitors are drawn by a varied hiking route and a challenging mountain bike trail.

23. St. Sebastian – Proud church of the Walser in high Warth

Originally part of the parish of Lech, the Walser "in Warth and on Teschenberg" fought long for their ecclesiastical independence. In 1540, a chapel with a bell and stone altar was erected, "upon which a priest could celebrate." With the active support of their neighbors from Gehren and Lechleiten, the sacred building was expanded in 1590, and in 1602 a parish and sacristan's estate were acquired. Warth was declared a parish in 1625, and the Church of St. Sebastian was subsequently expanded several times. Today, the neo-Romanesque nave with a two-story sacristy and tower, complete with a gable spire, stands in the village center of Warth as a proud church. For art history enthusiasts, treasures such as the relief of the four elements at the entrance portal can be discovered.

24. Walserhus – Magnificent craftsmanship and ancient, imposing homestead

As a splendid block construction, with its strong, sun-browned wooden beams and coupled window rows, the Walserhus in the village center of Warth is a testament to the high craftsmanship of the Walser. Its proximity to the Church of St. Sebastian, the unusually large masonry part, and the two-story design suggest wealthy former owners. The discovery of household items from the 15th century in the attic documents the impressive age of this preserved Walser home. From the imposing roof structure—with projecting, console-shaped purlins—to the traditional sliding windows with their rarity value and the overhung balcony, one gains a delightful and charming picture of classic Walser architecture.

25. Hus am Wießabach – Nearly 600 years of robust, time-defying Walser heritage

For nearly 600 years, the sturdy *Hus am Wießabach* in Gehren has stood on a green steep slope overlooking the Mühle Bridge, having outlasted many a Renaissance castle. The homestead dates back to 1425 and thus to the Walser's settlement of the Tannberg. As a valuable window into the past, it offers fascinating insights into everyday history, particularly in the kitchen with its old smoke vault. Scientific analyses allow the building's transformation over the centuries to be traced. A significant renovation took place in 1726, reusing old floors and beams. Inhabited and farmed until the turn of the millennium, the last owner's name, Josef Weißenbach, reflected the place-name—here by the roaring, white-foaming stream.

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26. Hinterboden – Walser village center, birthplace of skiing on the Tannberg

The small Walser settlement, where over 500 years ago a first stone altar stood on the site of the Parish Church of St. Sebastian, was still called Hinterboden until the 18th century. In the old, dense village center of Warth, the rectory was a particularly historic Walser home. Among the long line of pastors, some distinguished themselves as doctors and teachers, historians or craftsmen. The most consequential idea came in 1894 from Pastor Johann Müller. Discovering an article in a magazine, he ordered "the Swedish skis" and practiced skiing at night to avoid ridicule. When he reached Lech in the early morning after just an hour and a half with the strange boards on his feet, he was praised, thereby pioneering the future of skiing on the Tannberg.

27. Salt road – The path of white gold, most precious Walser mule cargo

Between Wolfegga, the westernmost hamlet of Warth, and the Jägeralpe on the Hochtannberg, one can still trace the path of "White Gold" today. On this once-important mule track, salt from Hall in Tirol, the most valuable commodity of the sovereign, was transported from the Lechtal into the Great Walser Valley and the Bregenzerwald from the 15th century onward. Valued not only as a seasoning but also as a remedy for humans and animals and for preserving and making cheese, salt was also likely smuggled from Bavaria over the Gemstel and Schrofen passes. Transporting salt, as well as cheese and other goods, was a vital side income for the Hochkrumbach villagers, which is why one or two sturdy horses were still kept in every stable until the 19th century.

28. Holzboden Alpe – Well-preserved stone building, once a small Walser homestead

Gracefully situated on a small rise, the small but solidly built Holzboden Alpe stands on its namesake meadow, overseeing the old salt road leading up from Warth. The name likely refers to the surrounding woodland, a rarity in Hochkrumbach. Could the unusual stone construction be explained by on-site wood processing and the associated fire risk? Typically, masonry was reserved for the kitchen and representative buildings in Walser architecture. Undoubtedly, this already documented Walser home dates back to 1764. A peek through the window offers an authentic glimpse of former living culture, with modest ceiling height and beds measuring 1.70 meters in length, revealing the significantly shorter stature of people in the past.

29. Am Tschirggen – Far-sighted "high seat" of the old Walser court

On the beautiful ridge northeast of the Hochkrumbach Saddle, known as the Tschirggen, stood the first houses of the Walser community of Hochkrumbach, as well as the Tannberg court seat. What seems remote today was once situated on one of the Walser's most important routes—over the Gemstel Pass into Bavaria through the Kleinwalsertal. Until the latter, then known as Mittelberg, became an independent Walser court in 1564, the enclave's residents had to undertake the long journey to Lech. To accommodate the Mittelbergers, the court was held at Tschirggen every other year between 1529 and 1563. The exercise of low jurisdiction was one of the famous Walser freedoms. Where once autonomous justice prevailed, today, an inspiring panorama leaves a lasting impression.

30. Gemstelpass – Ancient Walser mule track, trade route, and smuggler's path

Guarded in the west by the formidable rock towers of the Widderstein, the Gemstel Pass, an ancient Walser mule track, leads to their northernmost colony. The panoramic route likely facilitated the settlement of the Kleinwalsertal at the end of the 13th century. Mittelberg, historically the first municipality north of the ridge, gave its name to the Walser court, separated from Tannberg in 1563. For centuries, the idyllic mountain path saw regular traffic with pack animals and pedestrians, as family ties, properties, and trade spanned far beyond the mountain slopes. Until the 20th century, smuggling was still active here, though today, the route offers mostly breathtaking natural impressions to take home.

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31. Hochkrumbacher Bergmähder – Sweating hay harvest on steep slopes

Contrasting the weathered rocky face of Widderstein, lush green meadows cascade down its southern slopes into the valley of Hochkrumbach. While a delight to our eyes, these slopes once represented hard labor for the Walser people. The steep wild hay meadows were farmed right up to the ridge where the former mule track and today's hiking trail lead from the Widderstein hut to the Gemstelpass. Even into the 20th century, entire families would move to the scattered hay barns ("Schüna") during high summer to gather enough fodder for their livestock through the long winters. They brought goats for self-sufficiency, cooked on the "Herdgruaba" (fire pit), and slept in the hay. The impressive sight of these slopes still evokes the imagined sound of scythes swishing through the grass.

32. Krumbacher Wasariad – Water blessing and warmth for the Walser

The picturesque Krumbach stream meanders through the high plateau at the foot of the Salober, giving its name to the former Walser community while also providing much-needed fuel. A vast peat bog formed around the stream, creating the Krumbacher Ried, a beautiful and protected ecosystem. The Walser valued the "Wasariad" even more for the peat, which warmed their homes (in the Walser dialect, "Waasa" referred to a peat area). The area was once known as "Krumbach ob Holz" (Krumbach above the forest line), because by 1707, residents had "mostly no wood and only moss to dig and burn." Peat extraction required skill and was done carefully to preserve the valuable bog.

33. S' Kuchele – Warmth-giving Walser home and stately alp

Als stolzer Zeuge der einstigen Walsergemeinde Hochkrumbach ruht unweit des namensgebenden, durch das A proud relic of the former Walser community of Hochkrumbach, the stately Alp Kuchele sits near the namesake Krumbach, which peacefully meanders through the Wasariad. Until the 19th century, it was inhabited year-round and was one of the thirteen scattered Walser homes in the area. The solid log construction, with a south-facing entrance, paired windows for a sunny "Stub'n" (living room), and decorative shingle paneling, exemplifies classic Walser architecture. The hayloft, where round logs were used to ventilate the drying grass, is also exemplary. The name Kuchele comes from its sheltered location, shielded from the west by a rocky outcrop and from the north by the Simmel. The wonderful Walser building still radiates warmth and coziness today.

34. St. Jakobus at Simmel – Piety and rural exodus in Hochkrumbach

The narrow yet proud church of the Walser in Hochkrumbach sits atop the gentle ridge of the Simmel and traces its roots to a pilgrimage chapel built around 1540. By 1692, five years after separating from Lech, the highest parish in the region counted 50 communicants in twelve year-round homes. The church was expanded and received a tower in 1700. In 1767, to protect the priest from harsh weather, a covered walkway was built from the rectory (demolished in 1916) to the church, with wood laboriously carried from Bavaria by the Hochkrumbachers. The lack of wood and poverty led to depopulation, and the parish was incorporated into Warth in 1884. Saved from ruin, the small church still invites visitors to a charmingly spiritual place.

35. At Simmel – The Walser's fortress of god in harsh winters at Tannberg

The glacial hill of the Simmel rises like a mighty whale's back in the middle of the beautiful high valley, offering a stunning vantage point at the Hochtannberg Pass. The view sweeps from the World Peace Cross on the western flank to the nearby chapel, still a pilgrimage site as it was five centuries ago. Serving as the parish church for the Walser of Hochkrumbach from 1687, it was the highest in the land. The adjacent rectory, demolished in 1917, was supplied with water and firewood by the villagers, and several priests endured the harsh winters there. Before the last one left in 1856, he reportedly burned the church benches to avoid freezing. Once an "exile in Siberia" for these brave souls, it now presents a small paradise.

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36. Körberkreuz – In memory of a love and the Walser ancestors

On February 27, 1887, Filomena Schwarzmann from Hirschegg made her way through the white solitude on the Krumbacher Höhe, while her fiancé waited longingly at the church in Schröcken. She never arrived. A small avalanche sufficed to give the young woman an icy grave. Her hands, wrapped in her scarf due to the freezing cold, left her no chance to free herself. Many perished in similar circumstances on the Tannberg, especially on their way to church. The Körberkreuz, erected by Jodok Alois Schwarzmann, a former innkeeper from Schröcken, not only commemorates his bride lost to an avalanche but also serves as a memorial and symbol of an old Walser virtue—true reverence for nature.

37. Kalbelesee – Alpine landscape jewel and dark Walser legend

The azure surface of Kalbelesee, reflecting the northern Widderstein or southern Salober, framed by the shifting colors of the alpine fen, creates a true alpine idyll. Nestled in the gentle landscapes of the Hochtannberg, its charm gave rise to a dark Walser legend: When a vain farmer baptized a calf because of its beauty, he and the animal were swallowed by the earth, and the pit filled with water. It is said that the faint ringing of a bell can sometimes be heard from the lake's depths, although the mythical moorland itself invites daydreaming. The internationally significant biotope offers unique flora and impressions in its extensive underwater meadows, shores, and siltation zones.

38. Alpe Witele and Alpe Körb – Small and vast Walser pastures

Where a small path branches off from the beautiful trail between Kalbelesee and Körbersee, leading down through a blooming alpine pasture to the valley, two alpine areas meet, perfectly illustrating Walser pasture farming. While only twelve cattle graze on the small Alpe Witele, nestled along the path, the nearby Alpe Körb, stretching from Körbersee over Salober to Hochkrumbacher Saddle and up into the Widderstein region, supports around 400 young cattle. The Walser have always managed both private pastures and large communal alpine areas, as documented in the Alpbuch Körb from 1618. Both forms ensure excellent livestock farming and dairy production while shaping a diverse landscape.

39. Nesslegg – Sun-kissed, settled during the Walser's heyday

Basking in sunlight and overlooking the rest of Schröcken to the west, Nesslegg, at an altitude of about 1500 meters, is the highest part of Schröcken still inhabited year-round. First mentioned in 1489 in the Lech parish's yearbook as "nesselögke," the name likely derives from the once abundant nettles and the V-shape of the land between Seebach to the east and Litzitobel to the west. Somewhat remote until the Hochtannberg Road opened in 1954, the Walser likely already appreciated the wonderful panorama. Two genuine Walser homes can be admired here: the stately farmhouse (Nesslegg 35) dating back to the early 17th century, and the wooden barn (Nesslegg 37) from 1588.

40. At Joch – Walser home and mountain meadow up to the Höfergrat

Above the breath-taking ascent at Steinigwies stand two former Walser homes, telling tales of hard work on the magnificent mountain meadows. High above Nesslegg, the viewpoint at Am Joch offers a sweeping view of Schröcken's valley basin, but also the expansive steep slopes that awaited the Walser to be cultivated. The labor extended up to the Höfergrat, using scythes, rakes, and sometimes even crampons to gather enough hay into the barns or form the Walser haystacks ("Trischta"). During summer, the hay was pulled on a "Büntel" (canvas) and carried home as hefty "Schocha" (burdens) on heads and shoulders or brought down by sled in winter, rewarding their effort with top-quality fodder.

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41. Schlöble – Magnificent oldest Walser homestead, perched on the Höferberg

High above Schröcken, on the Höferberg, stand two ancient Walser buildings, known as Unteres and Oberes Schlöble. The reason for their distinguished names remains a mystery, with theories ranging from an early hunting lodge of former feudal lords to their privileged location at 1600 metres. Perhaps it was due to their splendid appearance; the Unteres Schlöble had a rare upper floor added in 1543, indicating wealthy owners. Even more impressive, the original structure dates back to 1386, making it the oldest Walser homestead in Schröcken and one of the earliest on the Tannberg. The Obere Schlöble, built in 1673, rivals its neighbour in remarkable Walser timber construction and historical atmosphere.

42. Alpe Höferberg – Proud alpine pasture on a steep grassy mountain, Walser settlement at the farm

The Höferberg stretches like a massive grassy barrier for about two kilometres, with steep slopes dropping up to 700 metres on the northern side of Schröcken. On the western side of this imposing alpine fold lies the old Alpe Höferberg, surrounded by blooming mountain flowers. Once called “Alpe Hof” or simply “am Hof,” this splendid timber building exemplifies a typical Walser homestead. To the east, there is a room with an old stove and the Gada (Walser dialect for bedroom), while the entrance on the valley side leads to a hall kitchen that also served as a dairy kitchen. The cheese cellar, built from rubble stone, is also well-preserved. Until the 1980s, cheese was made here daily. Today, the charming alpine meadows invite exploration.

43. Sulzegg – Massive Walser timber building with original interior

At the mouth of the mighty mountain basin of the Heiterberg, the massive timber building Sulzegg has stood for centuries in a beautiful forest clearing. Scientific analysis of the ancient logs dates the building to 1656. After several renovations, it still appears much as it did in 1802, offering a vivid impression of the original Walser dwellings on the Tannberg. Furnished with the oldest inventory, the Alpe and former Walser homestead convey the atmosphere of long-forgotten times, from the simple stone cellar to the dimly lit living room and the soot-blackened, massive smoke collector. The building’s survival is due to the Jochum family, who also maintain their 1646 Walser homestead in the nearby Wald hamlet.

44. Alpe Alp – Former Walser homestead as a traditional transhumance pasture

Beautiful to behold and to hear, the Alpe Alp sits on a hill in a scenic mountain meadow in the Schröcken hamlet of Wald, overlooking the old Walser homestead of its owners (Wald 19). For at least nine generations, the Jochum family has managed scattered properties and maintained the traditional three-stage farming system of the Walser. In addition to the stately Walser house built in 1646, they own the much higher Alpe Sulzegg, dating back to 1656, and occupy the equally venerable Alpe Alp as a classic transhumance pasture from mid-August for another month. Due to the snow, it is not used as a spring pasture (Vorsäb). Once inhabited year-round, the timber building reflects the traditional farming methods and settlement history.

45. Oberboden, Schwand, and Wald – The cradle of Walser agriculture

From the climatically favoured terrain of Oberboden, through beautiful mountain meadows, to the small hamlets of Schwand and Wald, the southern slope of the Höferberg has long been the heart of agriculture in Schröcken. It is believed that Oberboden was used as an alpine pasture by farmers from the Bregenzerwald before the Walser migration. Today, the splendid meadows and hayfields are still diligently worked by the Walser descendants. The scattered alpine pastures and mountain farms of the families living here cover almost the entire municipality. Nearby, the Jochum family, known locally as the “Engelbertles,” maintain the traditional Walser three-stage farming system from their 1646 homestead in Wald to the Alpe Alp and up to Sulzegg, dating from 1656.

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46. Sulphur Spring – Health fountain of the Walser and a gift of nature

The sulphur spring in Schröcken has been known since ancient times, as evidenced by a 1589 document concerning the sale of “a piece of meadow by the sulphur spring in the valley.” There is no doubt that the Walser were aware of the health benefits of this unpleasant-smelling water. The sulphurous thermal spring beyond the Höferspitze in Baad, Kleinwalsertal, even gave the place its name, and when it was buried by a landslide in 1860, the locals regretted it deeply. In Schröcken, the healing spring, known for treating rheumatic ailments, skin diseases, or chronic catarrh, has always been freely accessible. Thus, the people of Schröcken truly regarded the health fountain as a gift of nature.

47. Chapel of the Annunciation – Oldest Walser church in Girsboden

During the last renovation, the uncovering of old wall remains confirmed that the charming Chapel of the Annunciation in Unterboden is the oldest sacred building in Schröcken. The Warth church chronicle even notes the year 1269 for the “Girsboden” outpost, as the area was known until the 17th century. It is believed that alpine farming was practised here before the Walser arrived, making such an early construction plausible. Even Pastor Jodok Grenßing, who oversaw the demolition and reconstruction between 1774 and 1778, described the building as “ancient, and probably as old as the parish church.” Since for centuries there was only one path to the parish church through the ravine, the Walser were likely grateful for this small haven of quiet devotion.

48. Our Lady of the Annunciation – Walser church, risen from ashes

The steep-gabled church tower with a slender nave on green meadowland, framed by ravines in the wide valley of Schröcken, paints a true picture of idyll. Nothing recalls the catastrophe of 1863, when the already consecrated church from 1639, which had been expanded and restored several times, was reduced to rubble and ashes within a short time. The blaze started at the Gasthof zum “Ochsen,” and also destroyed the neighbouring school, sexton’s house, and rectory. With Walser craftsmanship and determination, all the buildings were quickly rebuilt, and in 1867, the parish church “Our Lady of the Annunciation” was solemnly re-consecrated. No less splendid than its predecessor, the richly furnished church now invites a detailed visit.

49. Heimboden – First pastoral care with the solemn pride of the Walser

Like a steep, green island surrounded by three gorges, Heimboden is a special spot worthy of the parish church, once a cosy centre of Schröcken. The name is believed to derive from a settler named Haimb, who cleared the land and became an innkeeper at the beginning of the 17th century. At that time, Schröcken was still called Girsboden, from the Walser word “Gir” for birds of prey. In 1639, the Bishop of Augsburg consecrated a small church on the “Giersboden, called Schrecken.” The legend that he exclaimed, “This place is truly terrifying, and it shall be called ‘Schrecken’,” when he saw the church surrounded by steep mountains and ravines, is just that—a legend. The place name actually derives from the word “schrecken” or “cracking,” referring to the rugged, awe-inspiring landscape.

50. Alpe Felle – Weathered Walser building on valuable pastureland

The weathered Walser building of Alpe Felle defies the elements and overlooks the steep pastures between the roaring Bregenzerach and the small Rührkübelobel. Built in 1624, the timber structure initially served as a typical Walser homestead with a cellar under the living room, a chamber, and a hall kitchen. When the kitchen was expanded into a dairy kitchen in the 19th century, the building underwent a typical transformation into an alpine pasture. The outlines of the large stables that were added at that time are still visible. The cooperative management of the alpine pastures was based on the increasing success of dairy farming, whose delicious products can be enjoyed at the nearby New Alpe Felle. However, it cannot surpass the charm of its ancient, shingle-clad predecessor.

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51. Gletschermühle – A natural wonder and eternal source of strength for the Walser people

A swirling, turbulent, whirling force, a relentless power that over millennia carved and polished the rock, instantly expanding the lungs when gazing down into the churning basin. Shortly after the confluence of the Fellebach and Bregenzerach rivers, the water cascades about 10 meters into the frothy Fellchessel. The remarkably smooth rock bowl is less the work of roaring wild water and more a relic from the Ice Age. When meltwater cascaded turbulently down a glacier crevasse, it created a glacier mill under immense pressure. The mystical allure of this natural wonder stems not only from its aesthetics but also from the countless rising oxygen molecules that stimulate the immune system. No wonder the Walser people have always seen the Fellchessel as a source of strength.

52. Äpele – A magnificent cultural landscape, legacy of the Walser pioneers

Sunny, lush alpine meadows, with the Bregenzerach bubbling below, while the captivating massif of the Braunarlspitze fans out in the background and the tributaries of the Fellebach shimmer down in cascades. What a breathtaking panorama and what a prime location for the Walser to have once chosen as their home. Evidence of a settlement on Äpeles Berg dates back to 1453. The beautifully preserved Walser house on Bühl exemplifies how these houses were once scattered across gentle hollows and small hillocks. Although the last resident left Äpele in 1902, the carefully maintained cultural landscape remains a true gift. The amazement never ends when one discovers the steep Juppenmahd above the rock band to the south.

53. Alpmuseum uf m Tannberg – Splendour of Walser tradition and dairying

Rich in memorable impressions, full of ancient atmosphere and historical traces, the Alpmuseum uf m Tannberg embodies traditional alpine farming and Walser cultural history in the best sense. Whether in the dairy kitchen, parlour, or barn, you will find centuries-old furniture, tools from traditional craftsmanship and dairying, and a glimpse into the lives and everyday routines of the former residents. Originating from a Walser pair farm built in 1602, the old Alpe Batzen produced exquisite dairy products from 1802 until 1998, a tradition now carried on by the neighbouring New Alpe Batzen. This unique museum offers a fascinating journey through time, with an "Allgäuer Fireworks" oven and a parlour oven complete with a Häslatta, old attic rooms, and authentically preserved stalls.

54. Heimat uf m Büel – A magnificent Walser home from the time of Columbus

It was shortly after the birth of Columbus, and precisely the year Sigmund the Rich brought the Tannberg under Tyrolean rule, that the timber was felled for a new Walser house on Äpeles Berg. Since 1453, the Heimat uf m Büel has stood proudly on its scenic hill, evolving over the centuries into a splendid building. Whether it's the imposing Walser long barn, which housed around five horses and twenty cattle, or the representative corner-floor house, Walser architecture is impressively preserved. Notable features include the spacious shed, used as a summer dining or rest area, and the authentic interior with its blackened smoke kitchen and adjacent milk cellar. The last inhabitants of the former Walser hamlet of Äpele lived here until 1901.

55. Körbersee – Secret witness of history and botanical paradise

Surrounded by precious moors and encircled by green meadows and small, picturesque rocky hillocks, Körbersee rests at 1656 meters like a quiet, blue jewel. The unique microclimate of the expansive basin and the management of the surrounding mountain meadows, combined with the valuable wetlands, have contributed to significant biodiversity, leading to the area's protection. Alongside this true botanical paradise, the refreshing mountain lake invites a swim or a romantic boat ride. As the reflection of Widderstein enchants on the water's surface, the rare light-green water star shines from the depths. Pollen analysis of the lakebed has even revealed the sensational discovery of rye cultivation dating back to the Iron Age.

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56. Uf m Aflat – Legendary high plateau, rich in moors and meadows

Where the young Bregenzerach meanders leisurely through wet meadows and moors, rugged monoliths loom to the south, between which marmots whistle, while to the north, the rarest and most precious flora blooms. This legendary landscape welcomes you in the wide hollow between Juppenspitze (SW) and the Karhorn massif (NE). A glacially shaped high plateau with an idyllic valley floor, unique in such alpine regions. The natural backdrop is crowned by the species-rich mountain meadows rising towards Falken and Salober. Sustainably farmed since the Walser settlement at Auenfeld (documented in 1399), weather-beaten old barns at the base of the meadows complete the breathtaking landscape painting uf m Aflat (Auenfeld in Walser dialect).

57. Auenfeld – Once a permanent Walser settlement in an enchanting landscape

A natural panorama of absolute enchantment unfolds here at Auenfeld, where ice age glacial erosion has created a uniquely diverse landscape. From gentle hillocks and expansive alluvial terraces to species-rich mountain meadows and valuable wetlands, to the picturesque valley floor of the Bregenzerach. It's no wonder the Walser chose this visual feast as one of their first settlement sites on the Tannberg. A 1399 document already mentions a "Walser woman from Owenfeldt," and in 1817, Arbogast Jochum from Lech owned a house here with "fat and lean lands." The beauty of this natural jewel was further enhanced by traditional Walser farming, which remains cherished at Auenfeld, as evidenced by the two stately alpine pastures.

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