

Our Chalet

# Explore 2028



Open to Guides and Scouts aged 12-18

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Discover the magic of your  
home in the Swiss Alps

## Key Information

### Who can attend Explore 2028?

Our Explore programme is for Guides and Scouts aged 12-18 accompanied by a limited number of leaders age 18+. Explore is designed for Guides/Scouts ready to stretch themselves out of their comfort zone. It is more physically demanding than our Discover programme but not so challenging as our Adventure programme.

Our summer programmes are designed for groups of around 8-20 youth accompanied by adults in a ratio of 2 adults per 8 youth. For very small groups (fewer than 6 youth) and large groups (more than 20 youth) please contact us to discuss suitability prior to booking.

Our Explore programme is suitable for Guides/Scouts with disabilities and/or additional needs, who are physically fit and able to participate in a busy programme with peers of their own age. Please see the accessibility pages of this brochure for further details.

**Summary: Groups of 8-20 Guides/Scouts age 12-18 accompanied by up to 2 leaders (18+) per 8 youth. Ideal for those ready to push themselves to try new things in the outdoors.**

### Dates and Prices

Explore 1 - 26 June - 2 July 2028

Explore 2 - 12 - 18 July 2028

Explore 3 - 5 - 11 August 2028

Explore 4 - 20 - 23 August 2028

#### Youth (12-15):

Camping (self-catered): CHF 366

Squirrel House (self-catered): CHF 546

Indoor (catered): CHF 891

#### Youth (age 16-18) + Leaders (2 per 8 youth):

Camping (self-catered): CHF 393

Squirrel House (self-catered): CHF 573

Indoor (catered): CHF 918

Extra costs: Tent hire CHF17 large tent, CHF8.50 small tent. Single/twin room: +CHF10 pppn.

Caterer: Free accommodation for one caterer (age 18+) for groups of 10+ camping or in Squirrel House. This adult is in addition to the 2:8 ratio. The caterer cannot take part in programme.



# Programme Activities

## How many activities are in the event?

- 4 day programmes
- 4 evening programmes
- Pinning ceremony and tour after dinner on arrival day

Day programmes usually start at 09:00 and finish between 17:00 and 18:00. Except for onsite day we are away from the Centre all day so expect busy, action packed days!

Evening programmes start at 20:00 and last 60 to 90 minutes.

## Can we plan our own activities?

There is one free day in the middle of the event. On this day you can plan your own activities or relax at Our Chalet.

## Can we skip activities we don't want to do?

Yes, all activities are optional. We ask you to let our staff know so we don't wait for you. As this event is sold at a package price we cannot give refunds for missed activities.

## How much walking is there to get to activities?

Our Chalet is located 1.2km (0.75 mile) up a steep hill from the nearest bus stop. On days where we use public transport we must walk to/from the bus stop. See accessibility pages for more details.

## Are activities guided or self-led?

All programme activities (day and evening) are guided by Our Chalet staff or volunteers. Sailing is led by qualified, local instructors in conjunction with Our Chalet staff.

## Do leaders have to take part in all the activities?

At least one leader aged 18+ must take part in all activities with their group. The leader is responsible for behaviour of their group and any first aid needs. The leader must be physically and mentally fit for the activities and willing and able to lead by example.

Your Member Organisation may require more than one leader to take part, groups are responsible for checking their own Member Organisations rules.

## Are activities risk assessed? Who is responsible for first aid?

Yes, all activities are risk assessed. Our risk assessments are reviewed prior to the start of each season to keep them up to date. It is the responsibility of the group to check that activities meet their Member Organisations rules and are covered by their travel insurance.

Leaders are responsible for first aid for their group at all times. Our Chalet staff are only permitted to provide first aid in a life-threatening emergency. We expect leaders to be prepared and capable of handling first aid situations for all their group.





# RIVER WALK & CLIMBING TOWER

Take on a day of heights-based challenges, starting with crossing the 154m long suspension bridge hanging 38m above the River Engstlige. After a drink and cake in the family-run café on the other side, we take a walk along the river for 1.5-2 hours (depending on group pace). Look out for the many wood-carved statues waiting to greet you!

After our packed lunch, it's time to take on the Climbing Tower with it's 64 challenging obstacles across three levels. For those who only want to spend a short time on the Climbing Tower there are optional extras (not included in programme cost) including mini golf, ride on the children's train, underground playground, and ice cream café.

## Good to know

- The bridge and Climbing Tower are not suitable for those with vertigo or a severe phobia of heights. Participants without appropriate footwear will not be permitted to take part.
- The walk is mostly on wide gravel trail and tarmac surface, there are short sections on narrow dirt trail. It is largely flat with short uphill and downhill sections.
- Optional extra activities must be paid for directly by the participants/leader. Our Chalet does not pay for extra activities.

## Accessibility

- The bridge has a flat surface and handrails on both sides. The bridge does move/sway slightly, especially in windy weather.
- The bridge and river walk are possible for manual wheelchair users with a narrow chair and who can walk short distances. Please contact us prior to booking for more detail.
- Climbing Tower is accessed via a staircase with handrail. Participants are attached from above and can use their arms for balance on all level 1 obstacles and some on levels 2 and 3. Participants can cross obstacles in pairs or with a leader for additional support. A harness must be worn, maximum weight for harness is 120kg.





## ALPINE HIKE

## CABLE CAR RIDE

Tackle a challenging hike in the Swiss Alps, reward yourself at the top with a treat from the cafe, before taking the cable car and bus back to Our Chalet.

Starting from Our Chalet, we follow a quiet road through the local chalets before joining a gravel riverside trail which starts out flat before becoming steeper as we approach the impressive Engstligen waterfall. After a stop at the waterfall the challenge really begins as we hike up 500m (1,640ft) of vertical climb, following the path the cows take on their climb to their summer pastures.

Once at the top there's time to enjoy the impressive alpine plateau views, watch the cows and goats, and reward your efforts with a drink and a sweet treat. We then take the cable car back to the valley level and the public bus most of the way back to Our Chalet.

### Good to know

- Hiking time from Our Chalet to the waterfall is 1.5 to 2 hours, depending on group pace. Hiking time from waterfall to alp is another 1.5 to 2 hours, depending on group pace.
- We walk at a steady pace with plenty of breaks. Our volunteers will lead hiking games, point out things to see, and encourage youth with their hiking. We expect leaders to be physically fit for the hike and able to lead by example and encourage their group.
- There is a 20-30 min walk on road at the end of the day from bus stop to Our Chalet.

### Accessibility

- The hiking trail to the waterfall can be completed by wheelchair users, if they have suitable off-road tyres. The hiking trail from waterfall to alp is very steep, narrow and uneven underfoot. It is not suitable for wheelchair users or those with vertigo or very poor balance.
- An alternative hiking trail suitable for wheelchair users and those with vertigo is located on top of the alp and can be accessed by cable car (extra cost).



# **SPIEZ CASTLE**

## **SAILING ON LAKE THUN**

Spend a day at Lake Thun, experiencing history at Spiez castle, crossing the lake by ferry boat, and trying your hand at sailing on the crystal clear water.

Medieval Spiez castle was built in 933 with additions added in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century. Learn about it's history and get a hands on feel for life back then by trying on costumes and having a go at jousting on a wooden horse!

Cross to the other side of Lake Thun on a small ferry boat, passenger ferries have been operating here since 1835. Enjoy the views while you eat your picnic lunch.

Finally try your hand at sailing with a 1.5 hour sailing lesson where you'll need to work together to keep yourself afloat and heading in the right direction!

### **Good to know**

- Half the group will do this day in the opposite order; sail in morning, castle in afternoon.
- Non-swimmers can sail but we must be informed of the number of non-swimmers in advance. Non-swimmers are required to wear a full life jacket with neck float (provided).
- Swimmers must wear a bouyancy aid (provided). A T-shirt must be worn underneath. .
- Those with epilepsy (inc. absence seizures) or any condition that may result in sudden loss of consciousness are not permitted to sail. We cannot make exceptions to this rule.
- Travel on this day is by private coach.

### **Accessibility**

- Spiez castle is a historic building with lots of stairs. It is not wheelchair accessible. Staircases are spiral and without handrails. Some staircases are wooden and narrow.
- Sailing can be adapted for a range of abilities, however, participants must be able to react to instructions quickly and sit upright unaided.

# ONSITE DAY



Spend a day competing in a series of different challenges to earn items to protect your team's egg in an egg drop adventure!

Activities vary depending on weather conditions. Whatever we do it's a great opportunity to mix with other groups and make new friends while learning something new.

## Good to know

- As with all programme, at least one leader must take part in onsite day activities with their group.
- Activities take place outdoors in all weather, even though we are onsite! Indoor spaces are often in use by day tour visitors.
- This day has a longer lunch break, during which time our shop is open.

## Accessibility

- Activities can be adapted to meet the access needs of all participants.



# EVENING PROGRAMME



Evening programmes take place onsite at Our Chalet on all evenings except the free day and lasts from 1 to 1.5 hours. These range from traditional favourites like campfire and International Night to WAGGGS programme tasters and special celebrations like Our Chalet's birthday (31 July).

On your first evening we do a pinning ceremony and tour to start your event and help you get to know our site.

All evening programmes are optional, if your group needs an early night or simply wants some time to relax and chat you are, of course, welcome to do that instead.

## Good to know

- During dinner on your arrival day there will be a leaders meeting. One leader from each group needs to attend this meeting, where you will meet our programme staff and make sure you have all the information you need for the week ahead.

## Accessibility

- Activities can be adapted to meet the access needs of all participants.
- Our campfire circle is located up a very short, steep gravel path. We are currently working on improving this access and hope to have a more accessible path in place by 2027. There is seating at the campfire circle.

## Meals

Meals are included in indoor accommodation packages for Main Chalet/Spycher House only.

Meals are not available for campsite or Squirrel House packages. Groups staying in these accommodations must self-cater.

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For groups booked on to the indoor accommodation package all meals from dinner on arrival day to packed lunch on departure day are included in the cost and provided by Our Chalet.

The kitchen at Our Chalet is operated by the Catering Coordinator and a team of volunteers. We do our best to accommodate dietary requirements, however, if your group has a participant with a severe allergy or complex dietary requirement we recommend you discuss your needs prior to booking.



**Breakfast** A continental breakfast of cereals, yoghurt, bread, cheese, and fruit is available every morning in a self-service buffet style. Hot and cold drinks are also included.

**Packed lunch** of sandwiches, fruit, & a small snack is made by participants each morning to take with them on programme. All participants are required to bring a lunch box or bag to carry their lunch. Please note: we strongly encourage groups to bring additional snacks that they know they like and will keep them energised for a busy day!



**Dinner** is served at one sitting and offers one option for everyone. Typical dinners include Swiss dishes such as rösti and camp favourites like chilli or pasta. Dinners always include salad or vegetables and are two courses with a main meal and dessert. Special diet meals, including vegetarian, are available only to participants who have notified us in advance of their need for a special meal.



## Accommodation



Indoor accommodation package includes six nights of accommodation, meals from dinner on arrival day to packed lunch on departure day, luggage transfers, and all event programme activities.

Our indoor accommodation is offered across two buildings:

**Main Chalet** opened in 1932 and offers dorm rooms, triple rooms, twin rooms, and a single room. The largest dorm room can sleep up to 14 participants. None of the rooms in Main Chalet have bunk beds.

**Spycher House** opened in 1999 and offers one dorm room (sleeps up to eight participants), quad rooms, twin rooms, and two single rooms. Some rooms in Spycher House have bunk beds.

Rooms will be assigned to your group by our office staff based on your needs. To maximise availability, groups may be split across both buildings. Our staff always ensure at least one leader is in the same building as participants from their group. Participants from different groups do not usually share rooms (unless by request), however, different groups will share the same common facilities such as bathrooms and hallways. Our Chalet is open to Scouts and Guides of all genders.

For details of wheelchair accessibility in our indoor accommodation please e-mail [info@ourchalet.waggs.org](mailto:info@ourchalet.waggs.org). As a broad overview, accommodation suitable for manual wheelchair users is available in Spycher House. Users of powered wheelchairs or mobility scooters who can transfer to a manual chair without the use of a hoist can also access this accommodation.



## Accommodation



Camping package includes six nights of accommodation, luggage transfers, and all event programme activities.

**Note: Tent hire is not included in the camping package.** We have a limited number of tents (with mattresses) available for hire at an additional cost.

Our campsite can accommodate up to 50 people. For hygiene reasons participants must bring their own sleeping bags, even if hiring a tent from Our Chalet. Camping is available as a self-catering option only.

Camp House contains a small kitchen for the use of campers. Equipment for outdoor cooking is also available. Please note: **in summer multiple groups share the kitchen.**

Toilets and showers are available in Camp House. The upstairs of Camp House can be used for shelter in wet/stormy weather. Note: **it is not permitted to sleep in Camp House, campers must sleep in their tents.**

It is approximately a five minute walk from the campsite to Main Chalet and Spycher House. Grocery deliveries are available from Coop@Home and can be delivered Monday – Saturday. Our campsite is partially wheelchair accessible, for full details please e-mail [info@ourchalet.wagggs.org](mailto:info@ourchalet.wagggs.org).

## Accommodation



Squirrel House accommodation package includes six nights of accommodation, luggage transfers, and all event programme activities.

Please note: there is a minimum group size of eight to book Squirrel House for a Summer Youth Event.

Squirrel House is perfect for smaller groups who would prefer not to camp but do not need the full indoor accommodation package. In summer Squirrel House is available as self-catering accommodation only. Squirrel House sleeps up to six people downstairs on bunk beds and up to ten people upstairs on mattresses. There is a small kitchen in the downstairs sleeping area for self-catering. Squirrel House has two toilets – one downstairs and one upstairs – and one shower.

Squirrel House is not suitable for wheelchair users and is not recommended for those with limited mobility. Grocery deliveries are available from Coop@Home and can be delivered Monday-Saturday.

## Accessibility

Our Chalet is passionate about offering international experience and adventurous, outdoor activities to girls and young women with disabilities. Our Explore programme is suitable for Guides/Scouts with some disabilities and medical conditions who are physically fit and ready to challenge themselves in the outdoors. If you are unsure if Explore is suitable for your Guides/Scouts, please contact our programme team and we will be happy to advise.

**IMPORTANT:** Explore is a busy, activity-packed programme for Guides/Scouts aged 12-18. All participants must be able to participate in high-energy activities with peers of their own age and need a reasonable level of fitness. It is not suitable for those who need frequent rest periods/naps, have very low fitness, or who have learning, behavioural or social communication needs that would prevent them from participating in age-appropriate group activities.

### **Can youth who need 1:1 support take part?**

Yes, for Guides/Scouts who need 1:1 support we allow groups to book carer/assistant places. Adults fulfilling carer/assistant places can be in addition to the 2 youth to 8 adults ratio for this event. Please tell us **prior to booking** if you need a carer/assistant place. Please note that to keep this system fair we may ask for proof of the need for 1:1 support. Carer/assistant places are charged at the full leader rate and the person must take part in all activities with the youth they are supporting. Youth who need 1:1 support may be eligible to apply for a scholarship, please ask us about this when making a booking enquiry.

### **Can youth with medical conditions such as epilepsy, diabetes, food allergies, etc. take part?**

In most cases, yes. We encourage leaders to contact us prior to booking to ensure we can enable the Guide/Scout to participate safely in our programme. Participants with epilepsy or any condition that causes sudden loss of consciousness cannot take part in sailing.

Those with severe food allergies are strongly recommended to contact us prior to booking.

### **Can neurodiverse youth or those with learning disabilities take part?**

In most cases, yes. Youth must be able to participate in age-appropriate group activities and be able to cope with a busy programme schedule. The programme is not suitable for youth who are prone to/have a recent history of elopement or wandering.

### **Can youth with mental health conditions take part?**

In most cases, yes. The programme is not suitable for youth who have a recent history of self-harm or of aggressive or violent behaviour.



## Access to toilets

During off-site programme we often have access only to public toilets. Often this means we do need to queue to access toilets. In general there is a toilet break opportunity at least every 2 hours.

For those who need to know where the nearest toilet is we can provide this information on a printed sheet, please let us know prior to arrival if you need this so we can prepare it.

Wheelchair accessible toilets are available at most locations, including on trains. However, some wheelchair toilets require a Eurokey. As Eurokeys can only be purchased by people with a registered disability we do not have a Eurokey and are not able to provide one.

## Restricted mobility

For wheelchair users and those with restricted mobility due a long-term medical condition or disability, we can provide transport to/from the start point (bus stop, coach pick up point) of programme. Public transport is wheelchair accessible and we can book a wheelchair accessible coach.

Depending on ability and fitness, some wheelchair users may need support to push over rough terrain, particularly on Engstligenalp programme. It may be possible to rent an off-road powered wheelchair for Engstligenalp, this depends on availability and must be enquired about well in advance.

Please note the transport to/from the start of programme is not available to those who simply prefer not to walk or who have a low level of physical fitness or a temporary injury. This is due to local taxi regulations. Leaders may book taxis at their own expense in these cases.

## Sensitivity to noise/crowds & difficulty waiting

As we visit popular locations during the height of the tourism season we often encounter crowds and need to wait/queue at some locations. Below are some examples, we advise guests to contact us if they need more information.

- **Public bus** - buses are often extremely busy in summer, often with other youth groups and some people may need to stand (max journey time 20 mins). It can be hot and loud inside the bus. To ensure we do not miss a bus we usually arrive at the bus stop 10 to 15 mins prior to departure and must wait.
- **Cable Car** - on good weather days the cable car can be very busy, up to 32 people travel in the cable car and it is standing room only and packed close together. There can be a wait time of up to 30 mins to board.
- **Boat** - the ferry boat on Lake Thun is crowded in summer, especially on the outside decks in good weather. The wait to board is usually 10-15 mins standing in a queue.
- **Dining Hall** - our dining hall is small and can get hot and very loud in summer. Guides/Scouts sit up to 10 per table on benches. Middle seats can be hard to exit quickly. We can arrange for a limited number of people to eat outside the dining hall. Groups with multiple participants who struggle with noise or crowds are encouraged to consider our self-catered accommodation.

## **Leaders with disabilities**

We strongly believe in the value of young people seeing adults with disabilities lead and we strive to have staff and volunteers with disabilities and neurodiversity in leadership roles.

The focus of our summer programmes is the youth participants, therefore the programmes are not suitable for leaders who need 1:1 support to fulfil the duties of a leader.

Leaders must be able to support youth to participate in all activities, be responsible for the behaviour and emotional wellbeing of their youth members, and provide first aid if needed. In many cases leaders with physical disabilities, medical conditions, or neurodiverse leaders can meet these requirements. If a leader needs to attend with a carer/assistant to help with personal care or mobility, please contact us to arrange this. The carer/assistant should not be one of the other leaders in your group so that all leaders focus is on the Guides/Scouts.

Neurodiverse leaders, those with mental health conditions such as anxiety, or learning disabilities should carefully consider how they will handle the unfamiliar setting and their ability to handle unexpected or emergency (inc. first aid) situations in a foreign country. Our summer programmes are youth-focussed programmes and are not suited to leaders who need 1:1 support to fulfil the duties of a leader.

We have a range of adult-focussed and leadership-development focussed programmes that are open and accessible to adults of all ages. We encourage those who are not currently ready to lead internationally without support to attend one of these events instead of a summer programme.

