



How to Spend a Perfect Weekend at Oeschinensee

Take the Gondola from Kandersteg to Oeschinensee

Oeschinensee is an Alpine Lake in the Bernese Oberland that can only be reached by gondola, or a 2.4-mile uphill hike. For this weekend itinerary, you'll be staying at the Arva Mountain Lodge on the lake so you'll want to take the gondola since you'll be bringing suitcases.

The gondola lift station is located in Kandersteg, about 40 minutes from Interlaken in the canton of Bern, and can be reached by train, bus, or car.

The address for the parking lot is Oeschistrasse 49, 3718 Kandersteg, Switzerland. If you are driving a car, the parking fee for the lift station is included when booking a room at Arva.

The 8-seater gondola takes about 6 minutes to reach the top station. Guests staying at Berghaus Arva receive a 50% discount on the lift ticket, so be sure to show your reservation confirmation when purchasing tickets.

Check-in at Berghaus Arva

For a magical weekend in Oeschinensee, you will want to stay at the [Arva Mountain Lodge](#).

This charming guest house sits on the shore of Lake Oeschinen. It was built in 1880 and has been in the same family for 5 generations. The owners are the kindest couple and they have done such a great job renovating the lodge and creating such a special place to stay.

The lodge is only open Wednesday through Sunday and seasonally from May through October. There are only 8 rooms so you'll want to book far in advance.

Some of the rooms have a shared bathroom, if you would like a private ensuite bathroom then I recommend staying in the "Double Room with Balcony". The room was renovated in 2024 and is so cute and cozy!

To reach Arva from the top gondola station, you can either walk about 20 minutes down the gravel hiking trail or there is an electric shuttle cart. The shuttle departs about every 30 minutes and costs 10 CHF per person.

The walk is downhill so it's not too bad, but pulling suitcases along the gravel trail isn't ideal. I would recommend at least taking the shuttle back up after your stay since it is more of an uphill walk.

Rent Row Boats on the Lake

Check-in starts at 3 pm. After getting settled in, walk down to the lake where you can rent row boats and explore out on the water.

Oeschinensee, or Lake Oeschinen ("see" is German for lake), is fed by the glacier streams of four surrounding mountain peaks.

The result is a vibrant turquoise lake with dozens of waterfalls pouring off the surrounding mountains.

The row boats are available to rent for 32 CHF for one hour. Each boat can seat up to 4 people and they accept credit cards and cash. Boats are available to rent from 10:30 am until 5 pm.

It takes about 45 minutes to row out to the main waterfall and back, which I highly recommend doing!

Eat Dinner by the Water

The restaurant at Berghaus Arva is open to all visitors until 4 pm. Dinner is served at 6 pm for hotel guests only, the cost of dinner is not included with your stay. You'll want to put your order in at the time of check-in so that it will be ready by 6.

Other dining options include the Berghotel Restaurant next door which is open until 4 pm, and the Cafébar which is open until 6 pm.

These are the only dining options nearby, so plan accordingly and arrive before they close so that you don't go hungry!

I'm sure the dinner for the hotel guests is lovely, but we wanted to do a hike before sunset so we picked up sandwiches, chips, and ice cream at the café for our dinner.

Go on a Sunset Hike

Oeschinensee is a popular day trip destination for tourists and locals alike. During the day, hundreds of people are lying on the shore, playing in the water, hiking on the trails, and enjoying the beauty of the lake.

What makes staying at Arva Oeschinensee so special is that once the last cable car leaves at 6 pm, the crowds will be gone and you can enjoy the tranquil beauty all to yourselves.

The best way to soak in the serenity is by taking an evening hike on the Oeschinensee Panorama Trail.

The full hike is a 5.6-mile loop trail that begins and ends at the gondola station. From Berghaus Arva, you can hike a portion of the trail that contours along the shore of the lake.

We hiked about 2 miles to the far end of the lake and up to Zur Sennhütte, a mountain hut restaurant. The restaurant closes at 5 pm if you would like to grab a bite to eat.

The trail continues up the side of the mountain to a panoramic lookout point. It is a more challenging climb with a total elevation gain of 1,624 feet. If you are doing a sunset hike, I recommend turning around at the mountain hut before it gets too dark.

The views along the trail are absolutely breathtaking. I'm sure the trail is beautiful any time of day, but it is pure magic being able to experience it at golden hour without the crowds. That is definitely a perk to spending the night at the lake and it was a highlight of our Switzerland trip!

Breakfast at Berghaus Arva

Breakfast the next morning is from 7:30-9 am and is included for guests at Berghaus Arva. You'll enjoy a spread of homemade bread and jams, fresh fruit, cheese, pastries, oatmeal, cereal, juice, and coffee.

Breakfast is served in the cozy chalet or you can enjoy eating outdoors on the patio.

After eating, it's time to pack up before checking out at 10 am. If you are staying an additional night, you can spend the day relaxing by the water or you can opt to rent row boats the second day.

Ride the Rodelbahn Oeschinensee

After checking out, take the shuttle cart back to the gondola station. Before taking the gondola down, take a quick ride on the toboggan track!

The approximately half-mile-long track is located just to the right of the gondola station.

The Rodelbahn is open from 9 am until 5:30 pm. Tickets are 6 CHF for one ride, 11.50 CHF for two, and 17 CHF for 3. You do not need to purchase tickets in advance.

After your one last adventure, it's time for your magical weekend in Oeschinensee to come to an end, but there are still so many incredible places to explore in Switzerland!

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