

4 sections of the tour “Panoramic views of the Albtrauf region”

Section 9: Bad Urach to Stahleck

Distance: approx. 20km

Altitude variation: approx. 650m

Walking time: approx. 5 hours

Maps: Sheet no. F 524 – Bad Urach

- Bad Urach
- Hohenurach
- Urach waterfall
- Hohe Warte
- Stahleck

Route description for section 9:

Our route description starts at the car park behind the railway underpass which is on the bypass road between the station and the junction leading into the spa area.

Look for the red triangle trail marker and follow the track uphill to the ridge. It's well worth taking a detour here to go up to the ruins that were once **Hohenurach fortress**. The route is marked by red arrows.

Hohenurach:

The origins of the castle and subsequent fortress can be traced back to the 11th century. Count Eberhard V, or Eberhard the Bearded, who founded the University of Tübingen, housed his mentally ill cousin in Hohenurach castle in 1490. From 1732 the castle was used as a source of stone for buildings in the surrounding area. The remaining walls, gateways and vaults are all that is left of its former glory. From the mighty castle ruins you can see Rutschenfelsen crags, Runder Berg (round hill, the Erms valley, Nägelesfelsen crags and, of course, the town of Bad Urach.

Take the same route back to the trail.

Following the red triangle signs again, you pass the **Kreuzhütte**, a walkers' shelter with a barbecue, and about 15 minutes later you come to the Wasserfallhütte café run by the Swabian Alb Walkers' Association.

Urach waterfall:

Urach waterfall, probably the prettiest in the Swabian Alb region, is located in a side valley off the Erms valley. The water streaming over the falls is from a karst spring and it continually deposits limestone that builds up the rock. It plummets down 37 metres in free fall, then runs off for another 50 metres or so over a moss-covered slab of tufaceous limestone. The flow rate from the karst spring is around 70 - 420 litres per second and the spring rises from the scree of the hillside meadow just above the waterfall

Follow the route marked by the red triangle up to the plateau, a strenuous climb, but worth it for the beautiful views. At this point the route meets another "Walking without luggage" path, the "**Eduard Mörike trail**", which is the name of the section between Nürtingen and Ulm. A direct path to the Stahlecker Hof inn branches off at the top of the hill, but do not take it. After a short time you come to the Rutschenfelsen crags.

Rutschenfelsen crags:

(755m) The Rutschenfelsen crags are popular with climbers and are named after the former Rutschenhof farm which was abandoned in 1827. The teams of oxen stabled there were used to transport firewood felled on the Alb to the wood slide at Hanner Felsen.

The Camerer memorial stone (1922) near the Rutschenfelsen crags is dedicated to a former chairman of the Swabian Alb Walking Association.

There are magnificent views of Hohenurach castle ruins, Runder Berg hill, Hohenneuffen Castle on the horizon and down into the Schiesstal and Hölle valleys.

The adjacent area is a volcanic maar where the Rutschenbrunnen spring bubbles up. It never dries up and is located in a copse in the hollow.

Before reaching the **Fohlenhof** stud farm, the route leaves the forest and continues along the paddocks. At the crossroads near the stud, follow the red triangles along a footpath back into the woods. This path leads to the Hohe Warte tower, your next destination.

Hohe Warte tower:

(820m) This viewing tower was erected in 1922 as a memorial to members of the Swabian Alb Walking Association who had fallen in the First World War. You can climb the 125 steps to the top of the 23 metre high tower to enjoy the lovely view. The tower is only left open on Sundays, but during the week you can fetch the key from the St. Johann stud (Gestütsgasthof St. Johann). This would mean retracing your steps as it is further along the route.

From the Hohe Warte tower the route takes you downhill past the walkers' car park to the **St. Johann stud** where you can call in for refreshments.

The trail then leads through the stud's attractive grounds and veers left towards Übersberg hill, down Alte Strasse to a sheltered avenue of lime trees. At the end, we continue walking to the left of the road. Follow the red triangle markers to the Eninger Weide bus stop and continue to the walkers' car park where you turn left. The route takes you past Schafhaus and then **Lindenhof (Albgut)** .

The Lindenhof experimental plant breeding station is a research and teaching institute of Hohenheim University.

Further along the trail there is an unexpected view of the Schönberg tower in Pfullingen, known locally as Pfullingen's "long johns", and also of Achalm hill and Eningen.

Achalm hill:

There are two versions of the story of how this hill came by its name.

"The Battle of Reutlingen", a ballad by Ludwig Uhland describes how a mortally wounded knight tried to call out "Ach Allmächtiger" ("Oh almighty God!"), but died after uttering the first two syllables, "Ach Allm"!

The second version is much more prosaic. "Ache" means brook and "Alm" means a mountain meadow.

Now continue along the Albtrauf, the north-westerly edge of the Swabian Alb, as far as **Übersberg hill** (776m) where you come to a tarred road. Follow it round to the left to the glider airfield. The trail leads around the airfield, through the woods and after a short time you reach today's destination, the Stahlecker Hof inn.

Your accommodation:**Landgasthof Stahlecker Hof**

72805 Lichtenstein

Tel. +49 (0)7122 9427

Price: on request

Section 10: Stahleck to Genkingen**Distance:** approx. 20km**Altitude variation:** approx. 250m **Walking time:** approx. 6 hours**Maps:** Sheet no. F 524 – Bad Urach; Sheet no. F 523 – Tübingen/Reutlingen

- Stahlecker Hof
- Genkingen
- Traifelberg
- Nebelhöhle
- Lichtenstein Castle

Route description for section 10:

In front of the Stahlecker Hof inn there is a red fork trail marker which you follow on a path through the fields towards Stahleck castle ruins. At the edge of the forest you come to the main Swabian Alb Walking Association trail no. 1 marked with a red triangle.

Not much remains of **Stahleck castle** (711m) but the moat is easily recognisable.

Continue for about 30 minutes following the red triangle markers until you reach Eckfelsen crags (748m) on the Albtrauf. From the viewpoint here you can see Lichtenstein Castle, Unterhausen, Echaz valley and Schönbuch nature reserve in the background.

A short time later you come to **Greifenstein castle ruins**(753m), a vantage point with a shelter, then a little further on to "Little Greifenstein" (737m), which also has good views.

The next place you reach is Holzelfingen where you follow the red triangle markers through the village, along Honauerstrasse and Brühlstrasse.

Alternative:

Walk along Burgenweg past the cemetery to an attractive play area with a barbecue and shelter. From here follow the blue triangle markers along the edge of the escarpment until you get back onto trail no. 1 with the red triangles near **Biegel hill**(738m). The trail marked by blue triangles descends to Unterhausen, but your route stays at the same altitude and leads towards Traifelberg hill.

The next viewpoints are **Rötelstein** (769m) and Locherstein (795m), from where the trail leads down to Traifelberg hill. Continue through woodland passing a hamlet until you come to the main road from Engstingen to Reutlingen. Cross the road by the **restaurant** near Traifelberg hill.

From the other side you can already see the ski lift, which you then pass as the trail climbs steadily, but not steeply, towards Lichtenstein Castle.

Before you reach the castle you come to the Hauff memorial, a vantage point from which you can look back and see the route from Eckfelsen across the escarpment to Lichtenstein Castle.

From the memorial, take the path along the castle walls to the main entrance. At first you only see some side buildings, the castle proper can be reached via a bridge. A tour of the castle is highly recommended and the views from the ward are spectacular.

Lichtenstein Castle:

This romantic castle was built between 1837 and 1842 and was based on the novel "Lichtenstein" by Wilhelm Hauff. It is perched on a crag high above the Echaz valley. Lichtenstein Castle, along with Neuschwanstein Castle in Upper Bavaria, is probably the best known of the new castles built in the 19th century

Further information:

www.schloss-lichtenstein.de

The remainder of your route following the "red triangle" trail along the Albtrauf is dominated by a series of scenic crags such as the **Giesstein** (788m).

The distance from Lichtenstein Castle to Nebelhöhle cave is about 4.5km, and you follow the red triangle route the whole way.

Alternative:

There is also a direct route signposted from Lichtenstein Castle which is about 2km shorter, but does not have the beautiful views.

Nebelhöhle cave:

Nebelhöhle cave is one of the most attractive dripstone caves in the Swabian Alb. Elector Frederick I of Württemberg visited the cave in 1803, which helped to make it famous. Magical stalactites and stalagmites can be seen along the 380 metre cavern. Even at the height of summer you would be advised to take a jacket or a pullover with you - because the temperature in the cave always remains at 10°C even on the hottest of days and can feel quite cold.

Further information:

www.sonnenbuehl.de

The route to **Genkingen** is well marked. It follows the access road to Nebelhöhle cave for a while before turning into the forest.

Genkingen is on the European watershed. In the past, before the underground sewage system was introduced, the water from the downpipes on the town hall flowed towards the Danube on one side and towards the Rhine on the other.

Our walk along the European watershed takes you from Villingen in the Black Forest diagonally across the Swabian Alb to Ellwangen.

We have chosen to end this section at Genkingen, because all attempts to find a suitable place to stay overnight elsewhere have been unsuccessful. Other walking guides to trail no. 1 have encountered the same problem.

As a solution we have incorporated another transfer. Hotel Sonnenbühl in Willmandingen, the next designated overnight stop, will collect you in Genkingen and take you back there the next day, which means that you can stay two nights in the same hotel.

Further information:

www.sonnenbuehl.de

Your accommodation in Willmandingen:

Landhotel Sonnenbühl

Egelsbergstrasse 12
72820 Sonnenbühl-Willmandingen
Tel. +49 (0)7128 92830
www.landhotel-sonnenbuehl.de

Price: on request

Section 11: Genkingen – Willmandingen

Distance: approx. 12km

Altitude variation: approx. 330m

Walking time: approx. 3.5 hours

Maps: Sheet no. F 523 – Tübingen/Reutlingen

- Genkingen
- Rossberg
- Bolberg
- Willmandingen

Route description for section 11:

The hotel will drive you to the starting point in Genkingen.

The tour starts at the town hall (771m) and from here you go down Gönninger Strasse to Öschinger Strasse – where you will see a red triangle trail marker – you then follow a tarred lane up the hill. The lane becomes a gravel track. When you come to a crossroads at the edge of woodland take the lower forest path which leads downhill through the trees.

As you emerge from the forest you will see an expanse of sheep pastureland and Rossberg hill. You now have to walk along the road for about 1km to the **Rossberg walkers' car park**.

From here follow the trail marked with a blue triangle that climbs through woodland up Rossberg hill.

Rossberg hill:

(869m) The walkers' hostel incorporating a viewing tower was built on Rossberg hill in 1913 to mark the 25th anniversary of the Swabian Alb Walking Association. At the time the solid concrete construction method used was considered ultra-modern, but now there are concerns whether it is structurally sound. Rossberg hill rises just 100m above the Rossfeld, the broad plateau of meadowland surrounding it from where there are views across the countryside. It forms a base for walks between Echaz, Steinlach and Starzel, along the Albtrauf and on the plateau; you can sometimes see the Alps from here. There is a memorial to Friedrich August von Quenstedt, a geologist who investigated the Swabian Alb, on the western side of the hill. The walkers' hostel serves food and drink, but is closed on Tuesdays.

Retrace your steps to the car park and return to the red triangle trail.

Follow the red triangle markers again from the walkers' car park, initially descending a steep hill through woodland – on a well maintained path.

The fairly strenuous climb up Bolberg hill starts at the **Hirschhäusle shelter** (650m).

Make sure you take the footpath veering off to the right of the trail a few minutes after the shelter.

You reach the top of Bolberg hill (880m) after about 40 to 45 minutes. At the top there is a lovely broad plateau with a shelter, barbecue and benches.

The sweeping view takes in the highest ridges in the Alb, the Albtrauf, Rossberg hill, and in the distance you can make out Wurmlingen Chapel.

Retrace your steps from the view point and take the easy route down to **Willmandingen** following the red fork makers.

Today's walk is not very long, so you can take the opportunity to recover a little from your exertions of the last few days. The hotel will be pleased to provide you with bicycles for exploring the surrounding area.

Not far from Willmandingen is the village of Melchingen, whose Lindenhof theatre is well known throughout Germany and is well worth seeing. Ask at the hotel for details of performances. The Reum family, who run the hotel, will be only too pleased to drive you to the theatre.

Further information:

www.theater-lindenhof.de

Your accommodation in Willmandingen:

Landhotel Sonnenbühl

Egelsbergstrasse 12

72820 Sonnenbühl-Willmandingen

Tel. +49 (0)7128 92830

www.landhotel-sonnenbuehl.de

Price: on request

Tennis players will be delighted to find that the hotel has its own indoor tennis court.

Section 12: Willmandingen – Jungingen

Distance: approx. 23km

Altitude variation: approx. 550m

Walking time: approx. 6.5 hours

Maps: Sheet no. F 523 – Tübingen/Reutlingen

- Willmandingen
- Dreifürstenstein
- Jungingen

Route description for section 12:

From the hotel, walk into the centre of Willmandingen and go past the church into Bolbergstrasse, then turn left into Thomastrasse and then Filsenbergweg.

Follow the tarred lane round to the right up a slight incline. Go past the walkers' car park and you will come to trail no. 1, marked with a red triangle.

The trail goes through the woods and on the way you will come across **Buchbrunnen** spring in the midst of the deciduous forest, which is an ideal place to take a break.

The climb up to the Riedernberg viewpoint (852m) takes ten minutes. It is the site of a castle dating back to pagan Celtic times between 600 and 400BC and has a shelter and barbecue.

From here you can see Rossberg hill, Thalheim and Dreifürstenstein hill.

Continue down the hill, then along a footpath which becomes a forest track.

Note:

Follow the red triangle route to the right as you emerge from the forest.

The path follows the course of a stream and at the bottom you come to the road between Thalheim and Melchingen. Cross the road to reach the village of **Thalheim**.

Trail no. 1 (red triangle) skirts round above the village. Farrenberg airfield is ahead of you and opposite it you will see the continuation of the escarpment as far as Dreifürstenstein hill.

Follow the tarred lane up a slight hill to the foot of Dreifürstenstein hill itself where the ascent begins. Parts of it are steep, but the 300-metre climb is soon behind you. At the top, your efforts are rewarded with a beautiful view. The path continues through woodland at first, then along the edge of the escarpment. The Mössingen landslide took place near here at Hirschkopf hill but it can't be seen from our route.

Dreifürstenstein viewpoint:

Long ago the boundaries of three principalities, Württemberg, Hohenzollern and Fürstenberg converged here. According to legend, the three princes met here for negotiations so that each prince could be on his own territory. The old boundary stone stands in front of the recently renovated shelter. The view from here is magnificent, you can see Raichberg hill with a radio mast on it, Hohenzollern Castle atop Zeugenberg hill with Plettenberg hill (1,005m) behind it, and in the background the Black Forest mountains with the Vosges mountains to the right.

Beuren Heath and the towns of Hechingen and Tübingen can be seen, with the Stuttgart region and the television tower in the distance. Wurlingen Chapel can be glimpsed in between.

The rest of your route mainly follows the edge of the Alb plateau with lovely viewpoints such as the Brunnengrat (850m) ranged along it.

When you reach "**Kohlberg**" **viewpoint** (653m), where there is a shelter and a barbecue, you are already looking down on Jungingen, today's final destination.

The next stop is the site of the former Eineck castle, then you make the steep descent to Jungingen. The last section takes you through an area of juniper scrub, which is typical of the region and is a protected site. It is a short climb up to the small castle, another viewpoint.

Jungingen:

(597m / pop. approx. 1,800) Jungingen in the Killer valley, now an independent district, evolved quickly from a farming village via the textile industry to become a small town specialising in precision engineering. This small, prosperous district provides a good quality of life, with amenities such as indoor and outdoor swimming pools and a small local history museum. The pilgrimage church of St Sylvester and the wealth of half-timbered buildings in the village are well worth seeing.

Further information:

www.jungingen.de

Your accommodation in Jungingen:

Hotel Restaurant Weinstube Post

Killertalstr. 19

72417 Jungingen

Tel. +49 (0)7477 92990

www.hotel-post-jungingen.de

Price: on request

For details and bookings, please email: info@touristik-service-agentur.de