

Our favourite “Knallertour”: from Gleisweiler to the Trifelsblickhütte hut

Length of the tour: 12.5 km | Duration: 4 hours | Ascent: 304 m | Incline: 378 m

We start at the car park for hikers in Gleisweiler. Interestingly enough, Gleisweiler has been the hottest place in Germany for a long time. So we start off under palm trees and follow the sign with the grape turning left towards Frankweiler. There are explanatory boards with route descriptions at the car park. Approaching the first houses, the narrow hiking path leads us to red and white markings, which we follow turning right. Here, the path is a well-developed roadway leading through the shady Hainbachtal valley. Just below us, a cold-water shower is waiting to be used: a spring has been tapped and converted into a “forest shower” with great care. The way to it is, however, not accessible with the tram.

Ascending again from the valley, we hike towards Landauer Hütte hut. This section of the track is strenuous and a certain amount of fitness is required, because there is a constant ascent there. And over a length of 400 metres you have to overcome an extra-steep slope just before you reach the hut. But you'll be rewarded for your efforts: You can take a very enjoyable rest there and pay family-friendly prices for a meal in Landauer Hütte hut, which is a popular destination for day trippers. After we have taken a rest at the hut, we continue the hike on another roadway along the signs to Neuscharfeneck castle ruin. Inside the ruin, there is a spot from where you have a marvellous view. However, to reach this point you'll have to carry your offspring. From the tower we discover and enjoy the unique panorama of the Palatinate Forest, which unfolds widely and offers a great view on Ramburg castle ruin and Dernbach and Ramberg villages—and even on the High Black Forest and the Vosges on fine-weather days.

The upcoming track is signposted very well. We decide to take a narrow route along the slope, which branches off to the left from opposite the castle ruin and which is marked with a white line and the sign of the Pfälzer Weinsteig hiking trail. The path leads us pleasantly straight ahead on a soft ground. After about a kilometre, the slope route flows into a forest trail, which we continue

to follow, turning right. Here, the signposted Pfälzer Weinsteig trail informs us that we have another 1.6 kilometres to overcome to reach “Drei Buchen” forest hut. We pass the hut, where you could actually have very good meals, and we reach a country road. On the right, there is a hiking route marked with a blue line and the Pfälzer Weinsteig trail, which we follow to Trifelsblickhütte hut. The wide forest trail ascends gradually until we reach the Dreimärker junction, where three districts meet. There is a shelter here, which you can use to hide from bad weather or to feed and change your baby. We continue straight ahead, following the signs and the Weinsteig markings and we look forward to the magnificent view on Trifels rock, which we can’t get enough of. The path continues ascending gently and pleasantly. On its sides, there are sculptures that Reinhold Müller, a local of Gräfenhausen, carved out of wood with loving care. A bagpipe player and various animals made of wood make us forget about the ascent altogether.

Arriving at the top, we recognize that the Trifelsblickhütte that translates as ‘hut with a view on the Trifels’ lives up to its name and we enjoy a magnificent view. Little dishes typical of the Palatinate are available here. And: Despite of the absence of electricity in the hut, the volunteers here spare no efforts and heat up your baby food in a bain-marie.

The inclining way back to Gleisweiler is well signposted. Behind the hut, we follow the roadway and the Weinsteig markings. The route leads past the “Holzdieb” (wood thief) sculpture and further downhill. Some 500 metres below the hut, we turn right and follow the blue line and the sign towards Gleisweiler. The trail loses height quickly here and we have to overcome two times six sandstone steps. This is doable with a pram. Just above the sanatorium, a sign saying “Wanderparkplatz” (car park for hikers) leads us back to our starting point. The last obstacle for prams is posed by about 12 steps just before the car park, which can be taken easily because of the length of the steps.

Excerpt from the book: Christina Fuchs-Riesch, Philipp Fuchs: Mit dem Kinderwagen durch die Pfalz, Knecht Verlag, Landau 2020, 16,90 Euro. ISBN: 978-3-939427-54-4