Chärstelenbach

Create: 2023-07-26 19:06:52	**Update:** 2025-11-15 22:14:59	**Print:** 2026-11-10 02:11:40
Country: Schweiz / Switzerland **Region:** Kanton Uri **Subregion:** Silenen **Town:** Bristen		
Difficulty: difficult	**Grading:** v5 a5 V	**Total time:** 9h45
Approachtime: 4h	**Tourtime:** 5h	**Returntime:** 45min
Altitude entry: 1900m	**Altitude exit:** 1490m	**Delta Altitude:** 410m
Canyon length: 2200m	**Highest rapell:** 35m	**Amount rapells:** 16
Transport: on Foot	**Rock type:** limestone	**Drainage area:** 23.00km²
Season: October - November	**Orientation:** East	**Best Time:** 8-14 o'clock
Rating: ☆ 4.8 (2)	**Info:** ★ 1.5 (2)	**Belay:** ★ 1.5 (2)

Specialities:
Glacier in drainage area,

Gear:
Ropes: 2x40m
Headlamp, drill tool,

Summary: (machine translated)
Glacier canyon, very long day, very dark, very dangerous, lots of falling rocks. But beautiful!

New 2025 ! After the first abseil section, 3/4 of the ice and block chaos has collapsed. Now you have to scramble up, and then rappel 30m diagonally on firn, and again 25m vertically to get back to the stream. This will probably change again by fall 2026.

Hydrology: (machine translated)
Large glacier in the catchment area. At the exit of October at 13:00 there is not yet much evidence of melting, but by 15:00 it has almost doubled.

Access: (machine translated)
Take the highway from Lucerne in the direction of Gotthard and exit at Amsteg. Cross the village and turn left up the small road through the Maderanertal valley to the village of Bristen. Cross the village and park in the cable car parking spaces.
An Alpine cab shuttle is available to shorten the journey from Bristen to Guferen (approx. 2 hours) (road closed to traffic). The price is CHF 100 and the Alpentaxi can only take 6 people! Otherwise it is also possible by bike (400m).

Approach: (machine translated)
New!

A new access was tested in 2024, which saves almost 300-400 meters in altitude. It now goes past the Hüfisee (T4, marked with dots up to the lake), and then up a rock band onto the slabs north of the canyon (some scrambling, and a short climb, which now has a 30m fixed rope hanging in it). Details on the photos. From there just go down the tributary to the confluence with the glacier water. Right there is also the first rappel.

Old access :
Walk up the valley towards the village of Guferen, cross the bed of the Chärstelenbach stream and follow the path on the right bank of the Chärstelenbach stream towards the village of Blindensee. Cross the stream there to switch to the left bank and follow the path towards Hüfihütte. At an altitude of around 2,200 m, you reach the glacier by descending through a couloir and then over limestone slabs to reach the left bank of the glacier at an altitude of around 2,020 m. Follow the left edge of the glacier to about 1985 meters. Go into the hole on the left bank of the glacier to reach the watercourse and the start of the canyon.
Allow 1 hour for the approach to cross the glacier and walk along the limestone slabs on the right bank, then rappel down one of the 80 meters as you dispense with the upper part below the glacier!!!!

Tour: (machine translated)
First indentation under the glacier with about 10 waterfalls. After leaving the first indentation, you reach the Hüfisee on the left, follow it on the left and reach the second incised part with about 6 to 7 obstacles (alt. 1670m)

Commitment
A big commitment! No way out except after the first notch at the level of the Hüfisee. 1st committed part because under the glacier with the potential risk of the canyon being blocked by ice and 2nd committed part because of a considerable amount of water!

Period/water character
Autumnal canyon to be done when temperatures drop in altitude but before the first snow to facilitate the long approach and reduce the risk of avalanches and glacier crossings.

Notes
The uphill section has been opened up using caving techniques (fixed ropes) to allow you to turn back. Be careful and vigilant when you set off! Icefalls and falling rocks could block this part of the canyon!

Return: (machine translated)
At the exit of the second inlet in the Griesboden district, walk along the watercourse and reach the Riedbödmer district. Walk along the left bank and after about 10 minutes you will reach the approach path and follow it to Guferen and/or Bristen.

Coordinates:
Canyon Start 46.8079 8.8240
Canyon End 46.7982 8.8024
Waypoint 46.8081 8.8229
Parking Entry and Exit 46.7664 8.7107
Waypoint 46.7804 8.7756

Reports:

2025-11-10 | Alberto Cabrera | ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ½ | 🕮 ★ ★ | ⚓ ★ | ≋ Normal | 👍 Completed
Access by the new cut. Approach in 3h somewhat exposed, important that there is no snow-ice on the walls. One of the climbing sections has a grade of 5+, 6a (fixed rope). Inside the canyon the obstruction of stones and ice has fallen cutting the passage through the canyon. We had to climb and add 2 parabolts to get to the river again. The narrow section is intact. The lower section all OK, we added an anchor at the second waterfall to be able to descend into the water. (machine translated)

2024-11-01 | Nico Schneider | ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ | 🕮 ★ | ⚓ ★ | ≋ High | 👍 Completed
Upper part: You can easily get through under the avalanche snow. Watch out for falling rocks from the side. Access via the rocks orograghically to the right. If you take the access described in the book, you still need anchors to get into the canyon. All anchors in the canyon have been renewed. The water level is manageable without problems if you start early. Lower part: About 4 times the amount of water. We drilled a new anchor on the third rappel so that the lower parts can be climbed even when there is a lot of water. The rock is also slippery. (machine translated)

2023-09-28 | Daniel Sturm | | 🕮 | ⚓ | |
Basic data taken with kind permission by Matthias Holzinger from "Swiss Alps Canyoning VOL. 2.0" (machine translated)

First descent: 14.11.2018 by

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