



**“The view from the summit is truly exceptional. The Matterhorn stands aloof, while the ice-clad mountain wall from Breithorn round to Lyskamm is displayed from its best angle.”**



- ↑ The chapel at Trift, with Monte Rosa and Lyskamm beyond.
- Valais Blacknose sheep.
- ↗ The Trift Glacier.

There are two ways to begin the climb. The best crosses the railway line near the campsite before heading north uphill and then zigzagging up open slopes on an obvious trail, gaining height with surprising ease. This avoids the brutal push up the enclosed Trift Gorge (which makes more sense in descent, after you’ve had your fill of the views). After passing through larch woodlands where marmots play, you’ll climb through wildflower meadows and an area of large metal structures that look a little like fences—these are avalanche-prevention devices. The trail contours around the southern flanks of Wisshorn before joining the Trift Gorge route just above the Berggasthaus Trift, a guesthouse offering Swiss cuisine and accommodations. If you plan to split the ascent into two days—which is a good idea if you aren’t acclimatized to the altitude—this is the best place for an overnight stop. There are still over 1,000m (3,281ft) to climb from this point.

The trail turns north and climbs steeply into the rocky wilderness of the Triftchumme. Vegetation thins and the scenery becomes dramatically more alpine, with remarkable views to the adjacent Trift Glacier. On a hot day, you might see a serac (ice block) collapsing with a thunderous boom. Underfoot, the terrain is now almost entirely composed of shattered rock in shades of gray and orange. If you’re used to hiking in the lower pastures of the Alps, this can feel like an alien landscape, but the trail is

good and clearly marked, and after a final steepening it soon leads you to the col of Furggji at 3,149m (10,331ft).

The views from this point on the edge of the glacier are impressive. Directly ahead, Weisshorn’s south face appears as a pyramid of rock, and the glaciers tumbling down from Zinalrothorn add a gothic atmosphere to this high perch. On a sunny day it’s certainly beautiful, but with clouds swirling on a cold wind around the peaks it can feel thrilling and foreboding. In good conditions, an easy, flat track across the glacier leads to the final steep and rocky climb to Mettelhorn’s summit. The track is usually well marked, but at certain times of year it can be helpful to have crampons and trekking poles, especially early in the season before the spring snow has melted, or in September when the glacier is bare ice. This is only a short glacier crossing, though, and no special skills are needed beyond good mountain-sense.

On a clear day, the view from the summit at 3,410m (11,188ft) is truly exceptional. The Matterhorn stands aloof, while the ice-clad mountain wall from Breithorn round to Lyskamm is displayed from its best angle across the deep gulf of the Mattertal valley and Zermatt far below. The air up here is thin and often cold, giving you a taste of what it’s like to climb those 4000ers, and, in fact, many alpinists have taken their first steps towards mountaineering on this hike. It’s one to savor.