



monschau touristik

Water – Wool – Slate

From the Old Town to the Eifel National Park
14 km or 9 km hiking tour

The hike starts in the idyllic old town of Monschau and leads via Höfen, a village famous for its hedges, to the Eifel National Park and back to Monschau. Spectacular views, romantic creek valleys and a rich fauna await you along the way. Information points point out scenic attractions as well as cultural and historical characteristics. Besides several restaurants in the Perlenbachtal and in Höfen you will find two exhibition houses that are very interesting and deserve a visit: the Nationalparktor in Höfen and Haus Seebend which houses a weaving museum. Shortcuts are possible. Additionally, you can use public transportation (bus line 84) from Höfen back to Monschau.

The hike starts and ends at the clothier fountain on the market place in Monschau. The fountain shows several steps in the cloth production process of the 18th century, a time when cloth production was hard manual labor. At that time Monschau used to be a very important centre of the European cloth production. From the market place the hike takes you up to the “Sonntagsley” (1). From here you have a beautiful view over the old city of Monschau and its houses with their slated roofs. The hike continues through the Kurpark (city gardens) to Burgau. (2) (without image), where the last one of Monschau’s cloth manufacturers, the Rheinischen Wollwerke, stopped its production in 1983.

The hiking path leaves Monschau and ascends to “Engelsley” (3) with a wonderful view of the Rur- and

Perlenbach valley. Below the ley (slate rock) used to be a slate pit. A steep path leads down to the Perlenbach valley, the Dreistegen dam (4) (without image) with its canal that used to channel water to the turbine of the cloth factory of Alexander Scheibler. An idyllic path takes you by a camp ground and the Perlbach valley that shows the distinctive ground vegetation of a talus forest (5). You can discover different species of moss and fern and from time to time you will be able to spot a white-throated dipper, diving for food in the creek.

Passing hotel Perlenau, that used to be a wool laundry and a dyewood mill, you will get to the Perlbachtalsperre, that supplies tap water to the Monschauer Land since 1953. On a ledge, high above the water dam, you can take a break on a “Eifelsteigliege” (7) (without image). Shortly after, you have the possibility to take a shortcut by taking the path to your left and following the “Eifelsteig” signs to the Nationalparktor Höfen. If you do not want to take the shortcut please continue straight on to the Höfener Mühle (Höfen mill) from 1805 (8).

The valleys of the Fuhrtsbach (9) (without image) and Perlbach are old cultural lands. Those valuable biotopes are the home of many rare animals and plants. During spring an uncountable number of wild daffodils turn the meadows into a yellow sea of blossom and in the summer you will find the aromatic spignel. Before the path leaves the Fuhrtsbach valley, you will arrive at the most southern corner of the Eifel National Park (10). Since 2004 nature is left alone to run its course in order to bring the forest back to its original state. An area of about 11.000 hectares is under strict protection and hikers are only allowed to walk on designated paths.

You will now hike up to the little village of Höfen. The district of Alzen welcomes you with its high hedges. Those copper beech hedges are kept and planted as green walls in order to protect the half-timbered houses from the elements. Höfen offers a lot of typical half-timbered houses (12). Haus Seebend (13) (without image) hosts an exhibition “Buchenhecken und Narzissentäler” (beech hedges and daffodil valleys) of the German-Belgian nature park HohesVenn-Eifel. It is also home to the weaving museum. If you have enough time you should visit the Nationalparktor Höfen (N). In the old dairy you will not only find an exhibition about the Eifel Nationalpark but also a tourist information and a bistro. You will continue through the Weiherstraße, passing old farm houses, that tell the story of the life of earlier generations (14) and have been restored with a lot of love and care.

The “Alter Weg” (old path) brings you back to Monschau. There used to be a road block during the 17th century, called Grindel (15) (without image), that controlled access to the city. You will pass the cemetery (16) (without image), where many of the cloth manufacturers have been buried. The cobble stone pavement marks the beginning of the old town district Mühlenberg (17) (without image). Around 1780, during the bloom of Monschau’s cloth producing industry, this district used to be home to many weavers. They did not only have to put their huge weaving-loom in their houses but also housed animals such as goats and pigs in their basement.

After a 14 km hike you will be welcomed again by the clothier fountain in the centre of Monschau where a diverse gastronomic offer awaits you for a well deserved rest.