



The greatest glacier of the alps

The stream velocity at the Konkordia square is 200 m per year.

On a hot day, it can diminish in height by 20 cm by deglaciation.

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The great Aletsch glacier A titan

greatest glacier of the alps



The great Aletsch glacier

Surface: 81.7 km²

Length: 22.6 km

Depth: 900 meters (2,952 ft)

Weight: 27 billion tons

The multimedia exhibition at the Bettmerhorn - BETTMERHORN WORLD OF ICE - which is open all year round provides more detailed information.



The heart of the UNESCO World Heritage

It is surrounded by imposing 4000 m peaks such as Jungfrau, Mönch, and the great Fiescherhorn, and they limit its collecting basin to the north: the glaciers of the great Aletsch, Jungfrau, Ewig-schneefäld and Grünegg (from west to east), join together at the Konkordia square.

Everything flows

At the altitude of the Konkordiaplatz its velocity reaches about 200 meters (656 ft) per year, while at the altitude of the Bettmerhorn it still reaches 80-90 meters (262-295 ft) per year. The ice of the Aletsch glacier does not flow steadily. The flow is slowed down at the sides and underneath due to frictional resistance. Different velocities lead to tensions in the ice which results in glacier crevasses.

The glacier perspires

On a hot summer day, up to 60 cubic meters of water leave the glacier mouth per second. That's 60,000 liters in one single second! This is how the glacier diminishes by up to 20 cm in height per day in the summer. Adding up the deglaciation in the winter, the measuring station shows that up to 12 meters of ice melt into water per year. Since the streaming of the ice constantly provides more material, the actual shrinking of the glacier is less.

A phenomenon without comparison

The length and thickness of the stream of ice determine how much water is contained in this glacier. If the whole glacier was thawed, each inhabitant of the earth could have one liter of its water every day for six years! The weight of the ice is calculated at 27 billion tons, which is equal to the weight of 72.5 million jumbo jets.

Quietly settles the snow

In ten years, one meter (3.2 ft) of fresh snow is converted into one centimeter (0.39 inches) of dense, blue glacial ice.

1 m fresh snow
> 10 years
> 1 cm glacial ice

The sun, the artist of the glacier

A glacier table is formed by a large block of stone resting on an ice pedestal, protecting the ice below from melting.

Survival under extreme conditions

The glacier flea which measures approx. 1.5 to 2.5 mm lives on the glaciers all year round and reaches an age of around three years. It can handle temperatures of up to minus 20 degrees Celsius, but it dies at temperatures of 10 to 12 degrees above zero.

