

History of the Buchenwald Railway

The concentration camp had already been operating for six years when the SS decided to build a railway line to the camp's new armament factory in 1943. Prisoners had to build the 11 kilometer connecting road between Weimar and Buchenwald under the harshest conditions. It was provisionally opened on June 21, 1943, after three months of construction. Beginning in August of 1943, prisoners were taken via the railway line to Buchenwald and were then deported to satellite camps for forced labor. The prisoners came from all of the German-occupied territories. They often traveled for many days without sustenance or protection against the cold. Those who were not capable of work were deported from Buchenwald to extermination camps. This is what happened to approximately 200 Sinti and Roma children, who were deported to Auschwitz on September 25, 1944



Memorial path along the former route

and murdered there. This transport was followed by others, in which 2,000 children and adolescents were brought to Auschwitz. As the SS evacuated the concentration camps in the east at the beginning of 1945, over 10.000 people were deported in open cattle cars to Buchenwald. Many of them were already dead upon arrival or died shortly thereafter.

Initiative Gedenkweg Buchenwaldbahn

The efforts of the initiative "Gedenkweg Buchenwaldbahn" led to the creation in 2007 of a memorial path along the former route of the Buchenwald railway. An approximately 3.5 kilometer long section of the former railway embankment between Weimar and the Buchenwald concentration camp was freed of trees and shrubs. This accessible section of the former route offers visitors of the memorial site and other interested parties a new approach to Buchenwald's history by being situated in the immediate vicinity of the former camp complex. Along the memorial path, visitors are encouraged to grapple with the railway's history. Project groups have begun researching the fates of those who were deported, as well as investigating the connections between the concentration camp and the outside world. Volunteers of the Weimar-based initiative "Gedenkweg Buchenwaldbahn" helped to clear the historic route. The group was part of the countrywide citizen initiative "Zug der Erinnerung" ("Train of Remembrance"), which advocated for the remembrance of the people, especially the children, who were deported on the tracks of the German national railway system. From 2007 to 2013, a traveling exhibit housed in a historical train was dedicated to the individual fates of children and families. Young people were especially encouraged to engage with the biographies of those who were deported.

Information

Visitors should plan to spend approximately 1.5 hours walking the length of the memorial path (3.5 km). The path is accessible throughout the entire year, including after rain



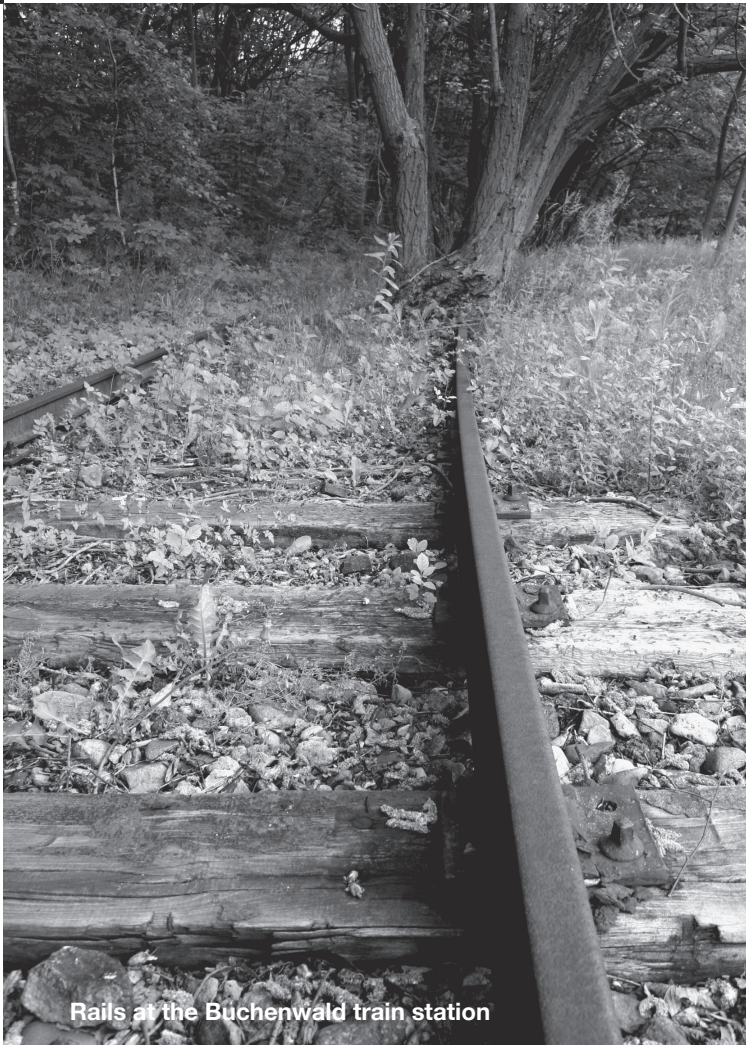
Milestone on the railway route



showers, but sturdy shoes are recommended. The route is signposted with information panels and the blue-black symbol. The memorial path can be reached from Weimar via bus (Line 6) leaving hourly from Goetheplatz, as well as from the main train station in the direction of Buchenwald (stops "Obelisk" or "Gedenkweg Buchenwaldbahn") or toward Ettersburg (stop "Buchenwaldstraße").

Contact:

Heiko Clajus, Tel. 0176/64673330 or Christian Molitor, Tel. 0176/21918272, Email: molitor.weimar@web.de
A project of the Gerberstraße 1 e.V. Weimar



Rails at the Buchenwald train station

*When the train moves, the whispers and
Death rattles are drowned out by the rattling of the wheels.
The train has already traveled for many days.
Sometimes it stops for a night at a
Siding, near a bridge, upon which civilians
Hurry by and timidly glance down
Upon the train. Open wagons, packed with
Men, doubled over in the cold.
Only when they die do they stretch
To their full dignified length.*

Fred Wander, Austrian-Jewish prisoner



Gedenkweg Buchenwaldbahn

The education department at the Buchenwald Memorial offers school groups and other groups the opportunity to dive deeper into the history of the Buchenwald Railway through hour-long and multi-day programs. To arrange a program, please contact the visitor information center at the memorial site.

Tel: 03643/430-200, Fax: 03643/430-102
Email: information@buchenwald.de
Homepage: www.gedenksteine-buchenwaldbahn.de

Opening Hours of the Buchenwald Memorial / Museums:

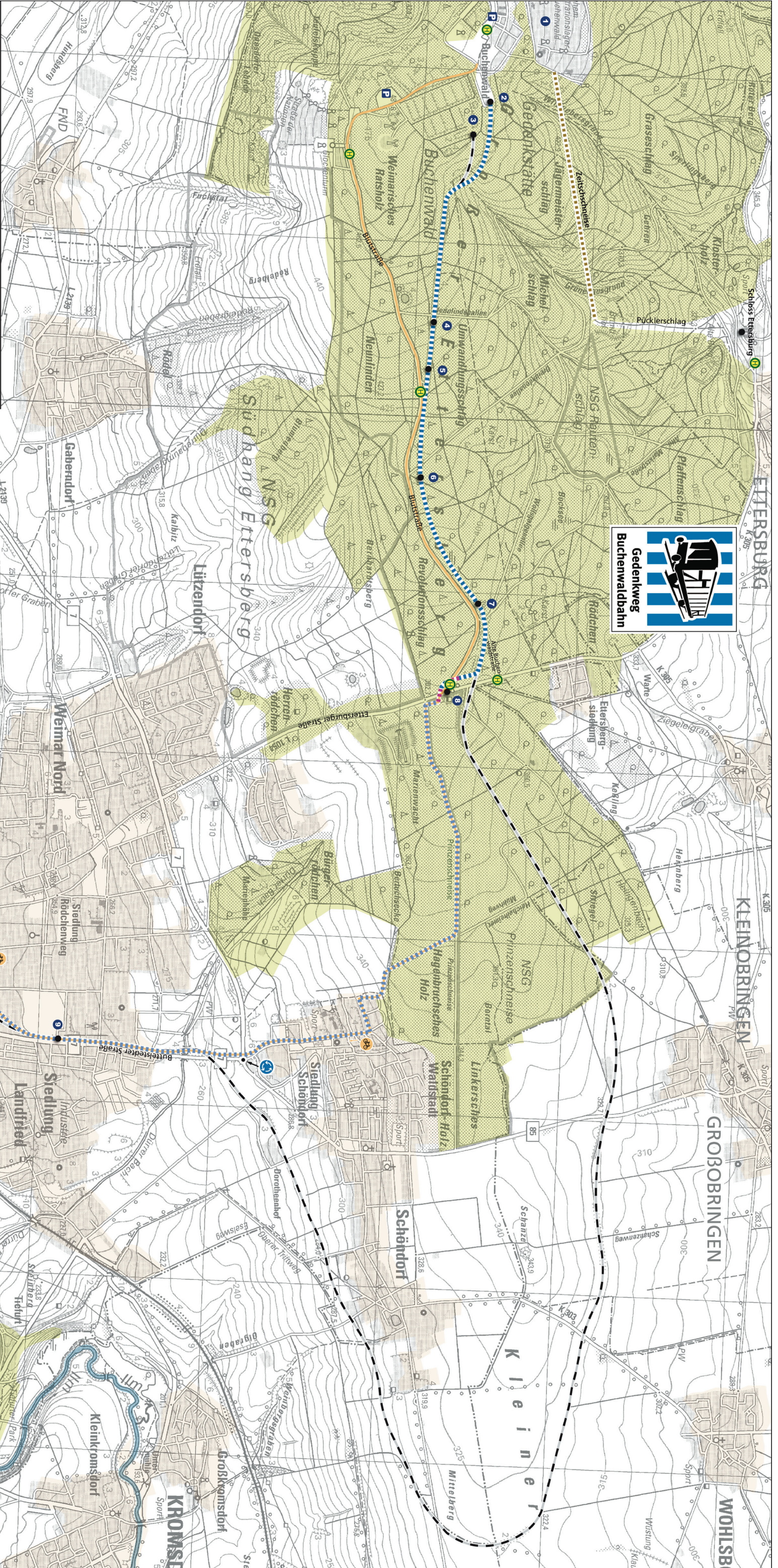
April-October:
Tuesday-Sunday
10am-6pm (last entry 5:30pm)
November-March
Tuesday-Sunday
10am-4pm (last entry 3:30pm)
The museums are closed on Mondays.
The grounds can be visited daily until nightfall. Multimedia guides can be borrowed in the visitor information center.

Credits:

Text: Anna Ruhland, Christian Molitor, Sandra Starke
Layout: Jens Welscher, Michael Hecker
Photos: THStA Weimar, J. Welscher, M. Hecker
Map: City Development Office, Department of Geo-Information and Statistics
Editorial: Friederike Walter
Initiative Gedenkweg Buchenwaldbahn, Weimar 2022



Stiftung Gedenkstätten
Buchenwald und Mittelbau-Dora



Legende legend

- Gedenkweg Buchenwaldbahn
memorial path Buchenwaldbahn
- Achtung Straßenverkehr
attention traffic
- nicht ausgeschildeter Weg
route without marks
- Historische Bahnstrecke
historical railroad line
- mit Fahrrad befahrbarer Weg ohne Ausschließung
drivable route for bikes without marker on road
- „Zeicheneise“
„Zeicheneise“
- Denkmal
memorial
- Parkplatz
parking site
- Bushaltestellen der Linie 6 am Gedenkweg
bus stops of bus route 6 at the memorial path
- Touristinformation
tourist information
- Kreisverkehr
roundy traffic
- 1 Gedenkstätte Buchenwald
memorial camp Buchenwald
- 2 Ehem. Bahnhof Buchenwald
former train station Buchenwald
- 3 Ehem. Gustoff-Werke
former Gustoff-factories
- 4 Gedenkstätte der deportierten Kinder
memorial stores of deported childrens
- 5 Alte Verladeanlage
old loading ramp
- 6 Rastplatz „Drei Linden“
Rest Area „Drei Linden“
- 7 Alte Buchenwaldstraße
old street to Buchenwald
- 8 Obelisk
obelisk
- 9 Schemenstück der Buchenwaldbahn
piece of tracks from the ancient
train to Buchenwald
- 10 Rastenberg-Tunnel / Hauptbahnhof
Rastenberg-Tunnel / Hauptbahnhof



**Gedenkweg Buchenwaldbahn
Memorial path Buchenwaldbahn**

Wanderweg auf den ehemaligen Gleisen der Buchenwaldbahn
Walkway at the former tray of the Buchenwaldbahn