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## Bernina Express Rhaetian Railway

We took this railway in July 2015 catching the train from Scuol to Tirano and back in one day. We had beautiful weather and it was very hot the further south we went. We left at 8am from Scuol, had coffee in Pontresina by the river, lunch in Tirano under the trees in the park and Gelato in Poschiavo on the way back in the cobbled square near the towers. We didn't go on to Lugano as that was a bus trip away and we would have had to stay overnight.

The highest railway crossing of the Alps is the Bernina Express which climbs up to the glistening glaciers before descending to the palms of Italy far below. This rail link between Northern and Southern Europe builds bridges between regions with different languages and cultures.

The railway is unique, blending in perfectly with the alpine landscapes around the Albula and Bernina Passes. The train negotiates the 55 tunnels, 196 bridges and inclines of up to 70 per mille with ease. At the highest point on the RhB, 2,253 metres above sea level, you will find the Ospizio Bernina. Here, visitors can delight in the cultural and natural surroundings and enjoy the Alps at their most impressive. The railway line from Thusis - Valposchiavo - Tirano has UNESCO World Heritage status.

The valley Valposchiavo in the southern Alps is a great place to enjoy lengthy hikes, leisurely strolls and fine regional specialties. Explore the historic heart of Poschiavo, centred around its pleasant piazza and discover various

aspects of the valley's history in one of the museums or the colourful "Spanish Quarter" built by returning emigrants. Soaking up the beautiful scenery at the Lago di Poschiavo makes a fitting end to a memorable trip.

Tirano is the departure point for the journey through the picturesque landscape of Valtellina – an Italian valley famous for its wines. Gaze out over pretty bays and charming little fishing villages as you travel along the shores of Lake Como. The narrow roads that hug the shores of Lake Lugano bring you into Switzerland and Lugano.

### Albula/Bernina UNESCO World Heritage route

The Albula and Bernina section of the track is a masterpiece in terms of civil engineering and routing. Landscape and railway blend into one: in wide radiuses, ingenious man-made structures punctuate rugged valleys. The Landwasser Viaduct, the helical tunnels between Bergün and Preda and the Brusio Circular Viaduct all stand testimony to the early pioneering days of the railway.

#### Landwasser Viaduct

The viaduct at Filisur spans the Landwasser Valley and leads directly into a tunnel. The construction of the three main pillars in 1901/02 was an outstanding architectural feat, considering that the viaduct was built using only two cranes and without scaffolding. This is the most spectacular landmark on the Rhaetian Railway and it has become famous all over the world.



Market square in Poschiavo



Viaduct in Brusio

### Poschiavo

The picturesque village of Poschiavo is dominated by three towers: the Romanesque tower of the Catholic Church, the Baroque tower of the Reformed Church and the medieval tower of the town hall. The landlords of the typical Graubünden restaurants in the village take pride in their delicious Pizzoccheri. A glass of Veltliner will also stand you in good stead. Viva!

### Lago di Poschiavo

Situated in Le Prese, this fairytale lake is a popular destination for walkers. A flat, 7km hiking trail leads around the lake. The lake was formed by a prehistoric landslide and its turquoise waters and pretty coves are truly spectacular.

### Brusio Circular Viaduct

This viaduct turns round a 360-degree curve, lengthening the track so that it is possible to overcome the difference in altitude in the narrow Valposchiavo. The Brusio Circular Viaduct is considered the most spectacular construction on the Bernina Line.

### Bernina Express Bus

Following a tasty lunch in Tirano, the Bernina Express Bus is ready and waiting to take passengers on a leisurely drive through the picturesque landscape of Valtellina, past Lake Como, where many stars own holiday homes and Hollywood films are shot, to Lugano. With its Mediterranean ambience, the destination, steeped in culture and history, invites visitors to enjoy sheer indulgent relaxation.

Melissa Lanz

<https://www.rhb.ch/en/panoramic-trains/berlina-express>

