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Autor: Zuber, Anita
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E-biking in Emmental



We'd heard about this e-biking craze so we put it on our bucket-list of things to do whilst in Switzerland and mentioned it to one of our relatives. Straight away they agreed to come and lucky for us they had a bit of experience in riding e-bikes. Our sister-in-law Kaethi did some bookings and reserved our bikes at the train station in Burgdorf. When she told us we were going to bike 64kms to Willisau we thought she was joking. Nonetheless we headed off to collect our bikes, helmets and maps and started our journey along route 99.

There is a free guide available with all the bike routes from Lausanne to Rorschach so we were just embarking on a small part of that network. It is called the "Herzroute" translated Heart Route. After a while we got used to the different power phases available between economy and high and then the different gears to use so slowly we figured out how best to make the use of the battery. The tracks were very well marked and only a few kilometres had to be ridden on the road and all the rest were either cycle ways or farm roads. The route took us through lots of farming

communities and at times it felt as if we were looking through their front doors or into their cowsheds.

After about 20kms we had our first break in Affoltern where we were met by bus loads of tourists. Quite a contrast after being in the back of beyond! This stop was one of the places you could swap your battery but most of us decided to carry on to the next battery exchange in Madiswil. We had already reached the highest point at 838 metres but we still had a lot of up and down to come. Unfortunately we had about 10kms of gravelly road which I struggled with and went quite slow, only to find Kaethi too close behind and she had to brake and managed to skid off her bike. Luckily she wasn't hurt so we continued on our way.

Our lunch stop was at Bauernhof Flueckiger in Ursenbach where they offered a self-service on their porch with an honesty box. It was a great resting place where we bought sandwiches and a drink. They even had deck chairs set up in their orchard for relaxing. Soon we continued on to Madiswil where

we swapped over our batteries so that we could make it to our destination. It was time for coffee in their aptly-named "Velo Garten" where we appreciated a bit of shade before we embarked on our final stretch. We still had more hills to come but thanks to a bit of power we managed easily, apart from our bums starting to get very sore. I personally would have had enough after 40kms of biking but we persevered and made it to Willisau where we dropped off the bikes. From there we took the local train back to Burgdorf via Langenthal.

What a great adventure in perfect conditions – temperatures mid 20s and a bit of breeze. We will definitely try and do another stretch at some stage, maybe Romont to Lausanne as that looks downhill all the way going past some beautiful vineyards and through the sunny Lavaux region. It wasn't a cheap day out as the bikes cost CHF 65 to rent and on top of that is the train ticket which is quite expensive if you haven't purchased a Half-tax pass.

Written by Anita Zuber – photos by Walter Zuber.

