

Switzerland is being rediscovered

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Soaring value of the pound is helping



On the Uetliberg above Zurich



Hikers on the crest trail of the Stanserhorn

BRITISH tourists are re-discovering Switzerland!

The 1970s saw the plunge of the pound, the malaise of many other major currencies – and a subsequent slump in bookings at many Swiss cities and resorts. Even many Swiss themselves found it cheaper to take their holiday abroad.

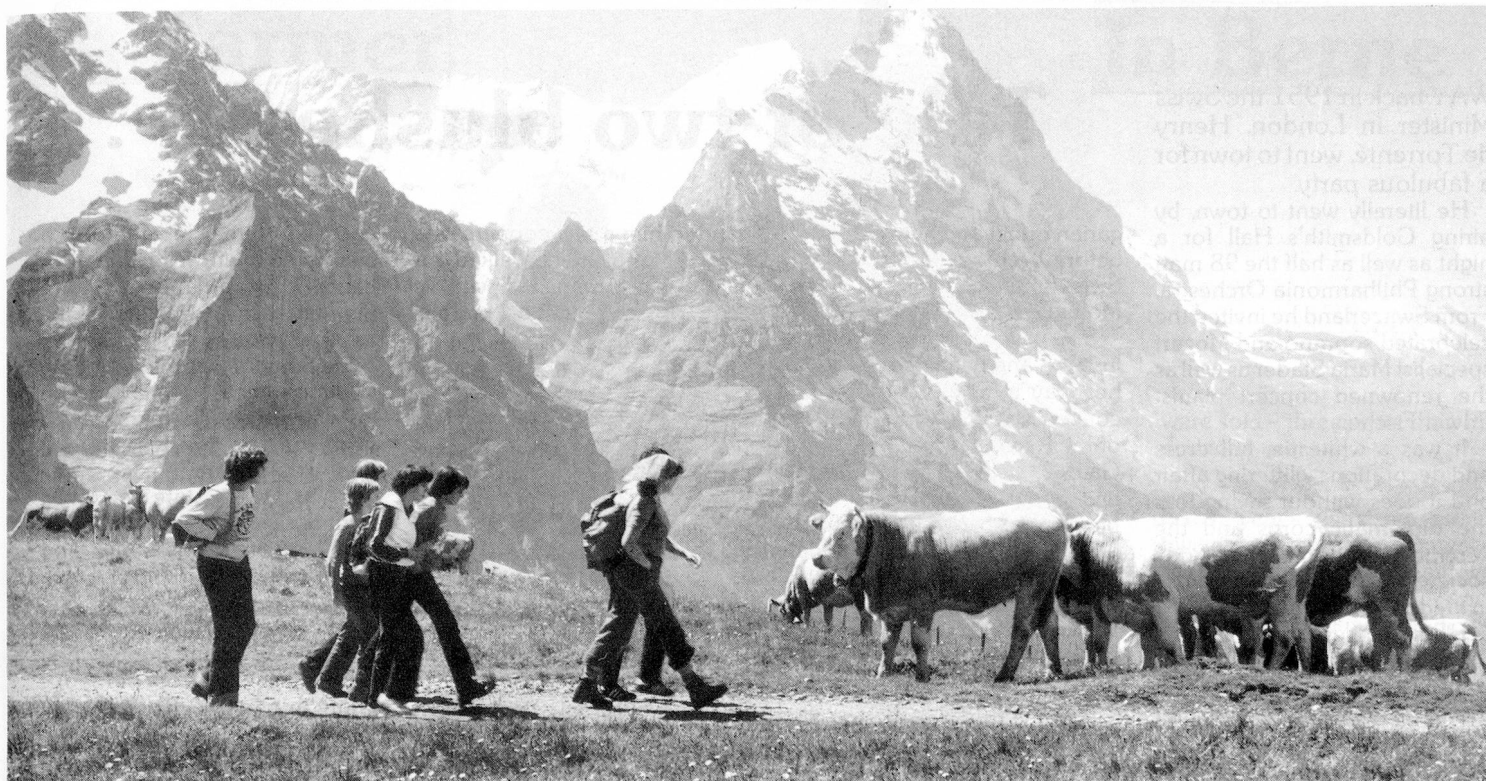
But now Swiss hotels are winning back a lot of their lost business, with foreign tourists in particular returning in ever-increasing numbers.

Provisional figures for 1980 show that foreign tourism to Switzerland increased over the previous year by no less than 20 per cent. British bookings alone soared by some 27 per cent. And Swiss tourism officials – cautious and conservative at the best of times – believe that 1981 will see still further improvement.

Why this renewed interest in Switzerland as a travel and tourism destination? There are several reasons. The Swiss enjoy the world's second lowest annual inflation rate (currently 4 per cent!) and, in consequence, have hardly increased their hotel prices for years.

Switzerland's neutrality is a

Swiss tourism win back many old friends



On a high altitude hiking trail in the Bernese Oberland

Switzerland is being rediscovered

legend, and its political and economic stability a way of life. The scenery is superb and the Swiss – famous for generations as a nation of hotelkeepers – have perfected hospitality to a fine art.

Switzerland's transport and communications network is second to none. And the country's central location right in the very heart of Europe means that neighbouring Germany, France, Italy and Austria are never more than a few hours (and sometimes merely minutes) away.

In fact Switzerland is a "mini-Europe" of its own, right at the crossroads of the continent. Its 6.3 million population share no less than four national languages, and many Swiss also speak excellent English. In short, Switzerland offers superb value for money. Or, as a Swiss National Tourist Office publicity slogan persuasively informs potential visitors: "Switzerland – it's worth it!"

But just how reasonable is Switzerland? According to offi-

cial Swiss government statistics, 75 per cent of the bed and breakfast hotel accommodation in Switzerland costs less than Sfr 51 per person – that's only 12 pounds sterling! Thirty seven per cent of the bed and breakfast accommodation costs less than Sfr 29 per person (£7).

And 18 per cent of the hotel rooms cost even less than Sfr 24 (or £6) – still including breakfast.

Many of Switzerland's smaller, independent hotels have joined forces, forming themselves into voluntary groups which offer the tourist reasonably-priced accommodation in a wide variety of attractive locations nationwide.

A typical example – and an increasingly firm favourite among British visitors to Switzerland – is the Inter-Hotels group.

Inter-Hotels Switzerland links 40 carefully selected and moderately priced establishments offering an extensive range of accommodation and excursion possibilities through-

out the country – from city centres to remote Alpine villages, from a snow-capped peak to a palm-tree paradise. And wherever you stay in Switzerland, any destination can be reached within a day.

Says Inter-Hotels group manager Martin Buehler, "All Inter-Hotels are independently owned and individually managed properties, where time honoured traditions are a matter of pride and priority. Some of the hotels are big, some are small. But each has its own individual charm and character, each has its own special touch of class and comfort.

"The discriminating visitor to Switzerland is thus offered ample opportunity to experience real Swiss hospitality – and escape the uniformity of the massive, multinational look-alike hotels."

A wide range of special services and arrangements are available to the independent holidaymaker to Switzerland. One highly successful innovation has been the Inter-

Hotelpass which guarantees the holder savings of up to 30 per cent on the regular and already reasonable hotel prices, plus a special 15 per cent discount on Budget Rent-a-Car rental, and free hotel-to-hotel reservations.

Another firm favourite is the *Discover Switzerland* deal. Offered under the slogan "Who says Switzerland is expensive?" this is an all-inclusive go-as-you-please holiday package tailor-made for the independent tourist.

The arrangement combines hotel accommodation, unlimited rail travel (or self-drive car hire) and gift vouchers alone worth more than Sfr 200. The price? An unbelievable Sfr 425 (at current exchange rates only £95) per person for eight days; or an even more advantageous Sfr 679 (£150) for 15 days!

Full details are available from the Swiss National Tourist Office in London.

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