

Zeitschrift: Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal
Herausgeber: Swiss Railways Society
Band: 4 (1994-1996)
Heft: 10

Artikel: Swiss holiday information 1921!
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-855092>

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Swiss Holiday Information 1921! by Barry Harper

Seventy-five years ago my Father, then about thirteen years old, travelled to Switzerland for a holiday with his parents. I have been searching through some of the travel literature which gives some idea of the changes that have taken place.

The first thing that strikes one is the difference in the rate of exchange. In 1921 there were about twenty-four Swiss francs to the pound sterling, but bearing in mind our present day pound is only worth about one shilling (5p) of that time. However, even that comparison is distorted by the fact that Swiss inflation has not matched ours. So we must just look at the prices and think if only we could still exchange our pounds for Sfr24. Wishful thinking indeed!

Ward Lock's Guide to Switzerland quotes the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway return tickets from Victoria valid for 45 days costing £5.16.8d. to £9.2.0d. first class. The South Eastern & Chatham Railway's short sea route via Dover was a little dearer at £6.18.5d to £10.10.5d.

The ordinary tariff on the SBB was 10.4 centimes per km. first class, down to 5.2 centimes third class. There is a note "that the Guard clips and collects tickets during the journey, calling out the name of the next station. In a country where education is so general the traveller need have no fear that any fellow-passengers will offend them by unseemly language or conduct". "The railway buffets whether for light refreshments or for hot meals are very good and prices charged are moderate".

Season tickets could be purchased from the General Agency of the Swiss Federal Railways at 11b Regent Street, Waterloo Place, SW. These giving unlimited travel for 15, 30 or 45 days. The 15 day ticket cost only £3.8.0d. first class, £2.8.0d. second, and £1.16.0d. third class! Amazing value, but, there was no reduction for children! 4/- (4 shillings) was then refunded if the ticket was returned within the day following the expiration of the ticket. Reductions on some lake steamers and mountain railways were available at discounts between 20% and 50%.

However, in spite of these seemingly tempting offers, my father's parents chose to motor across

France to Switzerland in the family Armstrong.

Each year the Police Division of the Federal Department of Justice and Police in Bern issued a book (price SFr.3-) on motor traffic regulations, valid from May 1st to the following 30th April, and interesting reading it makes, with all the restrictions regarding times and days of the week. These varied from Canton to Canton with motor traffic completely prohibited in Graubunden. You could not reach Chur by car in 1921!

Art. 35 reads: "on driving through towns, villages or highways, the speed shall never exceed trotting pace (18km per hour)."

Art. 37 reads: "On mountain roads, as well as on other narrow or dangerous highways, speeds shall not exceed 18km and at turnings 6km per hour".

In Unterwalden the only roads open were Buochs-Ennetbürgen, Kägiswil-Sarnen, Stansstad to Bürgenstock, Emmeten, or Engelberg and the Brünigstrasse. All these had a maximum speed of 10km and on the section from Giswil to Brünig was only open from 8am to 7pm. Vehicles were timed over this section and this is where my grandparents got into trouble. They stopped to enjoy the views and have a picnic lunch, but in spite of this they didn't take long enough to come within the 10km per hour restriction, and were involved with the police, accused of dangerous driving!

In addition one had to plan one's itinerary carefully if you wanted to move on, on a Sunday. Only Appenzell, Inner Rhoden, Tessin, Uri, Valais, Fribourg and Basel Stadt had no ban on traffic. Most other Cantons permitted motor traffic only until 1pm, then after 6.30pm from 1st May until 30th September, but the roads of Ob- and Nidwalden were closed for twenty-four hours each Sunday.

With all these restrictions and the fact that the roads outside the towns were pretty rough, especially over the passes, tyres caused many problems. Even if the car mechanically gave no trouble, it certainly makes me wonder why my grandparents didn't go by train. They were adventurous. The tour took in Basel, Luzern,

Place and Hotel	Proprietor or Manager	Number of beds	Minimal rates		Ordinary rates			Open
			Board and lodging	Room	Break-fast	Lunch or Supper	Dinner	
Interlaken (continued)								
Schloss Villa	Fam. Bühler	45	11.—	4.—	1.75	4.—	5.—	
Schwanen	Frau R. Reinhard	30	9.—	3.50	1.75	3.50	4.—	
Schweizerhof-Hôtel Suisse	Th. Wirth	160	16.—	6.—	2.25	6.—	7.—	
Simplon	Häcki & Hansen	90	11.—	4.—	1.75	4.—	5.—	
Sonne	N. Schafflützel	70	10.—	4.—	1.75	4.50	5.—	
Splendide	F. Masserey	70	14.—	5.—	2.—	5.—	6.—	
Touriste	Th. Häcki	48	10.—	4.—	1.75	4.—	4.50	
Grand Hôtel Victoria	A. Müller, dir. gén.	400	18.—	7.—	2.50	7.—	8.—	15)
Interlaken-Unspunnen								
Waldhôtel&Pens.Jungfrau	Frau R. Heger	85	11.—	4.—	1.75	4.—	5.—	
Iseltwald								
du Lac	Wwe. Abegglen	45	10.—	3.50	1.75	4.—	4.50	5)
Strand Hôtel	U. Abegglen	40	10.—	3.50	1.75	4.—	5.—	
Jochpass								
Kurhaus Engstlenalp	Wwe. Immer	70	12.—	4.50	1.75	4.50	5.50	
Kandersteg								
Adler	H. Bohny	20	10.—	4.—	1.75	4.50	4.50	
Alpenrose	Rud. Rohrbach	40	9.—	3.50	1.80	4.50	4.50	
Bären	Ed. Egger	80	11.—	4.—	1.75	4.—	5.—	
Blümlisalp	D. Wandfluh	30	10.—	3.50	1.75	4.—	4.50	
Bellevue	Fam. Rikli-Egger	70	11.—	4.—	1.75	4.50	5.50	
Central	Fam. Rikli-Egger		12.—	4.50	1.75	4.50	5.50	
Grand Hôtel	F. Loosli-Brügger	110	12.—	4.50	1.75	4.50	5.50	
Kreuz (alkoholfrei)	G. Hegnauer	40	9.—	3.50	1.75	3.50	4.—	15)
Kurhaus	J. Reichen	80	11.—	4.—	1.75	4.—	5.—	
Oeschinensee	D. Wandfluh	30	10.—	3.50	1.75	4.—	4.50	
Parkhôtel Gemmi	H. Dettelbach	80	11.—	4.—	1.75	4.—	5.—	
Pension Regina	H. Dettelbach	30	9.—	3.—	1.50	4.—	5.—	
Schweizerhof - Tea Room	Ed. Egger & Trog	80	13.50	5.—	2.—	5.—	6.—	
Sporthôtel Bernerhof	Gottfr. Müller	60	12.—	4.50	1.75	4.50	5.50	
Victoria	Victor Egger & Cie.	170	15.—	6.—	2.—	5.50	6.50	
Waldrand	H. Dettelbach	50	11.—	4.—	1.75	4.—	5.—	
Kiental								
Alpenruh	Jak. Mani-Lauener	25	9.—	3.50	1.80	3.50	4.—	11)
Bären	F. & M. Uehli	50	10.50	4.—	1.75	4.—	5.—	9)
Kientalerhof	J. G. Thönen	80	10.50	4.—	1.75	4.—	5.—	8)
Kurhaus Bergfrieden	Marie Eicher	40	9.50	3.50	1.75	4.—	4.50	8)
Schöneegg	R. Meister	30	9.50	3.50	1.75	3.50	4.—	
Lauterbrunnen								
Adler	Chr. von Allmen	70	11.—	4.—	1.75	4.—	5.—	15)
Silberhorn	Chr. von Allmen	30	9.—	3.50	1.75	3.50	4.—	5)
Steinbock	Wwe. E. Gurtner	60	12.—	4.50	2.—	5.50	6.50	
Weisses Kreuz	Chr. Stucki	25	9.—	3.50	1.75	3.50	4.—	

5) April—October.
6) May—October.

9) May—November.
11) June—September.

15) Summer season.

Schwyz, the Brünig Pass to Interlaken, visiting Bern, Grindelwald, then to Montreux and Geneva, returning via Dijon - quite an undertaking!

There are no details of which hotels were used.

Above: A page from the Hotel Guide, some of the hotels may be familiar, more over.

The 1921 Official Guide of Swiss Hotels issued by the Swiss Hotelkeepers Association also makes interesting reading. Many of the family-

Place and Hotel	Proprietor or Manager	Number of beds	Minimal rates		Ordinary rates			Open
			Board and lodging	Room	Break-fast	Lunch or Supper	Dinner	
Hünibach								
Pension Hünibach	Alois Aerni	20	9.—	3.50	1.75	4.—	5.—	
Innertkirchen								
Hof & Post	E. Ammon-Hofer	50	9.—	3.—	1.75	3.50	4.—	
Interlaken								
Alpenblick	Fam. Häsler	45	10.—	3.50	1.75	3.50	4.—	6)
Bären	Frau L. Hodel	20	9.—	3.50	1.75	3.50	4.—	
Bavaria	Hofweber & Co. A.-G.	90	11.—	4.—	1.75	4.—	5.—	
Beau-Séjour	Schwestern Hodel	40	9.—	3.50	1.75	4.—	4.50	
Beau-Site	J. Würth	75	11.—	4.—	1.75	4.—	5.—	
Pension Bel-Air	Ad. Oehrli	35	9.—	3.50	1.75	3.50	4.—	
Bellevue	Fam. Storck	100	12.—	4.50	2.—	5.—	6.—	6)
Belvédère	J. Würth	100	13.—	5.—	2.—	5.—	6.—	
Bernerhof	G. Anderegg	95	12.—	4.50	1.75	4.50	5.50	
Blume	Fr. Zutter	20	9.—	3.50	1.75	3.50	4.—	
Bristol-Terminus	Rud. Hunziker, dir.	100	12.—	4.50	1.75	4.50	5.50	
Carlton-Brünig	Ad. Ritschard	90	13.—	5.—	2.—	5.—	6.—	
Central & Continental	E. Ritschard, dir.	70	11.—	4.50	2.—	4.50	5.50	7)
Eden	A. Bürgi	100	12.—	4.50	1.75	4.50	5.50	
Europe	Fam. Alf. Ritschard	70	12.—	4.—	2.—	4.50	5.50	
Goldener Anker	E. Weissang	20	9.—	3.50	1.75	3.50	4.—	
Grand Hôtel & Beau Rivage	Alb. Döpfner	170	16.—	6.—	2.25	6.—	7.—	8)
Helvetia	Fam. Sterchi	25	10.—	3.50	1.75	4.—	4.50	
Hirschen	Karl Bühler	80	11.—	4.—	1.75	4.—	5.—	
Interlaken-Interlaknerhof	E. Hirschi	100	12.—	4.50	2.—	5.—	5.50	
Pension Iris	J. Frutiger	25	9.—	3.50	1.75	3.50	4.—	
Grand Hôtel Jungfrau	A. Müller, dir. gén.	300	17.—	6.—	2.25	7.—	8.—	15)
Jura	E. Botz-Bühler	80	12.—	5.—	2.—	5.—	6.—	
Krebs	Ed. Krebs	70	11.—	4.—	2.—	5.—	5.50	
Weisses Kreuz	Fam. Bieri-Köhler	120	12.—	4.—	1.80	4.—	5.—	
Krone	A. Maumary	40	9.—	3.50	1.75	3.50	4.—	
du Lac & Ostbahnhof	W. Hofmann	70	13.50	5.—	2.—	5.—	6.—	
Löwen	P. Tschiemer	35	9.—	3.50	1.75	3.50	4.—	
Grand Hôtel Mattenhof	Elmer-Sprenger	150	16.—	6.—	2.25	6.—	7.—	
Merkur	Rud. Hänny	40	10.—	4.—	1.75	4.—	4.50	
National	Herm. Wyder	170	14.—	5.—	2.—	5.—	6.—	
du Nord	Gebr. Maurer	110	13.—	5.—	2.—	5.—	6.—	
Oberland-Oberländerhof	M. Wagner	130	13.—	5.—	2.—	5.—	6.—	
Park-Hôtel	Fam. Borter	110	12.—	4.50	1.75	4.50	5.50	
Regina-Jungfraublick	P. Oesch, dir.	175	18.—	7.—	2.50	7.—	8.—	
Pension Rugenpark	E. Beldi	30	8.—	3.—	1.75	3.50	4.—	8)
St. Gotthard	A. Beugger	75	11.—	4.—	2.—	4.50	5.50	
Savoy	Herm. Wyder	140	16.—	6.—	2.25	6.—	7.—	

5) April—October.

7) May—September.

6) May—October.

15) Summer season.

owned hotels are still being run by the heirs of the same families. As for charges, one could stay at Badrutts Hotel from SFr.18 per day for full board and lodging, but a charge of SFr.1.50 per day extra was made if the room had running water.

Above: A page from the Official Swiss Hotel Guide.

En-suite was not then even dreamed of!

Although my grandparents went by car and I don't know the cost of shipping a vehicle over the

1921 Swiss Holiday Information:-

channel, one can calculate the cost of a rail holiday staying at the best hotels.

Return 1st class from London S.E.C.R.	£10.10.5d
Swiss "Rail Pass" 1st class 15 days	£3.08.0d
15 nights at the best hotels at SFr.20 full board = Sfr.300 i.e. about	£13.00.0d
Chocolate, souvenirs, concert, theatre, excursions, say an extravagant	£10.10.0d
Total per head	£37.08.5d
For those of more modest means:	
Return 3rd class S.E.C.R.	£6.18.5d
Swiss "Rail Pass" 3rd class 15 days	£1.16.0d
15 nights ½board in 3rd class hotel or pension Sfr.8.50 per day about	£6.00.0d
Souvenirs and excursions	£7.00.0d
Total per head	£21.14.5d

Those were the days! Even at today's rate of exchange one gets very good value in clean, tidy hotels, interesting railways and transport and, if that's not all, what about the scenery?

A Note for Modellers

If you build an early 1920's line, Art. 39 of the motor regulations states that:

"All official notice-boards concerning motor-car and motor-cycles, including those at custom-houses and prohibited highways shall throughout the contracting Cantons, be of uniform size shape, vis. an equilateral triangle, 1 metre in length, placed point upwards, inscriptions black on white ground. This triangular notice-board may not be used for any other kind of public or private notice.

These notices must be placed crosswise to the roads, at a distance of about 250m. from the place to which the warning applies at a maximum height of 2.5m."

I don't know when the international pictogram road signs were introduced, but I believe it was in the mid-1930's.



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