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Swiss ski resorts by train - some insights

Wed 12 February, 2020 By: Daniel Elkan

When you've been sat down so long on the ground that the snow is seeping through your ski salopettes and soaking your underpants, it's probably time to get up.

But I couldn't move. Any moment, another train would swing around the curved track and I'd get the shot.

I was sitting on the snow by the side of a railway track, near Sedrun in Switzerland, with my camera poised. The problem was that I couldn't tell which direction the next train would come from.

I got wet and cold, but I got some great pics. Ironically, one of the most inspiring was just the bare track weaving its way past Swiss chalets towards a majestic mountain range.



Travelling to Switzerland by train is an absolute pleasure, and there is an impressive range of ski resorts that are easily accessed this way. In case it's useful to you, here are some of the things I've learned as I've experienced these journeys.

Many resorts have stations right in the village

Generally, from the UK, it takes a little longer to reach Swiss resorts than French ones. But one of the big advantages of Swiss resorts is that the closest train station is often located right in the village. That means no transfer at all, or at best a two-minute local taxi or pick up by your hotel. Trust the Swiss to have positioned their mountains around their railway lines.



Some of the trains have restaurants on board

And by that, I mean what feels like an actual restaurant. Not a café-bar, like you get on a TGV, but an actual sit-down restaurant or bistro. Proper crockery and cutlery, not plastic wrapped in plastic. Hot and cold dishes, that are on the right end of the freshly-prepared, not ready-meals spectrum. Prices are quite reasonable too. And with Swiss scenery gliding by, it's just one of those lovely experiences that is very, very far from an airport queue and a cramped flight.



The scenery

Did I mention the views? I did? Anyway, you know this. It's Switzerland. It's stunning. Just drink it in and try and absorb as much into your soul as possible.



Changing train is easy in Switzerland

One thing about travel to Swiss resorts is that you are going to change train two or three or four times. Once in Paris, which is easily done by pre-booked taxi. And then a couple of times on your way to the resort. Don't let that put you off. The Swiss have designed their travel system to make changes as easy as possible. Your train pulls in on one platform and more often than not your next train is on the adjacent platform. Also, Swiss timetables show the arrival and departure platforms in advance, which makes planning easy. Every station has ramps and lifts, so hauling your luggage up or down stairs is only for those who are skimping on gym membership and want the exercise.

Stopover en route if you like

You can also travel to Swiss ski resorts and stopover en route, for example in Paris, Basel, Geneva, or Lausanne. It's a good way to break up the journey, visit cities or towns that you want to check out (or catch up with friends there) and get to resort earlier the next day. And apart from a hotel or AirBNB, the stopover won't add to the cost of your journey. Check out skier Scott Taylor's account of his [journey by train from London to Saas Fee](#) this way.

Swiss trains are frequent and punctual

If your TGV into Switzerland is late (as can occasionally happen) you needn't worry. Most Swiss rail services are every 30 minutes so just hop on the next connection. Your ticket should be valid (but obviously double check this yourself before booking your journey).



Useful resources for researching and booking travel to Swiss resorts

Switzerland Travel Centre

As the name suggests, these guys are the experts in booking travel to Switzerland, and can also help you with resort and accommodation suggestions too. The office is based in Covent Garden in London, so you can visit too. Website: <https://switzerlandtravelcentre.com/en/gbr>; Email: sales@stc.co.uk; Tel: +44 20 7420 4900

The Rail Map of Europe

I can't emphasise enough what an informative, inspiring thing this is. That's right, I really can't emphasise enough what an informative, inspiring thing this is. It makes a great present for the train-loving traveller or the frequent flyer who should know better. You can order one and they post it to you (£11.99 + p&p). Here's the website: europeanrailtimetable.eu

Rail.ch

SBB's website is a useful planning guide. Most schedules are daily and consistent throughout the winter season. You can even use retrospective dates to help plan for next season. For example, if you are planning for a holiday in January 2021, look back with a search date in January 2020 to get an example of timetables. You can also use the Snowcarbon Swiss Journey Planner that we are creating, which has some of our recommended rail journeys to Swiss ski resorts.

Snowcarbon Swiss Stations Journey Planner

We are adding more journeys to Swiss stations in the Snowcarbon Journey Planner, to show you some of the journey schedules that we'd recommend. Have a look at our [Swiss Stations Journey Planner](#) and see what you think.

For suggestions and advice on fantastic ski resorts, excellent accommodation and suitable train-travel options, just contact ski writer and Snowcarbon co-founder, Daniel.

CONTACT DANIEL



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