

# The Bernina railway

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THE BERNINA RAILWAY.

The best route and the most beautiful which from the north of Europe leads to the south is that which goes through the Swiss highlands of the Grisons.

The Rhaetian alpine passes, already well known to the ancient Romans who made frequent use of them for their military expeditions to northern countries, served later on the same purpose for the foreign armies which from the north came down to invade the fertile plains of Italy. But, in those times, these passes bristled with difficulties, and the invaders could only avail themselves of rough paths through the wild ravines of these enormous mountains covered with eternal snows.

Today, all difficulties have been conquered. Over the highest and the grandest of the Rhaetian mountains an electric railway now runs which, penetrating into the heart of the rocks, shoulders its way past immense glaciers, climbs up to 7403 ft., and carries the traveller from the northern countries to the south as rapidly and comfortably as one travels on the plain. It is a miracle; and the Bernina railway has wrought it.

Big international lines lead from the northern countries, from England, Holland, France and Germany to the Swiss frontier, and from there on to the Grisons, where the Rhaetian railway receives the traveller and in a few hours carries him up to St. Moritz and to the Engadin of world-wide fame. The journey from St. Moritz to Poschiavo and Tirano seems more a dream than a reality, so grand, so fantastical is it. Whoever takes this journey does not know what is more to be admired: the marvels of nature or the boldness of science which has created such a wonderful railway. At St. Moritz we are at the height of 5825 ft., but we climb higher up to 7403 ft. on passing the Bernina, thence to descend to Poschiavo, which is 3727 ft. and down to Tirano, 1405 ft. Climbing from St. Moritz to the Bernina Pass we cannot fail to admire Pontresina, the Morteratsch, the group of the Bernina glaciers, the candid mass of Cambrena, the Lago Bianco, the Hospiz, all names familiar to the tourist all over the world. From the Hospiz down to Poschiavo the journey seems to go through fairyland. Alp Grüm towers on the slope of the colossal mountain. From Alp Grüm down to Cavaglia it seems almost impossible that a train can make so steep a descent: it looks as if it were being carried down by magical power. From Cavaglia to Poschiavo the view changes but does not lose anything in grandeur. The lake of Poschiavo and the distant Italian mountains appear and disappear as so many rapid visions to the eye of the traveller, as the train passes over audacious bridges, and winds in and out of mysterious and most difficult tunnels, devouring the way which leads down into the valley.

From Poschiavo, the train, after touching the romantic nest of Le Prese, coasts along the magnificent Lake of Poschiavo, and passing through beautiful chestnut woods descends rapidly to Tirano, the first Italian town.

No other country can furnish in so short a journey such contrasts as those which meet one on the Bernina line. The traveller who a few hours ago left the Cambrena and Palü Glaciers, and bid farewell to the majestic alpine panorama, finds at Tirano chestnut trees and vines!

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DECREASE OF UNEMPLOYMENT.

During June last the decrease of unemployment in Switzerland steadily continued. The total number of people seeking employment fell by 7,143 from the preceding month to 50,830. Comparing the figure with June 1936, when we had 75,127 unemployed, or 32% more, the position is very encouraging and must be attributed to a great extent to the larger export of all manufactures, as well as the improved tourist trade, which is so vital to our country.

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