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Tunnels and Passes

There are three major rail tunnels at the Simplon, Lötschberg and Furka and a road tunnel at the Great St Bernard. Many of the road passes are well known, such as the Grimsel, Furka, Nufenen, Simplon Pass.

The longest land tunnel in the world, the Lötschberg Base Tunnel, is in operation since late 2007, connecting by rail the town of Frutigen in canton Bern, with the town of Visp in canton Valais. Around 110 trains a day run through the new base tunnel, and 66 through the old mountain tunnel. Of the 110 trains which pass the base tunnel, 30 are passenger trains and 80 are freight trains. Heavy freight trains up to a maximum weight of 4000 tons and a maximum length of 150m have to use the new tunnel, as they are unable to run on the old track.

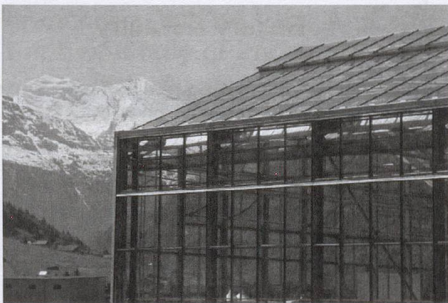
As there are about 21km of single track without passing loops, a train that is more than 7 minutes late is either routed via the old line (incurring further delay), or it will have to wait for the next available timetable slot in the base tunnel.

Travel speeds in the Lötschberg Base Tunnel are for regular freight trains 100km/h, for qualified freight trains 160km/h, for passenger trains 200km/h and for tilting passenger trains 250km/h.

I realize that Frutigen is on the other side of the tunnel, in the canton of Berne, but when I came across the following article I thought the Helvetia readers might be interested in what can be visited on the other side of the tunnel:

Frutigen - in the Tropics?

The warmth of the water flowing out of the tunnel is used to heat the Tropenhaus Frutigen, a tropical greenhouse producing exotic fruit, sturgeon meat and caviar.



Tropenhaus Frutigen

The idea for the greenhouse was born in 2002 when it became apparent that the water continuously flowing out of the world's longest land tunnel could not be diverted to the local river, the Kander, as its warmth of 20 °C would disrupt the biological rhythm of the endangered trout there. Rather than cool the water artificially, wasting its energy,

tunnel engineers founded a start-up company to use the warm water for powering a greenhouse. The construction was completed in 2009. A sturgeon farm is at the centre of the Tropenhaus. Some 60,000 fish are intended to be grown in 40 outdoor basins. The sturgeons should yield 20 tons of meat as well as two tons of caviar annually. The first sturgeon fillets were sold in local stores in November 2009. The rest of the greenhouses are dedicated to the production of exotic fruit, such as banana, papaya, mango and guava. In 2007, the project received the Prix Evenir, the Swiss petroleum industry's CHF 50,000 award for sustainable development.

The Tropenhaus is also a tourist destination, with a visitors' centre, a visitors' trail through the installation, a restaurant, and an exhibition room showcasing the project's use of renewable energies and sustainability.

from swissinfo

Eine wahre Geschichte zum Walliser Brot

In der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts übernahmen deutsche Medizinstudenten, die auf der Durchreise waren, die ärztliche Versorgung der armen Dorfbewohner im Goms, dem obersten Teil des Wallis. Es gab so gut wie keinen Arzt im Tal. Zwei dieser armen Studenten klopfen an die Tür. Grossmutter Elphrosina öffnete und hörte das Begehren der Studenten nach etwas zu essen, etwas Brot. Grundgütig, wie sie war, rief sie ins Haus zum Grossvater: "Xander, nimms Bilti und gibne." ("Xander, nimm das Beil und gib ihnen.")

Worauf die Studenten fluchtartig das Dorf verliessen. Die Grosseltern aber wunderten sich. Sollte der Grossvater doch nur ein Stück vom Brot abhacken, um es den Studenten zu geben ...

FOR SALE



I am an old Swiss cabinetmaker and lately I'm engaged in making alphorns.

They have good sound and they look very nice.

The price has to be negotiated.

If you are curious or interested please phone Peter on (09) 837 2955.