

# Swiss Holidays

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## SWISS HOLIDAYS. A Policy for British Tourists.

*The following article is re-produced from the 14th of April issue of the "Manchester Guardian" by the courtesy of the Editor.*

As the time draws near for the opening of the tourist season of 1950, the Swiss, who, since the conclusion of the Anglo-Swiss Trade Agreement last month, have been looking into, over, under, and round it from the point of view of their own tourist traffic, still maintain the attitude of optimism which was engendered by the original publication of the agreement. While it is clear that the general business turnover will be no greater (indeed, even a little less than that of last year), the relief caused by the thought that there will be at least some turnover is quite sufficient to explain and even to justify the general satisfaction.

Two things are abundantly clear, at any rate, to the Swiss. The first is that more British tourists are expected to make use of conducted tours and there will be fewer British visiting Switzerland on their own. As a corollary to this, it is anticipated that the "Grand" hotels will be out of luck, but that medium and cheaper hotels may expect to receive more British guests. Nobody worries very much about the "Grand" hotels. There is, however, quite a lot of thought about the manner in which the smaller hotels may reasonably be expected to treat their very welcome and somewhat unexpected guests.

"EXTRAS".  
In a previous article I made some reference to the vexed question of "extras." Many British tourists in the last two years have complained with great bitterness and considerable justification of the prices which they were charged in their hotels for such extras as baths, coffee, odd drinks, &c. It was ridiculous, they said, when they were paying pension terms of, say, 15-17 francs, that they should be charged two francs or 2.50 for a bath, a franc perhaps for a cup of coffee, and six to seven francs for a bottle of wine. These complaints have not escaped the notice of the Swiss Association of Hotelkeepers and of the Federal Tourist Association, and I understand that considerable progress has been made, even in the last few weeks, in an endeavour to secure reconsideration of some if not all of these items.

On the other side of the picture it has been suggested to me that, with a little more knowledge of local conditions, the British tourist can easily avoid the

main burden of these "extras." I have spoken with many anglophile Swiss, some connected with the tourist industry, others disinterestedly concerned to eliminate causes of complaint, and I feel that I can summarise their views in five points, to be taken as friendly hints to British tourists about to visit Switzerland, whether for the first time or for the first time since the war.

First, go for choice to less well-known places: in other words, forget about Wengen, Murren, Davos, Montreux, Interlaken, &c.

Secondly, when settled in your small town or village, find out where the local inhabitants go for coffee, tea, beer, &c. If the after-dinner coffee in your hotel is too expensive you will almost certainly find as good in the local inn at half the price. If you order wine, order it by the half-litre, or three-tenths of a litre, or even one-fifth of a litre, which can always be done in the smaller hotels and in all the inns. Forget about whisky; you can get that in England. If you like a liqueur order the local liqueur in the local inn. You will be surprised how cheap it is, and how good.

Thirdly, do not forget that, in virtually all cases, 10 per cent. is added to the bill for service. Do not, therefore, go about indiscriminately tipping everyone you see on the day of departure. The only exception to this is the outside porter.

### MEETING THE SWISS.

Fourth point: travel third class. Everyone in Switzerland travels third class except profiteers, journalists, and Government servants. Nobody at all travels first class. This rule applies, of course, to journeys within Switzerland.

Finally — try not to be stand-offish. If you follow the advice given in point (2) above you will probably find, quite apart from the cheapness of the stuff you consume, that you will get to know some of the people who use the same inn. The majority of intelligent Swiss speak English, or enough to get along with, and so you may find your sojourn in the local pub not only cheap but interesting and amusing. I read an article a few months ago in one of the German-Swiss papers which definitely claimed that, at long last, the average Swiss citizen had a chance of getting to know the average Englishman, since British tourists no longer lead a life of "splendid isolation" in "Grand" hotels, but have come down to the level of the average Swiss. I believe this comment to be perfectly true, and I could wish nothing better than that intending tourists, should they read these lines, may take this hint above all others. They will not regret it.

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