

Mailbag

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Tourism is contributing to the “eventisation” of the Swiss mountains



Thank you for the wonderful article about the development of tourism in Switzerland and the discussion that has been going on for generations about its merits and risks. I myself come from a Grisons tourism region and therefore am well informed about the issue. One simply must not forget that thousands of jobs depend on tourism. Without tourism the Alps would

be a desolate, rarely used place with no future for the young. As a mountaineer, I can reassure all the critics of tourism. Each time I stand atop a mountain peak and let my eyes wander across the panorama, I still see many, many mountains that are completely untouched.

RETO DERUNGS, HIGUEY, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

I realize that commercialism is tainting every pristine place in the world. All I know is my own experience while staying in Interlaken and hiking in the Berner Oberland (Bernese Highlands).

My father was born in Bern, and my wife and I had traveled from Washington state to see Switzerland for the first time. I'd even cut my thumb with a Victorinox knife the day before, on my 60th birthday. It seemed fitting to leave some blood in the homeland.

We rode up to Mürren in a gondola lift under a sky of blue. The amazing views of the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau dazzled us while walking to Gimmelwald. We met a local on the trail who also was on his birthday holiday. This was a trek he took every year. There are those who miss the Switzerland of the past, and those like me who are captivated today. If one has an inspired vision that isn't just about pumping money out of tourists, then perhaps change won't destroy the Switzerland of tomorrow. Move forward with great sensitivity. You can never go back.

TREVOR GLOOR, WASHINGTON, USA

It is not my intention to condemn tourism per se, just its scale, and to ask what can still be considered tolerable – and what not. That is, of course, highly subjective. What drives me most is the question: what right do our national and international capital spenders and profit maximisers have that they can simply occupy landscapes – mountains, lakes, seas and cities? With all the known consequences: land and property prices, rents, and accommodation expenses are spiralling out of control; the natives are being driven out. We rich Swiss make it easy for ourselves: when we find our mountains too crowded for us due to the number of foreign tourists, we just hop aboard a plane – and jet off to the Andes or to Nepal...

I think it is time to stop now with this mania of growth at the expense of nature and humankind. It is simply not enough

to go to the supermarket and buy organic or what is supposedly regional – we should scrutinise our own actions. And that starts right up there on the Rigi.

HANS REICHERT, FRANKFURT AM MAIN, GERMANY

Magdalena Martullo-Blocher in the big footsteps of her father



Is she, like her father, crying out against Europe, yet eating from the European plate with no scruples at all, along the lines of ‘do as I say and not as I do’?

MICHEL PIGUET, COMMENT ONLINE

Cat ladders: the discrete catwalk for Swiss kitties



Hello, sorry, but I cannot agree with your line: “Cats would probably cope with everyday life without the climbing aids.” Cats need freedom and, depending on the floor on which the flat of their owners is located, they cannot go outside as they please. One too often sees cases where cats have taken a leap and have either died or been found crippled. What's more, these “staircases” are ideal play areas and they also improve the health of cats, allowing them to move around as opposed to cats that are always kept inside. I find this to be an excellent initiative and am going to immediately make a “chicken ladder” for my cat.

LILIANE ENJOLRAS, LE GRAU DU ROI, FRANCE

Thank you for the cute article about cat ladders. When I last visited Switzerland, I happened to notice all those staircases for cats. But it is only now, thanks to the “Review”, that I can see how typically Swiss these constructions are. It is a love of animals in the form of infrastructure. Some may find it strange. But most of all, it is bizarre in a beautiful way.

HELEN MEIER, AUSTRALIA