

TRAVEL DIARY - GRAND TRAIN TOUR OF SWITZERLAND

MAMMAVVENTURA

Sunday June 14. Day 1

We woke up early because Mom was already excited about the week of adventure ahead. Then we took the bus and arrived at the train station, where Maurizio was waiting for us. From there, we boarded the train from Lugano to Bellinzona. On the train, we met Jessica, a beautiful girl whom my brother immediately fell in love with. (In fact, he kept misbehaving all day just to get her attention!)

In Bellinzona, we boarded the Artù train. Was it perhaps the very train that King Arthur himself used to ride? Then we visited Bellinzona's three castles. We had lunch at Castelgrande, and it felt like stepping back in time. With its breathtaking views and the traditional grotto restaurant located right inside the castle, it was a truly special experience.

After lunch, we enjoyed an ice cream and then headed to the Pozzom waterfall in Ossogna to cool off our feet. That refreshing break was exactly what we needed.

We then continued on to Campra, in the Blenio Valley. There, we picked up some mountain bikes and were supposed to go for a ride, but my bike was way too big for me. On the other hand, Mom and Jessica had a great time (although they almost fell off a couple of times! 🤸)

Later, Maurizio suggested we stop for a snack, and luckily he loves sweets just as much as I do. Otherwise, Mom would never let me eat so many desserts!

At dinner, I had a delicious pumpkin soup followed by meatballs as a main course. There was no dessert, but I won a snack bar to eat the next day, so that made up for it. We also played Dobble, and Jessica won every single game. My brother was on her team, so he won too, even though he didn't put in much effort.

When we got back to our room, we took a nice shower and snuggled under the blankets. Mom promised to sleep with us in the big bed since Dad wasn't there with us.

Leonardo

Monday June 15. Day 2

Today mom woke us up early as if we had to go to school. I was a bit disappointed, but then she explained that on vacation time is limited and if you want to see lots of beautiful places you need to get up early. Fair enough.

We went down for breakfast and I ate well as usual. My brother, on the other hand, completely messed himself up with egg; so much that I don't know how Jessica managed to stay next to him without running away. That's exactly why I never want to sit next to him.

Then we set off to take the panoramic Gotthard Express train and crossed many towns with beautiful scenery. The train guide explained all the sights we were passing step by step and, as if that wasn't enough, they even served us milk with Ovomaltine!

After the train journey, we took a boat across Lake Lucerne to reach Lucerne. While sailing, we had lunch on board in the restaurant area. The boat was beautiful and the coolest thing was that you could watch the engine working from above.

Once in Lucerne, we took a quick walk to admire the Chapel Bridge. I had only seen Lucerne in miniature at Legoland before, and I was really happy to see those buildings I liked so much “in real life.”

In the evening we took another express train that quickly brought us to Engelberg, a small mountain town with picturesque houses that look like they came out of a fairy tale. Our hotel, the Terrace, can be seen from far away because it is perched high above the town with an amazing view over the entire area. To get there we had to take two elevators carved directly into the rock!

Tomorrow’s plan is to go sledging, I can’t wait!

Leonardo

Tuesday June 16. Day 3

Today we woke up and immediately rushed down for breakfast. It was a bit chilly, so we got properly dressed before setting off to conquer Mount Titlis.

We took the first cable car, which luckily had benches to sit on, bringing us halfway up the mountain. From there we took another amazing one with a rotating cabin! Jessica told us it’s the first rotating cable car in Europe.

At the top, Fabian was waiting for us, a Mount Titlis guide who accompanied us all day to discover the various attractions. I have to say he was incredibly patient, especially with my brother 😊.

As soon as we arrived, we went up the panoramic tower from where you could see beautiful mountains. Fabian told us that when the sky is completely clear, you can even see Italy, France, and Germany all at once.

Then we entered the ice cave. I had never seen one before: it was 150 meters long and the most interesting thing is that it is entirely carved inside a real glacier!

Right after that, we crossed the highest suspension bridge in Europe. I was a bit scared looking down, but my brother, who’s crazy, was even jumping on it.

Today was truly a day full of adventures: I even went on a zip line! Mom was terrified, while I was completely calm. I really love high-altitude adventures.

But the thing I liked most of all was sledging! We all went together and even crashed into each other, laughing so hard. Finally, we took the open chairlift back down to the restaurant for lunch.

In the evening, we returned to Engelberg to the hotel. Right in front of it there’s a nice little park with a sandbox, and while the adults were visiting the Engelberg monastery, my brother and I got completely covered in sand, bringing half the beach straight into the hotel 😊.

At dinner we ate at the restaurant again (I love restaurants!), and then straight to bed, exhausted but super excited after such an amazing adventure-filled day.

Leonardo

Wednesday June 17. Day 4

Today, a miracle happened! We woke up late (8:30 a.m.!) to Mum's absolute delight. Maurizio told us today would be a little less hectic than usual. Thank goodness—we really needed a bit of a rest.

We went downstairs for breakfast while enjoying the view of the giant mountains through the windows of the Hotel Terrace.

After breakfast, we settled into the hotel's beautiful lobby. While the grown-ups got some work done on their laptops, Mum told us to go "wag our tails in the garden." 🐶

Then, taking our time, we walked down towards the train station and stopped at a nearby restaurant for lunch. I have to say, I had the best pulled pork sandwich of my entire life! (Mum makes a pretty good one too, but I'll NEVER tell her this one completely blew hers away, or she'll be upset.)

With our bellies full, we caught the train to Lucerne, and from there... to my great excitement, another panoramic train was waiting for us! The amazing Luzern–Interlaken Express.

When we arrived in Interlaken, I felt like I'd stepped straight into a fairy tale. Everything was so neat, clean, and perfect that we couldn't even find any pedestrian crossings! The houses looked as if they were made of gingerbread, and all the little shops were colourful and full of joy.

I think our hotel is the most beautiful in the whole town, and once again our room had an incredible view. I chose the bed by the window, and I begged Mum to leave it open. I just love falling asleep while looking at beautiful things!

Leonardo

Thursday June 18. Day 5

The day got off to a great start with a delicious breakfast at our hotel in Interlaken. Right after that, we headed to the train station. We took a train and then a bus that brought us to the Ballenberg Museum. It's the largest open-air museum in all of Switzerland! Jessica told us it welcomes more than 200,000 visitors every year. It's basically a huge collection of traditional wooden houses, farmsteads with animals, and workshops where skilled craftspeople demonstrate old trades. One lady even let us try woodworking ourselves, and at the end we got to take our little wooden creations home. I'll let you imagine the danger: my little brother walking around with a stick in his hand... help! 🤔

Then Maurizio surprised us with something amazing. After a short walk, a real horse-drawn carriage pulled by two horses was waiting for us! And guess what? We got to sit right at the front, next to the coachman! He was incredibly kind and even let us hold the reins and steer the horses for a while. We laughed the whole time—it was so much fun!

For lunch, we ate at one of the museum's restaurants, then we went back to Brienz to catch the boat to Interlaken. I absolutely loved the boat ride. The water of Lake Brienz is the most beautiful colour, somewhere between emerald green and turquoise... my favourite colours! It was such a relaxing and refreshing trip, and luckily we had the chance to recharge, because afterwards a special mission was waiting for us.

We were supposed to board another spectacular panoramic train, the GoldenPass Express, to travel to Montreux. But... disaster! There was a problem on the railway line. We had to switch to regular regional trains, making lots of connections with barely any time between them. Mum got us organised: we had to stay focused, full of energy, and ready to sprint with our suitcases at a moment's notice!

While we were sitting on the train, still out of breath, the ticket inspector arrived. I nearly panicked because I suddenly realised that, with all the rushing around, we hadn't had time to buy our tickets! But Jessica explained that we have this magical pass called the Swiss Travel Pass, which lets us travel on public transport without having to buy a ticket every single time. It's basically real magic!

In the end, after countless dashes through stations and making connection after connection just in time, we finally made it. We arrived in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, in Vevey. We dropped our suitcases at yet another beautiful hotel, and before dinner we took a walk down to the lake. My little brother was completely exhausted and having a full-blown meltdown. So Mum and I came up with a brilliant idea: we let him dip his little feet into the cool lake water! It worked—the sound of the waves and the refreshing water finally calmed him down.

We had a lovely evening, and after dinner we headed straight to bed. We can't wait to find out what tomorrow has in store for us!

Leonardo

Friday June 19. The Second-to-Last Day

We woke up to another delicious breakfast, and then our guide was waiting to take us to the Charlie Chaplin Museum. Nikita was surprisingly calm, and I was very happy about that. Otherwise, he would have lost the promise Mum had made to him—there was a toy chainsaw waiting for him back home. (My little brother loves toys like that. I think he'll grow up to be a craftsman!)

We took the bus and arrived at the museum, which used to be Charlie Chaplin's actual home. Jessica told us that this museum also welcomes more than 200,000 visitors every year.

The museum was full of scenes from Chaplin's films, with wax figures that looked just like real people. At one point, my little brother got so confused between the statues and the visitors that he started gently poking real people to see if they would move! 🤪

After visiting the museum, we went back to Vevey by the lake, where our guide had booked a lovely restaurant for lunch. It was such a beautiful morning.

After collecting our luggage, we boarded a train to Bern, the capital of Switzerland. To reach our hotel, we took a brand-new tram. I'd never seen one so modern and beautiful before! When we arrived, two mascot plush toys representing the city were waiting for us in our room. We were so excited to have new cuddly souvenirs.

Later, we took the funicular to the top of the hill because we were supposed to ride the summer toboggans back down. Unfortunately, it had rained a little earlier, so the toboggan run was closed. Maurizio came up with a great alternative and took us to see the bears so we could still end the day with a smile.

We were incredibly lucky because we got to see all three of them: the mother, the father, and their daughter, Ursina. They were living in a large enclosed park right in the middle of the city, next to the river.

After that, we had dinner at a restaurant nearby, and once we had finished eating, we took the tram and then the bus back to our hotel to get some well-deserved rest.

Leonardo

Saturday June 20. The Last Day of Our Adventure

After breakfast, we took the beautiful red tram into the centre of Bern, where our guide Natalia was waiting for us. She took us straight to the Clock Tower and showed us how the famous clock works from the inside. She explained that the tower and its clock are more than 500 years old.

It was incredible to watch all the gears working together. When the clock struck the hour, everything came to life perfectly—the rooster crowed, and the little bears on the outside began to move. My little brother wanted to touch absolutely everything, so we had to keep a close eye on him! 😊

After that, we explored the historic centre of Bern, with its eleven beautiful fountains. Each one told a different story and reflected the city's traditions and history.

We also had enough time to visit the Museum of Communication. There were old computers and mobile phones on display, along with lots of fun interactive activities for children.

After enjoying a delicious traditional Swiss lunch, we set off on the little green Alpine train that took us to Domodossola, where our dad was waiting for us.

During the journey home, I was happy to be going back, but I also felt a little sad. I'd grown really fond of Maurizio, Jessica, and Andrea.

It was a week full of emotions, adventures, and unforgettable experiences. Sometimes it was a little tiring, but I'll always carry these wonderful memories of discovering Switzerland by train in my heart.

Leonardo