

In June my husband and I visited the Grisons and we were delighted by what we found. It is the only region in Switzerland that falls under three cultures and languages, namely German, Romansh and Italian. It has some sleek resorts but also very pretty villages with painted houses, old churches, old customs and friendly people.

The nature is spectacular with magnificent mountain peaks, dramatic mountain passes and many lakes that are as clear as glass. There are numerous hiking opportunities at all levels.

We stayed in the unspoiled alpine village of Bergün which lies at 1400m at the foot of the Albula Pass that leads to the Engadine and St. Moritz. The houses in the old village of Bergün are decorated with sgraffito and frescoes and it has an 800 year old Romanesque church. In summer there are guided tours of the village in the early evening. It lies on the historic Albula railway line which is mostly in its original condition, 100 years after its construction.

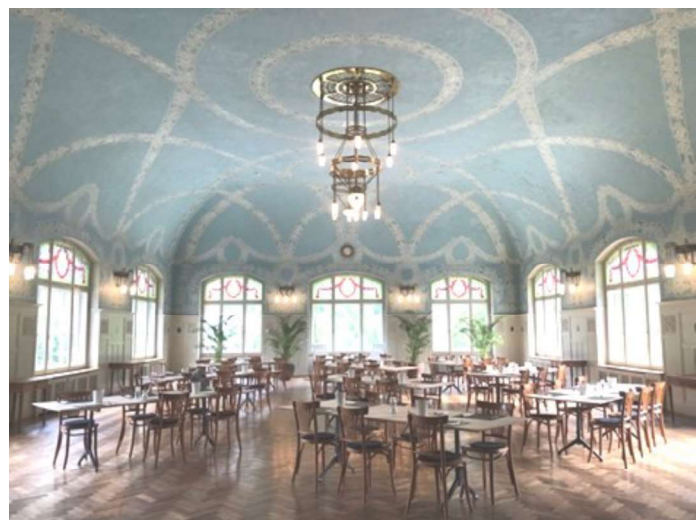


This railway is a marvel of engineering with loops and spiral tunnels to climb the mountain passes. They serve to artificially lengthen the route making it possible to limit the grade so heavy loads can be transported. The railway passes over quite a few natural stone bridges that were the first to be constructed on any railway route in Switzerland.

One day, we took the train along its most spectacular section from Bergün to Preda from where we did an easy 3 hour hike back to our hotel. The route is marked with panels explaining the construction of the railway (also in English) which makes for interesting reading and gives a good idea of the engineering prowess as well as the hardship of the labourers.

The nearby valley of Avers is a remote valley famed for its marmots. We went looking for them on a dark and windy day which seemed appropriate for this wild and beautiful place. It did not take long to find them and the marmots are indeed plentiful and don't seem to be particularly frightened by humans.

We stayed in the historic Kurhaus right in the center of Bergün which is an Art Nouveau jewel that has been modernised and restored but retains its charm and character. Many rooms have panoramic views and it has a restaurant with delicious food. <https://kurhausberguen.ch/?lang=en>



Text and photos by Tineke Elgersma