



REAL RAIL ADVENTURES with Jeff Wilson
SWISS GRAND TOUR

Real Rail Adventures: Swiss Grand Tour Transcript

Jeff Wilson On Camera: Hello, I'm Jeff Wilson, and I'm on the Grand Train Tour of Switzerland! Now on this trip, I'm looking for lots of outdoor adventure – but when you're aboard the Swiss rail system, *getting there* is more than half the fun!

Jeff OC: Imagine you're a Hollywood art director trying to conjure up an exciting backdrop for a new adventure fantasy...or a theme park designer contemplating the perfect blend of atmosphere, thrills, and fun. Well, you could hardly do better than Switzerland! This is Europe's year-round playground. It has endless opportunities for hiking, skiing, watersports, or pretty much any outdoor activity you can imagine.

Jeff Wilson Voice Over: I've traveled through Switzerland before, but it keeps pulling me back. As an author of eco-oriented books and host of home improvement TV shows, I'm fascinated with Switzerland's work in green energy, particularly with its train systems. And as an outdoors lover, well, this place has it all.

Jeff VO: Switzerland's public transportation system is hailed as one of the world's finest. It's a mind-boggling network of railroad, bus and tram lines with punctuality that would make a watchmaker proud. It makes every corner of this mountainous country accessible.

Jeff VO: To kick off this trip, I flew into Zurich Airport...and boarded a train heading northeast.

Jeff VO: The official Grand Train Tour of Switzerland covers eight different routes throughout the country. You can pick it up at any point and choose any travel direction.

Jeff OC: I'm off to explore lots of new destinations, as well as re-ride a few of my favorite trains, all in the goal of finding lots of outdoor fun.

Jeff VO: Our train is headed to northeastern Switzerland and the town of Schaffhausen.

Jeff OC: One Swiss Travel Pass is enough for an entire journey, even if different trains, buses, and boats are involved. And it gives you the flexibility to hop on and off along the way.

Jeff VO: The northeast is the place to slip away from the familiar guidebook sites, dodge tourist crowds, and uncover a quiet, unhurried pace of life. It's full of hidden gems - lesser known, but impeccably well-preserved villages and towns.

Jeff VO: With its traditional brown-roofed houses and extravagantly painted facades, Schaffhausen looks as if it's still waiting for a medieval merchant to pull into town. The compact



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Aldstadt or old town exudes a confident sense of history. Statues rise from flower-rimmed fountains, and many of the streets are pedestrian-only.

Jeff VO: Schaffhausen's emblem, the Munot fortress, can be seen for miles. It was built nearly 500 years ago to a design by Albrecht Dürer, the great artist of Europe's Northern Renaissance.

The fort offers panoramic views fit for a nobleman's guard. They span across a mosaic of rooftops, vine-draped hills and a long ribbon of river.

Jeff OC: The Rhine River was a trading superhighway in the Middle Ages. And Schaffhausen was a major depot for barges, which because of nearby rapids and waterfalls, had to unload their cargo here. First on my adventure list: a boat ride to those falls.

Jeff VO: The Rhein Falls is the largest waterfall in Europe. The falls are about 75 feet tall and 450 feet wide.

Jeff VO: Our boat steers very near the falls, plunging into the billowing spray. Here you can feel the full impact of those positive ions as water surges all around. Landing on a large rock in the middle of the falls, you're tasked with a short climb – a fair exchange for the exhilarating views from above.

Jeff OC: These falls even come with a ghost! According to legend, a young fisherman fell asleep one day with his boat anchored above the falls.

Jeff VO: It broke loose and he awoke in horror to find himself in a terrorizing tumble down the falls – which he miraculously survived. After boasting about it to the doubtful townspeople, he felt he needed to prove his claims by repeating the stunt. This time he wasn't so lucky.

Jeff OC: Now, during the full moon, people claim to see a young man and his ghost boat plunging down the falls.

Jeff VO: The eleven-hundred year old castle above the falls was the prized waterfront real estate of its day.

Soundbite, Ursula Neukomm, Schaffhauserland Tourism: It's very well positioned, as you can imagine, it's hard to take it over here. So many people wanted to have this castle, so fights were there for this castle.

Jeff VO: In the hills next to the falls, an adventure rope park sends you flying.



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Jeff OC: OC: We're about to do the big zip-line, the long one which goes all the way out into the distance, and I'm not sure where it ends.

Jeff VO: The creators of this park let their imaginations run wild constructing a crazy obstacle course of rope, wood and cable. In the safety of a Swiss-designed harness, you can test your courage by navigating aerial trails with more than 140 different challenges.

Jeff VO: There's something about climbing trees that brings the kid out in all of us.

Jeff OC: Here I go! Here's goes nothing! Thank you! See you! Whoohoo! Yeah!

Jeff VO: Back on the Schaffhausen pier, my Swiss Travel Pass lets me board a boat for a trip along the high Rhine.

Soundbite Jeff: You have a nice office here, a nice place to work.

Soundbite Boat Captain: Yes, it's the best place on the boat.

Jeff OC: And if traveling on the river and gazing at all this wonderful scenery makes you tired and hungry, come down to the galley and have a little snack. I'm having this fantastic pastry and a great cup of coffee.

Soundbite Riverboat Crewman: Good bye. Thank you very much. Bye bye.

Jeff VO: The Rhein ambles and bends along pastures and woodlands, a serene landscape chiseled by the mighty river over the ages. We drift through a watercolor canvas come-to-life, passing by time-burnished villages tucked into the riverbanks.

Jeff VO: Stein-am-Rhein looks like a set from a period costume drama. One of the best-preserved villages in Europe, it's a conclave of half-timbered houses huddled together. Here you can wander through the Switzerland of centuries ago... spiced with a few contemporary twists.

Jeff VO: Outdoor adventure is my watchword this trip, and the bike paths along the Rhine and around Lake Constance are among the best cycling tracks in Europe. Though bikes aren't included as part of the Grand Tour, they're easy to rent.

Jeff OC: You can pick up a bike in town and ride it to your next destination. Or if you want a shorter ride, you can just ride around a bit then put it on the train.



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Jeff VO: This is cyclists' heaven. The long flat stretches along the lake are great for casual bikers and families with kids. And there are some hilly spots further inland if you want some extra challenge.

Jeff VO: Bicycling is very popular in Switzerland. There are networks of well-marked trails stitched together across the entire country.

Jeff VO: Lake Constance, known as Bodensee in German, is the third largest lake in Western Europe. Three different nations line these shores: Switzerland, Germany, and Austria.

Jeff VO: If the day is hot or you just want a break from cycling, there's no better place for water sports. Whether you want to be on... in... or under the water... ...it's all here.

Jeff VO: The town of Romanshorn is a convenient place to drop off a bike and checkout an exhibit dedicated to Swiss trains.

Jeff VO: Romanshorn became a transportation center in the mid-19th century when the train came to town. Today it's a major rail and boat hub.

Jeff OC: Romanshorn celebrates its long rail tradition here at the Locorama. It's housed in an old train depot, and you can see cars and engines dating back over a hundred years.

Jeff OC: Getting up close to these old engines you realize just the scale of thing. I mean, these wheels are just as tall as I am and the parts are just enormously heavy.

Jeff VO: In a locomotive driving simulator, you're the engineer.

Jeff Soundbite: We're out in the country so I'm going to go fast.

Jeff VO: You can see virtually what it's like to control a train.

Jeff OC: So this isn't a toy, this a real simulator. It's actually showing you what you see station to station on this particular line in Switzerland. You see all the same signals the engineer sees, all the same controls that the engineer has. You have the speed limits between towns, you have two different kinds of brakes, you have the power and the direction, you've got all this information here on the sheet that tells you how many crossings there are, whether or not they have the crossing arms, the grade of the track, the distance between towns. You have a lot to think about as an engineer.

Jeff Soundbite: Oh, we just need the electric on that....We missed the station. LAUGH



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Jeff OC: There were no people, I took no one anywhere, so no people were harmed during the making of this film, I promise.

Jeff VO: Now it's back on an actual train for the half-hour ride to St. Gallen.

Jeff VO: For centuries St. Gallen, an ancient town in the foothills of the Alps, was an important center of learning. In fact, it was once dubbed the 'writing room of Europe.'

Jeff VO: It all started in the 7th century when St. Gallus, an itinerant monk, took a stumble here. According to legend, St. Gallus was walking through the forest when he fell into a bush, startling a bear. Well St. Gallus appeased the bear by giving him bread, and in return the bear gave him some wood. Well, Gallus took this as a divine sign—I mean who wouldn't right?—and decided to use the wood to build a hermitage here.

Jeff VO: St. Gallus came to Switzerland as part of a mission of Gaelic monks who travelled around the Europe to spread Christianity and set up monasteries. After his death, an abbey was founded on the site of Gallus' hermitage. It would become one of the prime locations during medieval times for monks to copy manuscripts.

Jeff VO: The library still contains 160,000 antique books and 2000 original manuscripts. Counted among its treasures is the oldest complete music manuscript in the world. The entire Abbey complex has been honored as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Jeff VO: St. Gallen's central location in the Lake Constance region makes it an ideal base for day trips. The many trains that pass through here showcase the engineering prowess of the Swiss rail system.

Jeff VO: For example, the Sitter Viaduct, at more than 300 feet high is the tallest rail bridge in Switzerland. Built in the early 1900's, it spans nearly 1200 feet.

Jeff VO: About an hour south of St. Gallen, the region of Appenzellerland transforms dramatically from rolling hills... to sheer and rugged Alps. Peaks reaching 8000 feet seem to surge from nowhere.

Jeff VO: Colorfully painted houses in the village of Appenzell trumpet the area's love for Swiss tradition.

Jeff OC: And in no other part of the country are the old ways such a part of everyday life.

Jeff VO: Local Evelyn Manser tells me this town is especially proud of its traditional cuisine, and even offers food tours to visitors.



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Jeff Soundbite: Evelyn when I travel I like to taste things from the region where I am. I like to know what the locals eat. What are the things in Appenzell that are local tastes.

Evelyn Manser, Appenzellerland Tourism: A lot of smoked and dried products. We have smoked and dried venison, it's like a salami. And then we have pork, and smoked and dried beef.

Jeff Soundbite: And everything's smoked and dried, what's the reason for that?

Evelyn Soundbite: It just holds a lot long. So if you go into the Alps or you go hiking, you can take it with you and it keeps a lot longer.

Jeff Soundbite: Right, that makes a lot of sense. I'm going to try some of this venison...It's dried and crumbly a little bit, perfect flavor. Dried beef is particularly Swiss maybe?

Evelyn Soundbite: Very much so. It's definitely from this area. Great flavor, beautiful, thank you very much.

Jeff: Ah the bakery is next. What's special or different about Appenzeller baked items?

Evelyn Soundbite: we have a lot of specialties, same as the meat, specialties that hold a long time. You can take them home and keep at home for a week or two and that's almost as good as on the first day. This is like a gingerbread and in the middle is almond filling, it's called a Bieber.

Jeff Soundbite: Very tasty, a little spicy. What's beautiful about it is that it's not too sweet. It has a lot of nice spices but doesn't overwhelm you. Very tasty, thank you. You can have some too! LAUGH.

Jeff VO: The whole Appenzellerland region is threaded with networks of hiking trails - everything from gentle walks to heart-pounding ascents. To reach the spectacular Ebenalp plateau, you can hike up or use your train ticket to for a discounted ride on the cable car. It's a kind of alpine magic carpet to one of the world's great hiking destinations.

Jeff VO: Paragliders take advantage of lofty Ebenalp to soar like birds over dazzling mountain scenery.

Jeff VO: A short hike leads to three dark mountain caverns known as Wildkirchli. Here, ancient cave bears and Neanderthals once found refuge, and later Christian monks built another hermitage. The altar chapel was dedicated in 1621.



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Jeff VO: Around the corner, the Aescher Hostel is an image pulled straight from a travel brochure. Defying gravity, it clings precariously to the rock face. This was once a shelter for pilgrims who climbed the mountainside to seek counsel from the hermits. Now it's a guesthouse featuring simple, modest rooms, and ultra-extravagant views.

Soundbite Jeff toasts camera: Suvold.

Jeff OC: I checked with some locals and they said there's some more great hiking and some awesome river rafting in southeastern Switzerland, so that's where I'm headed next.

Jeff OC: Train schedules can be a little bit confusing if you haven't done this before, but if you look at it it's organized by the hour that the train leaves. So I'm here, it's a little bit after ten

Jeff OC: I'm going to Chur; we have a train leaving at 10:26. It's a regional express and it's on track three, so I'm right over here.

Jeff VO: In Chur, I make quick change to board my all-time favorite train: the Albula-Bernina line

Jeff VO: This is no ordinary train ride. With 55 bridges, dozens of tunnels and an altitude change of 3600 feet, it's truly an engineering marvel. Since it's opening in 1903, it's been praised as one of the most spectacular rail stretches in the world.

Soundbite Maurus Lauber, CEO, Swiss Travel System: This line between Chur and San Moritz is part of Glacier Express and Bernina Express. This is a very special train ride. It's even the first railway line that's nominated in Switzerland as UNESCO World Heritage site.

Soundbite Jeff: Oh very special then.

Soundbite Maurus: Travelling in Switzerland by train, by public transportation, is so easy. So a lot of people think once I am in Switzerland, I like to do this experience, they ride the train and see it's very very relaxing, they can sit down, enjoy the landscape and they see the best of Switzerland just outside of the windows.



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Jeff VO:

While you're enjoying the views, you can dine on local dishes in the vintage dining car. It recreates stylish European train travel from the 1930's, with period decoration and three-course meals.

Soundbite Maurus: This is a really traditional dining car, and what is very special, everything is freshly cooked in the kitchen which is very small but they do it with a lot of enthusiasm.

Jeff: Yeah, they don't take any shortcuts, no microwaves, none of that kind of thing. Oh it smells great.

Jeff VO: Miles of forests ripple and fold around the Albula line, begging to be explored. I'm meeting up with guide Svenja Summermatter for a local take on hiking.

Soundbite Jeff: So Svenja, tell what makes this region, this area so special for hiking.

Soundbite Svenja Summermatter, Swiss Travel System: Yeah, this is really an adventure part of hiking... because it's the Railway Adventure Trail. It's very exciting for example you take the train in the town in the valley, then you go up to Preda. You can get off the train and then you do the hiking part here near the tracks. You can see always the trains, and then you see everywhere the information boards where you get information about constructions here, you see the viaduct surrounded by the mountains. Yeah it's just an experience here to do this hiking part.

Soundbite Jeff: And the best part of that is it's all downhill from here

Soundbite Svenja: Yeah it takes around two hours to get to Bergün, and then finally to Filisur and there you can take again the train to go back home. I thought I bring some wine because we always have a little bottle of wine in my pocket.

Soundbite Jeff: That's a great tradition. I can get behind that. So we should say a traditional Swiss toast? What would I say? If we were toasting.

Soundbite Svenja: it's Santé or Prost.

Soundbite Jeff: Prost!

Jeff VO: Conquering the highest rail pass in the Alps, the Bernina express provides a link between northern and southern Europe. It passes through a long avalanche gallery or snow shed hinting at the massive amounts of snow delivered here by winter storms. Next stop is the hamlet of Alp Grüm, which, except in summer, is accessible only by train.

Jeff VO: At 6500 feet, this mountain lookout provides sweeping views of the Palü Glacier. Unfortunately the Palü, like other Swiss glaciers, is retreating due to global warming.



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Jeff VO: A hike down the hillside leads to a local hydro-electric power station.

Soundbite, Werner Steinman, Repower: The outside of the building, it's like a little castle. The outside of the building it looks like a little castle. It's because electricity was something new. So as a sign of progress, they made a castle, some very sturdy-looking building. Yes, yes, that's the reason why.

Jeff VO: The Swiss are ahead of the curve in environmentally- friendly energy production. They even use hydro-power to supply many railways.

Soundbite Jeff: Oh so the railway here never ran on steam.

Soundbite Werner: No from the beginning it was with electricity, because it was here they built this power station.

Soundbite Jeff: And today I understand that a lot of Swiss trains are run electricity and that most of that electricity is renewable hydropower.

Soundbite Werner: Most of them nowadays is renewable hydropower. In Switzerland we have about sixty percent of electricity is produced by hydropower.

Jeff VO: Though typically not open to the public, we get a behind-the-scenes tour of the underground train that power station workers use to maintain the station. Travelling into the depths of the mountain feels like a journey to the center of the earth. The Alps were once a daunting barrier that stymied travelers and spawned legends of dragons. Now, thanks to rail power, they're one of Switzerland's great assets—and an invitation to adventure.

Jeff VO: As every hiker traveler knows, once the day's over it's time to refuel. The Alp Grüm restaurant, operated by innkeeper Primo Semadeni, is not your typical train station fast-food. This is a destination; a place to linger over luscious Swiss-Italian specialties, local beers, and spectacular views.

Soundbite Jeff: What would be a couple of typical dishes you would serve here?

Soundbite Primo Semadeni, Albergo Ristorante Alp Grüm: Here we make homemade Pizzoccheri, it's a specialty from Valtellina in Italy, also in Paschiavo. It's a pasta with cheese, and vegetables, and potatoes. Something when somebody have a lot of...

Soundbite Jeff: Very hungry....Well you're making me very hungry.

Jeff VO: The Glacier Express, a 7 1/2 hour ride across southern Switzerland, is legendary among train fans. Talk about a contradiction in terms. This is known as the slowest express



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train in the world. There's good reason for this leisurely pace: the train snakes its way through Alpine steepness, negotiating countless tight curves and vertical slopes, and hundreds of bridges and dozens of tunnels. Kick back and enjoy the ride. You don't have to ride the Glacier Express all in one trip; there are plenty of adventure stops along the way.

Jeff OC: Next on my outdoor adventure list is river rafting on the Vorderrhein.

Jeff VO: This is one of the source rivers of the Rhine. I make a quick train change to get to the town of Ilanz, and meet up with my guides from Wasserch Raft to put-in at the River.

Jeff OC: Now we're traveling through the Swiss Grand Canyon. And its experiences like this, a day like today, this is why I travel.

Jeff VO: There's nothing quite like rafting to get you out in the wilderness, working as a team, and having fun.

Jeff VO: This stretch of the Vorderrhein is especially spectacular, framed in steep chalk walls created by a huge landslide at the end of the last ice age. All that geologic churning left a roller coaster of rapids for today's rafters.

Jeff VO: Now it's back aboard the Glacier Express and on to Andermatt.

Jeff OC: When the German writer Goethe passed through this region in 1779, he declared "Of all the places I know, this is the dearest and most interesting to me."

Jeff VO: And no wonder. In a country overflowing with spectacular valleys and mountain passes, the Ursern valley is one of the most impressive.

Jeff VO: The village of Andermatt was once a mandatory stop on the European ski circuit. Andermatt drifted into semi-obscurity in the late 19th century after the Gotthard rail tunnel was bored below it, diverting tourists away from the town.

Jeff VO: Today it's experiencing something of a renaissance as investors have come in to reclaim its tourism potential.

Jeff VO: One hotel that's managed to maintain a traditional Swiss feel, blended with modern amenities, is the River House. Priding themselves in being relaxed and unconventional, the owners implement environmentally-friendly practices, such as using geothermal energy for heat.



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Soundbite Kevin Ohschlager, Owner, River House Boutique Hotel: It was for us really important for us to have a really low, small carbon footprint. We got a special permit from the authorities that we could do drilling in front of the house on property that is not ours. It's like the main street going through. And we did the drilling at a total of 500 meters down into solid rock.

Soundbite Jeff: Drilling into the middle of the street, now I'm sure that the authorities were all thrilled about that, right?

Soundbite Kevin: It was actually no problem at all.

Soundbite Jeff: That's great]

Jeff VO: River House serves up hardy traditional dishes using local ingredients.

Soundbite Kevin: Well we try to source all foods from around the region if possible. Summer time we have salads from the garden, herbs from the garden, we have cheese from around the mountain in here—in the area. Sometimes we go and hike. We go for blueberries, whatever you find out in nature try to bring that back into the kitchen so we can actually show people what they're eating from the region.

Jeff VO: The nine and half-mile Gotthard Tunnel, the one that changed Andermatt's fortunes, first opened in 1882. It was a revolution for travel in Switzerland, providing passage through one of the most forbidding mountain ranges in central Europe.

Jeff VO: A newly built, state-of-the-art thoroughfare called the Gotthard Base Tunnel means an even faster connection between northern and southern Europe. Its 35-mile length earns this new passageway the title of world's longest and deepest tunnel.

Soundbite Jeff: As far as the trains go, the old way the trains went up and over the old Gotthard Tunnel. And in this case, you're saying it's flat through the Alps?

Soundbite Adrian Wilboz, Chief Engineer, Gotthard Base Tunnel: Until now the trains came from the northern part of Europe, flat until here to Erstfeld and going up a steep incline to Goshenen, going through the existing tunnel, then going down to the Ticino Valley. And nowadays they can go flat through the Alps so you need less locomotives, less personnel, and less energy.

Jeff VO: But luckily for fans of the original scenic route, the track will be left in place.



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Soundbite Tabea Mandour, Swiss Travel System: The other line is still open, and the idea is that for example, people could take the fast line down to Ticino, spend the day and then take the panoramic back to the Swiss-German-speaking part. So you have both, you have the innovative modern part, and then on the way back you can enjoy the scenery.

Jeff VO: The Grand Tour leaves German-speaking Switzerland and dips to the Southeast, where locals speak French, and fabled peaks capture the dreams of mountaineers.

Jeff VO: The town of Martigny, lining a curve on the Rhone River, spreads comfortably across the valley floor.

Jeff VO: Martigny, located in a strategic mountain pass, has been a commercial crossroads for centuries. Roman ruins, left from the days when the Roman Empire infiltrated the Alps, are scattered through the city.

Jeff VO: In 1976, local architect Leonard Gianadda was excavating a site for a new building and discovered a previously unknown temple dedicated to a Roman sun god. Around the same time, Gianadda's brother died in a plane crash, so Leonard decided to create a cultural center in his brother Pierre's memory. It holds archeological relics discovered during the excavations. It also has exhibitions of art from some of the world's major collections, including works by Picasso and Matisse.

Soundbite Jeff petting St. Bernard dog: You're an old man huh? An old man... I know he's nine years old. Oh, that feels good. Good boy. Yeah, you're a good boy.

Jeff VO: The next museum is one that's going to the dogs. It tells the story of the Great St. Bernard Pass, the hospice that was founded by monks, and their faithful canine companions.

Jeff OC: These enormous St. Bernard dogs are well known around the world for their legendary Alpine rescues. The monks would send up into the pass to save travelers who had been stranded by avalanches or harsh winter storms. Of course it's summer time now, so they're off duty.

Jeff VO: They started out as simple watch dogs for the hospice, but the monks soon discovered the dogs' uncanny ability to navigate snow storms and sense impending avalanches.

Jeff VO: In the beginning, the monks and dogs performed rescue missions together; later the dogs completed rescues on their own. Sometimes, one dog would stay and lie on an injured traveler to keep him warm, while another dog would return to the monastery for help. Younger dogs learned how to perform search and rescue operations from older ones.



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Jeff VO: I'm lucky enough to visit just a few months after the birth of a litter of puppies.

Soundbite Jeff petting St. Bernard puppies: You have puppy breath still. I know, I know. Now I have another puppy. What's that? What is that?

Jeff VO: Martigny's outstanding transportation infrastructure makes it a great launching point for exploring the surrounding area.

Jeff VO: A trip to the Emosson hydroelectric dam is an odyssey into Swiss transportation. It takes several rail systems to reach the top of the dam. The first leg is aboard this local train.

Jeff VO: Then we transfer to the Emosson funicular. This is world's steepest two-carriage funicular, with an 87% grade. It chugs up to the reservoir to an altitude of nearly 6000 feet.

Jeff VO: From here, we change to the Emosson panorama railway. The small cars have a friendly toy train feel. They're pulled by a locomotive running on batteries that are recharged every night. The train winds its way along the mountainside to the base of the dam.

Jeff VO: The last section of the Emosson trip is aboard a mini-funicular, which takes us a hundred feet above the highest part of the dam.

Jeff VO: The massive dam is nearly six hundred feet in height. It was built to supply power to the Swiss rail system.

Jeff OC: This dam isn't the only giant to inhabit this area... Dinosaur footprints, reaching back 250 million years, have been found nearby.

Jeff VO: From this lookout, you get far-reaching views of the Swiss, Italian, and French Alps. If you have time, you can actually use your Swiss Pass to cross the border into France and visit the famed Mount Blanc.

Jeff VO: But I'm off to explore more of Switzerland. The next phase of my Grand Tour takes me back into the German-speaking part of the country and the heart of the Emmental Valley.

Jeff VO: I'll head north and east, and then take a short side-trip off the Grand Train tour to the town of Trubschachen

Soundbite Kambly Train Conductor: Here we go, hello. Cookie for you.

Soundbite Jeff: Wow, cookie, thanks, appreciate it.



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Soundbite Conductor: From the Kambly production site. It's coming up next stop. It's free entrance and there you can taste over a hundred cookies.

Jeff OC: A hundred different kinds of cookies? This I gotta see, this is right down my alley.

Jeff OC: We're going to the cookie factory, I can't wait.

Jeff VO: For more than a hundred years, Kambly has been making biscuits in Trubschachen, watched over by three generations of family. A tour through the showroom is sweet-tooth's dream, with free samples galore

Jeff OC: I'm suiting up to make some cookies. I'm learning from the best.

Jeff VO: Kambly claims their secret is that they use only fresh butter and milk from local dairies.

Soundbite Jeff: Oh look at this, a chocolate fountain. Never ending chocolate.

Soundbite Marlise, Kambly Cookies: It's dark chocolate and milk chocolate. So you have to fill the bowl, but not with the fingers.

Soundbite Jeff: Not with the fingers, none of this tasting. We set the warm dark chocolate, and I see from what you've made I want to dip the ends, and then dip the in – is this hazelnut?

Soundbite Marlise: Yes hazelnut.

Soundbite Jeff: Mmm that's my favorite, hazelnut is my favorite. So I take this and I dip a little, oh I'm not doing very well. Dip the hazelnut, dip the hazelnut, I'd have to be a lot faster if I wanted to work in the cookie factory.

Soundbite Marlise: It's very good.

Soundbite Jeff: Hang on.... This is one I made. Notice my cookies have little chocolate fingers all over them, Marlise's cookies are perfect. But mine taste just as good. Thank you.

Jeff VO: The town's residents pay tribute to earlier times at the Heritage Museum. This carefully restored farmhouse shows what life was like here in the 18th century – everything from children's' linens to cheese making.

Jeff VO: The pottery from this region is well known in Switzerland.



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Jeff VO: There are only a handful of companies left that master this old-world craft, including, Aebi Pottery. Their distinctive motifs are made up of numerous small dots, and each piece of ceramic is unique.

Soundbite Jeff: You know I could do that circle stuff all day but this is really...

Soundbite Potter: It's not easy!

Soundbite Jeff: No. It is fun. I can see how this could be very therapeutic. You have the Kambly cup? This is the Jeff Wilson Real Rail Adventures cup.

Soundbite Potter: Ah, yes.

Soundbite Jeff: And it's going to be in the shape of...hang on I'm going to tell you what it's going to be in the shape of when I'm done because I don't really know yet. Do you like it? There it is ladies and gentlemen, it's really a simple process that anybody can do. I'm going to stick to hosting television shows and maybe I'll just buy a cup.

Soundbite Potter: LAUGH Ok, yeah that's good idea.

Soundbite Jeff: Thank you.

Jeff VO: Down the street, the Jakob Company's Rope Trail uses interactive technology to pull visitors into the world of rope making.

Jeff OC: One of the great things about the rope trail you don't have to go into the building it. You can do it anytime you just show up with your smart phone and go. There's free public Wi-Fi to download the app and get on the rope trail.

Jeff VO: A century ago, the Jakob Company just made ropes for local farmers, and now it lassos business from more than 55 countries.

Jeff OC: There, I learned to tie a partial knot so if I have to tie up a package at home I'm ready to go.

Jeff VO: If you go inside the museum, you can actually create your own rope.

*Soundbite Jeff: I see you have instructions here so anybody who walks in can...
Guide: Can read, can see the pictures and can do this.*

Soundbite Jeff: We take this up here and this is going to hold the strands separate.



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Soundbite, Urs Schneider, Jakob Rope Systems Guide: Exactly

Soundbite Jeff: We take this all the way up to replace this hook.

Soundbite Urs: Now you can twist.

Soundbite Jeff: As I twist, the strands get tighter and tighter. Now the rope is beginning to form at the front.

Soundbite Urs: The leithost is moving.

Soundbite Jeff: Right up to the end. Now we can cut it, right, And put a knot in each end.

Soundbite Urs: So you have your...

Soundbite Jeff: You have your rope. Interesting!

Jeff VO: Back on board the train, I encounter a Swiss version of an “I Spy” driving game for kids. It’s a treasure hunt complete with map. Kids read a story about the not-terribly-fearsome Captain Engelbart who’s lost all his pirates and needs help finding them.

Jeff OC: So the object of the game is to find the band of pirates one at a time and mark their numbers into the booklet

Jeff VO: Kids have to look out of the train window at the right places marked on the map to find each of the pirates. It’s a fun way to keep kids engaged when traveling.

Soundbite Jeff: Hurry, hurry!

Soundbite Elia Jost (8 year old boy): Number 3. Number 3.

Jeff VO: If you get four correct matches, you can collect a treasure at the train station in Engelberg.

Jeff VO: As you walk toward Engelberg, surrounded by pastures and framed in a circle of mountains, you can tell you’re coming to a special place.

Jeff VO: The town is a haven of quiet streets and Swiss charm.

Jeff VO: But the soul of Engelberg is the Benedictine monastery: a stately white edifice set against an alpine vista.



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Jeff OC: Nearly 900 years ago a Zurich nobleman along with a group of Benedictine monks founded this monastery. It would become one of the great centers of learning in Switzerland. Surviving internal and external conflicts, devastating fires and plagues, monks have lived here continuously down through the centuries.

Jeff VO: The monastery is still a center of inspiration and activity for the community. Concerts are held in the Baroque music hall.

Jeff VO: This room, called the Chamber of Virtues, was created by one of the monks. It took ten years to carefully inlay the wood in the wall panels.

Jeff VO: Visitors on spiritual retreats often stay in former monk cells.

Jeff VO: And the church is a baroque work of art. The walls and ceiling glow with religious paintings and carved angels. A golden chandelier lights the way for the holy. And the church organ is the largest pipe organ in Switzerland

Jeff VO: There are still about twenty monks living at the monastery. They spend their days teaching students, ministering to the community, and cultivating beautiful gardens.

Soundbite Jeff: What is it that you do here at the monastery?

Soundbite Brother Gabriel, Engelberg Abbey (voice of translator): I serve God, so in my duties being a monk, I pray five times a day, that's my number one duty. And other than that, of course, my passion goes to the flowers. I used to work a lot outside in the garden but nowadays I'm more in the shop because I've become a little bit older. We also do many flowers for the restaurants and hotels in town.

Jeff VO: It's easy to see why those 12th century monks named this place Engelberg or mountain of angels. It's a little like heaven on earth, especially for outdoor fans.

Jeff VO: What's better than kayaking for immersing yourself in quiet beauty? A trip out on Lake Trübsee, with its clear glacial water and sheer mountain walls, serves up a generous portion of Swiss serenity. And this is an activity that just about any fitness level can take on.

Jeff VO: Nearby, a gondola called the "Titlis Rotair" is an engineering triumph.

Jeff VO: On the five-minute trip, the gondola revolves 360 degrees. This is the quintessential modern Swiss experience. Gliding smoothly over the rugged landscape, it provides heart-stopping views of the snowy summits.



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Jeff OC: We're up at 10,000 feet. And on a clear day you can see all the way to Italy. You can 82% of Switzerland from this spot.

Jeff VO: This is place for extremes...extreme heights, extreme beauty, and extreme cold!

Jeff OC: I'm walking through the glacier cave. It's five hundred feet long and it's under a 100 feet of solid ice. Honestly I think I'm going to get a cup of coffee cause it's a little chilly in here.

Jeff VO: After fortifying myself with some caffeinated courage, I'm ready to take on one last challenge.

Jeff OC: We're up at the top of Titlis here and we're at a suspension bridge where you can walk out over the glacier. You can hang over this incredible landscape. This is not for the squeamish; this is not for the faint of heart. If you're afraid of heights, you might want to stay on solid ground.

Jeff VO: But if you're up for aerial thrills, you can't beat this amazing foot bridge.

Jeff OC: This is the highest suspension bridge in Europe. They say that to cross it, you need nerves as strong as the steel cables that support it.

Jeff VO: On a recent world happiness report, Switzerland once again topped the list. What's their secret? Is it the countless charming villages? Is it the fresh-from-the-farm produce? Is it the *chocolate*?

Jeff VO: Experts say it's because they invest in their people. And they work hard to preserve the natural wonders that nurture their spirits...now, and for generations to come.

Jeff OC: I know I'm happy when I'm in Switzerland, because natural beauty is around every corner, and outdoor adventure is always just a train ride away.

Jeff OC: I'm Jeff Wilson. Thanks for joining me.