



## Green Switzerland

### 1. Statistical fact: Switzerland is an Eco-Country

#### **Switzerland is Number One on the Performance Index (EPI)**

A study on the criteria of health, environment, air pollution, water quality, species-riches, use of natural resources and climate change has been conducted by Yale University and Columbia University in the United States. The U.S. universities Yale and Columbia regularly evaluate the world's countries on the basis of criteria pertaining to the environment, air pollution, richness of species, handling of natural resources and climate change. On the so-called Environmental Performance Index (EPI), Switzerland occupies the first place. A decisive factor for this excellent result is the wastewater system, the high water quality and the excellent traffic system. As regards the emission of greenhouse gases, Switzerland has the most efficient economy.

<http://epi.yale.edu/Home>

#### **Booz Allen Hamilton Study: An exemplary strategy for sustainability and a fine**

Environmental standards and infrastructure are increasingly decisive factors for competitiveness in the travel and tourism sector (Second international study of the World Economic Forum and Booz Allen Hamilton on the location factor of the travel and tourism industry). For more and more tourists quality trumps quantity. Soft tourism - and ecologically compatible tourism to boot - is definitely called for. Switzerland, a destination whose nature is still intact, has a definite advantage. Gently rolling hills, clean lakes and rivers that are connected by a dependable traffic system. This viewpoint is also evident in the "Global Travel & Tourism Competiveness Report 2008", which was expanded for the first time by the category "Ecology and Sustainability". Switzerland ranks first among the 130 countries examined. The report commends Switzerland especially for its efforts in the field of highquality tourism and sustainability.

### 2. Being green every day.

#### **The Swiss are a nation of "railroad buffs"**

As a matter of fact, no one travels more by railroad than the Swiss. No other nation travels longer distances by train than the Swiss do: more than 1'243 miles per year. In the year 2006, every Swiss person took the train on average 44 times. The regular train schedule that was introduced 25 years ago - with departures at least once every hour - makes the use of train travel particularly convenient for commuters and tourists. They thereby relieve the roads of traffic, and protect the environment. Trains use significantly less energy than cars. A train only needs an amount of electricity that is the energy equivalent of 1.1 liters of gasoline in order to transport one passenger over a distance of 62 miles.

#### **Switzerland, land of recycling.**

The Swiss recycle 96.6 percent of used glass, 77 % of used paper and 76% of PET. In Switzerland, wine bottles or marmalade jars don't land in ordinary trash, but are taken to designated centers for collection of

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such glass items. These recycling centers have become a common fixture in many villages and towns. No less than 96 percent of the glass used in Switzerland is recycled. That's a world record! Nearly all glass is converted into new bottles. The production of glass from molten used glass requires only three-quarters of the energy needed to make fresh glass from quartz sand. Other materials that have a similarly high recycling percentage are aluminum (90 percent), steel plate (80 percent), paper (77 percent) and PET (76 percent). Each Swiss citizen collects an average of 350 kilograms of recyclable materials per year.

[www.vetroswiss.ch](http://www.vetroswiss.ch)

### **Dog poop ends up in the Robidog Container**

Many dog owners collect their four-legged darlings' poop in red bags, which are then thrown into green collective boxes. No dog poop will sully pedestrians' shoes. When you have to walk your dog in Switzerland, a small plastic bag is obligatory. For many dog owners it is a matter of course that they dispose of their beloved dogs' poop in a little bag, which they throw into one of the many thousands of Robidog containers. The positive outcome: No traces of dog poop on streets, sidewalks and meadows. The dog owner Josef Rosenast from Thun invented the dog poop removal system over 25 years ago. Today, the unmistakable, patented green boxes are found in 1700 Swiss communities and abroad as well. Who would have thought years ago that so many people could be convinced to remove their darling pooches' dirt themselves?

[www.robidog.ch](http://www.robidog.ch)

### **Old batteries are turned into raw materials**

The Batrec plant in Wimmis was the first installation worldwide that disassembled old batteries. 2500 tons of used batteries are collected annually in Switzerland. The Batrec Industries AG in Wimmis have developed a system for removing the toxic substances - such as mercury - and metals from old batteries and manufacturing new products from them. This is unique in the world. The installation of a high temperature processing plant in 1990 is considered a Swiss pioneering feat. All week long, the company's trucks drive from one collection site to the next. One thousand kilograms of old batteries yield 230 kg of valuable zinc, 900 g of mercury and 80 g of cinders. The cinders are used in road construction, thus closing the environmental cycle.

[www.batrec.ch](http://www.batrec.ch)

## **3. Experiencing sustainability as a traveler**

### **Railroad network: A train every 12 minutes**

Since 2005, 9000 trains are running daily on the approximately 1'895-mile long network of the Swiss Federal Railroad (SBB). The train density is 141 trains per mile of the rail network. This is a European record. Every 12 minutes a train rushes across Switzerland's railway lines. That is to say, more than 93 trains run daily on each Swiss railroad track. This performance is unparalleled worldwide. No less than 9000 trains run daily on the approximately 1'864-mile network of the Swiss Federal Railroad (SBB). The entire 3107-mile network of all national and regional railroad companies is practically completely electrified. The trains roll nearly pollution-free through 671 tunnels and across 6000 railroad viaducts.

[www.litra.ch](http://www.litra.ch)

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### **Drinking water - always and everywhere**

The water in the lakes (including Lake Zürich) is of such good quality that one can drink it without misgivings. Nature's thirstquencher comes directly from the water tap in Switzerland. You can hold your glass without a second thought under the water tap, fill it up and drink it - anywhere in Switzerland. Swiss drinking water is a quality product derived from natural resources: Forty percent comes from springs and ground water, while the rest originates in lakes. Thanks to strict water protection laws, the water quality in the lakes has in recent years developed so favorably that at many locations one can drink the water directly from the lake. In addition, Swiss tap water is better balanced from the ecological point of view than mineral water bought in bottles, which have to be transported over long distances.

[www.trinkwasser.ch](http://www.trinkwasser.ch)

### **New nature parks for Switzerland.**

More parks will join the ranks of the Swiss National Park in the Engadine. Up to 30 new parks will be created in Switzerland in the next few years. With these new nature parks, Switzerland is responding to the growing desire worldwide for sustainable tourism and environmentally friendly vacations. Thanks to the Parks Ordinance passed in late 2007 by the Federal Council, park projects can now count on obtaining government funds. In order to qualify for the money, regional parks must show that they are at least 62 square miles in area and that they meet ecological criteria. The most astonishing aspect of this movement is that it has been the local population (who actually live and will be living there), who took the initiative for this.

The new programme "Nature travel" from Switzerland Tourism comprises a range of tourist facilities in and around the regional nature parks, the Swiss National Park in the Engadine, the UNESCO World Natural Heritage sites (such as the fossil-rich Monte San Giorgio in Ticino), and the Entlebuch UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, with its characteristic upland bogs. At present, FOEN has listed nine Swiss parks as candidates for the status of "park of national importance". These encompass unspoilt landscapes such as those of the Parc Ela in Graubünden and the Chasseral in the Jura, as well as one of Europe's most extensive cave systems in the Lake Thun - Hohgant Regional Nature Park, and the Zürich-Sihlwald Nature Discovery Park, an extensive forest on the city's doorstep.

<http://www.myswitzerland.com/en.cfm/home/naturetravel>

## **3. First hand experience**

### **Europe's highest sewage treatment plant**

Guests in distant locales get annoyed when they have to tolerate the smell of the dry toilets of outhouses. This was the case also at the mountain station of Hohtälli/Zermatt (3286 meters above sea level) until the operators had their own small sewage treatment plant built. This plant removes dirt, toxins and nutrients from the toilet sewage water with the help of biological treatments and an intricate filter system. The clean water becomes part of the water cycle in the ecologically extremely sensitive mountain world. The mini sewage plant proves that even on limited space and at very distant places efficient and environmentally friendly water treatment in a complete uninterrupted cycle is possible. This is an exemplary project that could even be a model for other regions of the world.

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[www.eawag.ch](http://www.eawag.ch)

### **Palace Hotel St. Moritz: Luxury Hotel heats with ice-cold lake water**

The luxury hotel heats its halls and suites with heat from Lake St. Moritz. The St. Moritz Lake freezes in winter. It sounds paradoxical: even in winter, the ice cold water meets 80 percent of the energy requirements of the luxury hotel "Badrutt's Palace. And with 200 rooms, restaurants, bars and various wellness facilities, the requirements are considerable. There are pipes on the bottom of the lake, which suck the 4-degrees Celsius water - or the warm water, respectively - into a heat pump center. At that location, energy is removed from the water, which heats the water to 70 degrees Celsius when it reaches the heating cycle. The water, which is subsequently cooled to 1 degree Celsius, flows back into the lake. Thanks to this facility, 475,000 liter of heating oil will be saved annually.

[www.ewz.ch](http://www.ewz.ch)

### **A Country for Solar Pioneers: Zero Energy House**

Europe's first residential building whose energy consumption is entirely met by solar energy has been located in Oberburg near Burgdorf since 1989. With the solar house in Oberburg near Burgdorf, Josef Jenni created international headlines nearly 20 years ago: He built the first house in Europe that is heated 100 per cent by solar energy. Hot water, residential heating, as well as vacuum cleaners and junior's model train - all have been running since then on home-generated energy. And, contrary to predictions by some scientists, there have been no problems. This solar pioneer landed another coup in the same village - by building the first multiple family dwelling worldwide that is fully heated by solar energy. It boasts 276 square meters of solar collectors and a 200,000-liter storage tank.

[www.jenni.ch](http://www.jenni.ch)

### **Monte Rosa Hut: Energy-independence in the High Alps**

The Swiss Alpine Club (SAC) is building a high-tech hut at 3000 meters above sea level in cooperation with ETH. It will be up to 90 per cent energy- independent. Above Zermatt - in the midst of a world of glaciers - an energy-conserving wonder is coming into existence. The old Monte Rosa Hut will make way for a high tech building, which produces its own energy on site. Surrounded by solar cells and equipped with its own heat and power station, 90 percent of the hut's energy and heat requirements will be met. No less than 84 m<sup>2</sup> photovoltaic cells will provide the current for sewage treatment, ventilation, lighting and household equipment. With this prestigious project the builders and engineers will prove that sustainable construction is possible even under extreme conditions. It is envisaged that in 2009 the first guests will be able to occupy the beds in the hut.

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