

Europe's

1st Mountain Railway

gives access to Mount Rigi

– the Queen of the mountains

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1. Rigi before railway construction

There is only one Swiss mountain that bears the honourable title of «Queen of the mountains»: Mount RIGI. Like an «outer baley to the Gotthard» it looms between the lakes of Lucerne, Zug and Lauerz. Animals are known to have roamed the slopes of Mount Rigi in the middle ages. Cave bears, bears and hyenas sought shelter in the mountain caves. The first documented mention is from the year 1353. In the 17th century, Mount Rigi saw its first period of blossom when pilgrims flocked to the Kalt-Bad to alleviate their pains. The bath facilities also gave life to the gastronomy services. In 1756, the government of Lucerne approved the construction of the first inn at Rigi Kaltbad. The building housed a rectory, four guest rooms and a room for the innkeeper. One hundred years later, the new Kurhaus was constructed: After the expansion in 1868, it housed a dining room, a lounge, a ladies' lounge, a scriptorium and a music room. Full board at that time was priced at CHF 11.00.

Around the same time, Rigi Klösterli saw pilgrims beginning to flock to the chapel of «Maria zum Schnee», which had been built in 1689. Soon some 15,000 annual pilgrims came travelling to Rigi Klösterli on foot. With the construction of the first inn called «Maria zum Schnee» (in 1803), tourism really got underway here at Rigi Klösterli.

Long before the first cable car traversed the climb to Mount Rigi's peak, M.J. Bürgi opened the first inn on Rigi Kulm in 1816. In 1819, a total of 1036 bold summiteers registered themselves in the Kulmhaus inn's guestbook. In 1875, the Hotel Schreiber started operations. Built in a sophisticated palatial style, it could house 280 to 300 guests.

Rigi guests for whom the climb was too hard could rent a carrying chair or a horse. Rigi bearers were stationed at Arth, Küsnacht, Greppen, Weggis and Vitznau. The following transport fees applied from the starting points in Goldau, Vitznau and Weggis:

Route	With carrying chair	On horse
Arth*, Goldau, Lauerz – Rigi Kulm	CHF 6.00	CHF 10.00
Gersau, Vitznau* - Rigi Kulm	CHF 8.00	CHF 10.00
Weggis – Rigi Kulm	CHF 5.00	CHF 10.00

* = carrying chair only

Mount Rigi through the ages, into the 20th century

20th century

1999

Rigi Bahnen invent a new kind of rack and pinion switch. The patent is registered worldwide. The prototype is first installed at the ARB Rigi-First station.

1996

Summer: The historic steam locomotive no. 7 (built in 1873, now at the Swiss Museum of Transport in Lucerne) travels its old route to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the Vitznau-Rigi railway.

1993

15 July: The launch of the new panoramic cabins coincides with the 25th anniversary of the Weggis – Rigi Kaltbad aerial cable car.

1992

26 and 27 May: The Rigibahn-Gesellschaft and the Arth-Rigi railway join to form the RIGI BAHNEN AG (effective from the beginning of 1992), including the takeover of Skilifte Rigi AG.

1991

Construction completed on the new railyard and maintenance building in Vitznau.

1990

Launch of the rail connection Arth-Rigibahn – Vitznau-Rigibahn in Rigi Staffel.

1968

15 July: The aerial cable car between Weggis and Rigi Kaltbad starts operations.

1966

Opening of the «Hostellerie Rigi» hotel at Rigi Kaltbad.

1961

9 February: Catastrophic fire in Rigi Kaltbad. The former Grand Hotel is completely destroyed. 13 people perish in the fire.

1959

1 September: The valley railway line from Arth am See to Goldau is closed down and replaced with buses.

1948

25 July: The «Rigi First» hotel burns the ground.

1945

After the end of the Second World War, Mount Rigi goes from being the preserve of the holidaying elite to a day trip destination for mass tourism.

Media documentation

1945

The Arth-Rigi railway's last steam locomotive is sold for a scrap price of just 4,000 francs.

1942

The former railway line between Rigi Kaltbad and Rigi Scheidegg is closed down.

The signs are still visible (tunnel, Unterstetten bridge, kilometre signposts, water tank site, passenger car as a holiday home, etc.)

1937

Steam locomotive no. 7 is decommissioned and put on display at the Swiss Museum of Transport (Lucerne).

Today two other steam locomotives remain (no. 16 + 17) at the Rigi-Bahnen vehicle park.

1937

3 October: The railway line between Vitznau and Rigi Kulm is electrified.

1931

Commissioning of the railway from Rigi Kaltbad to Rigi Scheidegg.

1914

After the outbreak of the First World War, rich and aristocratic visitors suddenly stop coming to Mount Rigi.

1907

1 May: The railway line between Goldau and Rigi Kulm is electrified. The Arth-Rigi railway is thus the very first electrified standard gauge cogwheel railway in the world!

1906

The Vitznau-Rigi railway commences winter operations for the first time. The Arth-Goldau adhesion railway is electrified.

19th century

1884

The Arth-Rigi railway runs all year round for the first time.

1881

King Ludwig II of Bavaria visits Rigi Kulm and presents the owner of the Grand Hotel with an exquisite tea set. It can still be viewed today in a glass cabinet in the dining hall.

1879

The American traveller and author Mark Twain visits Mount Rigi and writes his humorous journal: «A trip to Mount Rigi».

1875

4 July: Opening of the Arth-Rigi railway (Arth am See – Goldau – Rigi Kulm).

1875

Opening of the fashionable Grand Hotel Schreiber at Rigi Kulm. It has rooms for 300 guests, as well as every imaginable convenience available at the time.

1874

The Vitznau-Rigi railway is a worldwide sensation, transporting more than 100,000 passengers in its fourth year of operations.

1874

Opening of the railway from Rigi Kaltbad to Rigi Scheidegg. It is the highest adhesion railway in Europe and connects the high-class hotels at Kaltbad, First and Scheidegg.

1873

23 July: The Vitznau-Rigi railway traverses along the «parade section» from Staffel to Kulm for the first time.

1871

21 May: Inaugural celebrations are held for Europe's first mountain railway from Vitznau to Rigi Staffelhöhe.

1870

21 May: Trial run of the very first Mount Rigi steam locomotive, the «Stadt Luzern», on the 53rd birthday of its creator, Niklaus Riggerbach.

1868

Opening of the high-class Rigi Kaltbad hotel with 240 beds, dining hall, salon for social gatherings, women's sitting room, writing room and a music salon.

1868

Queen Victoria of England rode on horseback from Küssnacht to the lookout at Rigi Känzeli and wrote excitedly in her diary: "We are amused!"

1863

Engineer Niklaus Riggerbach patents his cogwheel system for mountain railways in France.

1860

The tourist transportation business on Mount Rigi is booming. In Weggis, there are 30 horse stables with around 1,000 horses, as well as countless carrying chair bearers and guides.

1859

Architect Friedrich Albrecht presents his exciting project for Mount Rigi: an aerial railway using balloons. Passenger gondolas on a metal track were to be pulled up the mountain by helium balloons. It worked...but only on paper!

1857

Opening of the Regina Montium hotel on Rigi Kulm.

1840

Opening of the spa hotel at Rigi Scheidegg. The hotel offers remedies involving drinking and bathing in spring water.

1832

For the first time, Weggis can be reached by boat from Lucerne. It becomes an interchange station for Mount Rigi visitors looking to walk, ride or be carried up the mountain.

1818

Travel agencies in England offer the first guided tours to Switzerland. More adventurous and well-healed tourists were given the choice of visiting Mount Rigi.

1817

21 May: Birth of mountain railway pioneer Niklaus Riggenbach, the engineer who designed the Vitznau-Rigi railway. The railway was also opened on 21 May – his 54th birthday.

1816

Opening of the first guesthouse at Rigi Kulm. Just three years later, over 1,000 visitors a year make their way to Mount Rigi's summit.

1814

Samuel Birmann publishes the first panoramic map for Mount Rigi visitors.

17th & 18th century

1792

The doctor, naturalist and poet Albrecht Haller publishes his poem «The Alps» and triggers the first wave of mountain tourism.

1784

Inauguration of the rock chapel at Rigi Kaltbad.

1775

The poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe visits Mount Rigi during his first visit to Switzerland and noted in his diary: «The splendour of the world all around».

1756

Opening of the first inn to stay at Rigi Kaltbad overnight.

1730

Pilgrims continue to visit Rigi Klösterli in great numbers, with some 25,000 pilgrims making the journey each year!

1721

Replacement of the chapel on Rigi Klösterli after it had become too small for the mass of pilgrims.

1700

11 July: Inauguration of the first Capuchin chapel at Rigi Klösterli.

Media documentation

1689

Pilgrimage tourism to Mount Rigi commences. The «Maria zum Schnee» pilgrimage chapel at Rigi Klösterli is inaugurated: 15,000 pilgrims make the journey to visit it each year.

Middle Ages

1585

The first chapel (including a hermitage) is built at Rigi Kaltbad. Several hermits take up residence here in summer.

1540

First mention of the supposed healing properties of the natural spring at Kaltbad when Barthli Joler from Weggis was returned to health after bathing in the cold water. This marks the early beginning of wellness tourism on Mount Rigi. By the year 1600, over 100 people a year make the trek to bathe in the spring water.

1479

Albrecht von Bonstetten – humanist, geographer and dean of Einsiedeln Abbey – describes Mount Rigi as «Mons Regina» in his chronicle.

1421

The Lucernese chronicler Renward Cysat describes how dragons flew to and fro between Mount Pilatus and Mount Rigi. The legend suggests that these ancient creatures had their nests on Mount Rigi's southern slope around Vitznauerstock, above Vitznau.

1353

The first mention of Mount Rigi as «Grat Rigger» in an official document from the old Schwyz district.

One hundred thousand years ago

During the last ice age Mount Rigi was what is known as a nunatak, rising up like an island in a sea of ice. The bones of cave-dwelling bears and hyenas, as well as the remains of a fire, have been found in the Steigelfadbalm cave.

50 million years ago

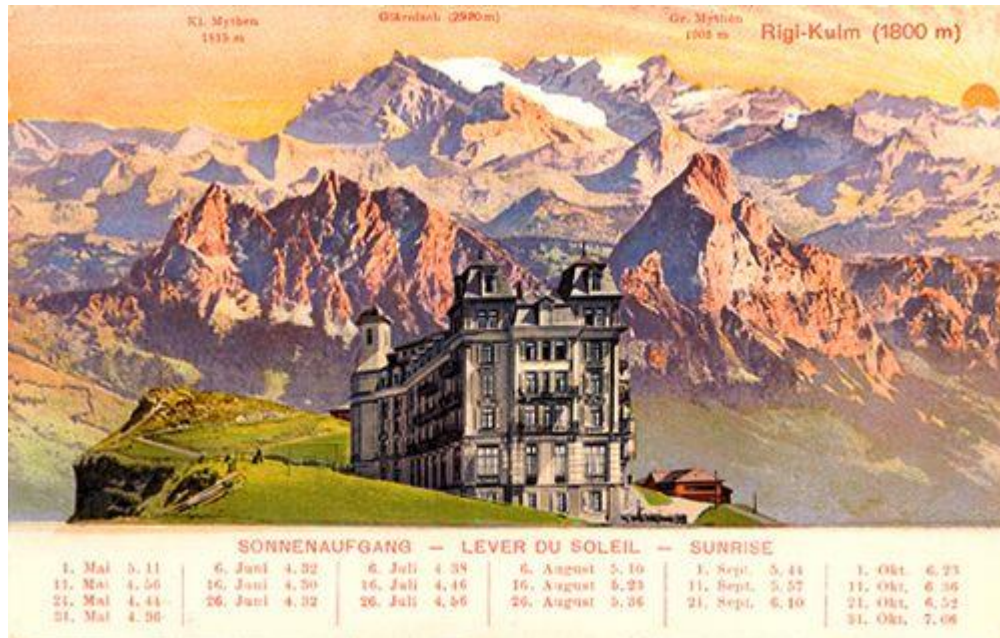
The Alps and the pre-alpine Mount Rigi landscape are formed as the African continental plate drifts northwards.

150 million years ago

The landscape currently dominated by Mount Rigi is completely flat. Rivers deposit detritus and rubble on the shores of the prehistoric Tethys sea.

Mount Rigi through the ages, into the 20th century

In 1816, Switzerland's first mountain inn was opened on Rigi Kulm. The opening of this hotel is considered the birth moment of tourist development on Mount Rigi, in the region and in Switzerland. 2016 celebrates the 200th anniversary of this historic event.



Events between 1903 and 2016

1903:

Guests from all over the world. Total income (only income related to lodging and boarding, without the two restaurants) in August:

CHF 99,208.15, peak day was the 8th of August with 237 arrivals, including 72 Germans, 47 Frenchmen, 30 Americans, 21 Russians, 11 Swiss guests, 5 English guests.

07 June 1875: And no. 3

Opening of the third hotel on the Kulm, the palatial «Schreiber» Grand-Hotel with 300 beds (advertising text: «que ne laisse rien à désirer sous le rapport du confortable») and with two restaurants, billiards, réunion, ladies' lounge, reading and music rooms. The construction period was three years, costs of the building site amounted to CHF 200,000.00. Just before the hotel opening, the Arth-Rigi railway was put into operation. The magnificent hotel was specialised in luxury and employed the most famous chefs, among others Escoffier, while the best Maîtres d'hôtel fulfilled the desires of its spoiled guests (King Ludwig II of Bavaria, who was a guest several times along with his entire retinue, brought a tea set as a gift, which is on display in a glass cabinet in today's in dining hall). Goethe, Brahms and many other intellectuals of the time gained inspiration here.

A day's stay cost CHF 20. At the time, this was the equivalent of a labourer's weekly wage.

Although the Grand-Hotel was open only from the end of June to the middle of October, it was operated profitably for many years.

1856: The 2nd Hotel on Rigi Kulm

Opening of the second hotel with 200 beds by the Brothers C. & J. Bürgi. Given the title of Regina Montium, «Queen of the mountains». The cost of the building site was CHF 57,000.00, and CHF 30,000.00 were paid for a prohibition of competition on Rigi Kulm, valid for 10 years. The building was constructed in accordance with the plans of Zurich architect F. Stadler, who had also designed the Bundeshaus building in Bern. As the mountain railways were not yet in operation, all the building materials had to be painstakingly carried to the peak. At that time, the job of the Rigi bearer was quite common. Rigi bearers would carry guests or materials all the way to the summit of Mount Rigi. The hotel had 200 beds and a dining hall with as many seats, which was a sensation at the time. The rate for one night was CHF 4.00.

08 June 1848: First only six, then 130 beds

Opening of the newly built Kulm Hotel made from stone, with 130 beds. Prices: CHF 2.00 for the room, service: CHF 1.00, breakfast: CHF 1.50, lunch and dinner CHF 3.00 each. During that period, around 40,000 – 50,000 tourists visited Mount Rigi annually.

1833: Generation change

The death of J.M. Bürgi. His son Caspar Bürgi-Ritschard and his wife Elisabeth took over the hotel.

14 August 1816: Guests are coming!

First record of five hotel guests in the guestbook

Publisher Sauerländer from Aarau, Dr. Feer, State Councillor Zürrer; Mr and Mrs Dolder. During the season, 294 visitors recorded their names in the visitor guestbook.

06 August 1816: Opening of the first summit hotel

The first Kulm inn in Switzerland had six beds. The builder and the labourers were the first guests.

1816: Numerous donors

A second begging letter was sent by Keller to influential people in large Swiss cities. 338 donors donated more than 1400 Swiss francs (approx. CHF 36,000.00 today). With this amount Bürgi was able to purchase the hotel facility.

1815: Early crowdfunding

Heinrich Keller (1778 – 1862), the famous Zurich panorama painter, who often stayed with Bürgi in the Klösterli, started a call for donations in Zurich for the benefit of Bürgi's inn construction – with great success: 971 Swiss francs were collected, which amounts to around CHF 25,000.00 today. The building construction was financed with the help of these funds. After this, Bürgi again ran out of money.

1814: Preparation for the construction of the first summit hotel

Arth-based tailor and Rigi guide Joseph Martin Bürgi (1778 – 1833) commences the initial preparatory works for a guesthouse on the Kulm (woodcutting and transport of the logs to the Kulm). Bürgi was the innkeeper of the Hotel Krone built by him on Rigi-Klösterli in 1805. In the same year, he ran out of funds to continue the Kulm project.

1601: The first mention

Writer-in-residence Renward Cysat from Lucerne mentions Kulm as a name designating the highest summit on Mount Rigi. The name Kulm is derived from the Latin word «culmus» = gable, summit.

2. Engineer

Niklaus Rigggenbach

When the engineer Niklaus Rigggenbach planned Europe's first mountain railway from Vitznau to Rigi Kulm, his vision was generally considered a «monstrosity». Even specialists and professors did not believe in the implementation of the project and did not consider Rigggenbach to be of sound mind.

Born on 21 May 1817 in Gebweiler in Elsass, Niklaus attended five years of school at the Gymnasium Basel and started a commercial apprenticeship after the early death of his father. Soon his instructor informed him that he was too "stupid" for this line of work.

Only while working at a ribbon factory did Niklaus understand that he was fascinated by mechanics and precision. Thus he became a mechanic. Via Lyon, where as a 20-year old he had already advanced to the level of a master foreman, Rigggenbach came to Paris. There he attended lectures at the «Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers». On the occasion of the inauguration of the Paris – St. Germain railway line, Rigggenbach finally decided on his choice of profession. He dreamed of becoming a locomotive engineer. The management of the Kessler machine factory posted him to Karlsruhe where he worked as a mechanic and foreman working on more than 150 locomotives. As a respected plant manager, he brought the first steam locomotive destined for the Swiss railways from Karlsruhe to Zurich in 1847. A few years later, after staying in England for several months, he finally settled in Switzerland. Centralbahnverwaltung promoted the experienced engineer to the position of main plant manager. It was here that Rigggenbach developed the idea of overcoming steep inclines with the help of tooth tracks.



On the occasion of Niklaus Rigggenbach's 200th birthday, the artist Inigo Gheyselincx created a sculpture from Swiss beech wood in his honour. He rests on a bench at Vitznau station where he reminds guests and locals of the pioneering work he accomplished in his day

3. Construction and operation of the Vitznau-Rigi railway

Keenly aware of the excellent location of Mount Rigi and driven by a pioneering spirit, Eng. Niklaus Riggerbach planned the construction of the Vitznau-Rigi railway. «I want to make it possible for all people to travel up into the mountains, so that everyone can enjoy the glory of our magnificent country!» Riggerbach proclaimed in 1863 when he patented his new invention in France: a cogwheel system that enables trains to climb uphill. Together with the engineers O. Zschokke and A. Naef he made an application to the Canton of Lucerne to construct the Rigi Railway. When they came to know that a similar railway was already up and running in America, the Great Council of the Canton of Lucerne granted the concession on 9 June 1869. The initiative committee established a stock corporation limited by shares and offered 1250 shares for subscription, which were already far oversubscribed on the first day. The railway construction commenced in mid-September 1869. On Riggerbach's birthday, 21 May 1870, the first test run was carried out successfully with Loc no. 1, the «Stadt Lucerne», on the 300-metre track in Vitznau. Finally, on 21 May 1871, Europe's first mountain railway was inaugurated. From the final station Rigi Staffelhöhe (Cantonal boundary between Lucerne and Schwyz), Riggerbach himself led the festive procession to the summit of Mount Rigi. The cost for the rail facility, buildings and raw materials amounted to CHF 1,250,000.00.

The financing and depreciation plan calculated that annually 50,000 guests would use the Vitznau-Rigi railway. Reality outdid the calculation significantly. In the first year of operations alone more than 60,000 guests travelled with the cogwheel railway. And in the year 1874, the 100,000 mark was crossed for the first time.

When the Arth-Rigi railway was opened in 1875, these numbers decreased for a few years, but in 1886 were back to 102,021.

4. Construction and operation of the Arth-Rigi railway

The engineers Riggerbach and Zschokke also constructed the Arth-Rigi railway. In 1870, a committee of twelve citizens from Arth managed to obtain the concession from the Schwyz Cantonal Council for the construction of the route between Staffelhöhe and Kulm as well as Arth, Oberarth and Kulm. The construction of the panorama and parade route Staffelhöhe – Rigi Kulm was immediately taken up by the Arth joint-stock company. Already in summer 1873 the route was handed over to the Vitznau-Rigi railway for operations. From 1873 until the merger of the two railways in the year 1992, the Vitznau-Rigi railway had to pay a rental fee for the use of the Staffelhöhe – Rigi Kulm track.

At the start of the year 1873, the initiators relinquished the concession for the construction of the Arth-Rigi railway to the «International Corporation for Mountain Railways», founded by Engineer Riggerbach in Aarau. The company implemented the rail project as general contractor for an amount of 4.2 million Swiss francs and also delivered five of the six steam locomotives. In the summer of 1873, the rail construction Goldau - Staffel was commenced and in the year 1874 the partial stretch Art-Oberarth-Goldau was started after the definitive location of the Arth railway station had been determined.

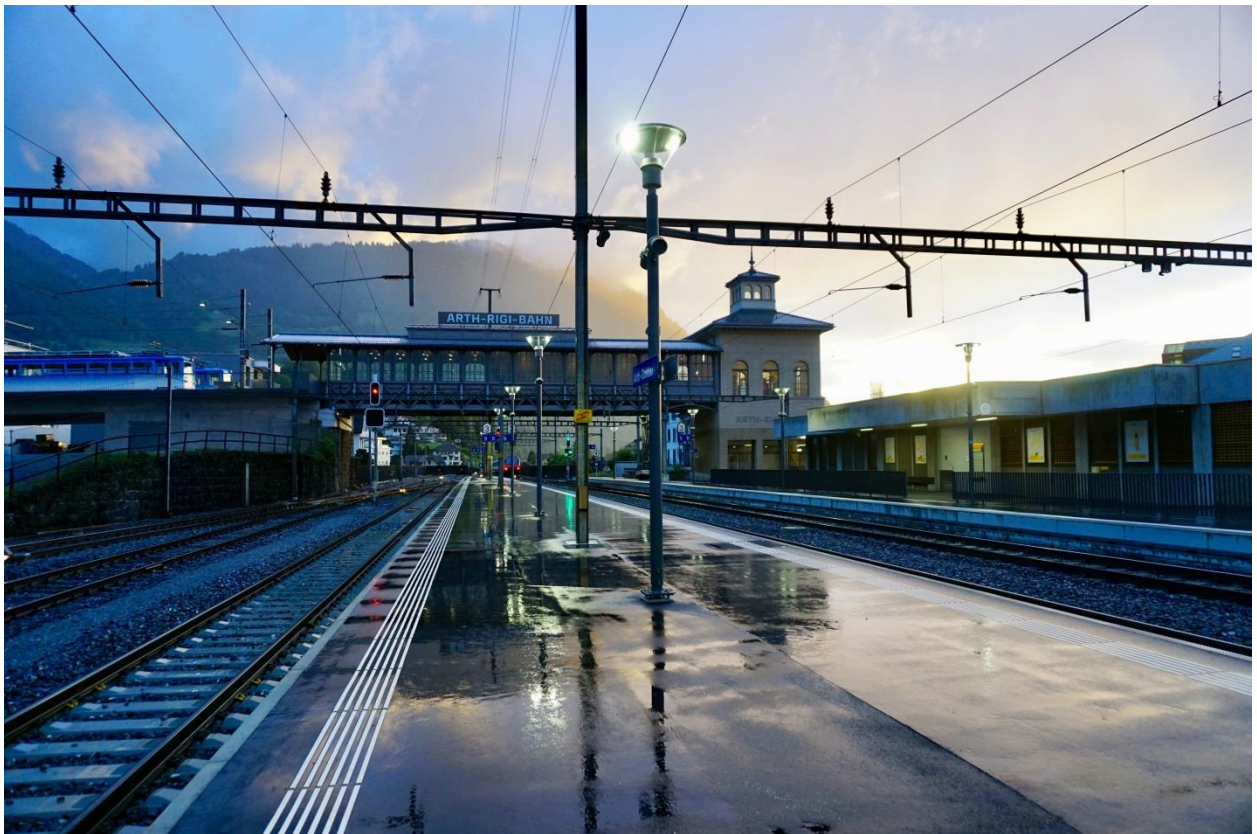
On 4 June 1875, the Arth-Rigi railway commenced operations on the entire route. The open passenger cars were arranged in a very luxurious way, with curtains on both sides to protect passengers from the sun, rain and wind. As early as 1907, the electric operations of the mountain route Goldau – Kulm were commenced. This switch was a real pioneering achievement, because the Arth-Rigi railway was the first standard gauge cogwheel railway in Switzerland that switched to an electric traction.

5. Goldau High Platform

In the year 1894, the Rigi Bahnen presented the pioneering project «Goldau High Platform» for the first time. The railway was up and running just three years after the presentation. The High Platform, also called Reiterbahnhof, was uncharted territory even internationally. There had never been a railway station that “rides” above the tracks.

Two turns of a century later even the first ever Reiterbahnhof was finally worn down and had to be closed for renovation purposes in the year 2010. After a construction period of almost seven years, with several ups and downs, the Goldau High Platform was finally reopened to the public again on 1 July, 2017.

The newly renovated High Platform is imposing – it was prepared with lots of attention to detail and is as magnificent today, if not more, as in 1897, the year of its construction.



The 123-year story of the Goldau High Platform

1 and 02 July 2017

Reopening of Goldau High Platform.

Summer 2016

The works are running at full speed. One of many tasks included newly designing the tower's façade in accordance with monument conservation directives.

16 February 2016

After another logjam as a result of a higher cost forecast, construction work continued.

08 February 2015

During this night the High Platform is once again lowered. At 00.15 the spectacle begins.

19 March 2014

The restorations works on the raised High Platform continue.

20 January 2014

In eight steps of 24cm each the steel giant is lifted upward. The High Platform is raised by a total of 1.92 m.

19 January 2014

At 20.00, the preparation works begin to raise the 170t heavy steel construction.

18 December 2013

In the past few days, the High Platform was uncovered and is now ready for its upward journey of two metres.

05 December 2013

The scaffold can be set up again due to the progress of the construction.

23 November 2013

After more than a year of intermission, the works on the High Platform can be continued once more.

23 October 2013

Even though the financing could be secured in the meantime, the High Platform will remain closed.

06 February 2012

Although the tower is anything but finished, the scaffold on the High Platform will be taken down again to save on scaffold rent.

26 May 2011

The media reports that RIGI BAHNEN AG had to stop works on the High Platform due to significant additional costs.

Media documentation

14 October 2010

The High Platform is blocked for any public transport.

10 October 2010

The last train departs from the High Platform.

2006

The High Platform is placed under heritage protection.

1921

Due to the electrification of the SBB line Goldau-Immensee, the High Platform had to be raised by 41 cm for the first time.

1899

Roofing of the High Platform.

1897

Startup operations of the terminal station in a Reiter building above the tracks of the Gotthard railway.

1894

Planning of the pioneering project "Goldau High Platform"

Facts and figures concerning the Goldau High Platform

Construction costs, Goldau High Platform, 1897

Looking back at the year 1897, the construction of the High Platform costed a total of CHF 172,500.00.

Investments Renovation Goldau High Platform

Gross investments up to completion CHF 18,000,000.00

Third-party contributions (heritage protection, SBB, Municipality of Arth) - CHF 4,000,000.00

26 metres long

The High Platform bridge with two passing-through trussed girds from rolled iron profiles covers some 26 metres.

Reiter terminal station

The Reiter terminal station is unique in Switzerland in terms of function and

Einsiedeln monastery

The High Platform is equivalent to Einsiedeln Monastery in terms of its

Eiffel Tower in Paris

The Goldau High Platform shows the same structural style as the Eiffel Tower.

6. Construction and operation, aerial cable car Weggis-Rigi Kaltbad

For decades, various initiators from Weggis made attempts within their municipality to build a connection to Rigi-Kaltbad. After nothing stood in the way of this vision any longer, the Federal Council awarded the concession to the Rigibahn-Gesellschaft in Vitznau, based on business considerations as well as to avoid direct competition between the existing Vitznau-Rigi railway and the planned aerial cable car.

After a construction period of only 11 months, the aerial cable car Weggis-Rigi Kaltbad was put into operation on 15 July 1968. The cable car related technical facilities were set up by the company K. Garaventas Söhne, Goldau. The large cabins were supplied by Carrosseriewerke Aarburg.

The aerial cable car operates throughout the year in a 30-minute rhythm and overcomes a difference in altitude of 924 m in just about 10 minutes. In Rigi Kaltbad a 100 m pathway connects the mountain station of the aerial cable car with the cogwheel railway station.

7. RIGI in the present times

Due to its unique location and environmental beauty, Mount Rigi enjoys an international reputation as an unforgettable destination and holiday paradise. In the heart of Switzerland, in the midst of an impressive mountain landscape, surrounded by the Lakes Lucerne, Zug and Lauerz, the «Queen of the mountains» looms on a height of 1800 m.

The 90km² large sports and leisure area is vehicle-free and its excellent infrastructure invites visitors to explore the many footpaths and mountain hikes during both summer and winter. From various, specially designated scenic outposts visitors can enjoy a panoramic view extending over many kilometres. Visitors experience incomparable sunrises and, especially in autumn, encounter a gigantic sea of mist. In winter, varied ski pistes, sledging routes, panorama cross-country ski tracks, prepared winter hiking paths, a natural ice field, or horse-drawn carriage rides are on offer. Mount Rigi continues to be the ideal destination for families, schools and associations.

The cogwheel railways from Goldau and Vitznau make the journey to Rigi Kulm all year round. As part of the annual overhaul in spring and autumn, during a period of five weeks the aerial cableway Weggis-Rigi Kaltbad is prepared for more efficient transport of Rigi guests. Alongside the usual vehicles, the Rigi-Bahnen operates a «nostalgic» vehicle park for visitors to enjoy: 2 steam locomotives (1923, 1925), 2 saloon carriages «Belle Epoque» (1873), ARB cars 6 (1911, the world's oldest cogwheel railcar), ARB cars 35 (1899), original Rigi-Pullmann composition (car 6/car 35).

Master plan

The master plan is set to increase the attractiveness of the experience on Mount Rigi by positioning the various attractions in a different fashion and by heightening the brand profile of Mount Rigi in the Swiss and international market. It also aims at strengthening growth and profitability.

Nine railways – one mountain

On 21 May 1871, Europe's first mountain railway travels from Vitznau to Rigi Staffelhöhe – a milestone in the history of Mount Rigi. Today the mountain is truly a unique mountain railway paradise – with its cogwheel and aerial cable cars, a total of nine railways provide access to the Queen of the mountains. Enter, take a seat and enjoy the ride. Breath-taking views guarantee an unforgettable railway experience.

Mountain railways on Mount Rigi

Tester beds on the Queen of the mountains

If you would like to stay a while longer on Mount Rigi, simply choose one of the many hotels, guesthouses and holiday apartment and settle in for a spectacular Alpine sunrise. Lovers of Rigi sing the mountain's praises for a reason: From:

20.00 – 8.00. Seeing is believing.

Places to stay on Mount Rigi

Twice the pleasure

From Rigi Alpine cheese fondue to a GaultMillau dish. From the terroir philosophy to its own mountain beer. Gastronomy on Mount Rigi offers culinary delights which not only give pleasure but also invoke amazement. On Mount Rigi the pleasure is doubled: Dishes with panoramic views are on the menu.

Restaurants on Mount Rigi

Holding meetings and celebrating on Mount Rigi

On Mount Rigi, every event becomes an experience. The range of various programmes available is as diverse as the Alpine flora on Mount Rigi. Suitable event locations for up to 750 participants are available on the Queen of the mountains.

Groups and seminars on Mount Rigi

8. Technical data for the cogwheel railway Vitznau-Rigi Kaltbad-Rigi Kulm

Commencement of operations

Vitznau-Rigi Staffelhöhe	21 May 1871
Rigi Staffelhöhe-Rigi Kulm	23 June 1873
Start of electrical operations	03 October 1937

Facilities for electrical operation

Rectifier stations	3
Three-phase supply	15 kV/50 Hz
Traction energy direct current	1,500 V
Performance of rectifier stations (Vitznau 2,000 kW, Romiti 2,000 kW)	4,000 kW
Tracks standard gauge	1,435 mm
Operating length	6,975 m
Double track	
Freibergen-Rigi Kaltbad (1874)	1,833 m
Rack system	Ing. N. Riggerbach
Maximum slope	250 ‰
Medium slope	190 ‰
Smallest radius (main track)	120 m
1 Tunnel Schwanden	67 m length
7 bridges	97 m total width
Altitude of the stations	
Vitznau	435 a.s.l M.
Mittlerschwanden	698 a.s.l M.
Grubisbalm	909 a.s.l M.

Media documentation

Freibergen	1,026 a.s.l M.	
Romiti-Felsentor a.s.l M.	1,195 a.s.l M.Rigi Kaltbad	1,420
Rigi Staffelhöhe	1,550 a.s.l M.	
Rigi Staffel	1,603 a.s.l M.	
Rigi Kulm	1,748 a.s.l M.	

Vehicles

a) Electrical traction vehicles

Electrical locomotive	1	331 kW
Electrical motor vehicle	4	331 kW
Electrical motor vehicle	1	824 kW
Electrical pendular compositions	2	824 kW

b) Snow blower 1 309 kW

c) Steam locomotives 2 368 kW

d) Passenger cars 9

e) Freight wagon, service vehicles, snow plough 13

Speed

Steam locomotives 9 km/h

Electr. traction vehicles Ascent 18/23 km/h

Descent 12/14 km/h

Travel time Vitznau-Rigi Kulm 30 minutes

Capacity 850 persons/h

9. Technical data Cogwheel railway Goldau-Rigi Klösterli-Rigi Kulm

Commissioning

Arth am See-Goldau-Rigi Kulm 4 June 1875

The Arth am See route was discontinued on 1 September 1959 and replaced by a bus line

Start of electrical operations 01 May 1907

Systems for electric operation

Rectifier stations 2

Three-phase supply 15 kV/50 Hz

Traction energy direct current 1,500 V

Performance of rectifier stations 6,000 kW

(Staffel 2,000 kW, Kräbel 2,000 kW, Klösterli 2,000 kW)

Tracks standard gauge 1,435 mm

Operating length 8,551 m

Rack system Ing. N. Riggerbach

Maximum slope 200 o/oo

Medium slope 144 o/oo

Smallest radius (main track) 120 m

2 tunnels Schönenboden 67 m length

Pfädern 48 m length

8 bridges 368 m total width

Altitude of the stations

Goldau 517 a.s.l M.

Goldau A4 541 a.s.l M.

Kräbel 761 a.s.l M.

Fruttli 1,156 a.s.l M.

Rigi Klösterli 1,316 a.s.l M.

Rigi First 1,479 a.s.l M.

Rigi Staffel 1,603 a.s.l M.

Rigi Kulm 1,748 a.s.l M.

Vehicles

a) Electrical traction vehicles

Electrical commuter trains 4 508 kW

Media documentation

Electrical commuter train	1	824 kW
Electrical railcar		
(world's first el. cogwheel railcar, year 1911)	1	390 kW
Electrical railcar	1	449 kW
b) Electrical locomotive with snow blower	1	449 kW
d) Passenger cars	4	
e) Freight wagon, service vehicles, snow plough	10	

Speed electro. Traction vehicles

Ascent	21 km/h
Descent 0-144 o/oo	17 km/h
Descent 145-200 o/oo	
Travel time Goldau-Rigi Kulm	35 minutes
Capacity	1,000 persons/h

10. Technical data aerial cable car Weggis-Rigi Kaltbad

Start of operations	15 July 1968
Builder Garaventa AG, Goldau	
System	Aerial tramway with 2 cabins
Altitude Talstation Weggis	499 a.s.l M.
Mountain station Rigi Kaltbad	1,423 a.s.l M.
Difference in altitude	924 m
Operational length of tracks	2,330 m
Inclination	
Medium slope	44.3 %
Maximum slope of load curve	79.0 %
Larger width	1,083 m
Running gear	
Number of rolls per running gear	24 pieces
Brake force of the safety brakes	15.5 t/drive
Cabin capacity	76+ 1 person
Vehicle speed	
Maximum speed	9 m/s
Speed during standard trips	5 m/s
Travel duration at maximum speed	6 min. 48 sec.
Conveying capacity	600 persons/h
Drive	at valley station
Drive technology type	Ward-Leonard
Drive motor (Windwerk) Max. performance	ca. 740 kW
Continuous performance	ca. 480 kW
Traction energy alternating current	3 x 380 V, 50 Hz
Number of struts	3 concrete struts (44 m, 28 m, 27 m)
Support cables	
per track	2 x 48 mm
Type	Fully locked
Breaking load	264 t
Weight per 100 m	1,2 t

Media documentation

Haul and counter cable	1 x 34 mm
Type Seale	6x19 strand
Breaking load	83,2 t
Weight per 100 m	418 kg