

Travel Blog

Excursion day to Bern:

As part of my assignment, I was given the chance to create my own excursion day in Switzerland using Inter-rail and preferably linking to my chosen niche market (sport tourism). Initially it was discussed that we would travel to Liechtenstein, however after researching the expansive areas of Switzerland it was decided that Bern had more sports tourism opportunities to offer.

Before traveling to Switzerland, I knew that Bern had the most successful football and ice hockey team in the country. For that reason, it was decided that the excursion was going to be focused on sport.

The trip commenced with a 10:35 am train journey from Lauterbrunnen to Interlaken, followed by a 11:10 am train trip using Inter-rail to Bern which took roughly one hour.

The original plan was to visit 'The Bears of Bern', then the ice hockey and football stadiums. However, 'The Bears of Bern' attraction was closed as the bears were hibernating. As a result, Rhodri and I went sightseeing in Bern. We were trying to locate the famous 'Child Eater' fountain and 'The Bears of Bern' monument which we discovered on TripAdvisor. Pictured below:

The original Bears of Bern monument (2019)



The child Eater (2019)



Both monuments were approximately 2-minutes away from one another. Each attraction highlights the mysterious past of the city of Bern. The bears represent the four bears that were originally brought to Bern as a tourist attraction. There are a myriad of theories behind 'The Child Eater' fountain, derived from the ancient tales of the city. Nevertheless, both monuments are beautifully painted and sculpted with an immense level of detail and precision. It was evident that both monuments are well-maintained as they were in pristine condition.

The next stop for us was the Stade de Suisse, home of Swiss League giants Bern Young Boys Football Club. We began our journey in central Bern, using the tram system to travel to Wankdorf, where the stadium is located. This took 9 minutes. Whilst at the stadium, we visited the training centre and the club shop. The club shop was reasonably priced, considering Switzerland has the reputation of being expensive.

Entrance to the Ground (2019)



Fan Shop (2019)



We then proceeded to get lost in the shopping mall beneath the stadium... Inside the shopping mall, we got into an elevator with a button that, we thought, would take us to the ground. When the elevator opened, it became apparent that we were in the hospitality suite of the stadium. We were approached by a woman, who worked at the stadium. She began to speak to us in French. She showed us to reception, where we asked for a tour. The receptionist agreed to take us out to the seats but not to the changing rooms or trophy room. The receptionist gave us facts and statistics on the stadium and the team, allowing us to take pictures and videos of the stadium.

Stade de Suisse (2019)



The Stade de Suisse visit was my favourite excursion in Bern. The staff provided exceptional service, helping us to learn more about football in Switzerland for our niche tourist market. This may be beneficial to us in future assignments.

After leaving the stadium, we noticed that the PostFinance Arena, home to European ice hockey mega stars SC Bern, was opposite the Stade de Suisse. A main road separating the two constituted a 10-minute walk from the stadium

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to the arena. On non-match days, the arena restaurant is open to the public. We decided to pay the restaurant a visit. The bar staff were willing to allow us to see the rink, providing we took plastic cups as a health and safety precaution.

PostFinance Arena (2019)



Leaving the arena, we identified the fan shop; we bought SC Bern hockey pucks as gifts. This fan shop was much larger than its equivalent at Bern Young Boys Football Club, it was also far less expensive.

SC Bern Fan Shop (2019)



I found the efficiency of the Swiss transport system surprising. Public transport throughout the country ran to schedule, very rarely running behind. Cleanliness is clearly important to the Swiss people as all modes of transport were immaculately presented, resulting in hygienic travel for all. Services terminated at convenient destinations within the city, with most tourist attractions being within walking distance of a tram stop. This made for easy travel links that were not limited by language barriers. Ease of travel may be an incentive for tourists to visit the city as they will be able to navigate between popular destinations using low cost and effective methods.

A short tram ride to the city centre and a brief stroll to the train station brought the excursion day to an end. I am of the opinion that Bern is one of the most beautiful cities in Europe; a city with a town-like atmosphere. There are no skyscrapers or busy streets. It is a relaxed, calm city that thrives on community spirit.