



Source of happiness:
Leukerbad's
thermal water



Leukerbad
SOURCE OF HAPPINESS



What do you think of when you hear the word "water"?

A clear, pure, and raw element?

A source of life and joie de vivre?

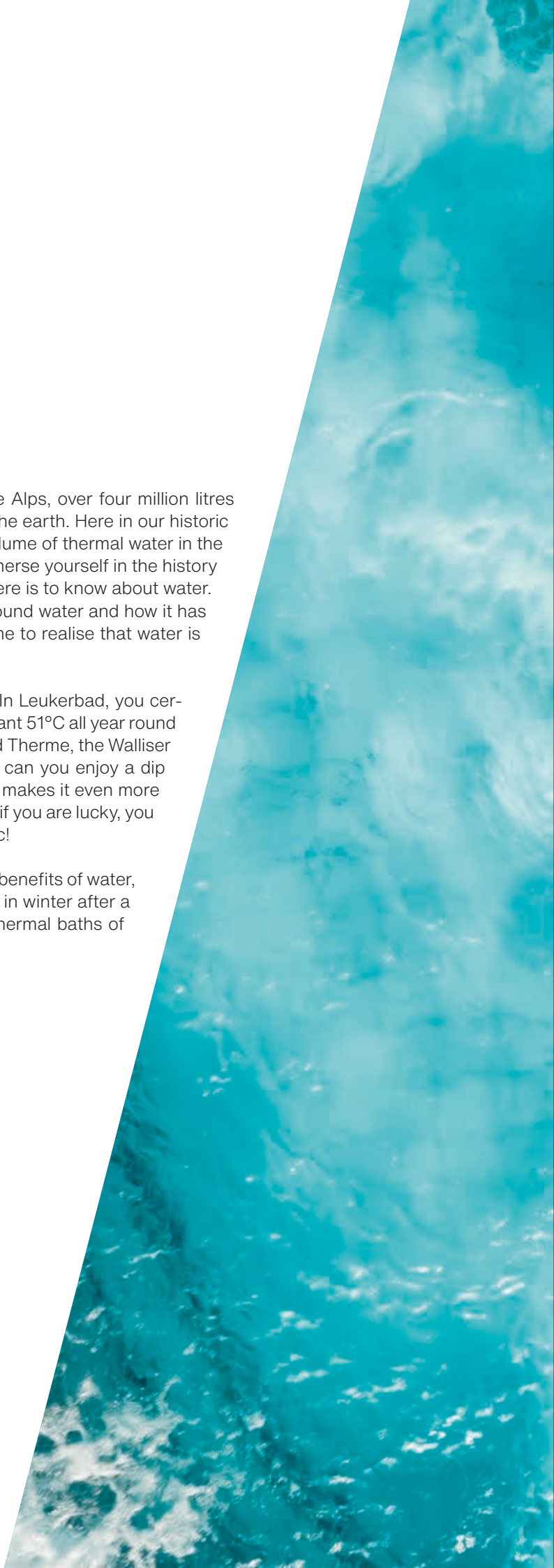
Or perhaps a fascinating natural phenomenon whose power people have learnt to tame and ultimately harness over the centuries?


If these are some of the things that come to your mind, then, yes! Water combines these elements. And in Leukerbad, you can experience all of them.

In Leukerbad, the largest thermal spa resort in the Alps, over four million litres of warm water bubble up daily from the depths of the earth. Here in our historic spa village in the Dala Valley, there is the largest volume of thermal water in the whole of Europe! Speaking of history, once you immerse yourself in the history of thermal baths, you will understand how much there is to know about water. Just think about the culture that has developed around water and how it has always attracted creative artists. Then you will come to realise that water is anything but simple.

Or is it? Is it possible to simply experience water? In Leukerbad, you certainly can. The springs maintain a wonderfully pleasant 51°C all year round and feed into our three public baths – the Leukerbad Therme, the Walliser Alpentherme & Spa and the Therme 51°. Not only can you enjoy a dip in the soothing and naturally warm water, but what makes it even more unique is the breathtaking mountain backdrop. And if you are lucky, you might even be in a bath during snowfall. Pure magic!

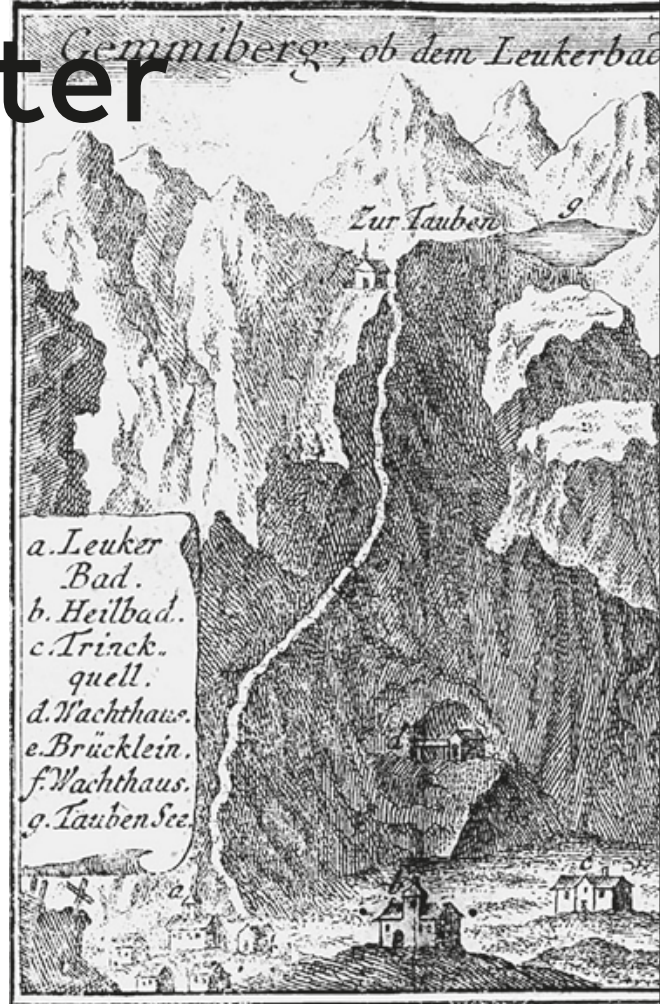
As well as educating you on the science behind the benefits of water, we also want you to enjoy the experience. Whether in winter after a day on the slopes or in summer after a hike, the thermal baths of Leukerbad are perfect for both, body and soul.



An aerial photograph of a circular hot tub in a swimming pool. The hot tub is filled with bubbling water, and a man and a woman are sitting inside. The pool water is clear blue, and the hot tub has a dark tiled border. The text "Because it works wonders..." is overlaid on the left side of the hot tub.

**Because
it works
wonders...**

The history and tradition of thermal water



- a. Leuker Bad.
- b. Heilbad.
- c. Trinck-
quell.
- d. Wachthaus.
- e. Brücklein.
- f. Wachthaus.
- g. Tauben See.



Prospect Des Leuker-Bäder in Wallis. Vue Des Bains De Loèche en Vallais.

A Die Taubst. B. Witz. ob dem Leukerbad. C. F. Witz. in der Sporn. D. Lant. E. La Roche. F. Die Kirche. G. Die Haus. H. Lorenzenhaus. I. St. Lorenz. K. Haupt-Quelle. See. D. Lorenz. L. Kollig. Brunnen. M. Die Gemeine. N. Die Werra. O. Der Leuker-Bad. P. Die Zurcher. Q. Die Froude. R. Die Fontaine. S. Die Bain. T. Die Bain. U. Die Bain. V. Die Bain. W. Die Bain. X. Die Bain. Y. Die Bain. Z. Die Bain.

Up to ten hours in the water.

As noted in Gabriele Knoll's work "Badebüchlein Leukerbad", thermal bathing in Leukerbad in the 16th century was characterised by certain rules. Spa physicians would prescribe up to 200 hours of thermal healing for those seeking various treatments. The spa guests therefore bathed for up to ten hours per day whilst simultaneously carrying out daily activities such as eating and playing. They were either clothed or naked, but always wore bathing caps, which was indicative of their social class. The treatment was considered a success when the person displayed a bathing rash with red inflamed skin that eventually peeled away.

The thermal water of Leukerbad has long played a significant role for the village and still provides magical moments to this day.

Bathing during the Renaissance

Although sources prove that the Romans had already shown much appreciation for Leukerbad's thermal baths, modern spa tourism dates back to 1501 when the then Valais Cardinal Matthäus Schiner purchased the rights to the hot springs in the village. He invested in the baths and built a magnificent inn. Schiner took pleasure in riding from his castle in Leuk to the soothing springs of Leukerbad to recover from the rigours of the day's work spent with political and ecclesiastical celebrities from all over Europe.

The infrastructure that led to the development of the most popular spa resort

Tourism in Leukerbad blossomed in the 18th century when the first set of valanche defences were constructed. Prior to this, the village had been destroyed by the forces of nature several times. As a result of these preventative measures, important connecting routes to the village were created – the Gemmi Trail was carved into the rock leading to the Bernese Oberland, whilst the "Varnerleitern" and the "Albinenleitern" provided trade routes between Leukerbad and the neighbouring villages.

In the second half of the 19th century, Leukerbad grew to be Switzerland's most popular spa resort. The development began in 1850 with the first connecting road from the Rhone Valley. This meant that visitors were able to reach Leukerbad easier and faster by carriage. New groups of tourists began to flock to Leukerbad encouraging the construction of more infrastructure.

Pioneering work for Swiss tourism

The baths were developed into more modern establishments both out in the fresh mountain air as well as under cover, like the Lorenzbad located on the village square at the time. Electric lighting for the spa was introduced early on. For this purpose, an electric power station was built in 1889 in Leukerbad, which was the first such station in Valais. This development made Leukerbad an interesting place for the hotel industry. As a result, in 1896, the Hotel and Spa Company was founded. It was the first ever public limited company for hotels in Switzerland.

From a spa holiday to modern wellness.

Leukerbad's innovative spirit continued into the 20th century when the railway between Leuk and Leukerbad was built in 1915. This was followed by the arrival of winter tourism when the first ski lift was constructed in 1948. The Gemmi cable car was built in 1957, followed by the Torrent cable car between 1970 and 1972. With the construction of these cable cars, winter tourism emerged as an important economic pillar.

In addition, due to further development, spa tourism continued to flourish. The construction of the Rheumatism and Rehabilitation Clinic was completed in 1961. The Burgerbad (Civic Bath), now known as Leukerbad Therme, was built in 1968 and remodelled in 1980. In 1993, the Walliser Alpentherme was established, replacing the original Lorenzbad. This marked the culmination of Leukerbad's transformation from a traditional spa resort to a modern alpine spa destination with wellness facilities.



The thermal springs of Leukerbad

St. Lorenz Spring

Outwardly invisible, the St. Lorenz Spring pours hot water into the well room. It is the beating heart of the spa and bathing history of Leukerbad. When you enter the fountain parlour beneath the village square, the water is an astonishing 51°C. This is easy to see in winter when warm steam rises from the manhole covers.



St. Lorenz 51°C 900 l/min

Fussbad Spring

This spring is no longer in use since its flow and temperature went into decline. The construction activities in the Obere Maessen neighbourhood and the mixing of groundwater have shown that the underground thermal water flow reacts sensitively and can cause springs to dry up. Accordingly, the springs are now specially protected.



Fussbad 34°C 2 l/min

The Dala Gorge, the source of four springs

The Dala rises at the southern foot of the Balmhorn massif and flows into the Rhone. The Dala Valley above Leukerbad is a unique place. Here, cold mountain water and natural thermal water merge in the river. In the past, the people of Leukerbad took advantage of the warm river water found in shallower areas to bathe their cattle.

On the right-hand side of the Dala Gorge, you will find the source of four springs which collectively form the springs of the spa.



| | | |
|-------------|--------|-----------|
| Fischweiher | 45°C | 90 l/min |
| Heilbad | 42,5°C | 300 l/min |
| Regina | 41,5°C | 120 l/min |
| Blisch | 48,5°C | 600 l/min |



These two springs do not originate in the Dala:

| | | |
|-----------|--------|------------------------------|
| Rossgillu | 45,5°C | 210 l/min (Leukerbad Therme) |
| Bristol | 30,5°C | 40 l/min (Hotel Bristol) |

Thermal water continues to be a significant resource for Leukerbad today. There are a total of 65 thermal springs in the village, of which only the 8 most productive springs are still in use.

In 2003, locals founded the Thermal Springs Guild. The association is committed to preserving the thermal springs and facilitating guests' access to the thermal water in and around Leukerbad.

Those who want to experience thermal water can also visit the village fountains in Leukerbad. In the past, people used to fetch water for their homes and livestock as well as wash their laundry there. The special thing about the many village fountains is that they not only contain cold mountain water, but also warm, natural thermal water.



Klybe

Bujes

Blisch
48,5°C, 600 l/min

Regina
41,5°C, 120 l/min

Heilbad
42,5°C, 300 l/min

Thermalquellen-Steg

Lischilir

Fussbad
34°C, 2 l/min

Fischweiher
45°C, 90 l/min

Schulhaus
Theatersaal
Gemeinde

Rathaus Busbahnhof

Therme 51°

St. Lorenz
51°C, 900 l/min

Weidstübli

Leukerbad
1411 m ü. M.

Walliser
Alpentherme
& Spa

Leukerbad
Therme

Rossgillu
45,5°C, 210 l/min

Stafeling

Zer Briggen

Bristol
30,5°C, 40 l/min

Torrent

Einfahrt
Leukerbad



Thermal springs from the Dala Valley



Other thermal springs



Village fountain



Thermal spa

1 Fountain Volksheilbad, warm



2 Fountain parish centre, warm



3 Water wall, warm



4 Fountain cultural centre, cold



6 Spring draw well, warm



5 Sternen-Trog, warm/cold



Spring Flühkapelle, cold

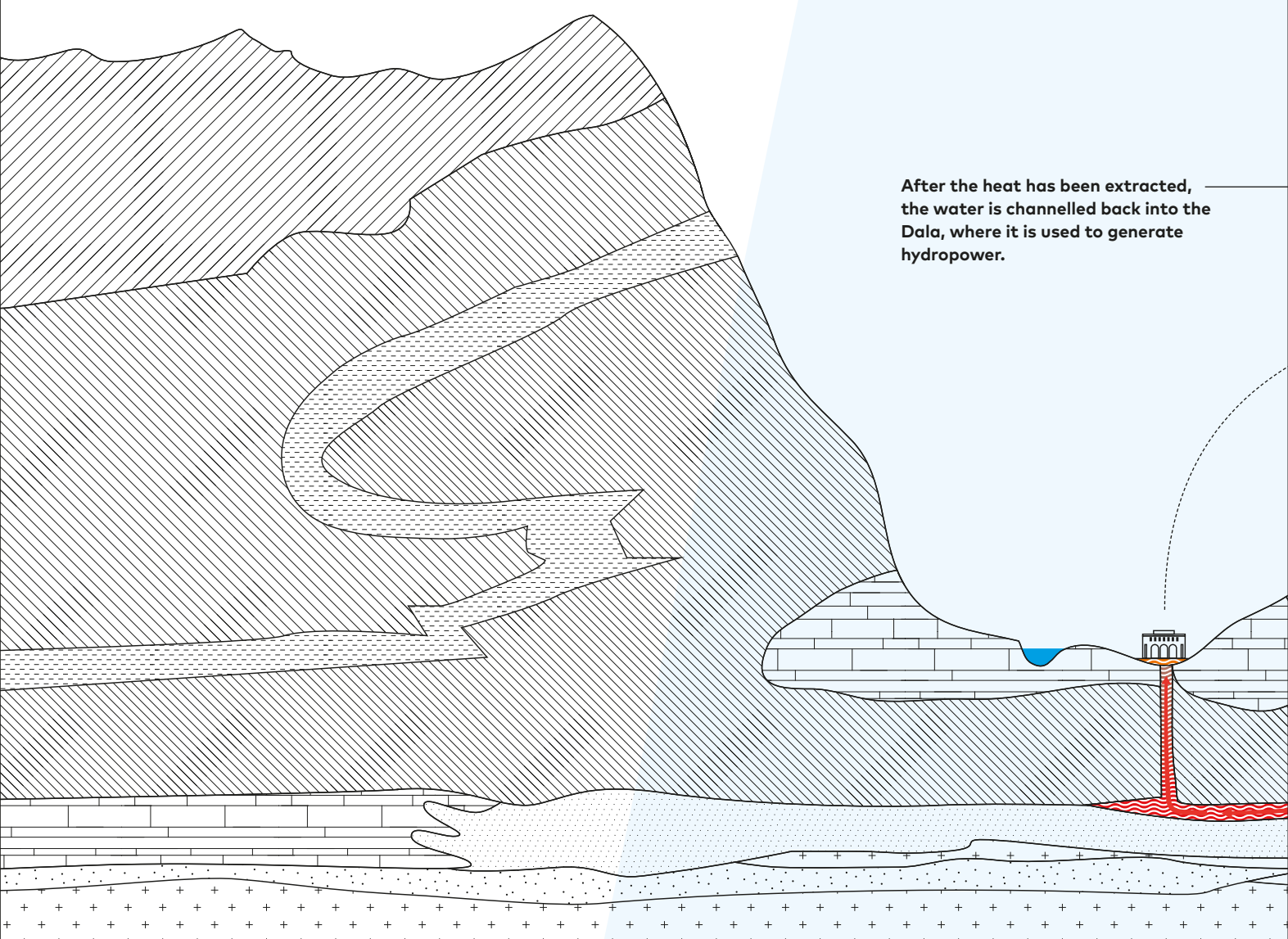


7 Chläbitrog, cold

Where does the thermal water come from?

The source of the thermal water in Leukerbad lies to the east of Leukerbad in the area between the Majinghorn and Torrenthorn. There, between 2,300 and 3,000 metres above sea level, the water accumulated from precipitation begins its 40-year long underground journey. At the Wyssee and Schwarzsee lakes, the water seeps into the steep fissure systems of the mountains and flows underground to a depth of 500 metres below sea level. Then, because of geothermal heating, it rises to the surface again as thermal water, where it emerges from the numerous springs in Leukerbad.

The total thermal water flow in Leukerbad is estimated at around 3,000 litres of unmixed thermal water per minute. Experience with the Fussbad Spring has shown that thermal water is a sensitive resource: earthquakes, changes in precipitation and construction activities, such as the building of the Lötschberg tunnel, impact the flow and properties of the thermal springs.



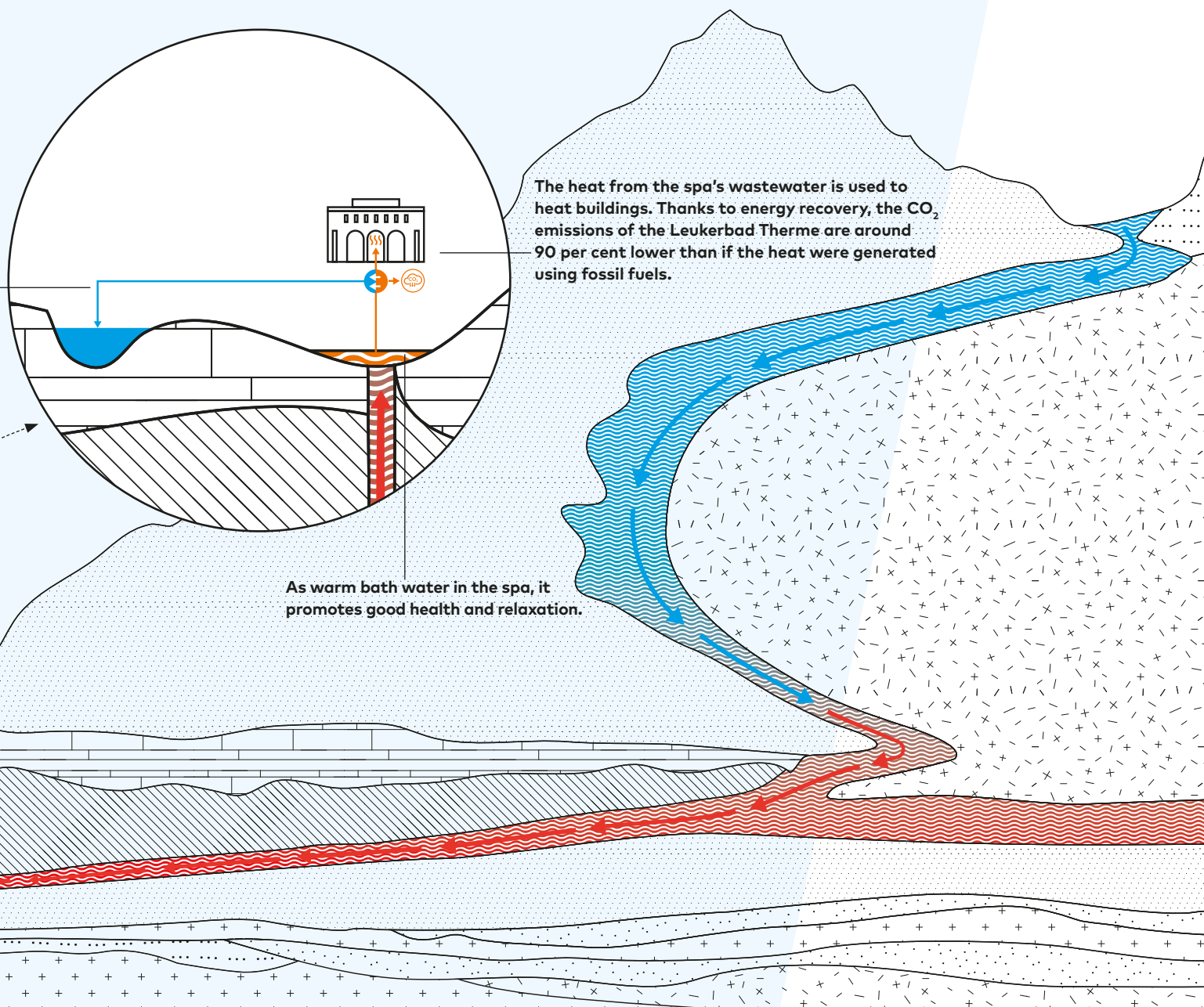
After the heat has been extracted, the water is channelled back into the Dala, where it is used to generate hydropower.

Chemical composition

All Leukerbad's thermal water comes from a single layer of rock. Thermal water is enriched with calcium and sulphate with a content of 1,800 to 2,000 mg/l of dissolved solids. It also has a slightly higher content of sodium, strontium, iron and fluoride. The bright rusty-red mud, which is typical of many springs, also known as "fango" or "healing clay", is caused by the high iron composition. All thermal springs have a blend of cold water between 9 and 40 per cent.


Sustainability with thermal water

Nowadays, the thermal water in Leukerbad is a valuable resource for generating climate-neutral energy. At the Leukerbad Therme, for example, the thermal water is utilised in three ways:



Facts & figures

4 MILLION



litres of thermal water are produced naturally from our springs every day.

3,000

litres of thermal water reach the earth's surface every minute in Leukerbad.

Ca + SO₄²⁻

The thermal water of Leukerbad is enriched with calcium and sulphate and also contains traces of sodium, strontium, iron, and fluoride.



The 51°C temperature of thermal water is unique across the whole of Switzerland.



The thermal water is used 3 times: for bathing, thermal energy, and hydropower.

5000

guests visit the thermal baths of Leukerbad every year on average.



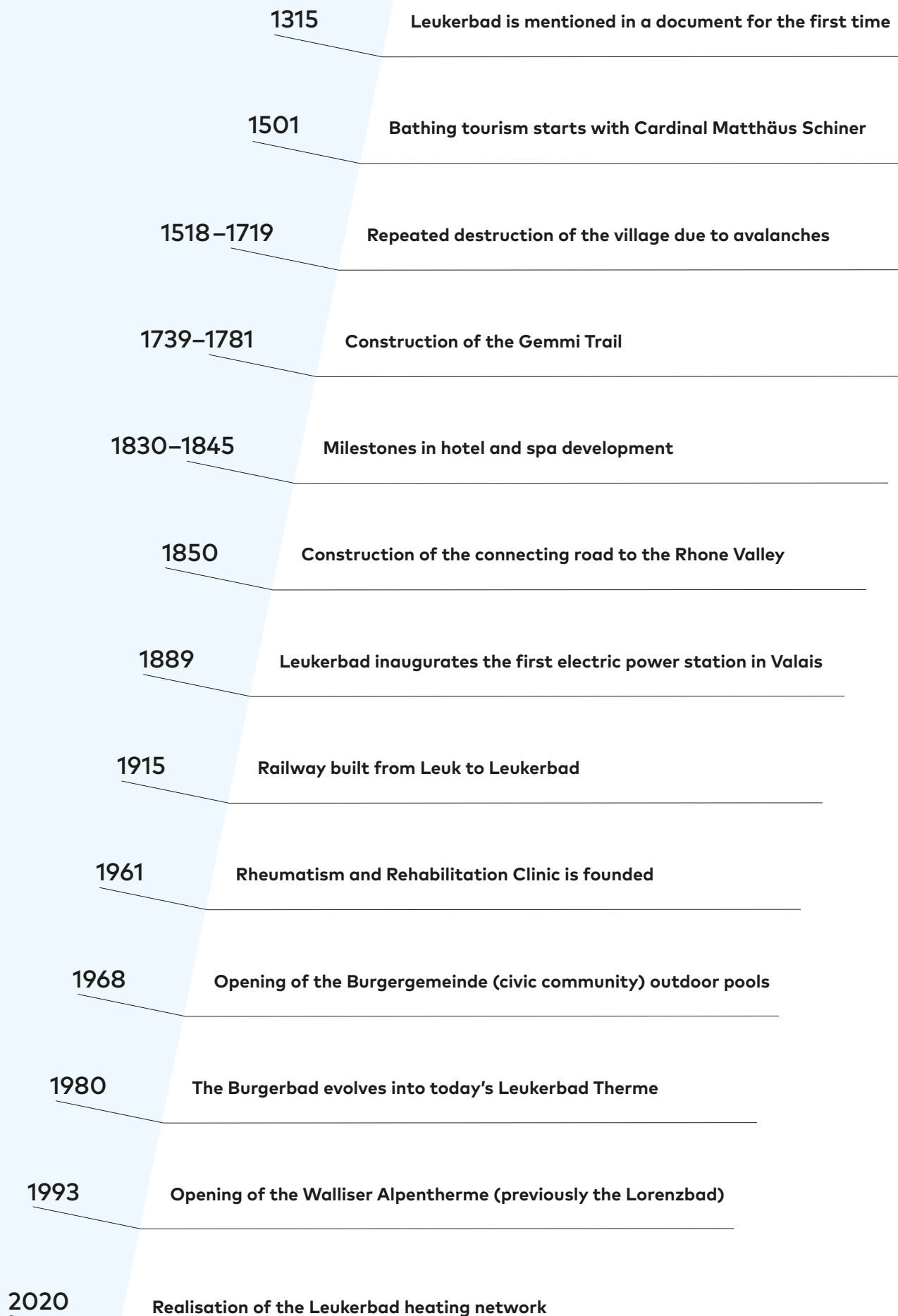
The 8 most productive springs are currently utilised in Leukerbad.

St. Lorenz

The St. Lorenz Spring is 51°C. It is the most productive spring and has a constant flow rate of approximately 900 l/min.



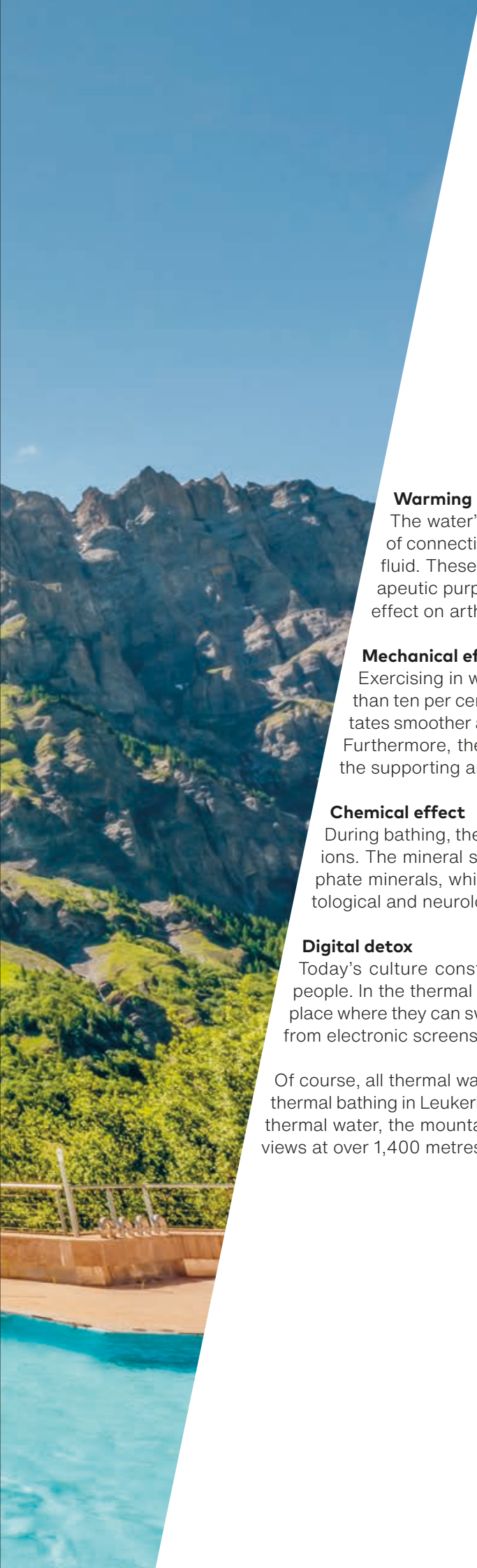
There are 8 fountains in the village with both hot and cold natural spring water.



Medical benefits and relaxation

The beneficial effect of the thermal water comes from numerous properties. The spa is valued by a diverse range of individuals, including those with physical and psychological ailments, as well as guests seeking relaxation and a reprieve from their daily routines.





Warming effect

The water's warmth relaxes muscles, enhances the flexibility of connective tissue, and promotes the liquefaction of synovial fluid. These properties are commonly employed for both therapeutic purposes and relaxation, with a particularly favourable effect on arthritic joints.

Mechanical effect

Exercising in water is unique. Due to the buoyancy, we carry less than ten per cent of our actual body weight in the water. This facilitates smoother and gentler movements that are kinder to the joints. Furthermore, the water provides an environment that encourages the supporting and postural muscles to relax.

Chemical effect

During bathing, the skin interacts with the water, absorbing beneficial ions. The mineral springs in Leukerbad primarily contain calcium sulphate minerals, which are particularly suitable for alleviating rheumatological and neurological conditions.

Digital detox

Today's culture constantly demands performance and attention from people. In the thermal waters, those in need of relaxation will find a quiet place where they can switch off mentally and find some valuable time away from electronic screens.

Of course, all thermal water has these effects. However, what truly sets the thermal bathing in Leukerbad apart is the unique chemical composition of the thermal water, the mountain air as well as the alpine climate and panoramic views at over 1,400 metres above sea level.

Influence on culture

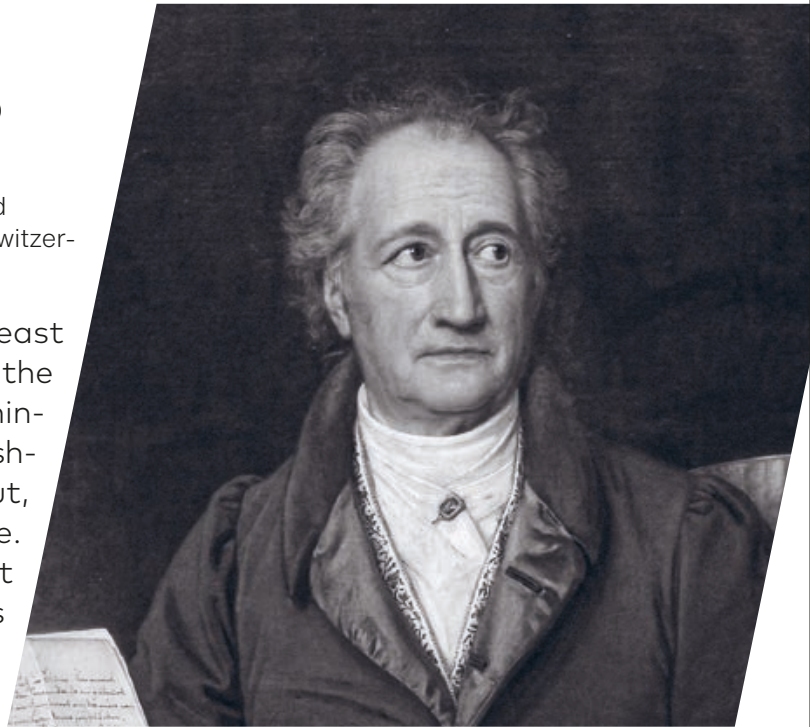
Leukerbad has long been visited by famous personalities. Goethe, Guy de Maupassant, Mark Twain, Thomas Cook, James Baldwin, and many others have visited and stayed here. Within their works, writers repeatedly reflected on the effects of thermal water. Every year since 1995, the International Literary Festival has invited renowned authors from the literary scene to Leukerbad.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832)

German poet

Goethe travelled to Switzerland in 1779 and spent time in Leukerbad. In "Letters from Switzerland", he writes about the thermal springs:

"This water does not have the least sulphurous odour, does not have the slightest ochre or anything else mineral or earthly about it where it gushes and where it flows through, but, like other water, leaves no trace. When it comes out of the earth, it is extremely hot and famous for its good powers."

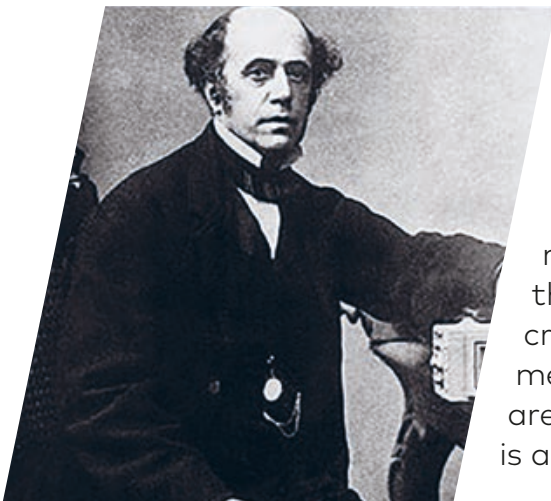


Thomas Cook (1808–1892)

Pioneer of tourism and inventor of the package holiday

In 1863, Thomas Cook visited Switzerland for the first time with a group of travellers. They travelled from Geneva via Chamonix and through the Valais to German-speaking Switzerland. He had fond memories of Leukerbad and reported:

"It's a real adventure to get to the high plateau on bumpy paths. The endless beauty, the colourful flower meadows, the local wildlife and the gentle tinkling of the grazing cows are fascinating. But above all, the crossing of the Gemmi Pass up to an altitude of 2,350 metres is a real challenge, whereby the exertions suffered are quickly forgotten in the thermal baths and the pain is alleviated."

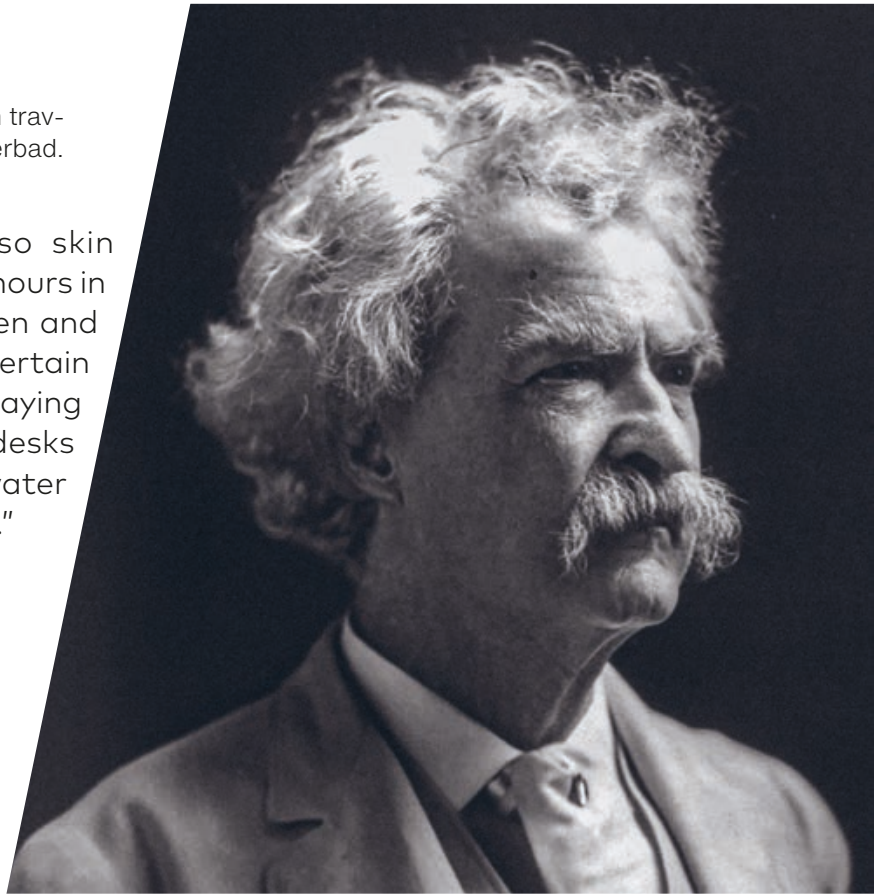


Mark Twain (1835–1910)

US-American writer

From April 1878 to September 1879, Mark Twain travelled through Europe and also stopped in Leukerbad. He described the thermal baths as follows:

"These baths remove fat and also skin diseases. The patients spend several hours in a row in the large baths. A dozen men and women take a pool together and entertain themselves by romping around and playing various games. They have floating desks and tables, and in the chest-deep water they read, have a snack or play chess."



James Baldwin (1924–1987)

US-American writer

"As far as I could find out, no black man had ever set foot in this little village in Switzerland before me. Even before I arrived, I had been told that I would probably be a 'sight'."

This is how the essay "Stranger in the Village" by African-American writer James Baldwin begins. The text was written in Leukerbad, where Baldwin stayed three times between 1951 and 1953 to complete his first novel "Go Tell It On The Mountain". He was a committed supporter of the American civil rights movement, sometimes giving influential speeches against racism, and cultivated friendships with the most famous artists and personalities of his time, including Malcolm X and Martin Luther King.

Experience the water in Leukerbad

In Leukerbad, water can be experienced in all its diversity – whether for relaxation or as a sporting event.



Walliser Alpentherme & Spa Leukerbad

This spa, which originally replaced the Lorenzbad, offers the best view of the Leukerbad panorama. An indoor and an outdoor pool, a Roman-Irish bath, and eleven hot-air, steam and thermal baths at different temperatures invite you to enjoy a swim. Additional enjoyment can be found at the Walliser Sauna Village, which boasts a herbal sauna, infusion sauna, mist sweat bath, and stone bath.

Roman-Irish night: Immerse yourself in the splendid era of Roman antiquity in the Roman-Irish bath, which becomes the backdrop for an opulent bathing ritual every first Saturday of the month, paying homage to the traditions of ancient Rome.

The Walliser Alpentherme is open daily between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Opening hours of the thermal baths:
subject to change





Leukerbad Therme

The Leukerbad Therme is the largest thermal spa complex in the Alps. The family-friendly oasis pampers visitors in a total of ten different thermal spring pools, including a thermal children's pool and slide, underwater massage jets, a footpath for Kneipp therapy and a sports pool. It is also home to the first pool bar in a Swiss thermal spa.

Aqua Mystica: The event promises a magical experience during the cold winter months, with unique light effects and harmonious sounds that create a mystical atmosphere. In addition to various shows at the spa, guests can also enjoy snacks and warm drinks. A wellness experience designed to enchant all the senses.

Brunch & Spa: On Sundays, enjoy an extensive brunch with local delicacies in the Leukerbad Therme restaurant, followed by relaxing moments in the pleasantly warm thermal water.

The Leukerbad Therme is open daily between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. and in the winter high season until 9 p.m.

Therme 51°

The former public spa, once an arthouse spa, is the smallest public thermal spa in the village. It has various indoor and outdoor pools with naturally pure thermal water from the St. Lorenz Spring. In addition, an organic hay sauna, an infrared room, a Finnish sauna, an alpine herbal steam bath, and an outdoor sauna made of Swiss stone pine ensure relaxation.

Therme 51° is open daily between 7.30 a.m. and 7.30 p.m.

Other hotels with thermal baths:

Les Sources des Alpes *****

Le Bristol ****

Thermalhotels ***

Regina Therme ***

Leukerbad Clinic



1 Thermalquellen-Weg or Thermal Springs Trail

The Thermal Springs Trail takes about two hours on an easy hiking route through Leukerbad. Nine signboards provide detailed information in German and French about the thermal water in the village. **The Thermal Springs Trail is open all year round.**

2 Thermalquellen-Steg or Thermal Spring Footbridge

The impressive Thermal Spring Footbridge leads directly into the wild Dala Gorge. It is almost 600 metres long and built at least 6 metres above the Dala riverbed. Brown-striped markings on the rock faces indicate the iron content of the thermal water, which trickles out of cracks of the rock. Guests reach a 35-metre-high waterfall via a 21-metre-long suspension bridge. Two staircases lead along the cascading waterfall to further hiking trails to and from Leukerbad.

The opening period depends on the weather and snow conditions (see leukerbad.ch/en/hiking).

3 Lake Dauben – traces of glacier water

Lake Dauben at 2,207 metres above sea level is very cold, even in summer. This is no surprise, as it is fed by snow and glacier water. The ice-cold water collects in Lake Dauben, which is fed from the Lämmerendala in spring to late summer. The lake empties completely by winter. Its water drains underground and emerges from the ground below Salgesch. Lake Dauben extends approximately 1.5 kilometers in length and spans approximately 400 meters at its widest point. This makes it one of the largest mountain lakes in Europe.

Lake Dauben can be visited via the Gemmi cable car and from the Gemmi Pass with the Daubensee cable car. The cable car is closed for a month in spring and autumn. Timetable: gemmi.ch

4 Lämmerenboden – alpine meadows on the glacier

On the Lämmerenboden, visitors can witness a unique cycle of repeated destruction and new beginnings. This alpine floodplain is constantly being remodelled by meltwater. Due to the interwoven stream system in the glacier fore field, the amount of water here varies greatly. Together, the alpine floodplain and the glacier fore field of the Wildstrubel create a special environment, which is part of the federal inventory of national importance.

Depending on snow conditions, the Lämmerenboden can be visited between June and October with the Gemmi cable car from the Gemmi Pass. Timetable: gemmi.ch

5 Wildstrubel Glacier and its glacier tongue

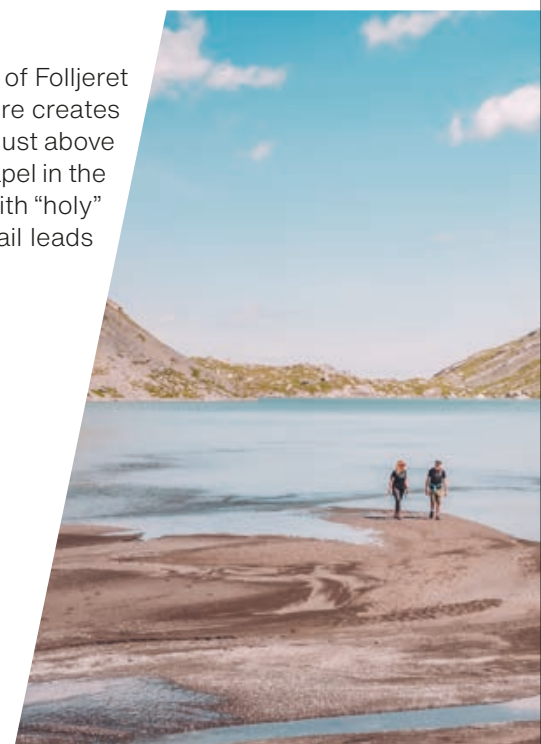
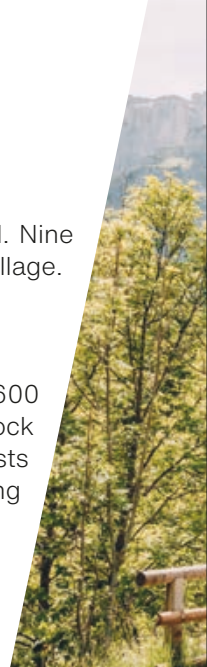
The Wildstrubel Glacier, also known as Lämmeren Glacier, flows from the Wildstrubel massif from around 3,200 to around 2,540 metres above sea level. Over the last hundred years, it has lost approximately 450 metres in length. The Lämmerendala takes its course at the tip of the glacier tongue. It flows through the Lämmerenboden and into Lake Dauben.

The Lämmeren Glacier Trail starts at the top of the Gemmi Pass and leads via Lämmerendala, Lämmerenboden and Lämmerenhütte to the Wildstrubel Glacier. The circular route takes four to five hours over a distance of 12.2 kilometres and 350 metres in altitude.

6 Circular hike to the holy water

The hike leads from the village square of Leukerbad to the pastures of Folljeret and up into the Dala Valley to Fluhalp. In summer, the alpine flora here creates a natural display of colours. At the furthest point of the circular hike, just above the Fluhalp, a natural rock grotto was converted into a small rock chapel in the 19th century. This contemplative pilgrimage site has its own spring with “holy” water that promises a healing effect for the eyes. From here, the trail leads back to Leukerbad on the other side of the valley via Clabinu.

The opening period depends on the weather and snow conditions (see leukerbad.ch/en/hiking).





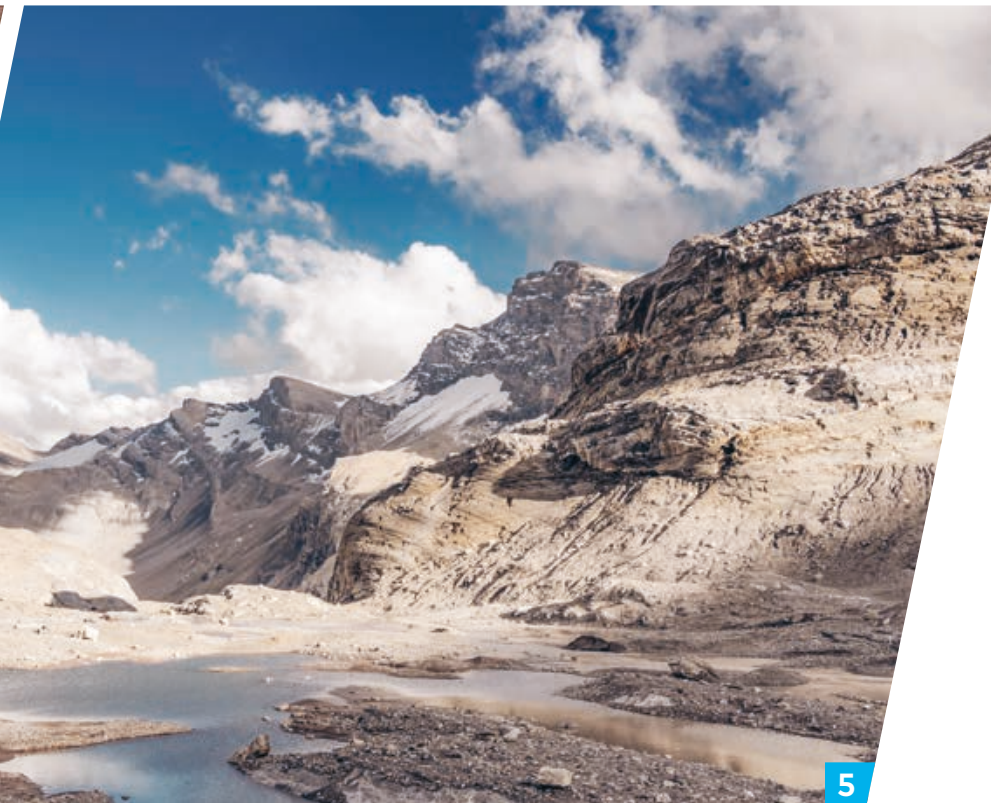
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3



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Page 16 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, oil painting by Joseph Karl Stieler,
1828; Thomas Cook, CC BY-SA 3.0 Deed;

Page 17 James Baldwin, CC BY-SA 3.0 Deed; Mark Twain (1907)


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The background is a solid blue color with several large, overlapping, wavy shapes in various shades of blue, creating a sense of movement and depth. These shapes resemble stylized waves or flowing water.

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