

History

Popular since the Stone Age

A prehistoric resting place and home for well-fortified women: The history of Lenk Simmental is just as exciting as the naming of this village. The ancestors of New Stone Age liked to rest here, the neighbours from Valais sought their fortune out in these meadows and the british invented the winter sports at Lenk.

The first inhabitant at Lenk lived in the cave of Thierberg at the top from the Simmental, 2'660 meters above sea level. They reached this prehistoric place via the old path of Rawil, which starts from the «Langermatte» all the way up to «Firstli» and passing the «Laufbodenhorn». The hunters of the New Stone Age probably went up there year after year to hunt and the cave of Tierberg might have been a perfect shelter for the night and bad weather.

Three layers of charcoal and ashes in various depths pointed to using this cave in three temporally different periods of time. The forest line in this period of time reached up to 2'200 meters above sea level, so the people must have carrying up the firewood more than 400 meters. The cave of the Tierberg is probably the highest alpine resting place of the Stone Age.

Smart boys and well-fortified women

The myth of the women's battle "Wyberschlacht" at the «Langermatte» gives us an view from the time of the faith struggles on both sides of the Rawil: When the men of Lenk went off down the valley to the war of religion, the neighbours from Valais came over the mountain of Valais (Rawil) and robbed their cows at the Langermatte. On the other side of the pass Rawil, the Valaisans allowed the stolen cowherd to graze quietly and gave the wine a hearty welcome. At the same time the chamois hunter Siegfried and the boys of Lenk, had arrived at the cowherd and gently loosened the bells from the cows and kept ringing them until some others had driven the herd to the top of the pass. Siegfried threw a big bell through the window of the house of the Valaisans. With fright they found out the cows had been disappeared. As soon as their heavy heads allowed it, they set off for Lenk in bad faith. At the meantime the inhabitants of Lenk, especially the women had prepared them selved with scythes and hay forks. They courageously attacked the approaching Valaisans and were able to rout them. The women of Lenk had won. When the men returned home, they were amazed at the defensiveness of the women. «Bi de Toete» is still the name of the place where the fallen ones were buried at the Langermatte.

This municipal coat of arms especially the spindle and sword remind to this women's battle at the Langermatte. The upper part of the coat of arms represents the seven waterfalls "Sibe Brünne" – origin of the river Simme.



Very British: The tourism history of Lenk

The British are regarded as the pioneers of Swiss tourism and also affected the development of Lenk. With the rise of the winter sports many enthusiastic Englishmen came before and after the First World War to Lenk. They were also the ones who achieved a breakthrough in winter sports at Lenk and initiated the construction of the first transport system – famous «Funis». As a result many british people had spent their christmas holidays at Lenk, the ski school had been founded and the field shooters organised shooting competitions with the English guests.

Media Information / Lenk-Simmental Tourismus

Lenk-Simmental Tourismus AG

Albert Kruker, Director, Tourist Center, CH-3775 Lenk im Simmental

Tel. +41 33 736 35 35

a.kruker@lenk-simmental.ch, www.lenk-simmental.ch

History to discover

- 4000 B.C.** Archaeological remains, that were found in 2003 in the clacier ice at the Schnidejoch, have proved to be much older than assumed. The remains are from 4,500 B.C. and must be at least 1,000 years older than glacier mummy Ötzi. They are prehistoric clothes made of leather and bast, a quiver and arrows, bronze robe pins and Roman shoe nails.
- 1555** Construction of the oldest Simmental house in St. Stephan.
- 1689** On April 6th Lenk was granted the first bathing concession. At the beginning of the 17th century, the first bathers travelled to Lenk. Later time the concession was apparently lost.
- 1862** New opening of the spa resort with two connected buildings (80 living rooms, "conversation salon"), billiard room and two covered skittle alleys.
- 1903** Fondation of the tourist office, ski club, and the music society. In 1900 there were already 250 guest beds, mainly for the summer tourism. With the foundation of the ski club the intention was to promote winter tourism.
- 1912** On June 8th the Zweisimmen-Lenk (MOB) railway line opened. This brought Lenk a big step closer to being developed for tourism.
- 1937** On December 12th the first mountain railway of Lenk was inaugurated. The «Funi», a mix of a sledge and cableway, was able to transport 16 passengers within 7 minutes from Lenk to the Balmen (350 meters altitude difference).
- 1949** For the first time a youth ski camp takes place at Lenk. Due to its great success, it is repeated every year and is already part of the tradition in Lenk (on average 600 children per year!).
- 1971** On July 1st Opening of the first public indoor swimming pool in Bernese Oberland.
- 1972** Fondation of the Metsch-Bahnen AG Lenk and realisation of the connection Adelboden-Lenk.
- 1977** **Foundation of the International Summer Academy.** This institution offers master classes and chamber courses for music students with some well-known personalities of today's music scene. Initiator Prof. Dr. Kurt Pahlen later becomes an honorary citizen of Lenk.
- 1989** **Bad Lenk** celebrates its 300th birthday (1689 - 1989)
- 2003** Jubilee «**Together 100 Years**» of the Tourist Office, Ski Club and Music Society
- 2005** Celebrations to mark «**500 years of Lenk**»
- 2011** On 8 October, the AlpKultur® playground Lenkerseeli can be opened. AlpKultur® is awarded 2nd place in the Milestone Award for outstanding projects.
- 2012** Jubilee «**100 years MOB**»
- 2013** Opening of the **Leiternweide suspension bridges** near Oberwil. **Lenk Bergbahnen** is awarded the **Swiss Mountain Award** for the AlpKultur® gondolas "Flöckli" and "Mona". The new **viewing platform on the Stockhorn** came in third place.
- 2014** The renovated **Wallbach Bad Lenk** offers attractive facilities such as a slide, outdoor whirlpool and wellness area.
On 6 December 2014, Lenk Bergbahnen opened the **Metsch 10-seater StandXpress**. opened. The ultra-modern aerial tramway takes guests from the Rothenbach to the Metsch Metschstand in just 10 minutes.
- 2015** «**Mountain railways included**» is the motto from summer 2015: Hotel guests in Lenk have free travel on the guests in Lenk will enjoy free travel on the mountain railways in summer for as little as one overnight stay.
- 2017** «**Public transport included with the guest card**». As of summer 2017, guests and locals who pay their and locals will be able to use local public transport in Lenk free of charge.
- 2022** «**Inauguration of the redesigned village centre Lenk**»