

You are here: [Main](#) » [Travel Ideas and Interests](#) » [Alpine High: Max's First Taste of Mountain Life](#) - AOL Travel News

## Bambino on Board

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## Alpine High: Max's First Taste of Mountain Life

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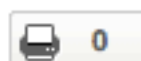
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## Bambino on Board

Jerry Soverinsky/AOL Travel

(even thousands of feet up, on the highest mountain peaks), and damn good chocolate and rosti (fried potatoes), are always available.

Jana, Max, and I arrived in Interlaken, Switzerland earlier this week. Nestled between (inter) two lakes (laken) – the Thunersee and Brienersee – Interlaken is the ideal base for a Swiss Alpine getaway. It doesn't hurt that I happen to love Switzerland.

Growing up in the flat Midwest, I had to ride my bike up street curbs to simulate hills. I spent vacations biking and hiking through a pretend Alpine landscape.

As an adult, I think of Switzerland fondly for very different reasons. The public facilities are impeccably maintained and efficient, hospitality infrastructure is everywhere

## Getting Our Feet Wet in Switzerland

I've visited Interlaken at least 20 times since the late 1980s, and while much has changed (it's a crowded tourist town today), it's still an ideal spot for hiking and I was excited for Max to get his first introduction to mountain scenery before heading back to the Midwest.

Our alpine adventure began yesterday with an easy afternoon walk that passed through a meadow, a forest, and a fast-flowing river before ending at a mountain lake. While it was impossible to tell whether Max was impressed with the snow-capped mountains in the background, he definitely enjoyed kicking his feet in the river and eating sand.

Our baby backpack is ideal for walks and hikes. While we pushed the stroller this time, more aggressive terrain would have made it far too difficult.

Today we visited Trummelbach Falls, just past the village of Lauterbrunnen in the shadow of the Eiger. The drive through Laterbrunnen was spectacular, with towering waterfalls cascading along nearly vertical mountain faces and the snow-capped Eiger, Monch and Jungfrau mountains beckoning you forward through the valley.

The Trummelbach Falls is a series of 10 waterfalls inside a mountain. We would not have been able to view the falls had the Swiss not figured out a way more than a century ago to hand carve stairs and viewing platforms inside the mountain providing up-close views. Afterwards, we found a shady spot under a tree not far from the Falls' entrance, and enjoyed a picnic lunch (by which I mean pastries), while Max honed his crawling and grass-pulling skills.



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## Transitioning from Tuscany

Switzerland is significantly more expensive than Italy. We bought baby food today - Nestle brand - with single-serving jars that cost roughly \$2.50 (similar sizes in Italy cost about 80 cents). I looked closely when Max was eating to see if he licked his lips just a bit more enthusiastically. But if he liked the Swiss version more, he didn't let on.

I'm still searching for a morning coffee spot for Max and me. This morning, we roamed Interlaken for 90 minutes while I sampled cappuccinos and espressos from four different spots (roughly \$20 total – ouch!). And, while Switzerland doesn't seem to have the baby-fawners that Italy had, Max still receives a generous amount of smiles and "Schön!" compliments from strangers.

Max seems to have made the transition from Italian to Swiss German seamlessly. His "mamma mamma mamma" that he babbled while in Italy has now become "mama mama mama" (with perfect inflection, too.)

Tomorrow, we're heading to Kandersteg, another mountain town (two ranges over from Lauterbrunnen) to visit an old friend who used to guide hiking trips for my former tour company, and to possibly visit a glacial lake. Max is pumped.

Keep up with Jerry and the bambino on [Twitter](#).