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Bambino on Board



Switzerland is Anything But Neutral: Max Gets Warm Welcomes in the Alps

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Jerry Soverinsky/AOL Travel

morning, she greets us with a warm smile, while asking about our plans for the day.

When Max and I returned from our morning cappuccino today, she had a present for him: A stuffed St. Bernard dog.

"He is so happy, I wanted to get him a Swiss souvenir," she said. And today when we were coming back from our hike, she had baked a fruit pie: "I love to cook, please, have it."

You gain a lot of weight traveling with a baby.

Yesterday, we visited my Swiss friend Marco who lives in Kandersteg, a mountain village of 1,000 people less than an hour's drive from Interlaken. A friend for more than 15 years, Marco guided more than a dozen mountain biking and hiking trips for my former tour company and taught me much about the art of traveling.

Marco's adheres to the cittaslow philosophy I [learned about in Italy](#). No matter how hectic things might seem while he travels, Marco will just take a deep breath and say, in his British accent: "And now we shall have a coffee."

And that is what we always did. Over the years, Marco and I chatted over many coffees (and beers), a deliberate way of breaking up the day while reflecting on what we had seen and what was yet to come.

Our afternoon with Marco was truly special. He led us on a very casual walk through his village, explaining its history. He seemed truly engaged in learning about Jana and Max and at the end of our walk, as we stood beside the village's first hotel, he said, "And now we shall have a coffee," which was nice to hear again.

This was the right way to end the day and Max seemed to intuitively know it. He sipped his half-Swiss milk half-formula bottle while playing with Marco's camera and moustache.

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

Max has taken an immediate liking to Switzerland. And with good reason: Everyone here, old and new acquaintances alike, has been incredibly kind to us. Max's eyes constantly dart about, taking in the impossibly perfect alpine scenery, but tend to linger and crinkle with joy when he sees one of his new friends.

We're staying on the top floor of 86-year-old Frau Kunz's [home](#) – think Rhoda's apartment from the Mary Tyler Moore Show mixed with equal parts Swiss grandma and Ikea. Centrally-located, and just a few blocks from the West train station, the 2-bedroom apartment is the perfect size for us, and Frau Kunz couldn't be friendlier. Every



Max and Marco. Jerry Soverinsky/AOL Travel