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# COWS, TRAMS AND THE CREEPING DEATH

CRUISING IN NEUTRAL IN A TRAIL-RICH LAND

"Swiss transport", a friend once proclaimed, "is the very best in the world. Efficient and punctual, with carriages befitting a prince. You'll have no problems getting from the airport to your destination."

However, after a trans-Atlantic stupor where the only thing higher than the cruising altitude was my blood pressure (courtesy of a handful of pint-sized monsters), I was disappointed to learn that the train I chose to take from Geneva Airport to the mountains didn't even depart the station before there were issues. In fact, its engines weren't even fired before it was halted. An hour of patiently waiting on a bubble of hope was soon deflated with the announcement that our train was kaput. And so the frantic bike box dance commenced.

"Is this the train to Martigny?"

"Non, pas ce train."

"*Ou est le train à Martigny?*" [My pronunciation would have sounded more like a sack of wet toads.]

"Over there."

[Fifty yards of luggage wrestling later.]

"Is this the train to Martigny?"

[Monsieur-in-an-official-looking-uniform just shrugs.]

This was the only real glitch in a long line of Swiss public transport experiences. The rest of the country, I'm glad to report, is a marvelous network of trains, trams and electric automobiles.