

# Swiss Skyline

Eiger . Mönch . Jungfrau

Schilthorn  
Piz Gloria

## Gimmelwald – then and now



Gimmelwald is an unspoilt mountain farming village situated at 1367 metres above sea level in the rear Lauterbrunnen Valley. Its almost 100 inhabitants cultivate a close relationship with nature and livestock. This bond is mirrored throughout the village in lovingly decorated chalets and cheese storehouses. The local farming families sell homemade produce from the farm, fields and garden straight from the farmyard. Gimmelwald can be reached by cable car from Stechelberg or Mürren. A narrow mountain road, which may only be used by pedestrians and agricultural vehicles, leads from Mürren to Gimmelwald.



[www.schilthorn.ch](http://www.schilthorn.ch)

## History

- 1300 – 1400 The rear Lauterbrunnen Valley is settled from the Lötschen Valley during the so-called Walser migrations. Old documents refer to the inhabitants of Gimmelwald and Mürren as "Lötscher".
- 1346 One of the earliest mentions of Gimmelwald is found in a document in which Baron Peter zum Turme from Niedergesteln in the Valais sells his estates in the Lauterbrunnen Valley to the monastery in Interlaken.
- 1638 A blast furnace is built at the "Schmelzi" south of Zweilütschinen. Iron ore is mined mainly at the Dürlocherhorn, above Kriegsmahd and to the south of the Rottal Glacier, before being transported by sled and cart to the Schmelzi for processing. The furnace is still visible today on the hiking trail along the right riverbank of the Lütschine between Lauterbrunnen and Zweilütschinen. Mining operations continued until 1715.
- 1705 – 1805 A mine operates at Trachsellauenen. Silver-bearing galenite and zinc ore are exploited and processed in several shafts. The blast furnace used for this was destroyed by an avalanche in 1931. Surviving ruins can still be visited at Trachsellauenen.
- From 1700 Flax and cereals are cultivated. Spinning and weaving begins. Potatoes aren't grown until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They remain a staple food until the end of the Second World War and are still enjoyed by the farming population today.
- 1789 Gimmelwald opens its own school with 20 pupils.
- 1869 The Hotel Schilthorn is built.
- 1871 The philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and his sister spend their summer holiday at the Hotel Schilthorn. Early tourism generates income for the village. Gravel used to build hotels in Mürren is extracted from the Sefinenlütschine and carried up to Mürren in sacks. The wage for one load is 1 Swiss franc. There is growing demand for mountain guides and porters. Distinguished visitors are carried up to the Schilthorn by sedan chair.
- 1890 The Berner Oberland Railway (BOB) opens, operating between Interlaken and Lauterbrunnen/Grindelwald.
- 1891 The funicular railway between Lauterbrunnen and Mürren (BLM) opens.
- 1965 Schilthorn Cableway provides a transport link to Gimmelwald. This makes life much easier for the local population, boosts tourism and generates more guests for restaurants and holiday lets. Residents can travel as far as Interlaken to work, and apprentices can return home every evening. Children in the village can now attend the secondary school in Lauterbrunnen. This curbs emigration and averts fears that the village will die out.