

ST. MORITZ - THE TOP OF THE WORLD



PHOTOGRAPHED BY KUR- UND VERKEHRSVEREIN ST. MORITZ TEXT BY HELEN VARRI

ST. MORITZ IS THE MOST FAMOUS holiday resort in the world for both winter and summer. I might be somewhat biased, since I am originally from Switzerland and have skied in the Alps for many years. St. Moritz is not only chic, elegant and exclusive with a cosmopolitan ambiance; it is also located in a most scenic valley among the Swiss Alps at an altitude of over 6,000 feet above sea level with a dry sparkling climate. The St. Moritz sun shines an average of 322 days a year!

St. Moritz originally rose to importance because of its healing mineral springs!

In 1830, St. Moritz had 200 residents, but in 1864 Johannes Badrutt (hotel pioneer of the famous Badrutt Palace Hotel) enticed the first group of English tourists to spend the winter, and tourism was born in the Alps. The hosting of the Winter Olympic Games and numerous winter sport events contributed to its unique and prestigious reputation. In 1986, St. Moritz established its name and brand in about 50 different countries. Today, St. Moritz has about 5,000 residents, plus about 3,000 seasonal employees. While the initial tourists were English, St. Moritz has become an international and fashionable destination with visitors from Great Britain, France, Belgium, Germany, Russia, North America and Japan.

There is hardly a celebrity or royalty who has not been to St. Moritz. Over the past years, George Clooney, Madonna, Hugh Grant, Robert de Niro, King

Juan Carlos of Spain, Prince Charles of Britain, and various celebrities and politicians have found their way to this famous European spot.

St. Moritz has two seasons: winter from December to April and summer from June to October. In the winter, the assurance of snow and good weather, thanks to its height and southern exposure, provide ideal conditions for a long season and a unique range of sports, from great downhill and cross country skiing, including a special marathon with 12,000 participants. There are horse and greyhound races, polo on snow, snow and symphony festivals, and the ever-popular gourmet festival. Of course, most remember the glamorous AprIt's Ski scene!

In the summer, the emphasis tends to be on hiking in the breathtaking scenery, mountain biking, inline skating, wind and kite surfing, golf, river rafting nearby! There are opera festivals, classic car rallies, symphony concerts and equestrian sports. How about a visit to Heidi's Hut? Or a ride on the exciting Glacier Express from St. Moritz over mountain passes, high bridges, through tunnels to the charming mountain village of Zermatt! Often urban and sometimes like a little snow-covered mountain village, Zermatt is never boring! The St. Moritz way of life is known around the globe for its class, tradition and glamorous style.

In the Spirit of Oscar Wilde: "I shall have to die, as I have lived, beyond my means". F&B