



Exploring caves along the Lorze

The most important river in the canton of Zug, the Lorze, runs through a tranquil forest to the legendary Höllgrotten caves, past idyllic bathing spots, castle ruins, three mighty bridges and landmarks of the canton's industrial history.

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QR code scan to immerse yourself in this magical underground world.

On a hot summer's day, what could be better than a walk through a cool, shady forest? Admittedly, there are forests all over Switzerland, but the densely wooded Lorzentobel is special. This ravine offers an element of spectacle that you wouldn't usually expect from such a small area. Both people and nature have made their mark here in an almost iconic way.

The impressive Höllgrotten caves near Baar show just how much the forces of nature have impacted the landscape here. Around 18,000 years ago, the glacial ice from the Ägeri valley gouged deep into the rock, forming the Lorze's current riverbed. You might assume that the Höllgrotten caves themselves were also formed by the ice. But that's not the case. They were only formed after the Ice Age and are therefore ac-

tually quite new. Unlike many other stalactite caves, they are not located deep underground, but rather just below the surface.

Therefore, if you want to visit the Höllgrotten caves, you first have to climb a few metres up from the valley floor. It's worth the effort, though. As you descend through the grottoes back to the ticket office on the banks of the Lorze, you will come across a few surprises and lots of information about this unique natural structure. Each grotto is a little world of its own.

In the "Bear Grotto" (Bäregrotte), you will discover how the mineral-rich water created the "shaggy bear", which is actually made of fossilised wood. In the "Magical Castle" (Zauberschloss) grotto, you can admire stalactites and stalagmites, which were created not by magic but by the power

← Are they stalactites or stalagmites? That is the question.

OUTDOORS



↑ Why not take the opportunity to combine your visit with a hike?



↑ The rock formations look magical.

← The caves are open from April to October.

of water. In the “Fairytale Grotto” (Märchengrotte), you can find out how the Höllgrotten caves got their name. We’ll let you in on this much: “Höll-” in German means “hell”, but hell has nothing to do with it!

In the past, the locals thought of the area around the Höllgrotten caves as an eerie place, which no doubt has something to do with the dense forest that dominates the Lorzentobel. These days, people tend to see the forest with different eyes. They have shaped the landscape according to their needs, taming and furnishing it. As a result, it’s now a well-loved place, popular with those looking for some peace, relaxation and mindfulness. It’s a great place for sport, recreation and outdoor bathing, and even serves as a kind of outdoor gym. The

Lorzentobel is the perfect place for you if you like hiking, cycling or working out (try the Vita-Parcours fitness trail).

It’s also perfect for history buffs. The fact that the Lorze has always been a key feature of the countryside of Zug is evidenced by the presence of Wildenburg Castle, which the lords of Hünenberg built on a spur high above the ravine in the 13th century. Today, it is a ruin – and a fascinating place to visit. The path to the ruin should be taken with care. Close to the castle, you’ll find the enchanting Schwarzenbach waterfall. The lords of Hünenberg were also the ones who controlled the first bridge in the Lorzentobel ravine, known as the Tobelbrücke. The bridge has been rebuilt several times since then. Today, the



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Höllgrotten Caves
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ravine has a unique ensemble of three bridges from three different eras (built in 1759, 1910 and 1985), a rare treat for engineering enthusiasts.

A rare ravine

Without the Lorze river, the Canton of Zug could never have industrialised. Unsurprisingly, Zug's industrial hub runs all along the Lorze, through the entire canton, and there's a trail dedicated to it. Numerous boards along the way provide information about the industrial development of this formerly agricultural canton. For example, one information board explains that electricity has been produced in the Lorzentobel since 1891. Thanks in part to this development, the city of Zug lit its first electric street lamps in 1894.

A hike is the best way to discover all that the Lorzentobel has to offer. If you choose a circular hike, you will inevitably have some ascending to do, owing to the steep terrain. The Tobelbrücke bus stop is a good starting point. If you prefer to get there by car, there are plenty of parking spaces at the Höllgrotten caves. This means there's nothing stopping you from enjoying some relaxing forest bathing in the Lorzentobel.

↓ There are lots of barbecue areas along the Lorze.



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12 **Restaurant Höllgrotten**

Combine your visit to the caves with a stop at the Höllgrotten forest restaurant. In summer you can sit in the idyllic garden restaurant, and in winter you can enjoy the cosy, wood-panelled pub. Not only is there a warm and welcoming atmosphere but also excellent food. House specialities include trout with potatoes and veal strips with rösti.



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13 **Lorze Industrial Trail**

The Industriepfad Lorze (IPL) association maintains 70 information boards along the 30 kilometres of the Lorze Industrial Trail by the river. Each one explains a part of the area's industrial history. This delightful walk is divided up into stages, each covering an aspect of the economic history of the Canton of Zug.



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