



MOUNTAIN HIGH, VALLEY LOW – AND A WORLD IN BETWEEN



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SWITZERLAND BEYOND THE POSTCARD

Directed by **Martina Andrés and Manuel Spescha**
Executive Producers: **Susanne Lummer, Sabine Holzer, Jörn Röver**
2 x 50 min., 4K, 5.1



For over a decade, Switzerland's stunning natural beauty has lacked a full portrait – remarkable, given the country's ecological and scenic diversity at the heart of Europe. From the iconic Matterhorn to the vast Creux du Van, and from the mighty Rhine Falls to the quiet Lac de Derborence, the landscape is ripe for rediscovery.

In Switzerland – Beyond the Postcard, filmmakers Martina Andrés and Manuel Spescha offer a fresh lens on their homeland using cutting-edge technology to reveal Switzerland from new and often inaccessible angles. Structured into two episodes, the documentary contrasts the differing characters of northern and southern Switzerland, capturing the striking diversity within this compact nation.

Episode 1: The North

Northern Switzerland, often eclipsed by the Alps, is revealed as an overlooked gem. Here, dramatic sites like Säntis, Creux du Van, the Hölloch caves, and the Rhine Falls rival the south's grandeur. Yet the Swiss Plateau, covering just 30% of land, holds over two-thirds of the population. Despite such density, wildlife has adapted in remarkable ways.

Alpine swifts nest in Lucerne's Chapel Bridge tower, while Schaffhausen's forest cemetery glows each summer with fireflies. Even Zurich hosts badgers, returning quietly after past rabies campaigns. Humans, too, are woven into the environment: from Appenzell farmers continuing the Alpfahrt cattle drive to wingsuit pilots diving off cliffs in high-altitude daredevilry.

A central narrative is the return of the bearded vulture, extinct in the Alps by the early 1900s. Since 1978, reintroduction efforts have restored up to 380 birds to the skies – an ongoing conservation success.

Still, the north faces environmental challenges, as only 10.8% of Swiss land are protected. Climate change poses serious risks, especially to species like the marmot, which struggles to adapt to rising summer heat, jeopardizing its hibernation cycle.

Episode 2: The South

The south delivers the iconic Swiss image: snow-draped summits, rugged cliffs, and alpine drama. With 48 peaks above 4,000 metres, it is Europe's rooftop. Nowhere captures this better than Lauterbrunnen Valley, with 72 cascading waterfalls.

But Ticino, Switzerland's sunny south, offers a Mediterranean twist – palm-lined villages and wildlife like scorpions nestled in ancient stone walls. The region's ecological balance, however, is under siege. Of the 1,400 original glaciers, fewer than 200 may

survive the century. The Aletsch Glacier, largest of all, has lost half its volume since 1931. Melting destabilizes entire landscapes: on Moosfluh's slopes, 150 million cubic metres of rock now shift at alarming speeds.

Wildlife must adapt. Ibex, built for cold, now suffer from parasites and heat, altering their nocturnal behaviour and increasing their vulnerability. Still, traditions endure. Harvesting mountain hay by hand, the Wildheuen, continues, not only as heritage but to sustain rich alpine meadows.

The film ends in God da Tamangur, Europe's highest continuous pine forest, where 800-year-old trees stand resilient. The nutcracker bird helps regenerate this forest, hiding seeds that later sprout – a timeless ecological bond.

Through evocative visuals and thoughtful narration, Switzerland – Beyond the Postcard paints a rich, modern portrait of a small nation bursting with contrast and biodiversity, bridging wild nature, climate challenges and human culture beyond the stereotypical Swiss postcard.

A co-production of Doclights/NDR Naturfilm and Terra Mater Studios

