

# Switzerland

2019

**+ TOUR GUIDE**

## Touring Switzerland's Religious Landscape

Lucerne ■

St. Gallen ■

Zurich ■

### Christmas Markets

Switzerland is at its cozy best during the festive Advent season

### Switzerland by Rail

Classic routes highlight the best scenery in Europe

### Outdoor Adventures

Hiking and biking trails lure active groups





**Alex Herrmann**  
Director Americas, Switzerland Tourism

# Welcome to Switzerland

Dear Group Leaders,

Arrive in Switzerland and press the “off” button. Breathe the crisp, clean air. Marvel at the majestic mountain panoramas from Mount Pilatus near Lucerne. Don’t just say cheese, but make cheese with a local cheese maker. Explore nature’s stunning beauty from a train or boat, on a hike, on skis or on a bike. Now you know why the Swiss are one of the happiest people in the world.

Take a stroll through the medieval Old Town of Zurich to the lake or river. Visit the cathedral of St. Gallen and take a guided tour in a museum—filled with art, not with other visitors. While small on a global scale, Swiss cities score with history and traditions, world-class art and quality of life packed into a compact area. Your groups will enjoy these and similar experiences throughout Switzerland.

“Nature wants you back” is our campaign theme. Wherever your groups are in Switzerland, they will have beautiful vistas of the Swiss Alps and countryside.

At Switzerland Tourism, group travel is very important to us, and we’re excited to partner with *Leisure Group Travel* on this Switzerland Tour Guide. In the guide we present ideas for faith-based groups, train enthusiasts, winter visitors and hikers/bikers.

We’re here to support you, the group leader, in creating and selling your programs. We offer you an e-learning program, Switzerland Academy, with various modules depending on your specialty, bi-weekly webinars, study trips, maps and brochures, and many other programs to support the travel trade.

Switzerland is very popular in North America—when it comes to Americans and Canadians visiting Switzerland, 2017 was the second best year in over 25 years. Thank you for your help in promoting Switzerland and bringing your groups to our beautiful country.

We can promise that your group’s tour will run as precisely as a Swiss watch and as smoothly a Swiss train, and it will be as fun-filled as dipping your fork into a pot of fondue. Your travelers certainly won’t be disappointed.

**Welcome to Switzerland!**

**Alex Herrmann**  
Director Americas, Switzerland Tourism



# Switzerland<sup>2019</sup>

**TOUR GUIDE**

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# TOURING SWITZERLAND'S RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE

**F**or faith-based groups pondering a trip to Europe, Switzerland often surfaces to the top of the list because it has so much to offer. Switzerland is a place of tradition and has a respect for the values of family, religion and homeland. There is a strong sense of community that you sense as soon as you arrive. The architectural splendor of centuries-old churches and monasteries, along with Switzerland's roots in the Reformation movement that swept through Europe 500 years ago, gives Christian groups much to contemplate. The following pages spotlight three cities brimming with religious heritage: Lucerne, St. Gallen and Zurich.







# LUCERNE

## AND ITS GREAT CHURCHES

Impressive churches and strong religious roots make this beautiful lake city a must on any faith journey to Switzerland

By Don Heimburger

**L**ucerne, in the heart of Switzerland, is surrounded by natural beauty, and has been attracting religious groups and tourists for decades. Famous personages such as Queen Victoria, Mark Twain and Victor Hugo also have been lured to Lucerne and the outlying area.

Along with the beauty of the countryside, the religious significance of this city cannot be

underestimated. Lucerne, at the foot of the Alps and Lake Lucerne, began as the tiny 8th century monastery of **St. Leodegar**, a Benedictine cloister. Lucerne was the only major Swiss city to reject church reformation in the early 16th century, and it became the leading power of the Catholic faction in religious disputes and four civil wars caused by religion between 1529 and 1712.

The city of 85,000 people is on the popular **Way of St. James** that leads to Santiago, Spain. One route from Lucerne goes up through Ruggisberg and Schwarzenburg and then on to Freiburg, Germany and beyond. Pilgrimage groups will want to learn about Brother Klaus, a spiritual counselor and peacemaker from the 15th century who lived close to Lucerne; he is Switzerland's national saint and the patron of





many churches, and his fame spread all over Europe. The **Brother Klaus Museum** is in Sachseln, about 30 minutes from Lucerne.

Lucerne has a number of important churches that should be on any group itinerary. Dating back to 1912, **St. Paul's Church** is a unique blend of Neo-Gothic and Art Nouveau styles and features a splendid interior, charming frescoes, majestic glass and a huge pipe organ at the rear of the sanctuary.

Lucerne's **Franciscan Church**, which once doubled as a city hall, was built between 1270 and 1280 and features a simple Gothic architectural style on ground level, but Renaissance and Baroque styles follow as the walls rise. The highlight is the spectacular side chapel, decorated with Italianate stucco in a Baroque style; also inside you'll find a wide range of interesting sculptures and paintings. The carved wooden pulpit dates from the 15th century.

The beautiful **Jesuit Church** is considered to be the first large Baroque church built in Switzerland north of the Alps. It's located on the south bank of the Reuss River in a triangular area known as Kleinstadt. Special points of interest include the sacristy, the rich stucco work and church relics including the penitential

robe of St. Nikolaus von Flue. It also serves as a concert hall.

**St. Matthew Church**, one of only two Protestant churches in Lucerne, was designed by Ferdinand Stadler around 1848. It came about as a result of a search for a church site by the owner of the adjacent Hotel Schweizerhof. The church represents a fascinating example of Neo-Gothic Renaissance style. Composer Richard Wagner, who lived in Lucerne from 1866 to 1872, married his second wife, Cosima von Bulow, here in 1870.

The landmark **Church of St. Leodegar** is considered the most important church in Lucerne. It was built in stages from 1633 to 1639 on the foundation of the Roman basilica that burned in 1633. The church was one of only a few built north of the Alps during the Thirty Years War and enjoys status as an art history-rich church of the German Late Renaissance period.

Besides the city's churches, groups will want to explore the medieval **Chapel Bridge**. The centerpiece of town, it is one of the oldest covered wooden bridges in Europe. Up the hill is the **Museggmauer**, a fortified wall that was constructed in 1386; four of its towers are open to the public.

Lucerne's highly popular **Transport Museum**, located by the lake, will fascinate nearly everyone with its model and prototype trains, airplanes, ships and other vehicles. Besides group tours, the museum offers team-building experiences in cooking, problem-solving and challenges, and torchlight tours and dinner.

The **Lion Monument**, or the Lion of Lucerne, is a sculpture designed by Bertel Thorvaldsen that commemorates the Swiss Guards massacred in 1792 during the French Revolution, when revolutionaries stormed the Tuileries Palace in Paris. Mark Twain praised the sculpture of a mortally-wounded lion as "the most mournful and moving piece of stone in the world."

Numerous Lake Lucerne boats travel between the 33 communities on the lake. Special group trips, including meals and parties, can be arranged. Nearby mountains—**Titlis**, **Pilatus** and **Rigi**—offer cable car trips. The latter two can accommodate groups for special tours on their railroads.

Lucerne is easily reached from the Zurich airport via a one-hour train ride that takes you directly into the central business district. Here many hotels, fine restaurants and shops are easily reached by foot or public transportation. 

Lucerne Tourism

*Picturesque Chapel Bridge, located at the mouth of the Reuss River, overlooks Lucerne's Old Town.*







# ST. GALLEN

## INSPIRES THE FAITHFUL

The Abbey District preserves a rich heritage dating back centuries

By Don Heimburger

In 2012, St. Gallen, one of Switzerland's most important faith destinations, celebrated 1,400 years of religious tradition. Today, faith-based tour groups traveling there will find the grandeur of its magnificent Abbey, its twin onion-domed cathedral and the entire Abbey District a testament to the religious

history this city of 78,000 has to offer.

Impressive **St. Gallen Cathedral**, one of the last monumental Baroque monastic constructions in Europe, was built between 1755 and 1767 under the direction of Vorarlberg, Austria native and master builder Johann Michael Beer von Bildstein. Peter Thumb and Johann Caspar

Bagnato, two other renowned architects, were also involved in the cathedral's design. The choir stalls with 84 ornately carved seats and the large organ are works of art themselves.

The inside of the church is painted in vibrant bluish-green colors, adorned with stucco and decorated with numerous carvings. Images





throughout the cathedral are the expression of a well-considered theological line of thought, and no picture, stucco work or carving is coincidental. Soft lighting and malachite-green stucco create a serene atmosphere.

The **Abbey of St. Gallen** is an outstanding example of a Carolingian-era monastery and from the 8th century to its secularization in 1805 was viewed as one of the most important in Europe. Founded by Saint Otmar, the Benedictine abbey was an independent principality between the 9th and 13th centuries.

The northern section of the Abbey square in St. Gallen consists of buildings from the 19th century and includes the ancient arsenal, the **Children's and Guardian Angels' Chapel** and the former Catholic school.

The heralded Baroque **Abbey Library**, dating back to around 820, is one of the most beautiful examples of its era. In addition to the library's architecture, cultural treasures conserved at the library are of exceptional importance, especially the Irish manuscripts of the 7th and 8th centuries; the illuminated manuscripts of the St. Gallen School of the 9th and 11th centuries; documents concerning the

history of the origins of Alemannic Switzerland; and plans of the layout of the convent during the Carolingian era.

The library is home to 170,000 books as well as 2,000 priceless medieval manuscripts, and some 400 of these are more than 1,000 years old. From 1755 to 1768, the conventual area of the library was rebuilt in the Baroque style. Elaborate artworks installed in the ceiling are framed by flowing, curved moldings, giving the space a timeless and even a fantastical aspect.

Together the cathedral and library are the main features of this remarkable architectural complex, reflecting 12 centuries of continuous activity. St. Gallen's cathedral and its world-famous Abbey Library were added to the prestigious UNESCO World Heritage list in 1983.

St. Gallen's **Old Town** is packed with narrow cobblestone alleyways and lively squares, along with elegant and brightly-painted merchants' houses from the 16th to 18th centuries. Magnificent bay windows called oriels decorate numerous homes in the Spisergasse, Marktgasse, Kugelgasse and Schmiedgasse areas.


St. Gallen's traditional textile industry has shaped the townscapes, landscapes and people

of Eastern Switzerland. Expertise in textile manufacturing and workmanship has been handed down from generation to generation. Until the 17th century, the region was mainly known for its high-quality linen and subsequently for cotton products. During its heyday in the 19th century, St. Gallen became one of the leading regions for the export of embroidery. Its **Textile Museum** is worth a visit.

The **History and Ethnology Museum** collection includes items dating from prehistory and early history to the 20th century as well as many articles from different cultures of the world.

The **Beer Bottle Museum** at Schützengarten Brewery, the oldest brewery in Switzerland, is another fascinating place for groups to visit. It displays 3,000 beer bottles from 260 Swiss breweries.

St. Gallen also boasts a large choice of lively street cafes and traditional restaurants. An open-air market is held every Wednesday and Saturday, and there are numerous boutiques and quaint shops to visit.

Groups in St. Gallen will find an abundance of opportunities for sightseeing, learning and religious discovery. 

Switzerland Tourism

*St. Gallen, located in northeastern Switzerland, is most famous for its twin-towered Baroque cathedral (far left), part of the Abbey District.*







# ZURICH

## AND THE REFORMATION

Landmarks recall the city's role in a religious upheaval that spread across Europe

By Don Heimburger

**Z**urich has been a captivating European destination year after year for thousands who flock to this international hub for business and pleasure. Zurich is also the starting point for many religious pilgrimages in Switzerland and is especially prominent now with its multi-faceted celebration of **500 Years of the Reformation**, which starts in 2019 and continues for two more years. Numerous events relating to the Reformation will be held through March 2019 at the **Schauspielhaus, Zurich Opera House, Theater Neumarkt**,

**Zurich University, National Museum** and many other venues.

Zurich was the first city to embrace the Reformation and became the cradle of the Reformed Church. In 1519 **Huldrych Zwingli** came to Zurich to work as a pastor and began preaching a new interpretation of the Word of God. He shared Martin Luther's view that everything that was not mentioned in the original version of the Bible should be banned from religious life. Zwingli advocated a new work ethic – diligence, discipline, thrift and frugality

– and introduced a social welfare system to look after the poorest and most disadvantaged people. Zwingli's close followers, the **Anabaptists**, had begun a movement spread throughout Switzerland, Germany and the Netherlands, and gave root to the modern-day Mennonite and Amish communities in North America.

The Zurich City Council in 1519 placed orders with the print shop of **Christoph Froschauer**—the first printer in Zurich— and it's said the Zurich Reformation had its beginnings there, as ideas of the Reformation disseminated from





the shop, along with the famous “Zurich Bible.” Between 1530 and 1585 the print shop was one of the foremost publishing houses in the German-speaking world.

Today in Zurich, many references and memorial sites bear witness to the Reformation. These include churches, statues and places where the reformers lived or preached. A guided tour through the historical **Old Town** is an absolute must for anyone interested in the groundbreaking religious movement. The tour also highlights the importance of Protestant theologian **Heinrich Bullinger**, who was responsible for sustaining the Reformation in Zurich.

Five Zurich churches played key roles during the Swiss Reformation: the **Grossmunster**, **Fraumunster**, **Predigerkirche**, **Wasserkirche** and **St. Peterskirche**. The Grossmunster, a Zurich landmark, is said to have been founded by Charlemagne; legend says the church was built on the graves of the city's patron saints, **Felix and Regula**. The stained-glass windows by Sigmar Polke, the Romanesque crypt, choir windows by Augusto Giacometti, bronze doors by Otto Munch and the **Cloister Reformation Museum** are just some of the highlights of the church. It was there that Zwingli preached a new brand of Christianity in the early 16th century, one that would change the face of Switzerland and Protestantism.

Founded in 853 by King Louis the German, the **Fraumunster** with its convent housed the female members of the aristocracy of Europe. The convent enjoyed the patronage of kings, and the Fraumunster abbess had the right to mint coins in Zurich into the 13th century. Ownership of the church and convent passed to the city of Zurich after the Reformation. Key architectural features of the church include the Romanesque chancel and high vaulted transept. Of special interest are the windows by **Chagall** and **Giacometti**.

**St. Peterskirche** was another landmark in Swiss Reformation history, being the home of Zurich's first appointed Protestant pastor, Leo Jud, a close friend of Zwingli. Originally a Dominican church, the **Peterskirche** became Protestant during the Reformation. In spite of the long history of **St. Peterskirche**, the church's attempt at modern relevance makes it stand out.

The **Wasserkirche** (“Water Church”) was originally built on a small island where, according to legend, the city's martyrs, Felix and Regula, were executed by the Romans. This Late Gothic church was completed towards the end of the 15th century and was regarded as being particularly holy. Renovated in 1942, the church is now used for religious and cultural purposes. Particularly attractive are the choir windows by Giacometti, which contrast the life of Jesus Christ with the life of modern man.

The unassuming office building at Kirchgasse, No. 13, belies the importance of the work that was accomplished within its walls. This is the **Helferei**, the office where Zwingli studied and wrote his sermons. The small room that served as his office is located upstairs, unaltered since the great Swiss reformer occupied it. The rough, wood-paneled walls and sloping wooden floor appear just as they did in the 16th century, as do the thick glass windows facing the garden.

For information on guided city tours focusing on the Reformation, visit [www.zuerich.com/reformation](http://www.zuerich.com/reformation).

Groups can take a popular two-hour walk through the **Old Town** to search for clues to the city's 2,000-year-old past in its hidden alleyways and picturesque squares. Then there's the famous **Bahnhofstrasse**, which sports up-scale shops, restaurants and Switzerland's finest chocolates, and **Lake Zurich**, which invites water sports and offers boat tours.

Zurich offers visitors a mix of unique activities and attractions waiting to be discovered, including over 50 museums such as the **Museum of Art**, **Swiss National Museum**, **Zurich Toy Museum**, **Zoological Museum** and **Beyer Clock and Watch Museum**. The city also has more than 100 art galleries, a world-class **Opera House** and numerous events that keep visitors coming back again and again. 🇨🇭

Zurich Tourism

*Architectural exclamation points, like the Grossmunster's twin towers and clock towers of the Fraumunster (left) and St. Peterskirche, grace the skyline of Zurich.*







# SWITZERLAND BY RAIL

Classic routes spotlight the best scenery in Europe

By Dave Bodle

*The Voralpen-Express crosses the 325-foot-high Sitter Viaduct near St. Gallen.*





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Groups visiting Switzerland anticipate seeing towering mountain peaks, flowering green meadows, crystal-clear lakes and friendly locals. The premium panoramic trains of the Swiss Travel System deliver the expected and so much more.

**ALL ABOARD!**

*Switzerland Tourism/M. Amsler*





### Gotthard Panorama Express

From the Mediterranean-influenced south of Switzerland starting at Lugano or Bellinzona, the 5- to 5½-hour trip on the Gotthard Panorama Express takes groups through the heart of Switzerland. On the way north, rural Switzerland and the Alps are on display as are numerous tributes to Swiss engineering, including the Gotthard Tunnel (built in 1882) and many other loop tunnels.

While enjoying the photogenic sights along the route, passengers hear stories about history, myths and legends. Arriving in Fluelen, groups seamlessly transfer to a steamboat for a ride across Lake Lucerne. En route to Lucerne, the final destination, there's a wealth of history to be discovered on the lake. Rutli Meadow, where the foundations of the Swiss nation were laid; the Schillerstein ("Stone of the Myths"); and William Tell Chapel, all have a story to share. The journey can be taken southbound, from Lucerne to Bellinzona or Lugano.

On the train, snacks and beverages are available for purchase, and seat service is offered. The steamboat offers meals, snacks and beverages.



Swiss Travel System/Switzerland Tourism

*The Gotthard Panorama Express runs between Lucerne and the Italian-speaking Ticino region.*





### GoldenPass Line

In the 1920s the railways of Central Switzerland and the Lake Geneva region merged to service visitors exploring the bright autumn colors. From there the name GoldenPass Line emerged. In 1976 the first panorama railcars arrived. Today, two premium panoramic trains service the five-hour route.

The Lucerne-Interlaken Express links two world-class destinations and travels past scenic, turquoise Lake Sarnen and Lake Lungern, across the Brunig Pass and by Brunig Safari, where passengers will see wild animals (both living and wooden) before arriving at Interlaken. Interlaken literally is the land “between lakes” and the point of transfer to continue the journey.

Continuing on the BLS RegioExpress,

the trip parallels the shoreline of Lake Thun from Interlaken to Spiez. In the Simme Valley, magnificent timber farmhouses display the creativity of the area’s carpenters. In Zweisimmen, a point of departure for adventuresome high-altitude hikers, the remaining passengers change to the gold-colored panorama trains or the classic, retro-style Belle Epoque train of the Montreux-Bernese Oberland (MOB) Railway.

A highlight of the GoldenPass Line’s final leg is the resort town of Gstaad, home to numerous festivals and a stop on the FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour. Saanen is well known for its rural handicrafts (as exhibited in the local museum) and finely sliced Alpine cheese.

The first French-speaking stop is Chateau-d’Oex, world famous for hot air

ballooning and for more than 40 years host to a balloon festival. On the east side in the direction of Montreux sits the “Grand Chapel.” Once Switzerland’s largest timber building, it was the site where Victor Hugo wrote part of *Les Miserables*. The charming village of Montbovon is a popular link to Gruyeres, famous for its fine cheese. White daffodils carpet the meadows surrounding the Vaud district. From the Jaman Tunnel to Les Avants the steep descent past woodlands and vineyards to lakeside Montreux begins.

A dining car is available on the Lucerne-Interlaken portion of the GoldenPass Line. From Zweisimmen to Montreux a mini-bar can be found on the panorama railcar trains. A dining car is on the MOB Belle Epoque line.

Switzerland Tourism



### Glacier Express

Labeled as the world’s slowest express train, the Glacier Express takes groups on an incredible eight-hour journey from Zermatt to St. Moritz. Through its panoramic windows guests experience 91 tunnels, 291 bridges and exceptional landscapes from the Engadine Valley to the Matterhorn. The highlights of the trip are numerous.

The Matter Valley features splendors from meadows and vineyards to eternal ice, rugged rock faces and the Bies Glacier. The only glacier visible from the train, the ice stream flows downhill to the valley at a 60-percent grade. Through the wild Kipfen Gorge the train closely parallels the River Vispa. The many bridges of Stalden, dating from different eras, helped the village develop as a major transportation hub. The picturesque Kin Bridge dates to the 16th century and is a protected monument. The village of Andermatt, located at the foot of Oberalp Pass, has developed into a year-round vacation destination.

Oberalp Pass is the highest point on the Glacier Express. Watch for Switzerland’s oldest Benedictine monastery, Disentis Monastery, built in the late 17th century, destroyed by Napoleon’s army in 1799 and restored in the 19th century. Passengers

also eagerly await the Rhine Gorge, or Swiss Grand Canyon, which began its formation more than 10,000 years ago following the Flims landslide. The Domleschg Region features an abundance of castles (the largest being Schloss Ortenstein) built to protect the three main Alpine passes. Solis Viaduct, built in 1902, is 292 feet high and spans 269 feet, making it the highest along the Abula line. Near the village of Filisur, spectacular Landwasser Viaduct, at 466 feet long and 213 feet high, is the most photographed feature of the Rhaetian Railway.

Bergun and Preda are less than four miles apart, but the train must travel more than twice that distance through five loop tunnels, crossing four valleys and viaducts in traversing the 2.5-mile grade. Between Bever and Celerina the architecturally distinctive houses of the Engadine Valley fascinate travelers with their funnel-shaped windows, facade decorations and three-story stone construction.

Meals prepared onboard are served at the guest’s seat. Handicap-accessible toilets and wheelchair seating are available. Earphones provide historical information and legends, along with need-to-know facts, in six languages.



### Bernina Express

Groups on the Bernina Express travel from snow-capped Alpine peaks to lakes lined with palm trees. The unforgettable trip to Tirano, Italy and on to Lugano, Switzerland begins in either Chur or Davos.

Departing Chur, Switzerland's oldest town, the train passes through Schin Canyon and over Solis and Landwasser viaducts. From Davos passengers travel through the high valley of Landwasser's 14 tunnels and 30 bridges, including the Wiesner Viaduct.

Along with the engineering wonders of the Solis, Landwasser and Wiesner viaducts and the Domleschg region's castles, the

route takes groups to Bergun and Preda and the Engadine houses, and that's just the beginning of the line. Between the Engadine Valley and Ozpizio Bernina station, glaciers sparkle through the panoramic windows.

From Ozpizio Bernina at 7,392 feet, the highest station on the Rhaetian Railway network, the train passes three small lakes situated as the watershed between the Black and Adriatic seas. Alp Grum is the only restaurant accessible only by train and presents wonderful views of the Palu Glacier.

The train runs close to Lake Poschiavo, a popular fishing destination, and the lakeside

vacation spots of Le Prese and Miralago. The Brusio Circular Viaduct requires two loops, each 325 feet in diameter, to overcome a full altitude level on its way to the Italian city of Tirano.

In the summer months groups can take the Bernina Express Bus from Tirano through the vineyards of Valtellina to palm-lined Lake Como to lovely Lugano and picturesque Lake Lugano.

Handicap-accessible toilets and wheelchair seating on the Bernina Express and Bus are available. Information in multiple languages is provided on the history and culture along the route.

*Alpine scenery captivates passengers on the Glacier Express route between Zermatt and St. Moritz.*

Rhaetische Bahn





## More **Scenic Journeys** on the **Grand Train Tour** of Switzerland

The routes that comprise the premium panoramic trains are just the beginning of discovering the incredible Swiss landscapes. Groups will find the Grand Train Tour of Switzerland, totaling 796 miles, a memorable experience. Choose from any or all of the premium panoramic trains and the following routes. There's no defined travel direction, and groups can begin from any point. The four- or eight-day tour of the eight most beautiful Switzerland routes is all accomplished with one ticket, the Swiss Travel Pass.

### **Zurich-Schaffhausen-St. Gallen**


It's on this 2½-hour route that passengers learn that although landlocked, Switzerland has navigable access to the world's oceans via the Rhine River. The remarkable railway bridge over the Rhine at Eglisau is crossed before passing briefly into Germany. The route continues past Schaffhausen and its Munot fortifications and parallels Lake Constance, a major trade route between Germany and Switzerland in the 19th century. The spectacular Rhine Falls between Neuhausen and Laufen is the largest in Europe. Departing the train, groups can experience this natural wonder by boat or from a platform.

### **St. Gallen-Lucerne**

This 2¼-hour trip on the Voralpen-Express showcases some of Switzerland's most dramatic Alpine peaks and green hills of the pre-Alpine landscape. The train crosses the Sitter Viaduct, Switzerland's tallest railway bridge at almost 1,200 feet long and 325 feet high. It then crosses a dam on Lake Zurich and travels through the Rothenthurm upland moor. Lucerne's Glacier Garden includes displays dating back to the Ice Age and before when Lucerne was a subtropical beach.

### **Montreux-Visp-Zermatt**

Before departing Montreux for the 2½-hour trip to Zermatt groups should visit historic Chateau de Chillon, the summer residence of the counts of Savoy for 400 years. From Martigny, founded almost 2,000 years ago, the journey continues through the lush Rhone Valley. Between Sion and Sierre is Lake of St. Leonard, the largest navigable underground lake in Europe and accessible by guided tour. Arriving in Visp, groups have the option of taking a side trip to Brig, International Alpine Town of the Year in 2008, and 17th-century Stockalper Palace. The trip continues from Brig on the Matterhorn Gotthard Bahn through the deepest valley in the Alps, Nikolai Valley. The distance between the Nikolai Valley and the Matterhorn summit is almost 2½ miles. Here you'll find the highest density of mountains over 13,000 feet.

To begin planning your group's Switzerland railway experience, visit online at [mystysnet.com](http://mystysnet.com) for information on ticketing groups of 10 or more and the Swiss Travel Pass. For bookings and group reservations for trains subject to surcharge such as Glacier Express, Bernina Express and Gotthard Panorama Express, go to [agent.raileurope.com](http://agent.raileurope.com). For route suggestions, please visit [myswitzerland.com/en-us/route-suggestions.html](http://myswitzerland.com/en-us/route-suggestions.html). 



Swiss Travel System





Rhaetische Bahn



Rhaetische Bahn



SGV Luzern

## 6 reasons the **efficient transportation network** has groups falling in love with Switzerland

### **1 Getting Around Made Easy**

The Swiss Travel System offers 18,000 miles of public transportation in a land the approximate size of New Hampshire and Vermont combined. Trains, buses and boats run like clockwork, and the Swiss Travel Pass is the easiest way to take advantage of the dense network. This all-in-one ticket allows visiting groups to explore Switzerland. When purchased for three, four, eight or 15 consecutive days of travel, it provides unlimited rides on trains, buses and boats. Some Panorama trains require seat reservations and therefore a surcharge. Free public transportation in more than 90 cities and free admission to 500 museums are also included.

Innovative luggage services are available for shipping your luggage all on its own, door to door, leaving your hands free and mind unburdened.

### **2 Cities and Shopping**

In addition to the Panoramic trains and Grand Train Tour experiences, the Swiss Travel System brings groups to stylish and historically rich cities throughout Switzerland. Shopping options and a wealth of museums are conveniently located within walking distance of train stations and transportation hubs.

### **3 Outdoor Adventure**

Even repeat visitors are amazed at the scenic beauty of the Swiss Alps. Whether your sport of choice is on a mountain, lake or river, the Swiss Travel System will get you to your destination by train, bus or boat in comfort and on time.

### **4 Culinary Delights**

With influences from Germany, France and Italy, Switzerland is a culinary journey, and the Swiss Travel System makes a tasty trip possible. The Chocolate Train will take you to Maison du Gruyere, where the famous Swiss cheese is made, and on to Maison Cailler in Broc to discover the secrets of Swiss chocolate, complete with a flavor tasting. In virtually every Swiss city, groups will enjoy grande cuisine in gourmet restaurants and local specialties in neighborhood establishments. Always accompanied by fine Swiss wines.

### **5 History and Culture**

Switzerland boasts four national languages – German, French, Italian and Romansh. All but the latter have equal status as official languages. Along with the languages comes the culture of the neighboring countries. That cultural influence along with Switzerland's neutrality during the 20th century world wars has left much of its architecture intact. From castles and cathedrals dating back to the Roman times to contemporary art in museums throughout the country, the Swiss Travel System will take you on a feast for the eyes.

### **6 Hospitality**

As the Swiss Travel System takes groups to all corners of Switzerland, you can be assured of two things. First, you can rely on the fact that your train, bus or boat will arrive and depart on time. Second, whether it's a prestigious hotel or restaurant or a simple establishment, guests will experience Switzerland's legendary hospitality.

Travel professionals can learn more about the Swiss Travel System, including services and group programs, at [mystsnet.com](http://mystsnet.com).

For booking the Swiss Travel Pass, seat reservations and luggage services, go to [agent.raileurope.com](http://agent.raileurope.com). —By Dave Bodle





# OUTDOOR ADVENTURES



*The Flumserberg region of Eastern Switzerland, shown here with Lake Walen, is popular with hikers and mountain bikers.*



# Hiking and biking trails showcase Switzerland's charming countryside

By Randy Mink

**S**witzerland's glorious mountain scenery is a sight to behold, and the storybook landscapes can keep wide-eyed travelers glued to the bus window for hours. But having your group members march or pedal their way into those postcard-perfect scenes brings to the experience a whole new dimension.

Active travelers who explore under their own steam, through villages and valleys, meadows and mountainsides, get a heady sense of accomplishment—even if it's just for a few hours. Things leap into sharp focus when you come face-to-face with a waterfall, smell fresh grass, hear the clink of cowbells and appreciate the delicate

beauty of wildflowers. What fun to eat a picnic lunch on a ridge overlooking dreamy vistas right out of travel posters.

Hiking and biking certainly fuel the appetite and make all that Swiss chocolate, cheese and bakery-fresh bread taste even better. For dinner, fill up on fondue without feeling guilty. You and your legs have earned it.

Hiking is a passionate pastime in Switzerland, and it's common to see people of all ages, including grandparents, on Alpine trails, striding across pastures and scrambling up pebbly paths like frisky mountain goats. The country is world-famous for its network of marked foot-





paths—totaling more than 40,000 miles—that are found in all corners of the country, many within minutes of big-city centers. Trails are well-maintained, and yellow signposts point the way, indicating the estimated time it takes to walk to villages, cable car stations and scenic points.

To explore the Swiss Alps by foot, ropes and other mountain-climbing gear are not needed. All that's required are a light backpack, sturdy shoes or hiking boots, average physical ability and a love of nature. Walking routes vary in length and range in difficulty from easy to strenuous. In many tourist locales, you can reach trails at or near the summit by chairlift,

gondola and cable car.

Guided walks may be arranged by tourist offices in mountain areas, and they may be free for guests staying in local hotels. Many outfitters organize day hikes, and groups can book all-inclusive, multi-day vacation packages with Swiss and U.S. hiking-tour specialists. These tours typically include hotel, meals and tickets for cable cars and other aerial transportation.

Groups staying in **Zurich** can take the train to 2,858-foot **Uetliberg Mountain**, just outside the city, for the easy and picturesque Panorama Trail hike, which covers four miles in less than two hours. After taking the Uetliberg Railway almost to the summit,

hikers have views of Zurich, Lake Zurich and the Alps of Central Switzerland. Markers on the Planet Trail of this walk take hikers on a journey through the solar system. End with refreshments at the restaurant terrace on Felsenegg Ridge and then take the gondola down to Adliswil and the train back to Zurich. A longer trek on the Uetliberg (4½ hours) goes to the Albis Pass and Lake Turler.

From **Lucerne**, a Lake Lucerne steamboat takes hikers to **Rutli Meadow**, where the Swiss nation had its origins in 1291 and where the 22-mile Swiss Path begins. Threading forests and isolated villages, the path leads around Lake Lucerne and ends in

Switzerland Tourism/Ivo Scholz



*Uetliberg Mountain, with easy trails for multi-generational groups, is the favorite hiking destination of Zurich residents.*





*Switzerland's oldest paddle steamer on Lake Lucerne*

Switzerland Tourism

the holiday resort of Brunnen. The thematic trail, divided into sections honoring each of the 26 Swiss cantons, features a variety of historic and religious sights in the spiritual heart of Switzerland, including small castles, the pilgrimage chapel Maria Sonnenberg and the 19th-century lakeside chapel named for the mythical William Tell. Various points of the trail can be accessed by boat or train.

Another Lucerne-area hike involves a gentle, 30-minute walk around the summit of 6,227-foot **Stanserhorn Mountain**, which is reached by funicular and the world's first cable car with a roofless upper deck. On a clear day, hikers will see panoramas of

majestic peaks and 10 lakes. The Stanserhorn's revolving restaurant also offers million-dollar views. Another option is to hike from the town of Stans to the summit (4½ hours).

An easy one-hour trek just 300 feet above the city of **St. Gallen** starts at the Notkersegg train stop near Notkersegg Monastery, a 17th-century Capuchin convent that still houses seven nuns. The trail leads past former storage ponds now used for swimming and descends through Muhlenen Gorge back to the Abbey District in St. Gallen's Old Town. Hikers enjoy stunning views of Lake Constance.

Switzerland Tourism



*The double-decker Cabrio cable car takes hikers to the summit of Mount Stanserhorn.*



Travelers looking to explore Switzerland on two wheels have a wealth of opportunities on more than 7,000 miles of signposted cycling paths geared to various levels of physical fitness. Most designated routes have a hard surface and see little traffic. On roads with a lot of cars, the routes usually follow cycle paths or cycling lanes with safe road crossings and turnoffs.


Along lake shores and river banks, cyclists will find flat paths with only minor uphill sections. Lakes Lucerne, Zurich and Constance are among the many lakes with bike paths that feature easy pedaling and beautiful scenery. An easy route from Zurich

to the spa town of Baden follows the Limmat River for 17 miles on a combination of asphalt and natural surfaces. Rolling terrain in Alpine foothills and high-altitude mountain-bike trails challenge experienced riders.

For a safe and enjoyable ride, groups should allow time for breaks, detours and shopping. Adults generally can manage about 10 miles an hour. Speed and daily distance should be adapted to the weakest member of the group; agree to a meeting point if cycling in a large group.

On paths with ups and downs, an electric bike, or e-bike, may be helpful, and they're

available throughout Switzerland from rental locations and bike-tour companies that offer multi-day trips. All cycling routes are open to e-bikes, and e-bikers must follow the rules for cyclists. Because riding an e-bike is different than being on a normal bike, it's advisable to practice your riding technique before starting out. E-bikes as well as standard bikes are available for rent at more than 80 Swiss railway stations.

For outdoors-minded groups touring Switzerland, footpaths and bicycle trails serve as magic carpets to heart-pumping adventures and some of the best scenery in Europe. 

Switzerland Tourism



*The beautiful shore of Lake Constance is the ideal setting for an e-biking excursion.*





# CHRISTMAS MARKETS

Switzerland is at its cozy best during the festive Advent season

By Randy Mink

**M**edieval city centers bathed in the warm glow of twinkly lights... yuletide carols ringing out in the crisp winter air... scents of hot mulled wine, grilled sausages and roasted chestnuts wafting through the town square.

The Christmas markets of Switzerland create fairy-tale settings in the romantic Old Towns of larger cities and in picturesque mountain villages—enchanting places in themselves but all the more magical during Advent season. These festive gatherings bring back childhood memories and recall the Christmases of old.

Origins of the Christmas markets that are so popular across Europe go back to the Middle Ages in German-speaking regions. Typical of traditional markets are clusters of wooden huts manned by artisans selling their handcrafted wares. You might even see the vendors at work—carving wood, making candles or decorating gingerbread.

Almost all Swiss cities and villages have at least one Christmas market. The bigger markets start in late November and run through Christmas Eve, while those in small towns may be just one week or a weekend.

Not only do the markets showcase the best of Swiss culture, but they give travelers opportunities to shop for one-of-a-kind Christmas gifts. Drifting from stall to stall, you'll find Advent wreaths, wooden toys and hand-blown glass ornaments. Perhaps a piece of jewelry or pottery will catch your eye. Rose-scented bath salts or a velvety soft alpaca wool scarf might make the perfect gift for someone special.

Carnival rides, horse-carriage rides, choral concerts, barrel organ music, nativity scenes, gingerbread house displays and other special features, depending on the market, add to the festive atmosphere.

Holiday markets offer a chance to sample foods distinctive to Switzerland and individual towns or regions. One wintertime favorite is *Raclette*, a semi-hard







*A giant Ferris wheel looms over the festivities at Montreux Noel, a month-long celebration.*





Traditional wooden chalets purveying food and handcrafted gifts enchant visitors to this Christmas market in Lausanne.

Switzerland Tourism



Lucerne

cheese whose steaming melted scrapings are served with potatoes. Dunking bread chunks into a bubbling pot of cheese fondue is another treat. Market-goers also will find freshly made waffles and crepes hot off the griddle, plus bratwurst and other sausages. Besides gingerbread, baked goodies include breads with nuts and candied or dried fruits, including *Stollen*, a Christmastime favorite in the German-speaking world. And who can resist a box, bar or morsel of Swiss chocolate. Drinks like hot chocolate, hot cider, spiced tea and *Gluhwein* (hot wine laced with cinnamon and other spices) will warm your insides on a chilly December day.

At the Christmas market in Appenzell and St. Gallen in eastern Switzerland, you will encounter *Biberli*, a pastry made of gingerbread dough and filled with almond paste. In Zug, a local specialty is *Zuger Kirschtorte*, a cherry cake with schnapps in it. In the Rhine River city of Basel, try *Basler Lackerli*, a chewy biscuit made of honey, nuts and candied orange peel.

Two Christmas markets in Basel's Old Town, with a total of almost 200 rustic wooden chalets, stretch over two squares, the Barfusserplatz and Munsterplatz. More than 100 Christmas trees adorn streets throughout the city center, with a magnificent tree on the Munsterplatz, site of the red-sandstone, twin-tower Cathedral, a Romanesque-Gothic landmark. The capital city of Bern also boasts Christmas markets on two Old Town squares, one dominated by the Bern Munster Cathedral, whose steeple is the tallest in Switzerland.

Zurich, the country's largest city, also has more than one Christmas market. In the main train station (Hauptbahnhof), a 50-foot-tall tree decorated with thousands of Swarovski crystal ornaments overlooks





*Christmas Village, with 100 market stalls and an ice rink, takes over the Sechselautenplatz in Zurich.*

*Zurich Tourism*

150 vendor stalls in one of the largest indoor Christmas markets in Europe. Across the Limmat River in the Niederdorf Quarter of romantic Old Town are more market stalls. Against the backdrop of the Zurich Opera House, yet another market beckons holiday revelers to Sechselautenplatz and the Christmas Village with its 100 stalls and ice rink.

Rapperswil-Jona, a Lake Zurich town set amid medieval trappings and overlooked by a castle, offers one of the most romantic locations of any Christmas market in Switzerland. Featuring more than 200 market stalls, it's also one of the largest in the country but lasts just 10 days in mid-December.

The week-long market in Einsiedeln, a small town in Central Switzerland, boasts a grand backdrop as well. Running the length of the main street, it is spread across the square in front of Einsiedeln Abbey, a Baroque Benedictine monastery famous for its Black Madonna statue and a Catholic pilgrimage site. Einsiedeln's Diorama Bethlehem nativity display, with 450 hand-carved figures, is said to be the largest in the world.

French-speaking regions of Switzerland also get in on the holiday fun. Montreux Noel, a month-long, citywide celebration, is centered around a Christmas village right on the Lake Geneva waterfront. Wandering musicians serenade shoppers prowling the 160 decorated chalets, and there's also entertainment under the roof of the Covered Market. Visitors can warm up in the Lumberjack Cabin, which serves wood-fired pizza, or enjoy fondue made from local gruyere cheese at La Poya. A giant Ferris wheel rises above it all.

Switzerland, a small country blessed with mountains, lakes and storybook towns, is one of the coziest places on earth. Things get even cozier when the Christmas season rolls around. 🇨🇭



*Switzerland Tourism*

*Basel*





# DREAM WINTER DESTINATION







# Skiing and other snow sports beckon groups to the Swiss Alps

By Vanessa Day

**A**s a long-time snowboarder—and a skier before that—I’ve spent years exploring the slopes of several mountain destinations. My experiences, so far, have been limited to the resorts of the United States, but there are many parts of the world I dream of carving one day. On that long list of destinations, Switzerland is at the top.

I visited Switzerland twice when I was younger, but only in the summer. Its dramatic mountains and homey towns awed me then; I can only imagine what it’s like blanketed in snow and buzzing with winter activity.

Switzerland is a true alpine skiing haven and popular winter destination. It’s what comes to mind when I think of elite winter athletes, off-piste powder activities and European ski villages. And I’m not alone. More people are flocking to the Alpine nation, with U.S. visits up 5.3 percent from November to April 2017/2018 compared to the same time frame in 2016/2017.

The country’s mountainous landscape offers 55 peaks that surpass 13,000 feet and diverse terrain for all skill levels. It’s home to the famed Matterhorn and Eiger mountains and cozy towns filled with Swiss chalets and medieval landmarks. It boasts miles of snowshoe and winter hiking trails for a more relaxed adventure, as well as hundreds of heart-pumping tobogganing runs to please those adrenaline junkies. Plus, it’s one of the few places on earth you can go glacier skiing. If that’s not a winter paradise, I don’t know what is.

The fresh powder falls practically everywhere in Switzerland. Where and how you choose to track it is completely up to you.

*The sun terrace of a St. Moritz restaurant affords vistas of the winter wonderland.*

Engadin St. Moritz



### South/Southwest Switzerland

Just north of the Swiss/Italian border sits one of the most striking formations in the Alps. The Matterhorn peak juts and twists upwards, piercing the sky. From its perch, it overlooks the pistes of **Matterhorn Ski Paradise**, the highest winter sports region in the Alps. Ski and snowboard groups can enjoy over 200 miles of beginner to advanced runs accessible from 52 lifts.

Ambitious skiers and riders will love the challenge of the Matterhorn Ski Safari, where they will cover between 32,000 and 41,000 feet in a day, without using the same lift or piste twice. If you have some novices in the group or those who prefer something a little more laid-back, the Matterhorn offers Slow Slopes. These runs allow visitors to make the descent at their own pace, without being disturbed by the more advanced athletes.

At the end of a long day on the slopes, groups can relax in the car-free town of **Zermatt**. This high-altitude village boasts relaxing spas, a hospitable dining scene and some of the best apres-ski joints in the country. If you want to take a break from the ski boots but still take in the views, head to Matterhorn Glacier Paradise, the highest place in Europe that can be reached by cableway. It features a viewing platform and the highest glacier palace in the world.

North of Zermatt, ski enthusiasts will discover **Crans-Montana**, two neighboring resorts that make up an alpine-skiing oasis. The villages are set atop a plateau above the Rhone Valley, offering spectacular views of the chain of peaks to the south. There are more than 87 miles of slopes that reach up nearly 10,000 feet to the Plaine Morte Glacier. The diverse terrain offers something for every skill level, from wide-open runs for beginners to steep pistes ideal for seasoned skiers. A golfing mecca in the summer, Crans-Montana courses become a paradise for cross-country skiers and hikers in the winter. And for those in the group who enjoy a spin on the ice, there's an extra piste reserved just for skaters.

A little farther north is the Bernese Oberland region, home to the **Adelboden-Lenk Ski Resort**. With roughly 125 miles of runs, groups can spend days exploring the expansive terrain, which consists of many sub-areas joined together into one of the largest snow sport regions in Switzerland. Winter hiking trails take groups to the Adelboden sun terrace for stunning views, while the miles of cross-country and tobogganing paths welcome visitors to explore the winter wonderland in a different way. In the evening, be sure to grab a table at Fondue Igloo, the world's largest fondue parlor and a truly unique Swiss winter experience.







Switzerland Tourism/Dolores Rupa

**Toggenburg**



Switzerland Tourism

**Flumserberg**



Swiss Travel System

**Graubunden**

## Central Switzerland

Located a few miles south of Lake Lucerne, **Engelberg-Titlis** is the largest winter destination in Central Switzerland. The resort is a freeriders paradise. There are several ski tours that take visitors off-piste where they can enjoy incredible downhill—*if they don't mind doing some climbing*. For those in the group who aren't big alpine skiers, there are some 20 miles of cross-country skiing trails to explore. After a day on the slopes, groups can spend some time wandering the streets of Engelberg, which boasts its own distinct character and Swiss flair.

For a relaxing and beautiful winter vacation, check out **Grindelwald** and **Wengen** in the Jungfrau region of Switzerland. These resorts offer laid-back runs that cater to groups of beginners and intermediate skiers, while also offering plenty of activities for non-skiers, such as winter hiking and tobogganing. Don't miss Jungfrauoch, the "Top of Europe," the continent's highest railway station and a renowned destination in the Swiss Alps.

Even more pistes, toboggan runs and walking trails can be found at **Murren**, a destination made famous not only by its spectacular landscapes, but also by James Bond. Part of the film *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* was filmed at the innovative revolving restaurant on Schilthorn. Groups can drink in the views of some 200 mountains and 40 glaciers while noshing on a legendary "007 Burger."

## North/Northeast Switzerland

The northern part of the country features a well-rounded selection of ski resorts near Zurich and over by St. Gallen. **Flumserberg**, located less than 60 miles from Zurich, is a popular winter sports destination in the Canton of St. Gallen. It has terrain that suits all skill levels—wide, gentle runs for beginners to steep, mogul-filled slopes for advanced skiers. For something a little different, groups can race down the nearly two-mile sledge run from Prodalp to Tannenheim, or get in some pets and face licks with an introduction to dog sledding. **Toggenburg**, the largest resort in St. Gallen, consists of three areas connected by 17 lifts. There are plenty of groomed runs, as well as more extreme off-piste options and two terrain parks. For some off-mountain fun, groups can enjoy several miles of winter rambling paths, or take in Mother Nature on a snowshoe tour.

*The legendary sledging run from Preda to Bergun is accessible from the Rhaetian Railway.*






Engelberg-Titlis Tourism

Engelberg-Titlis

### East/Southeast Switzerland

In east Switzerland, ski groups will discover the winter destination of **Davos Klosters**, which features six different resorts to explore. With nearly 200 miles of varying terrain, groups can't go wrong no matter which area they choose to tackle. Jakobshorn is ideal for snowboarders and free-skiers looking for a lot of action, while Schatzalp-Strela is home to a "decelerated" ski resort, perfect for a more relaxed on-slope experience. In Davos, groups will discover Europe's largest natural ice rink and the "Ice Dream" used for hockey, skating and curling. For something even more relaxing, guests can take in the town from the comfort of a horse-drawn sled or warm up with a cup of Swiss hot chocolate at one of the elite apres spots.

The epitome of alpine lifestyle can be found in **St. Moritz**. Not only can groups find world-class restaurants, great shopping and pampering spas, but it's all complemented by some of the best skiing in the country. Winter sports enthusiasts can enjoy over 200 miles of pistes, more than 100 miles of cross-country skiing trails and a snowboard fun park. Not to mention the steepest start slope in Switzerland. Take in the mystical scenery with a leisurely winter hike across frozen lakes and wide valleys; or get your adrenaline pumping with high-speed chutes and hairpin turns on a toboggan run. For something completely different, adventure seekers can try their hand at snowkiting. Hop on a snowboard or skis, and glide over snow-covered lakes being pulled by a kite. A memorable Swiss experience.

Switzerland's land of peaks, stunning scenery and quaint mountain towns offers groups a plethora of options. There's no shortage of snow-filled fun and adventure in this dream winter destination. 



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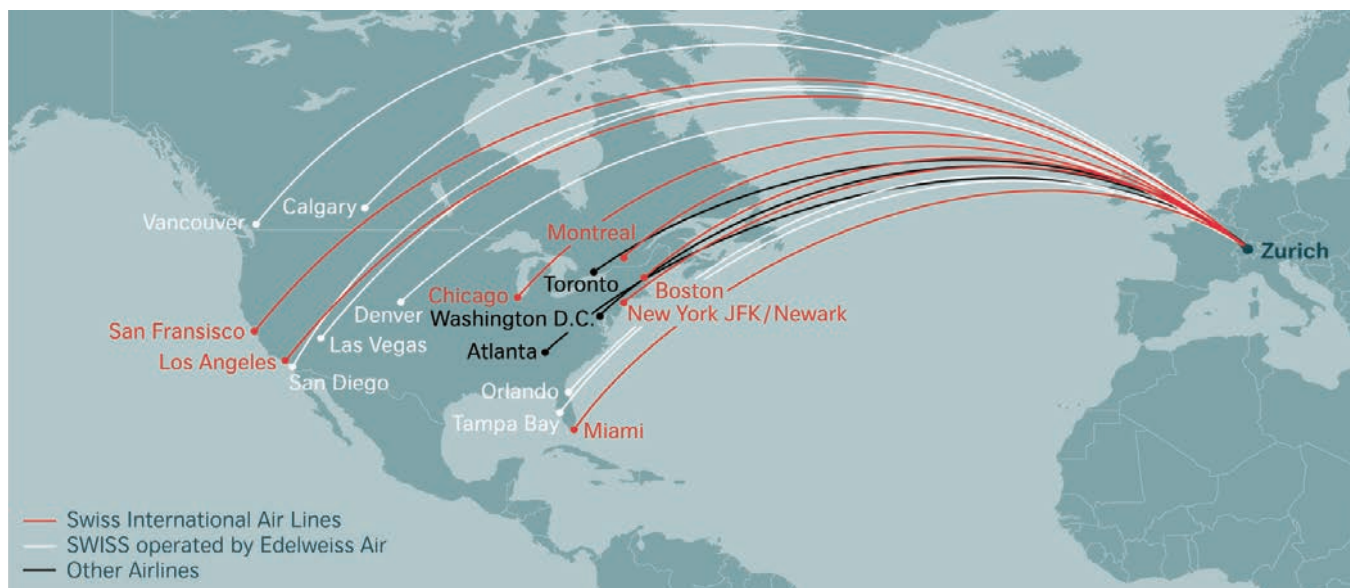


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# SWITZERLAND FAST FACTS



## Location

Situated in **Central Europe**, Switzerland borders **France** to the west, **Germany** to the north, **Austria** and the principality of **Liechtenstein** to the east and **Italy** to the south. Smaller than West Virginia, it measures 137 miles from north to south and 217 miles from east to west.

## Getting There

Weekly, there are more than **120 direct flights** to Switzerland from North America. Airlines flying from North American cities to **Zurich Airport** include Swiss, Edelweiss, United, American, Delta and Air Canada. Zurich's city center is just a 10-minute train ride from the state-of-the-art airport, which offers more than **160 shops, bars and restaurants**. Smack in the heart of Europe, Zurich Airport is the gateway to the Alps.

## Getting Around

**Switzerland's public transport network**—safe, efficient and punctual—is one of the finest in the world. The **Swiss Travel Pass** provides unlimited travel on trains, buses, boats, urban transit systems and most scenic train routes. In addition, pass holders enjoy free entrance to **500 museums** in Switzerland and are entitled to a **50 percent discount** on most mountain excursions by cable car or cogwheel train.



Glacier Express

Switzerland Tourism/Swiss Travel System



# Languages

Switzerland has four national languages: **German, French, Italian** and **Romansch**. German, the most dominant, is spoken by **64 percent** of the population. English is widely spoken throughout the country.

# Religion

The majority of people living in Switzerland are **Christian**. Approximately **38 percent are Roman Catholic, 27 percent Protestant** (2017 figures). The number of people with no religious affiliation is 21 percent.

# Weather

In July and August the daytime temperature range is 65 to 82 degrees Fahrenheit; in spring and autumn 46° to 59°. In January and February the range is 28° to 45°. There is no excessive heat and humidity in summer, so the air is always crisp. **Summer is the main travel season** with a share of 66 percent, but data over the last five years show that Switzerland is becoming increasingly important as a winter destination. **Peak ski season is December to March.**

# Money Matters

Switzerland's unit of currency is the Swiss franc. Merchants may accept euros, but change most likely will be given back in Swiss francs. ATMs are commonly found, and credit cards are widely accepted. **Banks are open Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

# Shopping Hours

**Shops are generally open from 8.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. daily** (Saturday until 4 p.m.); closed Sunday. Shops in small towns may close an hour or two for lunch.

# Tipping

**Tips for restaurant wait staff are included in the price of the meal,** but it's common to round up to the nearest franc or round figure.

# Internet

Most hotels and many bars, cafes and restaurants provide **free Wi-Fi service.**



Christmas Village, Zurich

Zurich Tourism



Zurich's Old Town

Zurich Tourism

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Sign up for the E-learning program 'Switzerland Academy' and become a certified Switzerland travel expert in only three hours. You will get more leads and benefit from additional sales support. Sign up at: [northamerica.switzerlandtravelacademy.ch](http://northamerica.switzerlandtravelacademy.ch). Also learn about Switzerland in **bi-weekly webinars** featuring Swiss partners who provide insights about specific destinations and products. And keep up-to-date on the latest news and offers through Switzerland Tourism's **bi-monthly newsletter**. Sign up for webinars and the newsletter at: [MySwitzerland.com/trade](http://MySwitzerland.com/trade). "**Switzerland Yodel**" - Sales companion for travel professionals can be downloaded at [MySwitzerland.com/trade](http://MySwitzerland.com/trade) (Multimedia/Sales Manuals)

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# Swiss cities – Designed for you.



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