

# Switzerland

2021

**+** TOUR GUIDE

**Explore Switzerland's  
Cultural Heritage**

## **Lovely Lucerne**

A lakeside beauty in the heart  
of Switzerland

## **Alluring Andermatt**

Year-round vacation paradise  
in the Swiss Alps

## **All Aboard!**

The Glacier Express,  
Luzern-Interlaken Express and  
Voralpen-Express scenic trains showcase  
the Alpine splendor of Switzerland

# I NEED SWITZERLAND

**“ORGANIZERS OF GROUP TRIPS AND TOUR GUIDES ALIKE ARE FACING SOME NEW CHALLENGES. I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT CHOOSING SWITZERLAND AS YOUR NEXT DESTINATION WILL GIVE YOU PEACE OF MIND AS WELL AS YOUR GUESTS THE MOST MEMORABLE VACATIONS.”**

**D**o you remember your last transatlantic trip? For me, it was a quick in/out visit to Switzerland for a work meeting in January. Flights between Europe and China were just about to get canceled because of some sort of virus somewhere in China and colleagues of mine looked at assisting travelers who were stuck in Switzerland. Not for a minute did I imagine that I, together with the rest of the world, would be stuck very soon, too. Traveling, both for business and pleasure, has been an intrinsic part of my lifestyle. At times, I have to admit, I have taken it somewhat for granted.

The last months certainly have changed all that. Sitting locked-up at home in my apartment, I often found myself scrolling through the photos of my travels and remembering the joy and excitement these trips brought me. All the while, making a list of places I will visit once travel is possible again. And top of the list for 2021 is the Blue Balls Festival in Lucerne. I heard so many great things about it and will make sure to be there next year (see page 9).


Switzerland has a long-held reputation for being super safe, clean and well-organized. It, therefore, is a natural choice when looking at organizing a post-COVID-19 trip. In order to strengthen guests' confidence in Switzerland, tourism industry associations have created a "Clean & Safe" label. When visiting tourism establishments and infrastructures, the label shows guests that the latter have made a conscious commitment to comply with protection plans. In addition, the information platform [www.clean-and-safe.ch](http://www.clean-and-safe.ch) provides an overview of all industry-specific protection concepts.



Organizers of group trips and tour guides alike are facing some new challenges. I firmly believe that choosing Switzerland as your next destination will give you peace of mind as well as your guests the most memorable vacations.

Many guests are surprised when they see the wealth of historic castles and forts Switzerland has to offer. These monuments, some dating back to medieval times, bear witness to the rich history of our small country. Don't miss including them in your itinerary and get swept away to times gone by (page 20).

But no visit to Switzerland is complete without sampling and stocking up on our delicious specialties. Our cheese and chocolates are world-renowned for a reason, and you can see for yourself how they get produced all over Switzerland. But when it comes to cookies, Kambly cannot be beaten. As they are not available in North America, check out the Kambly factory in the picturesque Emmental Region (page 16).

We can't wait to welcome you to Switzerland. 



**Claudio Zemp**  
Director, Americas  
Switzerland Tourism

# Switzerland<sup>2021</sup>

**TOUR GUIDE**

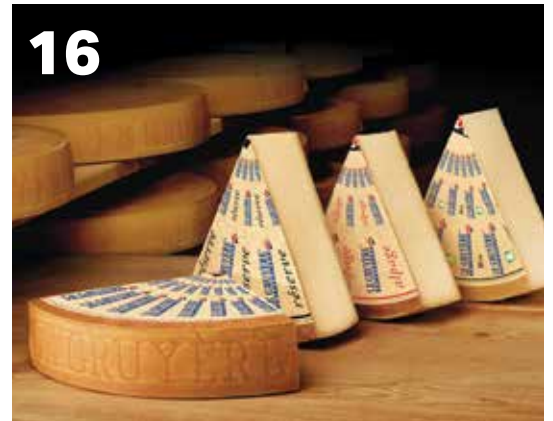
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Switzerland Tourism



**Switzerland.**  
by train, bus and boat.

In harmony  
with nature.

Bernina Express, Graubünden

Enjoy carefree travel across Switzerland by public transport. Swiss rail takes its customers to their desired destination, relying on practically CO<sub>2</sub> free hydro-electric power. Lean back and marvel at the passing landscapes knowing that this is a climate-friendly journey powered by renewable energy.

The all-in-one ticket **Swiss Travel Pass** is the key to Switzerland's public transport network. This single ticket enables visitors to explore Switzerland from end to end by train, bus and boat on 3, 4, 8 or 15 consecutive days.

For more information and bookings go to: [MySwitzerland.com/rail](https://www.myswitzerland.com/rail)



# TOURING THE HEART OF SWITZERLAND

**S**witzerland may be a small country, but it is big on tour possibilities, with cosmopolitan cities, storybook villages and slices of Alpine splendor scattered across the land. In the following pages, tour organizers will discover that the places and products featured in this year's Switzerland Tour Guide—including a major city, a resort town and three scenic trains—can easily be combined into one great itinerary that blends urban and mountain experiences in the very heart of Switzerland.

Centrally located Lucerne is only an hour's drive from the Alpine resort of Andermatt, where clients can rest comfortably in the 4-star Radisson Blu Hotel Reussen. The small-town charm of Andermatt perfectly complements bustling Lucerne—a winning combo indeed. From Andermatt, travelers can ride the famous Glacier Express for an eye-popping journey through landscapes fringed with snow-capped mountains. The iconic train is celebrating its 90th anniversary this year.

Lucerne is served by two jewels of the Swiss Travel System. The Voralpen-Express whisks passengers eastward to St. Gallen in two hours, passing through pre-Alpine landscapes highlighted by green hills, lovely orchards and Lake Zurich countryside. Heading west from Lucerne, the Luzern-Interlaken Express offers stunning Alpine panoramas studded with white peaks, glistening lakes and magnificent waterfalls.

Lucerne, Andermatt, memorable train travel....this is the Switzerland we all dream about.



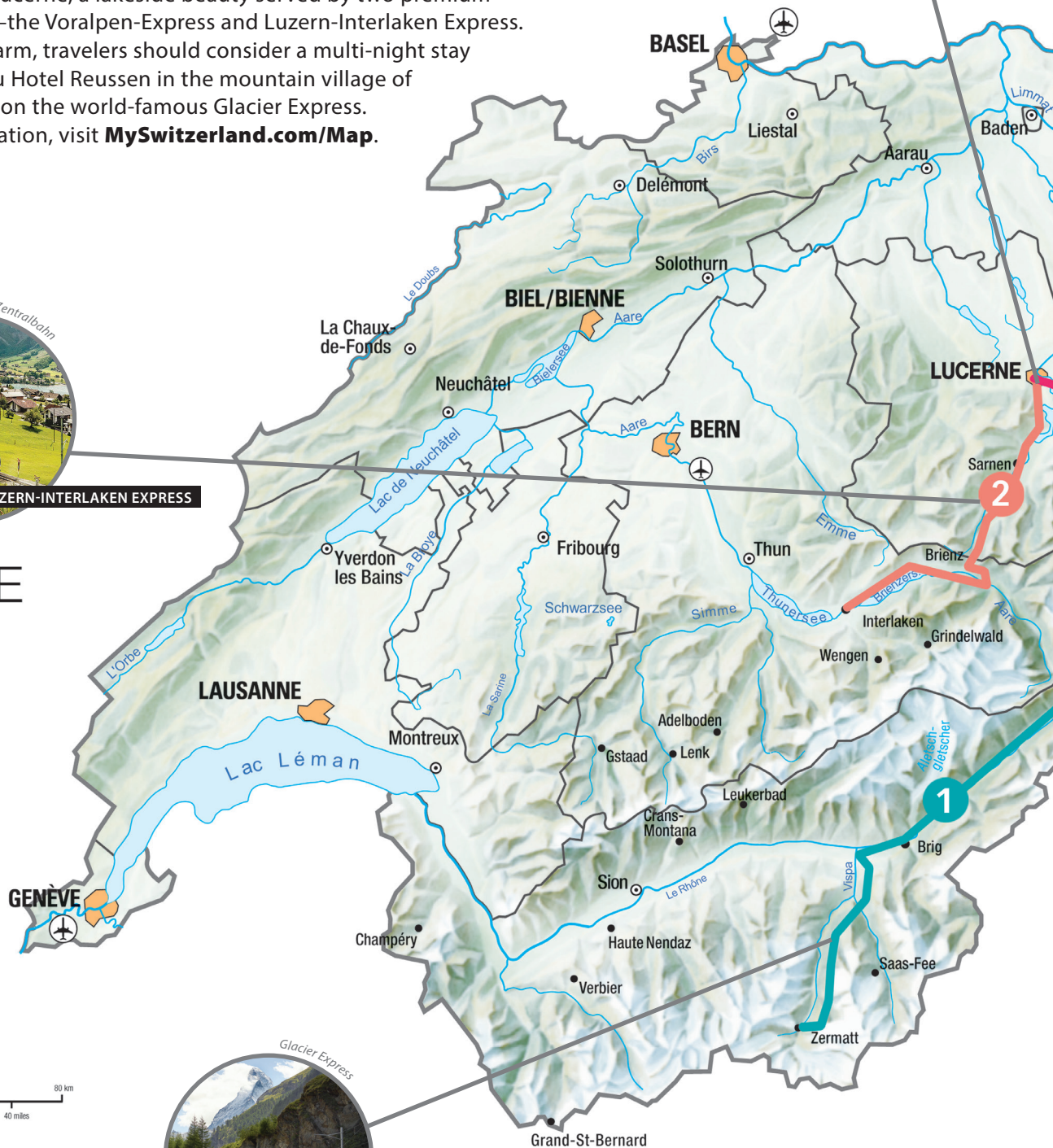
*Mt. Pilatus provides a dramatic backdrop for the lakeside city of Lucerne.*

Lucerne Tourism/Beat Brechbuehl

# SWITZERLAND

**M**any of Switzerland's best travel adventures can be found in the center of this Alpine wonderland—a prosperous, postcard-perfect country in the very heart of Europe. There is no city prettier than Lucerne, a lakeside beauty served by two premium panoramic trains—the Voralpen-Express and Luzern-Interlaken Express. For small-town charm, travelers should consider a multi-night stay at the Radisson Blu Hotel Reussen in the mountain village of Andermatt, a stop on the world-famous Glacier Express.

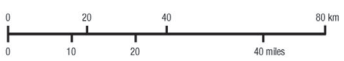
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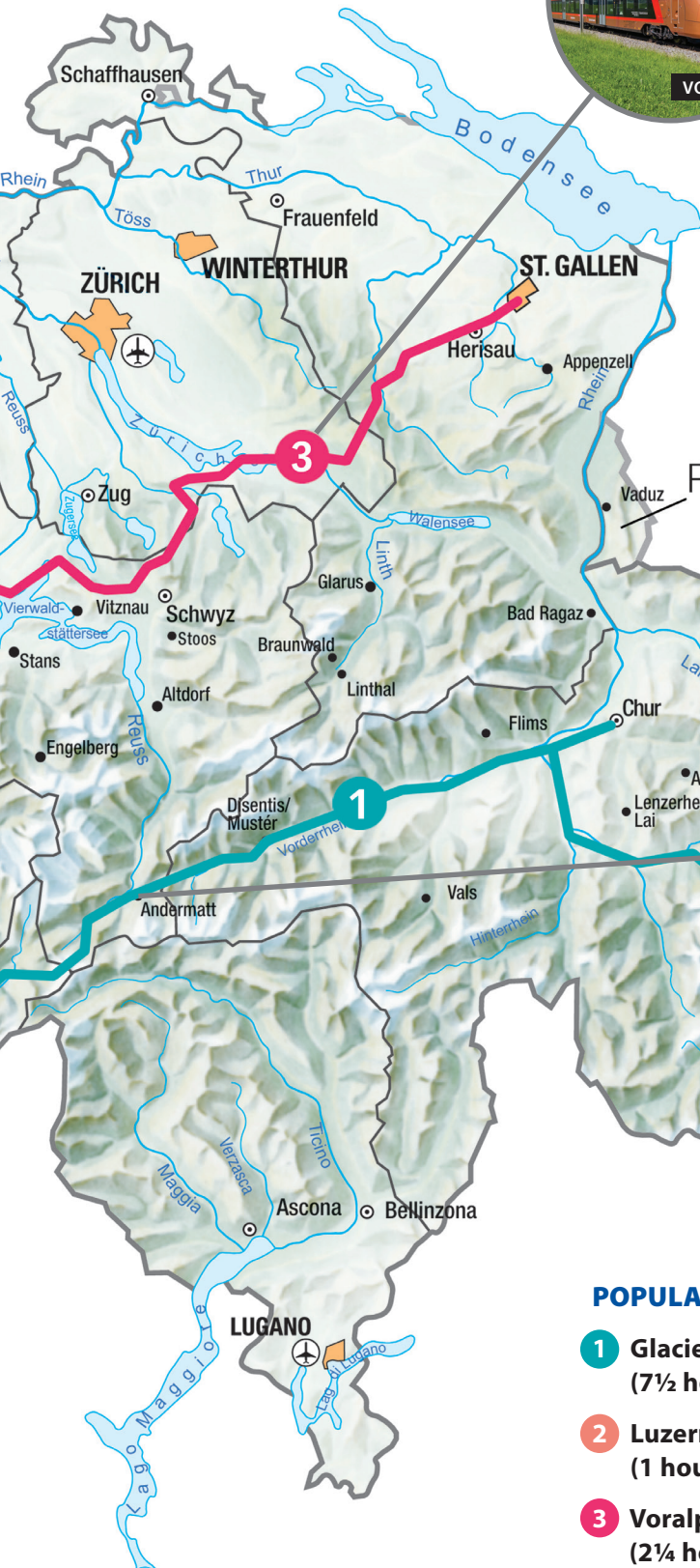
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# GERMANY



VORALPEN-EXPRESS



# AUSTRIA

## PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN



### POPULAR PREMIUM PANORAMIC TRAINS

- 1 **Glacier Express: Zermatt-Brig-Andermatt-Disentis-Chur-St. Moritz**  
(7½ hours/180 miles)
- 2 **Luzern-Interlaken Express: Lucerne-Interlaken**  
(1 hour 50 minutes/61 miles)
- 3 **Voralpen-Express: Lucerne-Rapperswil-St. Gallen**  
(2¼ hours/77 miles)



# LOVELY LUCERNE

This key Swiss city is a magnet for visitors

By Don Heimburger



*Lucerne's romantic Old Town.*  
Switzerland Tourism





**A**n enchanting and welcoming mid-size Swiss city, Lucerne, situated on azure-blue **Lake Lucerne**, is a key tourist and transportation hub. With its captivating history, spectacular Alps scenery and convenient location, Lucerne is a prime example of why Switzerland draws millions of visitors each year.

Located on the quintessential **River Reuss** in central Switzerland, Lucerne dates from the middle of the 8th century when a Benedictine monastery was built there to honor St. Leodegar. The small settlement officially became the town of Lucerne around 1178.

A bustling gateway, Lucerne is easy to get to and makes a good base for day trips. An easy 50-minute train ride from Zurich, the city of 81,000 is a popular jumping-off point for 6,982-foot-high **Mt. Pilatus**, a landmark called the Dragon Mountain, and **Mt. Rigi**, nicknamed Queen of the Mountains.

Mt. Pilatus boasts the world's steepest cog railway (with a gradient of 48 percent) and has restaurants and hotels at the top. There are 75 miles of hiking trails on 5,895-foot Mt. Rigi, the top of which can be reached by the **Rigi Mountain Railway** (inaugurated in 1871) or by an aerial cable car.

Both Mt. Pilatus and Mt. Rigi base stations can be easily accessed by boat, train or car. Not far from Lucerne at **Mt. Titlis**, visitors can enjoy a 360-degree panoramic view from a rotating gondola that glides over the deep crevasses of Titlis Glacier.

Another excursion possibility is the **Swiss Knife Valley Visitor Center** in Brunnen. The complex includes the museum and brand store of Victorinox, maker of the legendary Swiss Army Knife. Under the guidance of a professional, guests can assemble their own pocket knife in 15 minutes and have it personally engraved. A visit to this scenic region can be combined with a Lake Lucerne cruise.

Lake Lucerne, one of Europe's most awe-inspiring stretches of inland waterways, is 24 miles long and connects 33 villages and towns with a fleet of boats, some steam-powered. Passengers on the lake can go all the way to Fluellen on the other side to catch the SBB train to Italy.

Visitors to Lucerne have a wide range of educational, cultural and recreational possibilities. Nearly all the major sights in Lucerne are within walking distance of downtown, located right across the **Chapel Bridge**, which was built in the first half of the 14th century and once formed part of the city's fortifications. The adjacent 111-foot-tall **Water Tower**, the most photographed landmark in Switzerland, was built around 1300 and was used at various times as a treasury, archives and prison.

The **Old Town** is a beautiful part of the city with narrow, car-free streets displaying well-preserved buildings decorated with fresco paintings. Here you can enjoy quaint plazas, ornate statues, bubbling fountains and shops that sell Swiss chocolate, clothing, jewelry, cameras and watches. There is also an abundance of bakeries and quaint cafes and restaurants.



**Musegg Wall.**

*Lucerne Tourism*

The famous **Musegg Wall** was part of Lucerne's ramparts from 1386. Three of its towers are open to the public, with a city clock from 1535 still attached to one. Visitors have fantastic views of Lucerne from these ancient walls.

The **Church of St. Leodegar**, built in 1633, is noted for its late German Renaissance altars and art, as well as bringing the Counter Reformation to Switzerland. Other important churches are the 13th century **Franciscan Church**, which was once Lucerne's city hall; the twin-domed, Baroque-style **Jesuit Church**; the 1912 **St. Paul's Church**, with its intricate glass paintings; and **St. Matthew Church**, the first Protestant church in the city. Switzerland's only saint, **Brother Klaus**, was from the Lucerne area.

The **Swiss Museum of Transport** is a notable Lucerne attraction, drawing half-a-million visitors each year. It features rail, air, water and road transportation, plus space travel and telecommunications. As many as 60 steam and electric locomotives are on display. Switzerland's first IMAX theater is also part of the museum.

City festivals include the World Band, Lucerne Summer Festival, Blue Balls Festival, Lucerne Blues Festival and Lucerne Piano Festival. Ranking among Switzerland's top music and art events, the nine-day **Blue Balls Festival** transforms Lucerne Bay into a crucible of creativity.

For more information, visit [MySwitzerland.com/Lucerne](http://MySwitzerland.com/Lucerne). 



# ALL ABOARD!

Train routes sporting new equipment and amenities showcase the scenic splendor of Switzerland

By Don Heimburger

*Zentralbahn's Luzern-Interlaken Express passes five mountain lakes, including the Brienersee.*

*Tobias Ryser*



**G**etting around Switzerland is a breeze for groups using the Swiss Travel System, one of the densest and most efficient transportation networks in the world. As most travel pros know, the country's trains, buses and boats run like clockwork. Offering comfortable rides through fairy-tale scenery, they make moving from place to place a highlight of the Swiss experience.

Going by public transportation, moreover, lets visitors see Switzerland

through the eyes of its people and gives some insight into the culture of this highly advanced European nation.

With the all-inclusive Swiss Travel Pass, your group can discover virtually all of Switzerland by train, bus or boat with just a single ticket. The easy-to-use pass provides 3, 4, 8 or 15 consecutive days of unlimited travel and many other advantages as well. The Swiss Travel Pass, for example, is good for local transport in more than 90 Swiss cities. In addition, it grants free admission to more

than 500 museums around the country. The bargain also includes free or discounted rides on aerial cableways serving mountains like the Schilthorn, Mt. Rigi and Mt. Titlis. The Swiss Travel Pass Flex, another option, lets you choose your days of travel (3, 4, 8 or 15) within a month and offers the same bonuses.

The Swiss Travel System's door-to-door luggage service takes the hassle out of luggage handling. When groups send their luggage ahead, the bags will be waiting at the hotel or any other Swiss address by 6 p.m.





**Glacier Express 1<sup>st</sup> class panoramic cars gleam from a recent refit.**

*Glacier Express*

that evening. A similar plan is available for groups arriving at Zurich Airport.

Here are three rail trips that will lend a special touch to any tour itinerary:

**GLACIER EXPRESS**

"Impressive scenery...quiet ride... excellent on-board service...delicious meals... clean windows."

These are some of the superlatives that happy passengers typically use to describe the Glacier Express, a cross-Switzerland luxury train in a class of its own. Called the "window to the Alps," it carries 250,000 passengers annually on an eight-hour dream journey between the resort towns of Zermatt and St. Moritz.

The Glacier Express has been operating since 1930 and, with completion of the Furka base tunnel in 1982, began service year-round. It was tagged long ago by a television station as "the slowest express train in the world," a phrase that has stuck and is used today to encourage passengers to sit back, relax and enjoy the magnificent views of the Swiss Alps. Year after year the train is recognized as one of the most popular scenic trains in the world.

Lucky are those who travel in the train's new Excellence Class cars, which feature plush seats (all with window views), decor in a Swiss Alpine motif, an on-board concierge, a bar, welcome aperitif and a freshly



**The Glacier Express travels across the Landwasser Viaduct.**

*Glacier Express*

prepared five-course meal, plus other perks.

As the Glacier Express makes its way across Switzerland, it travels over 291 bridges and through 91 tunnels—once a day in each direction. Thanks to the large panoramic windows, a clear view of numerous summits, deep gorges and two UNESCO World Heritage sites—the Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch region and Rhaetian Railway in the Albula/Bernina Landscapes—is guaranteed. The Jungfrau-Aletsch region is one of the most outstanding high-mountain landscapes with imposing mountain chains, rustic valleys and the Alps' most extensive

glaciated area. At the center is the stunning Jungfrauoch (a mountain pass 11,370 feet above sea level) and 14-mile-long Aletsch Glacier (not visible from the train).

The rail line across Albula is an extraordinary triumph of structural engineering and route planning. Tight turns, sophisticated lineside structures and amazing tunnels across this UNESCO World Heritage section seamlessly blend into the spectacular scenery. The most famous structure on the Albula portion is the 213-foot-high, 446-foot-long Landwasser Viaduct, a single-track, six-arch limestone railway span built in 1901-1902. Its

southeastern abutment connects directly to the Landwasser Tunnel. The tunnel's entrance is positioned on a vertical rock wall, having been purposefully aligned with the viaduct. It was considered to be a challenging architectural feat of its era, and its construction employed numerous innovative techniques. Have your camera ready as you approach this site.

To add even more comfort and convenience to the trip, the Glacier Express panoramic cars are undergoing an exciting new makeover and refitting as part of the train's 90th anniversary jubilee in 2020. The \$20 million revamping includes more modern interiors with a "sense of Swissness and Alpine chic" throughout. Light oak is being used in second-class passenger cars, dark walnut in first-class. The seats are newly upholstered with the same fabrics as those used in Excellence Class, featuring black leather elements in second class, brown leather in first-class.

In addition, the cars are now equipped with a high-tech infotainment system that allows passengers video or audio information about the route on their tablets or smartphones; passengers may also use this system to offer feedback to help improve service. Helpful information is available on two large overhead screens at each end of the car.

Other upgrades include electrical sockets, cup indentations and bottle holders at every table; new, larger luggage racks; and solid stone washbasins in the lavatories. Also, sun protection film on the car's skylights has been added to minimize heat radiation. The train's kitchens and appliances are being completely upgraded to enhance this popular service.

Two complete sets of the new and improved Glacier Express have entered service, and improvements to the entire fleet are projected to be completed by 2021.

## VORALPEN-EXPRESS

The Voralpen-Express is the most appealing way to travel between eastern and central Switzerland. Starting from eastern Switzerland's urban center of St. Gallen, whose Abbey district is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the train traverses the 325-foot-high Sitter Viaduct and the rolling landscape of Toggenburg. Passing by Rapperswil and the impressive upland moor near Rothenthurm, the journey ends after a little over two hours in historic Lucerne on the shores of Lake Lucerne.

The sleek new copper-colored Traverso trains, introduced in mid-2019, run hourly on the route, offering passengers a comfortable ride at an operating speed of 100 miles per hour.

The eight-car trains feature 359 seats, 68 of which are located in the first-class section; all seats are equipped with power sockets. High-quality interior fittings are designed to meet the needs of various user groups, including commuters who require space where they can work in quiet surroundings. Tourists and leisure travelers can enjoy fantastic views from the large panoramic windows, and there is space for storing skis and bicycles. The train has two bistro zones with coffee machines offering a range of hot and cold drinks and snacks.

The family/kids compartment was designed by illustrator Konrad Beck with great attention to detail. Hidden-object pictures are themed around the four seasons.

From December 2020, the Traverso will operate as Treno Gottardo on the classic north-south route from Basel or Zurich via the Gotthard mountain route to Locarno.

Attractive leisure activities can be booked through Schweizerische Südostbahn AG. For more information and to make bookings, visit [www.voralpen-express.ch](http://www.voralpen-express.ch).

## LUZERN-INTERLAKEN EXPRESS

A train journey that is its own reward: that's how many travelers describe the remarkable Luzern-Interlaken Express. Operating between Lucerne and Interlaken, the nearly two-hour run affords passengers some of the most scenic views in all of Switzerland. Part of a network operated by the Zentralbahn company, the route covers the eastern section of the GoldenPass Line and belongs to the Grand Train Tour of Switzerland.

Large viewing windows allowing passengers to enjoy the splendor of the passing landscapes are key to this special train that connects two of the most popular Swiss destinations. Passengers are quietly whisked alongside mountain

scenery, turquoise lakes and thundering waterfalls. In fact, the train passes five crystal-clear mountain lakes—Lake Lucerne, Alpachersee, Sarnersee, Lungernersee and Brienersee.

A LiveGuide app for passengers offers trip information and highlights of the region, and indicates the train's position en route. Passengers can order drinks and snacks from their seat with the BistroOrder app.

The train leaves Lucerne every day of the year, with departures hourly from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. From Interlaken, trains depart for Lucerne hourly from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Soon after reaching Giswil, the Interlaken-bound train converts to cog technology because of the percentage of grade as it winds its way to 3,300-foot-high Brunig Pass, which connects the Bernese Oberland and central Switzerland. After the descent from the pass, the train arrives at Brienz, a popular starting point for boat cruises on beautiful Lake Brienz. Also worth a visit in this area is the fascinating open-air museum at Ballenberg, which began in 1978 with 16 characteristic Swiss buildings.

Other points along the route include the Glasi Hergiswil glass factory; Sarnen, where the William Tell legend was born; Lake Lungernersee, a fisherman's paradise; fascinating Aare Gorge at Meiringen; the woodcarving school in Brienz; and the exciting steam cog railway up the Brienz Rothorn.

Interestingly, more than 130 years ago the first trains of the Jura-Bern-Lucerne Railway operated between Alpnachstad and Brienz. In order to get from Lucerne to Interlaken, travelers had to make the first and last parts of their journey by steamboat. Today's express train trip through this scenic land offers a first-class adventure not soon forgotten.

For more information, visit [MySwitzerland.com/STS](http://MySwitzerland.com/STS). 



*The Voralpen-Express' sleek new Traverso in Steinerberg.*

*Markus Schälli*



# ANDERMATT

An unmistakable Alpine flavor makes this low-key resort village the epitome of Swiss bliss

By Randy Mink



*Traditional Alpine architecture  
graces the village center.*

*Andermatt-Ursental Tourism*

**T**raipsing across summer meadows carpeted with wildflowers and backed by snow-crested peaks, you might get the urge to belt out a good strong yodel into the crystal-clear mountain air. If only you knew how.

The village of Andermatt and surrounding region, a year-round vacation paradise, offer all the charm and beauty you expect to find in the glorious Swiss Alps. Tucked away at the foot of the Gotthard Pass in the Ursern Valley, halfway between Zurich and Milan and only 18 miles from Lake Lucerne, Andermatt (at an altitude of 4,737 feet) lies in the very heart of Switzerland. Certainly an off-the-beaten track destination, the town of about 1,500 people can be reached by car only via winding pass roads. Trains run there several times a day.

A total of eight nearby Alpine passes provide a bounty of scenic tour options. In the mountains around Andermatt, for example, your group can take a guided half-day trek with friendly pack goats, complete with picnic lunch. Just two miles from town is Devil's Bridge, which spans the wild river running through the steep-walled Schöllenen Gorge; an easy 30-minute hiking loop provides a hair-raising glimpse into the depths of the chasm. Another excursion goes to Sasso San Gottardo, a tunnel-riddled, top-secret fortress built during World War II.

For a top-of-the-world sensation, consider a cable car ride (in two stages) to the summit of the 9,714-foot Gemsstock. The rugged mountain is part of recently upgraded SkiArena Andermatt-Sedrun, the largest ski destination in central Switzerland, with 75 miles of pistes and 22 lifts.

Besides downhill skiing and

snowboarding, winter visitors to the Andermatt area find trails for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and winter hiking, plus opportunities for ice skating, tobogganing and sledging. Summer action in the valley revolves around cycling, hiking and climbing. The 18-hole, par-72 championship Andermatt Swiss Alps Golf Course, immediately adjacent to the village, was designed to complement its spectacular natural setting.

Andermatt, one of Switzerland's prettiest resort villages, is quiet, compact and steeped in tradition. Centuries-old houses line the main street, which runs from the central river bridge to the Gemsstock cable car. The new, state-of-the-art Andermatt Concert Hall, graced with a striking glass facade, is the town's hub for music and culture. Solo musicians perform in the evenings in the Living Room at The Chedi Andermatt hotel as well as in many other bars and restaurants.

The 5-star Chedi, a member of Leading Hotels of the World, is noted for its Asian-inspired decor, spa and cuisine. At the sushi/sashimi bar and tempura counter of The Japanese Restaurant, guests can watch the culinary artistry of The Chedi's Japanese chefs.

Alongside the established village center, the new Andermatt Reuss development shines with stylish hotels, shops and eateries. A cobblestone square called Piazza Gottardo is the centerpiece of this car-free area, which includes the Radisson Blu Hotel Reussen (see sidebar) and the fully equipped, home-like units offered by Andermatt Alpine Apartments.

Blending international flair with traditional Alpine character, Andermatt mirrors the best of Switzerland.

For more information, visit

**MySwitzerland.com/Andermatt.** 



**The Andermatt region abounds with hiking trails.**

Andermatt-Ursental Tourism



**Andermatt's new Radisson Blu.**

Radisson Blu Hotel Reussen

## PERFECT BASE CAMP


**F**or groups spending overnights in Andermatt, the new Radisson Blu Hotel Reussen is the ideal place to rest up and relax after busy days of skiing or sightseeing. Situated in the emerging Andermatt Reuss district, the four-star superior hotel lies within easy walking distance of the ski lifts and traditional town center. The Andermatt Concert Hall is right next door.

Designed in a modern interpretation of a Swiss chalet with elements of Scandinavian design, the 244-room Radisson Blu exudes a warm, inviting atmosphere created by local fabrics, natural wood floors and soft-hued furnishings. Guests awake to stunning views of Alpine peaks and enjoy drinking in the scenic splendor while sipping freshly brewed coffee from the hotel's terrace.

Accommodations at the Radisson Blu include standard rooms, superior rooms and two- and three-bedroom suites with separate living area and sleeper couch. Also available are one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments featuring a fully equipped kitchen as well as a living room. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, 24-hour room service, in-room coffee and tea facilities, and LED TVs.

The hotel's Spa and Wellness Center features two saunas, a steam bath, treatment rooms and an extensive gym, plus an indoor pool with floor-to-ceiling windows facing the mountains.

Restaurant Spun (the word for "spoon" in the Romansch language spoken in southeastern Swiss cantons) serves up a modern take on regional specialties with local and seasonal produce as its compass. Barbar, an elegant lounge set around a roaring fireplace, evokes the coziness of an Alpine lodge. A perfect apres-ski hideout, it serves signature cocktails made with local berries and herbs.

Radisson Blu, one of the eight distinctive brands of Radisson Hotels, is internationally renowned for its sense of style, sophisticated gastronomy and attention to details. In Andermatt, the Radisson Blu Hotel Reussen makes an excellent base for discriminating travelers exploring this delightful holiday region. 



# TASTES OF SWITZERLAND

The land of cheese and chocolate offers groups a cornucopia of culinary experiences—with peeks into how favorite foods are made

By Randy Mink



*Savoring fondue in Gruyères.*  
Pascal Gertschen/Fribourg Region Tourism



**T**hose plump cows grazing in idyllic Alpine pastures create more than just the postcard-perfect scenes that give Switzerland its pristine image. Their milk, delivered fresh to food-processing plants, is an important ingredient in many of the country's signature edibles—from candy to cookies to cheese.

Groups traveling in Switzerland have a wide choice of factories and production areas where they can see how foods, including some world-renowned brands that have been around for generations, are made. These manufacturing facilities are prime tourist attractions.

Besides behind-the-scenes glimpses of what goes into making cheese, chocolate and other favorite comestibles, visitors come away with insights into the company's culture through museum exhibits, demonstrations and hands-on activities. And let's not forget the taste samples, which can be quite generous.

Almost everyone loves chocolate, and Swiss chocolate is second to none. Milk or dark, studded with nuts, filled with liqueur—chocolate is the ultimate happy food, whether in the form of a praline, truffle or bar. The Maya and Aztecs believed the cocoa bean to be the food of the gods; beans were so precious they were used as currency.

Heavenly aromas of chocolate greet visitors to **Maison Cailler**, the interactive museum of Cailler, a Nestle firm based in the village of Broc in the La Gruyère region. Founded in 1819 by Francois-Louis Cailler, Switzerland's oldest chocolate brand has been made in the historic Broc factory since 1898. Maison Cailler's exhibition, a self-guided experience employing audio headsets, reveals the secrets behind chocolate making, provides a live look at a mini production line and includes lots of sampling.

Cailler is the only Swiss chocolate manufacturer using condensed milk instead of powdered milk, a formula that gives its product a rich milky flavor and smooth, melt-in-the-mouth texture. Milk comes from nearby farms in the Fribourg Alps, where cows spend spring through autumn in mountain meadows and winters in fields around Broc. The milk is so fresh that chocolate connoisseurs can tell the difference between summer and winter milk.

Workshops at Cailler's Atelier du Chocolat let visitors design their own chocolate creations to take home. Cafe Cailler serves its famous hot chocolate and tempting desserts crafted by the chocolatiers. The boutique sells the entire range of Cailler products.

At **Aeschbach Chocolatier** in Root-Lucerne, a 10-minute train trip from Lucerne, groups on guided factory tours get to watch the artisans up-close. Afterwards, guests can explore the ChocoWelt (ChocoWorld)



**Culinary experience in the Lavaux vineyards, UNESCO World Heritage Site.**

Switzerland Tourism

exhibition, with tastings included. The ChocoStudio offers novice confectioners a chance to decorate their own pralines. The third-generation family business also has a ChocoStore and ChocoCafe. At Lucerne's Swiss Museum of Transport, a 20-minute ride called the **Swiss Chocolate Adventure** features a multimedia show explaining the origins and production of chocolate. Lindt chocolates are served after the ride.

In northwestern Switzerland, **Camille Bloch**, a third-generation enterprise famed for its Ragusa and Torino brands, welcomes groups to the visitor center across the road from its factory in Courtelary. The self-guided Discovery World experience includes films, demonstrations and samples. Groups can book a chocolate-making workshop with a master chocolatier, and chocolate treats can be enjoyed at the Bistrot. In the eastern Switzerland town of Flawil, about 20 minutes west of St. Gallen, the **Chocolarium at Maestrani's** chocolate factory offers tours, tasting and hands-on kitchen fun. (A visit to Maestrani's could be combined with a tour of nearby **Appenzeller Show Dairy**, known for its spicy, herb-flavored cheeses.)

**Lindt Home of Chocolate**, a new attraction in Kilchberg, opened in September of 2020. Located at the Lindt & Sprüngli factory, it features museum exhibits, an audio-guided multimedia experience following the process from bean to bar, a pralines tasting room, and a show production facility that demonstrates Lindt's latest manufacturing technologies. In the world's largest Lindt chocolate shop, guests can watch as a master confectioner puts finishing touches on freshly produced pralines, bars and other delicacies. They can

indulge in Lindt drinking chocolate at the Lindt Chocolate Cafe while looking out over the striking chocolate fountain that soars nearly 30 feet tall. Chocolate-making courses let guests make their own creations. Kilchberg is about 20 minutes south of Zurich.

World-famous Le Gruyère AOP, ideal for sauces and fondue, takes its name from the French-speaking region from which it comes. **La Maison du Gruyère**, a modern show dairy at the foot of the castle-topped town of Gruyères, tells the story of this rich, creamy, strongly flavored cheese, which has been produced in the Fribourg Alps since at least the 12th century. AOP (*appellation d'origine Protégée*, or protected designation of origin) means the product complies with stringent specifications for processing and is awarded to high-quality Swiss specialties with a strong link to their region of origin. Each wheel (up to 48 made daily) is marked with the notation "Gruyère AOP" to assure its authenticity.

On the self-guided tour through the interactive exhibition at La Maison du Gruyère, headphone-wearing visitors learn—from videos and commentary by Cerise the friendly cow—all the ins and outs of cheese production and through gallery windows see the cheesemakers at work. Interesting facts: 1) The raw milk (unpasteurized milk) from black-and-white Fribourg cows is delivered by 36 farmers twice a day to the dairy (actually located in the village of Pringy); and 2) After the cheese is pressed into a mould, the wheel is plunged into a salt bath and aged in a cellar containing 7,000 other wheels. A tour highlight is tasting Gruyère at three different stages of ripening—six, eight and 10 months.

The Le Gruyère region's Cheese Dairy Trail (*Le Sentier des Fromageries*) passes by cow-dotted pastures and shingle-roofed Alpine chalets where cheese is made the old-fashioned way in wood-fired cauldrons. The hike from the modern show dairy in Pringy to Moleson takes about two hours and can include a fondue meal at an 18th century chalet in Moleson. Groups also can enjoy fondue and other cheese dishes at traditional eateries in Gruyères and at La Maison's restaurant. For a light-as-air dessert, try a regional treat—crisp, doughy meringue topped with double cream.

In the Engelberg countryside of central Switzerland, the **Alpine Cheese Trail** links eight mountain dairies on a hiking/biking route that affords chances to chat with farmers, take a tour, buy cheese and perhaps have a meal featuring fondue or *raclette* (melted cheese scrapings served with small potatoes and pickles, a Swiss specialty). Doing the whole trail takes two or three days, but it can be done in sections, and cable car rides shorten the trip.

In the town of Engelberg, groups can arrange a tour or an artisan cheese-making demonstration or class at **Kloster Engelberg**, the only Swiss monastery with a show dairy. They also can dine on fondue or *raclette* in the restaurant and shop for cheeses, including the famous Engelberger Klosterglocke, a mild cheese pressed into the shape of a monastery bell.

To Americans and many others around the world, the term Swiss cheese means the kind full of holes. Officially known as Emmentaler, the "King of Cheese" comes from the Emmental Valley in the heart of Alps. On a tour of **Emmentaler Show Dairy** in Affoltern im Emmental, groups can learn how the holes (or "eyes") form during ripening.

The Emmental Valley also is home to Switzerland's most popular cookie brand—

**Kambly**. The iconic Swiss family company was founded in 1910 and is run today by the fourth generation of the Kambly family. Kambly makes dozens of cookie varieties (many with chocolate) at its plant in Trubschachen, but the simple Bretzeli is the most famous. A thin disc made with fresh butter and eggs from Emmental farms and flour from the village mill, the Bretzeli is produced according to the same recipe that founder Oscar Kambly I borrowed from his grandmother.

The Kambly Experience visitor center offers a multimedia presentation and a show confectionery where visitors can watch the master confectioners at work. The factory shop invites guests to sample as many of the 100 different cookie and cracker varieties as they want. Groups can book a baking class conducted by a master confectioner. The Kambly Train offers easy and direct access from Bern and Lucerne to Trubschachen. The "Kambly Roundtrip" is a picturesque five-hour trip by train and boat that is covered by the Swiss Travel Pass.

The Emmental Valley tourism office markets a one-night package ideal for faith-based groups. Titled "Living History: On the Path of the Emmental Anabaptists," the tour combines the Kambly Experience and Emmentaler Show Dairy with visits to a farmhouse hideout used centuries ago by Anabaptists and a castle where members of the persecuted religious sect were imprisoned. Groups stay overnight at Sumiswald Castle, built in 1225 and now a modern B&B.

The GoldenPass-MOB line's **Chocolate Train**, popular with groups, provides a day-long foodie adventure (May-October) that indulges passions for cheese as well as chocolate. From Montreux tour participants travel in first-class Belle Epoque carriages to Montbovon, enjoying coffee and chocolate bread en route. Then they are transferred by bus to La Maison du Gruyère,

with time to explore the streets of medieval Gruyères, and La Maison Cailler, returning to Montreux by road in late afternoon.

The **Cheese Train** (*Train du Fromage*), another GoldenPass-MOB special from Montreux (or Zweisimmen), takes passengers to the Pays d'Enhaut area in the Lake Geneva region for fondue and a demonstration of traditional cheese making over a wood fire at a rustic restaurant in Château d'Oex. Cheeses and regional wine are served on board, and the program includes a folklore or hot air balloon museum. The Cheese Train runs every Friday-Sunday between January and April.

Beer aficionados can gain insight into Switzerland's brewing industry in locations throughout the country, which claims more breweries per capita than any other. Every fourth glass of beer drunk in Switzerland is a Feldschlösschen brand of **Feldschlösschen Brewery** in Rheinfelden, a short drive east of Basel. Two-hour tours with beer tasting await groups at the nation's largest brewery, which also brews other brands. The company boasts one of the world's most beautiful brewhouses, a castellated 19th-century building containing 12 original copper tanks. Separate tours spotlight the brewery's vintage car collection and stables housing draft horses that pull beer wagons in parades and appear at other special events (reminiscent of the Budweiser Clydesdales in America).

For something with a higher alcoholic content, kirsch (or Kirschwasser) from the cherry-growing region of central Switzerland is worth investigating. The organization Kirschstrasse (translated "cherry schnapps street") conducts tours, with tastings of the clear brandy, at the **Arnold Dettling Kirschwasser Distillery** in Brunnen. Another option: Make your own cherry schnapps at a farm in Arth with a distillery dating back to the 17th century. In Zug, tours of **Etter Sons Distillery** also reveal what goes into its kirsch and other fruit brandies.

Kirsch makes its way into some Swiss chocolates, and it flavors Zug cherry cake (*Zuger Kirschtorte*), a specialty of Zug for nearly a century and a favorite delicacy throughout Switzerland. On a program organized by Zug's tourism office, foodies watch the bakers at **Confiserie Speck** craft the "Queen of Tarts," a torte with layers of hazelnut-almond meringue, sponge cake and butter cream—and a generous dousing of Zug kirsch. After the demonstration, they enjoy a piece with coffee or tea in Zug's oldest tea room.

How appropriate that we conclude our discussion of Switzerland's culinary landscape on a high note—with dessert.

Bon appétit!

For more information, visit [MySwitzerland.com/Food](https://www.myswitzerland.com/food). 🇨🇭



Master confectioners at the Kambly Experience visitor center demonstrate their cookie-making skills.

Kambly



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**Chillon Castle sits on a rock island at the eastern end of Lake Geneva.**

*Switzerland Tourism*





# CASTLES, PALACES & MONASTERIES

Visions of the Old World come to life in Switzerland

By Don Heimburger

**A**ny group trip to Switzerland can be enhanced by taking a step back in time. And what better way to time-travel than visiting the many castles, palaces and monasteries. They serve as an open book to this country's rich heritage.

In Switzerland, there are dozens of captivating stories and treasures behind castle gates, palace doors and monastery walls, all waiting to be discovered and enjoyed. And because Switzerland is about the size of Vermont, it's easy to reach these historic places by car, train, bus or boat.

Here is an overview of some of these Swiss gems:

## CELEBRATED CASTLES

Exquisite **Chillon Castle**, the most visited historic building in Switzerland, rests on the banks of Lake Geneva near Montreux and sits at the foot of the majestic Bernese Alps. For nearly four centuries, Chillon was the residence and toll station of the counts of Savoy. Visitors can tour the dungeon, medieval kitchen, halls and sleeping rooms, and see collections of ancient furniture and pewter. Lord Byron made the castle famous in his poem *The Prisoner of Chillon*.

The 1020 **Habsburg Castle**, in the small town of Habsburg near the Aare River, is a medieval jewel. Hardly any other family has shaped European history as much as the Habsburgs. The remains of the front castle invite you to wander and climb, and the majestic castle behind hosts a permanent exhibition on the dynasty's colorful past. The most scenic way to approach the castle is to walk on

winding forest trails from the town of Brugg.

The 11th-century **Hallwyl Castle**, one of the foremost "water castles" in Switzerland, is located at the northern end of Lake Hallwil on two islands near Seengen. The impressive complex, open to the public since 1925, was the family seat of the minor nobility of Hallwyl for 800 years. Members of this lineage made their mark on the battlefields of the old Swiss Confederacy, at the European courts, in science, politics, commerce and the world of finance.

**Munot Castle** is a large, circular 16th-century Renaissance fortification crowning a round hill in the center of Schaffhausen.

Surrounded by vineyards, the fortress serves as a symbol of this city on the Upper Rhine. The earliest presence of a castle dates to 1379, but the Munot was built between 1564 and 1589. Fallow deer were introduced to the fortress moat in 1905 and can still be viewed grazing happily undisturbed on the grass below the stone walls. The castle's night watchman is exceptionally skilled at leading tours.

**Castelgrande**, the oldest of a trio of castles in Bellinzona, was built on a site first fortified in the 4th century. Easily identified by its two stone towers, the medieval monument stands on a flat-topped hill near



**Hallwyl Castle.**

Aargau Tourism/Michel Jaussi

the town center. It features two restaurants and a courtyard that's perfect for picnics. **Montebello Castle** was built in the 14th century, expanded in the 15th century and renovated in the early 1900s. The castle affords sweeping panoramas of the city and is home to the Civic Museum, which showcases archaeological artifacts from prehistoric burial sites in the region. The third castle, **Sasso Corbaro**, dates from 1479 and houses exhibition halls and an excellent restaurant. The Sforzas built the geometrical structure after the defeat of Milanese troops at the Battle of Giornico; it was designed and completed in just six months.

**Gruyères Castle**, a 13th-century landmark ensconced atop the quaint town of the same name, offers grand vistas of Fribourg canton's Alpine foothills. Treasures include stained-

glass windows dating from the Middle Ages and capes belonging to Charles the Bold's Knights of the Order of the Golden Fleece. Storytellers in medieval costume recount the legends of the castle and region on entertaining guided walks. There's also a multimedia show. The castle pairs well with a visit to nearby La Maison du Gruyère AOP, a show dairy where Gruyère cheese is made.

### IMPRESSIVE MONASTERIES

It's said that in St. Gallen you will find history at every turn, especially in its Abbey District. The spirit of the early Benedictine monks is discernible when you enter the famous Abbey Library, the world's oldest library, at the **Abbey and Convent of St. Gall**, also known for its Baroque

cathedral. The convent, including the library and monastery archives, was added to the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1983.

Pilgrims have been visiting the extraordinary **Monastery of Einsiedeln** for more than 1,000 years. Founded by the Benedictine monk Meinrad in 835, the Baroque complex, a major station on the Way of St. James, lies amid a breathtaking landscape with a deep blue lake and jagged mountaintops. The black marble Mercy Chapel in the monastery church contains the precious 15th-century Black Madonna.

The internationally-renowned **Convent of St. John** in Mustair contains the largest collection of early medieval frescoes from around the 800 period. The UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site owes its existence to Charlemagne, being one of the few architectural examples from the Carolingian period. At the museum in the Planta Tower, visitors can view some of the convent's inner workings and an exhibition presenting 1,200 years of monastic and architectural history. At the convent's guesthouse and chapel, visitors may join in church prayers and the Eucharist. The smaller Holy Cross Chapel features Europe's oldest dated wooden beam ceiling. The area is bordered by the Swiss National Park.

**Disentis Monastery**, located southeast of Lucerne, is the spiritual and educational center of the Upper Rhine Valley and the oldest Benedictine abbey north of the Alps. Founded around 720, it has a museum with ecclesiastical art and exhibits on abbey history. Benedictine monks welcome visitors at their hourly prayers and at the celebration of the Eucharist.

What's special about **Rapperswil Monastery** at Rapperswil-Jona is that guests can truly immerse themselves in the life of the monastery community.

Guests are asked to participate in the religious services and meditations during their time there, and men and women of all denominations and religions are welcome. Guests are assigned an accompanying brother or sister, and the length of the stay is decided in advance, but always starts and ends on a Sunday. Rapperswil-Jona, located on the upper end of Lake Zurich, combines Riviera-type sights, cultural life, hiking and sports possibilities with a Mediterranean holiday atmosphere.

### STATELY PALACES

**Chateau de Prangins**, built in the 18th century with classic architecture by Louis Guiguer, a Swiss banker living in Paris, has hosted illustrious guests from Voltaire to Joseph Bonaparte. Overlooking Lake Geneva, the elegant building is home to one part of the Swiss National Museum. The chateau



**St. Gallen's Abbey District.**

*Mattias Nutt Photography*

features a romantic French-style park and the largest historical vegetable and fruit garden in Switzerland. The permanent exhibition “Noblesse Oblige! Life at a Chateau in the Eighteenth Century” is set in the former reception rooms, which comprise the salon, dining rooms and libraries.

**L’Isle Palace** is Versailles in miniature, a harmoniously designed palace in the French Neo-classical style. Located in the canton of Vaud in the Lake Geneva region, it was built in 1696 for Charles de Chandieu, an officer in the French Army. Purchased by the town in 1877 and now used as a school, it is not open to the public (except for banquets) and can only be admired from the outside.

Pretty **Chateau de Villa**, situated in the middle of rolling vineyards in Sierre, awaits your visit for a fine meal and delectable wines. Raclette is a specialty of the house restaurant. The wine list features some 650 wines from more than 110 wineries in the canton of Valais.

Feed the ducks on the shores of Lake Thun or rest on a bench at **Schadau Park Castle**, built in the Romantic and Neo-Gothic styles between 1846 and 1854. Or you can take a walk along park paths through the woods and across inviting



**Stockalper Palace.**

*Switzerland Tourism*

meadows. Catch great views of the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau peaks and then have brunch, lunch, tea or dinner in the castle restaurant and stay the night in one of the luxurious rooms.

In Brig-Glis, **Stockalper Palace**, built by Kaspar Stockalper in the 1600s, is an extension of his ancestors’ mansion. The massive palace is the largest Baroque secular building in Switzerland and was nicknamed the “houses and the chapel of

the Three Kings” by Stockalper, who was one of the most significant figures in the history of the canton of Valais. Stockalper was a statesman, politician, builder and jack-of-all-trades who amassed an impressive fortune. On the ground level, a museum features exhibitions on the history of the Simplon Pass and is the starting point for tours.

For more information, visit [MySwitzerland.com/Castles](https://www.myswitzerland.com/castles). 



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# A WINTER PARADISE

With some of the world's best slopes and majestic mountain backdrops, Switzerland is an ideal place for skiing and other snow sports

By Jason Paha

*Snowshoeing in the Prättigau, near Davos.*

*Switzerland Tourism*





**F**ew countries are better suited to help visitors attain mental and physical wellness than Switzerland. Thanks to picturesque scenery, charming towns and delectable food from border to border, there's never a bad time to visit this immaculate land. Lovers of outdoor winter activities particularly appreciate Switzerland's mountainous terrain, which provides some of the finest skiing, snowboarding, hiking and tobogganing in the world.

Here are some bucket-list locations where guests can get outside and enjoy a myriad of winter activities:

### ANDERMATT

Formerly a quaint mountain village, Andermatt has developed a reputation as one of Europe's premier skiing destinations. Located in the heart of the Swiss Alps, Andermatt is home to SkiArena Andermatt-Sedrun, central Switzerland's largest ski resort. This resort contains two ski areas featuring splendidly groomed slopes for freeriders, well-maintained hiking trails and sunny snowshoe trails.

Andermatt boasts one of the best snowfall records in the Alps, with a winter season that typically runs from mid-November to late April. The northern slopes of the nearby Gemsstock mountain are perfectly suited for advanced skiers, while the well-lit slopes in the Andermatt-Oberalp-Sedrun ski area are better suited to intermediates. Andermatt is also an ideal spot for toboggan runs as it offers a slew of trails perfect for the entire family.

When your day of playing on the snow has concluded, the historic village of Andermatt resonates with Alpine charm and is a perfect destination in which to unwind. Another delicious way to cap your outing is to savor views over the Oberalp while eating fondue in a cable car. As guests dip their bread into the cheese, Andermatt's lights sparkle below while the moon illuminates the mountain backdrop. A delectable chocolate dessert caps off this magical meal.

### AROSA-LENZERHEIDE

The mountain villages of Arosa and Lenzerheide in eastern Switzerland are connected by an aerial cableway, enabling skiers to enjoy 140 miles of slopes and hiking trails. This luminous wonderland offers countless amounts of guaranteed snow and diverse slopes, and its state-of-the-art lifts allow transfers from one side of the valley to the other. Between frozen forests and shimmering lakes, the snowy landscape is superb for winter hiking, cross-country skiing and tobogganing. A spectacular way to start your day in Lenzerheide is to watch

the sunrise from the top of a mountain, gazing out over freshly prepared snow. The Proschieri ski lift and Statzertali chair lift both start running at 6:30 a.m. to take skiers up the mountainside. The Alp Statz mountain restaurant offers a delightful breakfast buffet (served from 8 a.m.) to reward early risers.

Arosa and Lenzerheide are home to more than 40 mountain restaurants offering a variety of delicacies. With an impressive range of mountain peaks around both towns, guests will be wowed by the sightlines.

### BERN

The capital of Switzerland is a thriving city filled with museums and collections. When winter arrives, Bern embraces a variety of fun-filled winter experiences. One such experience is the Lombachalp Trail, an unspoiled landscape surrounded by the Hohgant and Augstmatthorn peaks. Teeming with ancient spruce and pine forests, the snowshoe trail leads guests through a multitude of idyllic winter scenes. Tobogganers will appreciate Tschentalp, Adelboden's local mountain, which provides a range of runs that form a nearly nine-mile network of descents of varying levels of difficulty.

**Schilthorn:** A summit in the Bernese Alps, Schilthorn is the highest-altitude skiing area in the Bernese Oberland with the finest view of the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau mountains. Schilthorn is a skiing Mecca, featuring steep slopes, long downhill runs and a modern transport system. It is also an excellent locale for snowboarders, thanks to Skyline Snowpark, an alluring facility designed for freeskiers and snowboarders of all ages.

**Jungfrau Region:** Some describe the Jungfrau region near Bern as Europe's most dramatic mountain scenery and with the backdrop of the aforementioned Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau mountains, few would argue. Outdoor enthusiasts can savor activities of all types as skiers can embrace Jungfrau's gentle slopes, steep drops and pristine snow while snowboarders can perform their craft in two snow parks. A specialty of the Jungfrau region is ice climbing, as a number of frozen waterfalls make enticing climbing partners.

**Interlaken:** Residing in the German-speaking heart of Switzerland close to Bern,

Interlaken offers outdoor devotees some of the most dramatic skiing in the Alps. With pistes reaching more than 8,000 feet, skiers and snowboarders can savor Interlaken year-round. While Interlaken's slopes have a modern touch, the region has maintained its Old World charm, including a 100-year-old cogwheel train that transports skiers and snowboarders to the famed Jungfrauoch mountain pass (11,370 feet).



**Cross-country trek in Davos.**

*Destination Davos Klosters*

### DAVOS

Those aiming to experience Switzerland's largest ski resort and Europe's highest elevated city can visit Davos in the Swiss Alps. With an elevation of 5,118 feet, Davos is a popular locale for downhill and cross-country ski zealots. Davos, along with the nearby village of Klosters, comprises six separate snow sports resorts: the freestyle mountain Jakobshorn; the ski classic Parsenn; family-friendly mountains Madrisa and Rinerhorn; the slower Schatzalp ski area; and the freeride mountain Pischa. This adds up to 187 miles of guaranteed snow pistes. It also features five sledge runs for tobogganers and is ideal for ice sport enthusiasts and winter walkers thanks to its miles of cross-country trails and Europe's largest outdoor ice rink.

Davos also has plenty of off-mountain activities as it has an abundance of restaurants, night clubs, hotel bars, a theater, a concert hall, a casino and a winter sports

museum. Klosters, the resort down the road, is connected to the same ski circuit, making it easy to explore both villages. Smaller in size, Klosters offers a bounty of shopping, nightlife and cultural events.

### ENGELBERG

Originally a monastery village, this mountain resort has morphed into a modern winter sports paradise. Known for its tremendous skiing, Engelberg, which is situated within the Uri Alps mountain range and resides 22 miles from Lucerne, is home to Titlis Ski Resort. Covering an altitude difference of 6,561 feet from Mt. Titlis to the village below, the resort is an ideal destination for skiers and snowboarders. Boasting 51 miles of slopes, Titlis offers many skiing, snowboarding and sledding options with the longest downhill run covering more than seven miles.

Thanks to the Titlis glacier and modern snow-making facilities, the winter sports season runs about eight months, from October until May. When guests are not on the slopes, they can visit the rustic town of Engelberg, which contains homes from the Belle Epoque era, and a Benedictine monastery that was founded in 1120.

### VALAIS

A breathtakingly diverse landscape awaits visitors to the canton of Valais, as does the legendary Matterhorn mountain, which soars to a height of 14,692 feet. Located in southern Switzerland and bordering Italy and France, Valais is home to more than 70 ski areas, including some of the world's most famous names. Among them are Crans-Montana, Verbier and Zermatt, the only place on the continent that allows skiing 365 days a year.

**Crans-Montana:** The neighboring resorts of Crans and Montana reside on a sun-splashed plateau high above the Rhone Valley. Together, they form one of the most popular holiday destinations in Valais. The two villages offer an expansive natural landscape and panoramic views of the Valais Alps. Ski slopes stretch to the Plaine Morte Glacier while frozen golf courses make perfect settings for cross-country skiers and hikers. Crans-Montana also combine to provide big-brand shopping, lavish nightclubs and traditional bars.

**Verbier:** This Alpine village is renowned for both its skiing and nightlife. With numerous bars and discotheques, Verbier lays claim to some of the best nightlife in the Swiss Alps and has been described

as "Ibiza in the snow." Located high up at nearly 5,000 feet above sea level, Verbier is an eye-catching ski resort that is part of the interconnected 4 Vallees, which collectively is the largest ski area in Switzerland and offers 256 miles of ski runs.

**Zermatt:** Enthusiasts flock to Switzerland's highest ski resort to experience ideal skiing with miles of pistes and slopes. With an elevation of 5,276 feet, Zermatt lies below the iconic Matterhorn peak and has a legendary reputation among skiers and mountaineers. More than 248 miles of hiking trails lead through and out of the Matter Valley, including trails that date back to the 13th century. The town is a car-free zone and its main street is lined with boutique shops, hotels and restaurants. An interesting place to stay is the Igloo Village Zermatt, where guests can enjoy an uncluttered view of the Matterhorn from the vantage point of an igloo. Zermatt's lively ski scene encompasses 54 mountain railways and lifts. Nocturnal members of your group will appreciate a traditional Swiss cheese fondue before engaging in a nighttime ski down the Rothorn mountain, the slope illuminated only by the moon.

For more information, visit [MySwitzerland.com/Winter](http://MySwitzerland.com/Winter). 



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# SPECIAL EVENTS

## ACROSS SWITZERLAND

Check the calendar and add a festive element to your itinerary

By Randy Mink



*Flower-bedecked cattle make their autumn descent from mountain pastures high above the Simmental Valley of southwestern Switzerland.*

*Lenk-Simmental Tourism*

**A** trip to Switzerland typically revolves around gorgeous scenery and time-honored tourist attractions, but why not spice it up with a special event that provides a fresh look at the Swiss way of life. If the time of year is right, consider working in a religious procession, holiday shopping or a color-splashed parade of cows passing through an Alpine village. How about a wrestling festival?

Here are some options that will add a magical twist to the itinerary:

### ALPINE ASCENTS/DESCENTS

As summer approaches, communities in Alpine regions host festive processions of costumed herdsmen and women moving elaborately decorated cows, sheep and goats from farms in the valley for three months of grazing in high-mountain pastures. At the end of September, the ritual is repeated as the animals return to the valley for the winter. Such photogenic events may include street parades and other festivities heralding this seasonal phenomenon in the agricultural cycle.

### ALPHORN CONCERTS WITH FLAG-TWIRLING

On Wednesday evenings from June through August, the town of Brunnen showcases two of the oldest traditions in the Alpine regions. Spectators flock to the shore of Lake Lucerne to see twirlers artfully send flags fluttering through the air and listen to costumed musicians playing the alphorn, a long wooden tube with a cup-shaped mouthpiece. Originally used by herdsmen to call in animals from the pasture and to communicate with people on the mountain and in the valley below, the alphorn today is a musical instrument and a revered symbol of Swiss heritage.

### LARGEST SWISS FLAG IN THE WORLD

Every year in northeastern Switzerland, a mammoth flag measuring 262 feet square is hung for two consecutive days on a sheer rock face of Säntis Mountain. The spectacle celebrates the July 31 birthday of the Säntis aerial tramway, which opened in 1935, and Swiss National Day, an August 1 holiday that marks the founding of the Swiss Confederation in 1291. The flag, weighing 1,543 pounds, is mounted by 20 rope-access technicians who typically have to deal with extreme weather. After a 10-minute cable car ride from Schwagalp Pass to the summit (8,208 feet above sea level), visitors enjoy 360-degree



**Flag twirling in Brunnen.**

*Switzerland Tourism*

panoramas, with views of six countries on a clear day.

### BASEL TATTOO

This military musical event, held for a week every July in Basel, brings together bands, dance troupes and other performers from around the world. Staged nightly in the arena at former barracks on the banks of the Rhine, shows present not only military bands but all music genres, from rock to classical. A highlight of the week is the Basel Tattoo Parade, which attracts 100,000 spectators. Food stands in the streets around the arena add to the festive ambience. Basel Tattoo, the second-largest tattoo after the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, is set for July 16-24, 2021.

### HOLY WEEK PROCESSIONS IN MENDRISIO

During Easter week, the story of Jesus Christ's final hours on Earth comes to life on the ancient streets of Mendrisio, a small town in the Italian-speaking canton of Ticino. The evening procession on Maundy Thursday depicts Christ's journey to Calvary, featuring musicians, torch bearers, horses and 200 magnificently costumed actors playing Jews, Romans and a cross-bearing Christ. Good Friday's pageantry is more solemn and portrays Christ's burial. Grandstand seating on the Piazza del Ponte is available.

Mendrisio's processions can be traced back to around 1600, and in 2019 they were awarded inclusion in UNESCO's prestigious Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

### CHRISTMAS MARKETS

Parks, plazas and historic city centers all across Switzerland are transformed into winter wonderlands in the weeks leading up to Christmas Day. At festive holiday markets set up in towns big and small, it's fun nibbling goodies, imbibing warm beverages and shopping for handcrafted gifts at snug little huts trimmed in evergreen garlands and twinkly lights. With spiced wine, fresh gingerbread, roasted chestnuts, joyful music and happy people all around, it's easy to get into the yuletide spirit. Advent season is Switzerland at its cozy best.

### WRESTLING FESTIVALS

Called Schwingen, the Swiss form of wrestling is a traditional sport that has seen an upsurge in recent times. Originally a pastime among herdsmen and farmers, Schwingen has expanded into urban areas but is still most popular in rural German-speaking areas of the Alpine foothills. The sport in Switzerland has its own rules, grips and throws. Matches at Schwingen festivals are duels between two powerful competitors overseen by a referee on the sawdust and two judges at the table. A bout last five minutes and ends when a wrestler touches the ground with his back (both shoulder blades must be within the sawdust circle). Regulations require that the winner wipes the sawdust from the shoulders of the loser. As Schwingen is an amateur sport, no prize money is given, but the winner receives a wreath and gifts.

For more information, visit [MySwitzerland.com/Events](https://www.myswitzerland.com/events). 



**Wrestling, Swiss-style.**

*Switzerland Tourism*





# TREASURE HOUSES OF ART

Art lovers in Switzerland have a wide variety of museums from which to choose

By Jason Paha

**S**witzerland's brilliant landscape and snow-capped Alps are so stunning that visitors to this beautiful country are reticent to spend too much time indoors.

Lovers of fine art, though, will find Switzerland's many museums offer an incredible array of indoor allure, from classic and contemporary art to astounding photographs.

Here are some of the finest art museums Switzerland has to offer:

## CENTRE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY

See the world through a creative lens in this museum. Founded in 1993, the Centre for Photography in Winterthur is dedicated to chronicling photography as an art form. Consisting of the Fotomuseum Winterthur and Fotostiftung Schweiz, the Centre for Photography ranks among the best art museums in Switzerland. The two independent institutions each have a different aim in the jointly-run center: The Fotostiftung Schweiz focuses on Swiss photography from its beginnings to the present with a particular emphasis on Swiss photography from the 20th century. The Winterthur Museum of Photography examines contemporary photography in the context of individual works by acclaimed photographers.

## FONDATION BEYELER

This museum in Riehen/Basel is lovely both inside and out. The aesthetically pleasing Fondation Beyeler building is located in an English landscape park that features aged trees, a water lily pond and a pavilion overlooking cornfields, vineyards and the foothills of the Black Forest. Inside

the museum, guests can savor the 250 masterpieces of Hildy and Ernst Beyeler, who were renowned as perhaps Europe's pre-eminent dealers in modern art. The museum houses works from artists such as Marlene Dumas, a contemporary South African artist and painter; Gerhard Richter, a German visual artist who produced abstract and photorealistic paintings; and Ferdinand Hodler, one of the best-known Swiss painters of the 19th century. Presentations are accompanied by a calendar of readings, talks and guided tours.

## KUNSTHAUS ZURICH

Located in Zurich, the Kunsthaus Zurich houses some of the most important art collections in Switzerland. This collection spans from the Middle Ages to contemporary art, with an emphasis on Swiss art and includes major works by Claude Monet, Pablo Picasso and Alberto Giacometti along with a host of other Swiss artists. Leading representatives of the Expressionist movement along with a meaningful collection of Classic Modernism makes this museum a must-visit for art lovers. With some 19,000 members, its patron association, the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft, is one of the largest of its kind in Europe.

## KUNSTMUSEUM BASEL

Housing the largest and most significant public art collection in Switzerland, Kunstmuseum Basel was dubbed the fifth best museum on the planet in 2013 by the *London Times*. The museum, which is made up of three buildings, encompasses more than 100,000 square feet. The original museum, finished in 1936, contains art ranging from the 15<sup>th</sup> century to 1950, including the largest collection of works by the Holbein family, an influential German family of artists in the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Other pieces on display include paintings from Vincent van Gogh and Switzerland's Arnold Böcklin and Ferdinand Hodler.

## MAMCO

In 1994, Geneva's modern art museum was opened in a 1950s factory building. Containing large windows, huge rooms and expansive floors, this museum offers a spacious home for numerous art collections. Since it opened, the museum has staged 450 exhibitions with works dating from the 1960s to the present day. MAMCO's opening re-invigorated a cultural district in the now gallery-filled and trendy Quartier des Bains neighborhood. One of the premier events in the neighborhood is the *Nuit des Bains* ("baths night," a name that stems from the fact public baths used to take place there), which is held three times per year. During this event, the arts district is transformed into a large gallery and attracts thousands of people each night.

## MASI LUGANO - MUSEO D'ARTE DELLA SVIZZERA ITALIANA

Founded in 2015, MASI Lugano has become one of the most visited art museums in Switzerland. Born from the union between the Cantonal Art Museum and the Art Museum of the City of Lugano, the merger

brought together two institutes that had been working since 2012. In its two locations – at the LAC cultural center and the Palazzo Reali – it offers a rich exhibition program with temporary exhibitions and new collections. MASI is equipped with an artistic heritage of more than 14,000 works covering a historical period ranging from the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century to the present day.

## MUSÉE DE L'ELYSÉE

The internationally renowned Musée de l'Elysée in Lausanne is one of the world's leading museums dedicated to photography. Established in 1985, the museum aims to improve the public's understanding of photography through innovative exhibitions, key publications and engrossing events. The museum hosts a one-of-a-kind collection of more than one million phototypes including collections from Charlie Chaplin, Ella Maillart, a Swiss adventurer and photographer, and Nicolas Bouvier, a Swiss traveler, writer and photographer. The building that houses the museum is exceptionally photogenic: an 18th-century villa with views of Lake Geneva.

## MUSEUM FÜR GESTALTUNG ZÜRICH

Switzerland's foremost museum of design and visual communication, the Museum für Gestaltung Zurich contains an acclaimed collection comprising more than half a million objects from the history of design. Founded in 1875, the museum reaches a broad national and international audience at its two sites in Zurich and through touring exhibitions. It features four collections: Poster, Design, Graphics and Applied Art, which encompass more than 500,000 objects. The newly refurbished main building of the museum is located just a few minutes' walk from Zurich's main train station, and is a sublime example of Swiss modernist architecture. The new Swiss Design Lounge



**Musée de l'Elysée in Lausanne is a world-class showcase of photographic art.**

*Musée de l'Elysée/Cecilia Suarez*

invites visitors to relax and experience contemporary Swiss furniture while sampling goods from the museum cafe.

## MUSEUM TINGUELY

Located directly on the Rhine River, the Museum Tinguely in Basel is home to the world's largest collection of art by Jean Tinguely, a Swiss sculptor famous for his moving mechanical sculptures. Tinguely (1925-1991) is considered one of the most innovative and important Swiss artists of the 20th century. A variety of Tinguely's kinetic art sculptures and interactive exhibitions are on permanent display, complemented with illustrations, photographs and other documents related to the artist's life and work. Tinguely's wife, Niki de Saint Phalle, has donated 55 sculptures to the museum, and special exhibitions present the works of a variety of artists and subjects including Marcel Duchamp, a French-American painter and sculptor whose work was associated with Cubism and Dadaism; and Kurt Schwitters, a German artist who worked in several genres including Dadaism, Constructivism and Surrealism.

## ZENTRUM PAUL KLEE

The iconic Zentrum Paul Klee in Bern, which opened in 2005, is dedicated to the life and work of Paul Klee (1879-1940). With around 4,000 pieces, the museum has the most significant collection of paintings and drawings from Klee's work. Swiss-born, Klee is regarded as one of the 20th century's most important artists. His individual style was influenced by movements in art that included Expressionism, Cubism and Surrealism. Designed by star Italian architect Renzo Piano and built on the outskirts of the capital city, the museum's three curved hills and gently contoured lines blend into the surrounding rolling landscape. Enclosed by fields and a spacious park, the center provides an ideal area for walking.

For more information, visit [MySwitzerland.com/Museums](https://www.myswitzerland.com/museums). 



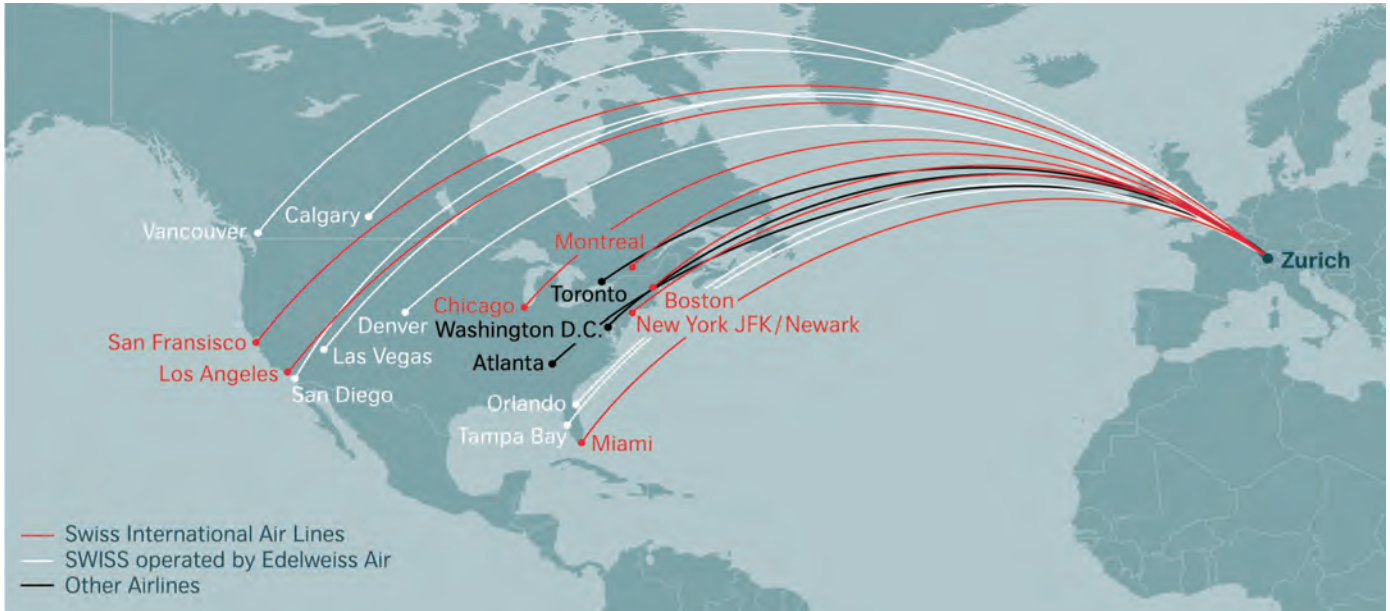
**Examining a work by Holbein at Kunstmuseum Basel.**

*Basel Tourism*





# SWITZERLAND FAST FACTS



Swiss Travel System

## 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 **130 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 more than **500 museums** in Switzerland and are entitled to a **50 percent discount** on most mountain excursions by cable car or cogwheel train.

## 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 (18 to 28 degrees Celsius); in spring and autumn 46° to 59°F (8° to 15°C). In January and February the range is 28° to 45°F (-2° to 7°C). 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 (1:1 with the US dollar). 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**.

## Peace of Mind

In response to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, Switzerland's hotels, restaurants, trains, cable cars and other tourism service providers have undertaken stringent protocols to ensure a safe and healthy travel experience. Clean & Safe, launched by Switzerland Tourism, signifies adherence to these special protection measures. For more information, visit **www.clean-and-safe.ch**.



Lucerne Tourism

## Agent Training

Sign up for the **eLearning program, Switzerland Travel 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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The world  
has changed.

Our quality  
standards haven't.