



Switzerland

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Best Places to Eat

- Chez Vrony (p1122)
- Alpenrose (p1132)
- Grottino 1313 (p1125)
- Volkshaus Basel (p1134)

Best Places to Stay

- SYHA Basel St Alban Youth Hostel (p1133)
- Hotel Schweizerhof (p1123)
- Hotel Bahnhof (p1122)
- The Hotel (p1125)

Why Go?

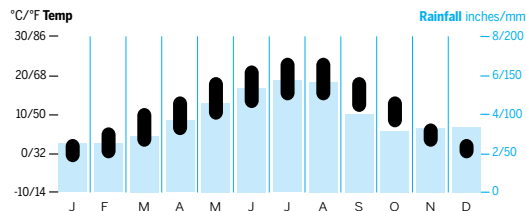
What giddy romance Zermatt, St Moritz and other glitterati-encrusted names evoke. This is *Sonderfall Schweiz* ('special-case Switzerland'), a privileged neutral country set apart from others, proudly idiosyncratic, insular and unique. It's blessed with gargantuan cultural diversity: its four official languages alone speak volumes.

The Swiss don't do half measures: Zürich, their most gregarious urban centre, has cutting-edge art, legendary nightlife and one of the world's highest living standards. The national passion for sharing the great outdoors provides access (by public transport, no less!) to some of the world's most inspiring panoramic experiences.

So don't depend just on your postcard images of Bern's and Lucerne's chocolate-box architecture, the majestic Matterhorn or those pristine lakes – Switzerland is a place so outrageously beautiful it simply must be seen to be believed.

When to Go

Bern



Dec–early Apr
Carve through powder and eat fondue at an alpine resort.

May–Sep Hike in the shadow of the mesmerising Matterhorn and be wowed by its perfection.

Aug Celebrate Swiss National Day on 1 August and witness Swiss national pride in full force.



Switzerland Highlights

- 1 Discover zesty **Zürich** (p1129) via a daytime stroll along the city's sublime lake followed by a rollicking night out.
- 2 Marvel at the iconic Matterhorn and wander around the car-free alpine village of **Zermatt** (p1121).
- 3 Enjoy the charm of famous beauties **Bern** (p1122) and **Lucerne** (p1124); think medieval Old Town appeal, folkloric fountains and art.
- 4 Be wowed by the Eiger's monstrous north face on a ride to the 'top of Europe', 3471m **Jungfrauoch** (p1128).
- 5 Board a boat in **Geneva** for a serene Lake Geneva cruise to medieval **Lausanne** (p1118).
- 6 Ride one of Switzerland's iconic scenic trains, such as the **Bernina Express** (p1135).
- 7 Go Italian at **Lugano** (p1135), with its lovely, temperate lake setting.

GENEVA

POP 189,000

The whole world seems to be in Geneva, Switzerland's second city. The UN, the International Red Cross, the World Health Organization – 200-odd governmental and nongovernmental international organisations fill the city's plush hotels with big-name guests, who feast on an extraordinary choice of cuisine and help prop up the overload of banks, jewellers and chocolate shops for which Geneva is known.

Sights & Activities

The city centre is so compact it's easy to see many of the main sights on foot. Begin your explorations on the southern side of Lake Geneva and visit the **Jardin Anglais** (Quai

du Général-Guisan) to see the **Horloge Fleurie** (Flower Clock). Crafted from 6500 flowers, the clock has ticked since 1955 and sports the world's longest second hand (2.5m).

★ Jet d'Eau

FOUNTAIN

(Quai Gustave-Ador) When landing by plane, this lakeside fountain is the first dramatic glimpse you get of Geneva. The 140m-tall structure shoots up water with incredible force – 200km/h, 1360 horsepower – to create the sky-high plume, kissed by a rainbow on sunny days. At any one time, 7 tonnes of water is in the air, much of which sprays spectators on the pier beneath. Two or three times a year it is illuminated pink, blue or another colour to mark a humanitarian occasion.