



Bernese Oberland

POP 856,300 / AREA 5907 SQ KM / LANGUAGE GERMAN

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Why Go?

Go for the epic outdoors. Whether you're hiking in the fearsome north face of Eiger with a china-blue sky overhead, carving virgin powder on a crisp winter's morning in Gstaad, or gazing up at the mist-enshrouded Staubbach Falls – the Swiss Alps don't get more beautiful than this. And we're talking big, in-your-face, stop-dead-in-your-tracks beauty. Nowhere are the resorts more chocolate box, the peaks higher, the glaciers grander. Fittingly watched over by Mönch (Monk) and Jungfrau (Virgin), the Bernese Oberland sends spirits soaring to heaven.

Mark Twain wrote that no opiate compared to walking here (and he should know), Arthur Conan Doyle thought Meiringen on the banks of turquoise Brienzensee a pretty spot for a Sherlock Holmes whodunnit, while 007 brought the icy wilderness of Schilthorn to cinema screens. Such masters captured the region's allure, but most photographers fail to do so. Listen for the tutting of tourists at postcard carousels trying – and failing – to find something to match their memories.

Best Places to Eat

- » Benacus (p119)
- » Michel's Stallbeizli (p144)
- » Restaurant Schöneegg (p132)
- » Fluss (p137)

Best Places to Stay

- » The Hayloft (p142)
- » Gletschergarten (p125)
- » Hotel Rugenpark (p117)
- » Hotel Victoria (p141)

When to Go

From ritzy Gstaad to picture-postcard Mürren, the slopes hum with skiers and boarders in winter. Come in January to ring in the New Year ogre-style at Harder Potschete in Interlaken and catch the hell-for-leather Lauberhorn and Inferno ski races. Summer is the time for Alpine hiking and open-air folk festivals galore in the Jungfrau Region. Room rates plunge in autumn, when the crowds are few and the weather often fine. At *Almabtriebe* in September, cows wreathed in flower garlands are brought down from the mountains for another winter of dung-shovelling.

Bernese Oberland Highlights

- 1 Get dizzy on the zip-wires, hanging bridges and Eiger views on the *via ferrata* in **Mürren** (p133)
- 2 Hike the classically Alpine **Faulhornweg** (p121), from Schynige Platte to Grindelwald-First
- 3 Be spellbound by 4000m peaks and the ginting Aletsch Glacier at **Jungfrauoch** (p129)
- 4 Do some Sherlock Holmes-style detective work for glorious waterfalls and meringues in **Meiringen** (p140)
- 5 Test your limits canyoning, skydiving, ice climbing and glacier bungee jumping in adventure-sports mecca **Interlaken** (p115)
- 6 Marvel at the 72 waterfalls cascading down the cliffs in the **Lauterbrunnen Valley** (p130)
- 7 Slalom like a celebrity on the glitzy slopes of **Gstaad** (p143)

