



Lake Geneva & Vaud

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Best Places to Eat

- » Café St-Pierre (p63)
- » Auberge de Dully (p67)
- » Hôtel-Restaurant de la Plage (p67)
- » Le Chalet (p77)
- » Café Romand (p63)

Best Places to Stay

- » Hôtel Beau-Rivage Palace (p62)
- » Le Léman (p66)
- » Auberge de Dully (p67)
- » Auberge du Raisin (p68)
- » Riviera Lodge (p70)

Why Go?

East of Geneva, Western Europe's biggest lake stretches like a giant liquid mirror between the French-speaking canton of Vaud (north) and France (south). Known to most as Lake Geneva, French speakers call it Lac Léman. Lined by the elegant student city of Lausanne and a phalanx of pretty smaller towns, the Swiss side of the lake presents the marvellous emerald spectacle of tightly ranked vineyards spreading in terraces up the steep hillsides of the Lavaux area – the source of some very fine tipples. Down by the water's edge, the lake is laced by fairy-tale châteaux, luxurious manor houses and modest beaches, often backed by peaceful woodland. In the mild climate around Montreux, palm trees grow.

Then there are the mountains, the magnificent Alpes Vaudoises (Vaud Alps), in the southeast corner of the canton where hikers play in spring and summer, skiers and boarders in winter.

When to Go

Spring and early autumn, with their warm days and riot of beautiful, perfectly manicured flower beds, are perfect seasons to visit. The lakeside flower trail from Montreux to Château de Chillon and Morges' tulip festival make the month of May a must. July ushers in a twinset of world-renowned fests – Montreux' international jazz get-together and Nyon's multifaceted Paléo music fest – while more boats than ever zig-zag around the lake. Swimming in the lake is most pleasant in July and August, while December translates as skiing in the Vaud Alps.

History

As early as 58 BC, Caesar's troops had penetrated what is now southwestern Switzerland. In the following centuries a mix of Celtic tribes and Romans lived a life of peace and prosperity. Aventicum (today Avenches) became the capital, with as many as 20,000

inhabitants, and numerous other towns (such as Lausanne) flourished.

By the 4th century AD, the Romans had largely pulled out of Switzerland and Germanic tribes stepped into the vacuum. Christianised Burgundians arrived in the southwest in the 5th century and picked



Lake Geneva & Vaud Highlights

- 1 Meander the **Flower Path** from Montreux to Château de Chillon (p72)
- 2 Lap up lovely Lausanne, lingering in its unique **bridge bars** (p65) and the covered staircase linking Old Town to the cathedral and **Musée de l'Art Brut** (p59)
- 3 Walk, drink wine and swoon over vines in Unesco-listed **Lavaux** (p68)
- 4 Tackle the region's twinset of **high peaks** (p70) for a 360-degree vista of terraced vineyards, quaint villages and Europe's largest lake
- 5 Dance to rock, pop and jazz on the lakeshore at world-class music fests **Montreux Jazz** (p72) and **Paléo** (p66) in Nyon
- 6 Be hauled up the mountain in a cogwheel railway to **Rochers de Naye** (p74) and drop in on Santa or the marmots
- 7 Ski the striking Vaud Alps from **Les Diablerets** (p75)
- 8 Discover two thousand years of wine-making in **Aigle** (p76)