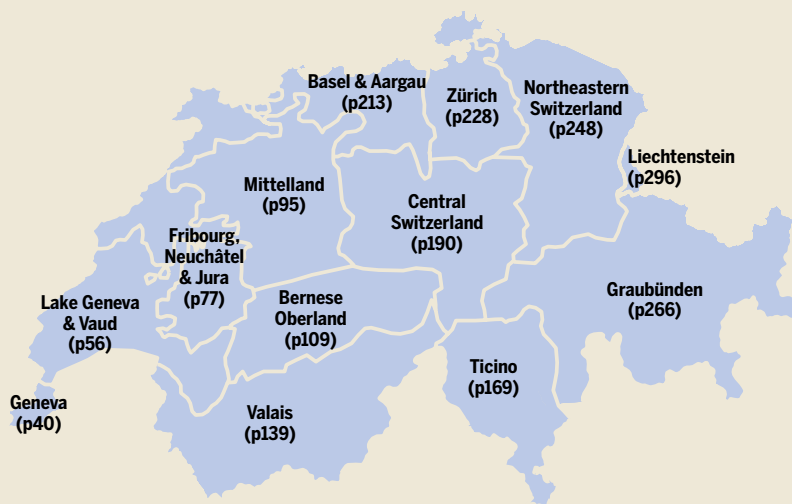




Switzerland



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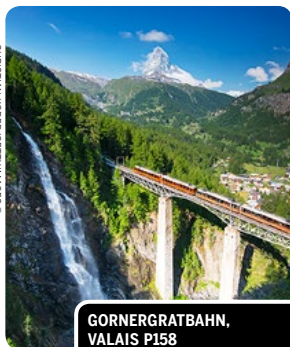
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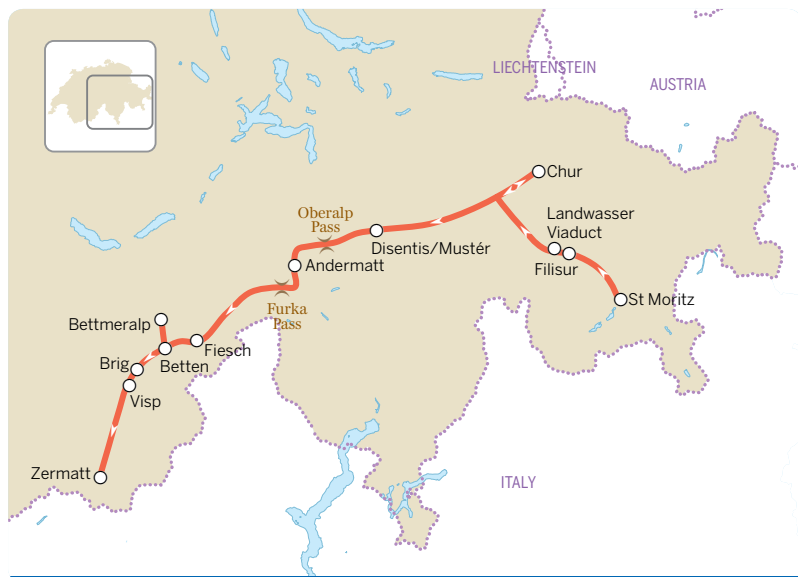
Itineraries



Lost in Graubünden & Ticino

This is a circular route that can be picked up at any point. From **Chur**, head north for a detour to pretty **Maienfeld** and its vineyards. Spin east to ski queens **Klosters** and **Davos**, then surge into the Engadine Valley, with pretty towns like **Guarda** and **Scuol** (with tempting thermal baths). The road then ribbons southeast to the Austrian border, which you cross to head south through a slice of Austria and Italy, before veering back into Switzerland to contemplate frescoes at **Müstair**. Continue southwest through picture-postcard **Zuoz** to chic **St Moritz**. Climb the Julier Pass mountain road and drop down the **Via Mala** gorges to art stop **Zillis**.

The southbound road crosses into Ticino and **Bellinzona**. Steam on past lakeside **Locarno** and up the enchanting **Valle Maggia**. Backtracking to Bellinzona, the main route takes you along the Valle Leventina, with a stop in **Giornico**, before crossing the **St Gotthard Pass** to **Andermatt**. Nip into the monastery of **Disentis/Mustér** before plunging into designer spa waters in highly recommended **Vals**, the last stop before Chur.



The Glacier Express

This mythical, 290km train journey has been a traveller must since 1930 and the birth of winter tourism in the Swiss Alps. Do it any time of the year – in one relentless eight-hour stretch or, perhaps more palatably, as several sweet nuggets interspersed with overnight stays in some of Switzerland's most glamorous Alpine mountain resorts.

This trip is spectacular in either direction, but boarding the cherry-red train in **St Moritz** (grab a seat on the left/southern side of the carriage) in the Upper Engadine Valley makes for a gradual build-up to the journey's inevitable climax: the iconic Matterhorn. About an hour from St Moritz, just after **Filisur**, the train plunges dramatically out of a tunnel onto the six dark limestone arches of the **Landwasser Viaduct** (1901-02), built 65m above the Landwasser River in a considerate, photographer-friendly curve. Switzerland's oldest city and Graubünden capital, **Chur**, about 2½ hours from St Moritz, makes a lovely overnight stop with its quaint old town, historic hotels and busy cafe/bar scene.

From Chur the track snakes along the Rhine Valley, through the spectacular Rhine Gorge (Ruinaulta in Romanesch) with its bizarre limestone rock formations, dubbed Switzerland's Grand Canyon. Next it's a stiff climb up to **Disentis/Mustér**, home to an 18th-century Benedictine monastery, and up still further to the **Oberalp Pass** (2033m) – the literal high point of the journey, snow-covered November to April. Next stop is ski resort **Andermatt**, another perfect place to stretch legs and overnight. The rollercoaster journey continues with a descent then steady climb up to the **Furka Pass**, circumvented by Switzerland's highest Alpine tunnel (and, at 15.4km, the longest of the 91 tunnels on this journey). Next port of call is **Betten**, cable-car station for the drop-dead-gorgeous, car-free village and ski resort of **Bettmeralp**. Hop off here or in neighbouring **Fiesch** and spend a day hiking or skiing and staring wide-mouthed at the gargantuan icy tongue of the Aletsch Glacier.

From here the *Glacier Express* swings southwest along the Rhône Valley into the Valais, stopping at **Brig** with its eclectic *schloss* (castle) topped with exotic onion domes, wine-producing **Visp** and – drumroll – its final destination, **Zermatt**, where that first glimpse of the Matterhorn makes a fitting finale.



Grand Tour

This circular ‘best of Switzerland’ tour starts in **Geneva** with its vibrant museums and signature pencil fountain, from where a slow road leads east along the southern shore of the lake in France – stop for lunch in **Yvoire** – and a fast road (the A1) shadows the Swiss northern shore (lunch stops **Lausanne**, **Vevey** or **Montreux**). The next port of call is art-rich **Martigny** and châteaux-crowned **Sion**, worth lingering in for its wealth of vineyards, wines and memorable Valaisian dining. Continue east along the Rhône Valley, nipping up to **Leukerbad** to drift in thermal waters beneath soaring mountain peaks. In **Visp**, head south to obsessively stare at iconic Matterhorn from the hip streets, slopes and trails of stylish, car-free **Zermatt**.

Second week, get a taste of the *Glacier Express* with a train trip to **Oberwald**. Stop off in **Betten** for a cable-car side trip up to picturebook **Bettmeralp** with its car-free streets and amazing vistas of the 23km-long Aletsch Glacier from atop Bettmerhorn. From Oberwald, drive north over the Grimsel Pass (2165m) to **Meiringen** (eat meringues!) and west into the magnificent Jungfrau Region with its once-in-a-lifetime train journey up to Europe’s highest station; base yourself in **Interlaken** or **Grindelwald**. If you have a penchant for Italian passion rather than hardcore Alpine extremes, stay on the *Glacier Express* as far as **Andermatt** instead, then motor south into Italianate Ticino for shimmering lake life in the glitzy and gorgeous towns of **Lugano** and **Locarno**.

The third week unveils a trip north to **Lucerne** where you can cruise on a boat to lovely Lake Lucerne resorts like **Weggis** and **Brunnen**. Feast on *Kirschtorte* (cherry cake) in rich old medieval **Zug**, then hit big-city **Zürich** to the north to taste urban Switzerland at its best (five days in all). Should you fancy some border-hopping, **Vaduz**, the tiny capital of tiny Liechtenstein, is very close by. Unesco-listed **St Gallen** is the next stop from where you can spend a week lapping up Switzerland’s north – see the Northern Treasures itinerary.

Ending up in the Jura, it’s a quick and easy flit south to **Neuchâtel** on the northern shore of Lac de Neuchâtel, from where the motorway speeds to Lausanne on Lake Geneva and, eventually, Geneva.



City to City

This Geneva-to-Zürich, 385km trip is for urbanites keen to mix metropolitan fire with small-town charm, is eminently doable by car or public transport. Fly into one airport and out the other, or zip back to point A by train in 2¾ hours.

Landing in **Geneva**, explore Switzerland's most cosmopolitan big city then trundle along the shore of Europe's largest Alpine lake to bustling **Lausanne**, a hilly lakeside town with a lively bar and cafe scene and sweet old town. Continue along the same route, aptly dubbed the Swiss Riviera, to the **Lavaux wine region** and beyond, past lakeside Château de Chinon, to **Montreux**. Head north next to **Gruyères**, land of chateaux, cheese, cream and pearly white meringues. Further north, you arrive in **Fribourg** on the French-German language frontier – cross it to pretty Swiss capital **Bern**. Later, drop down to the lakeside towns around **Interlaken** (plenty of top skiing, hiking and other outdoor options around here) then swing north to another bewitching lake lady, **Lucerne**. Rolling onwards to Switzerland's most hip 'n' happening city **Zürich**, via tycoon-magnet **Zug**, the atmosphere changes completely.



Northern Treasures

In spite of all its natural wonders, Switzerland boasts overwhelming man-made beauty too, and there is no finer spot to appreciate this than in **St Gallen**, the seat of a grand abbey and church complex safeguarding one of the world's oldest libraries (hence its privileged Unesco World Heritage Site status). Say cheese in **Appenzell**, a 50-minute journey from St Gallen on a narrow-gauge railway, then bear west along the southern shore of **Lake Constance** (great summer outdoor action) or to **Winterthur** (art museums and a kid-friendly science centre). Both routes end up in **Schaffhausen**, a quaint medieval town that could easily be German. Don't miss standing in the middle of **Rheinfall**, Europe's largest waterfall.

Next up, continue further west to art-rich **Basel**, either direct or via a pretty southwest detour through **Baden** and **Aarau**, two picture-postcard addresses to get lost in cobbled old-town streets. From Basel, it is an easy drive west again into the deepest depths of Switzerland's unexplored Jura. Push west to **La Chaux-de-Fonds** to discover several early works by architect Le Corbusier, who was born here.



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Nicola Williams

Coordinating Author; Geneva; Fribourg; Neuchâtel & Jura; Valais Ever since Nicola moved to a village on the southern side of Lake Geneva, she has never quite been able to shake off that uncanny feeling that she is on holiday – a garden tumbling down the hillside towards that same glittering lake and Switzerland's mysterious Jura mountains beyond is her wake-up call. When not flitting to Geneva, paddle-boarding or kayaking on the lake, skiing, hiking or dipping into a Swiss mountain (or fondue), Nicola can be found at her desk writing. She has worked on numerous titles for Lonely Planet. She blogs at tripalong.wordpress.com and tweets @Tripalong. Nicola also wrote the Plan Your Trip and Survival Guide sections.

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Kerry Christiani

Bernese Oberland; Ticino; Northeastern Switzerland; Graubünden; Liechtenstein

A huge fan of big mountains, long hikes and snowbound chalets, Switzerland was love at first sight for Kerry. She spent stints working in the Bernese Alps post-graduation and used to live just across the border in Germany's Black Forest. Hiking in the remote wilds of the Swiss National Park and lounging on the shores of Lago Maggiore were among her favourite moments researching this

edition. Besides *Switzerland*, Kerry authors/co-authors around a dozen Lonely Planet titles. She tweets @kerrychristiani. Kerry also wrote the Switzerland Outdoors chapter.

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Gregor Clark

Mittelland; Central Switzerland; Basel & Aargau; Zürich Gregor is a 15-year Lonely Planet veteran whose love of the Alps has led to previous gigs writing Alpine sections of Lonely Planet's *Cycling Italy* and *France's Best Trips*. A lifelong polyglot with distant Swiss ancestry, he was thrilled to dust off his *Schwyzer-Dütsch* and return to Switzerland. Memorable research moments this time around included reaching the summit of Titlis on one of the summer's few clear days and mingling with Zürich residents on a warm evening at Frau Gerolds Garten.

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Sally O'Brien

Lake Geneva & Vaud Sally has authored numerous guidebooks for Lonely Planet and has called Switzerland home since she moved to Lausanne in 2007. She lives in the city with her husband and their sons, and makes sure she refers to the large body of water at the bottom of the hill as Lac Léman (never Lake Geneva!) whenever locals are in earshot. Sally also wrote the Understand section.

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