



Lake Geneva & Vaud

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Includes ➔

Lausanne	58
La Côte.....	66
Lavaux Wine Region.....	68
Swiss Riviera.....	70
Vevey.....	70
Montreux.....	72
Northwestern Vaud.....	74
Yverdon-Les-Bains.....	74
The Vaud Alps	74
Leyzin	75
Les Diablerets.....	75
Villars & Gryon.....	76
Pays d'Enhaut.....	76

Why Go?

East of Geneva, Western Europe's biggest lake stretches like a giant liquid mirror between the French-speaking canton of Vaud (to the north) and France (to the south). Known to most as Lake Geneva, it's called Lac Léman by French speakers. 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. Down by the water's edge, the lakeside is graced with fairy-tale châteaux, luxurious manor houses and modest beaches.

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, and skiers and boarders hit the slopes in winter.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Auberge de Dully (p66)
- ➔ Hôtel-Restaurant de la Plage (p67)
- ➔ Le Chalet (p76)
- ➔ Denis Martin (p71)
- ➔ Holy Cow (p63)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Hôtel Beau-Rivage Palace (p62)
- ➔ Hotel Lavaux (p69)
- ➔ Auberge de Dully (p66)
- ➔ La Maison d'Igor (p66)
- ➔ Tralala Hôtel (p73)

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 twin set of world-renowned fests – the international jazz get-together in Montreux 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 January and February are for 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.

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 up the Vulgar Latin tongue that was the precursor to French. Absorbed by the Franks, Vaud became part of the Holy Roman Empire in 1032.

In the 12th and 13th centuries the dukes of Savoy slowly assumed control of Vaud and embarked on the construction of impressive



Lake Geneva & Vaud Highlights

1 Meander the Flower Path from Montreux to **Château de Chillon** (p73).

2 Linger in Lausanne's unique **bridge bars** (p64) and visit the **Musée Olympique** (p61).

3 Walk, drink wine and swoon over vines in UNESCO-listed **Lavaux** (p68).

4 Tackle the region's twin **high peaks** (p69) for a 360-degree vista of vineyards, villages and Europe's largest lake.

5 Dance to rock, pop and jazz on the lakeshore at world-class music fests **Montreux Jazz** (p73) and **Paléo** (p67) in Nyon.

6 Be hauled up the mountain in a cogwheel train to **Rochers de Naye** (p72).

7 Ascend to the panorama of the Peak Walk and ski the Vaud Alps from **Les Diablerets** (p75).

8 Discover 2000 years of wine-making in **Aigle** (p70).