



# Switzerland

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## Why Go?

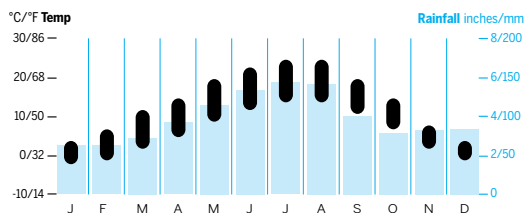
What giddy romance Zermatt, St Moritz and other glitterati-encrusted names evoke. This is Sonderfall Schweiz ('special-case Switzerland'), a privileged neutral country set apart from others, proudly idiosyncratic, insular and unique. It's blessed with gargantuan cultural diversity: its four official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

**Jun–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 Zürich** (p654) Discovering this zesty city via a daytime stroll along the city's sublime lake followed by a rollicking night out.
- 2 Zermatt** (p646) Marvelling at the iconic Matterhorn and wandering around this car-free Alpine village.
- 3 Bern** (p648) and **Lucerne** (p649) Enjoying the charm of these famous beauties: think medieval Old Town appeal, folkloric fountains and art.
- 4 Jungfrauoch** (p653) Being wowed by the Eiger's monstrous north face on a ride to the 'top of Europe', 3471m Jungfrauoch.
- 5 Geneva** (p639) Boarding a boat in this sophisticated city for a serene Lake Geneva cruise to medieval **Lausanne** (p644).
- 6 Bernina Express** (p647) Riding one of Switzerland's legendary scenic trains, such as the Bernina Express.
- 7 Lugano** (p660) Going Italian at Lugano, with its lovely, temperate lake setting.

## GENEVA

POP 198,072

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.

### ★ Cathédrale St-Pierre

CATHEDRAL

(www.cathedrale-geneve.ch; Cour St-Pierre; towers adult/child Sfr5/2; ☎ 9.30am-6.30pm Mon-Sat, noon-6.30pm Sun Jun-Sep, 10am-5.30pm Mon-Sat, noon-5.30pm Sun Oct-May) Begun in the 11th