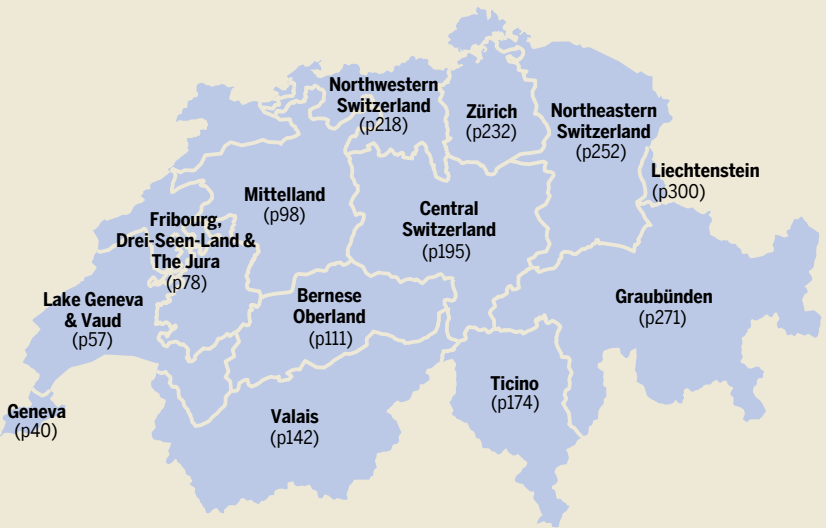




# Switzerland



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# Itineraries

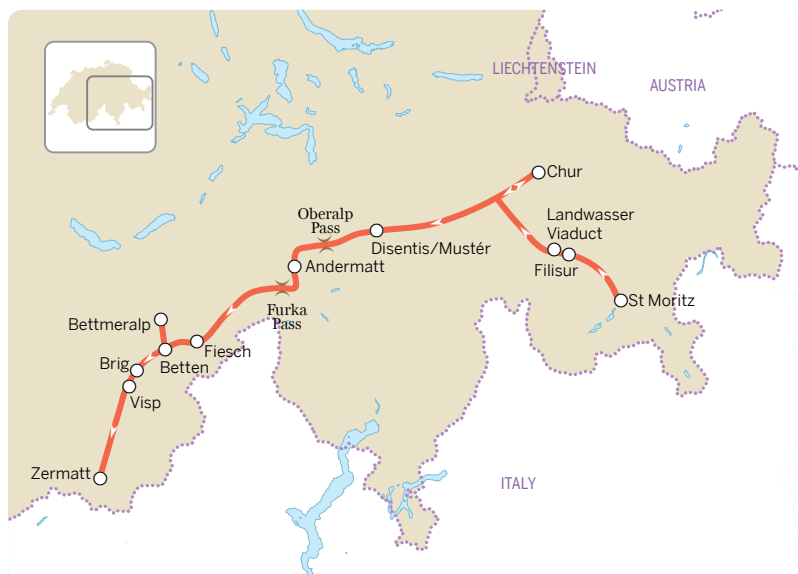


## Lost in Graubünden & Ticino

Swinging through the rugged Alpine landscapes of Graubünden and the sunnier climes and lakeside towns of Italian-speaking Ticino, this circular route of Switzerland's south-east 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** (and its 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 frescos 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.

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 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 you arrive back in Chur.



1 DAY  
OR 1  
WEEK

## The Glacier Express

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

This trip is spectacular in either direction, but boarding the cherry-red train in **St Moritz** (grab a seat on the left, or 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 narrow-gauge train plunges dramatically out of a tunnel onto the six dark limestone arches of the emblematic **Landwasser Viaduct** (1901–02), built 65m above the Landwasser River in a considerate, photographer-friendly curve. Switzerland's oldest city and Graubünden's capital, **Chur**, about 2½ hours from St Moritz, makes a lovely overnight stop with its quaint old town, historic hotels and busy cafe and bar scene.

From Chur the track snakes along the Rhine Valley, through the spectacular Rhine Gorge (Ruinaulta in Romansch) with its bizarre limestone formations – the gorge is known as Switzerland's Grand Canyon. Next it's a gradual climb to **Disentis/Mustér**, home to an 18th-century Benedictine monastery, and then a stiff ascent to the **Oberalp Pass** (2044m), the literal high point of the journey, snow covered from November to April. Next stop is ski resort **Andermatt**, another perfect place to stretch cramped legs and overnight. The roller-coaster journey continues with a descent then a steady climb to the **Furka Pass**, enabled 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 open-mouthed at the gargantuan icy tongue of the Aletsch Glacier.

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



## Switzerland's Greatest Hits

This is the big one, bringing you the best of Switzerland in one epic, month-long, circular tour – from lakes to vineyards, mountains to meringues.

Start in **Geneva** with its vibrant museums and signature pencil fountain. Then take the slow road east along the southern shore of the lake in France – stop for lunch in **Yvoire** – or the fast road (A1) shadowing the Swiss northern shore (possible lunch stops are **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 the iconic Matterhorn from the hip streets, slopes and trails of stylish, car-free **Zermatt**.

In the 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 picture-book **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 medieval **Zug**, then hit big-city **Zürich** to the north for a taste of 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.

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.

2  
WEEKS

## City to City

This Geneva-to-Zürich, 385km trip is for urbanites keen to mix metropolitan fire with small-town charm. It's eminently doable by car or public transport. Fly into one city and out of 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 a sweet old town. Continue along the same glorious 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** (there are plenty of top skiing, hiking and other outdoor options around here), then swing north to another bewitching lake lady, **Lucerne**. Rolling onwards, via tycoon magnet **Zug**, to Switzerland's most hip 'n' happening city, **Zürich**, the atmosphere changes completely.

1  
WEEK

## Northern Treasures

Artistic, architectural and natural wonders are in the spotlight on this week-long spin through the country's oft-overlooked north.

In spite of all its natural wonders, Switzerland boasts overwhelming human-made beauty too, and there's 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 (with great summer outdoor action) or to **Winterthur** (with 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, continue further west to artistic **Basel**, either direct or via a pretty southwestern detour through **Baden** and **Aarau**. From Basel, it's an easy drive west again into the 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.

# Map Legend

## Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

## Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkelling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

## Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping
- Hut/Shelter

## Eating

- Eating

## Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

## Entertainment

- Entertainment

## Shopping

- Shopping

## Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

## Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

## Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

## Transport

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- S-Bahn/Subway station
- Taxi
- T-bane/Tunnelbana station
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Tube station
- U-Bahn/Underground station
- Other Transport

## Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

## Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

## Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

## Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book





## 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, Dublin, 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



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Since 2000, Gregor has regularly contributed to Lonely Planet guides, with a focus on Europe and the Americas. Titles include *Italy*, *France*, *Brazil*, *Costa Rica*, *Argentina*, *Portugal*, *Switzerland*, *Mexico*, *South America on a Shoestring*, *Montreal & Quebec City*, *France's Best Trips*, *New England's Best Trips*, cycling guides to Italy and California, and coffee-table pictorials such as *Food Trails*, *The USA Book* and *The Lonely Planet Guide to the Middle of Nowhere*.



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