

# THE SWISS ALPS by TRAIN

May 29-June 11, 2012

\$5,599 p/p



We will explore this wonderland of scenic peaks, valleys, villages and lakes in the Swiss Alps, traveling by first-class rail and staying in some of the most charming places in the country. We will stay for several nights in each place, which gives you time to have a good look around. Our customized itinerary has been carefully created to include the most scenic parts of the Alpine region, and the most beautiful towns. Picture in your mind a vision of the Alps with their majestic pinnacles towering over green foothills, with little villages nestled at their base in green meadows. We shall see it all in our visit.

Touring Switzerland is almost like visiting all of Europe in one small country. This country is a fascinating mix of French culture in the west, German in the east and Italian in the south. Most Swiss also speaks English, so you will have no trouble communicating. You will discover cobblestone lanes for pedestrians winding past ancient buildings that have the most modern shops inside, with everything spotlessly clean and well organized. This is the land of efficiency and charm, with very friendly people. The best of both worlds, old and new

Price includes r/t air, hotels, daily breakfast, first-class rail between cities, Hawaii escort.  
Not included: rail and cablecar trips to mountain peaks, airline tax, tips, boat rides.

**To join our Alpine tour send a \$100 deposit to:  
Callans' Tours, 1011 Prospect St., #702, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822  
Call 528-4411 for further information.**



# LUCERNE

Our visit begins in Lucerne, one of the world's prettiest towns, set on a beautiful waterfront, along the shores of Lake Lucerne and the River Reuss, surrounded by majestic mountains. They truly have it all. Lucerne is deservedly the most popular destination in Switzerland, famous for its well-preserved Old Town, consisting of many blocks of medieval buildings richly decorated with painted murals showing village life in olden days, making this like an outdoor art gallery.



Two days will be plenty of time to enjoy Lucerne, using it as your home

base for travels by train and boat to nearby sights. Temperatures are very pleasant in May, reaching the 60s and 70s, for Lucerne sits at an elevation of just 1,300 feet. Some of the nearby mountains do reach 10,000 feet, with snow-covered glaciers, but the temperatures in town are very comfortable. Many restaurants and cafes have outdoor seating in fair weather, some of them on the beautiful banks of the Reuss River that flows through town, so it is really nice to sit in the fresh air and enjoy your meal.

Day One: walking tour in the Old Town. Day Two: trip to the top of Mt. Titlis; afternoon free for shopping alternative options, boat ride and excursions to Rigi, Pilatus.



DAY ONE: Explore the town.

We will arrive in the afternoon, and after resting up at the hotel, take an orientation walk. The historic center of Lucerne is an extensive pedestrian zone, filled with interesting shops, restaurants, and ancient buildings.

The steep gabled roofs, covered with strong wooden shingles to ward off the winter snow, complete the picturesque scenario. Automobiles are not allowed into this large historic zone, so you can wander the cobbled lanes without fear of getting run over. The shopping is fun, with many items that are pure



Swiss in character, like music boxes, chocolates, watches, cuckoo clocks, cowbells, beer steins, hand-carved wooden statues, costumed dolls, cheese, knives, embroidery, linens, music, and you can also find very good deals on clothing. The two main watch shops are Bucherer, a multi-story extravaganza, and Gubelin, facing each other on the lakefront at Schwanenplatz.

You can't get lost in this small place



— the Old Town is surrounded on one side by the river and lake, and on the other by a hillside and ancient fortified wall, which you can climb. Feel free to wander.

#### TWO COVERED BRIDGES:

In the heart of Lucerne is its major landmark, the 560-foot long Chapel Bridge, or Kapellbrücke, the oldest covered bridge in Europe, first built in 1333. But in 1993, after 660 years, this Lucerne icon was destroyed by fire, only to be rebuilt by the efficient townspeople within a year in the original style — and by now has weathered to a mellow patina that once again looks hundreds



of years old. The heroic rise from ashes symbolizes Swiss pride in their past and modern ability to get things done. Even here, it sometimes takes forever to repair old buildings or construct new ones, but the quality upon completion is unsurpassed. Adjacent to the bridge is the 110-foot high Water Tower, also nearly 700 years old, the most photographed image in town. For the best picture, lure some swans



into your foreground with the bridge and tower behind.

The Mill Bridge is a smaller covered bridge two hundred yards south along the river, built around 1408, notable for its series of paintings, “The Dance of Death,” whose jangling skeletons of the Black Death make you feel lucky to be alive. The clever Swiss have once again harnessed the waterpower that originally gave this bridge its name, and created a modern electricity-generating turbine, underwater and



completely invisible. Both bridges also served as part of the medieval fortifications that surrounded the town.

The old fortification wall still survives from the Middle Ages, built around

the same time as the two bridges, between 1350 and 1408. Called the Musegg Wall, it has nine towers, three of them open free to the public, and a section of wall you can walk along for the most spectacular view looking down on the town. This is worth your effort, and easy to find, with a path just beyond the Mill Bridge that takes you there.



#### LION MONUMENT:

The other landmark we shall see on our orientation is the huge Lion Monument, carved deeply into the sandstone cliff to commemorate the 1792 death of 786 Swiss mercenary soldiers that were trying to defend King Louis XVI in Paris. Completed in 1821, it depicts a noble, mortally wounded lion, regal but dying from a spear thrust in the ribs, making a grand tragic statement of historic pride carved in stone. Mark Twain toured Lucerne and called this “the saddest and most moving piece of rock in the world.”

The Old Swiss House, one of the best restaurants in Lucerne, is located



styles during the 17th century and has a rich interior with many carvings and wrought-iron works, and a cloistered courtyard next door.

#### SMALL LANES AND PLAZAS:

Walk the few blocks back into the center of town along the main pedestrian shopping street,

in front of the Lion Monument, so have a look at their menu and consider having a gourmet meal here on one of your nights in town. With its traditional half-timbered wooden beam construction dating back to 1859, this is truly a landmark of Lucerne. They serve the best Wienerschnitzel, sinfully sautéed with a stick of butter right at your table, or superb fresh fish from the lake, and many other items from an extensive menu. Comfortably elegant, the cozy interior is a perfect setting for a memorable meal.

The Hoffkirche, or Collegiate Church, is another attraction in this part of town, on a hill overlooking the lake, four blocks south of the restaurant. This Catholic church was built in the gothic and Renaissance



Hertenstein-Strasse, and head for the Kornmarkt, a small square with the Old Town Hall, built in 1602 with two distinctive styles that mirror Swiss cultural heritage: Italian in the lower section, echoing the Florentine Renaissance, and a Bern farmhouse wooden shingle pitched roof. An excellent restaurant for simple Swiss sausage meals is here, Pfistern, with a rustic wooden interior, or tables outside on the lower terrace along the river. The Picasso Museum is also on Kornmarkt, with a display of prints and 8 paintings.

You will discover several other peaceful small plazas in the middle of the Old Town, where cobblestone pedestrian lanes come together and form a charming open area, ringed

by ancient buildings and sidewalk cafes, with a fountain in the middle. Small independent shops, and a few department stores, make this the prime retail section of town.

DAY TWO: Train to Mount Titlis; boat ride.

Enjoy your rich buffet breakfast at our deluxe hotel and relax over coffee.



Be sure to try the dark breads if you are a whole-wheat fan, made fresh each morning in the town's excellent bakeries. Lucerne is in the German-speaking eastern part of Switzerland and they love dark bread.

The banks of Lake Lucerne offer a most picturesque walk, through manicured gardens, past picnickers, swans, fishermen, bobbing boats, and tree-lined paths. This stroll



is especially dramatic at sunrise, when the water turns to gold. On Tuesday and Saturday mornings you will see the farmers' market, with cheeses, breads, fruits, produce and pretty flower stalls, which stay open through mid-day. After the refreshing sunrise excursion head back to your hotel for breakfast and prepare for your day's activities.

### MOUNT TITLIS:

The most exciting, convenient excursion out of town is to Mount Titlis, where you get a chance to frolic in the snow at the top of a mountain, just two hours from Lucerne. Because it has a glacier at the 10,000-foot summit, there is snow all year round, so it is really a



thrill to go up in the summer time and play, especially for us Hawaiians. It is very easy to get there. Take the scenic train one hour to Engelberg, enjoying beautiful views of the mountains, farms and villages along the way. At one section this becomes a rack railway, where the train gears engage a metal strip between the rails and pull the train up the steep



incline, giving you a chance to walk the aisle leaned over at 45 degrees, if you want to clown around. In Engelberg follow the signs and walk a couple hundred yards to the cable car lift that will take you on the 45-minute ride up the mountain.

Mount Titlis provides a spectacular view into the heart of the Alps, with lofty peaks of the Jungfrau, Munch and Eiger visible in the distant Bernese Oberland on a clear day. The Titlis viewing platform at 10,000 feet has an elaborate multi-storied restaurant, café and gift shop complex, along with an ice tunnel into the glacier. In typical Swiss fashion, they have civilized this mountain peak like so many other similar perches in their realm. You



can walk right onto the glacier from the panorama terrace and frolic in the snow. It is cold enough that the snow never melts, but in the summer with typical sunshine you will feel comfortable with just a light jacket. There are also some big inner tubes you can ride down a side hill. For more fun on the trip down, get off the cable car at the next-to-last stop and rent a scooter (\$5) to coast down the final mile.

We return to town the same way, enjoying the scenery a second time in reverse, or take a snooze. We will be back in town before 3:00pm, which leaves some time for more shopping, or to take a boat ride. Depending on your interests, you could save the



boat for tomorrow, which gives you more time for a longer excursion. If you would just like a short two-hour ride, now is a good time. The boat docks are right in front of the train station, with frequent departures. Check their exact schedules on-line at [www.lakelucerne.ch](http://www.lakelucerne.ch).

You can spend a very pleasant afternoon enjoying a boat ride on



Lake Lucerne. Various pleasure boats operate on the lake, and you can ride them 45 minutes across the water to the little villages of Weggis and Vitznau. Each of these towns have a number of cafes along the water where you could have lunch or afternoon tea while waiting for the next boat back to Lucerne.

#### FOLKLORE SHOW:

Tonight, try the dinner show at the famous Stadtkeller in the heart of the Old Town, where you will be totally entertained by traditional Swiss music, with costumed performers yodeling their hearts out, throwing colorful flags around, playing spoons, bottles and brooms, and just putting on one heck of a lively show. The food is very good, with a choice of traditional items like bratwurst, Wienerschnitzel, sliced veal in mushroom cream sauce, fondue, chicken or fish, accompanied by rosti potatoes, which are similar to hash browns but better.

OTHER OPTIONS: Boat ride, and more exploring in town.

#### PILATUS:

A superb combination boat and funicular ride brings you on an optional trip to Mt. Pilatus, the mountain that towers over Lucerne. Take the boat from the dock in front of the Lucerne train station to Alpnachstad, which takes one hour and ten minutes, then ride up the world's steepest cog-wheel railway



to the top of Pilatus for a sweeping view of the lake and Lucerne. They do have a nice rustic restaurant at the top. You could return the same way, or for a slightly faster alternative with a different routing, take the cable car down the back side of the mountain to Kriens, and walk a few blocks to the city bus stop that will whisk you back into town.



## BOAT RIDES:

You could take a longer boat ride and go all the way to the end of the lake at Fluelen, which takes about 3 hours, and then take a one-hour train ride back to Lucerne. No matter which route you decide upon, you will be rewarded with a relaxing experience and wonderful scenery along the shores of the lake. Light refreshments are served on board, and some of the larger ships have a restaurant with typical Swiss



cuisine. There are several large, old-fashioned paddle wheelers that offer an elegant atmosphere that hasn't changed in the last hundred years. If you have a Eurail Pass the boat rides are free, or if you pay, the price varies between \$15 and \$100 depending on your route and whether you go first class or second.

We call it Lake Lucerne, but the Swiss name is Vierwaldstattersee, which means "lake of the four forest cantons," referring to the four communities that joined together back in at the start of the 14th



century and created the beginnings of Switzerland. This takes us back to the time of the legendary William Tell, who defied the ruling Hapsburg authorities and was then forced to shoot an apple from his son's head, leading to a rebellion that ousted the corrupt government and to Swiss independence. Since that medieval confederation of Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden and Lucerne, 19 more cantons (states) joined the nation, which reached its present size after the start of the 19th century and the defeat of Napoleon. A thousand years of complicated intrigue and changing alliances have resulted in the modern country we find today, neutral and secure in the middle of the Continent.

You can do one of the lake excursions and still have time in Lucerne for shopping, or visiting a museum. The Swiss Transportation Museum is the largest such display in the country, but it is best for those who are very interested in seeing many kinds of old trains, cars and planes. It is two miles outside the city and can be reached by public bus, or boat.



artists from the Italian-speaking southern part of Switzerland. Next door is the Ritter Palace, originally used as a Jesuit residence, but later converted into Lucerne government offices. It has a surprising Tuscan courtyard on the interior, so stop in for a free look.

If you enjoy pedaling, there is a lovely bicycle excursion you could take along the northern shore of the lake, in the direction of Tribschen, passing through a couple of little villages along the way. There is a sandy beach and swimming in the chilly water for the brave souls. The 8-mile round trip take about two hours, and you can rent bicycles at the train station.

Another nice attraction of this side is our favorite chocolate shop, Au Chocolat, on Pfister-Gasse Street. They fill the pralines by hand with sinfully rich creams that will melt your soul with delight. Also called truffles, the stuffed chocolates of Lucerne rival those of Belgium, and will stay fresh for a few weeks, so they are an excellent present to bring home. The History Museum on the same street has a small display about the region.



There are many dinner options in Lucerne, ranging from a simple sausage meal to a full-on gastronomic extravaganza. I would suggest the latter at one of a half-dozen superb restaurants for at least one, maybe two of your nights here

#### ACROSS THE RIVER REUSS:

There is also a small section of the Old Town on the other side of the river, so walk across one of the pedestrian bridges and have a look around the area near the Jesuit Church. This pretty church, built between 1666 and 1673, was influenced by the Italians, decorated in the baroque style by Toriano and Toricelli, two





to take advantage of the gourmet opportunities of this town.

We leave Lucerne after breakfast and catch the train to Interlaken, enjoying a very scenic two-hour ride into the beautiful mountains, through the Brunig Pass and along the shores of Lake Brienz.



## INTERLAKEN

Some of the world's most spectacular mountain scenery is waiting for you just outside of Interlaken in the heart of the Swiss Alps. Here is nature at its very best, and you don't need to be an athlete to enjoy it because the Swiss make it easy to get up the highest peaks with their efficient network of trains and cable cars. They have civilized the wilderness with restaurants and observation platforms that provide comfortable

facilities so you can relax, have a drink, and enjoy the eye-popping views of giant mountains, vast glaciers and splendid valleys. If you like to hike, you will be able to get that much more out of the experience, for the region has a vast network of trails ranging from simple paths to mountain-climbing ascents.

There is so much to see and do we are spending three full days here, filled with a variety of activities. Among the many astounding sights you will find in this Bernese Oberland region:v

Europe's longest glacier

Four famous peaks, the Mönch, Eiger, Jungfrau and Schilthorn

Astonishingly beautiful  
Lauterbrunnen Valley

Europe's highest railroad station

Delightful mountain villages of  
Grindelwald, Wengen and Murren

Two large lakes with tour boat  
service and fascinating nearby cities.





DAY TWO:

Lauterbrunnen and Schilthorn.

DAY THREE:

boat ride, and/or train to Bern.

Weather is always a major factor for determining our schedule in the mountains because we do not want to spend time and money going to the top on a cloudy day when you can't see anything. This is another

All these attractions are close to the town of Interlaken, which makes a perfect base from which to explore the region. Interlaken is a practical tourist center with fine support services, excellent rail and boat connections, and a compactness that makes for easy to walking anywhere in town. There is also a large casino filled with slot machines for some evening amusement. The nearby



good reason for spending a three days here — to increase the chances of good weather. If the reports from the Jungfrau summit look good this first morning, we go for it, because it might cloud over tomorrow. Temperatures in Interlaken are mild in May.

DAY ONE: TO THE JUNGFRAU

Europe's highest railroad line will bring you up to a spectacular world of perpetual winter, dominated by massive, snow-covered peaks reaching over 13,000 feet high and surrounding the continent's longest



surrounding peaks and valleys are your main reasons for being here, so our time in Interlaken is mostly for eating and sleeping in order to gear up for excursions into the mountains.

DAY ONE:

Jungfrau and Grindelwald.

glacier. Many consider the train ride up one of the finest, most picturesque in the world, where getting to the top is half the fun.

We begin the journey shortly after breakfast because it takes 2 1/2 hours to reach the Jungfrau summit, where



the weather is generally clearer in the morning, and longer to get down via an alternative route, so with various stops along the way you are going to have a full day. There is train service every half-hour departing from the Interlaken Ost rail station, on the east side of town just a few blocks from our hotel.

To get the best views on this train journey, you need to know where to sit and what to look for; otherwise,



you could completely miss the most spectacular sights. The rail journey's first leg is a 20-minute ride from



Interlaken to Lauterbrunnen, and already the scenery is nice, especially if you sit on the left side of the train and carefully stick your head out the window to look forward as the train leaves the residential neighborhood and enters the narrow mouth of Lauterbrunnen Valley, with the river rushing alongside and the steep mountains framing your view.

## LAUTERBRUNNEN

Change trains in Lauterbrunnen for the second leg of the journey, up the longest cog railway in Switzerland. The ride begins with a dramatic 14-minute ascent that offers



astounding panoramic views of the valley below as you travel up to the village of Wengen, perched on the side of a steep mountain. As the train



four miles of tunnels inside the rock. The beginning of this 50-minute journey is not underground, and momentarily offers a great view; so sit on the right side of the train. The train makes two brief stops enroute to let everyone out for a walk through short tunnels to viewing stations, where you look through windows at the nearby mountain peaks and the

climbs up the side of the mountain you can see a majestic vista of the deep green Lauterbrunnen Valley, framed by steep hillsides dotted with farms and massive snow-covered peaks in the distance.

You will have a lovely journey to the rail junction at Kleine Scheidegg, where you catch the third and final train that will bring you to the top, rising from an elevation of 6,762 feet up to 11,333 feet, Europe's highest train station.

## JUNGFRAU

This hundred-year-old rail line from Kleine Scheidegg to the Jungfrauoch is one of Europe's great engineering wonders, the world's highest subway climbing through



landscapes far below.

Upon arrival at the end of the rail line, you walk through an ice tunnel decorated with ice carvings and then approach a sight too amazing for description or film. You really have to pay your dues and go there in person to experience the exhilaration of standing at the top of the world, surrounded by Alpine giants of snow.

The observation deck and snowfield are at 11,350 feet, flanked by the jagged peaks of the Jungfrau (13,642 ft.) and the Mönch (13,449 ft.), which form a valley that cradles the Aletsch Gacier, an endless field of snow that stretches 13 miles to the horizon.

It is a mind-blowing sight! One is intoxicated with appreciation of this vista and amazed by the excellent Swiss technology that delivers you



here to such a comfortable viewing platform. There was no effort at all — you just enjoy the ride and are suddenly transported to this other world. After walking around on the snowfield, it's nice to go indoors and have a meal in the cafeteria or the restaurant and do a little souvenir shopping in this very civilized visitor center. If you feel like skiing, there is a gentle slope open year-round, complete with a school for beginners.

But you still haven't reached the top until you ride the elevator another 356 feet up to The Sphinx, the Jungfrau's highest platform (11,700 ft.) offering an unobstructed view in all directions. This modern building opened in 1996 and functions as



a scientific research center as well as a public lookout, with a weather station, astronomical telescope, cosmic radiation detector, solar observatory and environmental monitoring station. The center's studies have documented an alarming trend in recent decades of a gradual reduction in the size and extent of Alpine glaciers, probably due to global warming. The air up here is extremely clear, with only 5% of the dust and humidity found at lower altitudes, making for very crisp conditions. Temperatures are just below freezing, but on a mild, sunny,



May day it is quite comfortable, and there is always hot chocolate waiting for you in the café.

Plan on spending an hour at the top, playing in the snow and exploring the various levels and exhibits of the visitor center, then catch a convenient train back down the route you came. We return to Kleine Scheidegg and change trains for a different return route through Grindelwald.

GRINDELWALD



The route down to Grindelwald and back to Interlaken is another beautiful ride through stunning mountain scenery, completing a circular route that doesn't repeat itself but always reveals something new. Grindelwald is another small, quaint mountain village, most famous as a home base for mountain trekkers. There are nearly 200 miles of hiking trails that reach out from here, some of which are reached by cable car, or any of a dozen routes that extend directly out from the village. There is also an imposing glacier gorge and the mysterious Blue Ice Grotto to explore, close to the village.

with a drink and some local snacks. This can be a busy little village, with tour buses running up and down the main street and small crowds of people here and there, so the center of town might not be all that peaceful; but it is easy to find charming outdoor restaurants a few blocks away with stunning views of mountains so close it seems you could reach out and grab them.



If you don't feel like hiking, just find a terrace café with a view of the mountains and sit back to relax



While the village center may be ordinary, the stunning landscapes all around are so spectacular they just might entice you to take a walk right now, perhaps to the glacier through a narrow rock-lined canyon. Then continue through some meadows where you will see numerous cows enjoying their green pastures.



It only takes 35 minutes for the train to reach Interlaken on a direct route from Grindelwald, and of course there are more dramatic landscapes to admire along the way. This has been a full day that should leave



time and energy to find dinner, then turn in to rest for more adventures tomorrow. One truly outstanding choice for a memorable meal in Interlaken, outdoors with a view of the mountains you have just conquered, is the Grand Hotel and Spa Victoria-Jungfrau, a famous, ultra-deluxe resort, with reasonable prices on the dining terrace.

DAY TWO:

SCHILTHORN and MURREN

We'll get an early start for another big day in the mountains, traveling to the back of Lauterbrunnen Valley and taking Europe's longest cable car ride up to the Schilthorn mountain. It's the same 20-minute train ride as yesterday from Interlaken's East station to the town of Lauterbrunnen, and then take the public bus on a scenic 20-minute ride to Stechelback where the cable car begins. That bus from the train station to Stechelback takes just 20 minutes, driving through the spectacular, green Lauterbrunnen Valley, whose high vertical walls and flat floor were carved out by glaciers eons ago, resembling a deep U-shaped canyon.

We could get off the bus halfway and pay a small fee to visit the powerful Trummelbach waterfall, which comes roaring down from the Jungfrau, Eiger and Mönch high above. There is an elevator inside the waterfall (those Swiss engineers!) along with a series of tunnels and bridges to bring you right up to the face of this raging vertical river. The valley has 72 waterfalls, but





Trummelbach is by far the most spectacular. This is an easy visit, and you walk back to the road and catch the next bus coming through to Stechelback, where the long cable car ascent begins.

## SCHILTHORN

Four different cable cars are needed to get up this highest cable run in Europe, from an elevation of 2,844 feet at the beginning to 9,748 feet on top of the Schilthorn mountain. The views from the first stage of this cablecar ride are so fine they alone would make the day worthwhile, looking out the length of the valley and to the waterfall and dramatic rock cliff a few feet from the gondola.



We change cablecars in the villages of Gimmelwald and Murren along the way, gaining different perspectives

on the mountains. We can stop off for a quick look at the tiny hamlet of Gimmelwald, with its few scattered chalets for the 140 residents, and then continue to the top of the mountain by the next cablecar.

The Schilthorn is worth the effort, for you will be in the middle of a massive range of snow-covered peaks that stretch to the horizon, offering what some feel is the best mountain view in Europe. On a clear day a vast panorama of over 200



high mountains extends all around you, reaching from Titlis to Mont Blanc and all through the Bernese Oberland. The Swiss engineers have done it again with superb facilities at the observation center, including a rotating restaurant and escalators to bring you to the different levels, all run by solar power. Have a snack or a simple lunch in the self-service cafeteria while soaking in the amazing view.

A large outdoor terrace provides an excellent vantage to look back across

the valley at the three great peaks you visited yesterday, the Jungfrau, Mönch and Eiger, whose complete forms can be seen better from this



distance than close-up. Be sure to walk out into the snowfield following the guided rope trail along the crest of the ridge to immerse yourself in the environment, rather than merely looking at it from the deck. Then cap it off with a drink in the Crystal Lounge and imagine watching James Bond in the frantic chase scene from *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, filmed here in 1969.

The view from the Schilthorn is just as spectacular as the view from the Jungfrau, but different in its own way, with that amazing panorama of peaks all around. While the Jungfrau observation deck is about 2,000 feet



higher, with that endless glacier, both mountains are covered with snow all year round and give spectacular views of mountains, glaciers and valleys. On a sunny summer day the temperatures hover around freezing but usually feel quite comfortable when you are properly dressed. After an hour head down in the



cable car to Murren, a quaint village with some excellent restaurants and more views.

## MURREN

This is one of the few automobile-free villages in Switzerland, so it makes for a lovely stroll, especially with the amazing views across Lauterbrunnen Valley towards the Jungfrau.





It only takes ten minutes to walk from one end of Murren to the other.



We next travel 2 1/2 miles from Murren to Grutschalp and take the funicular down to the train station in Lauterbrunnen. You could do this either by walking for 90 minutes



through picture-postcard scenery along the smooth path, or by riding the little narrow-gauge train. It is one of the easiest Alpine strolls, with a mild downhill slope that gently

pulls you along, fueled by sights so pretty it will be an effortless glide. You will return to Interlaken by late afternoon, leaving time for more adventures.

After a rest at our hotel, you could head out to a variety of different fun activities. If you are too pooped from this big day, just pick from among the dozens of fine restaurants in town to enjoy a leisurely meal, perhaps take a pass at the Casino, then turn in to rest up for your final big day. Or, you may crave to visit the top of yet another mountain, which can be quickly done with an 8-minute funicular ride from the Interlaken Ost rail station to Harder Kulm, which offers nice views of the Eiger, Mönch & Jungfrau, as well as Interlaken and its two lakes.

Maybe you would enjoy an evening boat ride on Lake Brienz, a three-hour round-trip cruise that leaves



the dock next to the east rail station at 7:30 p.m. Dinner is served in a lovely restaurant on board as you cruise along, passing a number of



Dozens of splendid hiking trails in this region could keep you strolling on different paths for weeks. The most scenic network is found back in the Grindelwald area, just 35 minutes from Interlaken by train, as described in the first day's schedule. One of the most popular hikes there involves taking a cable car from

quaint villages. The sun sets at about 8:00pm in May, so there will most likely be golden lighting for much of the way.

### DAY THREE: SPECTACULAR OPTIONS

By now the two main mountain activities have been covered, but there are many more exciting activities to choose from on this third day — so many tempting options, you might decide to stay three days longer! Rather than lay out one specific plan here, we suggest various excursions



to pick from and leave the selection to you: hiking, boat rides, or scenic train trips to nearby cities.

### HIKING OPTIONS



Grindelwald to Pfingstegg, and then walking for 90 minutes to Stieregg at 5583 feet elevation, where you can enjoy panoramic views of glaciers and mountains while relaxing at the restaurant and observation terrace. Then retrace your route back down. You will find many other scenic routes in the Grindelwald area.

### LAKE BRIENZ

Two large lakes, Brienz and Thun, each with numerous recreational and sightseeing opportunities, flank Interlaken. Lake Brienz, or as the Swiss call it, Brienersee, can be explored with a combination of boats, trains, and hiking, depending on how ambitious you feel. It takes 70 minutes to ride the boat from Interlaken to the town of Brienz,

noted as a center of woodcarving and as a gateway to the Rothurn Kulm, a mountain 7,433 ft. high, reached by a steam locomotive cog-railway. As usual, there is a summit restaurant with panorama terrace and some easy walking trails to enjoy.

An easy hiking option on the way to Brienz is to get off the boat after 40 minutes at the village of Iseltwald and walk along the wild, romantic south shore of the lake for two hours to the village of Giessbach, and then resume your boat journey to Brienz. While in Giessbach you might ride up the short funicular to have lunch or tea at the Grand Hotel, on the panorama terrace overlooking the lake, forest and 1500-foot-high waterfall.



The very popular Swiss Open Air Museum in Ballenberg can be reached by a 3-mile express bus ride from the Brienz train station. This historical park features almost 100 original century-old Swiss buildings brought in from throughout Switzerland, with farm gardens, demonstrations of typical crafts, special events

and 250 native farmyard animals, creating a vivid impression of rural life in bygone days. You can visit inside the kitchens, bedrooms and living rooms of reconstructed original houses and farm buildings, and watch craftsmen demonstrating traditional activities, including lace making, straw weaving, woodcarving and needlework.



Historical displays of farm activities span recent centuries and continue right up through modern scientific innovations. Honest exhibits present realistic views of history, ranging from wealthy farm homes to a gloomy picture of the very difficult work and living conditions of many peasants. Your visit will be a learning experience set in a beautiful variety of rural scenes. The outdoor museum is open daily from 10 to 5.

## LAKE THUN and BERN

A different set of options awaits you on the other lake flanking Interlaken, Lake Thun. Here too are peaceful boat rides to quaint villages along

the shore, followed by a train ride to a fascinating city, the national capital of Bern. For example, a ship leaves Interlaken at 9:40 a.m. and arrives at the lakeshore town of Thun two hours later, after stopping at eight little villages along the way. You don't really need to get off and visit these villages, but looking at them from the boat is quite enjoyable. Be sure to get a good look at the Romanesque castle at Spiez, towering over the village on the lakeshore. It is open as a museum, so you might be tempted to disembark here for that special visit, easily walked from the dock.

If the boat ride does not appeal, you could take a 30-minute direct train from Interlaken West station to Thun, and stop off for a brief visit on your way to Bern.



## BERN

It only takes 20 minutes for the train to reach Bern from Thun, with several departures every hour, so this is a very easy trip to a rewarding destination, and the return to



Interlaken by direct train takes just one hour. The Bern train station is right next to the Old Town, so your walk through the historic zone begins the moment you arrive. Just in front of the station is one of Bern's important churches, the Church of the Holy Ghost, considered the most elaborate Protestant baroque church in the country.



Among all the pretty towns of Switzerland, Bern is unique because most of the sidewalks in the historic section are covered by old arcades that continue for nearly four miles along most of the streets in the center. The stone arcades offer protection from sun and rain, but more importantly, create a special atmosphere that is somewhere between being outdoors and inside.

As you walk along the covered sidewalks there are interesting views framed by the arches, columns, flower boxes and windows that give pleasure everywhere you turn. People still live in the upper floors, which makes this a vibrant mixed-use community with bakeries, shops and cafes for locals as well as visitors.



Because the buildings are small, department stores and franchises have stayed away, leaving most of the retail space for unique shops and galleries.

This historic section is only five blocks long and five wide, ideally suited for a walking tour, immersed in buildings that have not changed much since the Middle Ages. It is such a historic gem the town center has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The historic center of Bern is surrounded by a sharp curve in the Aare River, which defined the town plan, offered protection, enclosed the space and encouraged growth in a compact arrangement of shops and homes that fit perfectly together. We could

learn a lot about how to build our modern cities by studying these organic growth patterns that evolved over the past 900 years.

The main street proceeds directly from the train station through the historic center, with shops all along the way. This road is remarkable not only for the ancient buildings and arcades that cover both sides, but for the spectacular Renaissance fountains down the middle. Two covered arches at both ends of the Marketgasse block include the famous Clock Tower, the oldest building in town, whose astronomical clock still



works after 500 years. Try and be at the clock four minutes before the hour to catch the whimsical parade of mechanical bears, armored knight, jester, lion and Father Time celebrating the moment. Another important building is the gothic Cathedral, with the nation's highest church tower which you may climb for a birds-eye view of the historic center. When finished, take the train back to Interlaken for the evening.



# ZERMATT

Our next destination is just a few hours away by train, through more postcard scenery, past picturesque mountain pastures, across rushing torrents, and through steep-sided narrow valleys, which brings us to Zermatt. We settle into this popular village and look up to see the most famous mountain in all of Europe, the Matterhorn, which rises to an altitude of 14,070 feet in a distinctive vertical thrust-one of the most dramatic sights in the world!



We will enjoy a variety of activities here, including pleasant walks on the easy trails that lead out from the village. There are no cars allowed in town, so we can really relax and enjoy the peace and quiet, amidst

the spectacular setting of Alpine peaks all around us. Our first orientation walk will take us through the village past the various shops and restaurants, and point out the cablecar and mountain rail lines.

This first afternoon will be a good time to ride the comfortable Gornergrat



rack railway, one of the highest in Europe, for a stunning look at dozens of mountain peaks all around you. Here you will see dozens of snow-covered mountains reaching above 12,000 feet, displaying one of the most amazing mountain panoramas in all the Alps. This is the very center of the Alpine structure.

On our second day you can experience a most spectacular activity with a



ride up Europe's highest cable car to the Kleine Matterhorn, at 12,533 feet, offering a close look at the famous Matterhorn. People ski year-round at this extreme height, so you will see lots of snowboard and skiing action. On the way back down you can get off the cablecar at an intermediate station and walk the rest of the way down the mountain on a very easy, gentle trail through meadows filled with wildflowers, and more majestic mountain views. It just takes a few hours and is one of the nicest, easy hikes of the tour.



stroll to more vigorous hikes in the mountains. There are a number of Alpine lakes with easy trails that will lead you there and back with no strain at all. The rewards are many: beautiful views, uncrowded trails, fresh mountain air, downhill paths, wildflowers in bloom and scenic rest spots along the way.



We will find that there is a lot to keep us busy during our two days in Zermatt. It is one of the best places in the Alps for nature walks, ranging from the gentlest

Zermatt is one of Switzerland's most favorite destinations, surrounded by gigantic mountains piercing the sky, with beautiful paths reaching out in every direction, calling you to come for a splendid scenic stroll. This famous resort offers old-fashioned charm with all the modern comforts. Horse-drawn carriages or electric carts - vigorous mountain walks, or relaxing cafes - quaint chalets, and





small shopping malls. Here you can truly have it all. You can easily spend the entire day out in the mountains, walking, riding, eating, and enjoying the astonishing views.

# LOCARNO

From here we embark on another spectacular train journey that takes us from Zermatt out into the Rhone Valley, to Brig and the Oberwald pass. You are getting the very best of Swiss engineering, with their unique ability to take a train almost anywhere, with utmost comfort.

We're arriving now in a rather surprising part of Switzerland that you might not recognize at first: there are bright, colorful flowers, pastel colored buildings, some with arcades and the people speak Italian, but yes, we are still in Switzerland. This is the southern part of Switzerland in the region known as the Ticino where we are visiting the town of Locarno. This is a pretty little resort town along the shores of Lake Maggiore.



We change trains and then travel from Domodossola to Locarno, one of the most glorious, scenic journeys in the world. The rail line passes through 17 remote Alpine valleys, each surrounded by majestic mountain peaks, in another miracle of Swiss engineering that brings you deep into the Alps with complete safety and comfort.



It's a fascinating region of Europe with the best of both worlds: the romance of Italy and the efficiency of Switzerland, making the perfect combination. This town has an Italian feeling even though we are



at one of the sidewalk restaurants near the main square.

The old town is lined with narrow streets, and in the center cars



still in Switzerland. Most of the locals don't speak any Swiss German or French -- just Italian and perhaps a little English, especially those who are working in the shops and restaurants. Shop clerks and waiters are multilingual and so you don't have any problem getting taken care of, even in the little villages nearby. You can easily find pizza and pasta, because the main cuisine here is Italian.

are prohibited – it is strictly for pedestrians which makes the town lovely for walking. Nice and quiet and peaceful here and there are a few little hotels sprinkled around in the old town, and of course some excellent restaurants and a variety of shops and historic sites, including a castle and several old churches in the Italian Baroque style, with charming old-fashioned architecture throughout. Piazza Grande is the main square with a picturesque arcade along one side with lots of restaurants, gelato shops, cafés and



Locarno has a Mediterranean climate, so you will even find palm trees growing – quite surprising for Switzerland! In late May and early June the temperatures are just perfect for sitting outdoors and enjoying the very pleasant temperature, perhaps





little stores to browse in, with a nearby morning food market. They also have a casino where you could try your luck.

Locarno's Old Town extends for about six blocks by four blocks so it's not really huge but it's big enough to enjoy a nice stroll and browse in the shops, art galleries and antique stores. Shopkeepers are friendly and welcome you to come in to look around. You'll find quite a few modern stores intermingled with the old, scattered among the hidden lanes and quiet spaces in the back of the town. There's a nice shady, cozy feeling in the narrow alleys where you can walk from one end to the other. and there are some smaller piazzas tucked away on the side streets as well. You could easily spend a few hours just meandering and strolling, getting a little bit lost -- but you'll quickly find your way again in such a little place this.

One of the main historic highlights is the old Visconti Castle, where you can have a look inside at the display featuring period rooms

with ceramics and glassware, along with artifacts from the surrounding region. There are original frescoes on the walls and well-preserved old columns with various ancient architectural details.



This Castle has a primitive feeling -- you could almost be back in the day 500 years ago when there were some elegant banquets in these rooms. They've done a very nice job renovating the Castle and installing modern display cases, some with ancient Roman glass from 2000 years ago found in the vicinity. They conducted some archaeological excavations outside and found many Roman artifacts on the site, among the original Roman arches and walls.





The castle is conveniently on the edge of the old town of Locarno so just takes an hour for the complete visit. The church of St. Francis is the oldest in town, dating from the 14th century, with a nave dating from 1528, presenting a mix of the Gothic style and the early Renaissance. This is a nice cool sanctuary in the midst of this quiet little town.

These valleys go deep into the Alps, covered in green forests and dotted with small villages, offering some easy walking paths along the rivers. You might enjoy a little stroll for about a mile all along the stream on a level dirt trail that is very comfortable, winding through a pleasant forested valley. Anytime you feel a little tired you can walk back to the road and catch the next bus coming by, perhaps stopping for refreshments at one of the villages.



Some valley scenes look like they popped right out of a postcard, with old stone arched bridges and clusters of stone houses, many of which are abandoned now. The buildings are made from rocks quarried nearby – there is lots of good quality stone available in these valleys so local

## VALLEY EXCURSION

Another great activity to enjoy while in Locarno is to head into the mountains where you can choose from several different deep valleys, including Val Verzasca, Val Maggia and Valle di Campo. They are easily be reached by a scenic public bus ride in less than an hour.



builders took advantage of this abundant material to construct sturdy homes that have stood for centuries.



Most of the residents uprooted themselves in the 19th century due to poverty and moved to California where they established a winegrowing industry that they called Italian Swiss Colony, still a famous name today. The people living here seem to be doing fine: this is modern Switzerland after all, which has a strong economy. The buildings are nicely maintained, but they look ancient, kind like hobbit homes that have just grown up organically out of the earth.

## LAKE MAGGIORE

Another entertaining activity to enjoy is a boat ride on Lake Maggiore, a huge lake, 40 miles long – the second largest of the Italian Alpine lakes after Garda. The lake goes for many miles into Italy, to Stresa and the Borromean Islands, but you can just take a short boat ride for about 15 minutes across this little inlet of the lake to the village of Magadino.



Boat traffic begins early to serve commuters, so you can go down to the lake and take an early morning ride. You get a nice view from the boat looking back at Locarno and can see how the village is surrounded by the mountains, with snowcapped



peaks in the distance and the valleys beyond. There are some much longer boat rides available on Lake Maggiore of varying lengths to some of the nearby islands and villages, or further into Italy.





## ASCONA

We will enjoy taking a short bus ride over to the nearby village of Ascona, which only takes about 12 minutes on the city bus, or you can go by boat from Locarno. Ascona is a pretty little waterfront village -- another one of these picture postcards come to life.

Ascona has the expected waterfront promenade with shops, town church, an open market, sidewalk cafés, some arcades, and quite a few streets that are just for pedestrians in that typical European style. It's a little resort town with pastel colored buildings, small boats bobbing in the marina, tiny back lanes for an aimless stroll, enough shops to keep



you busy, a main pedestrian artery, and there are at least one dozen excellent restaurants here, so you will not starve. Next we travel by train to Zurich.



## ZURICH

Zurich is the world's best city to live in, with the highest quality of life, according to recent studies -- so it is also a perfect place to visit. While most people know its reputation as a modern banking center, you will be surprised to discover the historic charms of its extensive Old Town, among the largest in Switzerland. Zurich is ranked number one because of its superb cultural, economic and environmental conditions, and for





alleys which lead through an ancient town founded during the Middle Ages. With the right strategies you can see this slightly expensive city without spending a fortune. It's an easy city to cover on foot, which is always the best and cheapest way to see any historic town.

high scores on other important social criteria, as determined by the Mercer Human Resource Foundation's annual study. Its residents have the world's strongest purchasing power, primarily because of their high incomes, in this is financial capital and largest city of Switzerland.

Visitors can take pleasure in its wonderful lifestyle, enjoying friendly, efficient services while exploring many fascinating sights. With just under 400,000 people, Zurich is an ideal place to stay for two days -- especially when you consider the main visitor attraction: a beautiful Old Town of cobbled lanes lined with historic buildings and numerous fine shops and restaurants. It is delightful to



wander in this large pedestrian zone that is filled with enchanting little

Zurich might conjure up images of conservative bankers and businessmen in pinstriped suits and the world's third largest stock exchange, but the city throbs with culture, fashion and a zest for life approaching that of Paris, Rome and London, but without the crowds and traffic congestion of those larger cities. The Swiss are famous for their efficiency, safety and cleanliness, but you might be surprised by Zurich's hip style and cutting-edge scene.



This charming, compact city is situated on the picturesque waterfront shores of Lake Zurich, with the Limmat River running through the center of town and the snow-capped Alps visible in the distance.



Billions of dollars in gold bullion are stashed away in corporate basements beneath your feet. The neighborhood between Bahnhofstrasse and the river offers a lovely chunk of the Old Town to wander through, with important historic sites to see.



The Old Town extends about five blocks in from both sides of the river and stretches for about a mile. The right bank, or east side, of the river has the larger cluster of old buildings and is considered the prime district for visitors. Much of your first day can be devoted to exploring its many little side alleys and shops.

The modern part of town extends beyond the historic center for several miles and includes a greater metropolitan population of one million, but the visitor doesn't need to venture into those distant neighborhoods. Our suggestions will enable you to fully explore the Old Town and get the most out of your time, including visits to the surrounding mountain scenery and some nearby towns.



Across on the left bank you will find Zurich's most famous street, the Bahnhofstrasse, running about 1,200 yards from the main train station to the lake, and lined with elegant stores, department stores, restaurants and small boutiques. It is a lively yet quiet street scene for it is limited to pedestrians and trams. This is shopping central for ladies clothing as well as a business center for many major banks and offices.

Day One: explore vthe Old Town

Day Two: museums, shopping and a boat ride

DAY ONE: Old Town

Today's itinerary could be summarized as simply wandering up and down nearly every little lane in the Old Town, which is an ideal version of the best imaginable



## LINDENHOF

A good place to start is where the city began, at Lindenhof, a small, tree-covered park on a low hill overlooking the heart of town. Like many European towns, Zurich was founded by the Romans, who set up headquarters on this hill as an outpost for their expanding empire. It is believed the first scattered settlements sprang up four thousand years earlier as pole houses in the lake, but those initial residents left few artifacts.

collection of historic buildings set amid a delightful tangle of narrow, cobblestone pedestrian alleys. Disney could not have done it better, but this is the real thing.

Leave it to the Swiss to preserve their past and maintain these 500-year-old buildings in perfect condition. There is not a single ugly or boring moment to break the spell. No modern buildings are allowed here, and everything is kept spotlessly clean,

Despite a lack of direction signs, Lindenhof is easy to find: On the left bank, walk along Bahnhofstrasse to Rennweg, which has been the main street leading to the center since Roman times and is still an attractive



so you are not going to see graffiti and trash, or beggars, addicts and thieves, but instead will be treated to life at its best. Most shop interiors are quite new but the exteriors are vintage. Conditions really don't get much better than this.

thoroughfare lined with shops. Take the second left on Fortunagasse which leads up a gentle incline to the park.

From Lindenhof you gain a fine view across the river to the main section of the Old Town, where you will notice

the tall spires of the Grossmunster, Zurich's main church and signature sight, along with several other church steeples stabbing the sky. Just beyond the bridge to your right is the elegant City Hall you can later observe up close from different angles.

Lindenhof today is just a park with lime trees, but in the past was occupied by a variety of important buildings, from the Roman fortress surrounded by a wall with twelve



towers, to a major medieval palace which was demolished in the 13th century during a citizens revolt. Since then, further construction has been forbidden to preserve it as a small urban park. They say that Charlemagne visited the palace in the early 9th century and conducted negotiations to solidify his Holy Roman Empire.

Exit Lindenhof down the south steps along Platzgasse, which will lead you past one of the few Roman ruins visible in town -- a simple marble column on your right with

inscriptions containing the first known mention of the Latin name for Zurich.

At the foot of the Lindenhof hill you face a maze of five little lanes radiating out in all directions, but don't worry about which way to go: this is a good place to get used to the



idea you are going in every direction.

This cluster of alleys is really one of the nicest parts of the city, so walk a few short blocks along one route and circle back along a different lane to where you started, then pick another circuit. You could spend an hour covering this little patch of short lanes, including the lovely arcaded path along the river called the Schipfe.

Be sure to have a good look at Augustinergasse, which has a perfect atmosphere of ancient buildings arrayed on a gentle curved path, luring you along by revealing more charming structures until it reaches the busy Bahnhofstrasse. Another fine spot is Weinplatz, an enchanting



small square enclosed by smart shops and more Gothic buildings. Zurich does not have a single, large market square, but several scattered throughout the Old Town, and Weinplatz is the oldest, with ultimate origins as a Roman port.

In the midst of this special network of alleys you can't miss the towering steeple of St. Peter's Church with Europe's largest clock: 28.5 feet across, 500 years old and still keeping



accurate time. The quiet little square next to the church is one of the most charming spots in town. St. Peter's is Zurich's oldest parish church, first built in the 7th century with the Romanesque tower added during the 13th century. It's worth taking a quick look inside at the Baroque stucco decorations.

When you have finished exploring all the lanes surrounding St. Peter's, continue walking a few short blocks south to Fraumunster, another of the major churches and Zurich's oldest building, dating back to



the late 9th century. It began as a flat-roofed Romanesque convent and was expanded into a gothic church around 1280. The striking pattern of pointed arches inside is overshadowed by the church's main treasure -- stained glass painted by Marc Chagall when he was in his 80s.



Next door is the Stadthaus town hall, built in 1898-1900 in the Gothic style, with a lovely courtyard resembling a cloister, accompanied by old scenes painted on the walls.

Beyond this point, the buildings in the next few blocks are large, 19th century structures of minor importance, although the



Fraumunster post office has a lovely sidewalk arcade in the Florentine style. The lake shore is two blocks further -- the scene of a lively, morning market selling flowers, cheese, breads, fruits and vegetables. Those interested in taking an extended walk along the lake can enjoy a scenic stroll from the lively Burkliplatz, where excursion boats



dock, to the more tranquil, tree-lined Arboretum gardens, six blocks west.



## BAHNHOFSTRASSE

This completes your look at the left bank portion of the Old Town. Rather than continuing directly across the Limmat River to visit the larger section of old Zurich on the right bank, save that for later in the afternoon and instead walk along the elegant Bahnhofstrasse, one of Europe's finest boulevards, lined with thriving, modern retail frontage from end to end. No cars or trucks disrupt this pleasant shopping atmosphere -- only pedestrians and quiet electric trams gliding by. This is how a city should function and could serve as a model for any metropolis aspiring to show a human scale in the middle of its urban center.

By now you should be more than ready for lunch, and it will be no surprise this city is loaded with wonderful food choices in a wide range of prices. If you'd rather have a snack at a café, visit the famous Sprüngli, open since 1836 at Paradeplatz, a busy transit plaza chockablock with major bank headquarters, three blocks from the

lake end of Bahnhofstrasse. Sprüngli also has a restaurant upstairs and a big chocolate counter -- oh yes, Swiss chocolates, one of life's great rewards, which you can order from home through their web site. For a heartier meal at Paradeplatz, try Zeughauskeller, the city's top beer hall, serving traditional heavy meals washed down with plenty of suds.



A favorite restaurant choice near Bahnhofstrasse is Europe's oldest vegetarian restaurant, Hiltl, in business at this location under the same name for 106 years, so they must be doing something right. Dig in to their enormous buffet loaded with dozens of delicious, healthy choices, then weigh your plate at the cashier and sit where you like -- ground floor, upstairs or at the sidewalk tables. Eat here first and you will surely come back another day or night for more.

## RIGHT BANK

Plan on spending the afternoon exploring the main section of Zurich's Old Town, across the river on the

right bank in what is conveniently called the Niederdorf, after the main street of this side.



## NIEDERDORFSTRASSE

Niederdorfstrasse is one of the great historic streets of Europe, perfect in every way. It has been the main lane of Zurich since the Middle Ages and is still the major route for visitors to explore today. Niederdorfstrasse stretches for nearly one mile from the train station area to beyond the cathedral and is limited to pedestrians the whole way. Typical of European streets, it changes names a few times, becoming Munstergasse, Hirschenplatz and Oberdorfstrasse, but is basically the same road throughout.



What makes this lane so special? Paved with cobblestones and lined

with historic buildings hosting modern shops, cafes and restaurants, Niederdorfstrasse is a place to linger and enjoy. Sometimes it widens to form small plazas as it intersects with other lanes, but mostly it is just twenty feet across. This medieval street curves here and there, and rises then drops slightly as it continues in a most pleasant pattern.

Dozens of small lanes branch off both sides leading further into the magic of the Old Town. The neighborhood is just the right size: small enough so you cannot get lost or exhausted but large enough to keep you discovering new sights for a couple of days. You can easily fill out the afternoon by



meandering through this fascinating network of alleys, exploring the little shops and enjoying the variety of traditional Swiss buildings.

Anyplace you turn along this main pedestrian route in the central heart of the Old Town is a delight but there are several exceptionally picturesque lanes you want to be sure to discover, especially around the mid-section

where the street widens to form the connected plazas of Hirschenplatz and Stussihofstatt. Walk the broad, tree-lined block of Spitalgasse to the gothic Prediger Church (dating from 1230) with its mix of later baroque decor and the town's tallest tower reaching up 300 feet. Several fine alleys lead away from the church plaza, including the narrow Predigergasse and Brunnngasse.

After meandering through these lanes, walk along Rindermarkt to Neumarkt, one of the town's finest junctions which dates back to 1145 and still has some original buildings, especially the famous Grimmenturm, a 12th-century gothic tower of the with a popular restaurant in front,



Kantorei. Duck inside Number 4, the city archives of Zum Rech just across from the fountain, to view a free display of Zurich's history including a scale model of the Old Town's evolution, clearly illustrating how Niederdorfstrasse was the first street of early Zurich.

You'll want to drop into many of

the stores in this district to see what treasures are hiding behind their small windows. One food shop you would enjoy is Schwartz, selling dried fruits, nuts, fresh-roasted coffee beans, chocolate and many gourmet treats, with a casual café on the corner. A hidden gem is the Café Schober, set back from the road behind bushes, but worth finding for its pastries, tea service, dark Teuscher chocolates and festive 19th century interior.



For dinner there are a number of very good restaurants along Niederdorfstrasse, such as at the Hotel Adler's Swiss Chuchi on Rosengasse, but you might find less touristic dining on the nearby side lanes, with lower prices and a more



relaxed atmosphere. Any time you can get slightly away from other tourists, food quality usually goes up and prices go down, no matter what city you are in. For a high-end splurge try one of the upstairs guild house restaurants along the river near the City Hall, such as Zunfthaus zur Zimmerleuten or Haus zum Ruden.

After dinner take another stroll along Niederdorfstrasse to experience its evening character, especially beautiful as the lights come on and twilight lingers in the sky as people flock to and from the many popular bars and restaurants.

## DAY TWO

A great way to begin the second day is take yet another leisurely stroll along the main lane of Niederdorfstrasse to its end at Ramistrasse, catching a few more sights you might not have had time for the first time around. This



busy pedestrian path is endlessly fascinating any time but in the morning has a serene mood since



most of the shops do not open until 10:00 a.m. It is such a special street you will find it worthy of repeat visits throughout your stay in Zurich, rain or shine. This area is very easy to explore on your own.



site was reputedly founded in the early 9th century by Charlemagne, the Holy Roman Emperor. The monumental Romanesque interior is rather plain, stripped of all pictures during the Reformation, but be sure to appreciate the stained glass and Switzerland's largest crypt with its large statue of Charlemagne.



## GROSSMUNSTER

As you continue along the main pedestrian lane of the right bank you will reach the main historic site of town -- the Great Cathedral, or Grossmunster, a huge Romanesque church dating back to 1106.

This is where the Protestant Reformation began in Switzerland with the fiery sermons of Huldrych Zwingli in 1519, two years after Martin Luther began his crusade in Germany. An earlier church on this



Look for the small cloister, reached through an outside door to the left of the cathedral entrance. The cathedral is the symbol of Zurich, with its two huge 15th-century towers topped by 18th-century domes. If feeling energetic you could walk up the west tower for a stunning view across the city.

Leaving the Grossmunster, proceed a few blocks along the last stretch of

this main pedestrian lane, now called Oberdorfstrasse, then turn left on Ramistrasse to visit the Kunsthaus art museum, just five minutes away.



## KUNSTHAUS

Zurich's main art museum not only showcases a large variety of Swiss work, but has a fine collection of paintings by Europe's great masters that cover a wide range of styles and periods. By themselves, the penetrating blue eyes in Van Gogh's self-portrait painted in his final year could make your visit worthwhile, but there are also dozens of Impressionist works and other pieces, housed in a newly-expanded building. Modern artists represented include Picasso, Matisse, Klee, Munch, Leger, Miro, Giacometti, Magritte, Kandinsky, Mondrian, Rothko and Bacon. There is also a select sample of Late Gothic, Dutch, Flemish, Italian Baroque and Venetian paintings, including works by Canaletto, Rembrandt, Rubens, Domenichino and van Dyck.

While most travelers are not familiar with Swiss art, this museum offers a fine opportunity to appreciate some excellent pictures by Johann



Heinrich Fussli, Ferdinand Hodler and other native painters. It can be quite satisfying to discover relatively little-known artists like these who are rarely exhibited outside Switzerland. The Kunsthaus is small enough to breeze through in an hour, but the art-lover will want to stay twice as long. Those hungry for more art can explore some of the hundred galleries scattered through town.



## UNIVERSITY DISTRICT

Walk behind the Kunsthaus to the busy Heimstrasse, then turn right on Kunstlergasse which leads in a few minutes to the University of Zurich, Switzerland's largest, with a campus that includes the Zurich Polytechnic and University Hospital. Together,



these academic institutions have produced more Nobel Prize winners than any other city in the world. The collection of fine buildings is enlivened by energetic students and staff moving along to their next engagements. Located on a hill several hundred feet above town, the campus offers good views of the city and the Alps beyond. The Polybahn, an antique funicular, can take you downhill to the town center or you could walk the short distance in ten minutes.



## SWISS NATIONAL MUSEUM

Behind the train station, the country's largest museum occupies a huge Neogothic castle built a century

ago and houses a grand display of history illustrating the full length of human culture in Switzerland from the Stone Age up through the 1940s. Two vast floors with lofty ceilings take up most of a city block and offer 80 different galleries filled with remarkable art and artifacts. Take a chronological approach by starting with Neolithic stone tools, pottery, burials and colorful displays describing life before agriculture developed here, over 5,000 years ago. Continue into the medieval exhibits with many rooms of Gothic religious art, weapons and furnishings. Upstairs, the Gothic-vaulted Armory is the most impressive single space, showcasing suits of armor, old cannons, battle murals and related paraphernalia. Decorative arts on display cover a wide sweep of history with ceramics, jewelry, silver, embroidery and costumes.

## EXCURSIONS

Day-trip possibilities from Zurich are endless in this transportation hub of Switzerland. Of course, another fine option is simply to stay put in Zurich and continue your walking explorations, discovering more hidden corners of this incredible city.

Next morning we fly home.

# Let's compare our travel style

**We travel by train:** The train is comfortable, smooth, quiet, relaxing, and so fast it gets you there in half the time. On the train you are free to walk around, have a meal in the dining car or enjoy a picnic lunch, and talk with some of the other travelers on board. First class trains are air-conditioned, so they are cool and quiet. The spacious seats are like sofas, and can recline to make you very comfortable -- you might even take a nap. You can use the clean, convenient bathrooms anytime you want. The rail routing is through scenic countryside, and you can move around to enjoy the views on both sides through picture windows.

**Centrally located hotels:** We have made a great effort to select fine hotels in the historic centers of the places we visit. This is extremely important, for it enables you to experience much more by just stepping out your front door. In such an advantageous location there are many nearby restaurants, monuments, shops, historic sights, important buildings, landmarks, and other features that you have come on vacation to see. Our central hotel locations enable you to walk freely and safely through interesting neighborhoods, which is the best way to get to know a place. We want you to get the most out of your precious time, and really get a feeling for each destination. Nothing enhances that better than a good hotel in a central location. This is probably our biggest difference in approach.

**Shopping like a local:** With us you always have time for shopping in local stores, or, if you are not a shopper, use your precious time for other activities, instead of being led by the nose into tourist traps. The historic centers of town are filled with fascinating and unique little shops that are fun to browse through, and we will point you to those neighborhoods and set you loose. If you are looking for any particular items, your Hawaii escort can take some time to help you find them.

**In-depth city tours:** We include several tours in each city, to give you a well-rounded look at the place. In the large cities we offer panoramic tours are on a motorcoach, and we always provide in-depth walking tours with your Hawaii escort. Our guided walks really make you familiar with a place, and prepare you for some exploring on your own. Because we are staying for two or three days, you have enough time for this, with time left over for your independent activities. We put a special emphasis on history and fine arts. The trips are educational, cultural experiences, and they are also a lot of fun. Our walking tours will take you through historic neighborhoods filled with architectural treasures, and you have time for museums and other cultural attractions.

**Leisurely pace -- quality time:** We stay for two or three nights in each place. This gives us enough time to show you around with our tours, and then you actually have free time so you can do some exploring on your own. This approach gives you the "best of both worlds" for the guidance we provide on our included tours helps you get the most out of your free time as well. With a proper orientation to a city, you can make the best choices for your independent activities, and we are always there to help. This is how you really get a sense of place, and gain a feeling for the character of each of the cultures on the itinerary.

**Small groups, from Hawaii:** We limit our group size to 28 people, which we have found is quite important, for when you get above that size the group becomes very impersonal. Nearly every one of us is from Hawaii, so we become a friendly ohana on the road, looking out for each other, and showing a lot of courtesy. New friendships are made that last well beyond the length of the tour.

# with the typical bus tour:

**They travel by bus:** Sitting on a crowded bus for up to eight hours on a long journey can be very tiring. You are confined to a small space, and cannot move around at all. There is no dining car, and often when you pull into a roadside cafeteria, long lines are waiting ahead of you. Restroom stops also slow down the journey and waste your precious time, and they might not stop when you need it the most. The “scenic view” is dominated by the highway filled with trucks and cars. Buses often get stuck in heavy traffic jams on crowded streets, with many other vehicles competing for your road space, which can produce a lot of stress.

**Hotels on the edge, or beyond...** You finally arrive at your hotel after an all-day bus ride, and find that you are still far away from the main attractions of town. Your tour operator is saving money by putting you in a nondescript hotel on the fringe of the city. There will be very little to see in your immediate vicinity, so you have to spend money and time on a taxi ride into town, or you just don't bother, and miss out. You are practically held hostage in these remote locations, so your tour guide can sell you optional tours. These hidden expenses quickly increase the price you pay for the trip. All you are going to see is what the tour operator shows you on a brief bus tour, and that is usually a quick view of highlights through the window, and then off to the next city for more of the same treatment.

**Shopping in tourist traps:** With the bus tour, during the brief time you have in a place, you are often herded into tourist-trap “factories” and “showrooms” for “bargain” shopping. You are stuck on the bus, so you are at their mercy. If the tour bus stops at a souvenir mill, you stop too, and there is usually no other shop nearby except the one they have chosen for you. Your guide and driver are getting a commission for taking you there, so that's the place they want you to shop.

**Quick city tour:** At best they might give you a three-hour bus tour, and that's all. You are usually in town for only one night, and then leave the next morning, so there is little time for anything else. If there is any extra time, you will find the tour guide wants to sell you options that take you away from town, and if you don't buy the option, they set you loose with very little preparation, so you are on your own. Without proper guidance you might end up wasting time and being unable to find the important sights on your own. But there is no time, since you are already heading for the next city. If you get lucky you might have a quick look in one museum, and the little bit of history that you hear is probably delivered in dry lectures on the long bus rides that just might...lull...you...to...sleep.

**One-night stands:** Most bus tours keep you moving all the time. You arrive in a city late in the day, after driving for many hours, and then you leave in the morning for your next destination. The standard bus tour operators have devised exhausting itineraries that appear to show you all of Europe in 17 days, but when you analyze them, you are sitting on the bus most of that time! Unpacking every night, and repacking every morning, you don't have much time left for sightseeing. With a bus tour you have precious little free time for you are on the go all the time. If it's Tuesday, where are we now? All too often the quick stream of cities becomes a fuzzy forgettable blur.

**Big groups, from everywhere:** You really don't know whom you are going to be traveling with, or how full the bus is going to be. The bus has up to 55 seats, and they are usually full, with everyone jockeying for position, so you are part of a very big group, with most of the people from every place but Hawaii. A big anonymous group like that creates a less friendly environment in which people do not care much about each other.

## Alps Comments from our travelers:

Dennis' services were absolutely great. He knows his way around. Mahalo so much for everything you have done for our group. Our trip was so wonderful and fantastic, we will never forget this tour.  
Rose Abihai

Thank you very much for the adventure and enjoyable trip. I enjoyed riding the train, especially since we don't have one in Hawaii. We also had a wonderful group. We'll be calling you again for the next trip.  
Isamu and Janet Satogata



Best experiences: Getting up close to the famous mountain peaks in Swizerland such as the Jungfrau and Matterhorn....Walking the streets of Interlaken and Zermatt....The folkdancing. Very informative with areas visited carefully chosen for beauty and interest. Dennis did a good job of caring for members of the tour. Hotels were comfortable and well located. I'm glad we went!

Ruth Lam

I will recommend it to my friends. Of course the train rides were just sensational! Very interesting.  
Janet Miyashita

Best experiences: Seeing the Jungfrau and Matterhorn and surroundings, plus all the Swiss villages, shops, etc. Especially enjoyed Zermatt and walks there. I thought the whole tour was excellent. I learned so much from your descriptions, which were so interesting.  
Ruth Akiona

We thoroughly enjoyed the complete tour and the company of our traveling companions and tour directors. Extremely well organized and informative.  
Hugh and Sai Helvin

Best experiences: 1) the hike down into Zermatt from Kleinne Matterhorn. 2) train trip to Murren. 3) trip to the Jungfrau and the ice cave. 4) boat trip on Lake Lucerne. This was a great trip! Much more than I expected. Riding the train was great. I like the freedom of choice to be with a group or go off on your own.  
Norma Jean Ferguson

Best experiences: 1) train rides to Murren, Lauterbrunnen and Jungfrau 2) seeing the mountains close up - magnificent, breathtaking. 3) walking on the mountain path down to Zermatt. 4) Dining in restaurants and outdoor cafes. How can I ever forget the gelatti! The tour was very enjoyable and educational. We were able to observe and appreciate some of nature's best scenery in the world. Trains are excellent for travelling. The tour was flexible to meet the needs of the members. Tour escorts blended very well with the group and made all of us feel comfortable. Choice of hotels and breakfasts was very good. This is one of the best tours I've taken. I will cherish the memories of the Alps. I've been recommending it to my friends.

Millie Fukumoto.



# SWISS ALPS by TRAIN

**For reservations on this tour send a \$100 per person deposit to:  
Callans' Tours, 1011 Prospect St., #702, Honolulu, HI 96822.**

**For additional information, please call Dennis Callan at 528-4411**

**Our price includes:** round-trip air from Honolulu; first class rail tickets; transfers to and from airports and rail stations; hotels with breakfast everyday; all city tours and walking tours.

**Not included in tour price:** lunch and dinner; tips; airline taxes; all admission charges, such as to museums or palaces; optional tours. If you are interested send in your \$100 per person refundable deposit now to guarantee reservations. We are limiting the size of the group to about 28 people, making a nice medium-sized group.

**Videos of this tour are on our web site:  
[www.toursbytrain.com](http://www.toursbytrain.com)**

