

# **‘Swiss Country’**

## **Information about Switzerland**

**Switzerland**, officially the **Swiss Confederation** is a federal republic in Europe. While still named the "Swiss Confederation" for historical reasons, modern Switzerland is a federal directorial republic consisting of 26 cantons, with Bern as the seat of the federal authorities, called "federal city". The country is situated in Western-Central Europe and is bordered by Italy to the south, France to the west, Germany to the north, and Austria and Liechtenstein to the east. Switzerland is a landlocked country geographically divided between the Alps, the Swiss Plateau and the Jura, spanning an area of 41,285 km<sup>2</sup> (15,940 sq mi). While the Alps occupy the greater part of the territory, the Swiss population of approximately eight million people is concentrated mostly on the plateau, where the largest cities are to be found: among them are the two global and economic centres Zürich and Geneva.

## **History of Switzerland**

Switzerland is a small country (41,285 km<sup>2</sup> = 15,940 square miles), but densely populated (7 million inhabitants, 170 per km<sup>2</sup> = 440 per sq.mi.), situated in the heart of western Europe. It shares much of its history and of its culture with its neighbours Germany, Austria, Italy and France.

Some 60% of Switzerland are in the alpine region, with high mountains (12 peaks above 4,000 m = 13,000 ft above sea level and many more between 2,000 and 4,000 m) and narrow valleys. 30% are hills and relatively flat valleys carved out by glaciers called "Mittelland" [midlands] (400 to 900 m above sea level). 10% on a chain of older mountains called Jura (not exceeding 1,600 m above sea level). Most of the cities, towns and larger villages are located in Mittelland - this means that the actual density of population in this part of the country is somewhere near 500 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> (1300 per sq. mile)!

### **Early Swiss History**

**Stone Age**- About 600,000 years ago, temperatures sank and Europe was covered by glaciers almost completely. In Lucerne, Central Switzerland, the thickness of the ice reached as much as about 1 km (3000 ft). Until about 30,000 years ago, several cold and warm periods followed, animals and men came to Europe and had to leave again. The focus of cultural development remained for thousands of years in the Middle East (Sumer, Babylon, Egypt), however. Traces of early hunters (weapons and tools made from stone splinters, bones of prey animals) can be found in several natural caves in Switzerland. Later, around 3000 B.C. lake-dwellers erected their houses made of wood and clay on posts at the shores of Switzerland's lakes.

### **Bronze Age**

Metals, first copper, then bronze (an alloy of copper and tin) were introduced in Europe around 2000 B.C. Bronze age tools and weapons were first just copies of the most advanced late stone age products.

### **Iron Age**

Iron was known in the Middle East as early as around 3000 B.C. but came to Europe relatively late. The early Iron Age period in Europe (800 - 450 B.C.) is named after Hallstatt, a village in Austria.

### **Celtic tribes in Switzerland**

Celtic tribes colonized Europe from the east. Around 500 B.C. they had reached Switzerland and eastern France. Their culture is known as the La Tène period (450 - 50 B.C.) of the Iron Age. This name comes from an excavation in western Switzerland (Lake of Neuchâtel). At this time, Switzerland's relatively flat midlands from Lake Geneva to Zurich were the territory of a celtic tribe named Helvetians. The name of the Helvetians lives on as a keyword for everything that needs a short name not depending on one of the four official languages spoken in different parts of Switzerland. The label "HELVETIA" can be found on coins and postal stamps. while the Swiss top level internet domain ".ch" stands for "Confoederatio Helvetica", the latin version of "Swiss Confederation".

### **Age of the Romans**

When the Helvetians attempted to move south to Southern France they were stopped by the Roman commander and subsequent emperor C. Julius Cesar in 58 B.C. They were forced to return to Switzerland. The Romans controlled Switzerland's territory until about to about A.D. 400. Roman military camps and forts were erected at the northern Rhine frontier towards Germany. Several major Swiss cities and towns were founded by the Romans, among others Basel, Zurich, Geneva, Lausanne and Chur. The Roman military command and bureaucracy was established at the Old Swiss Capital Aventicum (Avenches, western Switzerland), which is today but a small village, however The total population of Switzerland at the time amounted to only about 100,000 to 200,000 inhabitants. They settled where the soil was easy to cultivate and the climate not too cold (especially in winter). - preferably in the

Mittelland region and in a few major alpine valleys. Large areas remained a wilderness covered by forests.

### **Migration of Nations**

A widely accepted theory assumes, that most European peoples have a common origin somewhere in Central Asia. Their languages (Greek, Latin, Old German/Old English, Slavonian) are quite similar to each other and even to Persian (Iran) and Sanskrit (India!). For reasons we do not know, they decided to move to the regions of the world where they settle now. While southern Europeans arrived in Greece and Italy several thousand years B.C., Germanic tribes first moved to the north (Poland, Scandinavia) and from there to the west and south (France, Great Britain, Germany). Slavonians came last.

Smaller incidents between Roman troops and Germanic tribes did not change a balance of power for several centuries until about A.D. 400. But then the Roman Empire was challenged by severe attacks and raids carried forth to the south of the Alps. So the Romans withdrew troops from their territories north of the Alps (including Switzerland). But they could not prevent the decline of their empire. The western Germanic tribe of the *Franks* invaded France, and settled near Paris. They adopted much of the Roman culture and even their language Latin, which was gradually transformed into what is known today as French. Much the same was true for the *Burgundians* settling along the Jura mountain chain in France (Burgundy) and western (French speaking) Switzerland. The southern Germanic tribe called *Alamannen* settled in southern Germany and northern Switzerland. Recent excavations in Switzerland do not support the older theory of a violent conquest. It seems much more probable, that the Alamannen were not quite interested in Roman towns, nor Roman culture. They rather infiltrated in small groups, cleared woodland and erected their own small villages. They stuck to their German language as did the northern Germanic tribes settling in northern Germany and Scandinavia. Today's border between German and French language in Switzerland is more or less the border between Burgundians and Alamannen. While the original Celtic population kept up at least parts of their culture in some parts of France, Spain, Ireland and Great Britain, the original Celtic population in Switzerland completely melted with the newcomers in the course of the centuries. So there is no area with special Celtic influence nor any significant remains of their language in Switzerland except for a few geographical names.

### **Middle Ages**

In the Middle Ages the Feudal System was developed in Europe: The king was primarily a warlord and had power to distribute land conquered by his troops among the dukes. These gave it to the knights. Money barely existed. There was no economical ground to raise taxes in significant amounts. As both German and Celtic tribes had little experience in writing, science and arts, Europe took several centuries to regain the knowledge of the Greek and Roman culture. This work was performed by literate monks in the monasteries. Interestingly enough, the task of preaching the gospel to Germanic people in Switzerland was not taken over by Romans or people from Constantinople, but rather by wandering Irish monks. One of them, Gallus, settled near St. Gallen (eastern Switzerland) early in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. A.D. 820 an influential monastery was founded there. Monasteries were also leading in agricultural progress (e.g. fruit-growing) and business affairs (e.g. model business treaties from St. Gallen A.D. 888). Monasteries were founded by kings and noblemen for political, social and religious purposes (power politics, bad conscience and fear of supernatural powers, public relations and placement for children). Jurisdiction is one of the dark sides of the Middle Ages: torture to extort a confession, cruel sentences and judicial murder (especially burning of so-called witches and heretics) were widespread. Awareness of the shameful wrong done to thousands of innocent women and men led to the abolition of the death penalty all over western Europe.

### **The Old Swiss Confederacy**

From the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, many cities (among them the federal capital Bern, Lucerne, Fribourg) were founded. Skilled craftsmen specialized in production of high quality goods and trade became more important. So did the roads crossing the Alps. At the same time, people from the upper part of the canton of Valais developed means to suspend wooden water pipes and catwalks in steep rocks. People from Valais settled in upper Uri and Graubünden [Grisons] around A.D. 1200. So the *Schöllenen* canyon in Uri, that had blocked the way to St. Gotthard pass, was overcome and a trade route developed. The new route made those regions far from the centers of power look interesting for the counts of Habsburg who were trying at the time to strengthen their dynastic power. German king Friedrich II exempted Uri (1231) and Schwyz (1240) from the powers of counts and made them subjects to the king alone as a reward for help in several war expeditions to Italy. When king Rudolf of Habsburg, the first German Emperor from this house, died in 1291, people from Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden feared that the counts of Habsburg would try to regain influence in their territories. So they swore to help each other against anyone trying to subject them. This is the background of the legend of William Tell, the Swiss national hero. The counts of Habsburg tried to reach their goals by military force but were defeated several times and finally had to

leave their native castle in Switzerland, while they were strong enough at the same time to gain the German kingdom from their new seat in Austria.

### **The Reformation**

Corruption had deprived the Roman Catholic Church from its credibility during the last centuries of the Middle Ages. Numerous attempts of reforms within the system (e.g. orders of mendicant friars, councils) had not produced longterm results. When Renaissance scholars discovered ancient handwritings of the Bible in the original Greek (instead of the Latin) language and began to study them as well as early comments by bishop Augustine (A.D. 354 - 430), they found a new approach to the christian religion: sola scriptura (only the Bible instead of church tradition) and sola fide (only faith instead of religious exercises). What Martin Luther preached in Germany, Huldrych Zwingli taught in Zurich, and even more radical. Johannes (John) Calvin organized the reformed church in Geneva, Oekolampad in Basel. The Reformation in Switzerland split the country in two fractions: the progressive cities like Zurich, Basel, Berne, Neuchâtel, Geneva turned to the new confession. whereas the conservative, rural areas in Central Switzerland (including Lucerne) remained catholic. When the Pope started an inner reform to regain influence, Lucerne gladly accepted the opportunity and called in the Jesuit order to organize its schools.

### **The Age of Enlightenment**

Science, economy, philosophy and arts had all set out for new shores. only the political system remained as it was. or to be more precise, medieval feudalism culminated in absolutistic forms of kingdom (especially in France and Austria). Political philosophy, especially in France, reacted with new ideas on society and political organization. Among those was Jean Jacques Rousseau, born in Geneva, living most of his life in France.

### **The Helvetic period**

For centuries, young Swiss men, especially from Central Switzerland fought in mercenary troops for French kings and Italian dukes. During the French Revolution a detachment of 800 Swiss mercenaries tried to defend the king against the radical Montagnards assaulting the Tuileries castle in 1792. All mercenaries were killed. The Lion Monument in Lucerne reminds of the infamous end of the once formidable Swiss military force. Inspired by the French Revolution, liberal people in western Switzerland, revolted against the undemocratic reign of the old members of the Swiss Confederacy over other parts of the country and called for French support in 1798. Napoleon Bonaparte's troops occupied Switzerland and a central government was introduced. But soon (1803) he was obliged to reestablish some federal elements. After Napoleon was defeated in Russia and at Waterloo, Switzerland returned to extremely federal structures in 1815. However, the cantons [federal states] St Gallen, Graubünden, Aargau, Thurgau, Ticino, Vaud, Valais, Neuchâtel and Geneva became full and free members of the confederation instead of their former status of partial members or even subject territories.

### **Switzerland's Way to Modern Democracy**

#### **The Federal Constitution of 1848**

From 1815 to 1848 liberals and conservatives debated about the structure of Switzerland after the French Revolution. Step by step the liberals could put through small innovations on the cantonal level. There were liberals as well as conservatives in every canton. the majority of one or the other side was mostly quite small. so that government changed from time to time in many cantons. When the cantons with conservative governments made a secret treaty with Austria against the liberals in 1846, civil war ("Sonderbundskrieg") was inevitable. Thanks to Henri Dufour, general of the liberal troops, it lasted only a few days and cost only 86 dead and some 500 wounded soldiers. After this, the way was free for a new political system: The loose confederacy, almost without common structures was replaced by a confederation of 25 (today: 26) relatively autonomous cantons [federal states] with enforced central structures after the model of the United States of America. The new principles were outlined in the 1848 Federal Swiss Constitution - basically still valid despite of two "total revisions" in 1874 and 1999:

- a declaration of civil rights
- a new federal structure with central and cantonal parliaments and governments
- national parliament with two chambers: "Nationalrat" (house of representatives according number of population) and "Ständerat" (2 delegates from each canton)
- federal responsibility for foreign affairs and public services of more than regional relevance (currency, customs, post and telecommunication)
- a federal court of justice

- cantonal autonomy remained unchallenged in broad sectors of administration (education, hospitals, police, justice etc.)

From 1848 to 1874 some instruments unique to the Swiss form of so-called *direct democracy* with frequent referendums on many affairs (several per year) and the possibility for citizens to demand a change of the constitution by collecting signatures were developed. Again it was the overreaction of conservative representatives and the catholic church in particular that brought about both some restrictions on church influence and the necessary majority in public opinion for the revised constitution.

### **The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)**

Henri Dunant, a Swiss merchant, was shocked when he learned about the fate of wounded soldiers in the battle of Solferino (1859, Austrian-French war). In 1862 he wrote a book about it. and in 1864 the Swiss government organized an international conference on humanitarian aspects during war. 12 nations signed the Geneva conventions and established the International Committee of the Red Cross as a permanent, neutral institution to take care of military and civil persons wounded or imprisoned in war.

### **Switzerland during the World Wars**

Since the 1815 Vienna conference on international affairs after Napoleons defeat, Switzerland is obliged to be neutral in any conflicts between other nations. During World War I (1914-1918), it was relatively clear, what this obligation meant. In World War II (1939-1945), Switzerland was surrounded by troops of or loyal to the German Nazi regime disregarding any international rules. From today's point of view, it seems that Switzerland could and should have done more in favour of jewish refugees. It is also clear that accepting gold from the Nazis while knowing they stole it from murdered jews was a big mistake. Today's Swiss government has appointed an international Independent Commission of Experts (ICE) to conduct an inquiry on Switzerlands role in World War II. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was criticized for not having intervned on behalf of the Jews in World War II. In fact, though the 4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Convention protecting civilians during wartime was only established after the war in 1949, the ICRC has admitted that it did neglect a *moral* duty. Those who are criticizing the ICRC for its legalistic omissions in World War II are kindly invited to support it now, when it demands e.g. that El Qaida terrorists being detained on Guantanamo U.S. base are either treated as civilians (with full legal rights, including fair trial within reasonable time) or at least as prisoners of war.

### **A society in prosperity**

After World War II, technical progress and economic growth reached a new dimension particularly in Western Europe, North America and South East Asia. Switzerland with its tradition in machine building, chemical and pharmaceutical processes and financial services could establish itself as an important player on global markets. Political stability is based a broad coalition of four parties: Liberals, Conservatives, Social Democrats and People's Party (farmers/craftsmen), improved government programs for social security and a negotiated partnership between employers and t rade unions helped to increase both productivity and prosperity for all inhabitants. Switzerland, though not member, takes part in many scientific programs of the European Union. Among others, it hosts the European Nuclear Research Center (Centre Européen de Recherche Nucleaire, CERN "where the Internet was born", when Tim Berners-Lee in 1989 designed Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML) as a simple and effective means to link text and graphics independent of proprietary standards). Society has changed following the 1968 student's protest movement in Europe. Religious and moral traditions have become less important to people; on the other hand, problems are discussed more frankly. The Swiss "Stop Aids" - campaign, a cooperation between a self-help association and the federal office for health, is an excellent example of this new spirit.

## **Geography**

Switzerland has an area of 41,285 square kilometres (15,940 square miles). The productive area - that is, the area without the lakes, rivers, unproductive vegetation and no vegetation at all - covers 30,753 square km (11,870 square miles).

It measures 220 kilometers (137 miles) from north to south and 350 km (217 miles) from east to west. The Jura, the Plateau and the Alps form the three main geographic regions of the country. Switzerland has a population of 8 million. Population density is high, with 193 people per square km (500 per square mile) of the productive area in 2008. In the agglomerations, which cover about 20% of the total surface area, the density is 590 per square km (1528 per square mile).

### **Switzerland at a glance**

Capital: Bern

Cantons: 26

Area: 41'200 km<sup>2</sup>

Boundaries: total: 1852 km/Austria 164 km/France 573 km/Germany 334 km/Italy 740 km/Liechtenstein 41 km  
Distance North to Souths: 220 km (137 miles)  
Distance East to West: 346 km (216 miles)  
Highest point: Dufour Peak, in the Monte Rosa mountain range, 4,634 m (15,203 feet)  
Lowest point: Lake Maggiore (Ticino) 193 m (633 feet)  
Lakes: 1'484  
Glaciers: 140  
Population entire country: about 8 million

## Getting Around Switzerland

### By plane

Major international Airports are in Zurich, Geneva and Basel, with smaller airports in Lugano and Berne. Flying into nearby Milan (Italy), Lyon or even Paris (France), Frankfurt (Germany), or Munich (Germany) are other options though rather expensive and time-consuming (3h Frankfurt-Basel, 4h Frankfurt-Berne/Zurich, 4h Milan-Zurich, 3h Paris-Basel/Geneva, 4h Paris-Berne/Zurich, 3.5h Munich-St. Gall, 4.5h Munich-Zurich) by train. Some discount airlines fly to Friedrichshafen, Germany which is just across Lake Constance (the Bodensee) from Romanshorn, not too far (1h) from Zurich. The flagcarrier of Switzerland is SWISS which is a member of Star Alliance and successor to the famous, but defunct, Swissair.

### By train

Trains arrive from all parts of Europe. Switzerland is together with Germany one of the most central-lying countries in Europe, making it a nexus of railways and highways to the rest of Europe. Some major routes include:

- 1) The TGV Lyria (Train à grande vitesse, French/Swiss high-speed rail connection to Switzerland), with several trains daily from Paris, Avignon, Dijon, and Nice with direct trains from Paris (Gare de Lyon) to either Geneva, or Vallorbe - Lausanne, or Basel - Olten - Bern (- Interlaken), or Basel - Zurich
- 2) Hourly trains to/from Milan with connections to all parts of Italy
- 3) Hourly ICE (InterCity-Express, German high-speed trains) from Zurich to Karlsruhe, Mannheim, Frankfurt in Germany, many continuing toward Amsterdam, Hamburg or Berlin.

Regular ICE trains from Zurich to Stuttgart

Regular EuroCity trains from Zurich to Munich

Night trains from Paris, Amsterdam, Berlin, Hamburg, Prague, Vienna, Belgrade, Barcelona, Rome and Venice to Basel, Geneva, Zurich and some also to Lausanne. These trains are either "EuroNight" (symbol: EN) or CityNightLine (symbol: CNL) services

### By Bus

Eurolines has incorporated Switzerland into its route network.

Due to the Bosnian war in the 1990s there are several bus companies serving the Bosnian diaspora, which provide a cheap and clean way of getting to the Balkans. Turistik Prošić runs from various destinations in the Federation of Bosnia and Hercegovina to Switzerland.

### By Car

Common tourist destinations within Switzerland are easily reachable by car, e.g. Geneva from central eastern France, and Zurich from southern Germany. Although Switzerland is now part of the Schengen agreement, it is not part of the EU customs/tariff union. Therefore, EU/Swiss border posts focus on smuggling e.t.c but there is no passport control. Delays are usually short but cars may be stopped and no reason needs to be named. Some delay may be caused by queuing at busy times, and there are often queues lasting hours to use the tunnels under the Alps from Italy such as Mont Blanc, Gotthard etc. Swiss motorway vignettes (40 Swiss Francs) can and should be purchased at the border if your car does not already have a valid one for the year and you intend to use the Swiss motorways which is almost unavoidable. Keep in mind when choosing your means of transport that most cities do not have free parking. When using mountain roads, bear in mind that they are also used by buses - most relevant on hair pin bends. And most mountain roads are frequently used by the yellow Swiss PostAuto bus. If you see a postal bus, or even much better, hear it approaching a bend by its distinctive three tone horn, hold right back (before the bend!) and let it pass, they *always* have priority and their drivers count on your passive driving (see also mountain road hints below)!

# Travel Tips

## Language

Switzerland has four unevenly distributed languages and a wealth of dialects.

**German (63.5 %)**- German is by far the most widely spoken language in Switzerland: 19 of the country's 26 cantons are predominantly (Swiss) German-speaking.

**French (22.5 %)**- French is spoken in the western part of the country, the "Suisse Romande." Four cantons are French-speaking: Geneva, Jura, Neuchâtel and Vaud. Three cantons are bilingual: in Bern, Fribourg and Valais both French and German are spoken.

**Italian (8.1 %)**- Italian is spoken in Ticino and four southern valleys of Canton Graubünden.

**Rhaeto-Rumantsch (0.5 %)**- Rumantsch is spoken in the only trilingual canton, Graubünden. The other two languages spoken there are German and Italian. Rumantsch, like Italian and French, is a language with Latin roots. It is spoken by just 0.5% of the total Swiss population.

**Other languages (6.6 %)**- The many foreigners resident in Switzerland have brought with them their own languages, which taken as a whole now outnumber both Rumantsch and Italian. The 2000 census showed that speakers of Serbian/Croatian were the largest foreign language group, with 1.4% of the population. English was the main language for 1%.

## Climate

The climate is moderate with no excessive heat, cold or humidity. From July to August the daytime temperature range is 18 to 28 °C (65° - 82° F) and from January to February the range is -2 to 7 °C (28° - 45° F). In spring and autumn, the daytime temperature range is 8 to 15 °C (46° - 59° F).

Depending on the altitude the temperature range may vary. It is highly recommended to visitors to pack a sweater, good walking shoes, sunscreen, sunglasses, a compact umbrella and/or a light rain coat.

**Seasons-** The seasons are clearly distinguishable. In autumn (September to November), the fruit ripens and the leaves of deciduous trees change colour.

The winters were formerly generally cold and snowy, but now freezing temperatures and snow are no longer the rule, especially in the lowlands. Nowadays, many ski resorts could hardly survive without artificial snow.

In spring (March to May) the trees blossom and the meadows turn green. Sometimes in April the winter returns for a short period and sometimes there are summer conditions as early as May. Summer temperatures rise to 25 to 30°C, with temperatures exceeding the 30°C mark during hot summers.

## Currency

Switzerland remains with the Swiss franc, usually indicated as CHF. While Switzerland is not part of the European Union and thus is not obliged to convert to the Euro, many prices are nonetheless indicated in euros so that visitors may compare prices.

Merchants may accept euros but are not obliged to do so. Change given back to the client will most likely be in Swiss francs.

**The Swiss franc comes in the following denominations:**

**Coins-** 5, 10, 20, 50 Cents and 1, 2, 5 Francs

**Bank notes-** 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 1000 Francs

## Public Holidays

Certain public holidays are celebrated throughout Switzerland- such as Easter, Christmas, New Year and Swiss National Day on 1 August.

## Drinking Water

Swiss drinking water- a quality product from natural resources – of which 80 percent stems from natural springs and groundwater, and the rest from lakes. Strict regulations concerning water and the quality of it have led to such positive development that, in some places, you can drink straight out the lake without second thoughts! Swiss tap water also demonstrates a more balanced ecology as opposed to water purchased in bottles and mineral waters travelling from near and far.

## **Tipping**

You never have to worry about tipping in Switzerland, as tips are included in the price. You can, however, add a smile to the face of someone who has provided good service by rounding up to the nearest franc or round figure.

## **Food**

If variety is the spice of life, Swiss food truly presents a flavourful platter. Regional cuisine is wide and varied. Masterful local chefs create new ways to present traditional treats. Some gain international acclaim with edible artworks based on simple country fare. You just can't go wrong eating out in Switzerland. There's a match for every taste and budget.

**Meal times-** Lunch is usually served between noon and 2 pm, and even a little earlier at some restaurants. Dinner is usually served from 6 pm to 9.30 pm. Many restaurants and pubs, especially in the cities, also offer continuous (11 am-10 pm) hot dishes. **For vegetarians,** Eating vegetarian is not a problem- either eat at a designated vegetarian restaurant or select individual meatless dishes on the menu.

## **Smoking Policy**

Since 1 May 2010, smoking has been forbidden in Switzerland in enclosed areas when they are open to the public or serve as a workplace for more than one person. Hence it is forbidden to smoke in restaurants, public buildings and offices. Smoking is also forbidden on public transport. Smoking is permitted in separate smoking rooms, outdoors and in private homes.

## **Alcohol & Tobacco**

Alcohol is sold in supermarkets. The age limit for the purchase of wine and beer is 16 years, and 18 years for high-proof alcohol. You will need to provide proof of age, either with a driver's license or passport.

There is no nationwide minimum age for the purchase of tobacco in Switzerland. Depending on the canton, the minimum age is either 16 or 18.

## **Emergency number in Switzerland**

Police: **117**

Fire: **118**

Ambulance: **144**

Swiss Rescue: **1414**

European emergency number: **112**

General inquiries, e.g. doctors, theatres, etc.: **1811**

Breakdown service: **140**

Weather report: **162**

Road report: **163**

Avalanche Report: **187**

For general inquiry calls from Germany or Austria, the number must be preceded by the following dialing code: 0041 848 800 xxx (e.g. 1811 or 162).

## **Electricity**

The voltage in Switzerland, as in most of Europe, is 230V/50 Hz. Switzerland uses type C (2-pin) and Type J (3-pin) plugs. (Type C 2-pin plugs also fit J sockets)

Most power sockets are designed for three pin round plugs. The standard continental type plug with two round pins, applied for many electrical travel products, may be used without problem. Adaptors are available in most hotels.

## **Dial Code**

### **Phoning home and within Switzerland**

If calling from Switzerland, you need to enter the international country code. For example, for Germany the international country code is "+49", for France "+33". The country code is followed by the area code

(without the "0") as shown in the following example: "+49221123456". As a rule, the "+" sign appears if you press and hold the "0" key for a few seconds.

**Taxcard-** As a rule, all hotels add a surcharge for phone calls. With the Swiss phone card (Taxcard©) you can make cashless domestic and international calls from public phone boxes in Switzerland. The Taxcard© can be purchased from Swisscom Shops, post offices, kiosks and petrol stations for CHF 5, CHF 10 and CHF 20.

### **Time Zone:**

During the winter, Central European Time (CET) applies in Switzerland. From the end of March to the end of October, Summer Time applies (CET + 1 hour).

### **Post offices**

Swiss Post International is as reliable as a Swiss watch. They are your professional partner for worldwide mail dispatch with branches in western Europe and the USA. They attach great importance to personal service and offer you solutions tailored to your needs.

### **Currency exchange**

**You can change money at** any Swiss bank, airport, main railway stations (western union), major hotels Swiss banks offer the best exchange rates for your traveler's checks or cash for foreign currencies (only bank notes). Official exchange offices and hotels may charge a fee for their services

### **Business Hours**

**Banks:** Banks are usually open Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Once a week they extend their hours. Please check locally. They are closed Saturdays, Sundays and on public holidays. However, money can also be changed at major train stations. Look for the "Change/Cambio" signs. Generally, offices are open 8 am to 12 noon and 2 pm to 5 pm on weekdays and closed on weekends. Many banks have automated teller machines (ATMs) that accept overseas bank cards. please check with your local bank before leaving if your bank card is valid in Switzerland.

**Post Offices:** Post offices are usually open from 8 am to 12 noon and 2 pm to 5 pm on weekdays, whereas some branches that are located in shopping centers are usually open the same hours as the shopping centers, including the extended business times that are often offered once a week. On Saturdays, post offices in large cities are open from 8.30 am till 12 noon, in villages they may be closed. please inform yourself locally. All post offices are closed on Sundays.

**Shops:** Shops in smaller towns and villages are generally open from 8.30 am - 12 noon and again from 2 - 6.30 pm. In larger cities they do not close for lunch. In larger cities, shops generally extend their hours till 8 pm on one evening of the week, usually on Thursdays.

### **Usage / acceptance of credit cards**

The safest and easiest form of money are traveler's checks and credit cards. The cards most used are American Express, MasterCard and Visa. Many banks in Switzerland have equipped their ATM machines with the CIRRUS or MAESTRO system. Many other Swiss banks offer ATM machines for cash advances with your credit card. It is recommended to have a small amount of cash on hand upon arrival in Switzerland for immediate expenses, i.e. taxis, city transportation etc.

## **Must See Destinations of Switzerland**

Switzerland is a highly aspirational dream destination for many Indians. Some places you just have to see to believe, and in this chapter we look at the four destinations, which are the biggest draw. As a travel agent you have to know everything about them to make your clients happy.

### **1) Engelberg / Titlis.**

Engelberg translates to 'mountain of angels'. The founders of the imposing Benedictine Monastery gave the name to the attractive village with its distinct and rustic character in 1120. It is located 25 km south of Lucerne and is a firm favourite with Indian guests looking for a year-around snow experience. The houses from the Belle Époque together with the Swiss flair lend the village its very own charm. In winter, the famous Titlis turns into the largest and most beautiful ski area in Central Switzerland with slopes that suits every ability. Special packages for guest from India who would like to try to ski or snowboard are available. Engelberg has a number of three- and four-star hotels for guests to choose from, but the



preferred pick of many Indians is the Hotel Terrace. It is situated on a south-facing slope in Engelberg and is surrounded by majestic mountains. The rooms are simply furnished and all with free WiFi. During summer, the Chandra restaurant at Hotel Terrace serves an array of traditional Indian specialties.

### **Top Excursion:**

**Titlis:** Titlis is a cable car with a twist. Emblazoned with the Swiss cross on its underside, the 'Rotair' revolving gondola turns around its own axis as it floats over the glacier towards the Titlis. The journey is truly spectacular with a view of Central Switzerland's mountain range. Experience a mind-blowing day in the snow at Mount Titlis at 3,020 meters above sea level. Up at the peak there is only one season: Winter. Enjoy snow in the midst of summer while riding a glacier chairlift, the ice-flyer, over the glacial crevice, visit the glacial caves and cross the cool highest lying hanging bridge, the 'Titlis Cliff Walk'. If this is not adventurous enough, you can take a course on abseiling into glacial crevices or opt for the attractive downhill hike to the picturesque Trübsee Lake where rowing boats are available. There is even a self service restaurant with Indian food on top of the mountain.

### **Other activities:**

**Benedictine Monastery:** Built in 1120, it forms the centre of Engelberg. To date there are still approximately 30 monks living and working there.

**Bike & E-Bike Hikes:** Biking is a great way to have fun and get fit, and here it is also a wonderful way to experience Alpine nature.

**Kayaking & Rowing:** Discover the beauty of the Truebsee from a boat. You can also arrange for a barbecue at the lake.

**Toboggan Run:** The young and the old can enjoy summer bobsledding at Ristis. It doesn't look like a steep run, but the bobsled can reach speeds of up to 50 km/ph.

**Golfclub:** Golfing in Engelberg is a two-fold pleasure with the combination of a spectacular mountain backdrop and the challenge of the 18-hole course.

**Hiking:** 500 km of hiking trails offer everything from leisurely to more challenging routes with pleasant places to stop and rest.

**Cable ways 'Buirebaehni' (Farmer's Cableways):** Local farmers operate these traditional cableways. A trip on one of them is always an enchanting experience.

**Brunni:** Welcome to the sunny side of Engelberg. This is an ideal destination for families and mountaineers amidst spectacular mountain scenery.

**Bannalp:** The Bannalp valley has an idyllic lake and unique natural landscape surrounded by majestic mountains, making it the perfect destination to visit.

## **2) Interlaken / Jungfrau**

Interlaken is situated between the Lakes of Thun and Brienz, and below the world famous 'Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau' mountain trio. It is the touristic centre of the region, which is a top destination for adventure sport. Paragliding, river rafting, bungy jumping, glacier trekking and canyoning are just a few of the endless options you have here. Guests from all over the world meet in Interlaken and stroll past souvenir shops, boutiques and enjoy the many cafes. From here you start countless day excursions, exploring the lakes and mountains of the region. In fact, Yash Chopra liked it so much here, that there is a statue of him in the Kursaal Garden and the five-star Victoria Jungfrau Hotel named even a suite after him. In winter, cross-country skiers and toboggan riders are well catered for in the vicinity and the centre of Interlaken is transformed in to a winter wonderland. You will love the ice skating area with its various ice rinks and cosy restaurants.

### **Top Excursion:**

**Jungfrau-** Top of Europe. The cog-wheel railway takes you 9 kilometres from Kleine Scheidegg to the Jungfraujoch. The highest railway station in Europe is located 3,454 metres above sea level and gives you access to a high-Alpine wonderland of ice, snow and rock.

The journey takes you through tunnels built between 1896 and 1912. Two stops in the tunnel permit spectacular views of the Eiger north wall and the surrounding glacier world. The views over the Aletsch Glacier, the largest glacier in the Alps and a UNESCO World Heritage, and the surrounding mountains Jungfrau, Mönch and Schilthorn are just magnificent. On clear days you can even see as far as the Black Forest in Germany from the Sphinx viewing platform. In the 1930s, two guides began carving a huge hall from the glacier ice. Enjoy your stroll under the vaulted ceilings and arches of the Ice Palace with its amazing ice sculptures. After a walk through the eternal snow or even a few hours in the Snow Fun Park

you must be ready for some refreshments in one of the three restaurants. How about some good Indian cuisine in the restaurant Bollywood?

**Other Excursions:**

**First:** The First Cliff Walk by Tissot, First Flyer, First Mountain Cart and Trottbike Scooter make this a great spot for adventurers and lover of outdoor activities.

**Harder Kulm:** It only takes 10 minutes by cable car from Interlaken to come to this amazing vista point with a restaurant that looks like a small castle.

**Schilthorn:** The mountain top featured in '007 On Her Majesties Secret Service' has a revolving restaurant with superb views and interactive Bond World 007 exhibition.

**Schynige Platte:** This excursion with a nostalgic cog railway is FOC with your Swiss Pass. The higher you climb the better the views.

**Ballenberg Open Air Museum:** Entry is FOC with your Swiss Pass. The museum awards an insight in the rich cultural heritage of Switzerland.

**Jet Boat:** Take a seat in Switzerland's first commercial jet boat, and enjoy a spectacular ride on the turquoise waters of Lake Brienz.

**Lake Cruise:** Ply the waters of Lake Brienz or Lake Thun on one of the many ships, which even include historic paddle steamers.

### 3) Lucerne / Pilatus.

Lucerne is embedded within an impressive mountainous panorama. Thanks to its attractions, its souvenir and watch shops, the beautiful lakeside setting and the nearby mountain excursion, the town is a must-see destination for many travel groups and individuals on their journey through Switzerland. Complete with gable paintings, the covered, medieval Chapel Bridge forms the centrepiece of Lucerne's townscape and is considered to be one of the oldest, covered wooden bridges in Europe. Historic houses decorated with frescoes line the picturesque town squares in the car-free old town. Make sure to visit the figure of a dying lion, which was hewn from the face of rock in remembrance of the heroic death of Swiss guards killed during an attack on the Tuileries in 1792, it is one of the best-known monuments in Switzerland. Tradition and modernity stand side-by-side with ease in Lucerne, as the town has also earned a reputation for itself with innovative design. The futuristic Culture and Convention Centre (KKL), designed by leading French architect Jean Nouvel, is one the architectural highlights of the town and home of many cultural events during the year.

**Top Excursion:**

Pilatus 'Golden Round Trip'. Standing 2,119m high, Pilatus is the city of Lucerne's home mountain. Once a legendary mountain associated with dragons, today the Pilatus is a popular excursion point, viewing platform and place of adventure at the door to Lucerne. High ropes park and the longest toboggan run on the Fräkmüntegg, rock gallery, ibex observations and short hikes to the Tomlishorn as well as newly renovated Hotel Pilatus-Kulm add further adventure to scenic excursions. The 'Golden Round Trip' starts with a relaxing cruise on Lake Lucerne to Alpnachstad. There you change to the world's steepest cogwheel railway, which takes you up to Mount Pilatus through the woods, fields and walls of rock on a maximum 48% climb. On the summit enjoy the most amazing views of Lake Lucerne and the surrounding Alps and some hearty food in one of the two restaurants. To return back to Lucerne you decent on the other side of the mountain floating through the air in the new Dragon Ride cable car that feels like a helicopter cockpit. This is a truly unique day trip.

**Other Excursions:**

**Lake Lucerne Cruise:** The flotilla consists of 5 nostalgic lake steamers and 15 elegant salon motor boats. Together they ply the lake on various routes that add up 38 km.

**Indian Dinner Cruise:** From April to August you can combine a cruise with an authentic Indian dinner and enjoy the unique landscape while feasting on a sumptuous Indian buffet.

**Stanserhorn:** Start your ascent in the open funicular railway that rumbles just as it did 120 years ago, then change to the futuristic CabriO cable car with open top deck. You've never seen anything like it before.

**Rigi:** The Queen of the Mountains is reached by cogwheel trains from Goldau and Vitznau, and a cable car from Weggis. This beautiful excursion is FOC with the Swiss Pass.

**Museum of Transport:** The history of mobility and communication is documented in exhibitions and theme parks, with simulations, interactive stations and films.

### 4) Zurich- World Class. Swiss Made.

Switzerland's biggest city is a vibrant and elegant metropolis by the water with a magnificent view of the snowcapped Alps on the horizon. The city has developed from a Roman custom station in to a tourist destination, bustling with life. A stroll through the Old Town on both sides of the River Limmat is a must. You can spend hours in the car free lanes with unique shops, restaurants and bars. Don't forget to stop at the Lindenhof, a quiet oasis with great views. Merchant guilds have played a big part in the history of Zurich and date back to the Middle Ages. Their traditions are still very much alive and their fine guild houses are the pride of the city. Check them out as many double up as restaurants serving excellent local specialties. Zurich is a shopping paradise, home of Switzerland's liveliest nightlife, numerous events and an active cultural scene with over 50 museums and more than 100 galleries. You can also admire Giacometti's entrance hall in the main police station, the choir windows by Marc Chagall in Fraumünster abbey or Jean Tinguely's open-air Heureka by Lake Zurich, all at no cost. Speaking of Lake Zurich, in summer the many public baths at the lake and river is where the locals go and relax. Why not join them for a dip in the refreshing water. Zurich is the ideal place as a base to explore the region and even destinations further afield. Last year, over 30% of hotel bookings made by Indians in Switzerland were in Zurich. The city has a vast inventory of hotels, which offer attractive rates and know how to make Indian guest feel at home. Here you really have all of Switzerland at your finger tip.

### **Excursions:**

**Lake cruise:** Cruising on the lake is the perfect way to spend a few hours. Why not go all the way to charming Rapperswil with its landmark castle and lake promenade?

**Uetliberg:** Zurich's house mountain towers above the roofs. From the top you can enjoy a magnificent panoramic view of city and lake.

**FIFA World Football Museum:** Opened in Spring 2016, this interactive experience world for people of all ages is guaranteed to get all football fans' pulses racing.

**Zurich Zoo:** Is home to 340 animal species in near natural habitats. The Masoala rainforest hall and Kaeng Krachan Elephant Park have been created to allow animals to roam freely.

**Zurich West:** This former industrial area is now Zurich's trend-setting district with a colourful urban lifestyle. Check out Frau Gerolds Garten: the charming city garden with restaurant and bar, neighboring Friday container tower (flagship store of the uber cool 'Friday' brand) and leisure and pleasure mile to stroll beneath the arched viaducts.

**Rhine Falls:** Stand high above Europe's largest waterfall and feel the roar and vibration of water over your entire body. By boat you can reach a rock in the midst of waterfall followed by a visit to Castle Laufen, which overlooks the falls.

**Stein am Rhein:** At the eastern tip of Lake Constance, you will find this little town famous for its wellpreserved Old Town featuring painted facades and half-timbered houses

**St. Gallen:** The Abbey precinct with the cathedral and Abbey Library has been accorded UNESCO World Heritage listing. Entry is FOC with Swiss Pass.

## **Off beat destinations:**

Many Indian guests like to return to Switzerland again and again and are looking for destinations a little bit off the beaten track

### **1) Basel**

Basel not only boasts of the greatest concentration of museums in Switzerland, visitors also find an abundance of thrilling modern architecture such as the Roche Tower or Messe Basel by world-renowned Basel-based architects Herzog & de Meuron. Kunstmuseum Basel is often listed among the best museums in the world. If you are passionate about art, you cannot miss a visit to Museum Tinguely Tinguely, the world's largest collection of work by Jean Tinguely (both entry FOC with Swiss Pass) or the Fondation Beyeler with its superb modern and contemporary art, thrilling architecture in an idyllic natural setting. Nestled where France, Germany and Switzerland meet, Basel is the ideal hub to explore the three countries. When combining Paris with Switzerland, make Basel your first point of call. The TGV train gets you here in only three hours. Carinval in February is when Basel goes crazy. The blend of anarchical chaos and well organised large-scale event makes the Carnival in Basel particularly special. If you visit during Carnival you must check out the Morgenstreich (4am start!), Cortège or the Lantern exhibition. Last but not least, Basel is world renowned for its fairs. Art Basel und Baselworld (watch and jewellery fair) attract buyers from all over the world.

### **Excursions:**

**Ferry Crossing:** Crossing the Rhine on one of the four ferries is an absolute must. Summon the ferryman with the bell at the landing stage, board the ferry and unwind, just like the people of Basel have done for over 150 years.

**Christmas market:** The Basel Christmas market is considered one of the prettiest and largest in Switzerland. During the run-up to Christmas, Basel holds many seasonal events and spectacular special exhibitions.

**Spalenberg:** The district in the Old Town with its historic alleyways and beautifully adorned houses is packed with seductive boutiques, attractive galleries and irresistible delicatessens, along with shops selling innovative labels and original gifts.

**Colmar & Eguisheim:** How about a trip to the Alsace, less than an hour's drive from Basel? Discover the picturesque old town of Colmar and stop on the way home at the village of Eguisheim, one of the most beautiful in France.

**Tram line 8 to Vitra:** In Basel you can cross a national border by tram! Travel easily with tram number 8 to Weil am Rhein in Germany and visit the Vitra Design Museum. It exhibits a vast collection of design classics in a building, which is an architectural masterpiece.

**Europa Park Rust:** Probably the most spectacular leisure park in the region. With over a hundred attractions and shows in 14 European themed areas, the park across the German border is a delight for young and old.

## 2) Davos Klosters

Davos Klosters in Grisons is a place of superlatives. This holiday destination with international ambience is the largest resort in the Alps for mountain holidays, sport and conferences, at 1,560 mtr it is the highest town in the Alps and a high-altitude health resort with a long tradition. It is probably best known for hosting the annual World Economic Forum (WEF) every year in February. However, this is also a great place for relaxing during summer and winter holidays, particularly for families. The 'Davos Klosters Inclusive' offer is one of a kind. During summer, you receive free use of public transport, cable cars and 700 free activities from the guest programme 'Davos Klosters Active' when you stay a night. Free activities include e-bike excursions, guided horseback rides, golf trial lessons, tennis trial lessons and many more. But of course Davos is also a winter sports metropolis for skiing and snowboarding fans from all over the world. 300 km of slopes, 75 km of cross-country ski tracks, two artificial ice-skating rinks, Europe's largest natural ice rink for people to ice skate or play curling, and last but not least, three sledging runs to have fun with all the family. Half-day introduction days for to ski and snowboard are available specifically for guest from India.

### Excursions:

**Schatzalp:** An Alpine botanical garden, the Alpinum Schatzalp, has about 800 different species of plants from all over the world. Flowers are the best in June and July. Enjoy a change of scene on the summer sledging run. The historic hotel here has amazing views over the Davos landscape.

**Monstein Brewery:** The highest brewery in Europe and the first brewery in the canton of Grisons is open to the public. Learn here the ABC of beer-making and make sure you get a tasting or three.

**Madrisa Land:** Switzerland's largest adventure park is located on Klosters' Sonnenberg Mountain. It offers fun for the entire family in both summer and winter. The park is especially thrilling for children.

**Sertig Valley:** Its unique natural beauty and mountain scenery make for an unforgettable alpine experience. Popular destination for rides by horse-drawn carriage or sledge.

**Kirchner Museum:** The world's largest collection of works by the German Expressionist Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880-1938) is housed in an innovative modern museum building.

**Züngenschlucht:** It is a wild and romantic gorge with the spectacular RhB railway line and a mining museum at the Schmelzboden at 1,340 mtr, and the Geology Trail between Davos-Monstein and Wiesen.

## 3) Geneva.

Embedded between nearby Alpine peaks and the hilly terrain of the Jura, the French-speaking city of Geneva lies in the bay where the Rhone leaves Lake Geneva. With its humanitarian tradition and cosmopolitan flair, the European seat of the UNO and headquarters of the Red Cross is known as the 'capital of peace'. Besides being a world leading congress city, hosting many international trade fairs and exhibitions, Geneva has now won the prestigious World Travel Award for 'Europe's Leading City Break Destination', twice in a row. It is high time we think for our Indian guests to visit and check it out for themselves. Of course everybody knows the 'Jet d'Eau', the 140 mtr high water fountain in the lake and

the city's undisputed symbol. When in Geneva we always love to visit Carouge. The small city, just a couple of minutes away from Geneva was designed by Italian architects and has retained its Latin charm. Many of the neo-classical houses and the inner courtyard gardens are well preserved and have been converted to restaurants, fashion boutiques, workshops, ateliers and antique stores. Quays, lakeside promenades, countless parks, lively side streets in the old town and elegant shops invite visitors to stroll and explore Switzerland's most international city. One of the best-maintained streets is the Grand-Rue, where Jean-Jacques Rousseau was born. The 'mouettes', a type of water taxi, enable crossings to be made from one lakeshore to the other, while larger vessels invite visitors to enjoy cruises on Lake Geneva. Visitors who stay overnight in one of Geneva's hotels can use the public transport system within the city FOC and at the office of Geneva Tourism you can even get a map specifically created with the Indian guest in mind. Ask for 'Geneva Masala' and start your holiday right there.

#### **Excursions:**

**St. Pierre Cathedral:** The north tower of the threenaval basilica in the old town of Geneva offers a unique vista over the city and lake. The Cathedral is famous for Jean Calvin preaching here during the Reformation, and the Maccabee chapel is especially stunning with its Gothic paintings.

**Palace des Nations:** The Palace located in the midst of the Ariana Park and on the banks of Lake Geneva was built in the 1930s and is home of the European headquarters of the UN. Guided tours are available.

**International Museum of the Red Cross:** Emotion, discovery, reflection: the Museum offers you a unique opportunity to enter into the history of humanitarian action. In a break with traditional museography, the exhibition is an adventure, initiating visitors into contemporary humanitarian action.

**Mont Salève:** Located in neighbouring France, the 1,380-mtr-high mountain offers delightful walks for hikers and affords breathtaking landscapes, including views of the Mont Blanc.

## **4) Gstaad**

Gstaad is proud to be the backdrop for scenes in many famous Bollywood movies such as DDLJ and Bachana BMF Gstaad 6 Ae Haseenno, and offers full day tours to explore the movie locations. You have the opportunity to take pictures at those very movie spots; you will feel like a star yourself. Also included in the tour is a visit of the Swiss Chocolate factory Broc of Maison Cailler. We are sure you will love the authentic Swiss Alpine village with the amazing wooden chalet houses. 7,000 people and 7,000 cows live here side by side. But of course there is also a touch of glamour attached to the destination. Gstaad's luxurious five-star hotels and shops of international designer brands make this a very upscale destination indeed. Stars from Europe, the US and India alike come here to relax. For example Kareena Kapoor has been coming to Gstaad for years. It is also the home of many international events. The hot air balloon festival in neighbouring Châteaux-d'Oex, Gstaad Major (part of Swatch Beach Volleyball Major Series), Swiss Open ATP Tennis Tournament and the Gstaad Menuhin Festival (classical music) are just a few of the many exciting events on offer.

#### **Excursions:**

**Glacier 3000:** On top of the mountain a thrilling alpine coaster, dog sleds and snow bus rides, cross country skiing, and the 'Peak Walk' suspension bridge awaits you. We love the futuristic mountain station as well.

**Lake Lauenen:** Also known as the Chopra Lake, it is a must on every Indians itinerary. Home to moorland meadows, reeds, clumps of heather it was featured in DDLJ.

Hiking: The hiking trails take you through some very varied scenery. Along the way you will discover moorlands, deep gorges, Alpine valleys, high mountain peaks and, of course, the beautifully located Alpine restaurants.

**GoldenPass Line:** Gstaad is en route of the GoldenPass Line scenic train journey. The stretch down to Montreux is particularly spectacular. Why not visit Chillon Castle, Chaplin Museum and the Lavaux vineyards for a day.

**Outdoor activities:** Hot air ballooning, paragliding, electric bicycles and toboggan rides and horse carriage rides are all available. In winter of course, Gstaad turns in to a winter sport resort with great skiing options.

**Family Mountain Wispile:** An excursion to Gstaad's house mountain is a great day out for all the family. See for yourself how cheese is made the traditional way, stop by at the petting zoo and whisk down the mountain on a trottibike. There are even supersized Fondue pots where the whole family can sit down and have the yummy melted cheese dish.

## 5) Lake Geneva Region.

The Lake Geneva Region consists of the Canton Vaud. In addition to the main cities Lausanne and Montreux, many Indian groups also stop in the Alpine resorts of Leysin, Les Diablerets and Villars, often making it the base for an excursion to Glacier 3000.

### Lausanne

The setting of Lausanne is extremely picturesque: it is hardly surprising that the International Olympic Committee has been based here since 1914. The town is built on three hills, surrounded by vineyard-covered slopes, with Lake Geneva at its feet. Rising impressively from the opposing French lakeshore are the Savoy Alps.

**Lausanne old town with cathedral:** The impressive cathedral dating back to the 13th century is surrounded by beautiful, car-free Old Town including the Maire Castle and the Ale Tower, both built in the 14th century.

**Olympic Museum:** Feel the Olympic spirit the way the athletes do, study the history of the Games from antiquity to today. The latest computer technology and audiovisual media makes this a great day out.

**Flon district:** This former industrial zone has reinvented itself over recent years as a culture and entertainment hotspot. With bars, cinema, restaurants, galleries and boutiques, this is the liveliest part of Lausanne.

**Lake Geneva Cruise:** Lausanne is ideal starting point for a leisurely cruise on the lake. Montreux and Geneva are easily reached and you can even cross the border to France for a daytrip to Evian.

### Montreux

The town of Montreux nestles in a sheltered Lake Geneva bay, surrounded by vineyards and against the breathtaking backdrop of snow-covered Alps. The Montreux Jazz Festival, which takes place in June/July features concerts of world famous acts, but also great free concerts in the parks and at the lake. Family Mountain Wispile Montreux 8

**Chillon Castle:** Is located on a rock on the banks of Lake Geneva. The water castle is the most visited historic building in Switzerland. For nearly four centuries, Chillon was the residence and profitable toll station of the Counts of Savoy. Entry FOC with Swiss Pass.

**Rochers-de-Naye:** After overcoming a difference in altitude of 1,600 mts, the rack-railway reaches one of the most beautiful vantage points in western Switzerland. You can enjoy an amazing view of Lake Geneva and the French Alps.

**Christmas Market:** This is one of Switzerland's famous Christmas markets with numerous attractions and over 100 decorated wooden houses brimming with gifts (December).

**Chaplin's World:** This newly opened exhibition on the former country estate of Charly Chaplin is already a huge hit with guests from India. It is a very interactive and highly entertaining experience.

## 6) St. Moritz

St. Moritz is one of the most famous holiday destinations in the world. Its name is synonymous worldwide with style, elegance and class. It's a classic holiday destination. For it was here in the spectacular Upper Engadin lakes district that the notion of winter holidays was born. This Alpine village has also hosted the Winter Olympics on two occasions and welcomes the Alpine Ski World Championship in 2017. And yet, St. Moritz originally rose to prominence due to its mineral springs, which have been attracting visitors for around 3,000 years. It is particularly charming during the Swiss summer and autumn. Via Serlas is St Moritz's answer to Rodeo Drive in LA, albeit on a smaller scale. Nevertheless, you find here every top brand from Chanel to Louis Vuitton. St. Moritz has great selections of five-star properties with a long tradition of welcoming guest, plus an array of classic bars, new lounges and clubs with international flair means you'll be spoilt for choice when it comes to nightlife. The frozen lake is the focal point during winter. Here you can witness Snow Polo, White Turf Horse Races and even Cricket on Ice. Yes you heard right. All these events happen on the frozen lake. Regardless of season, St. Moritz is an outdoor paradise. In summer, as well as traditional hiking and biking, you can try your hand at tennis, crazy golf, horse riding, sailing, rowing, wind- or even kite-surfing. In winter, St Moritz offers endless snow sports opportunities. Ski Alpine, snowboarding, cross country skiing, curling or exploring the many winter walking trails, the choice is yours.

### Excursions:

**Panoramic train journey:** Both Glacier Express and Bernina Express stop at St. Moritz. You have to do at least part of the journey which is a UNESCO World Heritage.

**Muottas Muragl:** Take the train to this beautiful vista point with impressive views over the lakes of the Upper Engadine. In winter, you can toboggan from the summit all the way down to the valley.

**Horse drawn carriage:** What could be more romantic than exploring the beautiful destination along the lake or through the forests in an horse drawn carriage. Bring your own date.

**Olympia Bob Run:** Whoever thunders down the only natural ice-run in the world will enjoy a 75-second adrenalin boost. But all bravery is duly rewarded with a diploma at the end of the run!

**Try your luck:** American roulette, black jack, ultimate Texas hold'em poker, slot machines. Lay down your cards with smooth James Bond-style at the St Moritz Casino.

## 7) Ticino / Lugano

Ticino occupies the southernmost corner of Switzerland. Here the climate is mild, people speak Italian, eat well and embrace the sunny side of life. Visitors can enjoy a great diversity: picturesque lakes, charming towns full of music, unspoiled valleys and an extensive network of magnificent walking trails. There is a feel of Italy, with palm trees at clean beaches and lanes and alleyways leading to piazzas and churches. Lugano, the largest town in the holiday region of Ticino, is a town of parks and flowers, villas and sacred buildings. With Mediterranean flair, Lugano lies in a bay on the northern side of Lake Lugano, surrounded by numerous mountains offering splendid viewpoints. The traffic-free historic town centre, the numerous buildings in Italianate Lombardy style, the exclusive museums, the mountains, lake and a packed calendar of events all invite visitors to see the sights, soak up the atmosphere – and enjoy 'dolce far niente'. Thanks to its mild climate, Lugano is a popular tourist destination in the spring when the camellias are in bloom.

### Excursions:

**Monte Brè:** Lugano's closest mountain can be reached by funicular railway from Cassarate on the outskirts of Lugano. Wonderful panorama of the town, lake and mountains, stretching right over the border into Italy. Muotta Muragl Lugano lake side 10

**Monte San Salvatore:** From the top of the 'sugarloaf' (reached by funicular railway from Lugano-Paradiso) you can walk down the panoramic footpath to Carona and then on to Morcote.

**FoxTown:** The factory outlet is a paradise for shoppers on the lookout for luxury and elegance. Situated in Mendrisio, it has 160 shops which sell brand name items all year round at 30 to 70% discount.

**Swissminature:** 120 miniature models of famous Swiss houses, castles and monuments in the open air, distributed throughout the 14,000 square meter park in Melide. The models have been recreated with great attention to detail and are surrounded by beautiful plants and flowers.

**Castles of Bellinzona:** With its castles, walls, towers, battlements and gates, this impressive fortress is a source of amazement and a UNESCO World Heritage.

**Verzasca valley:** The magical jade green waters of the Verzasca River flow peacefully over smooth polished rocks, passing under the picturesque double arches of the Ponte dei Salti in Lavertezzo. Follow the river and you will find wonderful worn rock shapes and natural Jacuzzis.

**Verzasca Bungee Jump:** Fancy recreating the climax scene from Bollywood blockbuster Dhoom 3? The bungee jump at Lago Di Vogorno is the ultimate adrenaline rush. It's also called the 007 Jump as 7 years before Amir Khan's Sahir, James Bond already jumped off the Verzasca Dam.

## 8) Zermatt

Zermatt is one of the up and coming destinations in the Indian market. Hardly a surprise as according to Lonely Planet it is the most popular destination in Switzerland. Everybody should see the Matterhorn, surely one of the most iconic mountains in the world, at least once in their life. The resort is a car-free and has preserved its beautiful village-like character. It is really rather small so you can easily get around on foot. However, there are electric taxis and your hotel will pick you and your luggage up with one of them when you arrive at the train station. Views from Zermatt's cable cars are all remarkable, but Bellinzona Zermatt 11 the Matterhorn Glacier Paradise is the icing on the cake. Ride Europe's highest-altitude cable car to 3,883mtr and gawp at 14 glaciers and 38 mountain peaks over 4,000mtr from the panoramic platform. Don't miss the Glacier Palace, an ice palace complete with glittering ice sculptures and an ice slide to swoosh down, bum first. End with some exhilarating snow tubing outside in the snowy surrounds. During the summer peak season you will even get amazing Indian food here. Europe's highest cogwheel railway, the Gornergrat Bahn, has climbed through picture-postcard scenery to Gornergrat (3089m) – a 30-minute journey – since 1898. Sit on the right-hand side of the little red train to gawp at the Matterhorn. Tickets allow you to get on and off en route; there are restaurants at Riffelalp (2211mtr) and Riffelberg (2582mtr). In summer an extra train runs once a week at sunrise and sunset – the most spectacular trips of all.

**Excursions:**

**Helicopter flights:** Air Zermatt offers sightseeing flights of 20, 30 and 40 minutes. What a way to get close to those majestic mountains.

**Gorner gorge:** Since the last ice age, the waters have carved a deep chasm. This is a thrilling place of natural beauty. The wooden walkways leading between the towering cliffs provide a dramatic insight in to the power of nature.

**Zermatt Matterhorn Museum:** It houses the items of equipment used during the first ascent of the Matterhorn in 1865, which ended tragically. Under the village square, the museum makes a world of powerful pictures and incredible stories.

**Air Taxi:** For sky-high mountain views to make you swoon, ride warm thermals alone or in tandem (minimum age six years) with Zermatt's Air-Born paragliding school.

**Après Ski:** Zermatt is famous for its great night life in winter and the many après ski bars are usually packed. Don't be surprised to catch some night owl at 3AM still in full ski gear as they have not made it home from the slopes yet.

**Glacier Express:** Use Zermatt as a start or end point for your journey on this most famous Swiss panoramic train journey.

**Village of Findeln:** Original Valais settlement with a small chapel. It has Switzerland's highest rye crop fields at an altitude of 2,100 mtr.

## Swiss Travel System

**Carefree travelling with Swiss Travel System.**

Exploring Switzerland by public transport, well known for its reliable services, turns into a real treat. Regardless of where your clients wish to go, Swiss public transport takes them there comfortably and hassle-free. Also, whatever your clients' specific requirements, a wide range of tickets and passes, as well as additional services, are available to meet any need.

**Public transport network.**

Switzerland is home to the densest public transport network worldwide. It includes over 26,000 km of rail, road and waterway routes, making the remotest places of the country accessible. Public transport operates as accurately and efficiently as the finely balanced wheels of a Swiss watch – whether for fast inter-city connections, relaxed journeys across Switzerland's captivating countryside or exciting excursions to Alpine altitudes of up to 3,500 mtr.

**Regular-interval timetable.**

One of the key attributes visitors from all over the world associate with Switzerland is punctuality – an expectation admirably met by the Swiss public transport system: Its precision is legendary, its coordination perfect. Trains operate according to a regular-interval timetable, meaning that a train always leaves at the same minute after each full hour. Main inter-city connections run at halfhour intervals. At major hubs, trains arrive every full and half hour. Post-bus and boat connections are perfectly coordinated with these regular interval timetables. You can research the timetable of Swiss trains online on [www.sbb.ch/en](http://www.sbb.ch/en). All the information is available in English.

**Harmonised timetable – guaranteed connections.**

The very moment they arrive in Switzerland, your clients benefit from the Swiss public transport network. At all border railway stations and airports, trains and buses are available for incoming guests to speed them on the way towards their city, rural or Alpine vacation destinations. Connections are guaranteed in all places. Where no rail service is available, the journey continues by bus, boat or even mountain railway.

**Coach classes.**

Almost all trains in Switzerland offer first and second class coaches. First class coaches provide additional amenities like wider seats, more legroom and electrical power outlets. Furthermore, first class passengers benefit from quiet zones on the train.

**Surcharge.**

No surcharge applies on international, InterCity or InterRegio trains within Switzerland. Panorama trains like the Glacier Express or the Bernina Express, as well as some PostBus lines (Palm Express), are usually subject to surcharge and/or require seat reservations.

**Seat reservations.**



In Switzerland, the majority of trains do not require seat reservations. Trains offering seat reservations are indicated with an «R» in the timetable on [www.sbb.ch](http://www.sbb.ch). - For trains with mandatory seat reservations, such as the Glacier Express, reservations should be made at the earliest convenience- Group reservations can be done via Rail Europe or GSAs

### **The Swiss Travel Pass experience- Get the most out of Switzerland.**

A national transport network of rail, road & waterway - unlimited use of all major railway and PostBus routes - unlimited use of all public waterway lines - unlimited use of all public transport services in more than 75 cities **Value for money**

Panaramic train journeys such as Glacier Express, the GoldenPass Line and all other panoramic routes are included. However a surcharge and/or seat reservation fee might apply. - Additionally, travellers receive a 50% discount on most mountain railway tickets (JungfrauJoch: 25 %). - Moreover, guests benefit from free of charge travel to selected Swiss Alpine peaks – for example: the Rigi «Queen of the Mountains» or Schynige Platte.

### **Freedom of choice.**

All Swiss Travel System tickets are available for first and second class. - We offer the ideal ticket for any travel requirement and budget; for example, the Swiss Travel Pass Flex or the Swiss Travel Pass Youth, which both include all the benefits and perks of a regular Swiss Travel Pass. - The Swiss Transfer Ticket is our most affordable option for a smooth, direct transfer by train, bus and/or boat from any Swiss border railway station or arrival airport to your clients' vacation destination in Switzerland – and back again.

### **Family friendly.**

Children under 6 years of age accompanied by an adult holding a valid ticket, travel free of charge. - With the Swiss Family Card, children between 6 and 16 years of age, accompanied by at least one parent holding a valid Swiss Travel System ticket, travel free of charge. - Children between 6 and 16 years of age travelling alone receive a 50% discount on the entire Swiss Travel System ticket range. But wait, there is more. You also receive free admission to more than 490 museums nationwide e.g. Chillon Castle, Open Air Museum Ballenberg, Glacier Garden in Lucerne and the Abbey Library in St. Gallen, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, to name, but a few.

### **Swiss Travel System STS tickets and passes.**

Our attractive Swiss Travel System ticket range provides ideal access to Switzerland's public transport network. Thanks to Swiss Travel Pass & Co., your clients enjoy almost limitless mobility, using railways, buses and boats. Here is an overview of our product range:

#### **Swiss Travel Pass. Coverage:**

Unlimited travel by rail, road and waterway, including premium panorama trains and public transport in more than 75 cities. Validity: 3, 4, 8 or 15 consecutive days. Additional benefits: 50 % discount on most mountain railway tickets and free admission to more than 490 museums nationwide. Reductions: Young travellers under the age of 26 receive a 15 % discount off the regular Swiss Travel Pass fare

#### **Swiss Travel Pass Flex. Coverage:**

Unlimited travel by rail, road and waterway, including premium panorama trains and public transport in more than 75 cities. Validity: 3, 4, 8 or 15 individually selectable days within one month. Additional benefits: 50% discount on most mountain railway tickets and free admission to more than 490 museums nationwide.

Reductions: Young travellers under the age of 26 receive a 15 % discount off the regular Swiss Travel Pass fare.

#### **Swiss Transfer Ticket. Coverage:**

Free transfer from any Swiss border railway station or arrival airport to the guest's vacation destination in Switzerland and back. Transfers to/from the traveller's destination must be via direct route, but not necessarily to/from the same destination. Validity: two transfers within one month. Border railway stations: Basel Bad Station / Basel SBB / EuroAirport Basel, Berne (SBB/BLS), Berne Belp, Buchs SG, Chamonix-Mont Blanc, Chiasso, Domodossola, Geneva / Geneva Airport, Koblenz (CH), Konstanz (D), Lausanne, Lugano /Lugano Airport (Agno), Romanshorn, Schaffhausen, St. Margrethen, Tirano (I), Visp / Brig, Zurich Main Station / Zurich Airport.

#### **Swiss Half Fare Card. Coverage:**

Up to 50 % discount off regular public transport fares all over Switzerland whether by train, bus, boat or mountain railway. Validity: 1 month.

**Swiss Half Fare Card Combi. Coverage:**

Up to 50% discount on regular public transport fares all over Switzerland whether by train, bus, boat or mountain railway. Swiss Half Fare Card Combi is only available in combination with a Swiss Transfer Ticket or a Swiss Travel Pass Flex and offers additional mobility in-between travel days. Validity: from first to last validated travel day, with maximum validity of 1 month.

**Swiss Family Card. Coverage:**

The complimentary Family Card offers free travel for children under 16 years of age accompanied by at least one parent holding a Swiss Travel System ticket. Children travelling alone receive a 50 % discount on the entire Swiss Travel System ticket range.

**Panoramic Train Journeys**

Switzerland's premium panorama trains are world famous, captivating passengers with their large panoramic windows with views of breathtaking sceneries. They are surely one of the most beautiful ways to experience Switzerland. Here are three journeys you must know of:

**Glacier Express.**

The Glacier Express is probably the world's most famous panorama train. Within roughly 8 unforgettable hours, it takes you from Zermatt to St. Moritz – a delightful day's journey across pristine Alpine landscapes and deep ravines, through quaint villages and gentle valleys. You will pass through no less than 91 tunnels and cross 291 stately bridges. Comfortable panorama coaches offer passengers the most spectacular views- to be savoured at leisure in what has been dubbed «the world's slowest express train». Route: Zermatt > Brig > Andermatt > Chur > St. Moritz Duration: app. 8h Good to know. - All trains equipped with passenger information system in multiple languages (D/E/F/I/J/C) via audio headphones, two music channels - Food served at your seat. Indian food is available (reservation required) - Three-course menu: CHF 43 - Dish of the day: CHF 30 - Panorama coaches for first and second class, openplan coaches with central aisle and tables, air conditioning and information channel - One wheelchair-accessible seat and one toilet facility for handicapped persons in the first class of each train; seat reservations: seat no 11, reservation at a ticket counter or travel agency no later than 24 hours prior to start of the journey - Animals not permitted on the train - Does not operate between end of October and mid December Sales information. - All Swiss Travel System tickets are valid. - Valid ticket and seat reservations are required. Seat reservations are subject to a surcharge. - Surcharges apply. Please check with your point of sale. - Meal reservations: Rhätia Werte AG, Gürtelstrasse 14, CH-7001 Chur, Tel. +41 (0)81 300 15 15, Fax +41 (0)81 300 15 16, sales@bahngastro.ch

**Bernina Express**

The Rhaetian Railway's spectacular Albula and Bernina lines most deservedly enjoy UNESCO World Heritage status. Operating on the world's highest-altitude railroad, the Bernina Express traverses the Alps, thereby linking the north of Europe to the south. In summer, the journey can be extended on board the Bernina Express bus along beautiful Lake Como and through the picturesque villages between Lugano and Tirano (I). Route: Chur/Davos/St. Moritz > Poschiavo > Tirano > Lugano Duration: 2h 30 min (St. Moritz-Tirano), 3h 40 min (Davos-Tirano), 4h 13 min (Chur-Tirano,) 3h (Bus Lugano-Tirano)

**Good to know.** - Passport or Identity Card required for the border crossing into Italy - No dining cars on Bernina Express trains; snacks, beverages and souvenirs available on all trains; lunchtime in Poschiavo, Le Prese or in the small Italian town of Tirano - Bernina Express bus: operates between Tirano and Lugano from March to October **Sales information.** - All Swiss Travel System tickets are valid. - Valid ticket and seat reservations are required. Seat reservations are subject to a surcharge. - Surcharges apply. Please check with your point of sale. - In winter, additional panorama coaches are integrated into regional train compositions serving the routes St. Moritz – Tirano and Chur – St. Moritz.

**GoldenPass Line.**

8 lakes – 6 cantons – 3 mountain passes – 2 language regions: The GoldenPass line spans Switzerland from Lake Lucerne in Central Switzerland to the gentle vineyards on the shores of Lake Geneva. Travelling in style, either in the VIP front seats of the GoldenPass Panoramic train with open view of the route in front, or in the sumptuous seats of the GoldenPass Classic, your clients truly feel like they're on top of the world. Route: Luzern > Interlaken > Zweisimmen > Montreux Duration: app. 5h

**Good to know.** - Change of train necessary in Interlaken East and Zweisimmen due to track gauge differences - GoldenPass Classic trains: «Belle Époque» coaches in the first and second class,

special wine cellar coaches in the second class. Optional: seat reservations including «dining at the seat»  
- Zweisimmen-Montreux, optional: you can reserve an appetizer platter with regional produce - Bistro coach available on the route Lucerne-Interlaken East

**Sales information.** - All Swiss Travel System tickets are valid. - A valid ticket is required and seat reservations are recommended for individual passengers. For groups, seat reservations are required. - Reservation fees apply. Please check with your point of sales. - The various route stages have to be booked separately

### **For a relaxed arrival in Switzerland.**

**Arriving by air-** Switzerland's main airports link perfectly to the country's outstanding public transport network. In Geneva and Zurich, a railway station is located right inside the airport. Trains leave for the city centre every few minutes, taking passengers there within roughly 10 minutes. Additionally, comfortable InterCity trains operate to most other Swiss cities at half-hour intervals. Basel and Bern airports offer a regular and excellently functioning bus service between their airports and city centres. Basel, Zurich and Geneva all provide a rail ticket counter right at the airport to facilitate ticket purchases.

**Travelling by train from Germany-** The highly comfortable ICE trains of the Deutsche Bahn (DB) take travellers quickly straight to all major Swiss cities. Berne, Thun, Interlaken, Zurich and now Chur as well are served on the Rhein axis via Basel. The high standard InterCity and EuroCity trains operate direct services between Munich, Stuttgart and Hamburg to Zurich. In addition, a new direct EuroCity connection has now been established from Hamburg to Interlaken via the Ruhr area. More than 35 times a day, the DB fleet sets direct course for its neighbouring Alpine nation.

**Travelling by train from France-** The briefer the journey the better – or is that always so? Speed, precision, competence, a warm welcome, excellent catering and first-class service: The high-speed train service TGV Lyria combines the very best of French and Swiss cultures. Beware, however: The journey is such a great experience that passengers might uncharacteristically wish it to last longer.

**Travelling by train from Austria-** The fleet of the Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB) transports passengers to Switzerland in a swift and most comfortable manner. Night trains link the old imperial city of Vienna, as well as Graz and Villach, to Zurich, which allows passengers to arrive the next morning in a completely rested state. Also, ÖBB's premium rail service «Railjet» takes travellers from Vienna, Salzburg or Innsbruck to Zurich in 2-hour-intervals on a daily basis. As usual, perfect connections from Zurich hub to the rest of Switzerland are guaranteed.

**Travelling by train from Italy-** Wanderlust or just taking a break from everyday routine? From neighbouring Italy, many of the most scenic Swiss cities are only a comfortable train ride away. Enjoying the amenities of state-of-the-art, technically refined tilting trains, passengers travel through curvy Alpine sections not only more smoothly, but also at high speed. This significantly reduces travel time while increasing passenger comfort. The recently opened Gotthard Base Tunnel is with a length of 57.09 km the world's longest and deepest traffic tunnel. Train services will begin in December 2016 and once fully functional, the tunnel will slice 45 minutes off the travel time between Milano and Zurich.