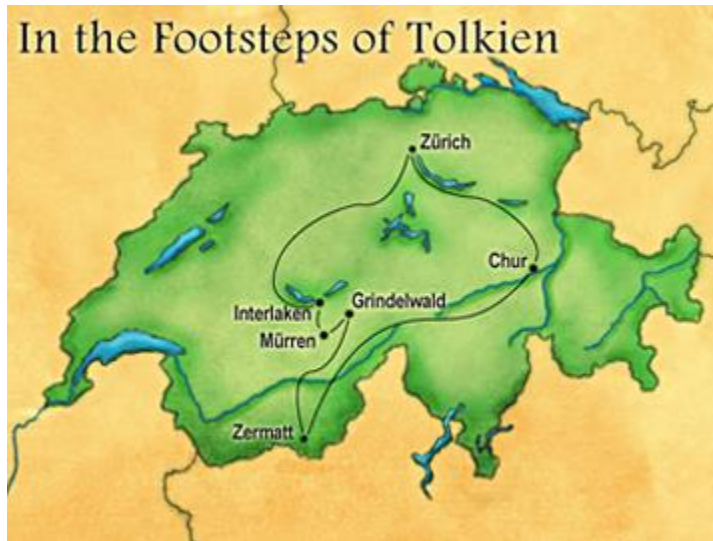


In the Footsteps of Tolkien



A MIDDLE EARTH TOUR AT THE SOURCE - THE SWISS ALPS

Trip Highlights

- Embark on the journey that inspired JRR Tolkien's Rivendell in Middle Earth from Lord of the Rings
- Experience exquisite walking trails, dazzling waterfalls, and legendary peaks like the Eiger and the Matterhorn
- Ascend snowy Jungfrau by cog railway to Europe's highest railway station and overlooking the Alps' longest glacier
- Visit the Greisinger Museum home to the largest Middle Earth and Tolkien memorabilia collection in the world

Activity Level

Our trips are designed for people who are energetic, active, and filled with a spirit of adventure. We rate this trip as easy. You should be capable of walking 2 to 3 hours per day on well-graded walking paths at an elevation up to 10,000 feet above sea level.

Overview

Much of JRR Tolkien's fascinating world was conceived in Switzerland. It's based on a formative trip the author made in 1911 at the age of 19. You can still find this world today in the Swiss Alps if you know where to look.

Spectacular Itinerary, Exclusive Features

Following Tolkien's route we embark on a journey where you'll explore Interlaken, the Jungfrau, the Eiger, Grimselpass, and the upper Rhone, before concluding in Zermatt at the base of the Matterhorn. We are guests at a new Tolkien museum and explore Tolkien's legendary landscapes on scenic trains such as the Glacier Express and the Goldenpass Line.

The magnificent snowcapped peaks of the Alps, the surging waterfalls and powerful glaciers are as likely to fire your imagination as they did Tolkien's. You'll travel in comfort and in the company of expert trip leaders and knowledgeable guides. You'll enjoy first class rail and hotels throughout.

About Your Guide

Our expert guide is Alex Lewis, Chairman of the Tolkien Society of UK from 1988-92, and author of three books of Tolkien studies: *Uncharted Realms of Tolkien* (2002) *Forsaken Realm of Tolkien* (2005), and *Epic Realm of Tolkien* (2009). Alex is currently the Secretary of the Tolkien Society and writing a biography of Tolkien due out later this year. An Oxford born and educated writer, he currently lives on the border of Wales and England.

"This is a serious journey, not a hobbit-walking party" Gandalf

Itinerary

Day 1 – Arrive Zürich

You'll start your adventure as Tolkien did—in Interlaken, the traditional gateway to the spectacular Jungfrauregion. Orientation and dinner. D

Day 2 – Lauterbrunnen, Trümmelbach Falls, Mürren

Ascending from Interlaken to the Lauterbrunnen Valley (Tolkien's Rivendell) evokes Bilbo's journey across the Misty Mountains. We'll avert "a glissade down the slithering stones into the pine woods," but capture all the excitement of Trümmelbach Falls—a ten-tiered underground waterfall draining the Eiger glacier—before continuing on to Mürren as did Tolkien. BD

Day 3 – Wengen, Kleine Scheidegg, Jungfrauoch, Grindelwald

Passing below the Silberhorn, which Tolkien called the "Silvertine (Celebdil) of my dreams," we take the legendary mountain railway excursion, tunneling through the Eiger to the highest railway station in Europe and overlooking the longest glacier in the Alps. The railway opened in 1912, the summer after Tolkien's journey. You'll stand in awe of the Eiger, Mönch, and Jungfrau as did Tolkien who mirrored them in the three peaks of the Misty Mountains. We descend into the Grindelwald (from an ancient Germanic word meaning mysterious forest)—now a world-class ski resort. BD

Day 4 – Meiringen

The town of Meiringen was a favorite of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who set Sherlock's death at Reichenbach Falls. You'll ascend the towering chasm of the Aare Gorge before settling in to Doyle's "English Hotel" in the heart of Meiringen. BD

Day 5 – Grimselpass to upper Rhone, Zermatt

Tolkien crossed the Grimselpass on foot, but we'll cross the granite bowls of this wild mountain region more comfortably. We'll ascend the Gelmerbahn—with a 106% gradient, the steepest funicular in Europe—before entering the Rhone Valley and on to Zermatt. BD

Day 6 – Zermatt and the Matterhorn

The incomparable Matterhorn is best viewed from the glistening lakes of Riffelsee and along the Gornergrat, and on a cog-wheel railway that takes us to an viewpoint where you'll be surrounded by more 4000-meter peaks than anywhere else in the Alps. BD

Day 7 – Glacier Express

Departing Zermatt we take the Glacier Express, “the slowest express train in the world” through golden forests of larch and deep glacial valleys to the city of Chur, one of the oldest in Switzerland. BD

Day 8 – Greisinger Middle Earth Collection

Located in the picturesque village of Jenins, with a mountain backdrop evocative of Rivendell, you’ll visit the Greisinger Middle Earth Collection, the largest collection of Middle Earth paintings, collectibles, and Tolkien books in the world. The new museum is complete with gardens, a hobbit house, and theater. Return for final night in Zurich. BD

Day 9 – Depart Zürich

Depart Zürich for return flights or consider onward travel on a cruise down the Rhine. B

Included

The services of both a Certified Switzerland Specialist trip leader and the added subject matter expertise provided by our resident Tolkien authority, all accommodations (8 nights in first class hotels), all meals as shown (B=breakfast and D=dinner), First class Swiss rail, all ground transportation including trams and mountain railways, admissions and luggage transfers.

Not Included

Beverages (beer, wine) with meals, items of a personal nature (laundry, phone calls, room service)

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