

Scenic Swiss Alps by Rail – The Grand Train Tour of Switzerland



TOUR SWITZERLAND BY RAIL IN LEGENDARY TRAINS

Activity Level

Our Adventures 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 about one to two miles per day. On one day you will take a mountain railway to an elevation of 11,388 feet.

Overview

Imagine the spectacular alpine scenery through the panoramic "vista" windows that run from your elbow to the ceiling while you sit comfortably in your first class Swiss rail seat. Your eyes gazing effortlessly on the beautiful Swiss Alp peaks, the sparkling lakes, lush flowered meadows, historic castles, the iconic profile of the Matterhorn, deep-cut glacial valleys, vineyards, gushing white water streams, magic mountains flanked by enormous glaciers. You'll enjoy this all in first class comfort. You'll tunnel through the Eiger to arrive at the Jungfrauoch, the highest railway station in Europe. Then you ascend the Gornergrat above Zermatt to arrive at an alpine panorama where you are surrounded by more 4,000 meter peaks than anywhere else in the alps.

Europe's Finest Rail System

The legendary trains of Switzerland are among the finest in the world and the Swiss have perfected making mountains accessible. Their ingenious network of trains, rack railways, trams, and funiculars easily puts you in the midst of the most spectacular glaciers in the Alps and the highest peaks in Europe.

Mountaintop Excursions

You will also get to ascend the Gornergrat above Zermatt to arrive at an alpine panorama where you are surrounded by more 4,000 meter peaks than anywhere else in the Alps. Then you will get to ride through a tunnel in the Eiger to arrive at the Jungfrauoch, the highest railway station in Europe.

All in First Class Comfort

Enjoy the Swiss Alps in the comfort of your first class rail car, and in the company of Swiss rail experts. You'll discover the scenery, history, and engineering that have made Switzerland's rail system the finest and most popular in the world.

Glacier Express and Other Scenic Journeys

You'll ride on the most legendary of alpine railway journeys—The Glacier Express—and discover the charms of other scenic routes such as the Bernina Express and the Goldenpass Line.

Itinerary

Day 1 – Arrive in Lucerne

After meeting the other tour members, (typically at 13:00), you will ascend to the top of the 7000 ft. Mt. Pilatus via the cable car in Kriens. At the top you will enjoy the beautiful Central Swiss Alps panorama and Lake Lucerne below you. You will then descend via the world's steepest cogwheel train and return to Lucerne. Overnight in Lucerne at a historic hotel near the train station. D

Day 2 – Swiss Alps in the Historic Heart of Switzerland

Lucerne--Gothard Pass -- Lugano

Ride a historic paddle steamboat along the Wilhelm Tell express route to Fluelen on Lake Lucerne. In the afternoon you will take a train to Lugano through the historic beginnings of Switzerland where you see the Ruetli meadow where Switzerland was founded in 1291 and ride through the 15 km Gotthard tunnel first opened in 1888. This 13th century Gotthard pass became the shortest North-South route through Europe and still one of the reasons for Switzerland's economic success. You can enjoy an early lunch in the dining room on this historic boat. Once in Lugano you will be delighted to enjoy this Italian

speaking part of Switzerland called Ticino, representing 10% of the Swiss population. Overnight in Lugano. BD

Day 3 – Italian Lake Como and Swiss Alps Postcard Views

Lugano -- Bernina Express Bus and Train -- St. Moritz

You will begin with a morning Swiss bus ride through the Lake Como region of Italy and wonder how the steep hillside vineyards are harvested. You stop in the Italian village of Tirano where you will transfer to the Bernina Express train. Spend the afternoon experiencing the scenic narrow valley terrain as you climb from 400m/1200ft up and over the 2250m/7300ft Bernina pass summit all the while watching the 4000m/12900ft Bernina mountain range. You will see the highest alpine peaks through the panoramic vista windows that run from your elbow to the ceiling. You will be busy taking lots of pictures as the beautiful alpine scenery changes with the many twists and turns of your Bernina Express train that runs along 122 km of track passing through 55 tunnels and over 196 bridges and viaducts. Overnight in St. Moritz. BD

Day 4 – Beautiful Swiss Alps, Lakes and Vistas

All Day St. Moritz to relax, discover, and enjoy

This wide Engadine valley is one of the most scenic in all of Switzerland as you see numerous alpine lakes from the Muttas Muragl funicular railway reached 2554m/7362ft summit. The vistas are inspiring as you see the snowcapped Bernina Mountain range peaks and the green pasture St. Moritz ski slopes all in the same view. You have choices to walk along the paved level St. Moritz lake situated in the midst of thick pine forests and experience the wonderful smells and beautiful sights of this world famous alpine resort. You will be amazed at the trendy fashions you see in the store windows and understand the "champagne climate" branded St. Moritz. Your Engadine card entitles you to access all the local transportation and the summit Piz Nair, Piz Corvatsch, and Diavolleza cable cars. Only 1% of Switzerland speaks the language of Romansh and you might be able to hear this spoken in this region of Switzerland. Overnight in St. Moritz. BD

Day 5 – Mountains, Meadows, and Breathtaking Scenery

St. Moritz -- Glacier Express -- Zermatt

The fastest 8 hour train ride you will experience! This morning you are transferred to the train station to begin one of the most beautiful stretches of railway in the world where you experience the one-of-a-

kind mountain landscape in the Swiss Alps. In addition to awesome scenery, you have headphones where information in English is provided so you also hear and understand what you are seeing. You will be amazed at the engineering feats this 1930 first-time route offers as you cross 291 bridges and go through 91 tunnels while you ascend and descend 500m/1660ft through the varied and culturally changing mountain valleys. You will have the opportunity to order lunch on the train. Throughout the day there is ample room to get up and walk around as you enjoy the scenery travelling by. Overnight in Zermatt. BD

Day 6 – The Matterhorn and The Surrounding Majestic Highest Peaks in Europe

All day in Zermatt to discover and enjoy!

Today is one of the trip's highlights as we take a Gornergrat cogwheel train to 3000m/10000ft and experience the Matterhorn at the same eye level along with a 360 degree view of the surrounding 4000m/13000ft highest peaks in Europe. You are now encircled with incredible mountain and glacier views and have the time to immerse yourself in the awesome alpine snow covered peak scenery. To deepen and enhance your Matterhorn experience, options include easy hiking on signposted paths to and through tiny alpine ponds that offer great photo taking opportunities. For the afternoon your guide offers the best afternoon Zermatt activities of a historical walk through town and a visit to the Matterhorn museum. You will be in the German speaking region of Switzerland. Overnight in Zermatt. BD

Day 7 – Swiss Valleys, Cailler Chocolate, and Cheesemaking

Zermatt – Chocolate and Gruyères

Today we will travel to the prealp of the French-speaking Fribourg canton where we stay in the walled medieval village of Gruyères. Close-by a visit to one of Switzerland's best tasting chocolate factories also allows you to taste all the chocolate you can eat! In Gruyères, you will learn why this is some of Switzerland's best tasting cheese and also what it takes to make it by seeing cheesemakers at work. There's no better place to enjoy fondue than in Gruyères. Overnight in Gruyères. BD

Day 8 – Chocolate, and Legendary Trains

Gruyères Castle - Interlaken

This morning, we will have time to explore the 800-year-old Gruyères castle. From Gruyères, the Goldenpass Classic train car allows you to experience what it was like during the Belle-Epoque, Golden

Age period when the rich and famous were the only ones traveling on such trains. The continuing alpine flower multi-colored valleys, rolling hills, green pastures, wooden chalets, Disney looking villages, cow grazing farms bring us to one of Switzerland's oldest and still most popular resorts. Overnight Interlaken. BD

Day 9 – Magnificent Mountains with Aletsch Glacier Experience

Interlaken – Jungfrauoch – Interlaken – Zurich Airport

Today caps one of the trip's highlights with three different trains riding up to the top of the 3,400m / 13371ft Jungfrauoch. The complex was built in 1914 between the Mönch & Jungfrau mountains. You are able to go inside and outside to experience Europe's largest Aletsch glacier and view mountains, snow, and ice as far as you can see. There's time to walk outside on the hard packed snow glacier and be part of the scenery at Europe's highest man-made splendor. Sit on one of the free standing deck chairs or go exploring in the Ice Palace filled with ice sculptures. Following the visit to the Jungfrauoch will be a group lunch at the Eigergletscher restaurant that sits below the mountain trio with magnificent views. You will then take a final train to Zurich for your last night. Overnight Airport Radisson Blu Hotel. BL

Day 10 – Depart Zurich for onward travel

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before heading out for onward destinations. B

Included

The services of an expert guide, all accommodations (9 nights in 3 and 4 star hotels), all meals as shown (B=breakfast, L=Lunch, D=dinner), First Class rail transportation and all ground transportation including trams and mountain railway excursions, admissions). Luggage handling will be assisted by hotel porters but you will need to be able to get your luggage on and off the trains.

Not Included

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

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