



The Best Things to Do and See in Lucerne in One Day

Chapel Bridge

Chapel Bridge, named for the nearby St. Peter's Chapel, is Lucerne's most iconic landmark. This wooden bridge was built in 1365 and is the oldest covered bridge in Europe.

Much of the bridge was burned during a devastating fire in 1993, but it was quickly restored and some of the original elements were preserved.

The exterior of the bridge is lined with colorful flower boxes, and you'll find graceful swans gliding under the bridge creating a picture-perfect storybook scene!

The interior of the bridge has ceiling panels decorated with a series of 17th-century paintings depicting important events from Lucerne's history. After the fire, only 30 of the original 147 paintings were able to be restored.

You'll also notice the water tower by the bridge, during Lucerne's darker history, this served as a prison and a torture chamber.

Musegg Wall

Lucerne's Musegg Wall, or Museggmauer, is part of the city's original medieval fortifications built in the 14th century.

The wall and towers are open to the public from April to November and there is no charge to visit.

Visitors will get a chance to walk across a portion of the city wall where you'll find the best view in the city.

You can even climb four of the original nine towers, including Zyt Tower which houses the oldest clock in the city dating back to 1535. The tower stairs are steep and narrow (and will give you a workout!), but you'll get to see the clock's inner gears. If you visit on the hour, you'll even be able to hear the clock bell ring.

Riverfront Promenade

The Riverfront Promenade is my favorite part of the city. This pedestrian-only walkway runs parallel to the River Reuss which flows right through the heart of Old Town and into Lake Lucerne.

The promenade is lined with sidewalk cafes, local shops, sculptures, historic buildings, and parks.

A few popular places to eat include Rathaus Brauerei, a waterfront brewery that serves traditional German dishes. Restaurant Schiff is also a great spot for Swiss cuisine and picturesque water views. Buvette Bar is a more casual café serving light bites and drinks right by the water.

We also really liked Pastarazzi. It isn't on the waterfront, but they serve delicious homemade pasta cooked to order. If you are looking for authentic Swiss fondue, check out the popular Fondue House du Pont, but you'll need to make reservations!

If you have a sweet tooth, Laderach is about a block from the water, but they sell the most delicious Swiss chocolates.

Every Tuesday and Saturday morning, a farmers market is held at the promenade. You'll find vendors selling fresh fruit and vegetables, homemade bread and pastries, meats and cheeses, freshly cut flowers, and handmade gifts.

The waterfront is also lined with historic buildings, including Altes Rathaus. This Renaissance-style old town hall was built between 1602 and 1606 and once served as the seat of government.

There are several hotels on the promenade with great views over the water. We stayed at [Hotel Weisses Kruez](#) just one block from the river. It was a little quirky but reasonably priced for the location in Old Town. We liked that it was within walking distance to restaurants and all of the main attractions in Lucerne.

Wounded Lion Monument

The Wounded Lion Monument is a peaceful refuge in the city. Here, you will find a beautiful garden and the intricately carved Wounded Lion sculpture reflected in a pond.

The monument honors the Swiss Guards who were massacred during the French Revolution while protecting King Louis XVI at the Tuileries Palace.

It was designed by Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen in 1821 and stands as a symbol of sacrifice and loyalty.

The gardens and monument are less than a 10-minute walk from the waterfront and are worth visiting.

Lucerne Churches

Lucerne's cityscape is dotted with church towers whose bells can be heard tolling throughout the day. Here are a few notable historic churches that are worth visiting:

St Peter's Chapel

St. Peter's Chapel is one of the oldest churches in Lucerne, dating back to the 12th century. It was originally built in 1178 but has been restored and renovated multiple times over the centuries.

The chapel is simple but beautiful, featuring a blend of Gothic and Baroque architecture. It once connected directly to Chapel Bridge which was named after this chapel.

Jesuit Church

The Jesuit Church was built between 1666-1677 and was the first large baroque church in Switzerland. It was constructed by the Jesuits who came to Lucerne to strengthen Catholicism and persuade Swiss Catholics to not convert to Protestantism during the Counter-Reformation.

The interior of the chapel is quite ornate with marble altars, stucco work, and fresco ceiling paintings. It stands in striking contrast to the simplicity of the surrounding medieval buildings.

Franciscan Church

The Franciscan Church is one of Lucerne's oldest buildings, dating back to the 13th century.

From the outside, the chapel is a simple Gothic structure, but the interior is more ornate with a large pipe organ, intricate woodwork, and detailed paintings.

Weinmarkt Square

Weinmarkt Square is my favorite town square in Lucerne. It sits in the heart of Lucerne's old town where you'll feel like you've been transported back in time.

This historic cobbled town square dates back to the early 1300s and was home to the city's fish market until the mid-16th century. You can even see part of a wall that remains from the original two-story market hall that was built in 1458.

The square is surrounded by beautiful medieval buildings with painted facades. The gothic fountain adorning the square is also significant and is considered one of the prettiest fountains in Lucerne.

The original fountain dates back to 1481 and took 10 years to complete. It was replaced in the 16th century by the current fountain, but the original can be found in the History Museum of Pfistergasse.

Lake Lucerne

One of the best ways to enjoy Lucerne's natural beauty is by taking a boat tour on Lake Lucerne.

There are several tour operators that offer inexpensive [Panoramic Sight Seeing Cruises](#) that depart from Old Town. The boat tours usually last about 1-hour and offer a beautiful and unique perspective of the city. If you have a Swiss Travel Pass, the boat rides are included at no additional charge.

You can also rent a pedal boat or a small motor boat at the marina to explore the lake on your own.

Spreuer Bridge

The Spreuer Bridge is another historic covered wooden bridge that was built in 1408.

Like Chapel Bridge, it features a series of painted panels in the ceiling rafters. These paintings depict the "Dance of Death," a medieval allegory reminding people of the inevitability of death.

The bridge is significant as it played a role in Lucerne's early milling days. Since the Middle Ages, Lucerne's mills were built on manmade islands along the river where the river water was funneled into water wheels.

Unfortunately, a fire in 1875 destroyed the mills, but this bridge still remains. The Spreuer Bridge was the only place where chaff from wheat could be legally thrown into the river. "Spreuer" translates to "chaff" in German, which is how the bridge got its name.

Mount Pilatus

If you have extra time, consider taking a day trip to Mount Pilatus. Mount Pilatus is the highest peak near Lake Lucerne and rises a staggering 6,995 feet above sea level. It offers breathtaking views over Lake Lucerne and the valley below.

Depending on where you are coming from, visitors can reach the summit by taking the steepest cogwheel railway in the world, or a scenic gondola cable car. Click the link for [transportation options](#).

At the top, you'll find [Pilatus Kulm Hotel](#), a restaurant, and summer mountain activities like a toboggan ride, paragliding, and hiking trails.

Conclusion

There is so much to do and see in Switzerland, but I hope Lucerne makes it into your itinerary!

You don't need more than a day or two to experience the main sites in the city, but you could easily spend more time exploring and delving deeper into the history and culture.

I hope this guide will help you discover the best things to see and do in Lucerne in one day!