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THE LATEST TRAVEL GUIDE TO INSPIRE YOUR NEXT TRIP

An Ambitious 7-Day Switzerland Itinerary

Day 1: Old Town Zurich & Old Town Lucerne

Our flight landed in Zurich in the evening so we stayed at this [Courtyard Marriott](#). It's located near the airport and within walking distance of restaurants and grocery stores.

For this itinerary, I recommend renting a car at the airport. The train system is fantastic in Switzerland, but since you will be visiting a lot of different locations, renting a car will save time and allow you to visit places that are a little harder to reach. We always use [RentCars](#) when we travel to compare the best prices.

To make your trip planning easier, I have created a [Google Map](#) with every location in this itinerary marked.

Old Town Zurich

After a good night's sleep, I hope you wake up refreshed and ready to explore!

Zurich is Switzerland's largest city. Start your morning by wandering through the cobblestone streets of Old Town (Altstadt).

Head to Lindenhof Hill, the highest point in the city with panoramic views. It is the best spot to snap an iconic photo of Old Town Zurich with its timeless medieval architecture.

My favorite part of Old Town is Nierderdorfstrasse, a pedestrian-only area where you'll find Swiss flags strung over alleyways, charming local shops, and historic medieval streets like Augustinergasse.

Bahnhofstrasse is a world-famous shopping street that is fun to stroll on and catch a glimpse of Swiss luxury.

A few other highlights you won't want to miss in Old Town Zurich include three historic churches. Grossmünster Church is a former monastery, St. Peter's Church houses the largest clock dial in Europe, and Fraumünster Church is famous for its Chagall windows.

Stadthaus is a beautiful Italian Renaissance-style town hall. It is open to the public and worth popping in to admire the architecture.

If you have time, I recommend taking a river cruise down the Limmat River. It passes through Old Town and is a fun way to see the sights from a different perspective.

The [Lindt Chocolate Museum](#) is also a popular tourist attraction. You'll learn everything you ever wanted to know about chocolate and be able to sample all kinds of chocolate!

I also had my eye on this [Fondue Tuk-Tuk Tour](#). It would be a fun, unique, and delicious way to experience Old Town!

Old Town Lucerne

If you get an early start, you can see the main sites in Old Town Zurich in the morning. Grab some lunch, then drive about 35 minutes to Old Town Lucerne.

Spend the afternoon and early evening exploring Old Town Lucerne, one of the prettiest towns in Europe. It sits on the shore of Lake Lucerne where you can take a cruise to see the town from the water.

Chapel Bridge is the oldest covered bridge in Europe and is one of the main highlights in Lucerne. The photogenic wooden bridge is lined with flower boxes and you'll find 17th-century paintings on the interior ceiling panels.

Musegg Wall is also worth a visit. It is part of the original city wall and visitors can walk across a portion of the wall for great views of the city. You can even climb inside four different towers.

The Riverfront Promenade is a pedestrian-only area where you can dine at one of the many waterfront restaurants.

The Wounded Lion Monument is a beautiful sculpture and peaceful garden that pays tribute to the fallen guards during the French Revolution.

A few historic churches that are worth visiting are St. Peter's Chapel, the Jesuit Church, the Franciscan Church, and Hof Church.

Weinmarkt Square is my favorite town square in Old Town. The medieval cobblestone square dates back to the early 1300s and boasts a beautiful 16th-century fountain.

After exploring Old Town Zurich and Lucerne, you'll want to spend the night in Lucerne. We stayed at [Hotel Weissen Kreuz](#). This boutique hotel is in a great location and the price is reasonable. The rooms are small and it's a little quirky, but it was fine for one night.

For more information and recommendations, see our detailed guide [9 Things to Do in Lucerne](#).

Day 2: Stoos Ridge, Interlaken, and Grindelwald

Stoos Ridge

From Lucerne, you'll drive about a half hour to Schwyz. Here, you will take the Stoosbahn (the steepest railway funicular in the world) to the small mountain town of Stoos.

You'll then hop on a chairlift to reach the trailhead for one of the most scenic hikes in Switzerland.

The Stoos Ridge Trail follows along the ridgeline for 2.9 miles. You'll be surrounded by unbelievable views of endless mountain peaks and lakes.

For more information about this hike, see our [Complete Guide to Hiking the Stoos Ridge Trail](#).

Interlaken

The Stoos Ridge hike and travel time will take the morning and early afternoon. If you have time, consider stopping in Interlaken where you can take a fun and scenic [Jet Boat Ride](#) on Lake Brienz.

The [St. Beatus Caves](#) are also worth visiting if you have time. This enchanting cavern is considered one of the largest cave systems in Europe. The exterior looks like something out of a fairytale with a cool stone structure and waterfalls. The caves can be reached by car, or you can take a scenic boat ride on Lake Thun.

Grindelwald

Drive to Grindelwald where you can either take the Grindelwald-First gondola to the first middle station, or you can drive along a narrow path.

Once you reach the middle station, check in to [Alpinhotel Bort](#) where you'll spend the night.

Day 3: Grindelwald First, Bachalpsee Hike, Fondue Gondola Dinner, and Hotel Silberhorn

Grindelwald First

Alpinhotel Bort takes a little more effort to reach, but this cozy chalet offers stunning views of the Eiger and Grindelwald Valley. When you wake up in the morning, the way the early morning light slants across the valley looks like something straight out of the pages of a storybook.

Not only does this stay offer incredible views, but it will also give you a headstart to beat the crowds at the popular Grindelwald First activities.

From the middle station located next to the hotel, you'll take the gondola up to Grindelwald-First where you can spend the day enjoying activities such as the First Cliff Walk, First Flyer, First Glider, Mountain Carts, and the Trottibikes.

Bachalpsee Hike

You'll also want to take the 3.8-mile out-and-back trail from Grindelwald-First to the beautiful Bachalpsee mountain lake.

This scenic lake is best viewed from the backside where the surrounding mountain peaks are reflected in the jewel-toned water.

For more information about this hike and the Grindelwald-First activities, see our guide [8 Fun Things to Do in Grindelwald](#).

Fondue Gondola Dinner

After spending the day at Grindelwald-First, head back down to the town of Grindelwald for dinner.

For a unique Swiss experience, make reservations for the [Fondue Gondola Dinner](#) at Hotel Belvedere in Grindelwald.

After enjoying authentic Swiss fondue in a vintage gondola, take time to walk around the cute town of Grindelwald.

Check into Hotel Silberhorn

That evening drive about 20 minutes to Lauterbrunnen where you'll check into the [Hotel Silberhorn](#). This historic hotel first opened in 1906 and their renovated rooms offer some of the best views of the Lauterbrunnen Valley!

The drive from Grindelwald to Lauterbrunnen is short enough that you could spend the night at Hotel Silberhorn instead of Alpinhotel Bort and just do a day trip to Grindelwald. We enjoyed our stay at Alpinhotel Bort, but it is nice to not have to pack up and switch hotels every night!

Day 4: Mürren Via Ferrata, Staubbach Falls Trail, and Lauterbrunnen Village

Mürren Via Ferrata

For a fun day of adventure, head up to Mürren to tackle the via ferrata!

A via ferrata is a climbing route that includes a series of cables and iron footholds. Part of the route requires that you climb across the face of a sheer cliff thousands of feet above the valley floor, it's not for the faint of heart!

The route takes about 3 hours and includes some hiking and suspension bridges in addition to the climbing.

To reach Mürren, you'll take the cable car next to the Hotel Silberhorn up to the Grütschalp station. From there, you'll take a 2.5-mile train ride to the town of Mürren.

Equipment for the via ferrata can be rented from the Intersport shop in town. They'll also give you directions and instructions for the via ferrata.

After you complete the via ferrata, walk around the town and grab lunch at one of the outdoor cafes before heading back down to Lauterbrunnen.

Staubbach Falls Trail

Staubbach Falls is the iconic Lauterbrunnen Valley waterfall you have likely seen posted all over social media.

This waterfall is one of the tallest free-falling waterfalls in Europe and is the third-tallest waterfall in Switzerland.

The waterfall is located right in the heart of Lauterbrunnen and makes for a stunning backdrop set against the traditional Swiss village.

You can actually take a short 0.3-mile trail that will lead you to an observation deck behind the waterfall. You can easily reach the trail from the center of town.

Lauterbrunnen Village

Spend the evening exploring the fairytale village of Lauterbrunnen. Enjoy dinner at one of the many traditional restaurants and pick up handmade souvenirs from a local shop.

There is also a walking trail down by the river that is especially peaceful in the evenings and offers great views.

You'll spend the night at Hotel Silberhorn again.

Day 5: Lauterbrunnen Valley E-bikes, Trummelbach Falls, and Oeschinensee

Lauterbrunnen Valley E-bikes

Start your morning off with a beautiful bike ride through the Lauterbrunnen Valley. We rented e-bikes from Imboden Bike Rentals located in town.

The paved Wasserweg trail is about 3 miles long from Lauterbrunnen to Stechelberg. You'll pass by 4 different waterfalls and charming little farms. There is even a cheese vending machine alongside the path!

Plan for about 2 hours to ride the 6-mile out-and-back trail with stops along the way.

Trummelbach Falls

Trummelbach Falls is one of the four waterfalls that you'll pass while biking through the valley. I highly recommend making a stop here!

This is the largest subterranean waterfall in Europe and it's pretty cool. You'll take a funicular through a tunnel inside of the mountain to reach the top of the falls.

From the top, there is a series of walking paths and observation decks where you can see the waterfall as it flows through the narrow gorge carved into the mountain.

For more information about visiting Trummelbach Falls and the Lauterbrunnen Valley, see our guide [9 of The Best Things to Do in Lauterbrunnen](#).

Oeschinensee

Grab lunch in Lauterbrunnen before making the 50-minute or so drive to Kandersteg. This is where you'll find the gondola that will take you up to Oeschinensee, arguably the most beautiful alpine lake in Switzerland.

After you take the gondola up, you'll find a fun luge ride at the top. Take a few runs on the track, then you can either walk about 20 minutes to the lake or pay to take an electric shuttle cart.

Once you reach the lake, check into [Arva Oeschinensee](#). This charming guest house sits right on the water and will give you access to the lake after the visitors take the last gondola down in the evening.

Grab an early dinner at the cafe, then head out to hike a portion of the Oeschinensee Panorama Trail. This hike is absolutely spectacular at golden hour and sunset!

Day 6: Row Boats, Gelmerbahn Funicular, and Meiringen

Oeschinensee Row Boats

Enjoy a slow morning, you've earned a day to sleep in!

Breakfast is included with your stay at Arva Oeschinensee. You can relax on the outdoor deck overlooking the water while enjoying your meal.

After eating, rent a rowboat to paddle around the lake and get up close to the waterfalls before taking the gondola back down to Kandersteg.

For more details and information, see our [Weekend Guide to Oeschinensee](#).

Gelmerbahn Funicular

You'll drive about 1 hour and 20 minutes from Kandersteg to the town of Handegg. This is where you'll find the Gelmerbahn, the steepest open-air funicular railway in Europe.

The ride takes about 12 minutes and it's like a slow-motion roller coaster with jaw-dropping views!

Once you reach the top, there is a beautiful lake with a walking trail around the perimeter. You can also walk across the dam for great views over the valley.

After you ride the funicular back down to the bottom, be sure to walk across the Handeck Fall Bridge located by the ticket booth. It offers incredible views over the Handeck Gorge and waterfall.

Meiringen

Meiringen is a cute little town that is known as the birthplace of meringues. Pick up some famous meringues and a bite to eat at the Frutal Bakery & Tea Room.

Meiringen also pays tribute to Sherlock Holmes. This is the town where Sherlock stayed before his fateful encounter with Moriarty at the nearby Reichenbach Falls.

You can visit the Sherlock Holmes Museum to learn more about this world-famous fictional detective.

Spend the evening visiting the shops in town and enjoying a quiet dinner, then check into the [Parkhotel du Sauvage](#).

This is the same hotel where Conan Doyle stayed while writing the chapters about Sherlock's death at Reichenbach Falls. This is also the hotel where Holmes stayed the night before going to the falls, although in the book it was referred to as the Englischer Hof.

Day 7: Aare Gorge, Reichenbach Falls, and Saxer Lücke Hike

Aare Gorge

You'll want to make the most of your last day in Switzerland, so get an early start and head to Aare Gorge right when it opens.

Aare Gorge is absolutely dreamy with a turquoise river and towering moss-covered limestone walls. A one-mile path leads through the dramatic narrow gorge along a raised catwalk, over bridges, and through tunnels.

Reichenbach Falls

Reichenbach Falls is located near Aare Gorge and you can purchase a combo ticket to visit both attractions. The ticket includes a ride on a vintage red wooden funicular up to the base of the waterfall.

This waterfall was made famous in the Sherlock Holmes book as it is where Holmes supposedly falls to his death.

It's a pretty waterfall, but nothing too extraordinary. However, if you take the trail past the waterfall and hike up to the top for about a half-hour you'll find a self-service lot where you can rent monster scooters. You can ride these scooters on the paved road all the way down the mountain, and it is so much fun!

For more information about the scooter rentals and things to do in the area, see our guide for the [Best Things to Do in Meiringen](#).

Saxer Lücke Hike

As you make your way back to Zurich, I recommend taking a detour to do the famed Saxer Lücke hike. Although it is a little out of the way in the Appenzell region, it is worth the effort to get there.

The Saxer Lücke is a unique rock formation that dominates the landscape. The jagged karst outcrop was formed by an ancient geological fault and it's incredible to witness it in person.

To reach the trailhead, you'll need to take the cable car from Frömsen to Staubern. The trail is about 1.75 to the lookout point, so 3.5 miles total, with the option to hike an additional mile or so down to Lake Fählen.

For more information about this hike, see our guide [4 Best Hikes in Switzerland](#).

If you have time, the Schafler Ridge Trail is an incredible hike located in the Appenzell region as well. The trail offers breathtaking views and passes by the Aescher cliffside restaurant

featured on the cover of *National Geographic* in 2015.

Zurich

After a full day of adventure, it's time to head back to Zurich for either a red-eye flight or an early morning flight the next day.

I'm sure you will be exhausted, but you will also have memories that will last a lifetime! Safe travels!