



Alpine Splendor: Switzerland and Austria

The towering peaks of the Alps serve as the stunning backdrop for our Swiss and Austrian exploration. As our small group discovers mountain villages and European cities, rides the famed Glacier Express, cruises on glassine lakes, and ascends snowcapped summits, borders disappear and the region's history – and beauty – enchant one and all.

**With an Post-Tour Extension:
Vienna – On Your Own**

Itinerary

Created on Feb 14, 2024

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Day-by-Day Itinerary

DAY 1: Depart U.S. for Zurich, Switzerland

DAY 2: Arrive Zurich/Lake Lucerne

We arrive in Zurich and transfer to our hotel on the shores of Lake Lucerne. After checking in, we meet for a briefing about the journey ahead, followed by dinner at our hotel.

Accommodations: Swiss-Chalet Merlischachen

Meals: Dinner

DAY 3: Lucerne/Mt. Pilatus

This morning we encounter historic and alluring Lucerne, surrounded by mountains and sitting on its namesake lake. We visit the medieval Old Town and cross treasured *Kapellbrücke* (Chapel Bridge), the oldest covered bridge in Europe. Later we ride the world's steepest cogwheel train to the summit of nearby Mt. Pilatus for stunning views across the surrounding countryside.

Accommodations: Swiss-Chalet Merlischachen

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4: Lake Lucerne/Zermatt

Today's scenic overload begins with a ferry ride on Lake Lucerne, where we pass Rütli meadow, the legendary "birthplace of Switzerland." Disembarking at Flüelen, we coach to Andermatt to board the celebrated *Glacier Express* train, renowned for its panoramic views as it sweeps through striking valleys, past mountain hamlets, and follows the course of the fabled Rhône. Our adventure on this famed route ends in Zermatt, nestled in the shadow of the Matterhorn. Tonight we enjoy dinner together at a local restaurant.

Accommodations: Resort Hotel Alex

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 5: Zermatt/Gornergrat

Sitting in a low-slung notch, Zermatt is surrounded on all sides by towering slopes. We get a unique view of the spectacular scenery this morning as we ride the *Gornergratbahn*, to the summit of the Gornergrat. Atop this rocky ridge, a dramatic tapestry unfolds all around us: 29 Alpine peaks, each over 13,000 feet, including the majestic Matterhorn standing alone at nearly 15,000 feet. After admiring the jaw-dropping scenery, we begin our descent by train to Zermatt, where the remainder of the day is free to explore this very walkable village as we wish.

Accommodations: Resort Hotel Alex

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6: Zermatt/Stresa, Italy/Lugano

We travel by coach today through more superb Swiss scenery and cross into northern Italy via the legendary Simplon Pass through the Alps. Late this morning we arrive in Stresa, Italy, along the shores of lovely Lake Maggiore, where we have time to explore and enjoy lunch on our own. Then, a scenic drive through the famed Italian lake district returns us to Switzerland and our hotel in lakeside Lugano.

Accommodations: Luganodante Hotel

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 7: Lugano/Ascona

Today's tour of Ticino, Switzerland's southernmost canton, begins in Ascona on the shores of Lake Maggiore. We enjoy a walking tour of this charming town known for its pastel lakefront façades and its early 20th-century artists' colony that attracted such artists and thinkers as Herman Hesse, Carl Jung, and Paul Klee. Next, we visit a nearby winery in the Ascona Delta, where we stroll through the vineyard, tour the wine cellars, and sample the wines on offer here. Before returning to Lugano, we enjoy regional fare as we lunch alfresco at a local *grotto* restaurant built around mountain caves.

Accommodations: Luganodante Hotel

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 8: Lake Lugano

After a free morning to explore Lugano independently, we board a motorboat for a private half-day cruise around Lake Lugano. We put ashore at Morcote, a town barely a mile square whose cobbled streets, terraced gardens, and Mediterranean charm led Swiss citizens in 2016 to name it the nation's loveliest village. After lunch together and time to explore, we continue on our cruise with a stop in Gandria, whose stucco façades seem to cling precariously to the side of Monte Brè.

Accommodations: Luganodante Hotel

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 9: Lugano/Bellinzona/Vaduz, Liechtenstein/Seefeld, Austria

Leaving the Lake District today, we're bound for Austria by way of the tiny sovereign nation of Liechtenstein. We stop first in medieval Bellinzona; its three feudal castles are all UNESCO sites. Here we visit Castelgrande, the iconic central castle where we explore the ramparts and expansive grounds. We then continue north to Liechtenstein and reach the country's capital of Vaduz, where we have free time to explore and have lunch on our own. We travel on to Austria, reaching our hotel in the mountain village of Seefeld early this evening. Tonight we dine together at our hotel.

Accommodations: Hotel Seelos

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 10: Seefeld/Innsbruck

This morning we coach to nearby Innsbruck, host of the 1964 and 1976 Winter Olympics. A walking tour highlights the postcard-worthy sights, including the many pedestrian squares surrounded by pastel-colored façades. Then we take a cable car to a lookout in the Nordkette, the “mountain at the heart of Innsbruck,” where we enjoy panoramic views of the city and the surrounding Alps. We have time on our own in Innsbruck before returning to Seefeld.

Accommodations: Hotel Seelos

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 11: Seefeld/Tyrol/Salzburg

Today we travel through Tyrol, a crossroads of Western Europe, en route to Salzburg. We stop to visit the Museum of Tyrolean Farms, an interactive outdoor exhibit featuring dozens of preserved farmhouses dating from the 15th century onwards. Then we continue on to Salzburg, Austria’s riverside jewel and city of Mozart and *The Sound of Music*. Following dinner together, we attend a classical music concert in the Marble Room of famed Mirabell Palace.

Accommodations: Imlauer Hotel Pitter Salzburg

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 12: Salzburg

Our walking tour this morning features the geometrically-styled Mirabell Gardens, dating to the 17th century; the Baroque Old Town, now a UNESCO site; and visits to Salzburg Cathedral and medieval Hohensalzburg Fortress, one of Europe’s largest and best-preserved castles. After lunch together at a local restaurant, the remainder of the day is at leisure for independent exploration and dinner on our own.

Accommodations: Imlauer Hotel Pitter Salzburg

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 13: Salzburg/Eagle’s Nest/Berchtesgaden

We travel today to the Bavarian resort town of Berchtesgaden, site of the clifftop *Kehlsteinhaus* (Eagle’s Nest), the Nazi Party’s alpine retreat. Arriving by the original 1930s brass elevator, we tour the chalet where Hitler paid multiple visits before it was captured by the Allies in the closing days of WWII. In the event Eagle’s Nest is closed because of unseasonal weather, we’ll visit the nearby Berchtesgaden Salt Mine, which has operated continuously for more than 500 years. Then we return to Salzburg, where the rest of the afternoon is at leisure before we celebrate our splendid journey at a farewell dinner.

Accommodations: Imlauer Hotel Pitter Salzburg

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 14: Depart for U.S.

We transfer today to the Munich airport for our return flight to the U.S.

Meals: Breakfast

PLEASE NOTE

This trip involves considerable walking on uneven terrain in a natural environment. You should be in good physical condition to enjoy the tour to the fullest. Elevations at hotel locations are not severe, ranging from 1,400 ft. to 5,200 ft. The altitude on some excursions – Gornergrat (10,300 ft.) and other Alpine venues (6,000–7,500 ft.) – could pose problems for guests with certain health conditions. You should consult your personal physician if you have concerns.

This tour itinerary was generated for Alpine Splendor: Switzerland and Austria on Feb 14, 2024. Please visit the Alpine Splendor: Switzerland and Austria page at <https://www.odysseys-unlimited.com/tours/europe/alpine-splendor-switzerland-austria/> for the latest and most accurate information.