

Day 1 LUCERNE

Enjoy strolling the picturesque streets and visiting its art museums or taking a scenic cruise on the lake. Nestled on the shores of Lake Lucerne with a backdrop of Swiss mountain peaks, the city is a vibrant combination of history and city life. It is the gateway to central Switzerland by car or train and is famous for its much photographed Chapel Bridge, a 14th century wood bridge that is the oldest in Europe. Avanti can arrange day tours through the countryside and Alps to the Jungfrau and Monch mountains or to the cities of Bern and Zurich.

ARRIVE LUCERNE:

After arrival in Lucerne, check in at your hotel. The remainder of the day is at your leisure. This picture postcard town offers spectacular mountain views with amazing cog railways and cable cars, all within easy reach. There is an impressive Old Town here, with wonderful shops and a wide choice of restaurants in a delightful lakeside setting. Lucerne is very pedestrian friendly. With the preserved city walls protecting the Old Town, a couple of sights to see are the famous covered Chapel Bridge across the River Reuss, and the 19th century Lion Monument (commemorating the Swiss Guards). Take advantage of your Swiss Coupon Pass* for discounts during your entire tour.

Accommodations: Lucerne - Ameron Luzern Hotel Flora - 1 Nights

Day 2 INTERLAKEN

Discover Interlaken: a quaint, picturesque city in central Switzerland that is nestled between two alpine lakes with endless hiking trails through the surrounding Swiss mountains. Avanti can arrange trips to nearby famous mountains the Eiger and Jungfrauoch as you continue your journey through Switzerland. The Hheweg is the main street that runs through the center of town and has many interesting Swiss shops and the 150 year old Victoria Jungfrau Grand Hotel.

LUCERNE-INTERLAKEN:

After breakfast, take 2nd class rail for the short ride to Interlaken. After checking into your hotel you'll take a non guided excursion to Jungfrauoch. Take the train to the Kleine Scheidegg at the foot of the famous Eiger. Change trains to get on board of the Jungfrau railway and ride via 'Eiger Gletscher' to the Jungfrauoch: the highest railway station in Europe at 3454 m with some breathtaking views of the Aletsch glacier at 22 km the longest in the Alps and an UNESCO World Heritage site. Returning to Interlaken, dinner will be on your own this evening.

(Breakfast)

Accommodations: Interlaken - Grand Hotel Beau Rivage - 1 Nights

Day 3 MONTREUX

Off the shores of Lake Geneva you'll find the city of Montreux with its mild climate and Mediterranean pines, cypresses and palms. The Swiss Alps are as stunning as ever, showcasing their white peaks in the distance. A warm shade of yellow bounces off the walls of Chillon castle during sunrise offering a dreamy spectacle next to the crystal blue water. Wake up in your lake view hotel, get ready and start exploring. No matter where you wander, you are bound to fall in love with this place.

INTERLAKEN-MONTREUX:

After breakfast, your journey on the Golden Pass line continues. Along the shores of Lake Thun you reach the Simmen valley with Zweisimmen and the world known holiday resort of Gstaad. Further on through the wild romantic Pays d'Enhaut with the scenic villages of Chateau d'Oex and Montbovon continues the journey through a tunnel before the panoramic view of the Lake Geneva and Montreux opens in front of you. This resort town offers several cultural attractions; Chateau de Chillon the 13th century fortress is Switzerland's most visited historical building and finds its way into several postcards and books about the country's sights. The Muse de Montreux displays Roman finds, period furniture, and ancient street signs, situated inside an old winegrower's house. More contemporary culture can be found at The Queen Studio Experience, where the legendary band created many of their albums, (witness the 3m tall statue of Freddie Mercury in front of Montreux's old covered market on the waterfront). For dinner, there are plenty of restaurants in Old Town, some offering panoramic views of the lake.

(Breakfast)

Accommodations: Montreux - Fairmont Le Montreux Palace - 1 Nights

Day 4 ZERMATT

Zermatt is a small alpine town brimming with life. This pedestrian only city center boasts great shops, restaurants and high end hotels. A perfect romantic retreat for honeymooners, it may steal your heart. The scenic Glacier Express train connects St Moritz to Zermatt offering a true spectacle of mountain ranges, valleys and tunnels. Here is also where you can admire the imposing Matterhorn peak which gained its global fame as the Toblerone chocolates icon. From the moment you arrive until you leave, Zermatt will make sure to keep you in constant awe.

MONTREUX-ZERMATT:

Enjoy breakfast at your hotel and afterwards, travel from Montreux to Zermatt. The 2.5 hour journey hugs the eastern edge of Lake Geneva before heading to the vineyards around Aigle. At Bex, it picks up the route of the River Rhone, which it follows through glorious countryside to Martigny, Sion and the huge Pfyn Finges nature park. The next stop is Visp, which enjoys one of the sunniest spots in Switzerland and has a charming Old Town. At Visp, the train leaves the Rhone and heads south through the Matter Valley and up to the high Alps of Zermatt and the Matterhorn. After checking into your hotel, explore this picturesque car free resort, nestled among stunning scenery of mountains and glaciers. The village has retained its traditional style and gourmet reputation, providing a wealth of options for dinner this evening with rustic stblis and over 100 restaurants.

(Breakfast)

Accommodations: Zermatt - Tradition Julen Hotel - 1 Nights

Day 5 CHUR

Located in eastern Switzerland, this Alpine city has a pedestrian old town, three naved Cathedral, museums, churches, amusement park and an aerial cableway showcasing panoramic views.

ZERMATT CHUR:

Departing on the Glacier Express, the Matter Valley leads to the town of Visp and is quite narrow at many places, with massive rock walls rising up to well over 4000 m. The highest peaks of the Swiss Alps can be found in this region. Once Visp has been reached, the train has descended to 651 m. A short flat stretch leads to Brig. The train

crosses the river Rhone a few minutes after departure from Brig, and continues its way east into the Upper Rhone valley Andermatt, at 1436 m, is where the Oberalp Pass begins. Enjoy a 3 course lunch of regional and seasonal specialties in the dining car while you gaze out at the stunning alpine panorama. The Glacier Express winds its way upwards to 2034 m, the highest point of this journey. This is where the river Rhine rises. Next up is a long descent along the Rhine valley to Chur at 585 m. The landscape looks very dramatic in the Rhine gorge between Ilanz and Reichenau, where the river carved deep into the white rocks. This region is also referred to as the 'Swiss Grand Canyon'. After Reichenau, the train will reach Chur. This attractive old town is a superb destination at the center of an area offering incredible scenic journeys and places of interest. Chur is Switzerland's oldest town, and like many Swiss locales, the old town is car free. The area around St. Martin's Church and Martinsplatz with its narrow streets and pretty squares, makes it an ideal place to stroll around. After checking into your hotel, dinner will be on your own this evening.

(Breakfast, Lunch)

Accommodations: Chur - Hotel Stern Chur - 2 Nights

Day 6 CHUR:

After breakfast, you'll board the famed Bernina Express for the 4 hour scenic journey to Tirano. The Bernina Express train route takes you through incredible alpine landscapes. Traveling through a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it bends to the south, towards Thusis and Tiefencastel. This Domleschg valley is known for its many ruins and castles. The Albula tunnel leads to the Upper Engadine valley, where Pontresina is one of the prominent towns. This is where the ascent up the Bernina Pass begins. This marks the highest point of the route, at 2253 m over sea level. The train now begins its dramatic descent of 1824 m, all the way to Tirano. After passing the station of Alp Grm, offering a magnificent view of the Pal glacier, the train runs through countless curves to gradually descend into the Poschiavo Valley. This is still Switzerland, but Italian is spoken here. The Bernina Express passes the Lago di Poschiavo, and about 15 minutes later, the train will cross the Italian border and arrives in Tirano. Stroll around this quaint town in northern Lombardy before returning later in the afternoon to Chur.

(Breakfast)

Day 7 ZURICH

Zurich, the largest city in Switzerland, known for its artworks, shopping and scenery, is rated one of the top cities in the world for wealth, livability and quality of life. It has excellent public transportation of trams and the main train station making it easy to travel onwards to other European cities and the mountain resorts throughout Switzerland. Avanti can arrange a full day tour into the Swiss Alps and experience the unique ambience of a Swiss mountain village with old wooden chalets and the sounds of cow bells ringing in the distance: you'll want more! Or, take in three of the region's best chocolates, mountains and cheese; with an unforgettable excursion allowing great shopping opportunities at the outlet shop of the famous Lindt + Sprungli Chocolate Factory, an aerial cable car ride to the peak of the Panorama Mountain Hoher Kasten and a visit to the cheese factory at Stein where the famous Appenzeller cheese is made!

Day 7 CHUR-ZURICH:

After breakfast, take the inter city train in 2nd class for the 90 minute ride to Zurich. This dynamic city is much more than a financial capital. Head to the Lindenhof district on the left bank of the Limmat River; here you are in the heart of the city's old town, where many of the city's must sees (Grossmünster, Fraumünster, the Peterskirche)

and the Bahnhofstrasse) are found. Grossmünster the famously austere church that sparked the Protestant Reformation. The Bahnhofstrasse is a world famous shopping street packed with designer outlets, banks and restaurants. Zurich's Kunsthaus contains over 4,000 works of art and is the best place in the country to explore Swiss artists. Alongside the homegrown talent, the Kunsthaus features plenty of works by world famous artists as well. Two of the more unusual museums are the Money Museum, where you'll learn about the history of... guess what? Money! Plus antique coins that you won't see anywhere else. For soccer (football) fans, wander through the halls of the FIFA World Football Museum, decorated with over 1000 exhibits stretching back to the very first World Cup tournament in Uruguay in 1930.

(Breakfast)

Zurich - Opera Hotel - 1 Nights

Day 8 ZURICH:

After a leisurely breakfast, time to move on to your next Avanti Destination!

(Breakfast)