BACKROADS

TRAVEL PLANNER

Switzerland—Interlaken to Zermatt



Hiking & Walking • Luxury Hotels

SWA-W-HP-R-037-26 6/20/2026

YOUR TRIP AT A GLANCE

Thank you for taking the time to read through this important resource.

This Travel Planner contains detailed information about your Backroads itinerary, including what to expect while traveling, how to prepare for your active adventure and recommendations to support your travel plans before and after your trip.

We look forward to hosting you!

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STRAIGHT TALK

We want to make sure you're on the right trip and that you have the best experience possible. Every Backroads trip is unique and this one is no exception.

Trail Support

Many of our hikes through the Alps are remote and do not intersect with roads. Vehicles (or mountain infrastructure like gondolas) will get us to and from the trailheads, but due to the nature of these trails, we won't see support vans along the route. Ample trail support in the form of water, snacks and encouragement is provided by your Backroads leaders and local guides.

Two Leaders

We ordinarily staff our trips with two Backroads leaders, plus one or more support leaders who are generally responsible for van support. Due to the unusual driving logistics on this trip, we're able to offer our usual high level of support without the help of a support leader.

Air-Conditioning

While the hotels on this trip offer outstanding service and amenities, please note that they are not equipped with air-conditioning. Despite the region's temperate climate and cool nights, guest rooms can occasionally become warm during peak temperatures.



Day 1

Meeting Time: 10:30 a.m.

Meeting Location: Interlaken Ost (East) train station in Interlaken, Switzerland

Additional Details: Meet your Backroads Trip Leaders (the folks in Backroads apparel) in the plaza in front of the train station. Note that there are two train stations in Interlaken; we are **not** meeting at Interlaken West.

Attire & Luggage: Please arrive dressed in your hiking clothes and bring your luggage and a daypack with your rain gear, extra layers and anything else you may want for today's hike (your luggage will be transported to our first night's accommodations).

LATE TO THE TRIP START? See "Meet & Depart Information" for more information.

Shuttle to Adelboden 1 Hour

Hiking & Walking Options:
2.1 Miles (300' elevation gain)
3.4 Miles (300')
4.2 Miles (500')

Welcome to Switzerland! After meeting we shuttle to Adelboden, a charming Swiss alpine village in the Bernese Oberland (Highlands), to enjoy a lunch of regional delights. Then your leaders give a brief trip orientation before you set out on a hike through the Adelboden Valley, a region with stunning scenery and crisp alpine air—the perfect introduction to walking in Switzerland. A gondola ride up to Sillerenbühl station

(6,500 feet) takes us to the Wildflower Trail, which you follow to Hahnenmoos Pass. Here, breathtaking views of the Adelboden and Lenk Valleys will stop you in your tracks. And there are more to come! Continue hiking a bit higher for more great vistas. Then descend past small cheese huts and a babbling brook to Geils, where a local bus or Trotti bike (a two-wheeled push scooter) returns you to Adelboden.

This evening we celebrate our arrival in the Bernese Oberland with a wine reception and the first of many tasty traditional Swiss meals. **Lodging: The Cambrian**



Day 2

Shuttle to Kandersteg 45 Minutes

Hiking & Walking Options:
5.7 Miles (1,600' elevation gain)
6.9 Miles (1,900')

Our hike today takes us across historic Gemmi Pass, an ancient trade route used since Roman times. To reach our trail we shuttle to gorgeous Kandersteg, a town nestled in the broad Kander Valley beneath the towering Blümlisalp and Doldenhorn peaks. It's long been an important mountaineering center and a favored destination of European travelers, becoming far more accessible in 1913 when a 9-mile railroad tunnel created a direct link between Bern and the Rhône Valley. Kandersteg is also known for abundant wildflowers and Simmental cattle, which can be seen munching on the lush grass of mountain pastures.

Just past the center of Kandersteg we arrive at the Sunnbüel cable car, which whisks us to 6,300 feet. Then head out on a gradual uphill along a wide path through the Spittel Valley, passing the shimmering glacier-fed Daubensee (*see* means "lake" in German). Dwarfed by the surrounding Bernese Alps, make your way up to Gemmi Pass (7,600 feet), where on a clear day you're treated to views of the Matterhorn and Monte Rosa, Switzerland's highest peak at 15,200 feet.

Settle into Leukerbad's walkable village center cradled by mountain peaks at Hotel Quellenhof, our cozy home for the next two nights. Curious about the thermal waters that put Leukerbad on the map? Our hotel stay includes free entry to the town pool complex; grab a towel and stroll over for a soak. Otherwise, just freshen up and take it easy before we meet in the evening for a warming dinner in the sleepy mountain town. **Lodging: Hotel Quellenhof**

Day 3

Hiking & Walking Options:
4.1 Miles (100' elevation gain)
5.7 Miles (600')
7.7 Miles (2,200')

Be prepared to cross patches of snow and ice during today's challenging hike—jaw-dropping views are ample reward for your efforts. Start your journey in the Dala Valley with a walk along a trail built into the side of a thermal gorge. As you cross the canyon on a high suspension bridge, admire a thundering waterfall. (Although the fixed bridge is very stable and doesn't swing, keep in mind that you can always opt to hike around the bridge.) At this point you have the option of hiking onward to lunch or returning to Leukerbad, where you'll catch a taxi to meet hikers there. If you choose to continue hiking, proceed on a steep and steady climb flanked by majestic mountains. Relish a quintessential Swiss scene of flower-filled alpine meadows and herds of soft-eyed milk cows adorned with leather collars and brass bells. A local cheese maker meets us in Flüealp and demonstrates the intricate age-old process by which this classic Swiss delicacy is made.

After a picnic lunch, which of course includes a taste or two of deliciously fresh cheeses, continue up the valley to a hidden chapel built into the mountain. The return route takes you down the other side of the valley and back to Leukerbad.

This evening we sit down to a delicious Swiss meal at a local restaurant. **Lodging: Hotel Quellenhof**



Day 4

Bus & Train to Zermatt 3 Hours

Hiking & Walking Options:
2.2 Miles (900' elevation gain)
5.5 Miles (1,200')
4.7 Miles (3,200')

Leaving Leukerbad we bus down to Leuk and catch a scenic train ride to the picturesque car-free village of Zermatt. Through the train window, you'll see the higher and drier mountain scenery that differentiates the southern and northern sides of the Rhône Valley.

Upon arriving, we jump straight into our time in Zermatt with today's hike. Head up through the Gorner Gorge, a dramatic slot canyon accessed by gangways riveted to the sheer rock, where the river water is still actively carving the mountain as it thunders through a roller-coaster of bowls and crevices below. At the top of the gorge, a mountain lunch is served in the hamlet of Furi.

From here you have two choices. If you're in the mood for a shorter hike and a longer afternoon to check out town, hike back down to Zermatt via the ancient cottages of the Zmutt Valley, which are built in the region's traditional style: perched upon stone pillars acting as stilts. Or, if you're craving more miles and views (including so-close-you-can-touch-it angles of the Matterhorn towering above an alpine heath), tackle the steep climb to spectacular Schwarzsee, an alpine lake which bejewels a hanging valley high above Zermatt. If you hike this remote long option, keep your eyes peeled for chubby marmots gamboling across the slopes!

No matter how long you choose to spend on the trail, it's a treat to settle into the historic Grand Hotel Zermatterhof, our home for the final nights of our trip. And you have ample opportunity to explore Zermatt's charming lanes, as dinner tonight is on your own. This ritzy mountain town is full of excellent restaurants; your leaders are happy to direct you to their favorites. **Lodging: Grand Hotel Zermatterhof**

Day 5

Hiking & Walking Options:
0.6 Miles (200' elevation gain)
2 Miles (1,000')
4 Miles (2,000')
5 Miles (3,000')
6.3 Miles (3,500')

This morning we take the Gornergrat Railway partway up the mountain before hiking along a steep, well-manicured trail overlooking Zermatt. After passing the glacial Riffelsee, the trail ascends to the top of Gornergrat, a spectacular ridge. Look down upon the bright blue pools and seemingly bottomless crevasses of the Gornergletscher, a glacier surrounded by the impressive peaks of Klein Matterhorn, Monte Rosa and Breithorn. Break out your lunch for a truly alpine meal—listen carefully and you may even hear the sounds of glaciers groaning and grumbling with movement.

After lunch, continue hiking to Gornergrat (up another 1,000 feet) or head to the Rotenboden station and take a cog railway train to the summit. Then return to the hotel for some R&R. If you're up for a bigger afternoon hike, follow the Monte Rosa route, which descends toward the Gorner Glacier and then climbs the back side of Gornergrat to reach the summit.

Later this afternoon you have time to enjoy the comforts of our hotel (perhaps a massage?) or hit the streets for some exploring or souvenir shopping.

Tonight we gather for a farewell reception and toast to the past week of high-altitude adventure together. Then we sit down together for a festive final dinner. **Lodging: Grand Hotel Zermatterhof**

Day 6

Morning Hike 2.8 Miles (700' elevation gain)

You're free to relish a leisurely morning at the hotel, lingering over breakfast and soaking up its magnificent vistas. Or, if you'd like one last challenge, hike up through the fragrant shade of the pines to views overlooking Zermatt and the surrounding peaks. This quick out-and-back is short, sweet and steep—a perfect dessert to the rugged mountain trails you've explored over the past week.

We say our goodbyes in Zermatt; please see "Meet & Depart Information" for end-of-trip logistics.

KEEPING YOU UP TO DATE

We are always seeking opportunities to enhance this itinerary. We'll be certain to notify you of any important changes prior to departure; other changes may be communicated on trip by your leaders.

SHIFT GEARS

Our trips are designed to be flexible, giving you the freedom to experience the best of the region the way YOU want. Feel like you're ready to go, go, go? We can show you the way! Want some downtime or prefer to head out on your own? No problem!

Your Trip Leaders will make sure to tell you the best days to take time for yourself (if you want it) without feeling like you're missing out.

So feel free to shift gears and make it your day!

Where You'll Stay

Luxury Hotels*



1 Night (Pictured)

The Cambrian

Spectacular views of the Bernese Oberland surround us at this mountain retreat with modern design sensibilities. (pool, spa) | Adelboden | www.thecambrianadelboden.com | +41-(0)33-673-8383

2 Nights (Casual Hotel)

Hotel Quellenhof

Modern interiors full of Alpine touches and grand mountain views make the Quellenhof a cozy home away from home. | Leukerbad | quellenhof-leukerbad.ch/en | +41-(0)27-472-7060

2 Nights

Grand Hotel Zermatterhof

Set in the heart of Zermatt, this landmark luxury hotel was built in 1879 under the shadow of the Matterhorn. (pool, spa) | Zermatt | zermatterhof.ch | +41-(0)27-966-6600

**With 2 Casual Hotel nights at Hotel Quellenhof*

Meet & Depart Info

Depending on train schedules, you may need to spend the night before your trip in our meeting town or plan for time between your arrival and trip start.

All prices are in US dollars and subject to change.

Meeting Time & Location

Meeting Time: 10:30 a.m.

Meeting Location: Interlaken Ost (East) train station in Interlaken, Switzerland

Additional Details: Meet your Backroads Trip Leaders (the folks in Backroads apparel) in the plaza in front of the train station. Note that there are two train stations in Interlaken; we are **not** meeting at Interlaken West.

Attire & Luggage: Please arrive dressed in your hiking clothes and bring your luggage and a daypack with your rain gear, extra layers and anything else you may want for today's hike (your luggage will be transported to our first night's accommodations).

Arriving Late to the Trip Start?

If you have a delay or emergency on the day your trip starts and need to contact Backroads, please email your Trip Leaders (you'll receive an email 48 hours prior to the trip start with their contact info) or call the Backroads office at 800-462-2848 (domestic) or 510-527-1555 (international).

If you miss the pickup at the Interlaken Ost train station, it's possible for you to reach our first night's hotel, The Cambrian in Adelboden, on your own. A taxi from Interlaken to Adelboden costs about $200 and takes around 1 hour. Another option is to take the train from Interlaken to Frutigen (switching in Spiez), and then take one of the public buses, which depart from the Frutigen train station each hour for the 30-minute trip to Adelboden. (The final Adelboden stop, the post office, is directly across the street from The Cambrian.)

Conclusion of the Trip

Trip End Time: 11:30 a.m.

Trip End Location: Zermatt train station in Zermatt, Switzerland

Additional Details: Our last night's hotel offers rolling complimentary shuttles to the train station throughout the morning, a 5-minute ride. Your Backroads leaders will be in the hotel lobby to say goodbyes and help coordinate onward train travel.

Flight Arrangements

This trip starts in Interlaken and ends in Zermatt. We recommend that you fly into Zurich (airport code: ZRH; www.zurich-airport.com) or Geneva (GVA; www.gva.ch) and travel to Interlaken and back from Zermatt by train.

For help arranging air transportation to and from your Backroads trip, please work with your own travel advisor, or you may work with our preferred travel agency. Their professional expert travel advisors are ready to assist you with any of your travel needs. Please note that they are an independent travel agency and consulting and ticketing fees may apply, based on the services requested. Simply ask your Backroads Trip Consultant to connect you! You can also book directly with the airline or through a travel website.

Taking the Train to Interlaken

From Zurich: Trains depart frequently from the central Zurich train station to Interlaken Ost. The trip takes approximately 2 hours, tickets cost around $75. You'll change trains in Bern or Spiez.

From Geneva: There are also frequent trains from Geneva to Interlaken Ost. The trip takes approximately 3 hours, tickets cost around $75. You'll change trains in Bern.

From Bern: Nonstop trains run hourly from Bern to Interlaken Ost. The trip takes approximately 1 hour, tickets cost around $28.

Taking the Train from Zermatt

Trains leave frequently from Zermatt to Zurich and Geneva via Visp. The journey to Zurich takes approximately 3½ hours and tickets start at $62. To Geneva, travel time is approximately 4 hours and tickets are usually around $100.

Buying Train Tickets

The frequency of Swiss rail service is such that locals tend to treat trains like a bus or subway system, arriving at the station and simply buying a ticket for the next departure. However, should your travel logistics depend on catching a train at a certain time, it's never a bad idea to pre-purchase tickets through your own travel agent or the Swiss Federal Railways (SBB-CFF) website (www.sbb.ch/en). You can also purchase tickets and make reservations through Rail Europe (www.raileurope.com; 800-622-8600). Be aware that they charge service fees.

If you prefer to wait until you arrive in Switzerland, you have two options. In most stations, there are reservation counters with agents who speak English. These counters are often located in a lobby or waiting room rather than directly at the platforms. Most stations also have automatic ticket machines in the lobby, at the platforms or both. These ubiquitous machines, which have user-friendly menus (with an option for English) and accept cash and credit or debit cards, are a convenient way to purchase tickets for travel within Switzerland and for principal cross-border routes.

While most domestic trains within Switzerland do not have reserved seating, some longer-distance and international journeys might. If this is the case, your seat reservation will likely appear as a separate coupon along with your actual train ticket. It will specify the train number, the coach number, class of travel and seat number.

Boarding the Train

Your platform number will generally be listed at least 10 minutes prior to departure on the small television screens or the larger schedule boards in the main station area (larger stations only). Four columns will be listed: destination, type of train, platform number and departure time.

It's possible that not all cars on your train are continuing to your destination. Therefore, it's important to make sure the nameplate on your car (usually posted outside near the door) corresponds to your travel destination.

Even if your train has open seating, there may be distinct first- and second-class cars; note that you're expected to sit in the appropriate class of car depending on the class of your ticket. If you do have reserved seats, make sure to find the car and the seats specified on your ticket. Keep your bags in sight, if possible, and stay alert; many luggage thieves and pickpockets specialize in dashing on and off trains.

PRICES & SCHEDULES

All prices and schedules were current at the time of printing but are subject to change at any time.



What to Expect

Backroads On Trip App

Enjoy the convenience of your itinerary details in one place, including daily snapshots, routes, elevation profiles and more. We'll send you an email seven days before your trip starts with the link and code for your itinerary. We encourage you to download the app and the trip experience before you depart (your leaders can help you on trip if needed). Just search for "Backroads" in the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store.

Trip Leaders

Each of your Trip Leaders plays many roles during your vacation: guide, host, caretaker, naturalist, chef, historian, troubleshooter, interpreter. These remarkable individuals have highly developed instincts for making people comfortable, for seamlessly handling the logistics of travel and for successfully navigating a wide range of unexpected situations. They're passionately committed to ensuring you enjoy an exceptional vacation—smooth, flexible and tailored to your needs. According to past guests, the caliber of our leaders is what sets Backroads apart from all other travel companies. With their knowledge, professionalism, enthusiasm and service ethic, they're the number-one reason people return to travel with us again and again. We look forward to having you meet them.

A Word about Gratuities

The exceptional service, care and travel expertise of our Trip Leaders is what sets Backroads apart. While we've thought about including a Trip Leader tip as part of the overall trip cost, we acknowledge that gratuities are a customary way to recognize excellent service on a more personal level. We offer specific Trip Leader tip recommendations because our guests have consistently asked for them.

Our recommended gratuity for this trip is $210 per guest.

While cash gratuities are always preferred, PayPal is another available option. If you prefer to tip via the PayPal app or website, please note that your account must be set up prior to departing the US. At the beginning of the trip you'll receive a contact list with your leaders' email addresses, which also serve as their PayPal IDs. Regardless of the number of leaders on your trip, you can pay the full amount to any one of them. All gratuities are then divided among your leaders.

When dining on your own in Switzerland, please note that most restaurants include a service charge in the final bill. Rounding up the bill or leaving a modest tip (spare change) is appropriate.

Accommodations

The hotels included in this itinerary have been carefully chosen to bring you an authentic European experience that melds the best of old-world charm and modern comfort based on a combination of amenities, character and location. Because the properties we stay in are often centuries-old buildings that have been renovated and turned into hotels, it is common for the rooms to vary in size and style. If you request a double bed, please keep in mind that European double beds are often two twin beds adjacent to each other. All rooms have private baths. Single room availability is limited.

Cell Service & Internet Access

Cell phone and data service is available in nearly all of the areas we visit on this trip. All of our hotels have internet access, although the connection may be slower than ideal.

Service may be sparse in the remote mountain areas we visit during the day.

Meals

Food is an important part of the Backroads experience. For lunch we look for the best way to capture the essence of the region. It may be a Backroads picnic, when your Trip Leaders prepare the freshest and healthiest local fare at a carefully chosen setting along the day's route; a boxed lunch; a packed lunch; a meal together at a favorite restaurant; or the opportunity to have lunch on your own.

Switzerland may be known as the land of cheese and chocolate, but its fare also includes a great variety of dishes influenced by French, German and Italian

cuisine. Our dinners feature regional specialties at gourmet restaurants, frequently with specially prepared limited menus.

All breakfasts, five lunches and four dinners are included in the trip price. One dinner is on your own.

On this trip we often dine according to local custom, which may mean that meals progress at a leisurely pace. We understand that on some nights you may want to retire earlier, so feel free to opt out of dessert or, when possible, request it in your room. You're always welcome to opt for dinner on your own; check with your Trip Leaders to find out what other options might be available.

Be aware that vegetarian/vegan, gluten-free, kosher and low-carb dishes are not always available. **If you have special dietary requirements, please indicate them in your Backroads Account.** Your Trip Consultant will pass on the information to your Trip Leaders. Alcoholic beverages at meals are not included in the trip price, unless otherwise noted.

Recommended Dinner Attire

"Sophisticated-casual" attire is appropriate at the restaurants on this trip. We recommend collared shirts and slacks, dresses, skirts or dressy pants.

Nice jeans are fine, but please do not wear shorts or athletic shoes to dinner.

Lost Luggage

On any flight, there is the possibility of lost or delayed luggage. Backroads believes that it's a great idea to take a small carry-on bag with enough clothing and supplies to last a day or two. Also be sure to bring with you any personal gear you deem indispensable on the trip. This way, in the event of lost or delayed luggage you won't have to spend time replacing essential items and miss activities while you wait for your bags to catch up. Please note that Backroads does not assume responsibility for any luggage lost, delayed or damaged during your trip.

Security

When traveling, there is always a possibility of theft. While you're enjoying the sights, remember to stay alert and always be aware of your immediate surroundings, especially in crowded locations and tourist areas. The best rule of thumb is to carry only the cash you need for the day, along with a copy of your passport, on your person and leave the rest in a locked safe in your room. If no safe is available, it's a good idea to keep your cash and passport in a money belt worn under your clothes. For more safety tips, refer to the Country Specific Information page on our website (backroads.com/why/regional-requirements) or the US State Department's website at travel.state.gov.

Trip Guest List

During the trip, leaders will distribute a guest list that includes the names and contact information of everyone on the trip. If you do not want your contact information to appear on the guest list, please inform your Trip Consultant at least 30 days prior to the trip start.

Van Support

Due to our spectacular, hard-to-reach walking and hiking routes, there is no van support on our hikes. This is not to say that this trip is unsupported: your Backroads Trip Leaders hike with the group every day and carry necessary supplies, including extra layers, food and first-aid equipment. Still, it is important that you have a daypack large enough to accommodate rain gear, an extra layer, snacks and as much water as you'll need for the day. Please select your mileage for the day with these details in mind.

The vans on this trip are used exclusively to transport our luggage from hotel to hotel. They follow routes far from our hiking trails. We use cable cars, buses and trains as our mode of transport between hotels and hikes.

Spa Treatments

Spa treatments are not included in the trip price. Advance reservations are recommended. Also, be sure to review the spa's cancellation policy to avoid any unexpected charges on your credit card.

Days 4 & 5

Grand Hotel Zermatterhof: On **Day 4** book an appointment for after 4 p.m. if you plan to hike the

short option or after 6 p.m. if you plan to hike the long option; dinner is on your own. On **Day 5** book an appointment for after 3 p.m. if you plan to hike the short option and after 5 p.m. if you plan to hike one of the longer options; we meet for our farewell reception at 6:15 p.m.



GUEST PHOTO CONTEST

Enter to win up to $5,000 in Backroads Trip Credit!

$250 in Backroads Trip Credit awarded to 75+ honorable mentions

For rules go to **backroads.com/photo-contest**

Weather & Destination Details

Climate

Switzerland has four distinct climatic regions: alpine, subtropical, continental and Mediterranean. During this trip we spend the majority of our time in areas with an alpine climate. **Mountain weather is very unpredictable and can change drastically with little warning and with temperatures dipping to freezing**. **It's essential that you bring appropriate clothing, including a waterproof jacket and pants, and plenty of warm clothes**. Please be prepared for all types of conditions to ensure that your trip is an enjoyable one.

Please be aware that weather-related trail conditions, such as lingering heavy snow, may result in itinerary changes. These conditions are more common during spring and early summer departures. Rest assured your leaders are equipped with fabulous alternate routes should they be needed.

Interlaken

Average:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
High °F	36	39	48	53	64	69
Low °F	26	28	34	39	46	53
Precip. in.	2.5	2.5	2.8	3.6	4.5	5.2
Average:	**Jul**	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**
High °F	75	75	68	57	44	37
Low °F	57	57	51	44	35	30
Precip in.	5.6	5.5	3.9	3.1	3.3	3.3

Zermatt

Average:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
High °F	29	34	40	47	55	63
Low °F	17	19	24	32	41	48
Precip. in.	1.6	1.7	2.1	2.1	2.7	2.3
Average:	**Jul**	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**
High °F	66	65	60	51	40	31
Low °F	51	47	42	35	27	20
Precip. in.	2.2	2.7	2.3	2.5	1.9	1.9

While these tables show Fahrenheit, temperatures in this region are locally measured in degrees Celsius. For a quick conversion, double the Celsius reading and add 30 to determine the approximate temperature in degrees Fahrenheit.

Time Zone

Switzerland is 6 hours ahead of eastern time and 9 hours ahead of Pacific time.

In Europe, the 24-hour clock is used. Times are the same as what you're used to in the United States up until noon. From then on, just keep going: 1 p.m. becomes 13:00, 2 p.m. becomes 14:00 and so forth. To convert these times into "p.m." times, simply subtract 12 and add p.m. (19:00 minus 12 is 7 p.m.).

Language

Swiss German, French and Italian are the most widely spoken languages in Switzerland. Swiss German is used in the regions we visit on this trip. English is often spoken at major hotels, restaurants and principal tourist areas.

Phone Facts

Many US cell phones can operate internationally. Check with your service provider before leaving home for information about international calling and data plans, and on making and receiving international calls.

International Dialing Instructions

All international phone numbers in this Travel Planner are listed using the following format:

+41-(0)##-###-##-##

41 is Switzerland's country code, followed by a *0* (used only when dialing from within Switzerland), a *two-digit area code* and a *seven-digit local number*.

To place an international call to Switzerland, dial *+* or the *international access code* of the country from which you're calling (e.g., *011* from the US) - *41* - *area code* - *local number*. Always omit the *0* when calling from outside Switzerland.

To place an international call from Switzerland, dial *+* or *00* (Switzerland's international access code) - *country code* of the country to which you're calling (e.g., *1* for the US) - *area code* - *local number*. For example, to call the US, dial *00* - *1* - *area code* - *local number*.

To place a call within Switzerland, drop the country code *41* and dial *0* - *area code* - *local number*.

For more information on placing international phone calls, visit www.countrycallingcodes.com.

Money Matters

The standard unit of currency in Switzerland is the Swiss franc (CHF). At the time of printing, 0.99 CHF = 1 USD. For the most up-to-date exchange rate, visit www.xe.com (Universal Currency Converter).

The easiest way to access cash abroad is by using ATMs. Before you leave, check with your bank to confirm your card will work overseas and ask if it has partner banks that waive fees. Most international ATMs have numeric keypads and accept only four-digit PINs, so note the number equivalents for any letters and shorten longer PINs before traveling.

Electric Current

Europe's electricity runs on a 230-volt, 50-cycle current. A plug adapter is necessary if you plan to bring appliances from home. You may also need a converter, but many newer appliances, such as computers and digital devices, are designed to work/charge over a wide range of voltage levels. Check the manufacturer's label on the back of your appliances to see what level of input they can handle. Converter/adapter kits can be purchased at travel, hardware or electronics stores.

Business Hours

The Swiss are proud of the fact that their working class has the right to some time off. For us visitors from faster-paced countries, however, that means carefully planning around opening hours. Most stores in Switzerland, including grocery and convenience stores, close by 7 p.m. on weekdays (often earlier on Saturdays) and are closed on Sundays. Although bars and restaurants are often open later than 7 p.m., most are also closed on Sundays. Businesses also often close for lunch between noon and 2 p.m. Swiss banks are open on weekdays, 8:30 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.; post offices are generally open 7:30 a.m.– 5 p.m.

Helpful Information

Visit backroads.com/trip-prep for links to other websites offering helpful travel information.

RECOMMENDED READING

The more you know about your destination before you go, the more you'll appreciate all that you'll see when you get there. We've selected a few of our favorite books to help capture the essence of the region.

–*Swiss History in a Nutshell*, Gregoire Nappey
–*Eiger Dreams: Ventures Among Men and Mountains*, Jon Krakauer
–*A Farewell to Arms*, Ernest Hemingway
–*Hotel du Lac*, Anita Brookner

Travel Documents & More

Travel Documents

A valid passport is required for travel to Switzerland. A visa is not required for US citizens, provided you are staying in the country less than 90 days.

Note that some countries require your passport to be valid for a specified amount of time beyond your departure date (up to 6 months). Be sure to check the expiration date and physical condition of your passport and verify the travel document requirements with the consulates of the countries you are planning to visit during your trip. Passports issued to minors under the age of 16 expire every 5 years. Check your expiration dates carefully!

The best way to ensure you have the most current information on entry requirements is by contacting the Embassy of Switzerland at 202-745-7900 or visiting www.swissemb.org. You may also find helpful information on the US State Department's website: travel.state.gov.

IMPORTANT: Each time you renew your passport, you are issued a new passport number. Depending on the trip, some of our service providers (like hotels or airlines) may require current passport information for each guest, so **if you renew your passport after booking your trip, please make sure to update us with the new information** prior to your departure date.

We recommend that you make two photocopies of your airline ticket/e-ticket confirmation and your passport. Leave one set of copies at home with a friend or relative, and bring one set with you, keeping it separate from the original documents.

Travel Protection Plan

Backroads' travel protection plan, offered through our preferred insurance provider, includes coverage for trip cancellation or interruption, trip delay, medical expenses and evacuation/repatriation, lost baggage and more. Learn more at backroads.com/travel-insurance or give us a call at 800-462-2848 to purchase the plan.

Cancellations & Refunds

If you must cancel your reservation, a fee will be charged. Please review your trip invoice for cancellation policy details. **Exceptions to this policy cannot be made for any reason**, including those of weather or personal emergencies. There is no refund for joining a trip late or leaving early. Private rooms and staterooms, bike rentals and internal air charges are considered part of the trip price and are subject to cancellation fees. You are required to provide a signed *Release of Liability, Assumption of All Risks and Arbitration Agreement* and a completed *My Trip Checklist* in your Backroads Account prior to your trip departure. If you fail to provide a signed release form, you will not be allowed to join the trip and will be subject to Backroads' cancellation policy. For complete details on our cancellation policy, see backroads.com.

Transfers

With the exception of Private and Custom Trips, you may transfer from one trip to another without penalty, within the parameters of your trip's transfer policy. When transferring to a different date or trip, if the trip costs more than your original trip, you are responsible for the difference in cost. Please review your trip invoice for additional transfer policy details. After the allowable transfer date, our cancellation policy applies. Cancellation penalties will not be charged if you are able to fill the vacancy with another guest(s).

Itinerary Changes

If unforeseen circumstances require a change in the trip itinerary, Backroads will make every effort to select alternative accommodations of the same quality and to keep the activity modifications minimal.

Electronics & Other Valuables

It is best to leave valuables at home. If you must bring valuables on the trip, please understand that they are 100 percent your responsibility, regardless of what anyone (including leaders) might tell you. Cash, jewelry and passports are especially important to keep in your possession. It's not safe to leave valuables in Backroads vans; while not common, break-ins do happen. You may choose to lock them in your room's safe, if one is available to you.

Although we will transport your valuables during your trip as a convenience, **we do not assume responsibility for any damage or loss**. This policy applies to personal electronics as well as other items, such as luggage, jewelry and fragile and delicate accessories, whether purchased on the trip or otherwise.

After your trip ends, if you realize that you've accidentally left an item behind in Backroads' possession, we'll do our best to honor return requests. However, we're not able to guarantee returns based on leader availability limitations to find and send items (our leaders are on the go!) and possible shipping issues. If you've left an item at a hotel, please contact that hotel directly to make arrangements.

On-Your-Own Activities

During the trip, there may be time for you to enjoy some of the region's favorite physical activities on your own. These activities may be a highlight for those who choose to do them, but due to liability and because they're not to everyone's liking, these activities are not included in the price of the trip. Backroads does not run these activities, is not responsible for their operation and makes no representation concerning that entity's liability insurance or the existence of any such insurance. Participation is at your own risk.



Terrain Info & Getting Active Before Your Trip

NAVIGATION OPTIONS ON THIS TRIP

Downloadable GPS files available for use on your own device—log into your account at backroads.com two weeks before your trip for more details.

ACTIVITY LEVEL

The routes on this trip are rated Levels 2–5.

	BIKING		WALKING & HIKING	
	Avg. Miles	Max Elev. Gain (feet)	Avg. Miles	Max Elev. Gain (feet)
Level 1 (2-3 hours)	8-22	1000′	2-5	800′
Level 2 (2-4 hours)	18-32	2200′	4-7	1300′
Level 3 (2-5 hours)	26-42	3400′	5-9	2000′
Level 4 (4-6 hours)	36-54	4400′	6-11	3000′
Level 5 (5-7+ hours)	48-70+	4400′+	7-13+	4000′+

Review the "Activity Level" section on the web for more details on daily route options.

Route & Terrain Notes

The hiking routes on this trip include well-maintained paths through forests and alpine meadows, paved and unpaved roads, and rugged mountain trails, with some rocky sections and steep climbs and descents. Most activities on this trip take place at elevations of 4,000 to 7,000 feet (and up to 10,000 feet), which can make the routes feel more challenging than the mileage may suggest. Thanks to the marvels of Swiss transportation, no support van is needed on this trip! We take advantage of the wonderful Swiss rail system and often use gondolas to access the best high-altitude hikes.

Remember, take your time and go at your own pace—you're on vacation! Your Backroads Trip Leaders will be available at intersecting routes when you're ready for a snack, a cool drink or a lift back if you're done for the day. Most days you'll have a choice of mileage options, so you can decide how active you want to be—it's always up to you.

Conditioning Tips

Every Backroads trip is designed to appeal to a wide variety of interests and fitness levels. We know your pace may vary from one day to the next—and your traveling companions' may differ somewhat from yours. So we present a range of mileage options, and each day you decide exactly what and how much you want to do.

Before your trip, we suggest walking and hiking regularly and hitting a few hills whenever you can to help you feel prepared for your active vacation. Pro Tip: Review the route options in the daily itinerary for the range of mileages offered on this trip and make sure you're comfortable with the distance.

Pacing & Endurance

Here are a few suggestions for increasing your endurance while on your Backroads trip:

- Make sure your muscles are warmed up before you start walking.
- Walk and hike at a steady pace that you can maintain throughout your walk—don't push yourself too hard at the beginning.
- Eat high-energy snacks throughout your walk or hike, and drink water often—before you are thirsty—to avoid dehydration. (Your leaders will have plenty of food and water on hand.) Some people find that a water-pack hydration system, worn like a backpack and equipped with a plastic tube for drinking, is a good accessory on long outings or in hot climates, since it enables you to carry more water and drink regularly without having to stop.

- Perhaps most important, make sure your shoes fit properly and have been broken in before the start of the trip.



Resources

The American Hiking Society website is packed with all sorts of useful information related to walking and hiking. Visit americanhiking.org.

Your local outdoor store can be an excellent resource too; ask to speak with an experienced employee.

Staying Comfortable: FAQs

Q: Do I need to bring hiking boots for my trip?

A: Varying weather conditions and terrain can make any trail challenging, whether you're hiking up a mountain or walking through a valley. We recommend hiking boots or sturdy hiking shoes (sometimes called "light hikers") with robust tread, ample ankle support and waterproofing. Your average running shoes often have inadequate tread and stability for terrain like gravel and mud—though even these may be suitable if you know that's what works for you. Most importantly, your shoes should be comfortable and well broken in before your trip starts.

Q: It's not really going to rain during the trip, is it?

A: Well, it just might! Rain is possible no matter where you travel. Your best bet for staying comfortable during a shower is to wear quality rain gear that is both waterproof and breathable.

Q: Does wearing layers really make a difference?

A: Yes! The trick for staying comfortable in fluctuating temperatures is to wear three basic non-cotton layers of lightweight clothing: innerwear (to wick moisture away from your skin), insulating garments (for warmth) and outerwear (to protect against wind or rain). The different layers let you add or remove clothing in response to changes in the weather or your internal temperature.

Hotel Recommendations

For help arranging hotel accommodations for before and after your Backroads trip, or an extension to your trip, please work with your own travel advisor, or you may work with our preferred travel agency. Their professional expert travel advisors are ready to assist you with any of your travel needs. Please note that they are an independent travel agency and consulting and ticketing fees may apply, based on the services requested. Simply ask your Backroads Trip Consultant to connect you! You can also book directly with the hotel or through a travel website.

Please note that Backroads does not block rooms and does not offer special rates for pre- and post-trip stays. If you plan on extending your stay at our first night's hotel before the trip starts or our last night's hotel when the trip ends, let the hotel reservations agent know that you're traveling with Backroads—you may be able to avoid changing rooms. We recommend booking your rooms as early as possible, especially during peak travel season!

The following is a selection of recommended properties that span a range of prices, amenities and locations. Refer to the Hotel Room Rates guide for the starting double-occupancy rates, which were accurate at time of printing. Note that rates are subject to change and some hotels may require a minimum stay.

HOTEL ROOM RATES

IN US DOLLARS PER NIGHT

$501 and up	✦✦✦✦✦
$301 to $500	✦✦✦✦
$201 to $300	✦✦✦
Up to $200	✦✦

Interlaken

Interlaken may not be a quaint Swiss village, but it does have plenty of outdoor adventure to offer, like river rafting, canyoneering, paragliding and bungee jumping. Should you choose to extend your stay here, we recommend working with AlpinRaft (www.alpinraft.ch) to book your activities.

Hotel map: bit.ly/InterlakenHotels

Victoria-Jungfrau Grand Hotel & Spa

Everything is indeed grand at this classic Leading Hotels of the World member, starting with its superb setting in the heart of Interlaken and its spectacular views of the Alps. *Travel + Leisure* World's Best. (pool, spa) | Höheweg 41 | www.victoria-jungfrau.ch/en | +41-(0)33-828-28-28 | 212 rooms & suites | Rates: ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Hotel Krebs

This charming Interlaken West property stands out from the crowd thanks to its friendly service and inviting sidewalk terrace. | Bahnhofstrasse 4 | www.krebshotel.ch/en-gb | +41-(0)33-826-03-30 | 44 rooms | Rates: ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Hotel Jnterlaken

With recently updated interiors in a 600-year-old building, the Jnterlaken offers a simple and humble option in a location convenient to Interlaken Ost train station and just steps from the town's glitzy central Höhematte park. | Höheweg 74 | www.jnterlaken.com/en/home-english | +41-(0)33-826-68-68 | 59 rooms | Rates: ✦ ✦ ✦

Hotel Blume

Simple, cozy and well-located, the Blume's traditional Swiss-style rooms belie the colorful Mexican cantina which occupies the ground floor. | Jungfraustrasse 30 | www.hotel-blume.ch | +41-(0)33-822-71-31 | 12 rooms | Rates: ✦ ✦

Zermatt

Hotel map: bit.ly/ZermattHotels

Hotel Monte Rosa

The Monte Rosa is Zermatt's oldest hotel and occupies a coveted position in the heart of town. Don't miss dining at the hotel's Michelin-starred Ristorante Capri. (pool) | Bahnhofstrasse 80 | www.monterosazermatt.ch | +41-(0)27-966-03-33 | 41 rooms & suites | Rates: ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Schönegg Chalet Hotel

Perched high above Zermatt, with a highly unusual entryway—a 2,756-foot-long cave-like tunnel—Schönegg Chalet Hotel wows you with excellent service and cuisine, not to mention panoramic vistas of the Matterhorn. (spa) | Riedweg 35 | www.schonegg.ch | +41-(0)27-966-34-34 | 48 rooms & suites | Rates: ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Hotel Bella Vista

Looking for a home away from home? The charming family-run Bella Vista, located just 5 minutes from Zermatt's center, fits the bill. (spa) | Riedweg 15 | www.bellavista-zermatt.ch | +41-(0)27-966-28-10 | 21 rooms | Rates: ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Romantik Hotel Julen

Bold style and bright colors add flair to the traditional alpine heart of Hotel Julen. Upon arriving, it's hard to resist immediately cozying up to the fireplace in one of the bar's leather sofas. Zermatt's center is located just across the bridge. (pool, spa) | Riedstrasse 2 | www.julen.com | +41-(0)27-966-76-00 | 32 rooms & suites | Rates: ✦ ✦ ✦

Zurich

Hotel map: bit.ly/ZurichHotels

Baur au Lac

This member of Leading Hotels of the World is situated on Lake Zurich in a magnificent park setting, and offers proximity to the most fashionable boutiques in Zurich. *Condé Nast Traveler* Gold List. | Talstrasse 1 | www.bauraulac.ch | +41-(0)44-220-50-20 | 120 rooms & suites | Rates: ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Widder Hotel

The Widder consists of nine adjoining historic townhouses that have been magnificently restored to blend modern décor with traditional architecture. | Rennweg 7 | www.widderhotel.com/en | +41-(0)44-224-25-26 | 49 rooms & suites | Rates: ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Hotel Adler

In the heart of Zurich's lively Old Town, the charming and fully modern three-star Hotel Adler has been welcoming travelers since the 14th century. | Rosengasse 10 | www.hotel-adler.ch | +41-(0)44-266-96-96 | 52 rooms | Rates: ✦ ✦ ✦

Hotel Kindli

Once a 16th-century townhouse, this charming boutique hotel maintains the comfort and character of a private home. Well-placed on a quiet pedestrian-only street, the hotel is just steps from the famous Bahnhofstrasse. | Pfalzgasse 1 | www.kindli.ch | +41-(0)43-888-76-76 | 20 rooms | Rates: ✦ ✦ ✦

Hotel Europe

Built at the turn of the 20th century in the noble Seefeld District, this newly renovated boutique hotel beautifully melds neobaroque and art nouveau design. | Dufourstrasse 4 | www.europehotel.ch | +41-(0)43-456-86-86 | 39 rooms & suites | Rates: ✦ ✦ ✦

Geneva

Hotel map: bit.ly/GenevaHotels

Hôtel Beau Rivage

On the shore of Lake Geneva, this fully renovated Leading Hotels of the World member has outstanding views of the water, the famous Jet d'Eau (Water Fountain) and Mont Blanc. A Relais & Châteaux member. | Quai du Mont-Blanc 13 | www.beau-rivage.ch | +41-(0)22-716-66-66 | 91 rooms & suites | Rates: ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Ritz-Carlton Hôtel de la Paix

Ideally located in the city center, this five-star hotel

features a unique contemporary style, while maintaining the classical aspects of the original 1865 structure. | Quai du Mont-Blanc 11 | www.ritzcarlton.com | +41-(0)22-909-60-00 | 84 rooms & suites | Rates: ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Hotel Edelweiss

This hotel evokes the kind of cozy Alpine décor that many people associate with the isolated hamlets of the Swiss mountains. Don't miss Restaurant Edelweiss, where regional cuisine is served to the sound of live yodeling. | Place de la Navigation 2 | www.hoteledelweissgeneva.com | +41-(0)22-544-51-51 | 42 rooms | Rates: ✦ ✦ ✦

Tiffany Hotel

Located in the heart of Geneva's cultural and arts district, this charming boutique hotel is just a few steps from galleries and designer shops, and a short walk from the lake and the Rhône River. | Rue de l'Arquebuse 20 | www.hotel-tiffany.ch | +41-(0)22-708-16-16 | 46 rooms & suites | Rates: ✦ ✦ ✦

Starling Hotel Geneva

Conveniently located next to the Geneva International Airport, this state-of-the-art hotel is also within 15 minutes of many key sightseeing attractions, such as the Palais des Nations, the Red Cross Museum and Geneva's fantastic shopping district. (pool) | Route François-Peyrot 34 | https://www.hilton.com/en | +41-(0)22-747-02-02 | 496 rooms & suites | Rates: ✦ ✦ ✦

Suggested Packing List

Remember to check your favorite weather app before you pack!

LUGGAGE REMINDERS

Please limit your luggage to one medium-sized suitcase (we recommend 25"–28") and one small carry-on bag. Be sure to mark your luggage with your contact information.

Essential

Travel Items

- ☐ international travel documents (i.e., passport, visa, etc.)
- ☐ photocopy of front page of passport (kept in a separate place from passport)
- ☐ wallet (credit cards, bank cards, ID)
- ☐ cash for incidentals & leader gratuities
- ☐ toiletries (including sunscreen & lip ointment)
- ☐ medications & copies of prescriptions
- ☐ list of important addresses & contact numbers

Active Clothing & Gear

- ☐ light hikers or boots
- ☐ hiking socks
- ☐ walking/hiking shorts and/or lightweight pants
- ☐ non-cotton base layers of varying weights
- ☐ lightweight hiking jacket or vest
- ☐ hat with brim, bandana or sweatband
- ☐ daypack/waistpack (for water, camera, snacks)
- ☐ sunglasses (with retention strap)
- ☐ sport sandals and/or flip-flops
- ☐ swimsuit

Rain Gear & Cold Weather Clothing

You may not need all of the items listed here, but they are necessary to stay comfortable in case of rain or unseasonably cold weather.

- ☐ waterproof (breathable) rain jacket & pants
- ☐ waterproof/water-resistant warm gloves
- ☐ warm jacket (easy to pack)
- ☐ warm hat

Non-Active Clothing

- ☐ clothing & shoes for downtime & restaurants
- ☐ lightweight jacket (like fleece) or warm sweater

Backroads provides water bottles & hiking poles.

Optional

- ☐ camera & charger **(remember to enter our Guest Photo Contest!)**
- ☐ cell phone & charger (consider a battery pack for on-the-go charging)
- ☐ voltage converter/plug adapter (if applicable)
- ☐ CamelBak or similar hydration backpack
- ☐ guidebook and/or field guides
- ☐ notebook/travel journal & pens
- ☐ reading material
- ☐ earplugs & sleep mask
- ☐ insect repellent