

SWITZERLAND

— Zurich · Lucerne · Interlaken · Bern · Montreux —

“Switzerland's train transport is impeccable, and the mountains are the stage backdrop someone forgot to remove.”

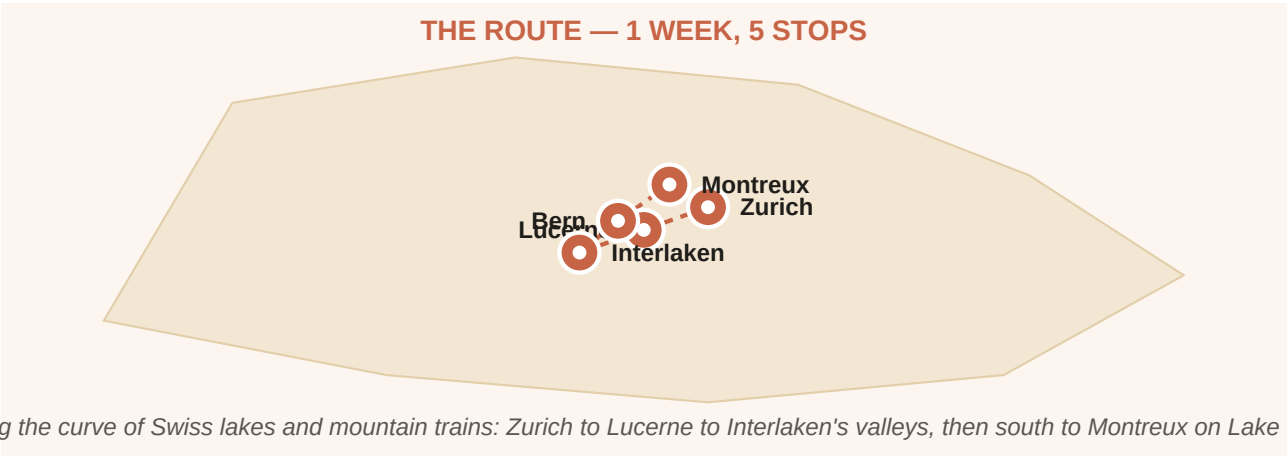


desk2destinations.com · Honesty over hype. Slow over rushed. Practical over pretty.

By Ayushi & Harshit Jain

Switzerland at a glance

A week moving through Switzerland's lake towns, mountain valleys, and riverside cities. Zurich surprised us. Interlaken delivered the drama. Lucerne got the postcard.



Following the curve of Swiss lakes and mountain trains: Zurich to Lucerne to Interlaken's valleys, then south to Montreux on Lake Geneva.

Best time	June to September
Visa (IN)	Schengen (Indian passport)
Currency	CHF
Getting around	Swiss train system is exceptional and runs on time. Lake steamers, cable cars, and regional trains connect everything.
If we did it again	We skipped Rhinefalls and the full Limmat cruise in Zurich due to ticket confusion. Gstaad would have been worth a stop.

The top 10 — our personal highlights

Ten moments worth flying back for. Ranked roughly in the order they made us go “oh.”

- 1 Panoramic View Train · Interlaken**
Glass-windowed train through Alpine valleys

- 2 Chapel Bridge at Night · Lucerne**
Wooden bridge lit with swans below

- 3 Mount Pilatus Cog Rail · Lucerne**
Steepest cogwheel railway in the world

- 4 Lake Geneva from Montreux · Montreux**
Palm trees and French Alps

- 5 Bern Old Town Arcades · Bern**
Sandstone-covered shopping streets

- 6 Zurich Lake Swims · Zurich**
City rivers where locals swim home from work

- 7 CLOUDS Restaurant · Zurich**
360-degree city views from the only skyscraper

- 8 Lindt Factory · Zurich**
Chocolate sampling (not cheaper than India)

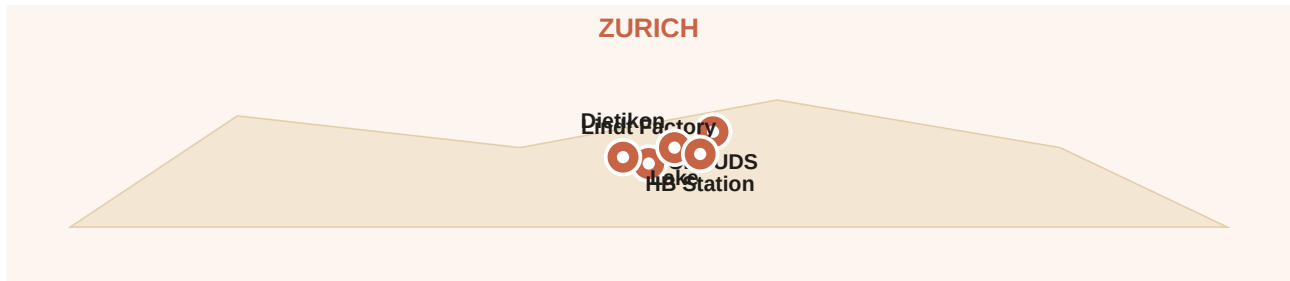
- 9 Mürren Cable Car · Interlaken**
Village that feels lost in the mountains

- 10 Lion Monument · Lucerne**
Mark Twain's most mournful stone

Zurich

Where the financial center learns to swim

Zurich was the city that gave us cultural shock. Europeans quietly enjoying life on a level we hadn't seen before. For us, it was a working city with conferences and Hop on Hop off buses.



European people know how to celebrate life. They are enjoying life and earning to survive, completely opposite to how I was raised.

Top 5 here

- **CLOUDS Restaurant** — 360-degree views, worth 75 euros
- **Zurich Lake** — Free to sit and watch the boats
- **Lindt Factory** — Chocolates cost the same here as India
- **Doner at Zurich HB** — Filling street food when museums get boring
- **Dietikon Apartment** — Stay outside the city for quiet and value

Days	2
Where we stayed	Shared apartment in Dietikon with friends
Getting around	Trains from Vienna via Austria, onward to Interlaken
Where we ate	Pasta carried from India, burger disappointments, Lindt chocolates
Reality check	Zurich is expensive. The travel ticket we bought didn't cover Rhinefalls. Budget more than you think.

→ Read the full Zurich guide on the site: desk2destinations.com/switzerland-zurich.html

Interlaken

Where the skydive got cancelled but the Panoramic train made up for it

Two dramatic days: a Thun cruise in drizzle, a skydive cancelled by rain, a cable car to Mürren, cards declining at every shop, and then the Panoramic train saved everything.



Top 5 here

- **Lake Thun Cruise** — Castles sliding past before rain starts
- **Mürren Cable Car** — Village that feels lost in mountains
- **Paragliding View** — See them drifting when you arrive
- **Panoramic View Train** — The cheapest priceless experience
- **Grindelwald Souvenir Shop** — Where COOP is better than tourist shops

Days	2
Where we stayed	Airbnb study-room converted by elderly Swiss couple
Getting around	Train from Bern, onwards to Montreux via Gstaad
Where we ate	Pav bhaji cooked by friends, Maggie in microwave mishaps, doner kebab
Reality check	The skydive cancellation taught us to have backup plans. Carry two different bank cards — one will definitely be down.

→ Read the full Interlaken guide on the site: desk2destinations.com/switzerland-interlaken.html

Lucerne

Postcard made real, with a stone lion that stops you cold

Small enough to walk in a day, dense enough to keep you busy for three. The Chapel Bridge crosses at an odd diagonal. The Lion Monument made us sit for fifteen minutes without speaking.



Top 5 here

- **Chapel Bridge at Night** — Painted houses, swans, unapologetically romantic
- **Lion Monument** — Mark Twain was right — the most mournful stone
- **Mount Pilatus Cog Rail** — World's steepest cogwheel railway, 48% gradient
- **Lake Lucerne Paddle Steamer** — Restoration paddle wheels, apple strudel onboard
- **Spreuerbrücke** — Darker wooden bridge, Dance of Death paintings

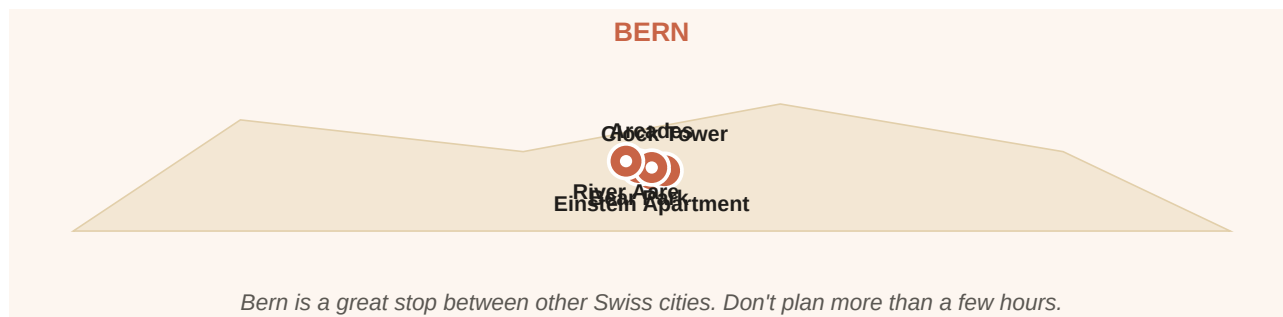
Days	2
Where we stayed	Hotel near Mirabellplatz (inferred base for Austrian trips)
Getting around	Train from Interlaken, onwards to Montreux
Where we ate	Apple strudel on the paddle steamer, lake-side simplicity
Reality check	The Jungfrau mountain is expensive and usually clouded. Pilatus is the better choice for clear-day mountain views.

→ Read the full Lucerne guide on the site: desk2destinations.com/switzerland-lucerne.html

Bern

A capital that feels like Prague, but quieter and well-organized

We got down at Bern on a whim from the train to Interlaken. A few hours, a quick walk, back on a later train. Short as it was, Bern left an impression — quiet, fountains, medieval arcades, police on horseback.



Top 5 here

- **Old Town Arcades** — Walk the whole centre under sandstone arches
- **Einstein Apartment** — Nostalgic and overpriced, but it's history
- **Zytglogge Clock Tower** — Astronomical clock show (we saw from outside)
- **BärenPark** — Live bears beside the Aare (we passed the queue)
- **Painted Fountains** — Weirdly charming, scattered everywhere

Days 0.5

Where we stayed Day trip only — few hours between trains

Getting around Train from Zurich, onwards to Interlaken

Where we ate Final box of chole chawal on the train, croissants, Läderach chocolates

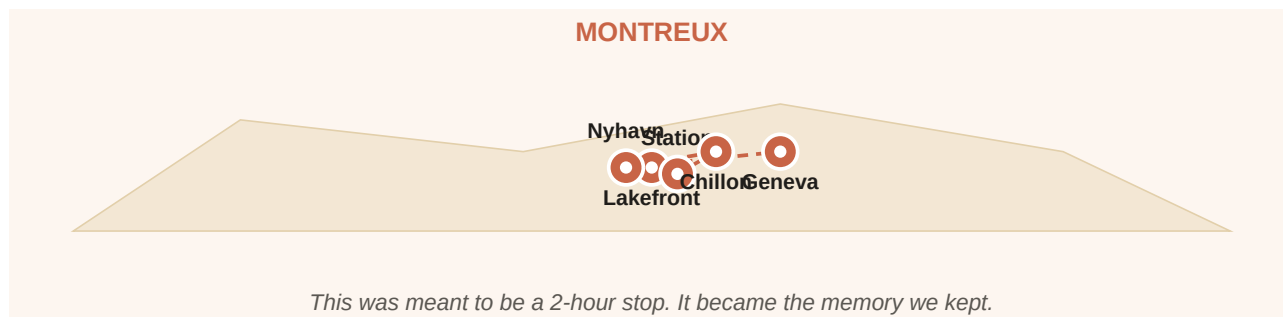
Reality check Einstein Museum is overpriced. The real highlight is the walk through old town.

→ Read the full Bern guide on the site: desk2destinations.com/switzerland-bern.html

Montreux

Two hours by Lake Geneva because the train was too beautiful to get off

We weren't meant to stop here. The Panoramic View train from Interlaken was so beautiful that we just kept going. Palm trees. Lake Geneva. Our final meal in Europe on a two-hour stopover.



Top 5 here

- **Lake Geneva Lakefront** — Palm trees, French Alps, borrowed grace
- **Pizza by the Lake** — Our last meal in Europe
- **Panoramic View Train** — Possibly the highlight of the day
- **Château de Chillon** — We missed it, regret it, will return
- **Freddie Mercury Statue** — We skipped this too

Days	0.1
Where we stayed	None — two-hour stopover only
Getting around	Panoramic train from Interlaken, return train to Zurich
Where we ate	Pizza and drinks for the final meal
Reality check	If you have time, stay overnight. The day-trippers leave, and the real Montreux appears.

→ Read the full Montreux guide on the site: desk2destinations.com/switzerland-montreux.html

Costs — where the rupees went

Mid-range, vegetarian-friendly, two travellers splitting stays. Numbers are per-person, rounded honestly. Flights vary the most.

Accommodation	Mid-range hotels	■3500/night
Trains	Regional passes	■8000 for week
Food	Mixed dining	■1500/day
Activities	Museums and cable cars	■3000/person
Transport within cities	Local trams	■500/city
Lakes	Boat cruises	■2000/person
Chocolate/Souvenirs	Premium Swiss goods	■4000
Miscellaneous	Contingency	■5000

Total: ■180000

One last thing

Buy regional passes. The Panoramic View train from Interlaken is worth the journey alone.

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