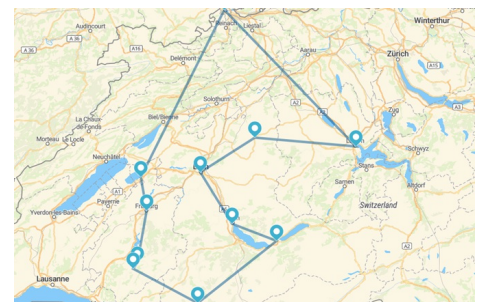




Switzerland, 8 Days · Tailor-made by car

Cheese Lover's Route

There are three things that Switzerland is famous for all over the world: its watch-making industry, its exquisite chocolate and - of course - its excellent variety of quality cheeses. No wonder, then, that they are the staple ingredient in many of the traditional dishes of Swiss cuisine, such as fondue, raclette or malakoff. Varieties as famed as Gruyère, Emmental, Vacherin and Appenzeller all come from Swiss lands and, thanks to this tour, you'll have the chance to savour them and also see exactly how they're produced. In the town of Gruyères, you'll get to enjoy its famous semi-soft cheese made from cow's milk and sliced rennet, protected by Le Gruyère PDO. Meanwhile, Affoltern im Emmental is the birthplace of the famous PDO-awarded Emmental cheese, made from cow's milk and instantly recognisable by its characteristic holes. Two must-visit destinations in any worthwhile Cheese Lover's Tour. What's more, this road trip takes you through the stunning Alpine landscapes of Switzerland, with stops in vibrant cities such as Basel, Freiburg, the capital Bern and Lucerne, where you'll enjoy a first-hand insight into the culture of this pocket-sized, charismatic and delicious country!



CULTURAL

Departure date: Departures from May 2026 till May 2027

From: Dublin, Shannon, Cork

Travel details

DAY 1 · CITY OF ORIGIN - BASEL

Flight departure from the city of origin to Basel.

Arrival and rental car pick-up.

The city of Basel, located in the northwest of Switzerland on the banks of the River Rhine between Germany and France, is considered the cultural capital of Switzerland. You can visit one of its forty museums that cover a wide spectrum of disciplines and will please all tastes and interests. The list includes the Kunstmuseum Basel (Museum of Art), one of the oldest public collections of art in the whole world; the Tinguely Museum, dedicated to the work of the iron sculptor Jean Tinguely; the Museum der Kulturen (Museum of Cultures), with one of the largest collections of ancient civilisations in Europe; the "Fondation Beyeler", with its modern building stretching 127 metres; the Pharmacy Museum; the Caricature & Cartoon Museum; and the Dollhouse Museum, which each year draw in countless visitors. (Note: Check the websites for prices and schedules. Not included). The city's major landmarks are clustered around the large market square, known as Marktplatz, with its picturesque City Hall (Rathaus), built between 1504 and 1514 and decorated with red sandstone. Also nearby is the Cathedral, dating from the late Romanesque and Gothic period, which houses the tomb of the famous Dutch humanist and philosopher Erasmus of Rotterdam. Basel has also masterfully complemented its important historical heritage with modern architecture reflected in many buildings that bear the hallmark of internationally-renowned architects. Herzog & de Meuron, Mario Botta, Diener & Diener or Richard Meyer are just some of them. You won't have a problem finding some of the many shops selling exquisite Swiss chocolate, a delicacy that started to gain a reputation abroad in the second half of the nineteenth century. We seriously recommend the regional speciality known as 'mässmogge', which are sugar candies stuffed with a creamy hazelnut praline. Make sure you visit the "Läckerli Huus" patisserie (Greifengasse, 2) to taste the traditional spice and honey biscuits known as 'Basler leckerli'. The city's signature dishes include Basel flour soup, which is served together with cheese and traditionally eaten at carnival time, and 'Suuri Lääberli', a sour liver stew. You can take advantage of balmy summer evenings to stroll through the many parks or even along the Rhine, the unofficial emblem of Basel.

Overnight stay in Basel.

DAY 2 · BASEL - MURTEN - KERZERS - FREIBURG

Enjoy a hearty breakfast of "Birchermüesli", a dish created in 1900 by the Swiss physician Maximilian Oskar Bircher-Brenner. It consists of oat flakes, lemon juice, condensed milk, grated apples and hazelnuts or almonds, which will set you up perfectly for the day ahead.

Today's final destination is none other than the medieval city of Freiburg. To get there you'll wind through a picturesque region that features three particular landscapes: the Alpine foothills, the Three Lakes region and Freiburg itself, so take the opportunity to stop off at some quaint little villages en route. One of them is Murten, with its intact medieval wall and idyllic location perched on a small hill above Lake Murten, which incidentally delivers an impressive sunset over Mont Vully and Mont Jura. In fact, the Vully region produces refreshing wines that can be sampled at wineries and tasting centres in Murten itself. What's more, the wines pair wonderfully with fish straight from the lake, such as vendace and trout. You can even join the guided "Vully Wine Trail", an hour-long excursion that includes tastings of the wines from the region. (Note: Not included). Very close to Murten is the town of Kerzers (Chiètres), which is home to one of Switzerland's top tourist attractions, the Papiliorama Swiss Tropical Gardens, where you can discover the fascinating world of tropical forests and marvel at the thousand-plus butterflies belonging to more than sixty different species. (Note: Check the websites for prices and schedules. Not included). There are just seventeen kilometres between Kerzers and Freiburg, heading south for half an hour on the "Route de Morat". Freiburg stands on a rocky headland lapped by the River Sarine and is one of the three fully bilingual cities of Switzerland, where both French and German are spoken. Its cobbled alleys and streets are lined with numerous coffee shops and restaurants that reflect the medieval atmosphere found all over town and where you can savour delicacies such as the classic cheese fondue with PDO-protected Gruyère or "Vacherin Fribourgeois", or the tantalising Swiss "meringue" with a double serving of whipped cream.

Overnight stay in Freiburg.

DAY 3 · FREIBURG

Freiburg is a city that boasts one of the most beautiful old towns in Switzerland, known as the "Basse Ville". There are more than two hundred fifteenth-century Gothic facades like no others in Europe, stunning fountains such as the Fountain of Faithfulness and the Fountain of Strength, and the remains of the wall and the huge bastion that once protected the city. The very best views of the Auge neighbourhood in the "Basse Ville" are found on the iconic 'Funi', a funicular considered a feat of engineering that has been running since 1899 on purified wastewater from the city, so it doesn't emit polluting gases. Towering fifty metres above the River Sarine is the impressive St. Nicholas Cathedral (Cathédrale de Saint-Nicolas) of Freiburg (Rue des Chanoines, 3), built on a very common sedimentary rock in Switzerland called "molasse". Construction of this incomparable religious temple began in 1283, featuring some marvellous stained glass and a 74-metre-high tower, which commands outstanding panoramic views. However, after climbing nothing more and no less than 368 steps. Do you dare? (Note: Check the websites for prices and schedules. Not included). Nicknamed the "City of Bridges", you simply have to walk across some of its ancient bridges that link the city's neighbourhoods, such as the stunning Pont de Berne, built in 1270 and with a wooden roof, or the stone-built Pont du Milieu. There are also some fabulous museums in Freiburg covering an array of themes, including the Sewing Machine Museum, the Puppet Museum and the Cardinal Beer Museum. And of course also more traditional ones such as the Fri-Art Museum of Contemporary Art, the Museum of Art and History (which houses the largest collection of sixteenth-century sculptures in the country) and the Freiburg Natural History Museum. (Note: Check the websites for prices and schedules. Not included). The most popular culinary specialties here are the "Dessert Gâteau du Vully" (Nidlechueche, in German), "Moutarde de Bénichon" (a very sweet mustard) and "Cuchaule", a typical saffron bread originally from the Canton of Freiburg. (Note: You could choose to buy the Freiburg City Card, which includes discounts on public transport, fourteen museums and other tourist attractions).

Overnight stay in Freiburg.

DAY 4 · FREIBURG - BROC - GRUYÈRES - GSTAAD - INTERLAKEN

One of the tastiest days of this culinary journey lies ahead today. Head south to make your first stop of the day, which lies half an hour away from Freiburg. The village of Broc is a town well known for the "Maison Callier Chocolaterie" (Rue Jules Bellet, 7). This is a chocolate factory that has been operating since 1898 and offers guided and audiovisual tours to find out all about the process of making this exquisite sweet. They include a tasting session and, of course, the chance to pick up any of the wonderful chocolate products on sale at the Cailler of Switzerland store. For quite some time now, the "Maison Callier" has been one of the most visited places in the whole of Switzerland, so it's highly advisable to book a few days in advance. (Note: Check the websites for prices and schedules. Not included). Just five kilometres southwest of Broc is one of the most important destinations on this Cheese Lover's Route. Your destination is a beautiful town where cheese also takes centre stage, Gruyères (Greyerz, in German), birthplace of the ever-so-tasty and internationally famous gruyère cheese, protected by the Le Gruyère protected designation of origin. So as soon as you set foot in the town, head over to the "Maison du Gruyère" (Place de la Gare, 3), where you can enjoy the process of artisan cheese-making and, of course, try a recently-made mild or matured variety. Delicious! And if that wasn't enough of an attraction, there's a delightful medieval atmosphere in Gruyères, as if time had stood still in this pocket-sized Swiss town. You can visit the majestic Gruyères Castle (Château de Gruyères, in French), a fortification built at the end of the thirteenth century, and the Saint-Germain Castle (Château St. Germain), both included in the so-called 'Swiss Inventory of Cultural Assets of National and Regional Importance'. What's more, the Saint-Germain Castle also houses the H.R.Giger Museum, in tribute to the famous Swiss artist who designed the most famous "Alien" ever seen on the big screen. (Note: Check the websites for prices and schedules. Not included). The old city walls and several of the houses located on the Rue du Bourg add to the fascinating historical legacy of this charismatic town, a heritage intrinsically related to the Middle Ages. In the afternoon, head over to the laid-back and very beautiful town of Gstaad, located about 40 kilometres southeast on the Route 11 that snakes through the Parc Naturel Régional Gruyère Pays-d'Enhaut, and then onward to the city of Interlaken, which rose to fame in the early 19th century thanks to its impressive mountainous landscapes. The Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau mountains are the majestic and silent sentinels that dominate the horizon of this beautiful town nestled between the lakes of Thun and Brienz.

Overnight stay in Interlaken.

● DAY 5 · INTERLAKEN AND SURROUNDINGS

Interlaken is famous for being Switzerland's summer and winter sports resort. In fact, it's the starting point of numerous excursions to the impressive peaks in the vicinity, and which captured the attention of luminaries such as Goethe and Mendelssohn. The extension of the railway lines in the late 19th and early 20th centuries thrust this exceptional region onto the tourism scene, making it much more accessible and highlighting the number of its natural attractions. In fact, more than forty-five mountain railways, aerial cable cars, chair lifts and T-bars connect Interlaken with mountains, glaciers and an extensive network of hiking trails. We recommend the Jungfrauabahn railway, which for more than a hundred years has been chugging its way up to Europe's highest train station at 3,454 metres above sea level, passing through the UNESCO-listed region of "Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch". From there you can reach the top of Europe, aka the Jungfraujoch, a world of eternal ice and snow; visit the impressive Aletsch and Oberland glaciers; or simply head to traditional Swiss restaurants where you can savour exquisite dishes such as "Luzerner Chügelipastete", a puff-pastry shell filled with fried meatballs in a creamy sauce; "Hafenchabis", a lamb or pork stew with cabbage; and "Stunggis", a pork and vegetable stew. Another must-do is the cable car to the top of Mount Schilthorn, 2,970 metres above sea level, where you can marvel at stunning panoramic views of the entire region. There's also the famous revolving restaurant called "Piz Gloria", which offers a delicious menu including the mouth-watering "007 Burger". Near Interlaken are the St. Beatus Caves (St. Beatus-Höhlen, in German) that delve up to a kilometre into the depths of the imposing Niederhorn massif. There you can enjoy incredible scenarios of stalagmites and stalactites, underground waterfalls and winding passageways and caverns that will delight young and old alike. (Note: Check the websites for prices and schedules. Not included).

Overnight stay in Interlaken.

DAY 6 · INTERLAKEN - THUN - BERN

Set off at a decent time to continue your journey through Swiss lands to Bern, the capital city. On the way, we recommend a stop in Thun, on the northern shore of the lake of the same name, a region that thanks to the lake and the proximity of the Bernese Alps has been attracting tourists ever since the early nineteenth century. The town of Thun, on the banks of the River Aare, is home to an imposing castle built between 1180 and 1190 by the Duke of Zähringen. It's now a history museum that showcases prehistoric exhibits, objects from the Middle Ages and weapons and uniforms from the 18th and 19th centuries. The sights of Thun also include its church and tower built around 1330 and the sixteenth-century town hall. But, above all, the spectacular "Thun-Panorama" (in Schadaupark), a gigantic 360-degree painting measuring 7.5 metres in height and 38 metres in length and portraying the city Thun in 1810, a colossal work of art completed by Marquard Woher. (Note: Check the websites for prices and schedules. Not included). Take a trip to the many cafes and restaurants located along the banks of the River Aare to savour a "raclette", melted cheese served with 'gswellti' (potatoes with their skins on), gherkins and onions, all seasoned with mustard, or a "rösti", a flat potato fritter cooked in butter or hot fat also served with 'gswellti'. When you're ready, head over to the country's capital, some thirty kilometres north of Thun. The city of Bern captivates visitors with an impressive old town, considered one of the best examples of medieval town planning in Europe and listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO since 1983. Perched on a hill embraced by the River Aare, the historic quarter cherishes a multitude of attractions that you really shouldn't miss, such as Bern Cathedral (Berner Münster, in German), a Gothic-style masterpiece that took more than 400 years to complete and whose 100-metre-plus spire makes it the tallest religious building in Switzerland. (Note: Check the websites for prices and schedules. Not included). Another of its most characteristic sights is the famous "Zytglogge" clock tower dating from the late twelfth century, to which the astronomical clock with its moving figures was added in 1530. On the hour you can witness the nostalgic performance of figures that include the golden 'jacquemart' (the mechanised figure that strikes the bell), the rooster and Chronos, the Greek god of time. The one-of-a-kind medieval complex is completed by six kilometres of so-called "Lauben", which are 15th-century shopping arcades built to protect the public from the inclement weather, and a host of stunning 16th-century fountains, such as the Schützenbrunnen. But Bern is more than its wonderful old town. Being the national capital, it houses the Federal Palace of Switzerland (Bundeshaus in German, Palais Fédéral in French, and Palazzo Federale in Italian), the seat of the Swiss government designed by the architect Hans Wilhelm Auer and inaugurated on 1 April 1902 (Bundesplatz, 3). The Kunstmuseum (Bern Art Museum) is a world-renowned institution that exhibits more than 3,000 paintings and sculptures, as well as 48,000 hand drawings, graphics, photographs, videos and films by artists such as Pablo Picasso, Paul Klee, Ferdinand Hodler and Meret Oppenheim (Hodlerstrasse, 8-12). But, without a shed of doubt, the city's most bizarre tourist attraction is the Bärenpark (Grosser Muristalden, 6), literally the "Bear Park", where you can see Finn, Björk and their daughter Ursina climbing up trees, fishing in the water and frolicking around in an area of about 6,000 square metres that stretches from the bear pit to the banks of the River Aare. (Note: Check the websites for prices and schedules. Not included). We recommend heading to one of the restaurants dotted around the old town or near the Federal Palace to try one of the country's most typical dishes - the "Älplermagronen" - a gratin of potatoes, macaroni, cheese, cream and onions garnished with apple sauce.

Overnight stay in Bern.

DAY 7 · BERN - AFFOLTERN IM EMMENTAL - LUCERNE

Get ready to explore another of the country's main cheese-producing regions today. Head northwest on the A1 for around thirty-eight kilometres and you'll reach your destination. Affoltern im Emmental is the birthplace of the famous "PDO-awarded Emmental" cheese, made from cow's milk and instantly recognisable by its characteristic holes, a delicacy that's highly appreciated across the globe. The Emmental Show Dairy is the perfect place to find out all about the cheese-making process, with both traditional and modern production techniques. At its two restaurants you can savour delicious regional and seasonal specialities, while at the Mätteli-Beck cheese shop and bakery you can buy different varieties of cheeses and sweets. Even groups can make their own cheese under the watchful eye of a professional cheesemaker, albeit with advance reservations. (Note: Check the websites for prices and schedules. Not included).

Once you're ready, continue onward the shores of the Lake of the Four Cantons and the city of Lucerne, which masterfully harmonises its impressive historical and cultural legacy with truly avant-garde design. In fact, its two most recognisable attractions are the Chapel Bridge (Kapellbrücke), one of the oldest wooden roofed bridges in Europe and dating from 1332, and the KKL Luzern Culture and Convention Centre (Europaplatz, 1), the futuristic meeting point designed by the famous French architect Jean Nouvel, which fuses culture, events and cuisine. By the way, in the middle of the Kapellbrücke is the octagonal Water Tower or Wasserturm, built at the beginning of the 14th century. It's another of the city's main landmarks and is said to be the most photographed monument in Switzerland. (Note: Check the websites for prices and schedules. Not included). The old town of Lucerne, closed off to traffic, is brimming with picturesque squares, such as the Wine Market (Weinmarkt), but also historic houses adorned with frescoes and stunning churches, such as the seventeenth-century Jesuit "Hofkirche", which is believed to be the first example of religious baroque in Switzerland. Don't miss the Monument to the Dying Lion (Löwendenkmal) in a small park near the Löwenplatz and which commemorates the death of seven hundred Swiss Guard mercenaries during the revolutionary assault of 1792 at the Tuileries Palace in Paris. The sculpture is carved into a rock wall and is the work of the Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen, who created it between 1819 and 1821. All these attractions and many more make Lucerne the most tourist-friendly city in Switzerland.

Overnight stay in Lucerne.

DAY 8 · LUCERNE - BASEL - CITY OF ORIGIN

Bear in mind that Basel is about an hour and a half away from Lucerne.

Arrival at the airport with enough time to drop off your rental car and flight back to the city of origin.

Arrival. End of the trip and our services.

Your trip includes

Your trip includes

- ✓ Return flight.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Basel.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Basel.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Freiburg.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Freiburg.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Interlaken.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Interlaken.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Bern.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Bern.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Luzern.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Luzern.
- ✓ Rent-a-car.

Your trip doesn't include

- ✗ Accommodation taxes in Switzerland direct payment in facility.
- ✗ Possible toll charges.

Destinations Visited

Basel



Murten



Freiburg



Broc



Gruyères



Gstaad



Interlaken



Thun



Bern



Affoltern im Emmental



Luzern



Important remarks

- Driving in Switzerland: 1. It's compulsory to drive with headlights on at all times, even on the brightest summer's day. Seatbelts are mandatory for all passengers. 2. Speed limits. 2.1 Built-up areas up to 50 km/h. 2.2 Roads up to 80 km/h. 2.3 Dual carriageways and motorways up to 120 km/h. 2.4. There are many radars in Switzerland, especially in speed-controlled sections, and radar detectors are forbidden. Fines for speeding are very high, so make sure you stay within the limits at all times. If you are fined, the police can demand on-the-spot payment. 3. In Switzerland, blue road signs indicate secondary roads, while green ones indicate motorways. 3.1. Make sure that your rental car has a Swiss motorway vignette on the windscreen. This means you can use all Swiss motorways for free over a one-year period (in Switzerland there are no toll roads as such). 4. Studded tyres are allowed from October to April, but they're not allowed on most roads throughout the rest of the year.

The speed limit with these tyres is 80 km/h. 5. A red warning triangle and a reflective yellow vest must always be carried in your car in the event of a breakdown or accident. 6. Alcohol. The legal limit is 0.25 g/l. There are severe penalties for drivers that exceed the allowed limit. 7. Parking. All the major cities in Switzerland have metered parking. 7.1. If you want to park on the street, take careful note of the road markings. Yellow line: parking prohibited. Blue line: free parking, but limited to one hour (except at night). You can get a blue parking disc free of charge at tourist offices in any city and it will be valid for the whole of Switzerland. White line: metered parking for a limited time (varies depending on the location). You have to pay at the special parking meters.

- Triple rooms in Europe are generally rooms with twin beds or a double, in which a folding bed is installed to accommodate the third person. Due to the inconvenience this causes, we advise against using this option as far as possible.

- Check-in time at the hotel on the day of arrival depends on each establishment, but in no case will it be before 3:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated.

- The proposed excursions and tours for each day are purely suggestions, as you can tailor the trip to suit your times, tastes and needs.

- A credit card is considered a guarantee, so sometimes you will need one for check-in at hotels.

- Hotels usually have cots available. Otherwise, babies will have to share a bed with an adult.

- To pick up your rental car, you'll need a credit (not debit) card in the name of the person who made the booking, who must also be the named driver of the vehicle.

- Consult the necessary documentation to enter the destinations visited and for transit in the countries where air stopovers are made.