

# Rail holidays to Switzerland



## By Rail to Swiss Lake Maggiore Holiday



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7 NIGHTS / 8 DAYS

Ascona

Locarno

Monte Tamaro

Bellinzona

Lugano



Lugano

We recommend travelling to Switzerland by train from London to Ascona, via Paris, Zurich and Bellinzona. Return flights from the UK with rail travel in Switzerland can also be arranged. Your destination is Ascona, Locarno's more peaceful neighbour, in the canton of Ticino. This region is the warmest in Switzerland, with a near-Mediterranean climate. Palm trees grow on the shoreline of Lake Maggiore, in front of the colourful houses, and behind the rows of quaint fishing boats. On the southern side of the water, opposite Locarno and Ascona, stands the impressive and green Monte Tamaro. Hiking trails and walking routes have a different tone here to further north, with panoramic summery vistas of bright flowers and wildlife. During your week here, explore the Italianate towns, such as Bellinzona and Lugano, seek out the waterfalls on the River Ticino, and visit the medieval castles. A stay on Lake Maggiore offers visitors a wholly different experience to that offered by the Bernese Oberland, by the northern cities, or by the Engadine.

### DAY-BY-DAY SUMMARY

#### Day one

Travel from London to Ascona by rail on your first day; or fly into Zurich and travel the rest of the journey by rail. The Eurostar leaves in the morning for Paris, where you change to a TGV train headed to Basel. Here, change for Locarno, and travel into Ticino. Check into your resort hotel.

#### Days two to seven

Spend seven nights enjoying the highlights of Lake Maggiore, first making the most of your three day rail pass to explore the lakeside towns and villages, the mountains, and the Mediterranean feel.

#### Day eight

On your eighth day, board an early morning train from Locarno back to Basel and Paris. Spend up to two hours in Paris before catching your connection back to London, arriving in the early evening.

### CHOICE OF HOTELS

**Eden Roc Hotel** 5 star superior

**Romantik Hotel Castello Seeschloss** 4 star

### PRICES

**From £1,930 per person**

Based on double occupancy, with flights to and from, and rail travel within Switzerland in 2nd class.

1st class rail travel can be added for a supplement.

### DATES

This rail holiday can be arranged throughout the year. Timings can vary depending on the month and day of the week. For more information regarding rail services to and within Switzerland, view our train guide.

### WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Rail travel London to Switzerland via Basel in standard/second class (first class can be booked at a supplement) return, or scheduled return flights from the UK to Geneva
- 3 days Swiss rail pass for travel on 3 consecutive days
- 7 nights' bed and breakfast in your resort hotel

### WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Optional extra nights
- Transfers in Switzerland station to hotel unless offered by your hotel

A luggage transfer service is available within Switzerland, please contact us for further details.

## ABOUT THE RESORT

At just 192m above sea level, Ascona and Lake Maggiore mark the lowest altitude point in Switzerland.

Expressions

This accounts for the warm climate and the rich greenness of the environment. Home to just over 5,000 people, Ascona marks the fine balance between urban cultural experience and rural seclusion; and with Locarno just across the Maggiore River, guests here are at their leisure to determine just how much of the bustling marketplaces and lively lakefront they would like to experience. Ascona itself is also recognised as a centre for the arts as it has an abundance of galleries and craft shops nestled down quiet alleyways.

### Places of interest on Lake Maggiore

- **Museo Comunale d'Arte Moderna** – housed in the Palazzo Pancaldi, exhibiting works by local artists as well as famous artists connected with Ascona, including Paul Klee
- **Casa Anatta Museum**, Monte Verita – dedicated to the 'back to nature' enthusiasts from the beginning of the century
- **Settimane Musicali** – this international festival of classical music is held between August and October each year in Ascona
- **Festa New Orleans** – a Jazz Festival held at the end of June on open-air stages
- **Isles of Brissago** – accessible by boat and known for their botanical gardens
- **Ronco** – famous for its cigars
- **Madonna del Sasso**, Locarno – the sanctuary has an enviable hillside position, from which you can look down across Locarno and Ascona; inside, famous paintings are exhibited in the church, and unique statues line the stairway
- From the sanctuary, take a **cable car** up to Cardada, and then to Cimetta at 1672m above sea level
- **Locarno's Old Town** – rich with Italianate squares and arcaded townhouses; this is also the best place to seek out some pre-17th century churches
- **Castello Visconti**, Locarno – this 15th century castle houses a Roman and bronze age exhibition
- **Locarno International Film Festival** – for two weeks in August, since 1948, the Piazza Grande is taken over by this festival every evening
- **Giardini Jean Arp**, Locarno – a lakeside park populated by surrealist sculptures
- **Bellinzona** – the capital of Ticino and home to three medieval castles; each has its own museum
- **Grand Castle**, Bellinzona – the middle of the three castles; dates from the 6th century
- **Montebello Castle**, Bellinzona – raised above the town
- **Sasso Corbaro Castle** – higher on the hillside, and therefore requires more of a walk



Lake Maggiore, Ticino

- **Bellinzona Saturday Market** – on the main street
- **Piazza Blues**, Bellinzona – an open-air Blues festival that lasts for three days at the end of June
- **Lugano's Old Town** – full of winding alleyways and quaint piazzas; every Tuesday in the summer, a free guided walk is conducted by the Tourist Office
- **St Lawrence Cathedral** – this cathedral has a Renaissance façade and three elegant doorways; frescoes from the 16th century decorate the interior
- **Alprose Chocolate Museum**, Lugano – tour the factory of Switzerland's largest chocolate manufacturer and learn about the history of chocolate production
- **Lido**, Lugano – offering beaches and swimming pool
- **Primavera Concertistica** – a series of classical music concerts held in Lugano during April and May
- **Monte San Salvatore** – bearing an uncanny resemblance to the Sugarloaf Mountain in Rio de Janeiro
- **Monte Bre** – take the funicular railway from Casserate to reach the summit
- **Centovalli Express** – take this two hour journey from Locarno to Domodossola in northern Italy, passing many pretty villages and striking historic buildings: including the Sanctuary of the Madonna of the Blood in Re

### Local sports

- Walking and hiking on Monte Tamaro, Monte Bre, and Monte San Salvatore
- Swimming in Locarno and Lugano
- Water sports on Lake Maggiore or Lake Lugano

The abundance of available activities, from exploring picturesque waterside towns and villages to scenic walks and hiking, will ensure that each of your days on Lake Maggiore is unique and memorable. This seven night rail holiday allows you to make the most of this variety and get to know the region in-depth.

### OPTIONAL

Combine this holiday with one of our Iconic Swiss Rail Journeys or another long stay in a different part of the country.

## HOTELS

As part of this single centre rail touring holiday, we include a seven night stay at the Eden Roc Hotel in Ascona. Other options in Ticino are available on request, and additional nights can be added here or in other destinations.

*Expressions*

### EDEN ROC HOTEL

#### *5 star superior*

The five star superior Hotel Eden Roc proudly sits on the banks of Lake Maggiore in Ascona, Ticino. This area of Northern Italy is known for its stunning natural beauty, as green mountains rise on either side of the deep blue waters of the Italian and Swiss Lakes, separated from the tranquil hotel swimming pool by a row of swaying palm trees. Behind the yachts and private boats of its own personal marina, the Hotel Eden Roc is a modern building with an abundance of large windows and long balconies. Divided into the Hotel Eden Roc and the Eden Roc Marina, the vast selection of room types are split across two main areas, and linked by a low-rise lobby and public area. Gardens, trees, sun loungers, and parasols extend right up to the water's edge, providing idyllic, verdant spaces in which to relax and enjoy the sunshine.

Inside, a traditional grandeur is introduced in a sleek, sophisticated fashion. In the Eden Roc Marina, the dining room is decorated with intricate chandeliers, floral curtains, and vases in the centres of tables. The radiant white colour scheme, minimalist furniture designs, and double-storey windows, bring these traditional features up to date. Guests can enjoy the fresh mountain air while dining on one of the restaurant terraces, in the walled waterside courtyard at La Casetta, or in the pretty poolside garden at the Restaurant Eden Roc. During the day, guests are encouraged to indulge further at the ultra-modern Wellness Centre and Spa. The main spa rooms are lit by an ethereal blue light, with a choice between a crescent-moon-shaped dipping pool and a larger half-indoor half-outdoor swimming pool. Enjoy a range of personalised treatments, before relaxing in the spacious lounge, the sauna, or enjoying a beauty treatment.

At the end of a relaxing day, retire to your room. Each guestroom has been individually appointed, with quirky, colourful features and bold artworks which inspire a themed colour scheme. All are spacious, with textured, tactile fabrics, and large windows and balconies that open up onto unbeatable views. For the ultimate Ascona experience, upgrade at the time of booking to a room with a direct lake view. The area around Ascona is perfect for day excursions, with plenty of cultural activities



*Eden Roc Hotel pool*

in neighbouring Locarno, and excellent train connections to cities such as Lugano, and Italianate Bellinzona.

### ROMANTIK HOTEL CASTELLO SEESCHLOSS

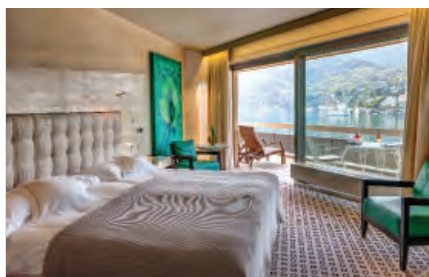
#### *4 star*

The four star Romantik Hotel Castello Seeschloss Ascona overlooks the waters of Lake Maggiore from its position in Locarno's peaceful neighbouring town. The most striking feature is the 13th century castle tower, which will be the first thing you see as you approach. Vines creep up the pale plastered walls, curving around the shuttered arched windows, and folding over onto the balconies towards the top. A weathervane crowns the tower. In the gardens either side of the front entrance, palm trees create shady tropical spaces, which give the hotel a slightly Mediterranean look. Move past the grand façade into interior spaces that blend classical themes with stylish modern design. In the dining room of Ristorante al Lago, for example, a stone wall tinged green by the reflection of the trees through the wall-to-ceiling glass windows adds exception character, though the tables

and chairs are simple, wooden designs, with the hotel logo embossed into the upholstery. Here, guests can indulge in exquisite Mediterranean cuisine, or enjoy coffee and cake in the afternoon. At Ristorante Locanda de'Ghirigioni, traditional Ticino dishes, particularly pasta dishes, are served in a pretty courtyard amongst flowers, trees, and beside the pillars of the castle. For the true experience of staying in a 13th century castle, with all the original opulence and charm, we would recommend staying in a Castle Room. Every room at this hotel, however, has been lovingly and carefully appointed with the colourful town of Ascona and the building's prestigious history in mind. Complete your stay at the Romantik Hotel Castello Seeschloss Ascona with a unique experience of aperitifs and tapas-style snacks on the rooftop terrace of the castle tower. Ticino white wine, Prosecco di Valdobbiadene from Venice, Franciacorte Brut, and Laurant Perrier Champagne can all be enjoyed alongside the magnificent views across the brightly coloured houses of Ascona, Locarno, and the tranquil waters of Lake Maggiore.



*Terrace*



*Guestroom*



*Exterior*

# MAP OF BY RAIL TO SWISS LAKE MAGGIORE HOLIDAY



The map below illustrates the route outlined in this touring itinerary, with places of interest highlighted.



## GENERAL INFORMATION

This rail holiday is one of several suggested rail holidays we can offer you exactly as it is but also with any alterations you might want including extra nights in one or more places or adding in extra places. All our tours can be extended so that you can include a longer stay in one mountain or lake resort too, perhaps at the end of the itinerary. Do call to discuss the options with our travel consultants.

The logo for Expressions Holidays, featuring the word "Expressions" in a white, elegant script font on a dark blue rectangular background.

### OUR TOURS

**Our rail tours are for individuals travelling on their own or in their own family group. You do not join a group and you are not escorted.**

### FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENTS

Our arrangements are very flexible in that you choose to travel on any day you want, subject to availability of trains and hotels. As mentioned above, additional nights can be added at any point.

### FLEX PASS INCLUDED

We include travel to and from your first and last hotel but also a Flex pass is included for the rest of the holiday, depending on its length. For example, on a long stay we would include an 8 day Flex pass. This gives you 8 non-consecutive but selected days of travel within a one-month period.

#### **The pass gives you a choice that includes**

- Unlimited travel by rail, road and waterway on your selected days of validity, including most panorama routes and public transport in 75 towns and cities
- Free admission to more than 490 museums on the selected days of validity
- Children under the age of 16 travel free of charge when accompanied by at least one parent holding the Swiss Family Card

If we have included a panoramic route in your holiday, we will automatically include any applicable supplements for that train.

### TRAIN TIMES

We have planned our itineraries based on train times that work day by day at the time of planning which can be up to a year before you travel. Usually train times stay more or less the same every day, season by season. The times we have planned will be discussed with you at the time you enquire about the holiday and they are detailed to you in your written holiday quotation. It may be that the timetable changes between the planning of the itinerary and when you come to book but we can always adjust the itinerary to suit the actual train times and any requirements you have for particular times of travel.

### FIRST OR SECOND CLASS

We will automatically include travel in second class but lots of our clients do upgrade to first class service. On Eurostar this is called Premier Standard for leisure travellers as it gives you an upgraded on-board service and more spacious seating but without paying for the fully-flexible business tickets. On the TGV trains from France to Switzerland, upgrading to first class gives you more spacious seating with increased legroom. Within Switzerland, first class gives you again more space and more comfortable seats, often with a quieter environment. The price of upgrading varies from route to route but is something that is not always proportionately a lot more on the price of the overall holiday, so well-worth considering.

### LUGGAGE TRANSFER SERVICE

**Swiss rail operates an efficient transfer service for your luggage. This works in a number of ways:**

For travel to Switzerland by air, you can check-in your baggage with any airline, from any airport in the world and it will be forwarded to our destination station in Switzerland from Zurich, Bern or Geneva airports. Simply collect your baggage from the station at your destination.

For departure from Switzerland if flying with Swiss, you can check-in for your flight at the train station the day before you fly (major stations only). You receive your boarding pass and your seat allocation and your baggage will be transported onto the aircraft.

For departure from Switzerland with other airlines eg British Airways or Easyjet, you can have your baggage transported to the airport train station ie Zurich or Geneva and you collect it from there to take it to check-in as usual. Just allow enough time for the luggage to reach the airport station, so well before you travel. Your station will be able to advise a day or two beforehand.

Within Switzerland you can transfer your luggage from one location to another. The Fast Baggage service is available between 45 destinations. You just have to check-in your luggage before 9am at your departure station and collect it by 6pm on the same day at your destination (or sometimes the following day, depending on the actual destination). The cost of this service is approximately £17 per item.

### TRANSFERS

Transfers in Paris between stations and from the station to each hotel are not automatically included in the price of the holiday. In Paris most clients choose to take a taxi between the stations rather than go on the Metro but we can arrange a private car with driver to take you in between. This is quite useful if you are a family group that can't fit into one Paris taxi. In Switzerland, depending on the location, hotels sometimes have their own transfer vehicles that they will send to collect you if we advise them in advance (eg in St Moritz and Zermatt this is usual) but elsewhere some hotels are within walking distance and others are a short taxi ride away.

## OUR PRICES

The sample prices mentioned in this leaflet are generally a 'from' price based on the cheapest season of travel. However, train fares and hotel rates can change (up and down depending on offers), so we give you an accurate price for your holiday when we provide you with a quotation. Our sample prices should be used as an indication of how much a particular combination will cost and to show the differences on average between the hotel categories on offer.

## PRICE INFORMATION IN MORE DETAIL

Rail (standard class on Eurostar and second class on all other trains) from London and throughout back to London at 4 star hotels (eg Romantik Hotel Castello Seeschloss), from £1,930 per person  
Supplement: Standard premier on Eurostar and first class on all other trains £430 per person

Flights to/from Switzerland and second class rail travel in Switzerland at 4 star hotels (eg Romantik Hotel Castello Seeschloss), from £1,930 per person  
Supplement: First class rail in Switzerland £240 per person

Rail (standard class on Eurostar and second class on all other trains) from London and throughout back to London at 5 star hotels (eg Hotel Eden Roc), from £2,860 per person  
Supplement: Standard premier on Eurostar and first class on all other trains £430 per person

Flights to/from Switzerland and second class rail travel in Switzerland at 5 star hotels (eg Hotel Eden Roc), from £2,740 per person  
Supplement: First class rail in Switzerland £240 per person

## BOOKING CONDITIONS

Our booking conditions apply to all holidays. A copy can be found on our website and a copy is also sent to you with a written quotation and when you make a booking.

## FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Expressions Holidays offers full financial protection for all holidays you book with us. If your holiday includes a flight, the ATOL (3076) covers the costs of the holiday. If the holiday does not include a flight, it is the ABTOT bond that protects the cost of the holiday. We are also members of AITO (the Association of Independent Tour Operators) and ABTA.



Expressions Holidays  
Lynx House, Pynes Hill, Exeter EX2 5JL

## HOW TO BOOK

To make a booking, just phone us on

**01392 441217**

and we can take you through the details we need and start the booking process. A deposit is required to confirm the arrangements and this can be paid by debit or credit card over the phone. The level of the deposit will be confirmed at the point of booking and will depend on the ticketing deadlines of the rail tickets involved in your booking.