

Rail holidays to Switzerland



Gotthard Panorama Express Holiday



www.expressionsholidays.co.uk
01392 441217

Gotthard Panorama Express

5 NIGHTS / 6 DAYS

Lucerne

Gotthard Panorama Express

Gotthard

Bellinzona

Lugano



Paddle steamer on Lake Lucerne

Wilhelm Tell, the Swiss National Hero of Liberty, is one of the best known folk characters in Switzerland. Friedrich von Schiller penned the most popular recounting of Tell's fable in his poem, which is still performed in Switzerland more than 200 years later. Begin your touring holiday with a three-night stay in Lucerne, the City of Lights, before boarding the Gotthard Panorama Express on your fourth day. The route of the Gotthard Panorama Express takes you first zig-zagging across Lake Lucerne in your choice of a steamboat or salon motorboat. Pass the iconic locations mentioned in Schiller's poem, including the Rutli Meadows and Tell's Chapel at Sisikon. When you reach Fluelen on the southern-most shore of the lake, disembark and board the train heading to Locarno. The journey south towards the Italian border is lined with snow-capped peaks, interspersed with dramatic valleys, and broken up by a number of historic, picturesque towns. When you reach Bellinzona, change trains for Lugano, where you will spend two nights before heading into Italy for a return flight from Milan, or back north to Zurich for a return flight or train.

ABOUT THE GOTTHARD PANORAMA EXPRESS

Route length 5.2 hours or 182km from Lucerne to Lugano, part by steamboat or salon motorboat, and part by train

Stops

Steamboat – Swiss Museum of Transport Lido, Hertenstein, Weggis, Vitznau, Beckenried, Gersau, Treib, Brunnen, Rutli, Sisikon, Fluelen

Train – Fluelen, Goschonen, Airolo, Faido, Biasca, Bellinzona, Lugano
Change at Bellinzona for the train to Locarno via Giubiasco, Cardenazzo and Tenerfo

Facilities Onboard catering is available on both the boat and panoramic train

PRICES

From £1,680 per person

Based on double occupancy in 4 star hotels, with flights to and from, and rail travel within Switzerland in 2nd class.

1st class rail travel and five star hotels 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

- Flights from UK to Zurich and back from Zurich or Milan OR rail travel London to Switzerland and back (first class can be booked at a supplement)
- 4 day rail flex pass (first class can be booked at a supplement)
- 3 nights' bed and breakfast in Lucerne
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in Lugano

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Optional extra nights in Zurich, Lucerne, Lugano, Geneva, or Bern
- Transfers in Paris
- 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.

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Lucerne - Gotthard Panorama Express - Gotthard - Bellinzona - Lugano

Expressions

Day one: Arrive in Zurich and travel to Lucerne

On your first day, fly or catch a train via Paris into Zurich. If time allows, perhaps spend an hour taking in this historic and enchanting city, stopping at the Grossmunster church and climbing the Karlstrum tower. Then board the train and take the short journey south to Lucerne, where you will spend the first part of your rail holiday.

Days two and three: Lucerne

The so-called City of Light is a bubble of cosmopolitan atmosphere, as well as a place of rich, historic significance. Wander down the pretty streets, taking in the individuality of the boutique shops and quaint cafes, or venture out into the surrounding landscape, visiting the Titlis Glacier, the Alpine meadows, and appreciating the views over the 13 nearby lakes, Swiss Mittelland, and the German and French borders from the Rigi Mountain. The Pilatus Mountain affords climbers and hikers views across more than 70 Alpine peaks, and is steeped in legends of dragons, giants, and royal graveyards. Two cog railways, from Vitznau and Goldau, and a panoramic cable car trip from Weggis offer relaxing ways to take in the scenery. A highlight of your stay in Lucerne will be walking along the Chapel Bridge and seeing the Water Tower, though the river itself has much more to offer. We would encourage using your time in Lucerne as an opportunity to visit many more of the towns and villages on the northern shore of the lake.

Day four: Lucerne to Lugano on the Gotthard Panorama Express

Heading south from Lucerne, board the Gotthard Panorama steamboat or salon motorboat from the Swiss Museum of Transport's lido. This boat trip takes you across Lake Lucerne, from Lucerne to Fluelen, passing the notable points of interest from Schiller's poem about Wilhelm Tell. Pass the picturesque white villages of Weggis and Vitznau, the bustling town of Brunnen, the Rutli Meadows, and Tell's Chapel in Sisikon, where he reputedly jumped from the bailiff's boat before pushing it back into the storm. Presiding over all of this is the imposing Rigi Mountain. When you reach Fluelen, disembark and board the Gotthard Panorama Express train, which is headed towards Locarno. Follow the pathway of the Reuss River as it slices through wide, flat valleys further inland, before the railway gains altitude as the valleys narrow. Chocolate box villages dot the hillsides, and the railway tracks navigate tunnels and steep curves, such as the Gotthard loop tunnels and the Gotthard



Lucerne

Strassentunnel, as you head further south into Ticino. Waterfalls, twisting streams, and historic chalets steam past the window as you go. An Italianate influence becomes apparent as you reach mid-south Ticino, particularly in Bellinzona, where you will change trains for Lugano. Take in the sight of the two opposing medieval castles, perched on their small hilltops, before continuing south. The landscape here is a patchwork of agricultural fields, with Monte Tamaro erupting out of the smooth land to separate Lake Maggiore from Lugano. Once you arrive in Lugano, disembark for a two night stay at your choice of luxury hotel.

Day five: Lugano

Use your time in Lugano to explore this cultural lakeside town, which is quintessential of the Ticino region. Lugano's Old Town will be one of the highlights of your stay here, with its relaxed café culture influenced by both the Italian border and the prominent Swiss towns to the north. Pay a visit to the Cathedral of Saint Lawrence, which sits at the top of the gently stepped Via Cattedrale. This Roman Catholic cathedral was founded in the Middle Ages, but was drastically rebuilt in the late 15th century. Its tower still rises high above Lugano, crowned by a distinctive green dome. For a further, more rounded, insight into Swiss cultural history, visit the waterside pink-fronted Museum of Cultures. Lake Lugano is perfect for a final sweeping boat trip, or for sampling the local water sports. The peak of nearby Monte Bre can be reached by funicular railway from Casserate, from where you can take

in the sublime views, seek out the forested beauty spots, and embark on a hiking trail. San Salvatore can also be reached by funicular railway from Lugano, and offers an alternative, but no less stunning, perspective.

Day six: Travel home

On your final day in Switzerland, you can choose to either continue south into Italy to catch a return flight from Milan or to catch a train north to Zurich, via Bern, for a return rail journey. If you decide on a return journey via rail from Zurich, we would recommend spending one extra night here before departure.

OPTIONAL

It is possible to add extra nights in Zurich, Lucerne, Lugano, Geneva, or Bern.

HOTELS

At both Lucerne and Lugano, you can choose between a range of different luxury hotels, details of which can be found below.

Expressions

LUCERNE

Hotel Waldstaetterhof 3 star

This centrally-located hotel offers sleek, bold accommodation that strikingly contrasts the fairy-tale appearance of its 20th century townhouse exterior. Polished wooden floors, white walls and bedsheets, and bold reds, blues, or greens create a very warm feel, which is complemented by the sharp lines, feature colours, and unique ornaments of the restaurant and bar.

Hotel Wilden Mann 4 star

Hotel Wilden Mann has been hosting guests for over 500 years; first as a bar, then as a tavern, and now as a luxury hotel. Inside, the original winding corridors and traditional elements remain, adding further quirkiness to the building that clings to the edge of the river. The lovingly decorated rooms have antique furnishings, abundant character, and a very classical style.

Palace Luzern 5 star

The lakefront Palace Luzern is in a very prestigious area, flanked by houses equally as palatial as the hotel itself. Light airy rooms follow either a traditionally elegant style, an art deco design, or are sleek and modern. Higher category rooms feature works by Miro, Kandinsky, and Chagall. The gourmet restaurants are unique in Lucerne; one serving exclusively seafood. A highlight is the tempting and luxurious spa.

Hotel Schweizerhof Luzern 5 star

This luxury hotel enjoys a central location on the lakefront close to the historic Old Town. The Schweizerhof has seen many a famous face stay here and is now run by the fifth generation of the family. The hotel offers a wellness and beauty area with stunning views of the lake as well as two on-site restaurants.



Hotel Wilden Mann, Lucerne

LUGANO

Hotel Lugano Dante 4 star

Built around traditional Swiss elements, this hotel provides simplistic luxuries in an area rich with gourmet restaurants. Inside the hotel, guests experience cosy, warm rooms, sleek, monochrome suites, and an unrelenting attention to detail.

Grand Hotel Villa Castagnola 5 star

Housed within a late 19th century mansion, the Grand Hotel Villa Castagnola channels aspects of Mediterranean culture in its pale-peach façade, its summery garden, and the dining experiences on offer. Guestrooms have wholly unique touches to ensure that every stay here is different, and the swimming pool, lounges, and bars encourage guests to keep returning.



Palace Luzern, Lucerne



Hotel Lugano Dante, Lugano

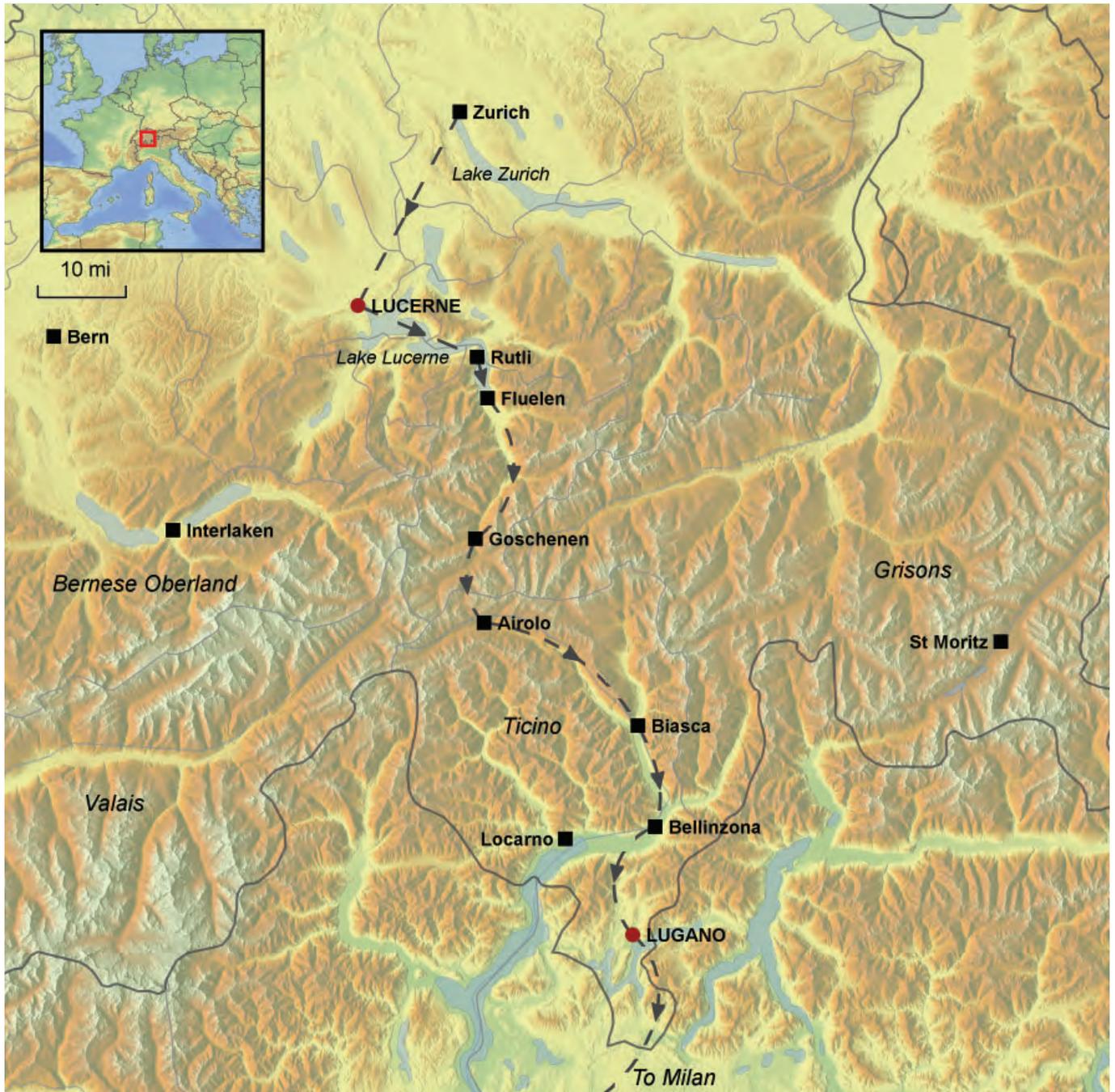


Grand Hotel Villa Castagnola, Lugano

MAP OF THE GOTTHARD PANORAMA EXPRESS TOURING HOLIDAY



The map below illustrates the route outlined in this touring itinerary, with overnight stops and 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 Hotel Wilden Mann and Hotel Lugano Dante).

From £1,680 per person

Supplement: Standard premier on Eurostar and first class on all other trains £390 per person

Flights to/from Switzerland and second class rail travel in Switzerland at 4 star hotels (eg Hotel Wilden Mann and Hotel Lugano Dante).

From £1,680 per person

Supplement: First class rail in Switzerland £210 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 Palace Luzern and Grand Hotel Villa Castagnola).

From £1,990 per person

Supplement: Standard premier on Eurostar and first class on all other trains £390 per person

Flights to/from Switzerland and second class rail travel in Switzerland at 5 star hotels (eg Palace Luzern and Grand Hotel Villa Castagnola).

From £1,990 per person

Supplement: First class rail in Switzerland £210 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.



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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.