my Switzerland

NATURE wants YOU BACK.

SUMMER 2019
Get back to nature: watch the TV ad at MySwitzerland.com/summer
Summer in Switzerland is simply amazing. And thanks to this magazine, it can be extra special – after all, hiking is the best way to discover nature. Whether you venture just outside of town or all the way up a mountain, exploring Switzerland’s natural treasures will produce some great memories.

Enjoy summer in Switzerland! 🕰️inté #inlovewithswitzerland #myswitzerland #hiking #schynigeplatte
Wellness in nature: my top four

Blogger Anina Mutter puts away her laptop and relaxes – the eco-friendly way.

Let nature lead the way

Trail running is the perfect combination of exercise, adventure and embracing nature.

A beautiful garden is a work of heart

Two women and their passion project: a mountain herb garden.

Hikers and their followers

See Switzerland through the eyes of top influencers.

I am the destination

Lucy Fuggle finds herself on the Via Alpina hiking trail in the Bernese Oberland.

Treetop fun with the family

The treetop walkway takes adventurers of all ages on an exciting journey through the canopy.
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Summit

A visit to the Turtmann Hut and its hosts, Magdalena and Fredy Tscherrig.

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Conquering 4,000 metres for the first time

Climbing a 4,000-metre mountain is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. With a mountain guide, even novices can do it.

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Urban base camps

One of the many advantages Swiss towns have to offer: you’re never far from nature.

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Mountain hiking trails are marked with white-red-white waymarks. For more information, see page 18.
Brienzergrat,
Canton of Bern

21km
4:45hrs

▲ 1,384m
✓ 1,992m

2,293m
Let nature lead the way

The great outdoors rarely provides a straight, even path. If you head cross-country, you will be climbing over rocks, walking through woods and on grass. Trail running really gets your pulse up and requires skill, giving you not just a physical but also a mental workout. Kim, Janine and Dan have tested Switzerland’s most beautiful trails.

Text: Patrick Meyer
Photographs: Patitucci Photo
22km
4hrs
850m
850m
2,492m

NATURE WANTS YOU BACK
Great Aletsch Glacier, Valais
“This smooth, fast trail takes you across a landscape shaped over millennia by an immense river of ice and offers truly unique views.” Janine Patitucci
Areuse Gorge, Jura & Three Lakes

“The Jura is a magical, serene place. Rugged trails wind their way across emerald green, fairytale landscapes, inviting you to stop and admire the view on more than one occasion.” Kim Strom
22km
4:30hrs

1,050m
1,050m
1,288m
<table>
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<td>1,475m</td>
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<td>2,492m</td>
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Pizol, Eastern Switzerland / Liechtenstein

“Aside from the ascent up to the Wildseeluggen, the hardest part of this trail is resisting taking a refreshing dip in one of the five turquoise mountain lakes.”  Dan Patitucci
Was jogging not exciting enough for you anymore? To be honest, we never found it that exciting. Then we discovered trail running in the late 1990s. What fascinated us is that it gives you the opportunity to discover the world: Patagonia, Iceland, the Himalayas and now the Alps. We’ve run all over the world. Plus, there’s the physical aspect. Your body’s reactions to the challenging terrain are immediate. Sometimes it’s blissful, but sometimes it can feel totally chaotic.

What is driving this trend? Many people want to exercise in the mountains, to get away from the crowds and traffic of urban centres. Also, running on trails is much more interesting and fun than pounding the streets. Every trail run is a mini-adventure: you choose and plan a route, prepare accordingly and are rewarded with breathtaking views, an unparalleled sense of freedom and nearly meditative solitude.

What tips would you give novice trail runners? Running is a great way to improve your fitness. Choose the route for your first trail run very carefully: not every hiking path is also a great trail for running. For Switzerland, our book “Run the Alps Switzerland” is a great place to start.

Read more: elevation.alpsinsight.com
Kim Strom is an author, Dan and Janine Patitucci are professional mountain sports photographers. The three of them regularly run Switzerland’s most beautiful trails and have published a book based on their experiences.

More trail running tips: MySwitzerland.com/trailrunning
How to pack your backpack

Packing your backpack for a hiking trip can be tricky. Make sure to only take what you really need. No one can carry more than 25% of their own bodyweight for very long.

AT THE TOP OF YOUR PACK
Keep everything you need quickly, such as a raincoat or your hiking map, easily accessible and near the top of your bag.

CLOSE TO YOUR BACK
Heavy items such as water bottles and cameras should be packed close to your back.

IN THE MIDDLE
The best place for medium-heavy items such as toiletries and your pack lunch is in the middle.

AT THE BOTTOM OF YOUR PACK
Fill the bottom of your backpack with everything that’s light, so always pack your sleeping bag or down jacket first.

The SwitzerlandMobility app is a must-have for anyone exploring Switzerland. A particularly useful feature is the GPS-enabled map of the national network of hiking trails, including descriptions, photos and elevation profiles.

The app also shows public transport and links to the SBB timetable.

switzerlandmobility.ch
Excellent transport links

However remote a place might seem, there's always a bus, postal bus or cable car to get you there. If you're looking for something spectacular, take one of the country's many mountain railways or cable cars to the starting point of your hike, a viewpoint or all the way to the summit.

Switzerland's hiking network in figures:

80%
The vast majority of people in Switzerland use Swiss hiking trails.

162,000,000hrs
Swiss hiking trails are in use for a countless number of hours each year.

CHF 800
The price of maintaining one kilometre of hiking trail per year.

65,000km
The combined length of Switzerland's hiking trails is nearly endless. Around 22,000 kilometres are mountain hiking trails.

20x
The number of times the average Swiss resident sets off on a hike per year. The average hike takes about three hours.

TREAD CAREFULLY

Hiking is pretty tough on the feet. Trails tend to be uneven and can be slippery, causing you to bear your weight differently to how you usually would. Swiss manufacturer Mammut helps take some of the pressure off your soles. Its robust and comfortable hiking and trekking shoes such as the Ducan Low GTX Women help you navigate even the trickiest terrain.
No two hiking paths are alike. The Swiss hiking trail network is divided into three official categories:

**HIKING TRAILS**
Hiking trails make no special demands on the users, aside from the usual care and awareness.

Signposting: yellow signposts, diamond-shaped symbols and arrows

**MOUNTAIN HIKING TRAILS**
Mountain hiking trails require users to be surefooted, physically fit and have a head for heights, as well as an awareness of mountain hazards.

Signposting: yellow signposts with white-red-white pointers and white-red-white waymarks

**ALPINE HIKING TRAILS**
Alpine hiking trails should only be attempted by experienced hikers, and a compass, rope, ice pick and crampons may be needed.

Signposting: blue signposts with white-blue-white pointers and white-blue-white waymarks
What's the best part of your job?
The variety. We don’t just fix the waymarks, we also improve the trails, which can involve driving a digger or carving steps into a rock face. Felling trees and trimming grass is also part of the job, as is building bridges and via ferratas.

Do you calculate the time each hike takes, too?
We did actually, in the past, using maps, a compass and walking timetables. Now, we get the computer to do it, for the whole of Switzerland. A positive side effect of this is that all cantons are assumed to hike at the same pace now.

Where might we see you painting the waymarks?
The higher you go, the greater your chances of bumping into me. That’s because the higher waymarks tend to need repainting more often due to the harsher weather. However, I usually do that in September as I have fewer things to take care of then.

The Swiss Hiking Trail Federation is always looking to fill vacancies.
wandern.ch
A beautiful garden is a work of heart.
A beautiful garden is a work of heart

Charlotte Landolt-Nardin and Laetitia Jacot have revived a historical mountain herb garden and given a new lease of life to the Alpine inn, Jardin des Monts. A life rich in scents and colours.

Text: Patrick Meyer
Photographs: Lea Meienberg

Wild thyme
Thymus serpyllum
The first thing you notice is the scent, mainly of wild thyme and calamint. The second is the abundance of colour: from vivid orange marigolds to deep blue and purple cornflowers to bright white edelweiss. The garden of Jardin des Monts is a magical corner of the world. From up here, high above Rossinière, you can see all the way to the Dents-du-Midi on a clear day. Charlotte and Laetitia fell head over heels for Alp Monts 13 years ago. Since then, they have spent years of hard work on lovingly turning the dilapidated chalet and numerous dry-walled gardens into a paradise of mountain herbs and medicinal plants. The idea was to understand the plants and utilise their active ingredients to create something. This resulted in a line of products – and personal change.

**From gardeners to businesswomen**

After renovating the chalet, the two budding entrepreneurs began drying their herbs in the rustic kitchen and using them to make syrups, oils and balms. Today, they have expanded their range of products to include chocolate, tea, scented candles and luxury cosmetics. All products are manufactured in line with Charlotte and Laetitia’s values and love of nature, and are certified by Parcs suisses, Bio Suisse and the Bio Bud as well as internationally renowned eco-label NATRUE. To satisfy their own high standards, Charlotte and Laetitia are constantly expanding their skillset. Their manufacturing processes are inspired by traditional herbal lore but also take account of the latest research into natural active ingredients. The women also support the local economy by collaborating with a number of local partners.
Time seems to have stood still in Rossinière. From here, it takes about one-and-a-half hours to reach the Jardin des Monts in the Gruyère Pays-d’Enhaut Regional Nature Park.
**Wild thyme**

*Thymus serpyllum*

Wild thyme forms low-growing mats with dense clusters of purple-pink flowers. It grows in sunny areas and is purported to ease period pain, insomnia, stress, digestive issues and a cough when brewed as a tea.

**Blooming period:** July to September

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**Yarrow**

*Achillea millefolium*

Yarrow can grow to a height of 80 centimetres and produces clusters of white flowers. It is commonly found in grasslands, along roads and on grassy slopes. It can be used to treat loss of appetite, stomach cramps and gastro-intestinal issues.

**Blooming period:** May to August

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**Marigold**

*Calendula officinalis*

Common marigold is an annual or biannual plant that grows wild all across Europe. It can reach between 20 and 60 centimetres in height and is considered one of the most important medicinal herbs. It has many uses, including as a treatment for inflammation and non-serious bites, bruises and burns.

**Blooming period:** June to August
MALLOW (MALVA SYLVESTRIS)

Mallow is one of the oldest known crop plants and has been cultivated as a medicinal plant since ancient times. In a garden, it flourishes when planted at the edge of a herb patch or flower bed, where it benefits from the most sunlight. Mallow flowers are mauve to deep purple in colour and provide many insects with shelter at night. The leaves and petals can be used to calm inflammation in the mouth and throat as well as to ease a dry cough. Mallow preparations can reduce the effectiveness of some medicines, so you should always take them at least an hour apart.

**Blooming period:** June to September

CORNFLOWER (CENTAUREA CYANUS)

Now endangered, cornflower can grow between 20 and 100 centimetres in height. It has been used as a medicinal herb since the Middle Ages to treat all sorts of ailments. It is purported to, for example, reduce a fever, stimulate the liver and gallbladder, and treat dandruff when used as a shampoo. There is, however, no substantial evidence for its effectiveness to date.

**Blooming period:** June to October

EDELWEISS (LEONTOPODIUM ALPINUM)

The national emblem of Switzerland and the Alps, edelweiss has had strong symbolic value since the 19th century, when intrepid alpinists would venture to dizzy heights to pick an edelweiss flower and wear it with pride pinned to their hats. Before it became a sign of unusual daring, edelweiss was primarily known as a cure for stomach aches. Today, it is a protected species and may not be picked.

**Blooming period:** June to September

Illustration: Alexander Schmidt
Traditionally crafted natural products
Cultivating herbs in terraced gardens is hard work. Luckily, Charlotte and Laetitia can use the two monorails to ferry dried blossoms and leaves down to the village. These are then immersed in alcohol, sunflower oil, olive oil or jojoba oil to extract fat-soluble components, fragrances and minerals the traditional way. The oil changes colour when it has absorbed the plants’ active ingredients. A change you can see and smell, as the now orange-tinged, marigold-infused oil smells of flowers.

The colourful and fragrant elixirs are then transformed into the luxurious products Jardin des Monts is renowned for: thyme- and berry-flavoured syrups, mint- and verbena-flavoured chocolate, herbal tea blends and edelweiss-based lotions and balms. Once a week, the delicate bouquet of herbal aromas is complemented by another smell: when the chalet’s old wood-burning stove, one of the few parts of the house that remained intact, is fired up, a friend of Charlotte and Laetitia’s who herds goats at Alp Monts, bakes fresh bread for the team. And serves up a delicious goat’s milk cream cheese that goes particularly well with fresh calamint.

jardindesmonts.ch
Hikes
inspired by Switzerland’s Alpine herbs

1 Aargau Jura Park

Delicious herbs
This wild-herb-themed hike and cooking class in Aargau Jura Park takes you on a fragrant journey through the lore surrounding garlic mustard, hogweed, angelica and more. You also get the chance to explore their intricate flavours by turning the herbs you picked on the way into delicious treats.

2 Vanil Noir, Fribourg Region

Versatile herbs
The Vanil Noir nature reserve is overwhelming in its diversity. Environmental engineer and hiking guide Aline Hayoz shares her valuable knowledge about biodiversity.

3 Emmental, Bern

Mystical herbs
The rolling hills of the Emmental Valley are not only home to the eponymous cheese but also an abundance of herbs. Between mid-May and late August, a number of guided hikes offer an opportunity to learn more about the properties and myths surrounding wild herbs.

More hiking tips: MySwitzerland.com/hiking
Summit

At 2,519m a.s.l. proudly sits the Turtmann Hut, run by the third generation of the Tscherrig family, Magdalena and Fredy. The hut is popular with hikers and mountaineers. MySwitzerland paid a visit to the untouched Turtmann Valley in Valais.

Text: Sabina Brack
Photographs: Switzerland Tourism
The way to happiness is steep and stony
The canton of Valais is famous for its Alpine beauty. Getting to the best viewpoints is hard work, though. It’s a three-hour uphill hike to Alp Gigi Oberstafel and the stunning views from the panoramic high mountain trail of the Turtmann Valley. After a short rest, follow the Steinmannliweg further uphill, and you will be rewarded with ever more magnificent views. Or, if you prefer a gentler climb, you can reach the hut in two hours via the more easy-going trail.
Built in 1928 on a stony and grassy ridge, the Turtmann Hut has beds for up to 74 guests and affords fantastic views of glaciers and mountains. A warm welcome is guaranteed as Fredy and Magdalena take care of their guests day and night. It’s not unusual for them to be up at 4 a.m. preparing breakfast and a thermos of tea for their mountaineering guests. As a mountain guide, Fredy also takes guests on tours and glacier hikes. During peak season, a working day can be as long as 18 hours, but it is obvious that Magdalena and Fredy love their work.
Hut warden Magdalena Tscherrig:

“When guests arrive here, they are usually sweaty from the hike up, and the first thing they order is a beer. As our energy supply is limited, we can’t guarantee that that beer will always be perfectly chilled. But they don’t usually mind. It’s the easy-going attitude of our guests that I really appreciate.”
A hearty evening meal made with home-butchered meat and vegetables from the SAC hut’s garden followed by a glass or two of fine Valais wine is the perfect way to unwind after a day of hiking. The next morning, hikers are spoilt for choice in terms of peaks, passes and mountain trails to conquer. A great option for experienced hikers is the Barrhorn, at 3,610m a.s.l. one of the highest peaks in Europe that can be reached without special mountaineering equipment. The quickest way back down is the Sommerweg, which takes you along the shores of the Turtmann Lake and through the valley to Gruben.
Magdalena and Fredy Tscherrig:

“We feel very privileged to be living and working up here.”
The world has a lot to offer.

So do we.
1. **Graubünden**

**Kesch-Trek**
A four-day hike through wild valleys, across rugged peak formations and over imposing glacier landscapes. Overnight stays are in the Grialetsch, Kesch and Es-cha huts.

2. **Lake Geneva Region**

**Muverans**
A four-day hike over six passes, following well-marked trails with views of Mont Blanc, the Dents-du-Midi and the Pre-Alps.

3. **Ticino**

**Sentiero Cristallina**
The Sentiero Cristallina trail connects Bignasco in the Maggia Valley and Airolo, taking in steep mountain slopes, a waterfall on the outskirts of a village, crystalline rock, Alpine lakes/reservoirs and remote hamlets.

4. **Bern**

**Wildhorn**
A five-day hike from Valais to Bern with spectacular views to the peak of Wildhorn. The Gelten Hut (pictured) also lies on the Tour du Wildhorn.

5. **Graubünden, Ticino, Valais**

**Four Springs Trail**
The circular mountain trail passes the sources of major rivers that flow into four different countries: the Rhine, Reuss, Rhône and Ticino. The challenging tour can be completed in four to five days and takes hikers across high Alpine landscapes, upland moors, Alpine meadows and dolines.

More hut-to-hut treks: MySwitzerland.com/hiking

**SWISS ALPINE CLUB**
Since its foundation in 1863, the SAC has been committed to promoting the Alpine region and alpinism. As a result of this tradition, it currently maintains 153 huts.

sac-cas.ch
Hikers and their followers

The nine Swiss instagrammers behind #thealpinists not only stick together through thick and thin, they also climb mountains together. The beautiful photos of the nature and mountain landscapes of their home country are attracting an ever greater community of followers on social media.

Text and photographs: #thealpinists
Marco Bäni, Valentin Manhart, Romy Bachofen, Silvan Schlegel and Laura Gabriel, five members of thealpinists, are currently checking the Alpstein for its “instagrammability”.
After a ride on the Trift Gondola high above pine forests, you carry on on foot across flowery meadows and the craggy rock landscape typical of the Grimsel region. After about an hour and a half of walking, you are rewarded with unforgettable views of the turquoise waters of the Triftsee and the Trift Glacier. Nevertheless, 22,000 likes did surprise me.
NATURE WANTS YOU BACK
Picturesque Grevasalvas, also known as Heidi's Village, can be reached in less than half an hour if you follow the Via Engiadina from Maloja. The Upper Engadin lakescape is simply breathtaking. To take this picture of beautiful Lake Sils, I took a little detour towards Motta da Blaunca.
mySwitzerland  NATURE WANTS YOU BACK

12.359
From Tannenboden, take the cable car up to Maschgenkamm. From here, it’s practically all downhill to the best photo locations. The views of the imposing Sächsmoor mountain, of Walensee from Grosser Güslen and of the three lakes by Seebenalp are definitely highlights.
Finding yourself: long-distance hiking

Text: Lucy Fuggle
Photographs: Stefan Tschumi
Via Alpina
Stage 13, Griesalp–Kandersteg

Griesalp

Blüemlisalp Hut

Kandersteg

Lake Oeschinen
As I write these lines, I am sitting outside the Blüemlisalp Hut watching the sun set. It took me a 1,450-metre steep uphill climb to get here. But it was worth it. Not only because of the comforting rays of the red evening sun up here at 2,840m a.s.l. but mainly also because the pride of achieving what I just did is warming me from the inside.

But let’s start at the beginning: two summers ago, I started hiking along the Via Alpina. I have now crossed the whole of Switzerland east to west, from Vaduz in Liechtenstein to Montreux. Most hikers complete the 390 kilometres of the Swiss part of the trail in a few weeks. I took things more slowly, though, hiking only at the weekend. And I ended every one of the 20 stages with a feeling of intense joy, a combination of happy exhaustion and glowing pride for what I had achieved.

The experience has made me stronger. I now feel confident doing things I would have never even dreamed of two years ago.

**Griesalp to Kandersteg**

The day treks on the Via Alpina take you to some of Switzerland’s most beautiful and impressive areas, especially here in the Bernese Oberland. This time, I’m heading from Griesalp to Kandersteg.

Today’s hike is not an easy one, especially in this heat. The climb to the highest point, Hohtürli, seems endless. I stop more than once to ask myself how much longer I will have to march on for. But my time in the mountains has made me more resilient, and not only physically. You have to be mentally fit and determined to tackle a mountain hike by yourself. There’s no one cheering you on, just you. But if you truly believe you can do it, you will do it.

Nature is in full bloom, and the magical kaleidoscope of radiant pink, yellow, white and purple Alpine flowers fascinates me. My favourite is the Alpine rose, a hardy pink bush that never grows in isolation. This time, though, it’s short-leaved gentian that catches my attention: its blossoms are the most vibrant deep blue that I have ever seen in the mountains. Black Alpine choughs are a common sight here, sweeping majestically above layered rock that is testament to geological developments stretching back millennia. Up here, my thoughts take flight too, and I throw caution and my mundane worries to the wind. Nature has a liberating effect, especially up here. I feel unburdened and, light as a feather, continue on my journey.

**Stopover in the Blüemlisalp Hut**

The view from Hohtürli is absolutely magical. It’s definitely worth the hard work to
get here. Above me lies the mighty Blüemlisalp Glacier, and right next to it, the Blüemlisalp Hut, my quarters for the night. After a long day of hiking, I join the other guests at a simple dining table. We start the evening as strangers, but soon become friends, with everyone chatting with each other. Dinner is soup. I am surrounded by people of different nationalities, but we all feel at home. We all share a love of the Swiss mountains.

My hikes through the Alps are usually solo adventures that take me closer to the heart of the mountains, but also closer to really understanding who I am. But you’re never truly alone. And with every conversation I have with other hikers, I realise that I’m far from the only one undertaking these trips for more than just physical exercise. I’m at the highest point on the Via Alpina. It’s a real adventure. Looking northwards, I can see all the way to Lake Thun. In the west, I spy the windy trail to Kandersteg – my route for tomorrow. Starting from the hut, I will cross various snowfields, despite it being early July.

**Keeping the best for last**
I’m really looking forward to reaching the ridge above Kandersteg and looking down on Lake Oeschinen, shimmering icy blue in the sun. On the east side, small waterfalls cascade into the lake. And I, too, take a leap – this is what I packed my swimsuit for, after all. Lake Oeschinen is a welcome sight for tired hikers ready for a refreshing – and well-deserved – dip after trekking the long distance from Griesalp. Don’t expect the water to be warm, though, as the lake is fed with meltwater from the glacier. However tired you might be, you’ll be wide awake after a swim in this lake.

**Reaching my destination: me.**
The mountains not only make me want to get up and go, they also bring me closer to myself again. A long hike, a night in a mountain hut, time spent amid rocks, flowers and birds – it all makes me realise

"Dazzling colours among the grey stone: Alpine flowers light up the landscape."

"Hiking with the best boots and poles – and a slab of Swiss chocolate."

“...”
Kambly Experience

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Kambly Experience, Mühlestrasse 8, 3555 Trubschachen, Switzerland, Tel. 034 495 02 22, www.kambly.ch/experience
how much simpler life is than I often seem to think. On a long hike like this one, the distance from the mundane, being away from work and my computer screen allows me to learn more about myself and begin to understand what’s really bothering me. I get a much better sense here of when I’m stressed and find it easier to rebalance my emotions. I free up space in my mind, and creative solutions to my problems or concerns flood in out of nowhere. I always return from the mountains with a much better sense of where I want to head next. There are few things I love more than those first few steps of a hike. Everything suddenly becomes easier. All you have to do is put one foot in front of the other, and repeat. The only destination is the path ahead of you. You learn something new on every hike. But you never know exactly what that will be. Until you lace up your boots and head out.

“The best natural therapy for tired hikers: a refreshing dip in Lake Oeschinen.”
The three most beautiful long-distance hikes in Switzerland

Via Alpina
“The classic”
Vaduz–Montreux

Long-distance hikers can experience the impressive picture-postcard mountain world of Switzerland first-hand on this route. The Via Alpina crosses 14 of the most beautiful Swiss Alpine passes and leads hikers through the northern Alps of Switzerland from Vaduz to Montreux via six cantons. Unique panoramic views, refreshingly cool mountain lakes, world-famous mountains and holiday resorts plus great variety in terms of food and drink as well as accommodation and opportunities to relax and recuperate make this route a classic for experienced hikers.

Camping
There are many camp sites along the entire route.

Food and drink
Many places along the route serve local, often home-made delicacies.

Stamp booklet
The more routes you complete, the more stamps you can collect.

More information: MySwitzerland.com/hiking

Length: 390km
Stages: 20
Ascent: 23,600m
Descent: 24,800m
Technical requirements*: ● ● ● ● ●
Fitness grade: ● ● ● ● ●●

* mountain hiking trail

Eiger, Mönch, Jungfrau and more: hiking holidays on the Via Alpina
The so-called Bärentrek (Bear Trek) takes you on a unique route over spectacular passes, through deep gorges and along grandiose glaciers to the holiday resort of Adelboden-Lenk. The tour includes five overnight stays, daily luggage transfers and more.
Alpine Passes Trail: “The wild one”
Chur–St-Gingolph

This long-distance hiking trail for adventurous hikers connects Chur with Lake Geneva, covering some of the most beautiful parts of the Graubünden and Valais Alps over 34 stages. Hikers encounter one highlight after another as the trail crosses over high plateaus and alongside lakes at the foot of the Dents-du-Midi. The Alpine Passes Trail follows spectacular paths and passes with unique and unforgettable views dominated by 4,000-metre peaks.

Length: 610km
Stages: 34
Ascent: 37,500 m
Descent: 37,700 m
Technical requirements*: ● ● ● ● ●
Fitness level: ● ● ● ● ●
* mountain hiking trail

Rhine Gorge, mountain villages and more: hiking holidays on the Alpine Passes Trail
The impressive Rhine Gorge and picturesque Val Lumnezia with its traditional mountain villages, historical cultural treasures and sunny slopes fascinate hikers each time anew. The tour includes four overnight stays, daily luggage transfers and more.

Jura Crest Trail
“The gentle one”
Dielsdorf–Nyon

The gentle Jura Crest Trail is popular with less experienced long-distance hikers. The unique Jurassic landscapes, culture and cuisine on offer along the trail, the tranquil remoteness, glorious views of the Alps far into the distance and some family-friendly sections set the oldest long-distance trail in Switzerland apart from the rest.

Length: 320km
Stages: 15
Ascent: 13,600 m
Descent: 13,700 m
Technical requirements*: ● ● ● ● ●
Fitness level: ● ● ● ● ●
* hiking trail

A joy for the tastebuds and more: hiking holidays on the Jura Crest Trail
With amazing views of the Alps, Black Forest and Vosges in the distance, this trail crosses two linguistic regions, giving hikers the opportunity to discover various cultures, peculiarities and culinary specialities along the way. The tour includes five overnight stays, daily luggage transfers and more.

BOOK HERE

All tours described can be booked with Eurotrek at: MySwitzerland.com/eurotrek
Tasty snacks make a hike even more fun. Nevertheless, preferences differ on what makes the best snack during a hike in open nature. There are three archetypal Swiss hikers, and you can tell which one’s which by what’s in their hiking pack.

Text: Christian Sidow
Photographs: Maya Wipf and Daniele Kaehr
The physically fit, outdoorsy type cares about authenticity. What draws him out is Switzerland's raw natural beauty. He always carries the following in his rucksack:

- Binoculars for spotting wildlife
- Rain protection, as he heads out in any weather
- Hiking map, especially for multi-day tours
- A drink, such as ice tea
- Trail mix with dried fruit and nuts
- Sausages and mustard for big appetites
The fun-loving family is always up for exciting and relaxing excursions. With numerous rope parks, nature parks, summer toboggans and ridge trails, Switzerland is the perfect holiday destination for this type of hiker. They always carry the following in their rucksacks:

- Picnic blanket, ideally waterproof
- Colourful cutlery and crockery, so even break-time is fun
- Fruit and vegetables, which they carve into little figurines
- Sandwiches for extra energy
- Chocolate bars as motivation
- Crisps and other crunchy snacks
NATURE WANTS YOU BACK
The discerning gourmet is always looking for that extra something. What she wants is exclusivity and relaxation. Her picnics are nothing if not classy. She always carries the following in her rucksack:

- Corkscrew with a genuine walnut handle
- Fresh salads, either home-made or from the favourite delicatessen
- Alpine cheese, organic and unpasteurised
- Pickled organic vegetables
- Swiss wine, of a good vintage of course
- Sweet treats from Swiss confectioners and chocolatiers
Conquering 4,000 metres for the first time

They tower over the rest of the Alps: 48 Swiss peaks rise above the magical 4,000-metre mark. They hold an allure for experienced alpinists that novice mountaineers, too, are finding increasingly difficult to resist. IT consultant Jürgen Heck answered their call and attempts to summit with the aid of a mountain guide.

Text: Jürgen Heck
Photographs: Angelo Brack
Me

Mountain guide Markus
He’s the one that made it all possible: mountain guide Markus Wey is not only hugely experienced, he also has a gift for telling a tale.
It’s quite the contrast. You arrive in pristine Zermatt and an hour later you find yourself amid a rough, cragged mountainscape. And that’s just the start. I registered for a guided tour up Breithorn, a mountain in the canton of Valais. Together with three fellow daredevils and under the direction of our mountain guide from the Mammut Alpine School, I climbed my first 4,000-metre mountain.
On the glacier above the Gandegg Hut, we prepare for the ascent. Learning how to tie knots, put on crampons, use a pickaxe properly and safely climb while attached to a rope is great fun. The next day, things get serious. We take the cable car up to 3,820m a.s.l., from where we start our ascent.

Rösti at 3,000m a.s.l. is an essential part of training: your body has to acclimatise to the altitude.
The first step is to traverse a snow field before we rope up.

The climb gets progressively steeper, and the rope between us shorter. The air is getting thinner. And the heat! Don’t lose focus... left, right, pickaxe. I follow in Markus’s footsteps, maintaining a regular rhythm. The path is now dangerously narrow. Finally, we reach the summit. The world is at my feet, I’m looking down on the Po Valley. Amazing! I feel on top of the world. But there are other 4,000-metre peaks around, and they feel within reach. One thing is immediately clear to me: this won’t be my last attempt to climb a 4,000-metre mountain.
Climbing a mountain together is a real bonding experience. The two-day excursion is memorable not only for the amazing backdrop, but primarily also for the moments of companionship.
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Bishorn

A two-day mountaineering tour with a mountain guide from Mammut Alpine School in Zinal that allows novice mountaineers to conquer a 4,000-metre mountain with unforgettable views.

Martinsloch

If you want to hike up to the Martinsloch rock hole with a mountain guide, you need to be physically fit. You have to ascend to 2,640m a.s.l. to get to the 22m high and 19m wide hole in the rock wall of Grosses Tschingelhorn.

Diavolezza

Against an impressive backdrop of glaciated Piz Palü and Piz Bernina, this five-hour trek traverses a glacier.

Gotthard

The Gotthard Base Tunnel is the world’s longest tunnel. You can follow the trajectory of the trains – just much higher and with a mountain guide. You will need crampons and a pickaxe as you will be crossing the Maighels Glacier on Piz Borel.

Aletsch

The Aletsch Glacier is the greatest river of ice in the Alps. Crossing it on foot is an unforgettable experience. In the company of an experienced mountain guide, the trip, which lasts one or two days, offers a fascinating insight into this UNESCO World Heritage. Depending on your experience, you can choose between a number of tours, most of which take place daily.

More guided mountaineering tours:
MySwitzerland.com/hiking
The Swiss National Park, established over 100 years ago, was the first national park in the Alpine region. It is also the largest nature reserve in Switzerland with a surface area of 170.3 square kilometres.

Lake Neuchâtel is the largest lake entirely in Switzerland and is shared by the cantons of Neuchâtel, Fribourg, Vaud and Bern. Its maximum depth is 152 metres.

Between Grächen and Zermatt, the world’s longest pedestrian suspension bridge crosses the Grabengufer. Around 250 people can cross it at any one time.

The Mönchsjoch Hut in Valais is the highest serviced mountain hut. A highlight on the way there is the Aletsch Glacier.

If climbing a 4,000-metre peak isn’t enough, there are a whole range of other, record-breaking natural wonders in Switzerland to discover. Make the most of your time with these highlights compiled for you by MySwitzerland.
The village centre has been listed as a protected site since 1975.

The mightiest waterfall can be found in Neuhausen, Schaffhausen. More water per second thunders down the Rhine Falls than anywhere else in Europe.

The Barrhorn in Valais is the highest Alpine peak that you can hike up without high Alpine equipment, which makes it a top-class mountain when it comes to views.

Since opening on 16 December 2017, the Stoosbahn is the world’s steepest funicular railway, overcoming a maximum incline of 110% (or 47 degrees).
Wellness in nature: my top four

Switzerland is a giant outdoor spa with a nature so enchanting, it’s pure relaxation. The Wellness Destination of Ascona-Locarno is a prime example, with plenty of inspirational corners for those seeking a bit of peace and quiet. Anina Mutter discovers natural ways of relaxing.

Text: Anina Mutter/ blossik.com
Photographs: Jehona Abrashi
While many lakes and rivers can warm up to close to body temperature in summer, the Verzasca river remains incredibly cool and refreshing. Surrounded by beautiful rock formations, it’s the perfect place to relax. I could stay here all summer!
Reconnecting with yourself, surrounded by nature – that’s the idea behind the yoga trail. First things though, hard work: after hiking up to Sass da Grüm near San Nazzaro along a beautiful hiking trail, I can begin the day with an “om”.

Taking deep breaths of forest air
Finding your balance on a barefoot trail

My feet are over the moon: fresh air! And not only because I’ve taken off my shoes, but also because Cardada lies at a lofty height above Orselina. The reflexology trail reawakens your feet, spirit and sense of adventure. What’s next?

Re-energising at spiritual power spots

Arcegno is otherworldly. I sit cross-legged and let the power of this place, space and peace wash over me. Slowing down with Mother Nature, far from the stresses of daily life, traffic and to-do lists. I’m happy!
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5 tips for your well-being

1 Eastern Switzerland / Liechtenstein
Herbs
Almost 80 different herbs can be found in the extensive garden of the Hof Weissbad health hotel in Appenzell. They are used for massages in the hotel spa and for delicious dishes in the restaurant.

2 Valais
Apricots
Valais apricots are not just deliciously sweet, the oil extracted from the kernels is also rich in valuable minerals and vitamin A. At Hotel Le Bristol Leukerbad, this oil is used for gentle massages.

3 Bern
Honey
At the Schweizerhof Bern spa, you can get a fascia massage with the hotel’s own Sky Deluxe Honey produced by bees kept on the hotel’s roof. This treatment soothes even the most stubborn tension and stimulates circulation.

4 Fribourg Region
Nettles
Nettles have long been used as a medicinal plant. In Charmey, the plant even has a festival dedicated to it. The festival is a great opportunity to learn about the conditions it can be used to treat and how best to use it in the kitchen.

5 Valais
Hay flowers
If you want to experience the pure power of nature, you should head to the Alpenhof Zermatt hotel spa. A full-body treatment in hay flowers from the Valais mountains is detoxifying, stimulates circulation and strengthens the immune system. The herbs’ fragrant essential oils have a warming effect on the skin.

More tips for natural spa treatments:
MySwitzerland.com/wellness
Treetop fun
with
the
family
It starts off like any other hiking trail. Suddenly, though, the trail takes off and heads towards the treetops. From here, the views of the Necker Valley, the Appenzellerland and the Principality in the direction of Wil are breathtaking. Another source of inspiration here are the educational boards along the way that provide information on the forest and its inhabitants.
What’s more impressive: the view of the Churfürsten peaks in the distance and the Appenzellerland, or the long drop from the treetops down to the forest floor?

As a family, they usually have their feet planted firmly on the ground. But today, Marc, Astrid and their kids Lina, Julia and Theo are braving the treetops. On the 500-metre treetop trail in the Necker Valley, around 30 interactive educational stops with information boards offer them a whole new perspective of the forest.
Theo and Julia particularly enjoyed the one about the golden eagle. “Golden eagles might weigh just five kilogrammes, but they can carry prey of up to seven kilos. That’s like me carrying my husband around on my shoulders,” says Astrid, laughing.
The educational stops teach visitors in a playful way how important the forest is to us humans and nature. Back on firm ground, kids can burn off any excess energy on the playground. “That’s even more fun than dropping sycamore seeds from the trail and watching them spin to the ground,” Lina and Julia exclaim with joy. The trail also offers rest areas for a deserved spot of lunch. “Another highlight,” chuckles Theo between two mouthfuls of apricot, “are the different smells coming from the trees.”
Excursions for families

1. **Graubünden**
   **Explore**
   More than 2,000 species of animal and plant have made Alp Flix near Savognin their home. The trail playfully brings little and not-so-little explorers closer to nature.

2. **Ticino**
   **Seek**
   Four treasures have been hidden somewhere in the winding alleys of Ascona and Locarno, on the mystical Brissago Islands and high up in Cardada. Who will be the family to find them all?

3. **Valais**
   **Discover**
   Following a guided expedition, parents and children walk through Grächen’s forests in the early hours of the morning to catch a glimpse of chamois, marmots and ibex. Afterwards, everyone has breakfast together.

4. **Eastern Switzerland/Liechtenstein**
   **Be spellbound**
   From mid-June to October, Bartli the dwarf emerges from his cave near Braunwald and gives families a glimpse of his world. Following in his footsteps through the enchanted forest will reveal eight magical places.

5. **Graubünden**
   **Be amazed**
   Curious kids and adults will find plenty to learn along the GWunderwald nature trail in Davos. 30 stops along the 13-kilometre trail provide interactive information on, for example, how the call of a buzzard differs from that of a blackbird or the various tracks animals leave in the forest.

More excursions for inquisitive families: [MySwitzerland.com/family](http://MySwitzerland.com/family)
Urban base camps

Switzerland has the best developed public transport network in the world and 65,000 kilometres of hiking trails, so you’re never far from a great place for an outdoor excursion, especially if you’re staying in one of the larger cities.
Zurich: panoramic trail
Every thirty minutes, the Uetliberg railway shuttles hikers up Zurich’s local mountain to 870m a.s.l. From there, a family-friendly hiking trail leads all the way to Felsenegg, where you can stop for a bite to eat on the restaurant terrace before getting the cable car down to Adliswil. A suburban train will then take you back to Zurich.

Hike: Uetliberg–Felsenegg
Duration: 1 hour 45 minutes
Highlights: observation tower at the top of Uetliberg, planetary path, Felsenegg terrace, cable car to Adliswil
Lausanne: Terrasses de Lavaux
Three ferries a day take hikers from Lausanne to St-Saphorin. From there, an undulating path leads through the largest connected winegrowing area in Switzerland to Lutry. Since 2007, the terraced vineyards built into the steep slopes have been under UNESCO protection. From Lutry, you can catch a train back to Lausanne.

Hike: St-Saphorin–Lutry
Duration: 3 hours 15 minutes
Highlights: medieval St-Saphorin, gourmet restaurant Auberge de l’Onde, the wine trail itself
Rivaz-St-Saphorin arriving 10.16 a.m.
Bern: hike along the Aare
Regular suburban trains take hikers to the village of Worb. From here, it’s a 1 hour 15 minute walk to the Aare, from where you can follow the river through possibly Switzerland’s most beautiful river landscape to Bern. When you finally arrive, you will probably be in need of refreshment – locals favour a jump off the Schönausteg straight into the river.

Hike: Worb–Bern
Duration: 4 hours
Highlights: Worb Castle, Muribad swimming pool, Elfenau park, Dählhölzli wildlife park, Schönausteg
Basel: Rehberger-Weg
From Basel, hikers can reach Fondation Beyeler in rural Riehen in about 30 minutes by tram. From there, the trail created by artist Tobias Rehberger leads across a varied natural and artistically enhanced landscape, all the way into Germany and the Vitra Campus in Weil am Rhein. A local bus takes you back into Switzerland.

Hike: Fondation Beyeler–Vitra Campus
Duration: 2 hours
Highlights: Fondation Beyeler, Vitra Design Museum, 24 stops along the trail
A BEAUTIFUL JOURNEY

In Switzerland, it never takes long to get to the next hiking trail. But sometimes getting there is all the fun. For example on the monumental Grand Train Tour of Switzerland. It combines the most beautiful scenic routes and enables passengers to experience the full variety of this Alpine country using nothing but public transport. The entire tour is 1,280 kilometres long. Choose your favourite sections!

MySwitzerland.com/grandtraintour

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This free app helps passengers plan their trips on trains, buses and boats, and provides up-to-date information on all extra benefits offered by the Swiss Travel Pass.
1. Bad Ragaz
   Tamina
   This easy circular hike starts and ends in the spa resort of Bad Ragaz and leads through the breathtakingly beautiful Tamina Gorge. Don’t miss: the spring grotto at the Pfäfers historical thermal baths.

2. Kreuzlingen
   Seerhein
   The way to Steckborn leads you along idyllic lake shores with fantastic views and historically interesting villages. Gourmet tip: the restaurants in the small village of Gottlieben.

3. Geneva
   Rhône nature reserve
   The walk from Geneva to La Plaine is full of surprises, including the beauty of the Rhône and the Moulin-de-Vert nature reserve, and the villages of Cartigny and Avully.

4. Lucerne
   Rigi
   From Lucerne, it’s just a short train, bus or boat ride to Vitznau, where you can board the cog railway to Rigi Kaltbad and enjoy grandiose vistas. A five-hour hike to the Urmiberg later, you can catch the cable car back down.

5. Lugano
   San Salvatore
   The ride up to San Salvatore aboard the funicular railway is really worth it. The panorama terrace affords magnificent views of Lake Lugano, the Po plain and Alpine peaks. The final part of the hike leads you through chestnut forest down to the lake and into picturesque Morcote. From here, you catch the boat back to Lugano. Tip: a brief detour to the artists’ village Morcote.

More great places to visit: MySwitzerland.com/cities
After a good night’s sleep, you open your eyes, head to the window and the first sight to greet you is a glittering lake, majestic mountains or the roofs of a historic old town. Swiss hideaways are the best way to really relax this summer.

**Berggasthaus Meglisalp**

This authentic mountain inn was built in 1897 and has been run by the same family for five generations. It sits at the heart of the Alpstein region amid the densest network of hiking trails in the whole of Switzerland. The idyllic Alpine farming village of Meglisalp and the mountain chapel at the foot of the Altmann mountain make for a unique backdrop. And there’s plenty on offer for gourmets here, too: the inn serves meals made entirely of fresh products sourced directly from the alp.

[meglisalp.ch](http://meglisalp.ch)

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**Domaine de Châteauvieux, Satigny**

This 14th century manor may be close to Geneva, but it is set in a rural landscape dominated by lush vegetation. Owner Philippe Chevrier is a passionate and exquisite chef, has his own range of wines and boasts a wine menu of 800 selected vintages. The rooms are tastefully decorated with historical and elegant touches.

[chateauvieux.ch](http://chateauvieux.ch)
Hotel Chetzeron ****, Crans-Montana
At 2,112m a.s.l., this former cable car station offers breathtaking views of the Rhône Valley and the highest peaks of the Alps, from Matterhorn to Mont Blanc. All rooms and suites exude an Alpine-urban charm with a décor inspired by the mountains. The hotel offers a shuttle service – by jeep! Just getting there is an adventure.

chetzeron.ch

Grandhotel Giessbach ****, Brienz
This splendid residence combines late 19th-century charm with modern comforts. Built in a historic power spot high above Lake Brienz near the gushing Giessbach Falls, the hotel sits amid 22 hectares of gardens and parks and has a natural swimming pool. The food served in the restaurant overlooking the falls is just as exclusive as the views.

giessbach.ch
Lidernen SAC Hut, Sisikon

Surrounded by Alpine roses and mountains, high above Lake Uri, sits the Lidernen Hut. Mountain guide Pius Fähndrich and hut warden Irène Kramer look after their guests’ every need, serving up regional specialities made using all organic ingredients, including freshly picked herbs and Alpine cheese from the three surrounding farms.

[Link to Lidernen Hut website]

See what Irène is cooking:
[Link to MySwitzerland.com/food]

Villa Carona***, Carona

At the heart of the village of Carona, which dates back more than 1,000 years, stands a former patrician residence turned hotel. Hermann Hesse is said to have been a regular guest. Inside the hotel, numerous ceiling decorations and floors have recently been uncovered and restored – some of which are 200 years old – and the villa is furnished entirely with period pieces. Antique lovers will feel right at home here.

[Link to Villa Carona website]
Pensiun Laresch, Mathon

Built in 2015, the guesthouse is an eco-friendly architectural masterpiece in the midst of the Graubünden mountains. The materials used in the building – stone, wood, clay – reflect a love of nature, as do the exclusive natural stone showers in the rooms and the seasonal, organic ingredients used in the kitchen. Since last summer, the guesthouse also features a holiday apartment.

laresch.ch

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MySwitzerland.com/myswissexperience

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