

Created by: Debra C. Argen

A Perfect Day in Zurich, Switzerland



Did you ever wish that you could jet set off to an exotic destination for one perfect day? That is exactly what I did on the inaugural [SWISS International Air Lines](#) flight from **New York** to [Zurich, Switzerland](#). Although the Vernon Duke and E.Y. Harburg song extols the virtues of April in Paris, Zurich in April is wonderful.

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On April 20, 2009 history was made at **JFK International Airport in New York** when **SWISS International Air Lines** rolled out their new long-haul **Airbus A330-300** for the inaugural flight from New York to Zurich, which features a complete redesign of their First, Business, and Economy classes. After a proper and celebratory ribbon cutting ceremony, Edward F. Nesta and I boarded the new plane, which still had its fresh from the manufacturer appeal.



Ribbon Cutting with the SWISS International Air Lines Team

The A330-300 plane is visually stunning, very state-of-the-art, and is also a welcome addition on the "green" front using 13% less fuel per passenger than the A330-200, and the new seat technology and in-flight trolleys will further reduce kerosene usage and reduce CO2 emissions.



SWISS A330-300 Airplane

Flying Business Class, we experiencedÂ **"A Bed Above the Clouds"** with 20.5-inch (52 cm) wide seats, which are fully reclinable and are 79 inches (201 cm) long. In addition, the seats have special lumbar

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support and feeling rather like Goldilocks we adjusted our seats to make them softer or firmer as desired with a touch of the button, and used the massage feature for an extra comfortable ride.



SWISS Business - A Bed Above The Clouds



Although one does not usually equate airline food with a memorable meal, SWISS has a unique program called "**SWISS - Taste of Switzerland**," with special recipes created for First and Business Class by the top chefs of Switzerland. We were delighted to read the menu and see that **Chef Urs Gschwend** of Ascona, Switzerland was the featured chef, whom we had met at the [15th Annual St. Moritz Gourmet Festival](#).^Â

For dinner we began with a first course of Seasonal Salad with Balsamic Vinaigrette, followed by a main course of Herb Crusted Halibut served with Lobster Sauce, Savoy Cabbage and Baby Carrots, and Chef Urs Gschwend's recipe for American Beef Tournedos with Ciabatta Crust and Port and Sherry Jus, served with Roasted Spring Vegetables and Thyme Gnocchi.



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Â Herb Crusted HalibutÂ Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â American Beef Tournedos

A selection of cheeses, Vanilla Mousse with Strawberry, and Swiss chocolates completed our SWISS dining experience before we drifted off to sleep in the comfortable SWISS flatbeds. Waking refreshed, we had a light breakfast just before landing to fuel our perfect day in Zurich. (Read **Travel News- SWISS International Air Lines - New A330-300 Plane and Redesigned Cabins**).



Vanilla Mousse

We stayed at the luxurious [Baur au Lac](#), where attentive service began at the **Zurich Airport** with a uniformed chauffeur who awaited to whisk us from the airport in comfort for the 20 minute drive to the hotel.



Baur au Lac

The grand dame hotel, the Baur au Lac, built in 1844, is family owned, and features 120 opulently appointed rooms and suites. Located across the street from **Lake Zurich** and featuring its own private park-like garden overlooking the **Schanzengraben River**, the hotel provides a tranquil setting amidst the hustle of Switzerland's largest city with a population of approximately 377,000, and provided us with a perfect location from which to explore the city.

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Rive Gauche Restaurant and Bar

During our stay at the hotel we had a lovely dinner at the casually elegant **Rive Gauche Restaurant and Bar** where Chef de Cuisine Olivier Rais focuses on Mediterranean Grill cuisine. The Rive Gauche Restaurant and Bar is open daily from 11:30 am until 11:30 pm.

Read about the **Baur au Lac** in the **Hotels and Resorts**, **Restaurants**, and **Chefs' Recipes** (in **English**, **French**, and **German**) sections.



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Zurich Electric Trains

The day was sunny and warm, with bright blue skies that promised endless possibilities, yet with only one day to spend in Zurich, we had to carefully choose how to spend our time. Did we want to take a ride on the bright blue and white electric trains to discover the city from a native's point of view, visit one of the many museums, go to the zoo, or perhaps take a boat ride and spend a few pleasant hours on **Lake Zurich**

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watching the sailboats gracefully glide by?



Flower Clock



Strolling along the **BÃ¼rkliplatz** trying to decide how to spend our day, we passed two of Zurich's famous landmarks, the **flower clock** and the statue of **Ganymed** pleading with Zeus (the eagle) from Greek Mythology created by sculptor Hermann Hubacher (152), when suddenly an ornate red and gold **Ferris wheel** located across the street in the park came into view and caught our attention, as this is not a usual Zurich landmark. Was this something new we wondered?

Speaking with **Mr. Bourquin**, father of owner **RenÃ© Bourquin**, we learned that the [Nostalgie Riesenrad Ferris Wheel](#) was there as part of the special celebration in Zurich that was held the previous day. As a way to celebrate the new season, there was a bonfire and a snowman placed in front of the **Opera House**, and depending on how long it took the fire to melt the snowman, would determine how long the summer would last. Mr. Bourquin told us that the snowman melted quickly ensuring that there would be a long summer in Zurich.



Nostalgie Riesenrad Ferris Wheel

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Questions answered, and not having been on a Ferris wheel since childhood, we boarded the nostalgic replica Ferris wheel with childlike elation that grew with each revolution as we had an incredible view of the city from our high vantage point. Although we had seen Zurich from the plane as well as from the water, this was our first aerial view from a Ferris wheel of the charming city, where we could see all the way to the **LimmatRiver** and the **Altstadt** (Old Town).

Since we have been to Zurich on numerous occasions, we decided to spend the afternoon strolling through our favorite parts of the city, including the Altstadt (Old Town) that is like taking a step back in time with its narrow and winding cobblestone streets that are lined with shops, outdoor caf  s, restaurants, unusual and decorative fountains, historic houses, and churches.



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Zurich Fountains

While we walked through the Altstadt we played a game of looking for the many **Guild signs** that remain like secret codes from the days when twenty-six Guilds ruled Zurich from 1400 - 1800, and the signs are visual clues as to the profession of the Guilds.

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Guild Signs

Walking over **M¹/₄nsterbr¹/₄ck** bridge (1836-1838) we stopped to admire the impressive churches located on either side of the **Limmat River**, the Romanesque-style **Grossm¹/₄nster** and the Gothic **Fraum¹/₄nster**, as well as the bronze statue of **B¹/₄rgermeister Hans Waldmann** on horseback, who was the mayor from 1493 - 1489, by the sculptor Hermann Haller.



B¹/₄rgermeister Hans Waldmann

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Grossmünster, distinguished by its twin towers that dominate the Zurich landscape, was built in the 11th century and features impressive stained glass windows by Augusto Giacometti and bronze doors by Otto Mäinch. Hours vary according to the season, open Monday - Saturday from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm, with extended hours in different seasons.

Grossmünster

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We also visited **Fraumünster**, founded by King Ludwig II in 853 as a Benedictine Convent for female members of aristocracy, which later became a Reformed Parish. We admired its famous five stained glass windows by the acclaimed artist, Marc Chagall (1970) and the Chagall rose window (1973), as well as the impressive tall stained glass windows in the north transept by the artist Augusto Giacometti (1945), and the frescoes by Paul Bodmer. Also of interest are the Romanesque choir and the organ, which has 5,793 pipes, and is the largest organ in the Canton.

Fraumünster is open Monday - Saturday from 10:00 am - 6:00 pm and Sunday from 11.15 am - 6:00 pm with the exception divine services from April to October; and Monday - Saturday from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm, and Sunday from 11.15 am - 4:00 pm with the exception divine services from November to March.

Fraumünster

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M Ä nsterbr Ä ck Bridge

Architecturally interesting, the Altstadt is like opening a treasure chest filled with unusual details. An excellent example of this is the building dated 1757 directly opposite FraumÄnster, which features different humorously menacing faces over each of its seven windows.



Humorously Menacing Faces

Also of interest is the **Zum Thor** building, which shows three dates on its façade of 1593, 1898, and 1979, and the many decorative and colorful façades that are found throughout the area where it is often the smallest of details that catch the eye.

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Decorative Dated Façade

In a complete juxtaposition to the Altstadt is the fashionable and affluent **Bahnhofstrasse**, which for luxury shoppers could easily be called the street of dreams. Major internationally recognized clothing designers line the street and beckon to shoppers with their glamorous windows, which we enjoyed browsing and seeing the latest fashions. Switzerland is renowned for its watches, and prestigious watch manufacturers are also well represented in this high real estate area.



Narrow Cobble Street



Always a must on our list whenever we are in Zurich is a visit to **Confiserie Sprüngli** founded in 1836 where we had to stop and indulge in experiencing the latest Luxemburgerli creation, namely their Jubilee Champagne, a decadent confection made with champagne, brushed with gold, and filled with white chocolate. If you have never had a Luxemburgerli then you are in for a treat, as they are miniature bites of pleasure. We spent a respectful amount of time there ogling the famous chocolates, the breads, and the elaborate pastries that beckoned invitingly behind the gleaming glass display cases.

Confiserie Sprüngli is open Monday - Friday from 7:30 am - 6:30 pm, Saturday from 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, and is closed on Sunday. Read the article on **Confiserie Sprüngli, AG** in the **[Luxury Products](#)** section.

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In the evening we dined at the [Rive Gauche Restaurant and Bar at the Baur au Lac](#), where **Chef Olivier Rais** clearly shines as Chef de Cuisine. The ambience at the restaurant is a delightful mélange of historic and contemporary elements that blend together beautifully.



Chef Olivier Rais

Asparagus was in season, and a few of the many tasty highlights of our dinner included White Asparagus served with Vinaigrette; Asparagus Cream Soup with Morels; and Scallops with Asparagus, Morels, and Garlic Vinaigrette. Other highlights included the Marinated Salmon on Cucumber Carpaccio and Tuna Tartar, and the tasty Giant Veal Paillard accompanied with Ratatouille. Rive Gauche Restaurant and Bar is open daily from 11:30 am until 11:30 pm.



Grilled Scallops with Asparagus

Read about **Rive Gauche Restaurant and Bar** in the **Restaurants** section, and also in **Chefs' Recipes** where **Chef Olivier Rais** shares his recipes in **English, French, and German** for **Tuna Tartar with Citrus Zest and Ginger**; **Red Wine Risotto with Radicchio**; **Simmental-Style Beef**; **Mediterranean Mélange of Vegetables**, and **Crème Brûlée**.



Rive Gauche Restaurant and Bar

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Baur au Lac

After enjoying a leisurely breakfast at the hotel, a Baur au Lac uniformed chauffeur drove us back to the airport where we did some airport shopping, and then relaxed in the comfortable [SWISS Business Lounge](#) before boarding our flight from Zurich to New York.



Flying in the daytime afforded us with plenty of opportunity to watch movies as part of the extensive in-flight SWISS entertainment program, and we experienced a last "**SWISS - Taste of Switzerland**" with Chef Urs Gschwend's menu of a first course of Carpaccio of Braised Veal with a Herb and Vegetable Vinaigrette, and a Spring Salad with Curly Endive, Snow Pea Julienne, and Pomegranate.



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Â Herb Marinated Pike PerchÂ Â Â Â Â Â Asparagus and Truffle Risotto

We continued with main courses of Olive Oil and Herb Marinated Filet of Pike Perch with Spring Onion Cream Sauce and Lemon Potato; and Asparagus and Truffle Risotto with Parmesan, followed by a selection of Swiss cheeses with Pear Bread. For dessert, we had Layered Mousse of Raspberry and Lime with Thyme, and Swiss Chocolates.



Â Â Â Â Â Â Layered MousseÂ Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Swiss Cheeses and Pear Bread

Although it had been a quick trip to Zurich, it indeed had been a perfect one.

Important information for Switzerland

Switzerland is not part of the European Union, and as such, the currency of Switzerland is the Swiss Franc. As of April 2009, the exchange rate was 1 US Dollar (USD) to 1.15 Swiss Francs (CHF), 1 Euro (EUR) to 1.51 Swiss Francs (CHF). The Swiss Franc coin denominations are: 5, 10, 20, 50 cents and 1, 2, and 5 Francs. Bank note denominations are: 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, and 1000 Francs.

Zurich is +6 hours ahead of EST, and +1 hour ahead of GMT. Electricity is 220 volts, and use 2-round pin socket. Bring a converter if your appliances do not have dual voltage and plug adapters.

Switzerland is a country with many languages: Swiss German, High German, French, Italian, and Romansch, with the Romansch language mainly spoken in the Engadine St. Moritz region. Swiss German is a spoken language, and High German is the spoken and written language for sixty eight percent of the Swiss population. The rest of the Swiss population speaks French (18%), Italian (12%), or Romansch (approximately 40,000) depending on their geographic location. While many Swiss speak English, it is always helpful to have some basic language knowledge when traveling.

Guide to pronunciation

ÃŸ = strong S sound (like a hiss)

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j = sounds like y
ie = sounds like ea
Ã¼ = sounds like ou
w = sounds like v

Basic Vocabulary

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English

German

Do you speak English?

Sprechen Sie Englisch?

Excuse meÂ Â Â Â Â Â Â

Verzeihung

I do not understand

Ich verstehe nicht

Hello

Guten Tag

Good-bye

Auf Wiedersehen

Good Morning

Guten morgen

Good Evening

Guten aben

PleaseÂ Â

Bitte

Thank you

Danke

Yes

Ja

No

Nein

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Open

Offen

Closed

Geschlossen

Where is?

Wo is?

The hotel

das Hotel

Train Station

Bahnhof

Airport

der Flughafen

How much is?

Wieviel kostet?

Â

Â

Time

Zeit

Monday

Montag

Tuesday

Dienstag

Wednesday

Mittwoch

Thursday

Donnerstag

Friday

Freitag

Saturday

Samstag

Sunday

Sonntag

Morning/Day/Night

Morgen/Tag/Nacht

Today

Heute

Â

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Health

die Gesundheit

Dentist

Zahnarzt

Doctor

Doktor

Fever

das Fieber

Headache

die Kopfschmerzen

Help

Hilfe

HospitalÂ Â Â Â Â Â

Krankenhaus

Ill

Krank

Pharmacy

Apotheke

Headache

die Kopfschmerzen

Â

Â

Restaurant

das Restaurant

Breakfast

FrÃ¼hstÃ¼ck

Lunch

Mittagessen

Dinner

Abendessen

Bread

BrÃt

Butter

Butter

Beef

Rind

Cheese

KÃse

Chicken

Huhn

Crab

Krebs

Fish

Fisch

Lamb

Lamm

Octopus

Sepia

Perch

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Zander

Pork

Schweinefleisch

Prawns

Krabben

Salad

Salat

Scallops

Jakobsmuschel

Seafood

Meeresfrüchte

Vegetables

Gemüse

Vegetarian

Vegetarisch

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Dessert

Â **Nachtisch**

Cake

Kuchen

Ice cream

Eis

Pastries

Märbeteigkekse

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Beverages

Coffee

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Kaffe

Tea

Tee

Ice

Eis

Juice

Saft

Water

Wasser

Beer

Bier

Red wine

Rotwein

Sparkling wine

Sekt

White wine

WeiÃwein

Wine

Wein

Cheers!

Prost!

Read other articles on **Zurich, Switzerland** in the **Hotels and Resorts**, **Restaurants**, **Chefs' Recipes**, and **Travel News** sections.

Read other articles on **Switzerland** in the **Destinations** section: ([Zurich](#)), [Bern](#), [Interlaken](#), and [Lucerne](#); [Hotels and Resorts](#), [Restaurants](#), [Chefs' Recipes](#), [Spas](#); in the **Liquor Cabinet** section: [Swiss Vodka - The Art and Science](#), and [Xellent Swiss Vodka](#), in the **Wine Cellar** section: [Domaine Zweifel - The Art of Making Swiss Wine](#), and [Lattenberg Rauschling 2005](#), in the **Gastronomy** section: [15th Annual St. Moritz Gourmet Festival](#), [Emmental - The Art of Making Swiss Cheese](#), and [Gastronomic Evening with Guest Chef Emmanuel Renaut](#), in the **Luxury Products** section: [Confiserie Sprungli](#), and in the **Adventures** section: [24th Cartier Polo World Cup on Snow in St. Moritz](#), [Skiing in St. Moritz, Switzerland](#), [Snowshoeing in Arosa, Switzerland](#), [Skiing in Arosa, Switzerland](#), [Hiking Jungfrauoch, Switzerland](#), [Hiking Mount Pilatus, Switzerland](#), [Paragliding in Interlaken, Switzerland](#), and [Porsche 911 Carrera S Driving Experience](#).

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For information on **SWISS International Air Lines**, please visit the website: www.swiss.com.

For information on **Switzerland**, please visit the website: www.MySwitzerland.com. For information on **Zurich**, please visit the website: www.Zuerich.com.

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