

Created by: Debra C. Argen
Lucerne, Switzerland

[Lucerne](#), Switzerland is a historic, picturesque, and enchanting city.

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Lucerne, (spelled Luzern in German), called the "City of Lights," has 60,000 inhabitants, and is the eighth largest city in Switzerland. Yet, despite its smaller stature or perhaps because of that, the city is an exciting destination focusing on nature, history, cuisine, and culture.

In October 2006, Edward F. Nesta and I flew Business Class on [Swiss International Air Lines](#) (www.swiss.com) from New York to Zurich, where Swiss hospitality began in the well-equipped large lounge, which featured a plasma television in the non-smoking area, comfortable seating areas, a conference room, six Internet workstations, and showers. The lounge has a nice selection of wines and spirits in addition to non-alcohol beverages, and offers snacks, as well as pre-flight dinners. While we waited for our flight to Zurich, we enjoyed a glass of wine and a snack while browsing our email on the Internet.



Once in the air, excellent service continued where we enjoyed wining and dining Swiss style. Imagine anyone writing about airline food these days, but Swiss Airlines guest chef Käthi Fassler (Chef de Cuisine at the Hotel Hof Weissbad, 15 GaultMillau points) prepared a tasty menu to provide passengers with a Swiss - Taste of Switzerland experience. We dined on a first course of Tequila smoked salmon with mango, for his second course, Edward selected the Sautéed chicken breast in Alfredo sauce served with carrots, grilled zucchini and squash, and white wine risotto, and I had the Seared salmon in a lemon and herb sauce served with butternut squash, cauliflower and broccoli. We continued with a cheese course, and finished with a Dessert course of a Seasonal fruit tart. We paired our selections with Swiss wines, a Riesling x Silvaner 2005, Weinkellerei Haubensak, Rheintal Alstätt, made with 100% Riesling silvaner, and a Blauburgunder Spätlese 2005, Rebgut Hoch Chapf Eichberg, Weinkellerei Haubensak, Rheintal Alstätt, made with 100% Pinot Noir. By the time we landed in Zurich, we had already begun our Switzerland holiday.

Getting around Switzerland is very easy using the [Swiss Travel System](#) pass, purchased in the United States before our trip. We purchased the Swiss Pass, although there are several types of passes available. Check their website to determine which pass best suits your needs. The Swiss Pass offers unlimited first class travel on trains, buses, boats, and provides holders with free entrance to approximately 400 museums. Check the website www.museumspass.ch for list of participating museums. We began using our Swiss Pass taking the train at the Zurich airport to our destination, Lucerne.

We stayed at the [Palace Luzern](#), a gorgeous 100-year old grand dame situated on scenic Lake Lucerne. This truly luxurious 136-room and suite hotel knows how to make guests' experiences special, from their Leisure Designer to assist guests in optimizing their leisure activities, to their Porsche Driving Experience, where guests can borrow a Porsche Cayenne for a day to experience driving in the Swiss countryside. During our stay at the hotel, there also was a Porsche 911 Carrera S for guests to drive, and we thoroughly enjoyed driving down the Swiss highways behind the wheel of a bright red luxury sports car.

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We took the Porsche to visit [DIWISA Distillerie Willisau SA](#) to see where Xellent Swiss Vodka, the first and only Swiss Vodka, is produced. We do love our distillery visits where we are always increasing our spirit knowledge, and our private tour of DIWISA was very worthwhile. Although the Distillerie is not open to the public for tours, the shop is open for tasting and purchases.

Read more about the DIWISA Distillerie Willisau SA and Xellent Vodka in the **Liquor Cabinet** and as well as the article [Xellent Swiss Vodka](#) for recipes.Â Â

DIWISA Distillerie Willisau SA

CH-6130 Willisau

Telephone:Â Â Â Â Â Â +41 (0) 41 972 72 72

Fax:Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â +41 (0) 41 972 73 73

www.Diwisa.chÂ Â



Guests can experience fine dining inÂ the Palace LuzernÂ contemporary design 16 points GaultMillau restaurant, Jasper, where Chef Ulf Braunert shines with his creative cuisine. We enjoyed two exceptional dinners at Jasper, and convinced Chef Ulf to share a few of his recipes. We also indulged in pampering spa treatments at the beautiful **Palace Spa**, which opened in 2005. Â

Read more about the **Palace Luzern** in the **Hotels and Resorts**, [Restaurants](#), [Chefs' Recipes](#), **Spas**, and [Adventures](#) section.

Palace Luzern
Haldenstrasse 10

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CH-6002 Lucerne

Telephone: +41 (0) 41 416 16 16

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Email: info@Palace-Luzern.ch

www.Palace-Luzern.ch



We took a tour of **Lucerne Old Town** and walked over the **Chapel Bridge**, named after nearby St. Peter's Church, built in 1333 as part of the city's fortifications, damaged in a fire in 1993, and rebuilt. If you walk over the bridge, take time to look at the triangular paintings along the bridge detailing the history of Lucerne, and the shrine at the far end of the bridge. Another interesting detail of the bridge is that if you look carefully, you will notice that one side of the bridge wall is higher than the other, so that men could rest their guns at shoulder height on the bridge. Next to the Chapel Bridge, is the famous octagonal **Water Tower** (34 meters/111.5 feet) built in the 13th century. Its interesting history includes service as a prison and a torture chamber. Today, people may rent the Water Tower for special occasions.

The **Zyt Tower**, also known as the clock tower, has the distinction of being the oldest clock in Switzerland. Hans Luter built the clock in 1535, and today the clock is still in use, and requires a watchmaker to wind the clock everyday. With age comes privilege, and an interesting note about the clock is that it chimes every hour exactly one minute before all of the other city clocks.



The old town has many interesting sights and places to visit. We stopped at the **Jesuit Church**, which has a Lion Coat of Arms on the facade. Inside, the church is very bright, ornate, and open. It was made in the Baroque style in 1666-1677, and was one of the first of this size in Switzerland. There are impressive paintings on the ceilings and the walls. The altar is made of wood and stucco that was mixed with animal blood and red plants to obtain the red color, and then highly polished to resemble marble. If you visit the church, notice that something is a bit peculiar, namely that there is a Rococo chapel in a Baroque church! After the church was damaged, a Rococo chapel for St. Alois, the patron Saint for eyes, was added.

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A definite must when visiting Lucerne is taking a boat cruise on Lake Lucerne and making a trip to Mount Pilatus; we decided to combine both. Although it was only a short stroll to the Pier, we took the bus in front of the hotel to the train station stop, walked across the road to Pier 2 and took the 90-minute [Vier Waldstättersee](#) boat trip on the MS Flä¼elen from Lucerne to Alpnachstad. It was autumn in Switzerland, and the leaves were at their showy best displaying bright gold, orange, and red leaves. Sheer mountain cliffs, rolling green hills, and charming houses, dotted the countryside, making the trip most magical.Â Â

Vier Waldstättersee

Postfach

CH-6002 Lucerne

Telephone: Â Â Â Â +41 (0) 41 367 67 67

Fax:Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â +41 (0) 41 367 68 68

Email:Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â info@LakeLucerne.ch

www.LakeLucerne.chÂ Â Â Â



We arrived in Alpnachstad, met Ursula Brun of [Pilatus Luzern](#) and took the world's steepest cogwheel railway, (inaugurated on June 4, 1889) to Pilatus Kulm peak (2132 meters/7000 feet altitude). Riding the red cogwheel train emblazoned with the trademark dragon provided the perfect opportunity to experience the autumn scenery. As the cogwheel train climbed higher and higher, the more excited we became as the landscape changed dramatically from grassy green meadows to rugged mountain vistas.

Once we reached the Summit, we hiked Mount Pilatus to experience magnificent 360Â° panoramic views of the Alpine range. After lunch in their Panorama restaurant, we said our last goodbyes to the mountain, before taking the cogwheel train down to Alpnachstad, where this time we boarded the train for Lucerne, again using our Swiss Pass. Read more about **Hiking at Mt. Pilatus** in the [Adventures](#) section.

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Pilatus-Bahnen

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CH-6010 Kriens/Lucerne

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Email: info@pilatus.ch

www.Pilatus.ch

Lucerne is a city rich in culture, and when we returned to Lucerne, we decided to visit the **Picasso-Museum Luzern/Am-Rhyn-Haus**. In addition to its vast Picasso collection, the museum is housed in a late 17th century Renaissance building, and is one of the few historical homes available to visit. The museum is open daily from April - October from 10 am - 6 pm, and from November - March from 11 am - 5 pm. Admission is charged; there is no charge with the Swiss Pass.

Picasso-Museum Luzern/Am-Rhyn-Haus

Furrengasse 21

CH-6004 Lucerne

Telephone: +41 (0) 41 410 35 33

Fax: +41 (0) 41 410 13 06



Continuing our museum exploration, we went to the **[Collection Rosengart/Picasso Museum](#)**, (Sammlung Rosengart) where over 200 works by Picasso, Paul Klee, Fernand Leger, Marc Chagall, Marino Marini, Georges Braque, Henri Matisse, Wassily Kandinsky, Pierre Auguste Renior, Claude Monet, Joan Miró, and many other important artists prominently featured in the museum. The museum opened in March 2002 and houses the private collection of Angela Rosengart. Admission is charged; there is no charge with the Swiss Pass.

Collection Rosengart/Picasso Museum

Stiftung Rosengart

Pilatusstrasse 10

CH-6003 Lucerne

Telephone: +41 (0) 41 220 16 60

Fax: +41 (0) 41 220 16 63

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Email: info@rosengart.ch
www.Rosengart.ch

We also visited the new [Museum of Modern Art Lucerne](#) (Kunst Museum), which opened in June 2000. The museum's collection features mainly Swiss art from the Renaissance to the present, and is open Tuesday - Sunday from 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, and on Wednesday, the museum has extended hours until 8:00 pm. Admission is charged; there is no charge with the Swiss Pass.

Museum of Modern Art Lucerne (Kunst Museum)

Europlatz 1

CH-6005 Lucerne

Telephone: +41 (0) 41 226 78 00

Fax: +41 (0) 41 226 78 01

Email: <mailto:info@rosengart.ch>

www.KunstMuseumLuzern.ch

Luxury Experience Magazine readers know that Edward and I love to listen to jazz, and were disappointed that we would miss the Friday Jazz nights at the Palace Hotel. When we heard that there was an " **Old-Time Jazz Jam Session**" on Thursday evenings in the Louis Bar at the [Art Deco Hotel Montana](#), we made sure that we went to check out the music, since the hotel was directly across the street from the Palace Luzern. The music begins at 9:30 pm and you never know who will show up to join in and play along. The night that we went, there was a lively trio headed by Richard Decker on piano, with Jimmy Wetter on stand-up bass, and John Ward on drums.

Louis Bar at the Art Deco Hotel Montana

Adligenswilerstrasse 22

CH-6002 Lucerne

Telephone: +41 (0) 41 419 00 00

Fax: +41 (0) 41 419 00 01

Email: info@Hotel-Montana.ch

www.Hotel-Montana.ch

On our last morning in Lucerne, we visited the [Glacier Garden Lucerne](#) at the suggestion of Patrick Goerke, the Concierge at the Palace Luzern. The museum was very interesting, and includes the Glacier Garden, Glacier Museum, GeoWorld Luzern, Gallery Room, Amreins House, Ice Labyrinth, "Alhambra" Hall of Mirrors with 90 mirrors that literally had us dazed as we tried to find our way through a maze of mirrors, and the Kiosu Garden where fish swim in the glacier pond garden. The museum is open daily from April 1 - October 31 from 9 am - 6 pm, and from November 1 - March 31 from 10 am - 5 pm. Admission is charged; there is no charge with the Swiss Pass.

Glacier Garden Lucerne

Denkmalstrasse 4

CH-6006 Lucerne

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Fax: +41 (0) 41 410 43 10

Email: info@GletscherGarten.ch

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One of the Lucerne landmarks is the 500-year old **Hof Church**, with its distinctive twin towers. We visited this important Renaissance church and admired the gold altars and the ornately carved wood pews.

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Before leaving Lucerne, we paid a stop to see the **Dying Lion of Lucerne Monument** created by Danish sculptor Thorwaldsen and carved out of natural rock, which is perhaps the best known and loved symbol of Lucerne.



After a fabulous time in Lucerne, it was time to explore more of Switzerland. Using our Swiss Pass, we took the train to our next destination: Interlaken.

Read other articles on **Switzerland** in the **Destinations, Hotels and Resorts, Restaurants, Chefs' Recipes, Spas, Liquor Cabinet, Wine Cellar**, and [Adventures](#) sections.

Switzerland is a country with many languages: Swiss German, French, Italian, and Romansch. 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.

German Vocabulary

Guide to pronunciation

ÃŸ = strong S sound (like a hiss)

j = sounds like y

ie = sounds like ea

Ã¼ = sounds like ou

w = sounds like v

Basic Vocabulary

English

German

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Do you speak English?Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â

Sprechen Sie Englisch?

Excuse meÂ Â Â Â Â

Verzeihung

Hello

Guten Tag

Good-bye

Auf Wiedersehen

Good Morning

Guten Morgen

Good Evening

Guten Abend

PleaseÂ

Bitte

Thank you

Danke

Yes

Ja

No

Nein

Open

Offen

Closed

Geschlossen

Where is?

Wo is?

Train Station

Bahnhof

Airport

der Flughafen

Health

English

German

Â

Dentist

Zahnarzt

Doctor

Doktor

Help

Hilfe

Hospital

Krankenhaus

Ill

Krank

Pharmacy

Apotheke

Food

English

German

Ä

Breakfast

Frühstück

Lunch

Mittagessen

Dinner

Abendessen

Dessert

Nachtsch

Bread

Bröt

Butter

Butter

Beef

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Rind

Cheese

KÃse

Chicken

Huhn

Fish

Fisch

Pork

Schwein

Salad

Salat

Seafood

MeeresfrÃ¼chte

Vegetables

GemÃ¼se

Vegetarian

Vegetarisch

Beverages

English

German

Ã

Coffee

Kaffe

Tea

Tee

Ice

Eis

Juice

Saft

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Water

Wasser

Beer

Bier

Red wine

Rotwein

Sparkling wine

Sekt

White wine

WeiÃŸwein

Wine

Wein

Cheers!

Prost!

For information on **Switzerland**, please visit: www.MySwitzerland.com. For information on **Lucerne**: www.Luzern.org. For information on **Interlaken**: www.InterlakenTourism.ch. For information on **Bern**: www.BernInfo.com. For information on **Zurich**: www.Zuerich.com. For information on **Swiss International Air Lines**: www.swiss.com. For More Information on **Swiss Pass**: www.SwissTravelSystem.ch.

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