

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN TRAVELLING TO SWITZERLAND

SEASONAL HIGHLIGHTS

High Season (*April to October*)

- High season peaks from July to August.
- In lake areas, the peak is June to September.
- Prices rise over Christmas and Easter.

High Season (*December*)

Ski resorts open from mid-December.

High season for skiing is mid-December to March.

Shoulder (*late Mar–May & late Sep–Oct*)

- The weather's changeable, the lakes are chilly and the hiking's excellent.
- Sights are open and less crowded.

Low Season (*Nov–Mar – Except Ski Resorts*)

- Many sights are closed at this time of year.
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WHAT TO PACK

As you plan what to wear in Europe, keep in mind that the trick is to pack and wear layers. We suggest layering like this: tank top or t-shirt, long sleeve shirt, jersey and then jacket. Always pack something to protect yourself against rain showers. Alpine wear will be needed in the Ski Resorts in winter.

RETAIL HOURS

Typical shopping hours. Mondays - Saturdays: 9:00 am to 5:30pm, or 10:00 am to 8:00 pm/10:00 pm. Sundays: - 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, or 11:00 am to 5:00 pm, or 12 noon to 6:00 pm. Sunday shopping has become more popular, and most but not all shops in towns and cities are open for business.

MONEY MATTERS

The Swiss franc (CHF) is the only official currency in (and in Liechtenstein). The franc is the only currency accepted everywhere. The Euro is the currency in the neighbouring countries Germany, France, Italy and Austria, and in many other European countries.

Credit Cards are widely available and ATM's are very prevalent.

DRINKING WATER

Tap water in Switzerland is pure, rich in minerals and perfectly safe to drink – in fact it's often just as good as any of the stuff you can buy in bottles. Don't necessarily expect it free in restaurants, however; bottled water (either still or sparkling) is the norm.

TIPPING / PORTERAGE

- **Hotels** One or two Francs per suitcase for porters and for valet parking in top-end hotels. Leaving loose change for cleaners is appreciated.
- **Restaurants** Tip about 10% (unless service is abominable). Round up the bill, state the amount as you hand the bill back or leave tip in the bill folder when you leave.

- **Bars** About 5% at the bar and 10% at a table.
- **Taxis** About 10%.

TRAVEL RESPONSIBILITY

- Learn a few words of the local language so you know what's considered polite in terms of eating, greeting and local values.
- Appropriate behaviours by travellers helps ensure local communities continue to be hospital and friendly.
- Respect other people's cultures and avoid imposing your beliefs.
- Adhere to the hotel's water or energy conservation policies.
- Buy locally made crafts and support local skills. Buy them preferably from the craftsman himself to ensure your money goes to the artist and not the middle man.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- **German**, French and Italian are the main languages in Switzerland. English is widely spoken.
- South African passport holders require a **Schengen Visa**.
- Switzerland is on Central European time. They are 1 hour behind S.A during their winter months (November to March) and are on the same time as S.A during their summer months (last Sunday in March to the Last Saturday in October)
- For Switzerland there are two associated plug types, types C and F. Plug type C is the plug which has two round pins and plug type F is the plug which has two round pins with two earth clips on the side.
- Austria operates on a 230V supply voltage and 50Hz.

WHAT THINGS COST

- Inexpensive restaurant meal : CHF 19 to CHF 30
- Meal for 2 people Mid-range Restaurant, 3 Course : CHF 70 to CHF 120
- McMeal at McDonalds (or equivalent): CHF 12 to CHF 15
- Domestic Beer (0.5 Lt Draught) : CHF 5 to CHF 8
- Imported Beer (0.33 Lit Bottle) : CHF 5 to CHF 8
- Cappuccino (Regular) : CHF 3.60 to CHF 5.50
- Coke/Pepsi (0.33 Lt Bottle) : CHF 2.50 to CHF 5
- Water (0.33 Lt Bottle) : CHF 1.50 to CHF 4.50

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- A lot of public restrooms will charge you a small fee to use them, so just keep some change on hand to pay the fee.
- Lock valuables away while travelling and always be vigilant of your belongings. Never leave them unattended.
- Always be aware of pick pockets irrespective of where you are in the world.