

**AmalaWandering**

Travel on your own



# SWITZERLAND IN A NUTSHELL

## DETAILED PLAN FOR YOUR APPROXIMATELY ONE-WEEK STAY IN SWITZERLAND

Roughly one week (possibly shorter or longer)

Any time of the year

Among the four-thousanders

With family (even with small children)

Economically, though with a rich program

By car

Without skis (not required, but not prohibited) 😊



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I love traveling. It has always been an excellent way for me to take a break from work, find balance and spend time with my loved ones. I know that to make this time truly a time of rest, it is worth it to ensure you have a good mood already at the preparation stage, in order to maximize the joy of the long-awaited vacation.

I speak from my own experiences, but also from the stories of other people who, like me, before leaving on a trip, invest a lot of energy in developing a detailed travel plan so that they can fully relax, see a lot and enjoy every moment during a short vacation.

I have almost always planned my own trips. I would spend long hours searching the Internet for places worth visiting, possible forms of transportation, accommodation options, contemplating and arranging the trip in a way that was both interesting and practical, as well as economical.

With my decision to document the knowledge and experiences I gathered during my travels, I wanted to make your next vacation trip easier and more enjoyable. I hope that I will be able to do this to some extent. 😊

*Amala Wandering. Switzerland in a nutshell.  
Detailed plan for your approximately one-week stay in Switzerland.*

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## WHAT PLACES DOES THIS GUIDE COVER AND TO WHOM IS IT ADDRESSED?

When I was planning my approximately week-long trip to Switzerland, my main goal was to get to know the country as much as possible, and as a lover of landscapes, to reach areas with breathtaking panoramas. So little time, so many places to see. What should you choose? How does one make the most of a trip to fully enjoy the unique beauty of this country? How can you avoid the constant exhaustion of moving from one place of accommodation to the next in order to see different corners of Switzerland? **How can this be done on a moderate budget?** How can you make sure that people of all ages will enjoy themselves on the trip?

The prepared program is based on these very principles. **It is dedicated to family trips, trips with a group of friends or even solo adventures, in your own or rented car.** I would like to emphasize that traveling by your own means of transport will be the most economical, as you can take as many people on the trip as your car allows, and as a result, the costs shared between passengers will be much lower than those incurred when using public transport.

**In this guide, you won't find detailed information dedicated to skiers.** However, if you wish to take advantage of the ski slopes during your stay (after all, Switzerland is a paradise for skiers), you will be able to modify the proposed program in such a way that will allow you to do so, as I will take you to places which offer that opportunity.

**I want to show you breathtaking views** of four-thousanders of the Alps, stunning regardless of the season, places inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list, such as the Eiger, Mönch, and Jungfrau massifs, the glacial landscape around the longest glacier in the Alps, Aletsch Glacier, and the beautiful scenery filled with lakes and waterfalls. I will take you on a walk across a spectacular suspension bridge (or even several, if you wish), you will enter a glacier, much like Kay and Gerda entered the Snow

Queen's palace, and you'll wander through the corridors of a dragon's cave. You will visit historical castles nestled in the Alpine landscape, and a friendly cow named Cerise, or Cherry, will guide you through the Gruyère Museum, a place created for cheese enthusiasts, where you will learn about the process of making Swiss delicacies, the origin of milk, and the principles of fully natural cow feeding.

I hope that this guide will be helpful not only during the trip itself, but that above all else it will relieve you of the burden of hours of searching for information regarding worthwhile places to see and essential information as well as practical details for organizing the trip. From the bottom of my heart, I wish you a truly enjoyable holiday! 😊

## EXPLORED AREA



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# INTRODUCTION

## SWITZERLAND

Located in Western Europe, divided into 26 **cantons**, mountainous Switzerland is one of the smallest countries in Europe, stretching 220 km from north to south and 350 km from east to west. The Alps cover the southern, southwestern, and eastern parts of the country. **The Swiss Plateau**, located north of the Alps, is bordered to the northwest by the **Jura Mountains**. The northern border with Germany follows the course of the Rhine. Lake Constance forms part of the border with Germany and Austria, while part of the border with France runs through Lake Geneva. The landscape is further enriched by some of the larger inland lakes, including Lake Neuchâtel, Lake Zurich, Lake of the Four Cantons, Lake Thun, and Lake Brienz.

There are four official languages in Switzerland: German, spoken by the majority of the population; French, used by approximately 20% of the population; then Italian and **Romansh**. To the east of the city of Bern (except for Ticino) the predominant language is German, while to the west it is French. In the canton of Ticino, the most common language is Italian. The Romansh language, derived from vernacular Latin, is spoken in the canton of Graubünden.

Switzerland is a member of the Schengen Area but is not part of the European Union or the European Economic Area.

## SYMBOLS

**YEAR-ROUND** – facility or location accessible throughout the year;

**OUTSIDE THE WINTER SEASON** – places to visit in the spring, summer, and autumn. Accessibility depends on weather conditions. If planning to



visit a particular place in spring or autumn, check whether the facility or location is already open or still closed. You can verify this by using the provided links that lead to the website of each respective place;

**SKIING** – places where you can bring skis due to the availability of ski slopes;

**SLEDDING** – places with trails for sledding;

**MORE WALKING** – excursions during which (depending on your fitness level) you may get tired;

*Note! The guide does not include trails that require special fitness or climbing skills.*

**LESS WALKING** – walking tours or those in which you mostly use a car (mainly sightseeing);

**CLEAR VISIBILITY** – expeditions where good visibility is particularly important;

**COST** – expensive, moderately priced, or free of charge attractions.

## ABOUT THE GUIDE

**The guide is aimed primarily at people traveling by their own or rented means of transportation, seeking inspiration for both hiking and car trips.**

It's obvious that such a picturesque country like Switzerland cannot be fully experienced during a week-long holiday. Because of that, while developing this guide, my key objective was to take you to some of the most interesting places that will allow you to better understand the character of this country and return home with unforgettable memories as well as a collection of photos from its most beautiful corners. **So, if you are going (with your own or rented car) for a week or a slightly**

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**longer vacation to Switzerland, with a desire to relax and enjoy the beauty of the landscapes – this guide is perfect for you!**

I've structured the program in a way that allows you to economically explore various regions of the country and appreciate its diversity, without the need of frequent changes in accommodation bases. As someone who travels with children, I understand how troublesome and inconvenient it can be to constantly change lodgings and pack and unpack luggage. Therefore, selecting a good starting point and base is one of the key aspects for a more enjoyable vacation. In the following pages of the guide, I provide suggestions for the locations of accommodation.

Switzerland is stunning both in the summer and winter. It offers captivating destinations year-round, so you will always find places worth visiting. Each season unveils new charms in this picturesque country. It's important to note that during the winter months, many trekking routes may not be suitable for exploration and some roads may be closed. I have included information on this in the guide. Nevertheless, I present a full range of attractions and ways to enjoy the winter season, complemented by the opportunities offered in the summer. **The photos included in this guide were taken in March and August.**

The guide includes a collection of suggestions for one-day trips during a week-long (or slightly shorter or longer) stay in Switzerland. **The plan for the first six days offers a complete travel proposal that is moderately priced while simultaneously exploring every aspect of the Swiss landscape** (peaks, caves, glaciers, castles, museums, waterfalls, Alpine villages). In the case of an extended stay or if certain attractions are closed due to maintenance, you can expand or modify the provided suggestions according to your needs. **I have personally undertaken each trip, so I know there is no risk of being unable to reach the proposed locations within the allotted time.**

I set up the plan in such a way that after a more intense day, the next is less physically demanding or simply more relaxed. I marked days that require less or more activity, as well as those dependent on good weather and those in which weather is not crucial to the plan. This way, you can tailor the suggestions to your needs, abilities, and the current weather conditions. Once you reach your accommodation base, it's always a good idea to check the weather forecast and adjust the proposed plan accordingly, so that attractions described as particularly dependent on good weather are planned for days with at least good visibility.

# DAY 3 Eggishorn

## Eggishorn Mountain [3]

[link to Google Maps](#)



### Symbols:

**YEAR-ROUND**

**SKIING** / **SLEDDING** – the plan doesn't cover these activities

**MORE WALKING** or **LESS WALKING** – your choice

**CLEAR VISIBILITY**

**COST** – costly (but worth it!)

Despite the stunning vistas nearby (especially if you're staying in the Interlaken area), it's difficult to resist venturing further to witness the UNESCO-listed scenery. This includes the Aletsch Glacier, the longest and largest glacier in the Alps.

**The Aletsch Glacier (Aletschgletscher)**, shaped like a winding, wide highway, is a relic of the ice age dating back over 12,000 years. Stretching 23.6 km and covering an area of about 118 km<sup>2</sup>, it's a captivating natural wonder. Since 1870, the glacier has receded nearly 18 km due to climate changes. Experts predict that by 2100, the Aletsch Glacier could lose up to 90% of its volume. So, it would be a missed opportunity not to experience its charm while you still can.



I suggest heading to the Eggishorn viewpoint (2,927 m) in the Aletsch Arena – a peak nestled in the Valais canton in the Bernese Alps. Why

venture so far from your base? Several reasons. Firstly, it offers the chance to see a different region, a view of the Alpine four-thousanders from the other side of the mountains, in a less touristy spot. Additionally, the adventure of crossing mountain ranges, including a scenic and paid cogwheel train journey (the only available route in winter) and significantly lower cable car ticket prices compared to Jungfrauoch, located much closer to Interlaken and considered Switzerland's most expensive and highly visited attraction. Furthermore, from the Eggishorn summit, you can marvel at the 20-kilometer stretch of the upper, curved section of the glacier – **Konkordiaplatz**. It's the confluence of four major glaciers descending from **Aletschfirn**, **Jungfraufirn**, **Ewigschneefeld** and **Grüneggfirn**, as well as the iconic peaks of Eiger, Mönch, and Jungfrau.

Embark on your adventure from the town of Fiesch, where the cable car of the Aletsch Arena ski resort will take you to the summit of Eggishorn. If you're a skier, during the winter season you can bring your skis, and conditions permitting, you might access piste number 70 (a more challenging trail) right from the summit. Always check the availability of ski trails on the website: [www.aletscharena.ch/en/live/status-report/winter](http://www.aletscharena.ch/en/live/status-report/winter), where you'll find up-to-date information on trail difficulty levels, availability of specific attractions, their prices, and the schedule of the cable car. There are also cameras that give you a sneak peek of what awaits you in a few moments. In this guide, I provide an option to reach Eggishorn without skis, allowing you to first admire the beauty of nature from the summit and then indulge in a shorter or longer hike along designated trails from the slightly lower part of the massif. As always, before heading to a specific location, check the website for the latest information on if the chosen attraction is operational on that day (in the option I described, it's the cable car from Fiesch). Here's the link to the website: [www.aletscharena.ch/en](http://www.aletscharena.ch/en).

If you've arrived in Switzerland during the winter, your adventure begins with a journey through the mighty mountain ranges by cogwheel train. Outside the winter season, you have the option to choose an alternative

route heading east towards Innertkirchen, then traversing dozens of stunning curves to the towns of Obergoms, Oberwald, and ultimately reaching Fiesch. Both routes cover approximately 100 km and take around 2 hours of travel. Here, I'll describe the route that leads to the town of Fiesch, both in the summer and winter, which requires an additional payment for the cogwheel train crossing.



Set your alarm for an early hour (the round trip will take about four hours), pack some provisions, prepare a thermos of hot tea, get into your car, set your navigation for the town of Fiesch (due to ongoing road repairs, navigation is almost essential), specifically, to the chosen parking area (Fieschertalstrasse Parking or Parking Gondelbahn Fiesch-Eggishorn), and hit the road! 😊 Head west towards the town of Spiez on the southern side of Lake Thun. In Spiez, head south. After about 40 minutes and approximately 40 kilometers, you'll reach the town of Kandersteg. From here, a cogwheel train will take you, along with your car (which you won't leave!), to the other side of the mountain range. You'll travel for about half an hour through a sixteen-kilometer tunnel.

**Note that the previously purchased vignette for toll roads does not cover ferry transportation.**

I suggest making the payment on-site upon reaching the crossing. The cost for a one-way crossing in 2024 is 25 CHF from Monday to Thursday and 28 CHF from Friday to Sunday. You can check the current price using the link provided above.

You'll make the ferry payment before boarding at the toll collection point (at the gates) or through the website: [HERE](#).

After the ferry crossing, continue south for about 10 km. Beyond the town of Steg-Hohtenn, head east. After covering another approximately 40 kilometers, you'll arrive in the town of Fiesch.

Choose any parking conveniently located near the Aletsch Arena station. There are plenty of parking spaces on both sides of the river. It's essential to select a parking area with a barrier at the entrance because you initiate the payment process by credit card upon entry (the machine records the entry time). Upon exit, you again use your card, and the system deducts the amount corresponding to the time your car spent in the parking area.

The parking cost in 2024 is approximately 8 CHF for the entire stay – the price list is available [HERE](#).

If any issues arise upon exiting the parking lot, you can seek assistance at the ticket counters of the cable car, provided you have the tickets for all participants that were used during the cable car ride.

You can purchase tickets at the ticket counters in the Aletsch Arena building or in advance through the website:

[www.shop.aletscharena.ch/en/](http://www.shop.aletscharena.ch/en/)

You have several options to choose from. I recommend using the **Aletsch Explorer / Aletsch Discovery Pass** (click [HERE](#)) for hiking trips with a family discount, providing unlimited mobility in the Aletsch Arena zone.



The pass includes free rides on all cable cars connecting hiking trails and covers the train route Brig – Mörel – Betten Talstation – Fiesch – Fürgangen, and in winter, it also includes the Sports Bus route from Fiesch to Fieschertal.

**The Aletsch Discovery Pass** does not entitle you to ski or sled.

When purchasing two full-price passes for adults (both parents), their own children up to the age of 19 receive complimentary passes.

The cost of one ticket in 2024 is 55 CHF. Therefore, the cost for a family with children up to 19 years old would be 110 CHF.

This option does not cover the scenario where only one parent goes on the trip with the children (as I experienced myself). In that case, to reach Eggishorn, you need to purchase individual tickets for a one-time cable car ride from Fiesch to Eggishorn and back.

The Swiss Half-Fare Card is accepted, but it is not valid with the Aletsch Discovery Pass family ticket.

The cable car ride from Fiesch to Eggishorn with a transfer at Fiescheralp takes 20 minutes. The route allows for the transportation of wheelchairs and strollers. I recommend heading directly to the Eggishorn point first, as this cable car station operates for a shorter duration. Afterwards, you can make a stop at the intermediate station, Fiescheralp. Upon reaching the Eggishorn station at an elevation of 2869 meters, it's worth heading to the impressive viewpoint. From there, you can admire the vastness of the Aletsch Glacier, along with the highest peaks and **most famous mountains in Switzerland (Mönch, Eiger, Jungfrau, Wannenhorn, Finsteraarhorn, Weisshorn, the Mischabel massif, Matterhorn), and even Mont Blanc.** You can identify them through markings on the map and use binoculars placed on the observation platform.



During the winter season, if you are a skier, you can start your journey from the Eggishorn station (as seen in the picture). However, it's important to note that hiking trails are only accessible from the Fiescheralp intermediate station during winter. In the summer, you can embark on treks from both the Eggishorn and Fiescheralp points. Useful applications for this adventure include SwitzerlandMobility and Mapy.cz (more about applications in: [THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE THE TRIP – Trails apps](#)).

Available both in summer and winter, the trail from the Fiescheralp station to the village of Bettmeralp, from where you can take a cable car to the Bettmerhorn viewpoint (offering a similar view of the Aletsch Glacier), covers a distance of 4 kilometers and takes over an hour. I encourage you, if you have plenty of time, to embark on such an adventure to Bettmeralp and then proceed to the mentioned viewpoint or take a leisurely stroll to the lake called Bettmersee.



Photo: Trail beginning from Fiescheralp station to Bettmeralp village

Fiescheralp station is an ideal spot for a longer break, whether it's for a packed lunch or a meal at the available restaurant.



You can find all the necessary information on the resort's website:

[www.aletscharena.ch/en](http://www.aletscharena.ch/en)

Information on toboggan runs and sled rentals: [HERE](#)

Bike rentals – click [HERE](#)

Overview map of trails and lifts in Aletsch Arena:

- Summer – click [HERE](#)
- Winter – click [HERE](#)

### **COST SUMMARY FOR 2024**

(option: 2 adults + 2 children up to 19)

Railway ferry crossing – 25 CHF x 2 (or 28 CHF one way – depending on the day of the week)

Parking – 8 CHF

Family ticket – 110 CHF

**Total:** 50 CHF + 8 CHF + 110 CHF = **168 CHF**