

**W**hether you ski or go ice diving, snowkite or airboard, jump or snowboard—you can pretty much do anything here if it involves snow, even wearing skis and pulled by horses. For more hints (tired yet?), take this Inside Scoop with you.

**travel:** delighting in the spirit of adventure • a vacation from home to explore places that are not your home • knowing life is different, knowing this is a joy of travel • enjoying the journey, not just the destination • a privilege best used with patience, humour and curiosity • fun • coming home with great tales •

The **Montreux** Jazz Festival is world-famous, held early July on the shores of **Lake Geneva**. Over the years its musical offerings have been broadened to other artists and genres; a mecca for music lovers. **Trivia:** Deep Purple's song *Smoke on the Water* is about the band seeing casino burn down during a 1971 concert.

#### Your Counsellor

Our knowledge and experience help turn dreams into first-rate vacations. Ask your counsellor about any details, including:

- airport information/transfers
- special excursions
- about the mix of city/alps.

**LeGrow's Travel**  
We Know Travel Best.™  
A Maritime Travel Company

# LeGrow's Travel

## Inside Scoop: Switzerland

**Know before you go: travel isn't just your destination, it's also the journey**

**B**eing landlocked—set amid France, Italy, Germany, Liechtenstein and Austria—Switzerland is so easy to get to from other parts of Europe. Plan ahead for benefits such as securing your accommodation and in-country travel. Tips:

- Be realistic: we know you want value for money in balancing choices and amenities with budgets. No matter what, aim to relax and enjoy. Special requests are requests only for such upgrades as a room with a view or quiet courtyard.
- Each person must have a valid passport [www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/index.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/index.asp). Keep separate photocopies of its ID page or snap a cell photo.
- Check with your cell provider for packages. Internet access is widely available.
- Currency is the Swiss franc. Banks change money for a fee, ATMs and merchants take Canadian debit and credit cards. Log the dates you'll be away with your bank and credit card companies. Some shops and restaurants also take Euros.
- Take adapter plugs (voltage converter) for 220 volt outlets.
- As in any country, if you don't speak the languages, just try—people often go out of their way to help. Take LeGrow's Travel's Inside Scoop: Popular Phrases for help with 3 (German, French, Italian) of the country's 4 (Romansh) official languages.
- Foods you must try include a raclette with melted cheese, potatoes and sides, fondue and (again melted cheese) yummy rösti—a crispy grated fried potato delight, often with onion, herbs and/or cheese on top.

Above all, travel with a positive attitude—patience and a spirit of adventure will carry you through any experience!

#### Small in Size, BIG in Activities

The Swiss Alps mountain range span the central south area, some 60% of the country (mainland Nova Scotia, minus Cape Breton). Whether you intend to only ski, walk around one of more than 1,500 lakes or aim to pack in cheese manufacturing visits. Besides watches and annual Christmas markets in many towns and cities, find cool gifts at Victorinox's Swiss Knife Valley Visitor Centre in **Brunnen**. Book ahead to make your own pocket knife (pack in a checked bag). The Swiss Camera Museum in **Vevey** showcases the history of photography. Travel plans may be scuttled by weather with poor visibility. If you have something booked, check weather reports before heading out that day.

#### Country Travel Made Easy

Travelling is about as easy as getting around a large city: the public system includes trains, lake steamers, buses and city transportation. You can travel through the Alps, **St. Moritz**, **Lugano** and **Zermatt**, many towns connected by trains and extensive bus networks even to the most out-of-the-way find. You can easily connect with other countries trains. Ask your counsellor about Swiss SBB rail and the Rail Europe/Eurail passes: a Swiss Transfer Ticket and Swiss Card (only for visitors) provide round-trip travel from any Swiss airport or border town to a destination in the country for less than many other tickets—book and reserve in advance. A very very very handy service is SBB's Fast Baggage program that delivers luggage from many train stations to dozens of cities (for a fee); check your bags, skis, snowboards, sleds or strollers etc. in and collect them at your destination.

Buy insurance that covers your activities: Ask your counsellor about LeGrow's Travel medical and cancellation/interruption insurance.

#### Booked Accommodation Yet?

Not a skiing fanatic? Consider a couple of nights in a monastery. Seriously. It's a lovely way to experience nature all around you. Depending on the site's offerings, visitors decide whether to participate in services, usually taking meals with other guests and monastery members. Some offer silence, such as **Neuchâtel's Abbaye de Fontaine-André**. Or stay at a traditional Swiss hotel. For urban flair, try a design and lifestyle hotel. If travelling with your family, consider a ranch, a camping vacation or farm—you can sleep on a hay bed (maybe just the kids...) Or rent an Alpine hut, stay in a cornfield open air hotel or try an agritourism experience.

## Your Airline

Sign up online for the airline(s) email/text flight notifications as your flight could be delayed (the plane might be flying in). Transport Canada advises, “*Travellers should arrive at the airport earlier than usual, exercise patience and contact their airline for further information on their flight(s).*” Airline staff are on duty some 2-3hrs prior: due to staffing/security, check-in closes 1hr before departure. If late, you’re not entitled to board (or a refund). Unless booked ahead, seats are first-come first. Many airlines have reciprocal “code-shares;” your ticket is for one airline, you travel on another’s plane. **For carry-on and check-in baggage**, check with your airline as size/weight restrictions vary.



**Get Packing Checklist and General Planning & Packing Tips** at [www.legrowstravel.ca/inside-scoops](http://www.legrowstravel.ca/inside-scoops)  
 Your sense of adventure & humour!

## Coming Home

The Canada Border Services Agency [www.catsa.gc.ca/home](http://www.catsa.gc.ca/home) limits for goods you bring home. For 7 or more days, you can bring \$800 worth of goods with you and/or to follow later. Amounts must be noted in CAD.

**Tip:** Those envelopes in hotels for writing letters? Take 2: in one tuck in receipts for costs there, receipts for items coming home in the other, put a rounded-up amount on the outside so you know what’s spent (handy at customs).

Also see LeGrow’s Travel’s Inside Scoop: Returning to Canada. Don’t buy or accept anything suspect or that may be taken from you at customs: drugs, plants, meat/animal products or endangered species parts. Know your limits and exemptions, [www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/bgb-rmf-eng.html](http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/bgb-rmf-eng.html) such as on duty free alcohol.



**Websites and emails in blue are hyperlinked; just click!**

Canadians: Emergency? Canada’s embassy is in Bern: Kirchenfeldstrasse 88 CH-3005, +41 31 357 3200, [berncs@international.gc.ca](mailto:berncs@international.gc.ca), [www.canadainternational.gc.ca/switzerland-suisse/index.aspx](http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/switzerland-suisse/index.aspx). Or contact Global Affairs (collect if needed) 613-996-8885, [sos@international.gc.ca](mailto:sos@international.gc.ca), <https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-assistance>.

## Cities or Alps, Rural or Alps, See the Alps

**Z**urich and **G**eneva are the two largest cities, each with charms, such as Zurich’s Blinde Kuh restaurant for dining and culture in the dark. **B**asel is a city in three corners of three countries (with France and Germany), a city with 40 museums, notable architecture and an annual Fasnacht (Carnival) that starts with a procession—at 4am. South east of **B**asel, specialty tours (ask your counsellor) include hiking the **S**enda Sursilvana in autumn, panning for gold in the **R**hine River and mountain biking in **T**ujetsch, **U**pper Rhine Valley. In winter, when crossing the **O**berlap Pass is closed between **D**isentis and **S**edrun, it’s a walkers world amid the calm. In the centre of the country, **L**uzern is a top destination with paddle steamers cruising **L**ake **L**ucerne, walking trails and the **R**igi Mountain cableway with breathtaking views. See the work of artists such as Paul Klee at the **M**useum **R**osengart.

If you’re a ski fiend, favourite spots are carved into your memory. Besides more popular areas, consider less common and quirky sites: **D**isentis-**S**edrun offers freeriders ideal conditions away from busy slopes. Bar Nevada is a meeting place for music and sun lovers with terrace seats (and 15 recliners, no you can’t stay overnight) plunked in the middle of ski land. At an altitude of 2,176 meters, get there by cable railway and chair lift. Le Kuklos (“revolving” in Greek) Panorama Restaurant on **L**a **B**erneuse connects two mountains (**T**our **M**ayen, **l**a **T**our **d**’**A**i); you can see **E**iger’s north face and **M**ont **B**lanc from your seat. Bring your bathing suit for heated open air hot tubs at Jatzhütte, **D**avos (the “fun” mountain). Love people watching? Then head to **S**t. **M**oritz’s snow bar. **G**staad offers terrific mountain views (it’s not like the others don’t), a panorama of **B**erneuse, **V**alaisian, **V**aud and **F**reiburg Alps. Stay overnight in a Cabane des Violettes hut (**C**rans-**M**ontana) and party (serious partygoers) at **Z**ermatt’s Restaurant Fluhalp. From Berghotel **H**ahnenmoospass, take its 3km toboggan run (as a good Canadian) from the pass to **G**eils, then surf the Grand Masta Snowboard Park. **L**eukerbad’s Bergrestaurant Rinderhutte & Schneebar offers an overnight holiday camp with various sized rooms (with some 50 beds), showers with board and half-board available. The **Y**eti **P**ark play and adventure area for children is next to the Restaurant Risti, **E**ngelberg. Besides great restaurants, Montreux offers culinary cruises. Montreux-Veytaux’s **C**hillon **C**astle sits on a rock, this “water castle” the most visited historic building in Switzerland. With vaults and 14thC art, the complex of 25 buildings commands this gorgeous setting.

Night skiing is usually offered certain evenings. Also check out Engelberg’s wild snowXpark. Malbi Park in **M**albun offers excellent sessions for children (as do many other areas). The modern cogwheel Jungfrau railway climbs to **E**iger **G**lacier station restaurant and polar dog kennels. Through Eiger tunnel, enjoy spectacular scenery on the way to the highest railway station in Europe. **J**ungfrau**j**och **M**ountain, more than 11,000 feet up, is called the Top of Europe: view a super long ice stream and Ice Palace. Glacier Express is a private panoramic railway trip from **S**t. **M**oritz or **D**avos to **Z**ermatt through the heart of the Alps and charming towns with vistas (if you like counting, some 291 bridges and 91 tunnels): Ask your counsellor as it’s a discounted add-on with regular train travel. Also try airboarding, snow bikes, **M**arbach’s ski-jump, the toboggan run from the **F**aulhorn **v**ia **B**ussalp to **G**rinkelwald, snowtubing, the Olympic bob run in St. Moritz, skating, skiing while being pulled by a horse, snowkiting or ice diving in Les Mosses. **Tip:** If you’re not a skier or snowboarder, some 180 schools provide professional snow-sport instruction at all levels in Swiss Snow Kids Village and Swiss Snow League uniform program.

Oh look we’re out of space, no room to talk about après-ski...

## Our 24/7 Emergency Service

We constantly survey airlines, local tour companies and hotels to ensure they meet our customer service standards, so don’t let a problem ruin your holiday. Nearly all issues can be handled quickly on site—first seek help from the venue’s local staff. Otherwise, call our Emergency Travel Service at **1-888-551-1181**. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferrable. Schedule changes can occur and airlines and tour operators have the right to change flight and/or tour times, alter, combine services or substitute accommodations. Your counsellor will work with you to ensure you receive information as soon as possible and ensure satisfaction. See your brochure and ticket terms and conditions.

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