

Central Switzerland



In its own way as gorgeous as the Bernese Oberland, Switzerland's geographical and political heartland has a more soothing beauty. The mountains hunching conspiratorially around Lake Lucerne at the core of the region are greener and less jagged, and a greater number of Alpine villages and larger towns make the place feel more lived-in and familiar.

The pact that kick-started the Swiss nation was signed here more than 700 years ago on the shores of Lake Uri, and Central Switzerland is the guardian of many Swiss founding tales and myths. Its far-east corner is William Tell country, where the legendary patriot is said to have shot an apple from his son's head and gone on the run. The nearby Rütli meadow is revered as the exact spot where Switzerland was signed into being in 1291; the village of Schwyz still proudly displays that original constitution.

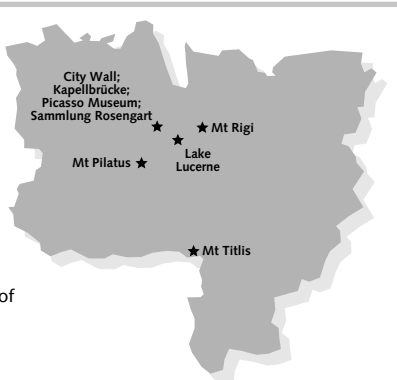
Interesting stories attach themselves to many places, from the Christian miracle that made Einsiedeln a place of pilgrimage to the pagan superstitions surrounding several peaks. According to legend, the ghost of Pontius Pilate haunts Mt Pilatus, while mischievous elves inhabit the sides of Mt Rigi.

Taking a cable car up these panoramic mountains, and others like them such as Mt Titlis and the Stanserhorn, is one of the main pastimes here. Meanwhile, lake steamers bob from shore to shore, and there's plenty of scenic hiking and skiing to be enjoyed.

Of course, as the largest town, Lucerne itself remains pivotal to the experience. Built on water, with medieval bridges, old squares and a striking skyline, it's one of the country's main drawcards. Sometimes, when tour guides in medieval costume appear, it's even vaguely reminiscent of Venice. Fortunately, however, it never gets that choked or busy.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Admiring the **Kapellbrücke** (p214) in Lucerne and climbing the **city wall** (p216)
- Seeing two sides of Pablo, in the **Picasso Museum** (p216) and **Sammlung Rosengart** (p216)
- Taking a cruise around **Lake Lucerne** (p222)
- Enjoying a mountain day-trip to the peak of **Mt Titlis** (p230) or **Mt Pilatus** (p222)
- Waking up to an unforgettable sunrise on top of 1800m **Mt Rigi** (p223)



■ POPULATION: 695,058

■ AREA: 4484 SQ KM

■ LANGUAGE: GERMAN

Orientation & Information

The official tourist region of Central Switzerland (Zentralschweiz) has at its heart Lake Lucerne (the Vierwaldstättersee or Lake of the Four Forest Cantons), which is surrounded by the four cantons of Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden (itself subdivided into the half-cantons of Nidwalden and Obwalden). Also included in this region is Switzerland's smallest rural canton of Zug, containing Lake Zug (Zugersee). In the north and west, Central Switzerland is fairly flat, but a southern tip reaches into the Alps as far as the St Gotthard Pass.

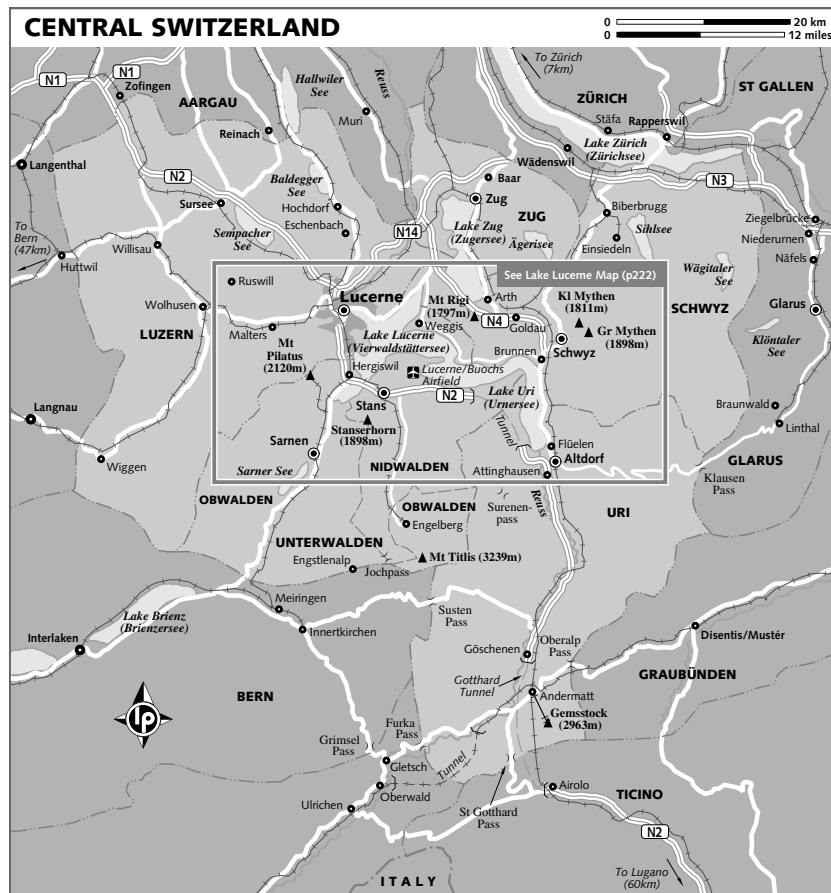
For information on the entire region, contact the tourist office in Lucerne (p214).

Getting There & Around

The nearest airport is Zürich, while road and rail connections are excellent in all directions. An interesting way to leave the region is on the William Tell Express (p331).

If you don't have a Swiss or Eurail Pass (both include lake journeys), you might want to consider purchasing the regional **Tell-Pass** (www.tell-pass.ch; per 7/15 days Sfr140/188; ☒ Apr-Oct) for rail and boat travel. Sold by the Lucerne tourist office and at all boat stations, it provides travel for two/five days respectively, and half-price fares for the remainder.

The Vierwaldstättersee guest card, available whenever you're staying anywhere in this



region, is worth having; you should ask for it if your accommodation doesn't offer it. Benefits include various discounts on sporting facilities, 10% to 50% off certain cable cars, and reductions on museum admission in Lucerne and elsewhere.

LUCERNE

pop 57,817 / elevation 435m

Legend has it that an angel with a light showed Lucerne's first settlers where to build a chapel, and in good weather even an atheist might describe the city's location as heaven-sent. Lapped by a scenic lake, surrounded by mountains of myth – a picture of this once small fishing village and its wooden Kapellbrücke (Chapel Bridge) is enough to connote the very essence of Switzerland.

Between the 13th and 19th centuries, Lucerne (Luzern in German, or 'the city of lights') made its fortune as an essential stop on the trade route over the Alps. Then its charming medieval centre and its fabulous position began attracting tourists. It's never looked back.

Orientation

The city is on the western edge of its namesake lake, straddling the Reuss River. The medieval town centre is on the northern riverbank, within walking distance of the Hauptbahnhof (train station) on the southern side.

Information

BOOKSHOPS

Schweizerhof Buchhandlung (☎ 041 410 23 71; Schweizerhofquai 2; ☎ 1.30-6.30pm Mon, 8.30am-6.30pm Tue-Fri, 8am-4pm Sat)

DISCOUNT CARDS

Lucerne Guide Stamped by your hotel, this entitles you to discounts on museum entry, some sporting facilities, car rental and lake cruises.

Museum Pass (per adult/child Sfr29/14.50) Free entry to all museums; valid for one month.

INTERNET ACCESS

Stadtbibliothek (Town Library; Löwenplatz 11; per hr Sfr4; ☎ 1.30-6pm Mon, 10am-6.30pm Tue-Fri, to 9pm Thu, 10am-4pm Sat)

Internetcafé (☎ 041 410 77 27; Löwengraben 31; per 15min Sfr4; ☎ 9am-9pm)

LAUNDRY

Jet Wash (☎ 041 240 01 51; Bruchstrasse 28; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 2.30-6.30pm Mon-Thu, 8.30am-12.30pm Fri, 9am-2pm Sat)

MEDICAL SERVICES

Permanence Medical Center (☎ 041 211 14 44; Basement, Hauptbahnhof; ☎ 24hr)

MONEY

There are numerous ATMs all around the Hauptbahnhof.

Hauptbahnhof (☎ 041 227 36 46; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat & Sun)

POST

Main post office (☎ 041 229 95 23; cnr Bahnhofstrasse & Bahnhofplatz; ☎ 7.30am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-4pm Sat) By the train station.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Lucerne Tourism (enquiries ☎ 041 227 17 17, hotel reservations 041 227 17 27; www.luzern.org; Zentralstrasse 5; ☎ 8.30am-7.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-7.30pm Sat & Sun mid-Jun–mid-Sep, to 6.30pm May & Oct, 8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat & Sun Nov-Apr) Reached from either Zentralstrasse or from Platform 3 of the train station. Offers city walking tours.

Sights

MEDIEVAL BRIDGES

The **Kapellbrücke** (Chapel Bridge), crossing the Reuss River in the Old Town, is Lucerne's most potent symbol. It dates from the 14th century and the octagonal water tower remains original. However its sides and gabled roof are modern reconstructions, rebuilt after a disastrous fire in 1993.

The bridge is famous for the triangular, painted roof panels that line its ceiling, created by Heinrich Wägmann in 1614 and depicting important events from Swiss history and mythology. Fortunately, some 30 of these were also rescued from the blaze and have been replaced at either end of the bridge. Gaps between them have been retained as a constant reminder of the loss of others.

The **Spreuerbrücke** (Spreuer Bridge) further down the river is darker and smaller, but its 1408 structure and 17th-century paintings are all original. The roof panels' theme here is artist Caspar Meglinger's movie-storyboard-style sequence of paintings, *The Dance of Death*.

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LUCERNE

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MUSEGGMAUER & CHÂTEAU GUTSCH

From its medieval **Museggmauer** (city wall; admission free; ☎ 8am-7pm Apr-Oct), there are marvellous views over Lucerne's rooftops to the lake and mountains beyond. A walkway is open between the **Schirmerturm** (tower), where you enter, and the **Wachturm**, from where you have to retrace your steps. You can also ascend and descend the **Zytturm** or **Männlerturm** (the latter not connected to the ramparts walkway).

At the time of writing, the hilltop **Château Gutsch** hotel was closed, its fate unknown. However, the Gütschbahn funicular (Sfr3 each way) continues to run up to the summit, where there are also breathtaking views.

PICASSO MUSEUM

Don't arrive at the **Picasso Museum** (☎ 041 410 35 33; Furengasse 21; adult/student & senior Sfr8/6, combined with Sammlung Rosengart Sfr18/16; ☎ 10am-6pm Apr-Oct, 11am-5pm Nov-Mar) expecting to find many of the man's works. Although it does include a few ceramics and sketches, this is principally a portrait of the artist as an impish craftsman, lover and father. Nearly 200 photographs by David Douglas Duncan create a captivating picture of the last 17 years of Picasso's life with his family in their Cannes home. It's a uniquely revealing series.

SAMMLUNG ROSENGART

By contrast, the **Rosengart Collection** (☎ 041 220 16 60; www.rosengart.ch; Pilatusstrasse 10; adult/student Sfr15/9, combined with Picasso Museum Sfr18/16; ☎ 10am-6pm Apr-Oct, 11am-5pm Nov-Mar) does contain a significant amount of Picasso's own art. Showcasing the works retained by Angela Rosengart, a Swiss art dealer and friend of Picasso's, its ground floor is entirely devoted to the Spanish master. In the basement, there's a selection of sketches and small paintings by Paul Klee; upstairs you'll find works by Cézanne, Kandinsky, Miro and Modigliani, and a fine handful of pictures by Marc Chagall.

VERKEHRSHAUS

Planes, trains and automobiles are showcased in the huge, family-oriented **Transport Museum** (☎ 0848 852 020; www.verkehrshaus.org; Lidostasse 5; adult/child/rail-pass holder/student Sfr24/10/12/22; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Nov-Mar). They are found alongside space rockets, flight simulators and other interactive exhibits designed to bring out your inner child (or inner bully if you're one of the occasionally over-eager

adults). Switzerland's most popular museum also has a planetarium, a giant-screen **IMAX cinema** (www.imax.ch; adult/child Sfr16/12 extra, not covered by the Museum Pass; ☎ screenings hourly 11am-9pm) and the **Swiss Arena** – an eye-catching floor map of Switzerland and accompanying geographical puzzle. There's a collection of technology-related paintings, drawings and sculptures by Swiss artist Hans Erni. Finally, in good weather, a permanently moored hot-air balloon, the Hi-Flyer, will take you up 120m above the complex (call ☎ 041 370 20 20 after noon daily for details). Take bus No 6, 8 or 24 to get here.

KULTUR UND KONGRESSZENTRUM & KUNSTMUSEUM

A striking work of post-modern architecture in an otherwise largely historic city, Parisian architect Jean Nouvel's **KKL** (Arts & Congress Centre; www.kkl-luzern.ch; Europaplatz) really stands out with its prime waterfront location, neighbouring the main train station. But if you think it looks good, wait until you hear it. The acoustics of the main concert hall are as close to perfect as humankind has ever known – or at least that's the verdict of many musicians and conductors who have performed here. The trick is that the tall, narrow concert hall is partly built below the level of the lake's surface, is entirely surrounded by a reverberating chamber and has an adjustable suspended ceiling, all creating extra sound dampening. In the bubble of silence that has resulted, you can hear everything – to the point where audience members are even quite self-conscious about unwrapping seats.

All the accolades showered upon the hall – it can be adjusted to any type of music – have raised the profile of the tripartite Lucerne Music Festival (see opposite). So increasingly it's one of the highlights on the global music calendar.

There are public **tours** (☎ 041 226 77 77; info@kkl-luzern.ch) of the building most Saturdays and Sundays at 11am, but they are only in German. Individual tours can, however, be arranged in English for groups.

Otherwise, you can enter the building to see the city's **Kunstmuseum** (Museum of Art; ☎ 041 226 78 00; www.kunstmuseumluzern.ch; Level K, KKL, Europaplatz; adult/child Sfr10/8, Sfr4 extra for special exhibits; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun, to 8pm Wed). The permanent collection is pretty uninspiring, but keep an eye out for temporary exhibitions.

VICTORIAN-ERA ATTRACTIONS

North of the old town, there's a cluster of 19th-century attractions for which Lucerne is famous but whose appeal is largely nostalgic. The renowned **Löwendenkmal** (Lion Monument; Denkmalstrasse) is dedicated to the Swiss soldiers who died in 1792 defending King Louis XVI and family during the French Revolution. Mark Twain once called this carved lion the 'saddest and most moving piece of rock in the world', but the sentiment might be lost on modern audiences.

Next door is the **Gletschergarten** (Glacier Garden; ☎ 041 410 43 40; www.gletschergarten.org; Denkmalstrasse 4; adult/student/child Sfr10/8/5; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm rest of year). This strip of rock bears the scars (including huge potholes) inflicted on it by the glacier that slid over it some 20 million years ago. The best thing about the garden, though, is its kitschy 1001-nights mirror maze. The **Alpineum** (☎ 041 410 40 64; www.alpineum.ch; Denkmalstrasse 11; adult/student Sfr5/4; ☎ 9am-12.30pm & 1.30-6pm Apr-Oct) opposite is a musty collection of Alpine relief maps and can be easily missed.

The renovated **Bourbaki Panorama** (☎ 041 412 30 30; www.bourbakipanorama.ch; Löwenplatz 11; adult/student & senior Sfr8/7; ☎ 9am-6pm) is a very professional depiction of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870–71, with a moving narrative (also in English) that brings to life the 1100-sq-metre circular painting of miserable-looking troops and civilians. All the same, it's hard to see the panorama appealing to those without a specific military interest.

OTHER MUSEUMS

Historisches Museum (History Museum; ☎ 041 228 54 24; www.hmluzern.ch; Pfistergasse 24; adult/child/student Sfr6/2.50/5; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) is cleverly and carefully organised into a series of attention-grabbing themes, from lust and lasciviousness to government and tourism. Pick up a barcode-reading audio-guide, pick your topic and let yourself be guided through your chosen story in German or English.

The **Naturhistorisches Museum** (Museum of Natural History; ☎ 041 228 54 11; www.naturmuseum.ch Kasernenplatz 6; adult/child/student Sfr6/1.50/5; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) offers an enticing entree into the natural world, especially for children, with lots of hands-on displays.

The **Richard Wagner Museum** (☎ 041 360 23 70; www.richard-wagner-museum.ch; Richard-Wagner-Weg 27; adult/student Sfr6/4; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-5pm Tue-Sun mid-

Mar–Nov), housed in the composer's former residence in Tribtschen, on the lake's southern shore, has a collection of historic musical instruments.

Activities

There's supervised swimming at the **Strandbad Lido** (☎ 041 370 38 06; adult/child Sfr6/3) near Camping Lido (see p219) or you can swim for free on the other bank of the lake by Seepark, off Alpenquai.

SNG (☎ 041 368 08 08; www.sng.ch), on the northern side of Seebücke, rents out rowing boats, pedalos and small motor boats (from Sfr25/25/50 per hour, plus deposit) and offers cheap lake cruises (Sfr15).

If you can't choose between an ascent up Mts Rigi, Pilatus, Titlis or the Stanserhorn, you can cover them all quickly, as well as Lake Lucerne, on a **Zeppelin flight** (☎ 052 354 58 74, 052 354 58 88; www.skycruise.ch; flights from Sfr380; ☎ Wed-Sun May-Oct, subject to change). Blimps leave from Lucerne/Buochs airfield near Stans.

For snowshoe tours (from Sfr85) or adventure sports like tandem paragliding (from Sfr150), bungee jumping (Sfr160) and canyoning (from Sfr155), contact **Outventure** (☎ 041 611 14 41; www.outventure.ch; Stansstad).

Festivals & Events

Lucerne's six-day **Fasnacht** celebrations are more boisterous and fun than Basel's famous carnival. The party kicks off on 'Dirty Thursday' with the emergence of the character 'Fritschli' from a window in the town hall, when bands of musicians and revellers take to the streets. The carnival moves through increasingly raucous celebrations climaxing on Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday), and is over on Ash Wednesday.

The musical **Lucerne Festival** (tickets ☎ 041 226 44 80, info 041 226 44 00; www.lucernefestival.ch) is divided into three separate seasons, Easter, summer and 'Piano' (in November). Concerts take place in the KKL (opposite).

Lucerne has several public holidays in addition to national ones: Corpus Christi (30 May), Assumption (15 August), St Leodegar's Day (2 October), All Saints' Day (1 November), Immaculate Conception (8 December), New Year's Eve and 2 January.

Walking Tour

Start by crossing the **Kapellbrücke** (1; p214) from the south to the north bank, admiring

the illustrated roof panels in order as you go. Double back to the south bank along the modern, concrete Rathaussteg bridge, arriving in front of the **Jesuitenkirche (2)**, the oldest baroque church in Switzerland. Behind this lies the medieval **Franziskanerkirche (3)**, which has been frequently altered since its original construction in the 13th century. The nearby **Rittersche palace (4)** was built in 1577 for the city's mayor, but now houses the cantonal government.

Continue west along the south bank, past the **Nadelwehr (5)**, or water spikes, once used to regulate the river's water levels. Skirt left around the **Naturhistorisches Museum (6)**; p217) and cross the **Spreuerbrücke (7)**; p214).

You're now in Mühleplatz on the edge of the old city. Veer right into Weinmarkt, as you admire the painted façades on several of the historic buildings. Then exit into Hirschenplatz, where you'll see a building with a drawing of Goethe, boasting that the writer once lodged here in 1779. Follow Weggigasse to the intersection with Mariahilfsgasse and turn left up the hill.

At the top, follow the stairs up through the park to the **Musseggmauer (8)**. Climb the

Schirmerturm here and enjoy a walk to and fro along the city ramparts, before emerging in the same place.

Head left (northeast) out of the park and continue down Musseggstrasse, passing underneath an arch in the city wall and continuing on to Museumsplatz. Turn left until you come to the **Bourbaki Panorama (9)**; p217) and Löwenplatz. Cross the square diagonally to have a quick look at Lucerne's famous **Löwendenkmal (10)**; p217).

On the return leg, make a detour south to the **Hofkirche (11)**, on the site of Lucerne's first monastery. Even if you're not particularly interested in the part Romanesque, part Renaissance church, there's a nice view from its broad stairs – and it's an ideal spot to gather your breath.

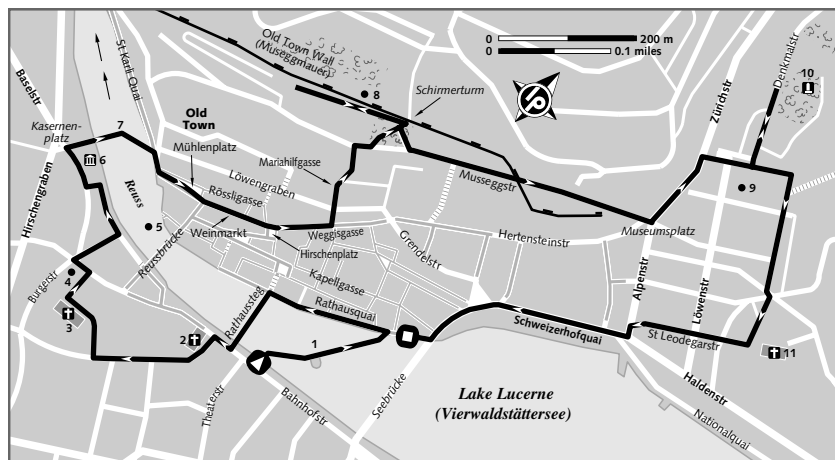
Finally, make your way back along Schweizerhofquai to Rathausquai and choose one of the restaurants or cafés facing the waterfront to enjoy a drink.

Sleeping BUDGET Hostels

Backpackers Lucerne (☎ 041 360 04 20; www.backpackerslucerne.ch; Alpenquai 42; dm Sfr28, d Sfr66; ☎ reception 7-10am & 4-11pm) Cheerfully decorated, with balconies overlooking the lake in a leafy spot, this friendly former students' residence makes a superlative backpackers' hostel. Facilities include kitchen and laundry. It's a 15-minute walk southeast of the train station.

WALK FACTS

Start Kapellbrücke
Finish Rathausquai
Distance 3.5km
Duration 1½ hours



SYHA hostel (☎ 041 420 88 00; www.youthhostel.ch/Luzern; Sedelstrasse 12; dm/d Sfr32.50/82; ☎ check-in 2pm-midnight in summer, from 4pm in winter; ☎ (P)) Although modern, well-run and clean, this hostel's location north of the centre is not particularly convenient. It still gets busy in summer, though, when it's best to book. Get bus No 18 from the train station to Jugenderbeerge, bus No 19 to Rosenberg or bus No 1 to Schlossberg.

Pensions & Hotels

Tourist Hotel (☎ 041 410 24 74; www.touristhotel.ch; St-Karli-Quai 12; dm Sfr35-40, s/d Sfr70/100, with bathroom Sfr90/120; ☎ ☒) On the waterfront but away from the bustling tourist zone, this friendly budget hotel feels like an upmarket hostel, with spotless rooms in varying cheerful colour schemes. Some have balconies.

Bed and Breakfast (☎ 041 310 15 14; www.theBandB.ch; Taubenhausstrasse 34; s/d with shared bathroom Sfr80/120; ☎ (P)) On a good day, the atmosphere at this cosy, stylish residence feels like a bunch of friends – of varying ages – have got together for a calm, relaxing weekend. Rooms have white walls and parquet flooring, while there's a lovely old-fashioned bathroom with tub and pleasant garden. Take bus No 1 to Eichof.

Hotel Löwengraben (☎ 041 417 12 12; www.loewengraben.ch; Löwengraben 18; dm/s/d/ste Sfr30/120/165/165; ☎ ☒) This revamped prison is a novelty, but fussier guests might find that the cheaper rooms all too accurately re-create the jail experience. With cell doors and barred windows, they consist of little more than a bed, bare floorboards and a prefabricated bathroom. They do for a short stay, however, while the suites are more congenial.

Also recommended:

Hotel Alpha (☎ 041 240 42 80; www.hotelalpha.ch; Zähringerstrasse 24; s/d Sfr75/110) Simple but clean lodgings, about a 10-minute walk from the centre.

Pension Villa Maria (☎ 041 370 21 19; villamaria@bluewin.ch; Haldenstrasse 36; d with shared/private bathroom Sfr130/160; ☎ closed Nov-Feb; (P)) Friendly granny-chic pension near the Transport Museum. Most rooms share facilities.

Camping

Camping Lido (☎ 041 370 21 46; www.camping-international.ch; Lidostrasse 8; camp sites per adult/tent Sfr10/10, plus Sfr5 for electricity, cabin beds Sfr20; ☎ 15 Mar–31 Oct) The well-equipped ground is on the lake's northern shore, east of town. It also has six-

bed wooden cabins (no breakfast, sleeping bag required). Get bus No 6, 8 or 24 or a boat to the Verkehrshaus.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

Most of the following hotels offer discounted rates during winter – sometimes up to one-third off.

Hotel zum Rebstock (☎ 041 410 35 81; www.here.ware.ch; St-Leodegar-Strasse 3; s/d & tr Sfr160/260; (P)) Spread over two houses – one still with medieval wooden beams and low ceilings – Rebstock's excellent rooms are tastefully decorated in a range of styles from urban to rustic and colonial to romantic. In three of them, funky tile decorations have been used to turn the bathrooms into works of art.

Hotel Hofgarten (☎ 041 410 88 88; www.hofgarten.ch; Stadthofstrasse 14; s/d/tr from Sfr195/295/335; ☎ ☒ (P)) Rebstock's sister hotel also has striking, individually decorated rooms, but in a slightly more streamlined fashion. The Mies van der Rohe furniture in No 226 sets the tone.

Hotel des Alpes (☎ 041 410 58 25; www.desalpes-luzern.ch; Rathausquai 5; s/d from Sfr125/195) The best of the several hotels along this noisy strip, Hotel des Alpes' rooms are older in style, but the place is well-maintained and overlooks the river near the Kapellbrücke.

Hotel Waldstätterhof (☎ 041 227 12 71; www.hotel-waldstaetterhof.ch; Zentralstrasse 4; s Sfr150-170, d Sfr190-270; ☎ (P)) Surprisingly good for a hotel right opposite the train station, this temperance hotel has jauntily coloured modern rooms behind its faux Gothic, red-brick exterior.

Hotel des Balances (☎ 041 418 28 28; www.balances.ch; Weinmarkt 6; s Sfr200-350, d Sfr300-420; ☎ (P)) City tour guides frequently describe this four-star hotel's historic frescoed façade as the city's most beautiful, and the rooms inside are elegant, too. Be warned, however, that the Weinmarkt square can be noisy at night, so book rooms facing the river if possible.

Hotel Krone (☎ 041 419 44 00; www.krone-luzern.ch; Weinmarkt 12; s/d Sfr185/290) The central Krone combines an ornate historic façade with modern, pastel-coloured rooms throughout. Those facing the square are noisier.

Hotel Montana (☎ 041 419 00 00; www.hotel-montana.ch; Adligenswilerstrasse 22; s Sfr195-295, d Sfr320-440; ☎ ☒) This opulent Art Deco hotel perches on a hill overlooking the lake and is reached by its own funicular. Many of the generously sized bedrooms enjoy fantastic views, as do

the breakfast room, terrace and the barrel-hall entrance.

Hotel (☎ 041 226 86 86; www.the-hotel.ch; Sempacherstrasse 14; ste from Sfr350-540; 🍷) Be a film star in your own bedtime in architect Jean Nouvel's low-lit design hotel, which features a scene from a different arthouse movie on the ceiling of each sleek matt-black suite.

Palace Luzern (☎ 041 416 16 16; www.palace-luzern.ch; Haldenstrasse 10; s Sfr390-560, d Sfr490-660) This huge luxury hotel on the waterfront is a favourite with the *Condé Nast* set for its *belle époque* style. Given its supposed pre-eminence, though, some finishes look a touch less than perfect. Some guests find it slightly overpriced.

Eating

Bodu (☎ 041 410 01 77; Kornmarkt 5; mains Sfr18-45) This French brasserie is a local institution, celebrated for its Parisian-café interior, Bordeaux wines and excellent river views. It specialises in Provençal cuisine, but also branches out into dishes from Piedmont and even the Antilles.

Hofgarten (☎ 041 41 0 01 77; Kornmarkt 5; soups & salads Sfr10, mains Sfr24-30, daily menus Sfr20) Enjoy the best vegetarian food in town in this restaurant's leafy garden. The specialities range from braised aubergine to Thai curry to vegetarian *Lozärner Chögalipaschtetli* (stuffed vol-au-vents), but the emphasis is always on fresh ingredients.

Jazzkantine (☎ 041 410 73 73; Grabenstrasse 8; snacks from Sfr6.50, mains Sfr19-25; 🍷 7-12.30am Mon-Sat, 4pm-12.30am Sun) With its stainless steel bar, sturdy wooden tables, chalkboard menus and wide selection of whiskies, this is a funky and rather smoky haunt, where you might have trouble catching a staff member's attention. Weeknight jazz workshops are followed by gigs on Saturday night.

KKL World Café (Europaplatz 1; sandwiches from Sfr8.50, mains Sfr16-19; 🍷 9am-midnight) This sleek-looking, casual bistro stocks muesli and sandwiches in its glass counters, but also offers a range of world dishes in woks at lunch and dinner.

Hotel Restaurant Schiff (☎ 041 418 52 52; Unter der Egg 8; mains Sfr20-45) Fish from Lake Lucerne, home-made Wurst and some of the city's most celebrated *Chögalipaschtetli* (vol-au-vents stuffed with meat and mushrooms – called *Kügelipastetli* in High German) are served at this old-fashioned but esteemed

AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Wirtshaus Taube (☎ 041 210 07 47; Burgerstrasse 3; mains Sfr18-40; 🍷 11am-midnight Mon-Sat) An excellent place to sample the local *Rüüdigi* cuisine, Taube has its own best-selling cookbook and a menu that goes well beyond Lucerne's trademark *Chögalipaschtetli* vol-au-vents. Lake fish, milk soup, rösti, calf's liver, homemade veal or pork sausages with onion sauce, venison and Alpine macaroni are just a few of the other dishes served in this updated but still cosy, former tavern.

restaurant. In summer, sit under the arcades facing the waterfront.

Wirtshaus Galliker (☎ 041 240 10 01; Schützenstrasse 1; mains Sfr20-50; 🍷 lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, closed Jul–mid-Aug) This very old fashioned restaurant is not without charm. The same family has owned it since 1856 and many groups of customers seem to be regulars, which bodes well for the traditional Lucerne cuisine.

Hug (☎ 041 410 10 92; Mühleplatz 6; lunch menus Sfr17-25; 🍷 7am-5pm Mon-Sat) This traditional café on the waterfront serves excellent breakfasts, delicious cakes and confectionery, plus cheap Swiss and Lucerne specialities. It's a successful local chain and has other outlets.

Heini (☎ 041 412 20 20; Am Falkenplatz) Heini has since mushroomed into a successful bakery/confectionery chain, but this was one of the original outlets and has an atmospheric 'grand café' as well as a takeaway shop.

Manor (nr Theilingasse & Weggigasse) This branch of the national supermarket restaurant chain is noteworthy for its panoramic roof terrace.

Drinking & Entertainment

Rathaus Bräuerei (☎ 041 410 52 57; Unter den Egg 2; 🍷 9am-midnight Wed-Sun, from 8am Tue & Sat) Sip home-brewed beer under the vaulted arches of this atmospheric tavern, or nab a pavement table and watch the river flow.

Penthouse (Astoria Hotel, Pilatusstrasse 29) This is a ritzy rooftop bar with plump sofas where, despite the great view, the clientele are busier discreetly checking each other out. On the ground floor in the same hotel, you'll find the door to the equally posh, but very popular Pravda nightclub (open Wednes-

day to Saturday) – a place where Ministry of Sound DJs have regular residencies.

ABC Club Mixx (☎ 041 240 88 77; www.abcmixx.ch; Pilatusplatz; 🍷 daily) This plush mainstream club is unusually built inside a former cinema and retains some of the flock wallpaper in the entrance.

Loft (Haldenstrasse 21; 🍷 Wed-Sun) With a steel-and-concrete minimalist design, this attracts a trendy, well-dressed, but unpretentious, young crowd and plays danceable house, Latin, hip-hop and urban sounds.

Schüür (☎ 041 368 10 30; www.schuur.ch; Tribschenstrasse 1; 🍷 generally Wed-Sun) Laid-back DJ bar and club attracting a mixed crowd (late 20s, early 30s), although the mood depends on the programme of music. Turn left just after the railway bridge, then right.

Sedel (Emmenbrücke; 🍷 always Fri & Sat, but sometimes also Mon & Thu) This formerly rundown, squat-like former prison was undergoing renovation at the time of writing, but should still maintain a fairly underground air with live industrial, experimental and punk music. It's near the SYHA hostel, behind Rotsee.

Restaurant Stadtkeller (☎ 041 410 47 33; Sternepplatz 3) Folkloric tourist trap.

Shopping

Fruit and vegetable stalls spring forth along the river quays every Tuesday and Saturday morning. There's also a **flea market** (Burgerstrasse/Reussteg) each Saturday from May to October.

Getting There & Away

Hourly trains connect Lucerne to Interlaken (Sfr29, two hours, via the scenic Brünig Pass), Bern (Sfr34, 1¼ hours), Lugano (Sfr56, 2¼ hours) and Geneva (Sfr70, 3¼ hours, via Olten or Langnau). Zürich-bound trains are hourly (Sfr22, one hour).

The N2 (E9) motorway connecting Basel and Lugano passes by Lucerne, and the N14 provides the road link to Zürich.

BOAT

For information on boat transport, see p222. The departure points are the quays around Bahnhofplatz/Europaplatz.

Getting Around

Should you be going further than the largely pedestrianised Old Town, city buses leave from outside the Hauptbahnhof at Bahn-

hofplatz. Tickets cost Sfr2 for a short journey, Sfr2.60 for one zone and Sfr3.80 for two. Ticket dispensers indicate the correct fare for each destination. The 24-hour pass (Sfr9.50) covers all zones, though with a stamped *Luzern* guide you can get a three-day bus ticket for Sfr14 and Swiss Pass holders travel free. There's an underground car park at the train station.

AROUND LUCERNE Alphornbau Stocker

The Alphorn workshop **Stocker** (☎ 041 340 88 86; Industrie Schweighof, CH6010 Kriens-Luzern; admission free; 🍷 8am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) is south of Lucerne in Schweighof (take bus No 1 to Kriens, then bus No 16 to Oberkuoni-matt). Here you can learn all about how these huge, unwieldy Alpine instruments are made and have the chance not only to buy, but also to blow, your own horn.

Glasi Hergiswil

A visit to **Hergiswil Glassworks** (☎ 041 630 12 23; www.glasi.ch; Seestrasse 12; admission free; 🍷 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat; glass-blowing only until noon on Sat) is instructive and interesting, with the chance to see glass-blowing in action and buy souvenirs, after listening to an audiovisual history. The factory is between Lucerne and Alpnachstad, and is an easy stopover on a round-trip up to Mt Pilatus (p222). Make sure your train stops at Hergiswil, however, as not all do.

LAKE LUCERNE

It's possible to feel the call of the mountains even while standing in downtown Lucerne. Majestic peaks hunch over the coastline of the adjacent Lake of the Four Forest Cantons, or Vierwaldstättersee – which twists and turns as much as the tongue does while saying that. (Little wonder English speakers use the shorthand Lake Lucerne.)

With Mt Pilatus, Mt Rigi and the Stanserhorn all having lookouts on their summits, you're really spoilt for choice. But, rest assured, any view across the shimmering expanse of water to the green hillsides, meadows and valleys beyond is never disappointing.

And apart from its many mountain lookout points, the lake also offers pleasant little tucked-away resorts, which can be reached

by boat. The far eastern reach of Lake Lucerne – Lake Uri or Urnersee – has special significance for the Swiss, as it's home to the Rütli meadow where the country was supposedly born.

Getting Around

The **Lake Lucerne Navigation Company SGV** (☎ 041 367 67 67; www.lakelucerne.ch in German) operates boats (sometimes paddle-steamers) daily. This excludes the Lake Uri section of the lake, its most easterly finger, where services only go past Rütli in winter on Sundays and national holidays.

From Lucerne, destinations include Alpnachstad (one way/return Sfr19.20/20, 40 minutes each way), Weggis (Sfr13.80/21, 45 minutes), Vitznau (Sfr19.20/29, 55 minutes), Brunnen (Sfr28/42, 1½ hours) and Flüelen (Sfr32/48, two hours). Longer trips are relatively much cheaper than short ones, and you can alight as often as you want. Swiss Pass and Eurail (on days selected for travel only) are valid on scheduled boat trips, while Inter Rail entitles you to half-price. Passes will get you discounts on selected mountain railways and cable cars. Ask about discounts for late afternoon or evening round trips during summer. There are also special dinner/dancing cruises on offer.

If driving, you'll find that roads run close to the shoreline most of the way around – excluding the stretch from Flüelen to Stansstad. Here, the N2 motorway ploughs a

fairly straight line, sometimes underground and usually away from the water.

MT PILATUS

Looming over Lucerne from the southwest, **Mt Pilatus** (www.pilatus.com) is one of the region's most popular destinations. According to legend, this rugged 2120m peak was named after Pontius Pilate, whose corpse was thrown into a small lake on its summit and who has haunted its heights ever since. In reality, however, the monkier is more likely to derive from the Latin word *pileatus*, meaning covered in clouds – as the mountain frequently is.

The classic 'golden round-trip' takes bus No 1 to Kriens and the cable car, via Krienseregg and Fräkmüntegg, up to Mt Pilatus. From the summit, the world's steepest cog railway (at a maximum gradient of 48%) brings you down to Alpnachstad, from where a lake steamer heads back to Lucerne the same day.

The reverse route (Alpnachstad–Pilatus–Kriens–Lucerne) is much less crowded, however, and from November to May only the Kriens route is open, meaning you have to retrace your steps up the mountain and back during that time of year. Even this route is closed for the last two weeks of October, while the cable cars are serviced.

Total cost of the return trip is Sfr79.80 (Sfr40.80/43.20/52.30 with valid Swiss/Eurail/Inter Rail passes). If you wish to walk part of the way, it is three hours down from the

summit to Alpnachstad, 3½ hours to Kriens and three hours down to Hergiswil boat station. The walk from Fräkmüntegg is easier.

It's more traditional, and arguably more worthwhile, to stay overnight at Mt Rigi (right), but there are two hotels found on Pilatus. The 19th-century **Pilatus Kulm** (☎ 041 670 12 55; hotels@pilatus.ch; s/d with shared bathroom Sfr80/125) and the modern **Hotel Bellevue** (s/d Sfr110/195) share the same reception in the circular building. There's also a self-service restaurant on this peak.

STANSERHORN

At 1898m, the **Stanserhorn** (www.stanserhorn.ch) is the second-tallest mountain on the lake. It also boasts the only revolving restaurant in the region, and offers 360-degree views looking back to Titlis.

The journey up is by 'old-timer' funicular from the village of Stans to Kälti, then a cable car. Both operate from mid-April to mid-November. The funicular's base station is a five-minute walk (signposted) from the Stans train station.

The return journey costs Sfr59 from Lucerne, or Sfr52 if you're staying in Stans. Alternatively, you can save more money by hiking up (4½ hours) or down (3½ hours) from the village. If you have a car you can save almost an hour by driving up to Kälti and parking there.

Stans is on the Lucerne–Engelberg railway (one way from Lucerne Sfr6.80). The **tourist office** (☎ 041 610 88 33; www.lakeluzern.ch; Bahnhofplatz 4; ☎ 9am–noon & 2–5pm) offers sightseeing trips in the village and helps out with accommodation. The expansive Dorfplatz, the hub of the charming town centre, is located behind the station, overlooked by an early baroque church and surrounded by pleasant streets to stroll. Here, too, is the well-regarded **Hotel Engel** (☎ 041 619 10 10; www.engelstans.ch; Dorfplatz 1; s/d/tr/f Sfr80/140/165/190), a striking mix of historic exterior and new designer rooms.

BECKENRIED

Beckenried, on the southern shore, is a bus ride from Stans. Just a few minutes' walk from the boat station is a cable car that makes the 10-minute ascent to **Klewenalp** (www.klewenalp.ch; one way/return Sfr19/30). This is a much-underrated skiing destination, especially for beginners, plus it offers many hiking and mountain biking trails heading into

the hills and valleys beyond. A map at the top outlines the options.

MT RIGI

Who would ever need TV when you have the astounding views from this 'Queen of the Mountains'? On a clear day, there's an impressive wall of mountain peaks to the south and east from 1797m-tall **Rigi** (www.rigi.ch) including Mt Titlis and the giants of the Jungfrau region. To the north and west, you overlook Arth-Goldau and the Zugersee, curving around until it almost joins Küsnacht and an arm of Lake Lucerne.

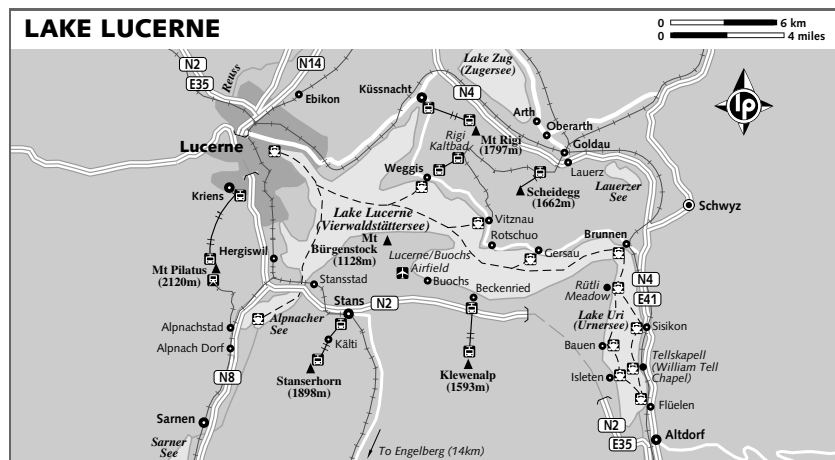
Most of all, sunrise is primetime viewing around here. Since the 19th century, tourists have been staying at the **Rigi Kulm Hotel** (☎ 041 855 03 03; rigikulm@bluewin.ch; dm Sfr32, s/d Sfr67/110, with bathroom Sfr105/186; ☎ closed mid-Nov–mid-Dec) and getting up before the crack of dawn to see the blazing sun light up the sky. (Today's hotel, a 20th-century re-creation of the original, is the only major establishment at the summit, and has two restaurants and a small snack kiosk).

After this, there's little left to do but to walk down this hikers' paradise of a mountain. For recommended routes, check www.rigi.ch. There are several easy walks (1½ to two hours) down from Rigi Kulm to Rigi Kaltbad (part-way down), with wonderful views. Or, ask at the tourist offices at **Lucerne** (☎ 041 227 17 17; Zentralstrasse 5) or **Weggis** (☎ 041 390 11 55) for information on the lengthy Rigi Lehnweg route around the mountain.

Hiking up the mountain is another story. It's at least a 4½-hour trek from Weggis, but you could take the cable car from Küsnacht to Seeboldenalp (one way/return Sfr12/18) to shorten the journey. There are two paths from there, the shortest of which takes a little over two hours. The last section is quite steep, however. (While hiking on Rigi, watch out for the *Chlyni Lüüt*, tiny 'wild folk' with supernatural powers who in mythology once inhabited Rigi!)

For those of a less energetic bent, two rival rack railways carry passengers to the top. One runs from Arth-Goldau, the other from Vitznau. Either costs Sfr35/58 one way/return. The Arth-Goldau service closes for two weeks in late May, but Vitznau operates year-round.

The Vitznau track gives the further option of diverting at Rigi Kaltbad and taking



the cable car to/from Weggis instead. The whole trip can be done from Lucerne for Sfr89 (Sfr29/29/44.50 with Swiss/Eurail/Inter Rail Pass).

Weggis

pop 3000 / elevation 440m

Sheltered from cold northerly winds by Mt Rigi, Weggis enjoys an unusually mild climate, sprouting a few palm trees and figs on the shores of the lake. Today, it's hard to believe this genteel resort was the birthplace of the rebellious 'Moderner Bund' art movement, the forerunner of Dada. Its small-town friendliness is extremely welcoming, but boats in and out of the resort are sparse in the evening and a few days' stopover generally suffices. A cable car runs from here up to Rigi Kaltbad (one way/return Sfr25/42).

The **tourist office** (☎ 041 390 11 55; www.weggis.ch; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2.30pm Sat & Sun in summer, 8am-5pm Mon-Fri in winter) is next to the boat station. Ask about bike rentals (per hour Sfr18).

Budget-Hotel Weggis (☎ 041 390 11 31; www.budget-hotel.ch; Parkstrasse 29; s/d/tr Sfr47/76.50/86.50, with bathroom Sfr66.50/111.50/116.50; ☎ reception 3-9pm) keeps even picky customers happy, with its simple, if not especially atmospheric, rooms and high standards of cleanliness. This excellent cheap choice lies up the hill from the boat station.

SeeHotel Gotthard (☎ 041 390 21 14; www.gotthard-weggis.ch; s/d from Sfr135/210; ☎ closed mid-Oct-mid-Dec) is a pleasant midrange hotel with checked bedspreads and curtains and a handy location on the waterfront minutes from where boats dock.

Park Hotel Weggis (☎ 041 392 05 05; www.phw.ch; Herteinsteinstrasse 34; s/d from Sfr340/515; ☎ ☎ P) has two turreted buildings that house one of Switzerland's top five holiday hotels (it was good enough for the Brazilian national football team). It boasts elegant, understated designer rooms, outstanding service and restaurants, a well-equipped spa and even a private beach.

See-Café Weggis (☎ 041 390 17 38; Seestrasse 6; dishes Sfr13-25; ☎ 7am-11pm Jul & Aug, closed Thu Sep-Jun) is a popular local meeting place, serving down-to-earth meals, coffee and cake.

Grape (☎ 041 392 07 07; Seestrasse 60; pizza/pasta from Sfr14.50, mains from Sfr25; ☎ 10-12.30am) is a trendy Californian restaurant – part of the Park Hotel complex – serving wines from

the Napa Valley alongside a range of delicious international cuisine. Asian and fusion dishes, Mexican classic and curries join wood-fired pizzas on the menu.

LAKE URI

With its many historical landmarks, the Lake Uri (Urnersee) section of Lake Lucerne is a popular outing for Swiss patriots. If you take the ferry from Brunnen towards Flüelen, the first sight you pass is a natural obelisk protruding from the water to a height of nearly 26m. Inscribed on it in gold lettering is a dedication to Friedrich Schiller, the author of the play *Wilhelm Tell*, which was so instrumental in creating the Tell legend.

Next stop is the **Rütli Meadow**. This is where the Oath of Eternal Alliance was supposedly signed by the three cantons of Uri, Schwyz and Nidwalden in 1291 and later where General Guisan gathered the Swiss army during WWII in a show of force against potential invaders. As such, this is hallowed ground to the Swiss and the focal point of national day celebrations on 1 August. On any ordinary day, there's always a flag flying proudly, and there's a small museum and a souvenir shop which doubles as a café.

Another port of call is the **Tellskapell** (William Tell Chapel). The walls are covered in murals depicting four episodes in the Tell legend, including the one that's supposed to have occurred on this spot, his escape from Gessler's boat (see the boxed text *The William Tell Tale*, opposite). There's a huge carillon that chimes behind the chapel.

After crossing into another founding canton, Uri, the boat finally pulls in at Flüelen. Flüelen is important because it's on the main road and rail route through the St Gotthard Pass, and historically it was a staging post for the mule trains making this crossing. Near the town is **Aldorf**, where William Tell is reputed to have performed his apple-shooting stunt. A statue of the man himself stands in the main square, and Schiller's play is sometimes performed in Aldorf's Tellspielhaus.

As well as making the round trip by boat (Sfr27) you can also circumnavigate Lake Uri on foot. You do that via the **Swiss Path** (www.weg-der-schweiz.ch) built to commemorate

the 700th anniversary of the 1291 pact and running all the way from Rütli to Brunnen. The path is in 26 sections, each representing a different canton, from the founding three to Johnny-come-lately Jura (1979). The length of each section is determined by the canton's population and is marked off with a stone plaque. It would take stamina, and at least two days, to walk the whole 35km, but one or two sections between boat stops are manageable. The first and last stretches, from Rütli to Bauen and from Sisikon to Brunnen, are the hilliest. But Bauen to Flüelen (around 4½ hours) is almost flat and Flüelen to Sisikon (2½ hours) isn't too strenuous either.

BRUNNEN

pop 7000 / elevation 443m

Situated on the shore where Lake Lucerne and Lake Uri (Urnersee) meet at right angles, Brunnen enjoys mesmerising views south and west. As the local *Föhn* wind rushes down from the mountains, it creates the perfect conditions for sailing, windsurfing and paragliding.

THE WILLIAM TELL TALE

Really, the Swiss have a German playwright and an Italian musician to thank for their national hero. For without Friedrich Schiller's 1804 play *Wilhelm Tell* and Rossini's 1829 opera *Guillermo Tell*, the legend would not have so lodged in the global consciousness. After all, tales of sharp-shooting archers forced to knock objects off the heads of small boys had been doing the rounds in Norse mythology aeons earlier – pretty much ruling out the chance that any real William Tell existed. But when the Swiss began to chafe under the yoke of Austrian dominance during the 13th century, they made the story their own.

In their adaptation, the Austrian bailiff of Uri and Schwyz, Hermann Gessler, placed his hat on a pole in Aldorf town square. Everyone was required to bow to this symbol of Habsburg rule. However, William Tell from Bürglen neglected to do so and was stopped. Gessler knew of Tell's reputation with a crossbow and decreed he would forfeit his life and that of his son, unless he shot an apple off his son's head. To Gessler's disappointment, Tell succeeded. Yet Gessler noticed that Tell was hiding a second arrow, which Tell admitted was intended for Gessler, had Tell's son been harmed. Outraged, Gessler arrested Tell and took him on his boat, intending to imprison him for life in his fortress above Küssnacht.

As they crossed the lake, *Föhn* winds whipped up and threatened to capsize the boat. Tell, who was also a master helmsman, was untied to guide the boat to safety and took the chance to steer close to the shore. He leapt from the boat and onto a rock (at the site of the Tellskapell), at the same time pushing the boat back into the stormy waves. Realising his family would never be safe from Gessler, Tell raced to Küssnacht to ambush the tyrant. He hid by the Hohle Gasse, a sunken lane. As the bailiff and his entourage approached, Tell killed Gessler with a single arrow through the heart.

This version initially grew in Swiss legend through word of mouth, its first written incarnation appearing in the *Weisses Buch* (White Book) of Sarnen around 1470. But Schiller and Rossini put it on the world stage. Even today, Rossini's *William Tell Overture* remains instantly recognisable – even though that's more to do with another do-gooder outlaw, the Lone Ranger of classic TV fame.

Information

Tourist office (☎ 041 825 00 40; www.brunnen-tourismus.ch; Bahnhofstrasse 15; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat & Sun Jul & Aug; 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat Jun & Sep; 8.30am-noon & 1.30-5.30pm Mon-Fri Oct-May) Has information and Internet access. The office is less than five minutes from the train station (following the signs), which has money-exchange counters and bike rental available daily. Don't forget to ask about the guest card.

Activities

Most people will be suitably impressed by the wonderful views of Lakes Uri and Lucerne from the **Urmiberg** (cable car one way/return Sfr11/19). However, if you want to get even higher, contact **Touch and Go** (☎ 041 820 54 31; www.paragliding.ch; Parkstrasse 14) for tandem paragliding flights (from Sfr170).

Sleeping & Eating

Two camping grounds in west Brunnen are open in summer: **Camping Urmiberg** (☎ 041 820 33 27; camp sites per person/tent/car Sfr6.90/3.50/2.50) and **Camping Hopfreben** (☎ 041 820 18 73; camp sites per person/tent/car Sfr6.90/3.50/2.50).

Alpina (☎ 041 820 18 13; www.alpina-brunnen.ch; Gersauerstrasse 32; s Sfr90-120, d Sfr140-180, apt per week Sfr850; 📍 (P)) Though it lacks lake views, this family-run hotel is Brunnen's friendliest and most creative. Rooms have a cosy Swiss feel, which is offset by eye-catching arrangements of stones, plants and odd-shaped tree branches in the stairwell and public rooms. There's an Alpine garden in the grounds and homemade jam at breakfast. Book well ahead.

Hotel Alfa + Schmid (☎ 041 820 1882; www.schmid.alfa.ch; Axenstrasse 5-7; s Sfr60-90, d Sfr110-170) Spread across two buildings facing the lake, this hotel has a renowned restaurant and rooms to suit most tastes. Those in the Schmid building have been renovated, although the bedrooms still evince a traditional style, those in the Alfa are cosily modern. Budget rooms forego the best views.

Waldstätterhof (☎ 041 825 0606; www.waldstaetterhof.ch; Waldstätterquai 6; s Sfr180-200, d Sfr270-320) Popular with honeymooners, including one-time English PM Winston Churchill, this grand hotel combines elegant rooms in neutral tones, lake views and a romantic atmosphere.

Weisses Rössli (☎ 041 820 10 22; fax 041 820 11 22; Bahnhofstrasse 8; s with shared/private bathroom Sfr45/80, d Sfr100/140) Recently rebuilt in its traditional 19th-century style after a devastating fire.

Mezcalito (☎ 041 820 08 08; Axenstrasse 9; mains from Sfr6-25; 🕒 11-1.30am, closed Sat & Sun in winter) This Mexican eatery is among the waterfront restaurants that are hard to miss.

Park Restaurant (☎ 041 825 47 26; Gersauerstrasse 8; mains Sfr12-24; 🕒 11am-5pm Sun-Wed, 11am-11pm Thu-Sun) Attached to the Aeskulap Klinik, this vegetarian and fish restaurant has a slightly worthy air about it, but you know the food is as healthy as it is tasty.

Dodo Bar & Café (Bahnhofstrasse 10) This place doubles as a very pleasant coffee house and a trendy bar.

Getting There & Away

By far the most pleasant way to get to Brunnen is to take a boat from Lucerne (Sfr28, 1½ hours). The train (Sfr15.20, 45 minutes to one hour) is cheaper and quicker, although often a change in Arth-Goldau is necessary. There are also road connections from Lucerne, Zug and Fluelen.

SCHWYZ CANTON

Schwyz's claim to fame is that it gave Switzerland its name, and together with the communities of Uri and Nidwalden signed the Oath of Eternal Alliance of 1291. This birth certificate of the Swiss Confederation is still proudly displayed in Schwyz town.

SCHWYZ

pop 13,934 / elevation 517m

Schwyz seems an unassuming little village camped in farming land beneath the twin peaks of the Mythen mountains (1898m and 1811m). However, it is home to the most important document in Swiss history, is the birthplace of the original Swiss army knife and also provides the perfect jumping-off point for tours to the Hölloch Caves, Europe's largest underground caverns.

Orientation & Information

Schwyz train station is in the Seewen district, 2km from the centre. To reach the centre, take any bus outside the station marked Schwyz Post, and alight at Postplatz. The **tourist office** (☎ 041 810 19 91; www.wbs.ch; Bahnhofstrasse 4; 🕒 7.30am-noon & 1-6pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-noon Sat) is by the bus station, with plenty of literature on the area.

Sights

The **Bundesbriefmuseum** (Museum of Federation; ☎ 041 819 20 64; www.sz.ch; Bahnhofstrasse 20; adult/student Sfr4/2.50; 🕒 9.30-11.30am & 1.30-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat & Sun May-Oct; 9.30-11.30am & 1.30-5pm Mon-Fri, 1.30-5pm Sat & Sun Nov-Apr) is home to the 1291 charter of federation signed by Nidwalden, Schwyz and Uri, which is regarded as having launched modern Switzerland. It's accompanied by restatements in German (rather than the original Latin) after important military events, such as Morgarten in 1315, or as more cantons came aboard. There's some academic discussion in German and French about the authenticity of the 1291 document, as many historians question the accuracy of Switzerland's founding 'myths'.

An explanatory English booklet is available from the front desk.

In any case, the building's murals and other artworks, from Heinrich Danioth's *Fundamentum* on the façade to Walter Clénin's *Oath on the Rütli* in the main hall,

A WORTHY CROSS TO BEAR

Once you cross the border into Switzerland, you'll never have a second's doubt about which country you're visiting. The Swiss fly their national flag with a fervent patriotism, and the white cross on a red square flutters in thousands of private village gardens, as well as halfway up mountains and in the middle of waterfalls.

The flag is distinctive for being the world's only square flag, and locals might be attached to it simply because it looks so goddamn good. Its proportions are easy on the eye, and like all design classics, it's clear and simple.

However, if Switzerland's flag today is virtually a logo or brand image, it started life with a much more serious purpose; it was a means of identifying Swiss mercenaries on the battlefield. Two bits of white cloth were sewn onto the shirts of those from Central Switzerland fighting with Bernese troops during the 1339 Battle of Laupen, and this highly recognisable marker was gradually adopted for all Swiss soldiers.

General Henri Dufour, the victorious military leader in the Civil War, lobbied hard to finally persuade every canton to accept the red-and-white military flag as a federal emblem in 1840, but in the first decades of the new Swiss Confederation, debate raged about the emblem's proportions. Finally, in 1889 the federal parliament voted for the current incarnation. Five years later, the Geneva-based International Red Cross adopted the reverse image.

Today, the Swiss are happy to slather their national logo over a range of clothing, accessories and household items, from tacky to chic. And in 2005, a report announced that, despite the vast array of utterly astonishing scenery the country boasts, the best-selling postcard in Switzerland – outselling its nearest competitor by three to two – is the one of the national flag.

are more immediately appealing. Don't overlook Josef Rickenbacker's witty metal reliefs, *The Stations of the Swiss Cross*, in the portico – which you needn't pay to see.

The town's **Hauptplatz** (main square) is a pleasant place to sit while taking in the fountain and **Rathaus** (town hall), complete with 19th-century murals depicting the Battle of Morgarten and other historic events. On the other side of the square lies **St Martin's Church**.

The **Forum der Schweizer Geschichte** (Forum of Swiss History; ☎ 041 819 60 11; www.musee-suisse.com, www.museenschwyz.ch; adult/student & senior Sfr8/6; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) is well curated and has interesting displays, but is mostly of interest for its special exhibitions.

The **Ital Reding-Hofstatt** (☎ 041 811 45 05; www.irh.ch; Rickenbachstrasse 24; adult/student Sfr4/2.50; 🕒 2-5pm Tue-Fri, 10am-noon & 2-5pm Sat & Sun Apr-Nov) was once the home of a mercenary soldier, many of whom came from Schwyz and returned home with their booty. Now it's a museum revisiting its former master's lifestyle. Across the complex is House Bethlehem, a tiny proportioned ancient house dating back to 1287.

Off Hauptplatz and down Schmiedgasse, opposite the Mythencenter shopping complex, is **Victorinox** (☎ 041 818 12 11; www.victorinox.ch; Schmiedgasse 57, 6438 lbach; 🕒 7.30am-noon &

1.15-4pm Mon-Fri, 8am-3pm Sat), the manufacturer of the original Swiss army knife. The company was founded in 1884 by Karl Elsener and, after a shaky start, hit pay dirt with its 'Officer's Knife'. You can't visit the factory here, but the shop has a vast array of knives, corkscrews and watches, where you can take pleasure in buying at the source.

Activities

The **Hölloch caves**, Europe's largest and the third biggest in the world, lie in Muotatal, some 35 minutes from Schwyz. More than 170km of tunnels carved out by underground streams have been mapped, while many remain unexplored. Book at **Trekking Team** (☎ 0848 808 007, 041 390 40 40; www.trekking.ch; short tours adult/child Sfr20/10, aperitif tours adult Sfr45, overnight tours from Sfr400), which even allows you to bivouac in the caves overnight. **Adventure Point** (☎ 079 247 74 72; www.adventurepoint.ch; Hirschen Hotel, Hinterdorfstrasse 14) also offers a range of activities.

Plenty of hikes begin from the nearby peak of **Stoos** (www.stoos.ch). Check the website or ask the tourist office for details.

Sleeping & Eating

Hirschen (☎ 041 811 12 76; www.hirschen-schwyz.ch; Hinterdorfstrasse 14; dm Sfr26, s/d Sfr48/80, with bathroom

Sfr58/100; ☎ reception 10am-noon & 4pm-midnight; ☎ ☎ This is a cheerful backpacker's hostel on one side and a budget hotel on the other. A kitchen, laundry and young friendly atmosphere make up for the fairly basic dorms and bathrooms. To get here, follow the signs from Hauptplatz.

Wysses Rössli (☎ 041 811 19 22; roessli-schwyz.ch; Hauptplatz 3; s/d from Sfr130/200) Much of the accommodation in this four-star establishment has been renovated in a generic modern style, but it does retain several traditionally furnished and atmospheric older rooms.

Eating options are dotted in and around the main square, including the old-fashioned **Café Haug** (☎ 041 811 16 16; Postplatz 4; menus Sfr16.50-19; ☎ 7.30am-11pm Mon-Sat, to 6pm Sun), trendy **Kreuz & Quer** (☎ 041 810 01 01; Hauptplatz 7; snacks from Sfr8.50, mains Sfr22.50-38; ☎ 8.30am-midnight) and the historic **Ratskeller** (☎ 041 810 10 87; Strehlgasse 3; mains Sfr18-42; ☎ Mon-Sat) which specialises in Swiss and seasonal dishes.

Getting There & Away

Schwyz station is 30 minutes away from Zug (Sfr8.60) on the main north-south rail route (see p233 for more information); Lucerne is 40 minutes away (Sfr13.40). The Schwyz centre is only a few kilometres detour off the N4, which passes through Brunnen and Einsiedeln. (For details on transport to/from Einsiedeln, see opposite.)

EINSIEDELN

pop 12,747 / elevation 900m

Einsiedeln is in Switzerland what Lourdes is to France: its prime place of pilgrimage. And the ornate interior of Einsiedeln's huge church is so over-the-top, you might consider it worth seeing anyway. The story goes that in AD 964 the Bishop of Constance tried to consecrate the original monastery but was halted by a heavenly voice declaring 'Desist. God Himself has consecrated this building'. A papal order later recognised this as a genuine miracle.

Orientation & Information

Einsiedeln is south of Zürichsee (Lake Zürich) and by the western shore of the Sihlsee (Lake Sihl). The train station and the post office are together in the centre of town. In front of them is Dorfplatz square; head through this square and turn left into the main street, Hauptstrasse. The church is at the end of this

street, overlooking Klosterplatz (a 10-minute walk). The **tourist office** (☎ 055 418 44 88; www.einsiedeln.ch in German; Hauptstrasse 85; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat, 10am-1pm Sun) is near the church.

Sights & Activities

In Einsiedeln, all roads lead to the **Klosterkirche** (Abbey Church; www.kloster-einsiedeln.ch; Benzigerstrasse; ☎ 5.30am-8.30pm); you can follow the crowds flowing towards this baroque edifice, which was built between 1719 and 1735 by architect Caspar Moosbrugger. The holiest of holies is the **Black Madonna**, housed in a chapel by the entrance to the church. Most pilgrims' prayers are directed to this small statue, which has somehow survived three fires.

In front of the church is a large square where stalls sell kitsch religious souvenirs. Continuing the religious theme, there's a **Bethlehem diorama** (☎ 055 412 26 17; www.diorama.ch; Benzigerstrasse; adult/child Sfr4.50/2; ☎ 10am-5pm Apr-Nov) and, further down the same street, a **panorama painting of Calvary** (☎ 055 412 11 74), which is open the same hours as the diorama and costs the same.

On 14 September there's an annual torch-lit procession to celebrate the **Festival of the Miraculous Dedication**.

The tourist office sells a variety of hiking maps (Sfr5 to Sfr12). The quickest and simplest walk begins by strolling through the monastery stables and continuing uphill along the path for 15 minutes to the **statue of St Benedikt** for an excellent view. Alternatively, a two-hour walk north of Einsiedeln and back will bring you to the narrow, wood-covered **Devil's Bridge** (Teufelsbrücke or Tüfelsbrugg), also built by abbey architect Caspar Moosbrugger. Ask the tourist office for details of this 'Etzel Wanderung'.

Sleeping

It's not really advisable to plan on staying in Einsiedeln, as material comfort seems to have taken a back seat to piety here.

Hotel Linde (☎ 055 418 48 48; www.linde-einsiedeln.ch; Klosterplatz; s/d from Sfr60/90, with bathroom Sfr110/160) This is the best bet in town with 17 nice, modern rooms, supplemented by some older budget rooms.

Hotel Rot Hut (☎ 055 412 22 41; fax 055 412 71 37; Hauptstrasse 80; s/d with shared bathroom Sfr65/100) If you get stuck, this might at least put a smile on your face with its kitschy 1970s décor.

Getting There & Away

Einsiedeln is in a rail cul-de-sac, so getting there usually involves changing at Biberbrugg. This is rarely a problem as arrivals/departures coincide. It is also within range of the canton of Zürich's S-Bahn trains. Zürich itself (Sfr16.20) is less than one hour away (via Wädenswil). There are trains to Lucerne (Sfr20.80, one hour), sometimes requiring a change at Goldau (70 minutes). From Einsiedeln to Schwyz, you can take the scenic 'back route' in summer: catch a postal bus to Oberberg, then private bus (Swiss Pass not valid) from there.

By car, Einsiedeln is 5km off Hwy 8 between Schwyz and Rapperswil.

ENGELBERG

pop 3500 / elevation 1050m

Towering Mt Titlis has made Engelberg Central Switzerland's best-known ski resort, as well as a popular day trip from Lucerne. The relatively humble village sits in a quiet, idyllic valley that's lush and

green in summer. However, the mountain is snow-capped all year and not only attracts summertime skiers and snowboarders, but also many Bollywood film crews and fans.

Orientation

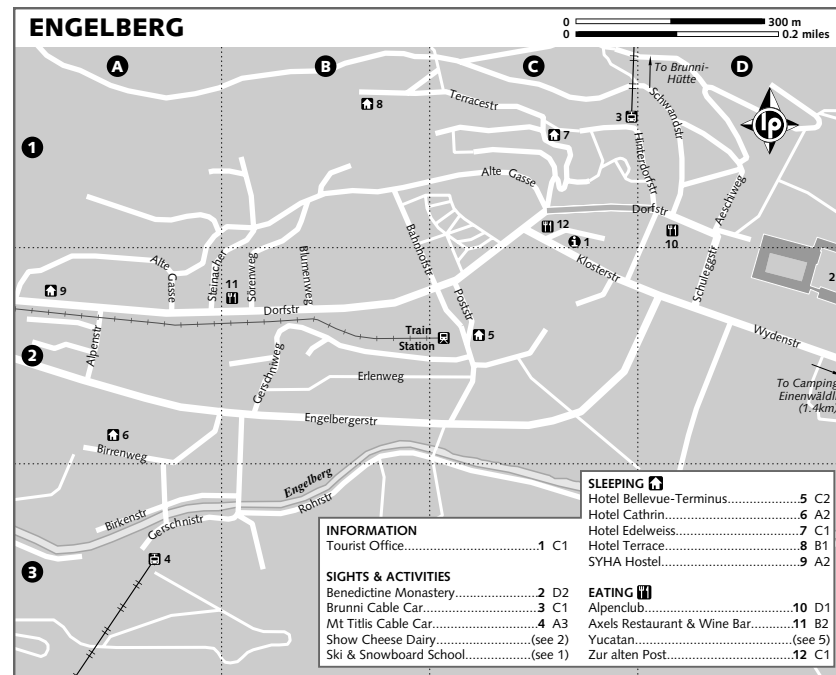
The main street is Dorfstrasse (partially pedestrianised), where you'll find most of the town's shops and restaurants. Many of these close in November, but the influx of Indian tourists in May and June ensures more of the village now stays open at the other end of the winter and summer seasons.

Information

The half-canton of Obwalden, which includes Engelberg, has a religious holiday on 25 September.

Guest card Good for various discounts, including 10% off the Mt Titlis cable car.

Tourist office (☎ 041 639 77 77; www.engelberg.ch; Klosterstrasse 3; ☎ 8am-6.30pm Mon-Sat, 2-6pm Sun in peak season, 8am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Sat rest of year) A five-minute walk from the train station, in the Tourist Center.



Sights

ENGELBERG MONASTERY

Engelberg's **Benedictine Monastery** (☎ 041 639 61 19; tours around Sfr6; 🕒 45min tours 10am & 4pm daily, in English 10am Thu & Sat) is the only attraction in the village itself. The Engelberg valley was once ecclesiastically governed, independently of the Swiss Confederation, and the monastery was the seat of power. Now the resident monks teach instead of rule, but their home retains much of its former grandeur. Rebuilt after the last of several devastating fires in 1729, it contains rooms decorated with incredibly detailed wood inlays, and a baroque **monastery church** (admission free).

Inside the monastery, you'll also find a state-of-the-art **Show Cheese Dairy** (☎ 041 638 08 88; www.schaukaeserei-engelberg.ch; admission free; 🕒 9am-6.30pm Mon-Sat, 9am-5pm Sun) where you can watch the cheese-makers through a glass screen, enjoy their produce in the bistro or buy it in the shop.

Activities

MT TITLIS

Central Switzerland's tallest mountain, **Titlis** (www.titlis.ch), is known for being reached by the world's first revolving cable car. This was completed in 1992 and is still one of the few on the planet. However, that's the last leg of a breathtaking four-stage journey. First, you must ascend to Gerschnialp (1300m). Then, in the same small cable car, you glide over cow pastures and up to Trübsee (1800m). Transferring to a large gondola, you head for Stand (2450m). Finally, in Stand you board the Rotair (only the cabin inside revolves) for the passage over the dazzling Titlis Glacier.

The Titlis station (3020m) has all the usual array of restaurants and tourist attractions such as an ice cave. But on a good day, you want to head straight outside. To the 3239m summit, it's about a 45-minute hike (wear sturdy shoes). It doesn't look far but at this altitude you need to take it slowly. Otherwise, enjoy the snowboarding and skiing, either by participating or merely spectating. The **Ice Flyer chair lift** (adult/child Sfr10/6) will take you down to the glacier park where there are free 150m-long slides on rubber tyres. The nearby freestyle park has a half-pipe and good summer snowboarding.

The return trip to Titlis (30 to 45 minutes each way) costs Sfr79 from Engelberg, or Sfr95 from Lucerne. However, in good

weather, you can walk some sections. Between Stand and Trübsee the Geologischer Wanderweg is open from July to September; it takes about two hours up and 1½ hours down. From Trübsee up to Jochpass (2207m) takes about 1½ hours (or there's a chair lift beyond the lake), and down to Engelberg takes around the same time. The tourist office's *Look Around* activity brochure sets out all the possibilities.

If you're hiking, destinations from Engelberg include Gerschnialp (one way/return Sfr6/9), Trübsee (Sfr18/26) or Stand (Sfr37/52). Reductions on all fares, including to Titlis, are 25% for Swiss Pass, and 20% for Eurail and Inter Rail. Ask about off-season reductions.

The cableway is open 8.30am to 5pm daily (last ascent/descent 3.40/4.50pm), but closes for maintenance for two weeks in early November.

BRUNNI

Brunni, on the opposite side of the valley, offers a series of untaxing, relaxing hikes. The cable car (one way/return in summer Sfr14/22) goes up to Ristic at 1600m. Here, there's a chairlift that takes you to the **Brunni Hütte** (☎ 041 637 37 32; www.berghuette.ch; adult/child Sfr52/35, breakfast Sfr10), a recently refurbished mountain hut that now has indoor plumbing. From here you can watch a magnificent sunset before spending the night.

OTHER HIKES

In summer, it's also possible to leave Engelberg on foot. The Surenenpass (2291m) is the scenic route to Attinghausen, from where a bus can take you to Altdorf and the southern end of Lake Uri. It takes around seven hours to get to Attinghausen; taking a cable car along the route can save two hours. From Jochpass a path goes to Meiringen via Engstlenalp and Tannalp. The highest point you reach is 2245m. From Meiringen it is easy to get to the Brienzensee. Acquire a decent map and check on snow conditions before trying any of these routes.

SKIING & SNOWBOARDING

Snowboarders populate Titlis, the half-pipe at Jochpass and the leisure park at Engstlenalp. Beginner skiers try around Brunni and near the lifts branching from Gerschnialp, while there are plenty of runs all around for

more experienced skiers. A one-day pass costs Sfr52 (Sfr58 on weekends and holidays). Specific day passes cost Sfr18 for Gerschnialp and Sfr36 for Brunni.

Shops hire skiing and snowboarding equipment at fairly standard rates of about Sfr45 per day, which lower if you rent the equipment over a longer period.

There's a **Ski & Snowboard School** (☎ 041 639 54 54; www.skischule-engelberg.ch; Klosterstrasse 3) inside the tourist office. Engelberg hosts a ski-jump **World Cup** (☎ 041 639 77 33; www.weltcup-engelberg.ch) during December.

ADVENTURE SPORTS

Adrenaline sports are another Engelberg pastime. If you want to bungee jump from a cable car at the top of Mt Titlis, between May and October, you can. It's Sfr160 (Sfr150 on Friday) for the 130m dive. Contact **Outventure** (☎ 041 611 14 41; www.outventure.ch; Stansstad), which can also organise glacier-trekking, kayaking, rafting and canyoning.

Sleeping

Hotel Bellevue-Terminus (☎ 041 639 68 68; www.belle-ue-engelberg.ch; Bahnhofplatz; s/d Sfr44/88, with bathroom Sfr100/170; 🕒 year-round; 📺 📶) The very picture of faded grandeur, this Victorian-era hotel has lots of students and other youthful guests treading over its wonderfully creaky floorboards. Little wonder, since it offers great value and comfort for the price.

Hotel Edelweiss (☎ 041 639 78 78; www.edelweissen-gelberg.ch; Terracestrasse 10; s/d from Sfr115/200) This grand old hotel has long been a family friendly establishment, with colourful paintings of clowns decorating its stairwell. All guests, though, will enjoy the views from its high-ceilinged dining room.

Hotel Terrace (☎ 041 639 66 66; www.terrace.ch; Terracestrasse 33; standard s/d from Sfr115/180, superior s/d from Sfr125/200; 🕒 closed btwn seasons) The Terrace's dining room retains original Art Nouveau features, but its 180 rooms are somewhat newer and more ordinary, with overwhelmingly dusky pink hues. Still, the views are magnificent and you feel privileged catching the hotel's private funicular up the hill behind Engelberg. A favourite with Indian directors and film crews.

Hotel Cathrin (☎ 041 637 44 66; www.cathrin-engelberg.ch; Birrenweg 22; s/d from Sfr95/170; 🕒 closed btwn seasons; 📺 📶) In a quiet location near the Mt Titlis cable car, this modern re-creation of a

chalet has sauna and fitness facilities, as well as a conservatory.

SYHA hostel (☎ 041 637 12 92; www.familienherberge.ch; Dorfstrasse 80; dm/d Sfr32.40/84.80; 🕒 closed btwn seasons; 📺 📶) This hostel is 10 minutes back down the train line on the northern side of the tracks. It's clean, roomy and modern, but some of its dorms are impossibly large.

Camping Einenwäldli (☎ 041 637 19 49; www.eienwaeldli.ch; camp sites per person/small tent/car Sfr8/8.50/2; 🕒 year-round) This deluxe camping ground, attached to the Sporthotel Einenwäldli, has access to its restaurant and sauna facilities. The ski and shuttle buses will drop you less than a minute from the gate.

Eating & Drinking

Alpendub (☎ 041 637 12 43; Dorfstrasse; mains Sfr18-48; 🕒 9am-late daily, closed Tue & Wed Jul & Aug) The atmosphere is wonderful in this low-ceilinged complex, with carved-back chairs and lampshades made from sepia-toned negatives of early mountaineering adventures. A longstanding local institution, it serves a mix of pizzas and Swiss food.

Axels Restaurant & Wine Bar (☎ 041 637 09 09; Dorfstrasse 50; mains Sfr40-50; 🕒 11.30am-2pm & 6pm-12.30am Wed-Sun) This chic minimalist restaurant wouldn't be out of place in Zürich or Geneva and indeed has garnered national attention with its Mediterranean-influenced cuisine. Head chef Axel Kirchner gently tweaks classic carpaccio, lasagne and risotto dishes, giving them a modern twist.

Zur Alten Post (☎ 041 637 25 24; Dorfstrasse; meals Sfr14.50-25; 🕒 8am-7pm) Nothing fancy, just a firm everyday favourite for coffee or a hearty lunch of rösti or Alpermagorinen (a form of macaroni cheese).

Mexican-style bar and restaurant **Yucatan** (Hotel Bellevue-Terminus) is the most popular après-ski place in town.

Getting There & Around

Engelberg is at the end of a train line, about an hour from Lucerne (Sfr15.60 one way). If coming on a day trip, check the Lucerne tourist office's special Mt Titlis excursion tickets.

Between early July and mid-October, a shuttle bus leaves the Engelberg train station roughly every half-hour for all the village's major hotels and attractions. It's free with a guest card or train ticket; Sfr1

without. In winter, there are free ski buses for getting to the slopes.

ZUG CANTON

ZUG

pop 22,917 / elevation 426m

To look at Zug, with its attractive medieval Old Town and placid lake, you might not immediately realise the enormous wealth beneath. With the lowest tax in Switzerland – about half the national average – this is the richest place in the country, but with typical Swiss modesty it doesn't boast about its riches. Undoubtedly, after an hour in town, you start to notice all the people in suits and a few more luxury cars than normal. However, like all good Swiss companies, Zugs go about their business quietly, leaving other visitors in peace to absorb the scenery.

Orientation

Zug hugs the northeastern shore of Zugersee. The train station is 1km north of the Old Town (Altstadt), and has bike rental and money-exchange counters. For the Old Town, follow the main train station exit into the roundabout at the head of Alpenstrasse (you'll see Confiserie Albert Meier to your left) and head south for another 700m.

Information

Tourist office (☎ 041 723 68 00; www.zug-tourismus.ch; Reisezentrum Zug, inside main train station; ☎ 9am–7pm Mon–Fri, 9am–4pm Sat, 9am–3pm Sun) Pick up a city map here.

Sights & Activities

It's hard not to be enchanted by Zug's medieval town centre. It starts at the town's emblem, the **Zytturm** (clock tower; Kolinplatz), whose distinctive tiled roof is in the blue and white cantonal colours. The heraldic shields below the 1557 clock face represent the first eight cantons to join the Confederation (Zug was the seventh in 1352). Walking through the clock's arch, you can veer off into the charming, pedestrian-only streets of Fischmarkt, Ober Altstadt and Unter Altstadt.

Uphill from the clock tower, opposite St Oswald's Church, is the **Museum in der Burg** (☎ 041 728 32 97; Kirchenstrasse; adult/child Sfr5/1, free Sun; ☎ 2–5pm Tue–Fri, 10am–noon & 2–5pm Sat & Sun). This is notable mainly for its 3D model of the town,

with commentary in German, French and English. Despite the narrative's stilted style, it's an excellent introduction to Zug – and its past tendency to partially sink into the lake.

On the waterfront, just north of the Old Town, is **Landsgemeindeplatz**. In this square there's an aviary of exotic birds, most strikingly a family of scarlet ibis (looking a bit homesick in colder weather).

The **Schöneegg funicular** will take you up the Zugerberg (988m), where there are impressive views, or hiking trails for the more active. The Zug day pass (Sfr11.40) is the best deal, as it covers all bus rides and the funicular. Bus No 11 gets you to the lower funicular station.

City bikes (☎ 041 761 33 55; outside the Rathaus, Bundesplatz; ☎ 9am–9pm May–Oct) are loaned out for no cost (ID and monetary deposit required). On the waterfront, pedalos (per 30/60 minutes Sfr12/20) and other boats are for hire.

Sleeping

Camping Brüggli (☎ 041 741 84 22; Chamer Fussweg 36; camp sites per adult/tent/car Sfr7.80/7/4; ☎ Apr–Oct) On the shore of the lake, 2km west of the centre, this is a very attractive spot, with free swimming in the vicinity.

SYHA hostel (☎ 041 711 53 54; www.youthhostel.ch; Allmendstrasse 8; dm/d Sfr31/95; ☎ reception 7–10am & 5–10pm, hostel closed early Jan–early Mar; ☎ P) Zug's hostel is clean and modern, and even has a communal kitchen. To walk here from the station, take the Dammstrasse/Grafenau exit, heading right in the direction of the Sportanlagen, then curving left and continuing past the hostel sign for about 10 minutes.

Hotel Guggital (☎ 041 711 28 21; www.hotel-guggital.ch; Zugerbergstrasse 46; s Sfr115–160, d Sfr185–220; ☎ ☒) This white building, with its distinctive three clover leaves, scenically overlooks the lake from a hill south of town. Although it principally caters to business travellers, it seems a perfect chill-out spot, as the priciest of its compact modern rooms have balconies. Bus No 11 will get you here from the Metalli exit from the train station.

Hotel Löwen am See (☎ 041 725 22 22; www.loewen-zug.ch; Landsgemeindeplatz; s/d from Sfr180/260; ☎ ☒) The recently renovated rooms here are very civilised and several of them enjoy lake views. The hotel is also renowned for its downstairs Mediterranean restaurant, Domus, which is in a prime spot on the main square.

Ochsen Zug (☎ 041 729 32 32; www.ochsen-zug.ch; Am Kolinplatz; s/d/tw/ste Sfr175/210/255/320; ☎ P) Although it dates from 1480 and once hosted Goethe, the Ochsen today is a business hotel and has been streamlined behind its quaint façade. Standard rooms are white and black with a few daubs of colour. Newer rooms use natural wood and fibres for an ecologically sound feel. The junior suite, No 503, has wonderful views of the Zyturm and the lake. Prices are about 10% to 20% cheaper on weekends.

Eating

The best restaurants congregate around Landsgemeindeplatz, and most have outdoor seating in summer. Fish from the lake is common; bream or *Zug Rotel* is a favourite.

Widder (☎ 041 711 03 16; Landsgemeindeplatz 12; mains Sfr16–38; ☎ 11am–midnight Mon–Sat, 11am–11pm Sun) Roof beams carved with Gothic words of wisdom give this tavern a traditional feel, but the menu is slightly unexpected. As well as Swiss and fish specialities, a page of South African dishes lists ostrich steak, biltong, Cape Town fish soup, Cape Malay curry and more.

Schiff (☎ 041 711 00 55; Graben 2; mains Sfr25–37; ☎ 11–12.30am summer, reduced hr winter) With a menu that seems equally split between fish and home-made pasta, this restaurant has a prime location on the main square, and the upstairs Panorama Bar to take advantage of the view.

Gasthaus Rathaukeller (☎ 041 711 00 58; Oberer Altstadt 1; meals in Bistro/Zunftstube from Sfr28/75; ☎ 11.30am–2.30pm & 3.30–10.30pm Tue–Sat) Both the ground-floor bistro and the elegant, traditional and pricey *haute cuisine* Zunftstube above are dotted with corporate customers, but somehow the service is so professional and the surrounds so pleasant that it just doesn't spoil the atmosphere.

Confiserie Albert Meier (☎ 041 711 10 49; www.die.zugerkirchortorte.ch; Bahnhofplatz; ☎ 7am–6.30pm Mon–Fri, 8am–4pm Sat) A local speciality is *Zuger Kirchortorte*, a cherry cake made from pastry, biscuit, almond paste and butter cream, infused with strong cherry brandy. It's sold all over town, but this café claims to bake the best. And if it's not the best, at least it's the most convenient; you can get a sugar rush here minutes after leaving the train.

Getting There & Away

Zug is on the main north–south train route from Zürich (Sfr13.40) to Lugano, where trains from Zürich also branch off to Lucerne (Sfr16.40) and the Bernese Oberland.

By road, the north–south N4 (E31) runs from Zürich, sweeps around the western shore of Zugersee and joins the N2 (E35), which continues through the St Gotthard Pass and on to Lugano and Italy. Hwy 25 peels off the N4 north of Zug at Sihlbrugg, completes the corset around the eastern shore of the lake, then rejoins the N4 at Goldau.

Boats depart from Zug's Schiffsstation, north of Landsgemeindeplatz, travelling south to Arth in the summer and many other destinations around the lake. Swiss Pass holders get half-price travel.

GOTTHARD PASS

ANDERMATT

pop 1313 / elevation 1447m

At the southern end of the canton of Uri, Andermatt was once an important staging-post on the north–south St Gotthard route. Nowadays, the town is bypassed by the Gotthard Tunnel, but it remains a popular hiking and winter sports destination.

The train station is 400m north of the core of the village. The **tourist office** (☎ 041 887 14 54; www.anderstatt.ch; ☎ 9am–noon & 2–5.30pm Mon–Sat Jul, Aug & Dec–Mar, 9am–noon & 2–5.30pm Mon–Fri rest of year), 200m to the left of the station, shares the same hut as the postal bus ticket office.

Sights & Activities

The **Gemsstock** peak (2963m) is a focal point for both hiking and skiing (intermediate and advanced). The journey to the top by cable car from Andermatt costs Sfr18/36 one way/return.

However, as Andermatt is a major army training centre, check beforehand that you're free to walk certain routes before heading up here. Ski passes cost Sfr53 per day for Gemsstock, Sfr42 for Nätschen/Gütsch and Sfr25 for Realp.

As Andermatt is situated near four major Alpine passes – Susten, Oberalp, St Gotthard and Furka – it's an excellent base for driving or bus tours. Check www.postbus.ch for the bus tours offered this year.

From Realp, along the flat valley, **steam trains** (www.furka-bergstrecke.ch) run to Furka from Friday to Sunday between mid-June and early October (daily from mid-July to late August). The **St Gotthard Museum** (☎ 091 869 15 25; adult/student & senior Sfr6/4; 🕒 9am-6pm Jun-Oct), on the St Gotthard Pass (2109m), is open only when the pass itself is. It chronicles the history of the pass and the Gotthard Tunnel (there's English text).

Sleeping

The tourist office can help find private rooms, but many places close in the low season.

Hotel Aurora (☎ 041 887 16 61; www.aurora-ander-matt.ch; s/d Sfr90/150; 📍) Despite its fairly unexciting modern exterior, this hotel on the far south side of the village is handy for the Gemsstock cable car, has good views and provides great value. It's popular with those doing motorcycle tours.

Hotel 3 Könige & Post (☎ 041 887 00 01; www.3koenige.ch Gotthardstrasse 69; s/d from Sfr95/190; 📍) With nostalgic rooms in a traditional Swiss chalet near the centre of the village, this hotel – like most in Andermatt – has a

sauna, but it also boasts a eucalyptus steam bath.

Kronen Hotel (☎ 041 887 00 88; www.kronenhotel.ch; Gotthardstrasse 64; s/d from Sfr95/180; 📍) A friendly place with pleasant modern rooms. It's known for its Barrybar – named after the famous St Bernard dog – and has an excellent menu.

Getting There & Away

Andermatt is a stop on the Glacier Express from Zermatt to St Moritz. For north-south destinations, change at Göschenen, 15 minutes away. **Andermatt train station** (☎ 041 887 12 20) can supply details about the car-carrying trains over the Oberalp Pass (direction: Graubünden) and through the Furka Tunnel (the route to Valais). Postbuses stop by the train station. The Gotthard Tunnel (N2/E35) is one of the busiest north-south routes across the Alps. The 17km tunnel opened in 1980, and extends from Göschenen to close to Airolo in Ticino, bypassing Andermatt. Work is already underway building the new Gotthard Base Tunnel, designed for high-speed and freight trains. It should be completed in 2012.