

Brienz

Interlaken · Switzerland

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Brienz is a village on the north shore of Lake Brienz, a long turquoise lake in the Bernese Oberland. Old wooden houses line the lakefront. Steep mountains rise behind the village.

Brienz is known for wood carving. It is also the base for the Brienzer Rothorn steam railway and for the Giessbach Falls.

When to visit

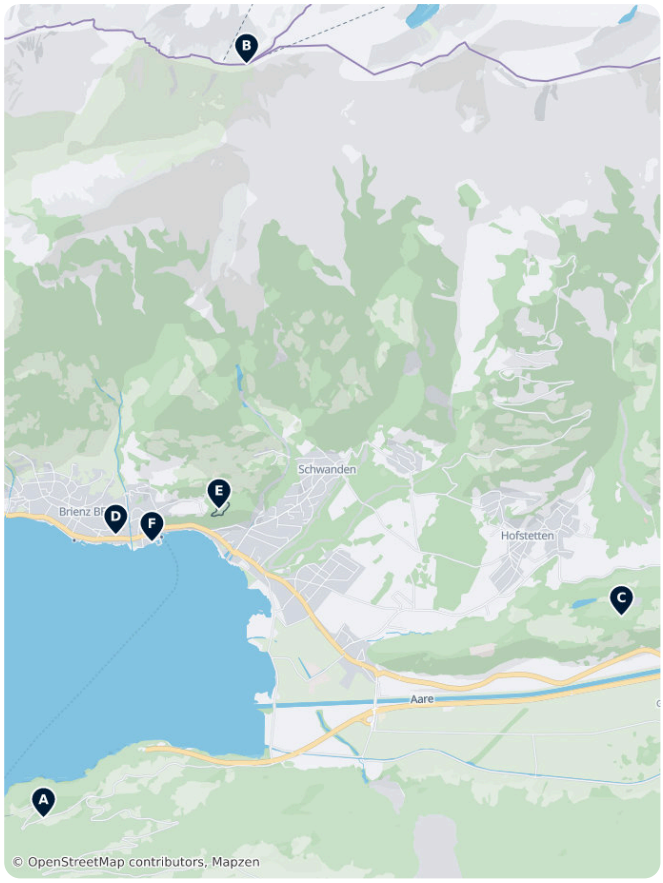
May to October is the best time for the lake, the falls and the Rothorn railway. Summer is warm. Autumn is calm and has clear light. Winter is quiet, and many attractions close. The steam railway runs only in summer.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for watersports	4° / 10° Feels like 0°	-3° / -10°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
February	Poor Poor for watersports	6° / 13° Feels like 1°	-2° / -11°	12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
March	Poor Poor for hiking	10° / 17° Feels like 6°	1° / -6°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
April	Good Good for hiking	14° / 21°	5° / -2°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
May	Good Good for sightseeing	18° / 25°	9° / 4°	19 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
June	Good Good for sightseeing	22° / 28°	14° / 8°	19 rainy days · Calm winds
July	Good Good for sightseeing	23° / 29°	15° / 10°	18 rainy days · Calm winds
August	Good Good for sightseeing	23° / 30°	15° / 10°	17 rainy days · Calm winds
September	Good Good for sightseeing	20° / 26°	11° / 6°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
October	Good Good for hiking	16° / 23°	8° / 2°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
November	Poor Poor for hiking	9° / 17° Feels like 6°	2° / -6°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
December	Poor Poor for watersports	5° / 11° Feels like 1°	-1° / -10°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Top sights

- A Giessbach Falls is a series of waterfalls above the lake, reached by boat and a historic funicular.
- B Brienzer Rothorn is a mountain above the village, reached by a steam rack railway.
- C Freilichtmuseum Ballenberg is a large open-air museum of historic Swiss buildings, a short bus ride away.
- D Schweizer Holzbildhauerei Museum Brienz shows the local wood carving craft.
- E Wildpark Brienz is a small wildlife park with alpine animals.
- F Die schöne Schifferin von Brienz is a historic ship moored at the lakefront.



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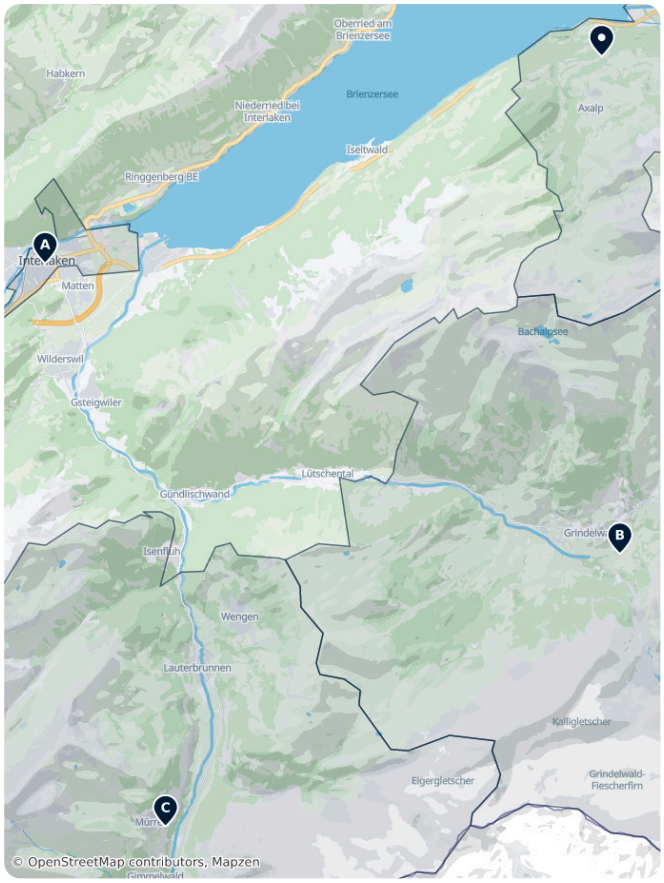
What to experience

- Ride the steam railway up the Rothorn.
- Take a boat to the Giessbach Falls and ride the funicular.
- Visit Ballenberg for a day.
- Watch a wood carver at work.
- Swim or paddle on the lake in summer.
- Walk the lakeshore path.

Day trips

- A Interlaken is about 20 minutes away by train.
- B Grindelwald is a mountain village below the Eiger, reached from Interlaken.
- C Lauterbrunnen is a valley with waterfalls.
- Meiringen is about 20 minutes away by train, with gorges and falls.
- Lake boats go to Interlaken and other lake villages.



Where to explore

- Interlaken is the main town of the area and the parent locality.
- Grindelwald and Lauterbrunnen are the nearest mountain villages.

Getting there

- By air: Zurich is the nearest main airport.
- By train: Brienz is on the scenic line between Lucerne and Interlaken. Check times on SBB.
- Lake boats stop at Brienz in summer.

Getting around

- The village centre is small and easy to walk.
- The Rothorn railway station is next to the main station.
- Boats go to Giessbach and other lake villages.
- Local buses link Brienz with Ballenberg.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The village is small and flat along the lake. Paths to the falls and the hills are steep.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

Lake paths are flat. The roads up to the hills are steep.

Driving

- A car is not needed in Brienz.
- Parking near the station and the lake is limited in summer.
- Roads along the lake are scenic.

Food & drink

Try lake fish, cheese and rösti. Brienz is known for wood carving and violin making. Local cafés and lakeside restaurants serve alpine dishes.

People speak German with a Bernese dialect. English is widely understood.

What to eat & drink

BREAKFAST

Birchermüesli
A raw-oat, fruit, and yogurt breakfast invented by a Zurich doctor around 1900, now standard on breakfast buffets.

LUNCH

Rösti
A fried, shredded-potato cake, originally a Bernese farmer's breakfast, now a national side dish.

DINNER

Cheese Fondue · Fondue
Melted Gruyère and Vacherin cheese in a shared pot, eaten by dipping bread cubes on long forks.

Raclette
Cheese melted tableside or under a grill and scraped over boiled potatoes, pickles, and onions.

Zürcher Geschnetzeltes
Sliced veal and mushrooms in a creamy white-wine sauce, traditionally served with rösti.

Älplermagronen
Alpine herder's macaroni gratin with potatoes, cheese, and cream, often topped with fried onions and served with apple sauce.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Cervelat
Switzerland's best-known sausage, usually grilled and often called the country's unofficial national dish.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Swiss Chocolate · Schweizer Schokolade
Switzerland pioneered milk chocolate in the 19th century; look for small-batch chocolatiers alongside the big national brands.

Basler Läckerli
A dense, spiced honey-and-candied-fruit biscuit from Basel, traditional around Christmas.

DRINKS

Swiss Wine · Vin Suisse
Mostly consumed domestically rather than exported; Valais and Vaud, along Lake Geneva, produce the best-known Chasselas whites.

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Safety & health

- Brienz is very safe.
- Lake water is cold. Swim in marked areas.
- Mountain weather changes fast, so check the forecast.
- Tap water is safe to drink.

History

Brienz grew as a lakeside village with farming and woodwork. Wood carving grew into a trade in the 19th century, when visitors started to buy carved souvenirs. A carving school was founded in 1884.

The Rothorn steam railway opened in 1892 and still runs today.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Switzerland at a glance:

CURRENCY
CHF CHF

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY

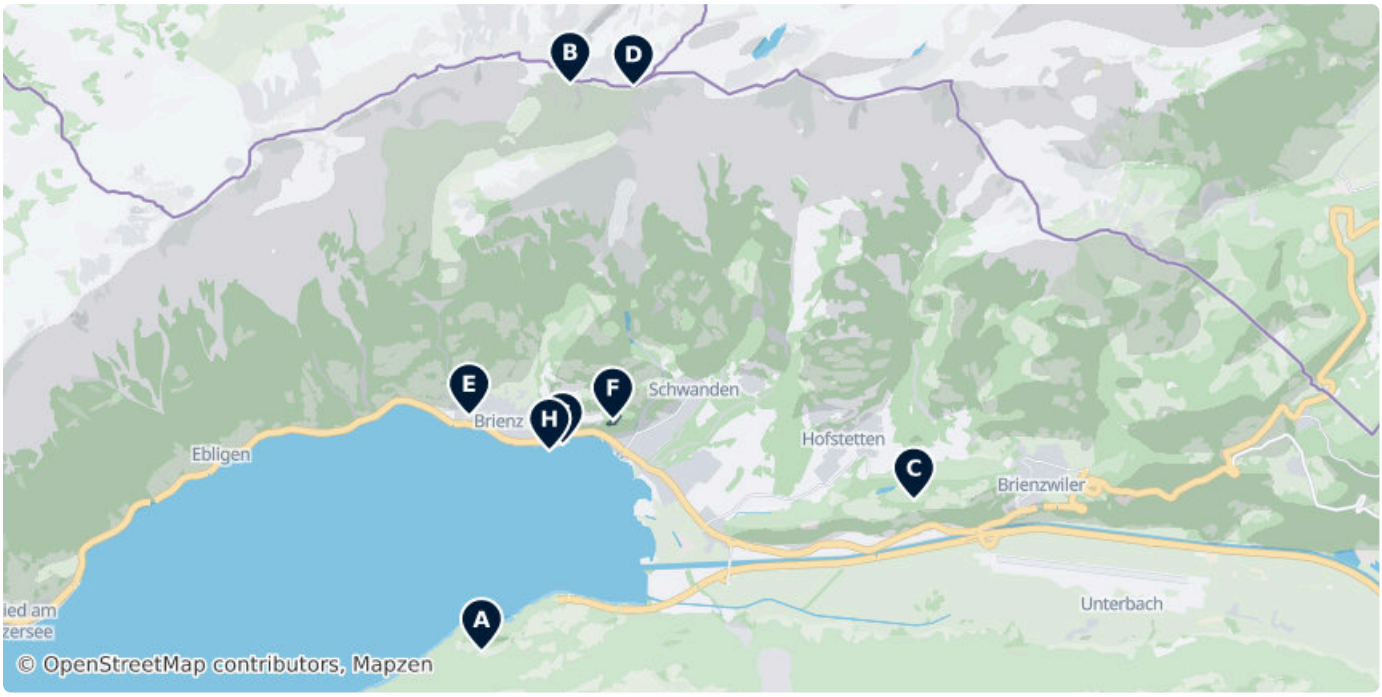
Type C / Type J
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
German, French, Italian, Romansh

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Brienz Essentials

Brienz sits on the shores of its namesake turquoise lake, defined by a centuries-old woodcarving tradition and the steam-powered Brienz Rothorn Railway. The village features the Ballenberg Open-Air Museum, showcasing over 100 historic Swiss buildings, and the multi-tiered Giessbach Falls. Visitors can explore the local wildlife park, founded in 1896, or visit Switzerland's only woodcarving school. Cultural landmarks include memorials to local figures like the dialect poet Albert Streich and the historic skipper Elisabetha Grossmann.





A Giessbach Falls

Beautiful waterfalls falling into the Lake Brienz. Take a camera with you because the views are stunning.

(Unnamed Road), 3855, Switzerland (46.73473, 8.02633)



B Brienz Rothorn Railway

The Brienz Rothorn Railway is a tourist rack railway in Switzerland, which climbs from Brienz, at the eastern end of Lake Brienz, to the...

Brienzer Rothorn, 3855 Brienz, Switzerland (46.78732, 8.03832)



C Freilichtmuseum Ballenberg

Ballenberg is an open-air museum in Switzerland that displays traditional buildings and architecture from all over the country.

Museumsstrasse 131, 3858 Hofstetten bei Brienz, CH (46.74876, 8.08487)

Mo–Su 10:00–17:00

ballenberg.ch



D Brienzer Rothorn

The Brienzer Rothorn is a mountain of the Emmental Alps, in Switzerland.

3855, Switzerland (46.78710, 8.04691)



E Schule für Holzbildhauerei

Switzerland's only woodcarving school, founded in 1884 to preserve and promote the traditional craft of the Bernese Oberland.

(46.75656, 8.02465)

holzbildhauerei.ch, +41 33 952 17 51

F Wildpark Brienz

Established in 1896, this park houses native alpine species including red deer, ibex, chamois, and marmots.

(46.75619, 8.04410)

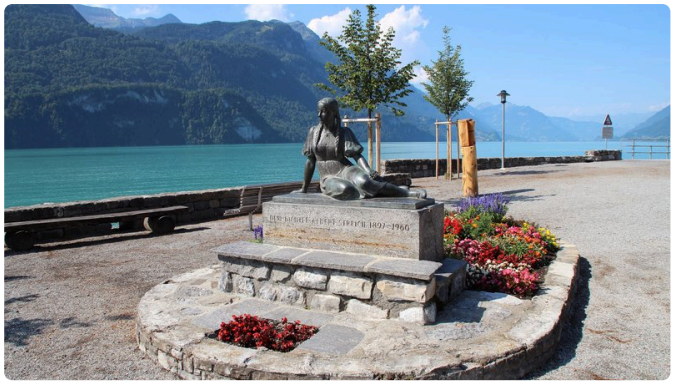
wildparkbrienz.ch



G Elisabetha Grossmann

Elisabetha Grossmann, was a Swiss skipper. She ferried tourists over the Lake Brienz in the early 19th-century and became herself a famous...

7 Ländteweg, Brienz BE 3855, Switzerland
(46.75391, 8.03732)



H Dem Dichter Albert Streich

A memorial honoring the local dialect poet and woodcarver Albert Streich, who lived from 1897 to 1960.

10 Tunnelgässli, Brienz BE 3855, Switzerland
(46.75332, 8.03553)

DATA SOURCES

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