

Lake Lucerne

Lucerne · Switzerland

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Lake Lucerne, in German the Vierwaldstättersee, is a winding lake in central Switzerland with fjord-like arms. Steep mountains rise straight from the water, and small villages sit on the shores. The city of Lucerne lies at the north-west end.

The lake is known as the heart of Switzerland. The country's founding legends are linked to its shores. It is a classic region for boat trips, mountain railways and short hikes.

When to visit

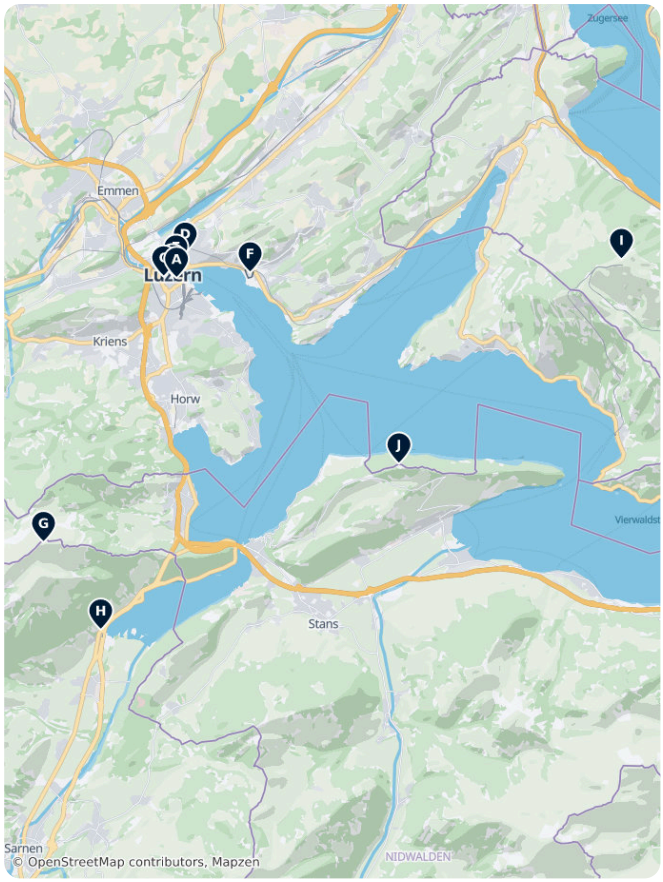
May to October is the best time for boats, mountain railways and walks. July and August are warm and busy. Spring and autumn are calm and good for clear views. In winter, the mountain tops are often in snow or cloud, and some boats and railways run less often.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for watersports	5° / 11° Feels like 1°	-2° / -9°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
February	Poor Poor for watersports	6° / 14° Feels like 2°	-1° / -10°	12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
March	Fair Fair for cycling	11° / 18° Feels like 7°	2° / -5°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
April	Good Good for cycling	15° / 22°	6° / -1°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
May	Good Good for sightseeing	19° / 26°	10° / 5°	19 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
June	Good Good for sightseeing	23° / 29°	15° / 9°	19 rainy days · Calm winds
July	Good Good for sightseeing	24° / 30°	16° / 11°	18 rainy days · Calm winds
August	Good Good for sightseeing	24° / 31°	16° / 11°	17 rainy days · Calm winds
September	Good Good for sightseeing	21° / 27°	12° / 6°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
October	Good Good for cycling	17° / 23°	9° / 3°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
November	Fair Fair for cycling	10° / 18° Feels like 7°	3° / -5°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
December	Poor Poor for watersports	6° / 12° Feels like 2°	-1° / -9°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds

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

Top sights

- A Chapel Bridge is the covered wooden bridge in Lucerne, and the best-known sight on the lake.
- B Old Town Lucerne has painted houses, squares and cafés.
- C Spreuerbrücke is a second covered bridge, with painted panels.
- D Löwendenkmal is a large stone lion carved into a rock wall.
- E Museggmauer is a medieval town wall with towers you can climb.
- F Swiss Museum of Transport is a large museum of trains, cars, planes and ships.
- G Pilatus-Kulm is a mountain above Lucerne. The H Steilste Zahnradbahn der Welt climbs to the top.
- I Rigi is a mountain with views over the lake. It is reached by rack railways from the lake villages.
- J Hammetschwand-Lift is an outdoor lift in a cliff near Bürgenstock.



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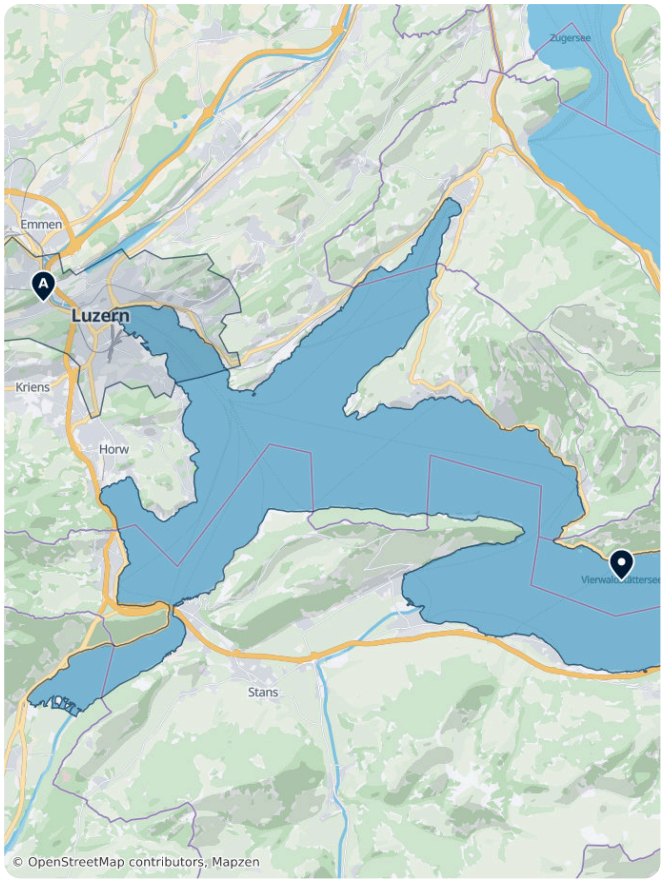
What to experience

- Take a boat or a paddle steamer from Lucerne.
- Go up the Rigi or Pilatus for views.
- Walk across the covered bridges in Lucerne.
- Take a short hike along the lake from one village to the next.
- Swim at a lake beach in summer.
- Visit the Rütli meadow, the meadow linked to the founding legend.

Day trips

- A Lucerne is the main city and base on the lake.
- Weggis and Vitznau are small resort villages at the foot of the Rigi.
- Flüelen and Altdorf lie at the south end, near the Gotthard route.
- Brunnen is a lakeside town near the Rütli meadow.
- Engelberg is a mountain resort with a cable car. It is reached from Stans by a short train ride.



Where to explore

- Lucerne is the main city on the lake.

Getting there

- By air: Zurich Airport is the nearest main airport. Trains to Lucerne take about 1 hour.
- By train: Lucerne is on the main line from Zurich and Basel. Check times on SBB.
- Lake villages can be reached by boat, by train or by bus from Lucerne.

Getting around

- Boats connect the villages around the lake. Historic paddle steamers also run in the warm months.
- Trains and buses link Lucerne with the lake towns.
- Rack railways go up the Rigi and Pilatus.
- Lucerne is easy to walk, and the lakefront is flat.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

Moderate

Lucerne and the lake villages are easy to walk. Mountain stations involve steep trails.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

Lakeside paths are mostly flat. The hills above the lake are steep.

Driving

- A car is not needed for the main sights.
- Roads along the lake are scenic but busy in summer.
- Parking at the mountain railway stations can be costly.

Food & drink

Try fresh lake fish such as perch and whitefish. Lucerne has its own local dishes, including Luzerner Chügelipastete, a pastry filled with meat. Cheese fondue and rösti are common.

People speak German with a central Swiss 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

- The region is very safe.
- Lake water is cold. Swim at supervised beaches.
- Mountain weather changes fast, so check the forecast before a trip.
- Tap water is safe to drink.

History

The lake sits at the centre of the old Swiss Confederation. In 1291, three communities near the lake made an alliance that led to the country. Legends about *William Tell* are set along its shores.

In the 19th century, steamers and mountain railways brought visitors. The first mountain railway in Europe opened on the Rigi in 1871.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Switzerland at a glance:

CURRENCY
CHF CHF

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY



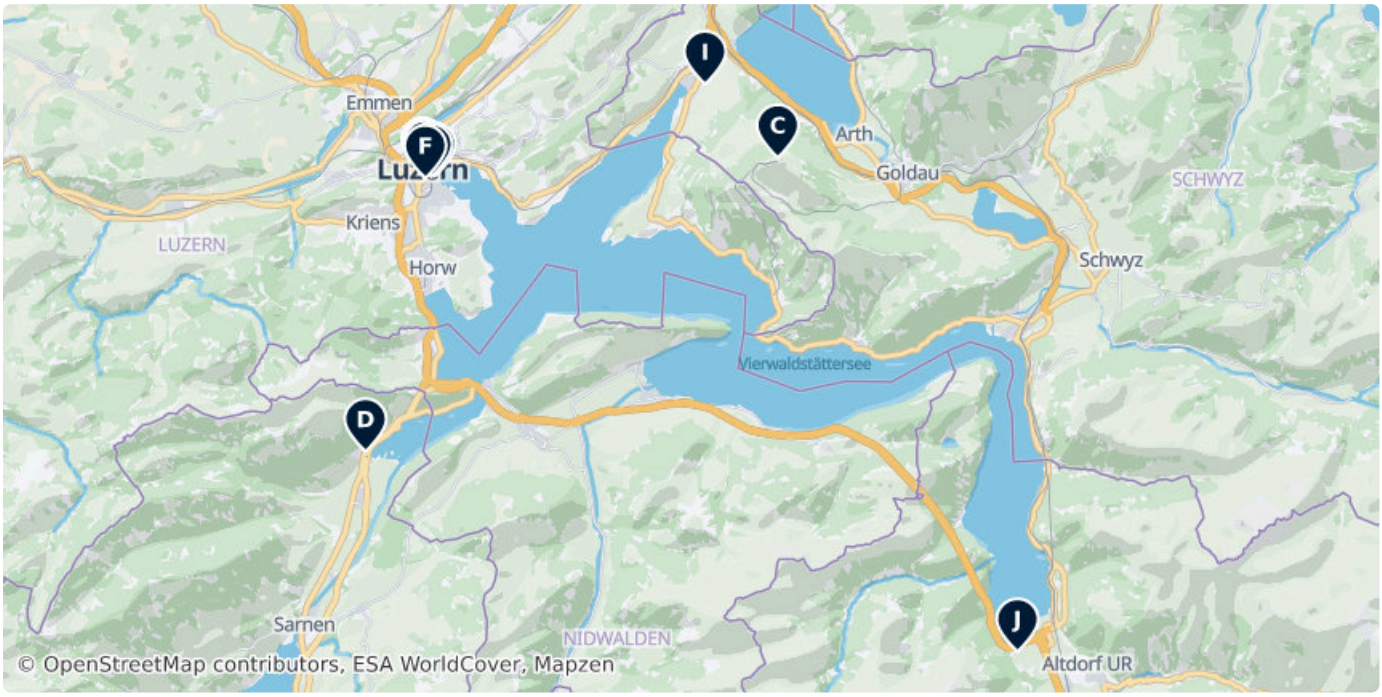
Type C / Type J
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
German, French, Italian, Romansh

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Lake Lucerne's Absolute Essentials

Lake Lucerne is defined by its medieval heritage and dramatic Alpine surroundings. The city of Lucerne features the 14th-century Chapel Bridge and its octagonal Water Tower, alongside the Renaissance-style Town Hall and the modernist Culture and Convention Center. Beyond the city, the region offers the world's steepest cogwheel railway at Mount Pilatus and panoramic views from the Rigi massif. Historical sites like the ruins of Gesslerburg and the moated Apro Castle highlight the area's significance in Swiss history.





A Chapel Bridge

Historic covered wooden bridge built in 1332, known as Europe's oldest of its kind, featuring medieval paintings and a water tower.

Kapellbrücke, 6004 Lucerne Switzerland
(47.05159, 8.30741)

+41412271717



B Old Town Lucerne

Historic district featuring well-preserved medieval architecture, picturesque streets, and accessible public spaces. Known for its cultural heritage and shopping opportunities.

Kapellgasse 28, 6004 Lucerne, Switzerland
(47.05234, 8.30588)

luzern.com/de/



C Mount Rigi

The Rigi is a mountain massif of the Alps, located in Central Switzerland.

Kulmweg 13, 6410 Arth, Switzerland (47.05672, 8.48532)

rigi.ch, +41 41 399 87 87



D The world's steepest cogwheel train

The Pilatus Railway is a mountain railway in Switzerland and the steepest rack railway in the world, with a maximum gradient of 48% and an...

4 Brünigstrasse, Alpnachstad 6053, Switzerland (46.95559, 8.27709)

pilatus.ch, +410 41 329 11 11



E Lucerne Town Hall

Renaissance-style building worth visiting especially for the lively atmosphere of the surrounding marketplace.

Unter der Egg 2, CH-6004 Lucerne, Switzerland (47.05190, 8.30611)

+410 41 227 17 17



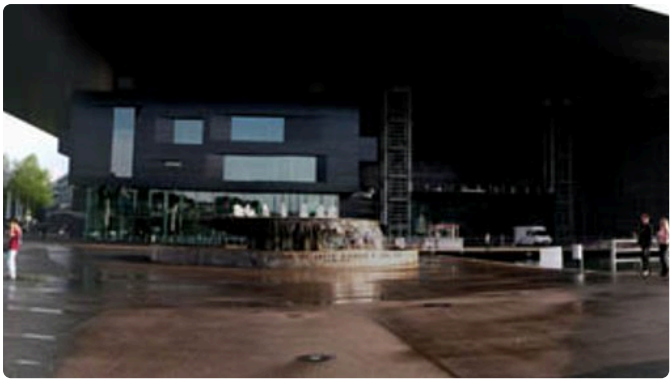
F Stiftung Rosengart

The Rosengart Collection Museum is an art museum located in Lucerne, Switzerland.

Pilatusstrasse 10, 6003 (47.04968, 8.30732)

Apr-Oct Mo–Su	10:00–18:00
Nov-Mar Mo–Su	11:00–17:00

rosengart.ch



G Culture and Convention Center

The Culture and Congress Centre in Lucerne is a multi-functional building with a concert hall that is esteemed for its high-profile...

Europaplatz 1, 6005 Lucerne, Switzerland (47.05034, 8.31212)

kkl-luzern.ch, +410 41 226 70 70



H Wasserturm

An octagonal, 34-meter-tall tower built around 1300 as part of the city's fortifications. It has historically served as a treasury, archive, and prison.

6 Bahnhofstrasse, Luzern 6003, Switzerland (47.05125, 8.30727)



I Gesslerburg Castle

Gesslerburg Castle is a castle in the municipality of Küssnacht of the Canton of Schwyz in Switzerland.

6403, Switzerland (47.08199, 8.44857)



J Apro Castle

Apro Castle or A-Pro Castle is a castle in the municipality of Seedorf in the canton of Uri in Switzerland.

Dorfstrasse, 6462, Switzerland (46.88663, 8.60635)

K Luzern, Bahnhof

Central hub for local bus and trolleybus lines located immediately outside the main railway station entrance.

1 Bahnhofplatz, Luzern 6003, Switzerland
(47.05080, 8.31077)



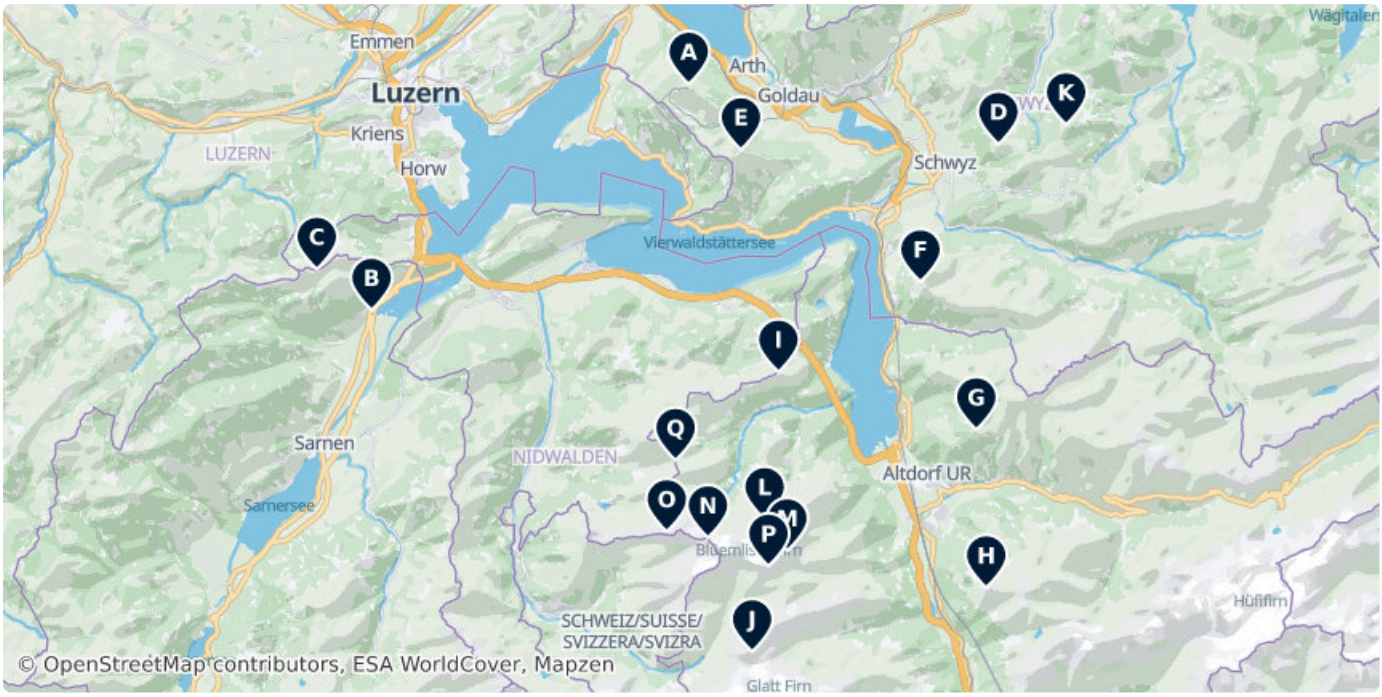
L Bahnhof Luzern

A major terminal station featuring a historic entrance portal preserved from the 19th-century building. It serves as a primary gateway for international and domestic Swiss Federal Railway connections.

1 Bahnhofplatz, Luzern 6003, Switzerland
(47.05014, 8.31030)

Swiss Mountain Peaks & Saddles

This collection features the prominent summits and ridges of Central Switzerland surrounding Lake Lucerne. It includes the Rigi massif, known as the 'Queen of the Mountains,' and the Pilatus massif, which hosts the world's steepest rack railway. The list covers diverse geological formations, from the limestone pyramids of Grosser Mythen to the 2,928-meter Uri Rotstock in the Urner Alps. These locations provide access to high-altitude saddles like Sinsgäuer Schonegg and panoramic viewpoints reachable by cable cars, chairlifts, or steep alpine hiking trails.





A Mount Rigi

The Rigi is a mountain massif of the Alps, located in Central Switzerland.

Kulmweg 13, 6410 Arth, Switzerland (47.05672, 8.48532)

rigi.ch, +41 41 399 87 87



B The world's steepest cogwheel train

The Pilatus Railway is a mountain railway in Switzerland and the steepest rack railway in the world, with a maximum gradient of 48% and an...

4 Brünigstrasse, Alpnachstad 6053, Switzerland (46.95559, 8.27709)

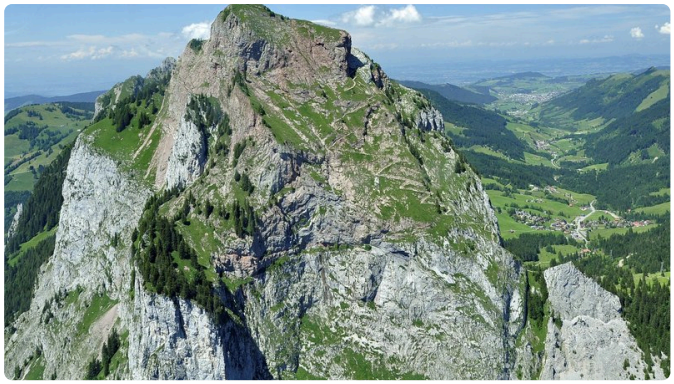
pilatus.ch, +410 41 329 11 11



C Tomlishorn

The highest peak of the Pilatus massif at 2,128 meters. It is accessible via a secured cliffside path from Pilatus Kulm, offering views of the Bernese Alps and the Lucerne lake basin.

6013, Switzerland (46.97391, 8.24122)



D Grosser Mythen

A 1,898-meter limestone peak near Schwyz. It is accessed by a steep mountain trail with 47 switchbacks and features a summit cross and a small restaurant with panoramic views.

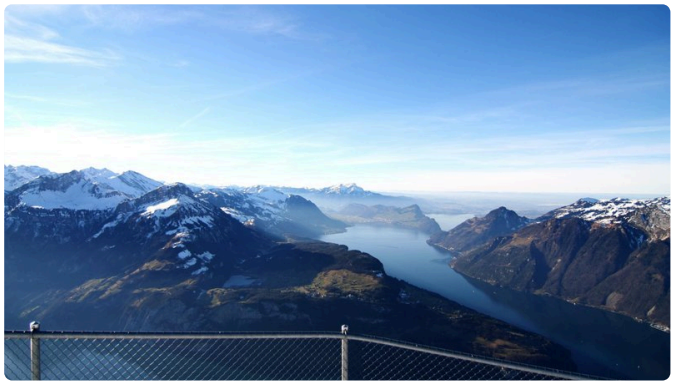
6430, Switzerland (47.02988, 8.68853)



E Rigi Scheidegg

The Scheidegg is a mountain summit of the Rigi massif, overlooking Goldau in the canton of Schwyz on its north mountainside, and Gersau and...

6410, Switzerland (47.02744, 8.51957)



F Fronalpstock

A 1,922-meter summit above the village of Stoos. Accessible by chairlift, the peak features a cliff-edge viewpoint overlooking the Urnersee, the Rütli meadow, and the surrounding Swiss plateau.

6433, Switzerland (46.96827, 8.63738)

G Hüenderegg

A 1,874-meter viewpoint on the ridge between the Muotatal and Schächental valleys, offering views toward the Clariden and Gross Windgällen peaks.

6460, Switzerland (46.90207, 8.67402)

H Bälmeten

The Bälmeten is a mountain of the Glarus Alps, overlooking Erstfeld in the canton of Uri.

6472, Switzerland (46.83117, 8.68052)

I Oberbauenstock

The Oberbauenstock is a mountain of the Urner Alps, overlooking Lake Lucerne in Central Switzerland.

6377, Switzerland (46.92786, 8.54412)

J Schlossberg

The Schlossberg is a mountain of the Urner Alps, located between Engelberg and Erstfeld in Central Switzerland.

6468, Switzerland (46.80250, 8.52694)

K Furggelenstock

A 1,656-meter peak in the Schwyz Prealps. It is a common destination for snowshoeing and hiking, situated between the Alptal and Brunni valleys.

8849, Switzerland (47.03856, 8.73296)

L Uri Rotstock

The Uri Rotstock is a mountain on the territory of Isenthal, Uri, Switzerland and part of the Uri Alps.

6461, Switzerland (46.86181, 8.53512)

M Brunnistock

The Brunnistock is a mountain of the Urner Alps, overlooking the eastern side of the Surenen Pass, in the Swiss canton of Uri.

6468, Switzerland (46.84778, 8.55000)

N Engelberger Rotstock

The Engelberger Rotstock is a mountain of the Urner Alps, overlooking Engelberg.

6461, Switzerland (46.85367, 8.49788)

O Ruchstock

The Ruchstock is a mountain of the Urner Alps in Central Switzerland.

6461, Switzerland (46.85636, 8.47089)

P Blackenstock

A 2,930-meter mountain in the Urner Alps located near the Surenen Pass. It is characterized by rugged alpine terrain and sits adjacent to the higher Brunnistock.

6461, Switzerland (46.84093, 8.53760)

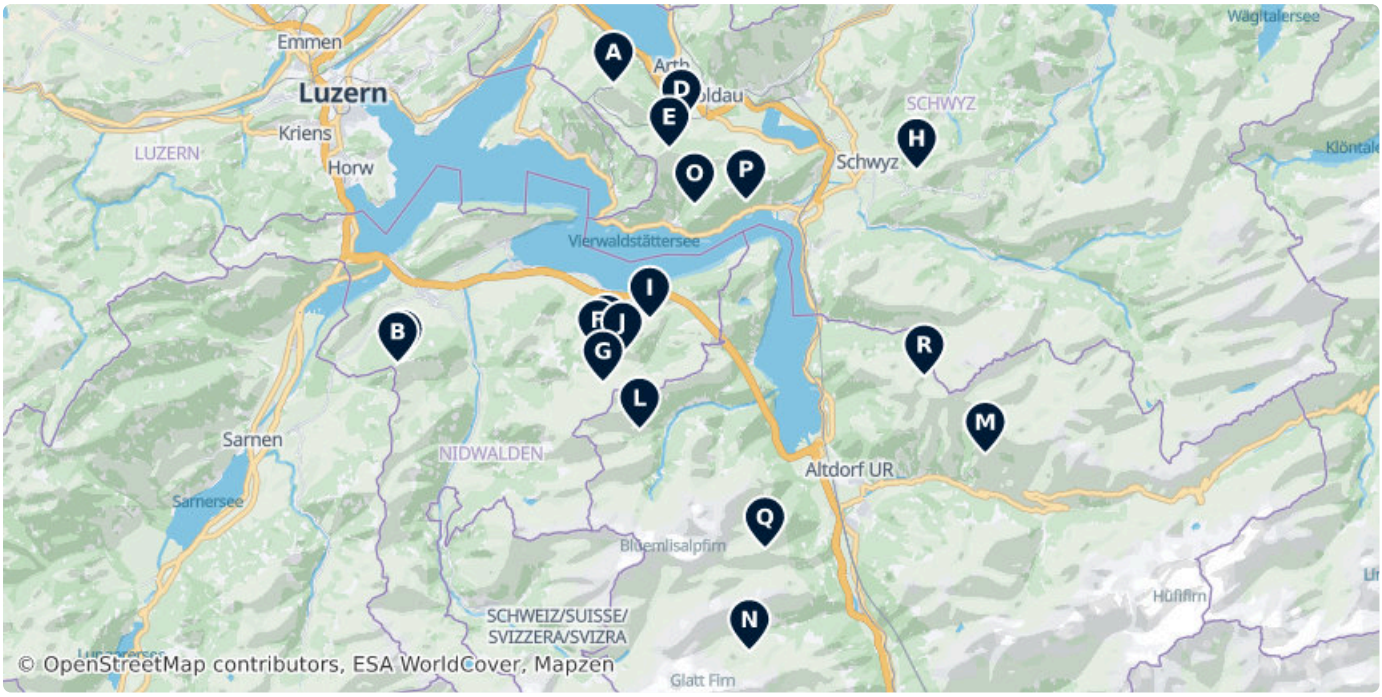
Q Sinsgäuer Schonegg

A mountain pass and saddle at 1,915 meters that connects the Engelberg valley with the Isenthal. It serves as a key crossing point for alpine hikers traveling between Nidwalden and Uri.

6461, Switzerland (46.88831, 8.47670)

Alpine Heights: Cable Cars & Huts

This collection features the diverse transport systems and mountain refuges of the Central Swiss Alps around Lake Lucerne. It includes the world's first open-top CabriO cable car at Stanserhorn and the extensive lift network of the Rigi massif. The list also highlights traditional Swiss Alpine Club huts like Krönten Hütte and seasonal alpine dairies such as Alp Spilau, providing access to high-altitude hiking trails and historic climbing routes across the Uri and Schwyz Alps.





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rigi.ch, +41 41 399 87 87



B Bergstation Luftseilbahn Kälti-Stanserhorn (CabriO)

Upper station of the world's first cable car with an open-top upper deck, ascending to 1,898 meters above sea level.

6370, Switzerland (46.93044, 8.34229)

stanserhorn.ch/stanserhorn/cabrio-bahn, +41 41 618 80 40

C Stanserhorn (Rinderalp)

Station serving the alpine pastures of Rinderalp on the slopes of the Stanserhorn.

(46.93138, 8.34551)

D Kräbel (Talstation Scheidegg)

Valley station for the aerial cableway connecting to Rigi Scheidegg, providing access to the high-altitude panorama trail.

44 Chräbelstrasse, 6410, Switzerland (47.04002, 8.53043)

E Rigi Scheidegg

Mountain station at 1,656 meters, serving as the starting point for the barrier-free panorama walk toward Rigi Kaltbad.

20 Schneealp, Rigi Scheidegg 6410, Switzerland (47.02752, 8.52224)

F Sessellift Wangiboden-Klewenstock

Chair lift in the Klewenalp-Stockhütte region connecting Wangiboden to the Klewenstock peak.

(Unnamed Road), 6375, Switzerland (46.93582, 8.47485)

klewenalp.ch

G Sessellift Stafel-Chälen

Four-seater chair lift serving the winter sports and hiking area of Klewenalp.

6383, Switzerland (46.92170, 8.47832)

klewenalp.ch

H Luftseilbahn Rotenflue

Gondola lift connecting Schwyz-Rickenbach to the Rotenflue, serving as the primary gateway to the Mythen region.

6432, Switzerland (47.01777, 8.68616)

rotenflue-kulm.ch

I Gondelbahn Emmetten-Stockhütte

Six-person gondola providing access to the Stockhütte plateau, popular for mountain biking and family hiking trails.

18 Rotifluh, 6376, Switzerland (46.95053, 8.50931)

klewenalp.ch

J Skilift Aengi-Twäregg

Surface lift in the Klewenalp ski area serving the slopes between Aengi and Twäregg.

6376, Switzerland (46.93472, 8.49121)

klewenalp.ch

K Skilift Ergglen

T-bar lift located within the Klewenalp winter sports region.

6375, Switzerland (46.93807, 8.48089)

klewenalp.ch

L Skilift Gitschenen

Small surface lift serving the high plateau of Gitschenen above Isenthal.

6461, Switzerland (46.90039, 8.50266)

skiliftgitschenen.ch

M Ratzi-Gisleralp

T-bar lift connecting the Ratzi mountain station to the Gisleralp pastures in the Schächental valley.

(46.88950, 8.73173)

N Kröntenhütte

Mountain refuge at 1,903 meters in the Erstfeldertal, managed by the Swiss Alpine Club and used as a base for Krönten climbs.

1, 6472 Erstfeld (46.80007, 8.57538)

kroentenhuette.com, +41 41 880 01 22

O Arche Ruchenberg

High-altitude alpine hut and viewpoint located on the Rigi massif.

Glattenberg, 6442, Switzerland (47.00208, 8.53914)

arche-stiftung.ch

P Bärfallen

Alpine restaurant and hut located on the hiking trail between Musenalp and Klewenalp.

6440, Switzerland (47.00384, 8.57313)

baerfallen.ch, +41 793734202

Q Alp Grat

Seasonal alpine dairy and café situated on the ridge overlooking the Engelberg valley.

6468, Switzerland (46.84646, 8.58570)

Mo–Su Open 24/7

alp-grat-surenenpass.ch

R Alp Spilau

Traditional alpine farm and hut located near Lake Spilau, offering local cheese and basic dormitory accommodation.

6452, Switzerland (46.92447, 8.69131)

alp-spilau.ch, +41 79 567 45 64

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