

Locarno

Canton of Ticino · Switzerland

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Locarno lies at the northern tip of Lake Maggiore and is the sunniest town in Switzerland. It has palm trees, arcades and a mild climate. Italian is the main language.

The town is small and relaxed. It is known for its film festival, a hilltop pilgrimage church and the lakeside. Most visitors stay one or two nights.

When to visit

April to October is the best time. May and June are green and warm. July and August are hot and busy, and the Locarno Film Festival is in August. September is pleasant, with warm lake water. Winter is mild but can be grey. Spring and autumn can bring heavy rain.

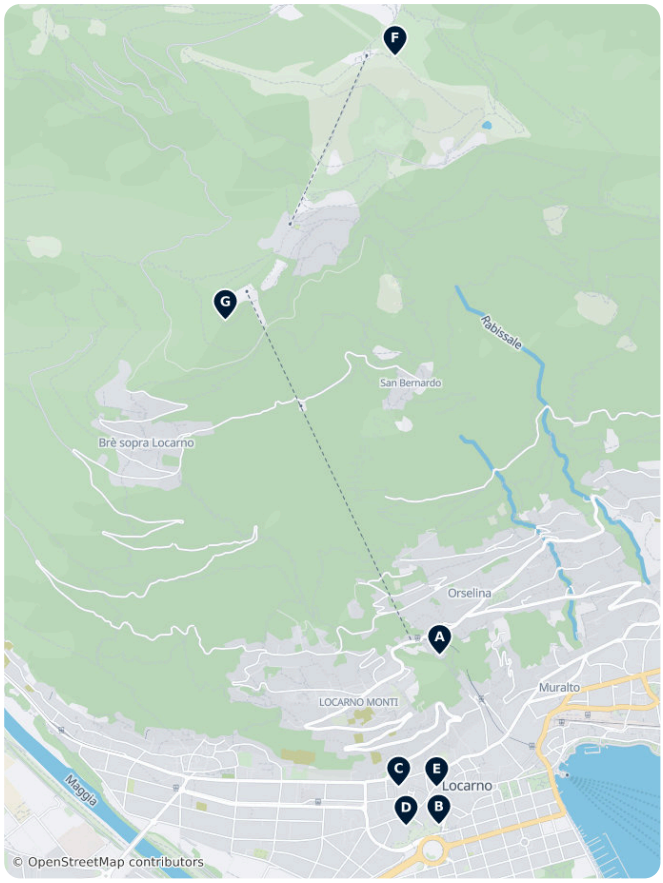
MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for watersports	7° / 12° Feels like 4°	0° / -6°	Dry air · Calm winds
February	Fair Fair for hiking	9° / 16° Feels like 6°	1° / -6°	Dry air · Calm winds
March	Good Good for hiking	14° / 20°	5° / -2°	Dry air · Calm winds
April	Good Good for hiking	17° / 24°	9° / 3°	12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
May	Good Good for sightseeing	22° / 27°	13° / 8°	17 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
June	Good Good for sightseeing	26° / 31°	18° / 12°	16 rainy days · Humid air · Calm winds
July	Good Good for sightseeing	28° / 32°	19° / 14°	Humid air · Calm winds
August	Fair Fair for watersports	28° / 33°	19° / 14°	16 rainy days · Humid air · Calm winds
September	Great Great for sightseeing	24° / 29°	15° / 9°	Calm winds
October	Good Good for sightseeing	19° / 25°	11° / 5°	12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
November	Good Good for hiking	13° / 19°	6° / -1°	12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
December	Poor Poor for hiking	8° / 13° Feels like 5°	1° / -7°	Dry air · Calm winds

Best months: September

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

Top sights

- A Santuario della Madonna del Sasso is a pilgrimage church on a rock above the town. A funicular or a path with chapels leads up to it. The view over the lake is the main reward.
- B Castello Visconteo is a medieval castle in the old town. It holds a small museum.
- C Casa Rusca, Pinacoteca comunale is a small art museum in the old town.
- D Chiesa di San Francesco d'Assisi is a Renaissance church near the old town.
- E Chiesa di Santa Maria Assunta is a church near the castle.
- F Cimetta is a mountain top above Locarno. A cable car goes up, with views over the lake and the Alps.
- G Ponte sospeso Cardada is a suspension bridge on the mountain above the town.



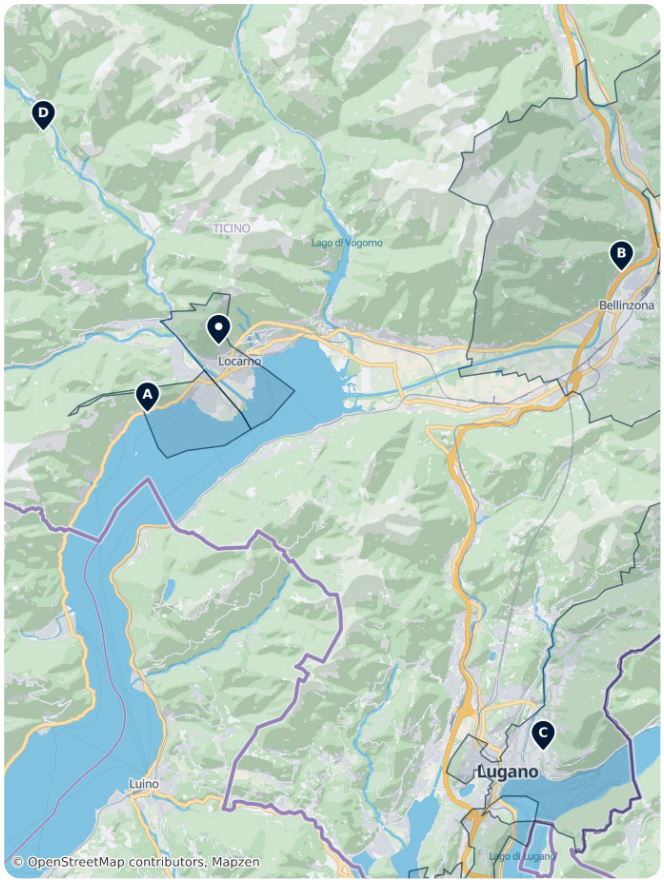
Locarno – Plan Your Trip
Turn the places from this guide into a real itinerary, with smart routing, time estimates, and everything you need for a perfect trip.
3M+ downloads · 4.6 stars · 15 years of trip planning
App Store · Google Play
Scan to download the app

What to experience

- Walk the lakeside promenade, or sit at a café on the big square, Piazza Grande.
- Take the funicular to Santuario della Madonna del Sasso and walk down along the chapel path.
- Visit Museo civico archeologico Castello Visconteo for Roman glass and local history.
- Take the cable car up to Cimetta for hiking and views.
- Watch an open-air film on Piazza Grande during the festival in August.
- Swim or rent a boat on Lake Maggiore.

Day trips

- A Ascona is a lake village with a colourful promenade. It is about 10 minutes away by bus.
- B Bellinzona has three medieval castles that are a UNESCO World Heritage site. It is about 20 minutes away by train.
- C Lugano is the largest city in Ticino, about 1 hour away by train.
- D Maggia Valley is a green valley with river pools and villages.
- The Brissago Islands are two small islands with a botanic garden. Boats leave from Locarno.



Where to explore

- Ascona lies next to Locarno on the lake.
- Bellinzona and Lugano are the other main towns of Ticino.
- Maggia Valley begins north-west of the town.

Getting there

- By air: the nearest main airports are Zurich and Milan. Zurich is about 2.5 hours by train.
- By train: trains run from Zurich and Lugano via Bellinzona. Check times on SBB.
- The Centovalli railway runs from Locarno to Domodossola in Italy and is a scenic ride.

Getting around

- The old town and promenade are easy to walk.
- Local buses link Locarno with Ascona and the villages around the lake.
- A funicular goes up to the Madonna del Sasso, and a cable car goes to Cardada and Cimetta.
- Hotel guests in Ticino receive a free public transport card. Ask at check-in.
- Boats cross Lake Maggiore to Brissago and Italian towns in the warm months.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The old town and lake promenade are compact and flat. The Madonna del Sasso hill is steep.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

High

Flat paths run along the lake and the Maggia delta.

Driving

- A car is not needed for the town. Parking in the centre is limited, and car parks are near the lake.
- A car can help for the Maggia Valley and the side valleys. Mountain roads are narrow.
- Traffic can be heavy in summer and on weekends.

Food & drink

The food is Italian-Swiss. Try risotto with local mushrooms, polenta and Ticino cheese. Merlot from Ticino is the local red wine. Grotti are traditional stone taverns in the valleys, where simple meals are served outside.

Cafés on the piazza are a place for coffee in the sun. Prices are high compared with northern Italy.

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.

Locarno – Plan Your Trip

Turn the places from this guide into a real itinerary, with smart routing, time estimates, and everything you need for a perfect trip.

3M+ downloads · 4.6 stars · 15 years of trip planning

App Store · Google Play

Scan to download the app

Safety & health

- Locarno is very safe.
- Watch your bags in the crowded centre during the film festival.
- Tap water is safe to drink.
- Summer can be hot and humid. Drink water and use sun protection on the lake.

History

Locarno became part of the Swiss Confederation in the 16th century. In 1925 the town hosted the Locarno Treaties, a set of agreements that aimed to keep peace in Europe after the First World War.

The pilgrimage church was founded in 1480 after a vision of the Virgin Mary. The film festival started in 1946 and now draws visitors every August.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Switzerland at a glance:

CURRENCY
CHF CHF

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY



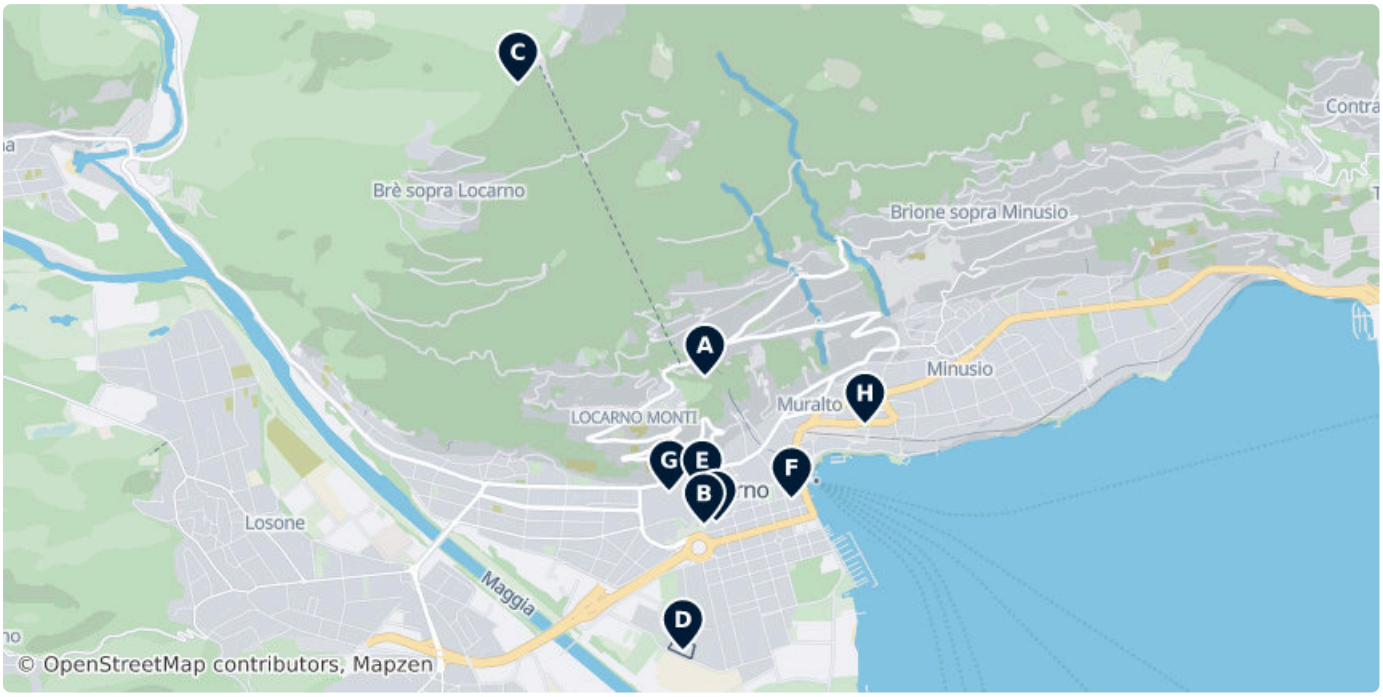
Type C / Type J
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
German, French, Italian, Romansh

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Locarno Essentials

Locarno's heritage spans from the medieval Castello Visconteo to the 15th-century Sanctuary of the Madonna del Sasso, perched on a rocky outcrop above the city. The Old Town features Baroque architecture like the Chiesa di Santa Maria Assunta, while the nearby Muralto district houses the Romanesque Collegiata di San Vittore. Modern cultural landmarks include the PalaCinema, home to the Locarno Film Festival, and the Ghisla Art Collection. For panoramic views, the Cardada suspension bridge extends over the landscape, offering vistas of Lake Maggiore and the Alps.





A Sanctuary of the Madonna of the Rock

The Madonna del Sasso is a Marian Pontifical shrine in Orselina, above the city of Locarno in Switzerland.

Via Santuario 2, 6644 Orselina, Switzerland (46.17516, 8.79380)

+41 91 7436265



B Visconteo Castle

Visconti Castle Italian: Castello Visconteo is a castle in Locarno, Switzerland.

1 Via al Castello, Locarno 6600, Switzerland (46.16789, 8.79375)

Tu–Su 10:00–18:30

castellolocarno.ch/en/

C Ponte sospeso Cardada

A suspension bridge and observation platform designed by architect Paolo Bürgi, offering 180-degree views of Lake Maggiore, the Centovalli, and the Maggia Valley.

(46.18952, 8.78056)

D Falconeria Locarno

An avian center featuring live flight demonstrations of eagles, hawks, falcons, and owls in an outdoor arena.

Via delle Scuole 12, 6600 Locarno (46.16171, 8.79225)

Mo–Su 10:00–19:00

falconeria.ch, +41 91 751 95 86



E Chiesa di Santa Maria Assunta

A 17th-century Baroque church in the Old Town featuring elaborate stucco decorations and a historic 18th-century organ.

20 Via Cittadella, Locarno 6600, Switzerland (46.16951, 8.79362)

F Fondazione Ghisla Art Collection Locarno

Housed in a striking red cube building, this private collection features modern and contemporary masterpieces by artists including Picasso, Miró, Magritte, and Basquiat.

(46.16917, 8.79995)

We–Su 13:30–17:30

ghisla-art.ch

G Casa Rusca, Pinacoteca comunale

A municipal art museum located within a restored 18th-century mansion, specializing in temporary exhibitions of 20th-century and contemporary art.

(46.16952, 8.79127)

Tu–Su 10:00–16:30

museocasarusca.ch



H Collegiata di San Vittore

An 11th-century Romanesque church in Muralto featuring a well-preserved crypt and a series of medieval frescoes.

5 Via San Vittore, Muralto 6600, Switzerland (46.17281, 8.80514)

PalaCinema

The headquarters of the Locarno Film Festival, this modern facility serves as a major cultural center with multiple screening rooms and film production spaces.

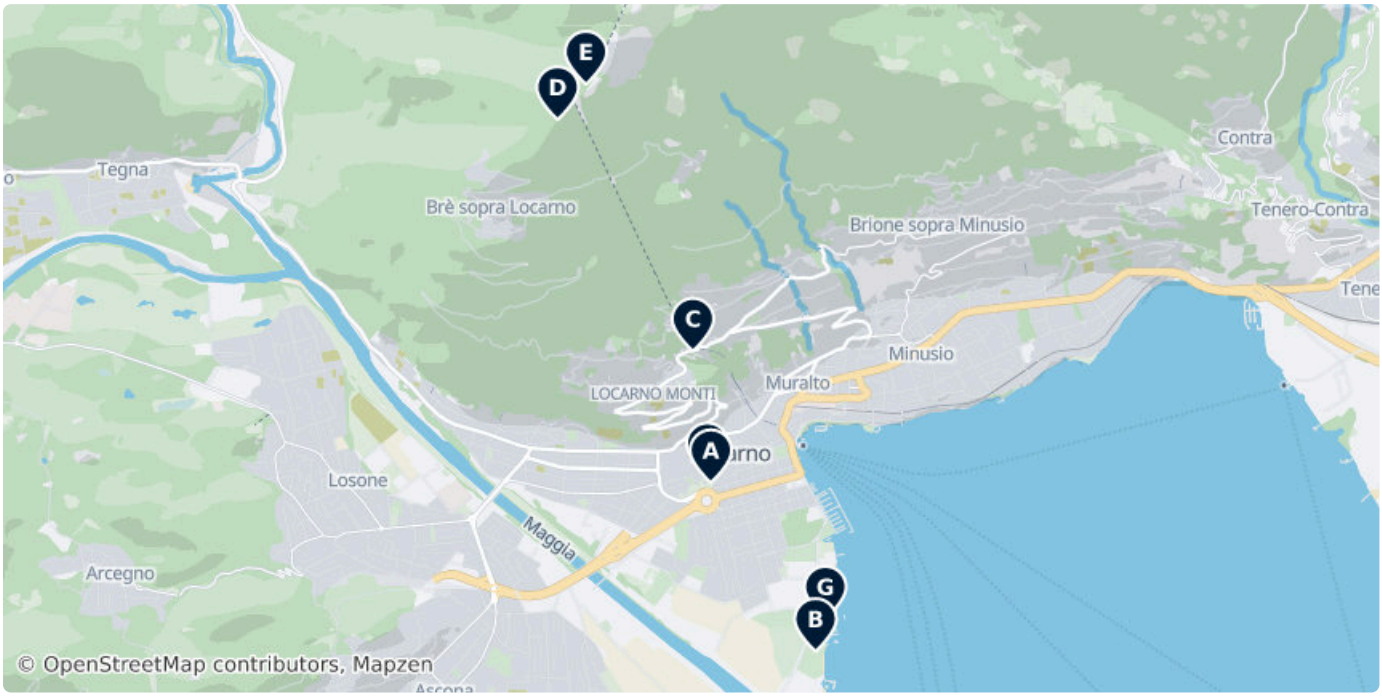
Piazetta Remo Russi 1, 6600 Locarno, CH
(46.16803, 8.79461)

Mo–Su Open 24/7

palacinemalocarno.ch

Locarno's Best Sights

Locarno's historic center features the 12th-century Visconti Castle and the adjacent Casorella palace, home to archaeological collections and Renaissance frescoes. On the shores of Lake Maggiore, the Camellia Park showcases over 900 varieties of flowers across 10,000 square meters. Higher elevations are accessible via the Mario Botta-designed cable car to Cardada, where the Paolo Bürgi suspension bridge provides views of the Alps and the lake. The Madonna del Sasso photo spot offers a perspective of the famous 15th-century sanctuary.





A Visconteo Castle

Visconti Castle Italian: Castello Visconteo is a castle in Locarno, Switzerland.

1 Via al Castello, Locarno 6600, Switzerland (46.16789, 8.79375)

Tu–Su 10:00–18:30

castellolocarno.ch/en/



B Parco delle Camelie

This lakeside park spans 10,000 square meters and features over 900 varieties of flowers. It includes organized beds and a large pond.

Via Gioacchino Respini, 6600, Switzerland (46.15784, 8.80277)

C Foto-Spot Madonna del Sasso

A designated viewpoint offering a panoramic perspective of the 15th-century sanctuary, the city of Locarno, and Lake Maggiore.

5 Via Santuario, Orselina 6644, Switzerland
(46.17572, 8.79221)

D Ponte sospeso Cardada

A steel and wood viewing platform designed by architect Paolo Bürgi. It extends over the forest, providing views of the Maggia Delta and the Centovalli.

(46.18952, 8.78056)

E Cardada

A mountain peak at 1,340 meters reached by a cable car designed by Mario Botta. It serves as a hub for Alpine hiking trails.

6605, Switzerland (46.19162, 8.78300)

F Casorella

A 16th-century manor house adjacent to Visconti Castle. It features Renaissance architecture, interior frescoes, and historical art exhibitions.

5 Via Bartolomeo Rusca, Locarno 6600, Switzerland
(46.16830, 8.79344)

locarno.ch/it/casorella

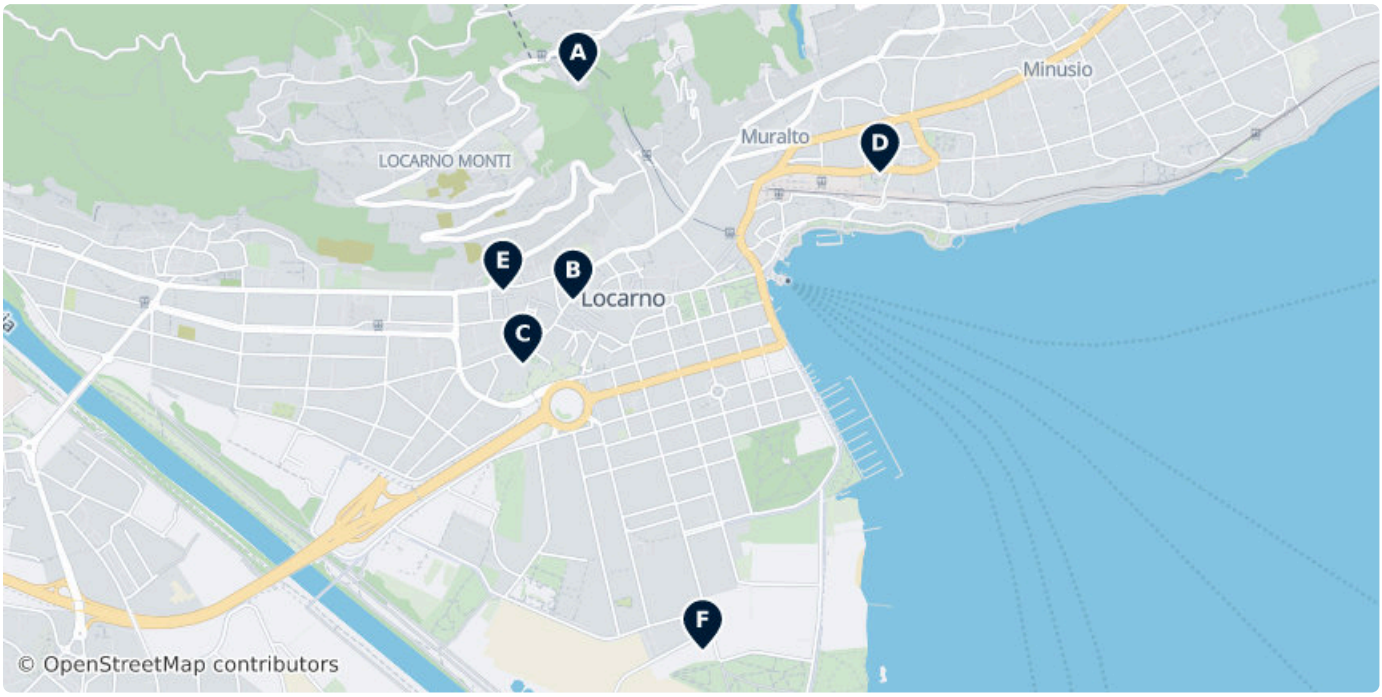
G Parco della Pace

A lakeside public park featuring landscaped green spaces, walking paths, and contemporary sculptures located near the Locarno harbor.

(46.15976, 8.80359)

Historic Churches

Locarno’s religious architecture spans from the 11th-century Romanesque style of San Vittore in Muralto to the 17th-century Baroque details of Santa Maria Assunta. The collection is anchored by the Sanctuary of the Madonna del Sasso, a significant pilgrimage site perched above the city in Orselina. In the historic center, the churches of San Francesco and Sant'Antonio Abate showcase Renaissance facades and ancient convent foundations, representing centuries of Ticinese spiritual and artistic development.





A Sanctuary of the Madonna of the Rock

The Madonna del Sasso is a Marian Pontifical shrine in Orselina, above the city of Locarno in Switzerland.

Via Santuario 2, 6644 Orselina, Switzerland
(46.17516, 8.79380)

+41 91 7436265



B Chiesa di Santa Maria Assunta

A 17th-century Baroque church in Locarno's old town, featuring ornate interior decorations and an 18th-century facade.

20 Via Cittadella, Locarno 6600, Switzerland
(46.16951, 8.79362)



C Chiesa di San Francesco d'Assisi

A Renaissance-style church rebuilt in 1538 on the site of a 13th-century Franciscan convent, featuring a three-aisle interior and historic frescoes.

19 Piazza San Francesco, Locarno 6600, Switzerland
(46.16785, 8.79173)



D Collegiata di San Vittore

A significant Romanesque collegiate church in Muralto, featuring an 11th-century crypt, 12th-century frescoes, and a distinct stone bell tower.

5 Via San Vittore, Muralto 6600, Switzerland
(46.17281, 8.80514)

E Collegiata di Sant'Antonio Abate

Located in Piazza Sant'Antonio, this church dates to the 14th century and was rebuilt in the 1600s. It features a prominent 19th-century neoclassical facade.

(46.16975, 8.79098)

F Chiesa della Sacra Famiglia

A 20th-century religious building in Locarno associated with the local Capuchin monastery.

(46.16041, 8.79849)

DATA SOURCES

Map data	© OpenStreetMap contributors, ESA WorldCover, Mapzen
Data	© OpenStreetMap contributors, Wikipedia, Tripomatic, Official websites

IMAGE CREDITS

- Sanctuary of the Madonna of the Rock — "100OrselinaMadonnaSasso" by Geobia, cc0
- Visconteo Castle — "Veduta del Castello Visconteo di Voghera (PV)" by Daniele Mancin, GFDL
- Chiesa di Santa Maria Assunta — "Church Santa Maria Assunta (Chiesa nuova) in Locarno, facade" by Rudolf H. Boettcher, CC BY-SA 4.0
- Collegiata di San Vittore — "Via San Vittore, Muralto. Église San Vittore." by Romano1246, CC BY-SA 3.0
- Visconteo Castle — "Veduta del Castello Visconteo di Voghera (PV)" by Daniele Mancin, GFDL
- Parco delle Camelie — "Parco delle Camelie" by Katarzyna Zofia, CC-BY-SA
- Sanctuary of the Madonna of the Rock — "100OrselinaMadonnaSasso" by Geobia, cc0
- Chiesa di Santa Maria Assunta — "Church Santa Maria Assunta (Chiesa nuova) in Locarno, facade" by Rudolf H. Boettcher, CC BY-SA 4.0
- Chiesa di San Francesco d'Assisi — "Convento di San Francesco ora Scuola Magistrale, nuovo chiostro (1892 - 1894)..." by WPestana, CC BY-SA 3.0
- Collegiata di San Vittore — "Via San Vittore, Muralto. Église San Vittore." by Romano1246, CC BY-SA 3.0

A free travel guide — not for sale. Travel guide generated with AI on November 15, 2026. Text and layout by Tripomatic, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, available under the ODbL. Photos are under their own licences, as credited on this page.