

Lucerne

Canton of Lucerne · Switzerland

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Lucerne sits where the Reuss river leaves Lake Lucerne, with mountains on every side. The old town is small and easy to walk. Most visitors see it in one or two days.

The city is also a base for the lake and the nearby peaks. Boats, cogwheel trains and cable cars all start here.

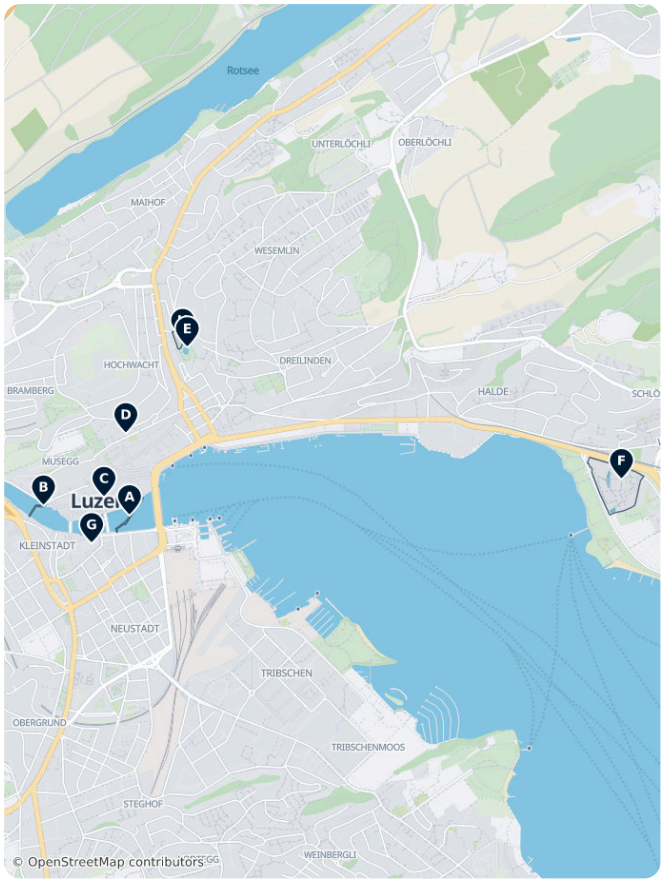
When to visit

Summer (June to September) is best for boat trips and mountain views. It is also the busiest time. Spring and autumn are quieter and good for walking. Winter is cold and often grey in the city, but the old town has Christmas markets and snow is likely in the mountains. Some mountain lifts and lake boats run less often in winter.

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° / 13° Feels like 2°	-1° / -11°	12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
March	Fair Fair for hiking	10° / 18° Feels like 7°	2° / -5°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
April	Good Good for hiking	15° / 22°	6° / -1°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
May	Good Good for sightseeing	19° / 26°	10° / 4°	19 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
June	Good Good for sightseeing	23° / 29°	14° / 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° / 30°	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 hiking	17° / 23°	8° / 2°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
November	Poor Poor for hiking	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 wooden covered bridge that is the symbol of Lucerne. Walk across it and look at the painted panels under the roof.
- B Spreuerbrücke is a second covered bridge, with painted panels on the Dance of Death.
- C Old Town Lucerne has painted house fronts, squares and fountains. It is a good area for a slow walk.
- D Museggmauer is the medieval city wall with nine towers. You can climb several of them for views over the roofs.
- E Löwendenkmal is a large rock carving of a dying lion. It remembers Swiss guards who died in 1792.
- F Swiss Museum of Transport is the biggest transport museum in Switzerland. It suits families.
- G Jesuitenkirche is a Baroque church beside the river.
- H Glacier garden shows ice age potholes and a small mirror maze.

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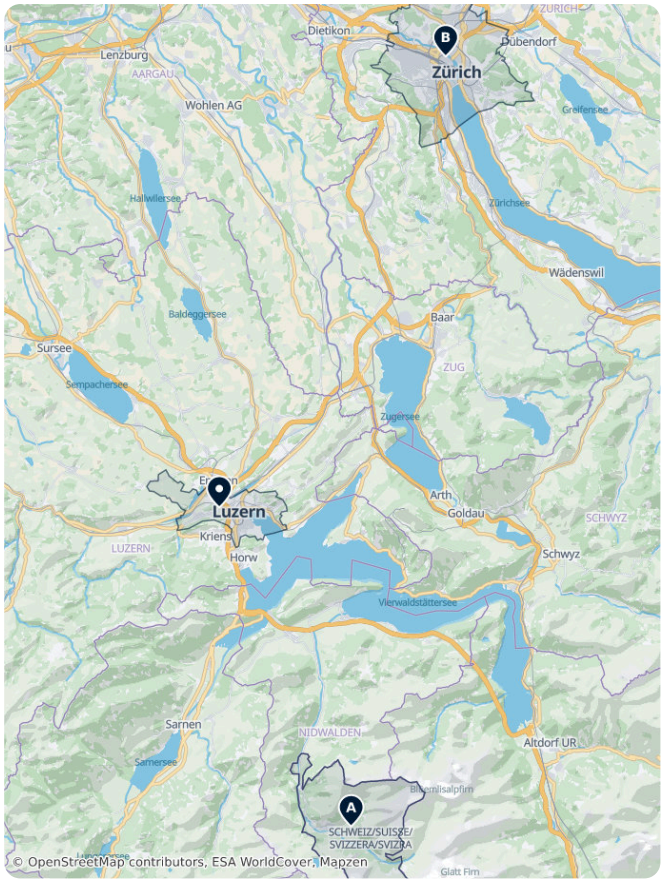
What to experience

- Take a lake cruise on a historic paddle steamer, see Raddampfer auf dem Vierwaldstättersee.
- Walk the Museggmauer wall at sunset.
- Visit Bourbaki Panorama, a huge round painting from 1881.
- Hear a concert at KKL Kultur- und Kongresszentrum Luzern, the concert hall by the lake.
- See modern art at Rosengart Collection, with works by Picasso and Klee.
- Rent a small boat or a stand-up paddle board on the lake in summer.

Day trips

- Mount Pilatus is the mountain above the city. Take the cogwheel train from Alpnachstad and return by cable car.
- Mount Rigi is known as the Queen of the Mountains. Boat to Vitznau, then take the cogwheel train to the top.
- A Engelberg is a mountain village with a monastery and lifts to Mount Titlis. The train from Lucerne takes about 45 minutes.
- B Zurich is about 45 minutes away by direct train.



Where to explore

- Lake Lucerne has steamboats to lakeside villages such as Weggis. A boat ride is a good half-day or full-day plan.

Getting there

- By air: most visitors fly into Zurich Airport. Trains run from the airport to Lucerne in about 1 hour 15 minutes, usually with one change.
- By train: Lucerne has direct trains from Zurich, Bern and Basel. The station is next to the lake and the old town. Book or check times on SBB.
- By bus: long-distance buses stop near the station.

Getting around

- Most sights in the old town are within a 15-minute walk of the station.
- City buses and trolleybuses cover the rest of the city. You can pay with a bank card or phone on many ticket machines, and with the SBB app.
- Lake boats and mountain trains are separate services. Check their times before you go.
- Hotels in the canton usually give a visitor card with free or cheaper local transport. Ask when you check in.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The old town and lakefront are compact and mostly flat.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

Bike paths run along the lake and river. Hills rise north of the old town.

Driving

- A car is not needed for the city. Parking in the centre is limited and costly.
- Park at a garage near the station or at the edge of the centre and walk.
- A car can help for villages around the lake, but trains and boats are easier for most trips.

Food & drink

Try Luzerner Chögalipastete, a puff pastry filled with veal and mushrooms in cream sauce. Cheese fondue and rösti are common across the region. Lake fish such as perch and whitefish appear on many menus.

The old town has many restaurants along the river. Prices are high, so lunch menus are a good way to save money. Fasnacht, the carnival before Lent, is the main local festival.

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

- Lucerne is very safe. Pickpocketing can happen on the bridges and in crowds near the station.
- Mountain weather changes fast. Check the forecast and the last lift time before you go up.
- Tap water is safe to drink. Fountains in the old town are drinkable unless marked.

History

Lucerne started around a monastery in the 8th century. It joined the Swiss Confederation in 1332. The wooden Chapel Bridge was built around 1333 as part of the city defences.

In the 19th century writers and painters made the lake and mountains famous. Tourism has been the main industry since then.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Switzerland at a glance:

CURRENCY
CHF CHF

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY



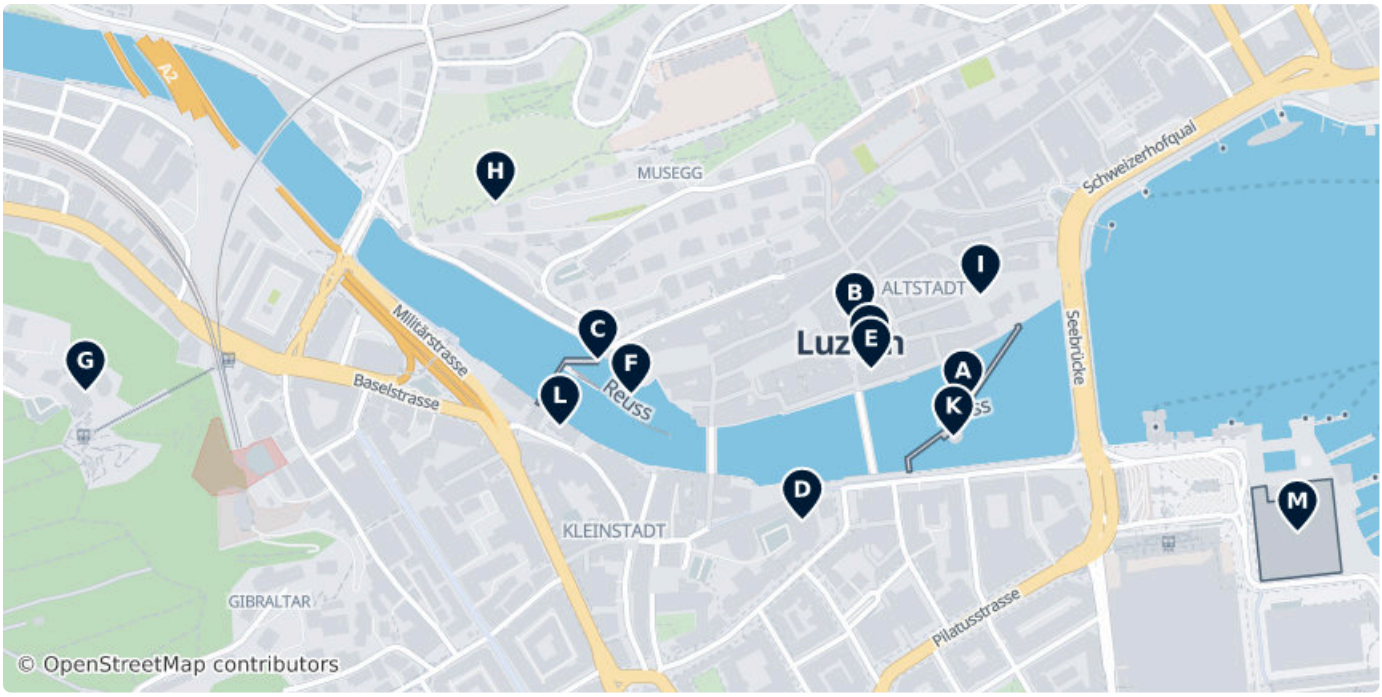
Type C / Type J
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
German, French, Italian, Romansh

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Luzern's Absolute Essentials

Lucerne's historic core is defined by its medieval fortifications, including the 14th-century Chapel Bridge and the Musegg Wall. This selection covers the city's architectural evolution, from the Baroque Jesuit Church and Renaissance Town Hall to the modern glass-and-steel Culture and Convention Center (KKL). Key engineering landmarks include the Spreuer Bridge, known for its macabre paintings, and the 19th-century needle dam. The list also highlights the well-preserved Old Town squares and the iconic octagonal Water Tower.





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 Spreuer Bridge

The Spreuer Bridge is one of two extant covered wooden footbridges in the city of Lucerne, Switzerland.

Spreuerbrücke, 6004 Lucerne, Switzerland (47.05199, 8.30226)



D Jesuit Church

The Lucerne Jesuit Church is a Catholic church in Lucerne, Switzerland.

Bahnhofstrasse 11, 6003 Lucerne, Switzerland (47.05045, 8.30514)

jesuitenkirche-luzern.ch, +410 41 240 31 33



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 Water Spike

A needle dam is a weir designed to maintain the level or flow of a river through the use of thin "needles" of wood.

Reusssteg 7, 6003 Lucerne, Switzerland (47.05166, 8.30273)

reusswehr.ch

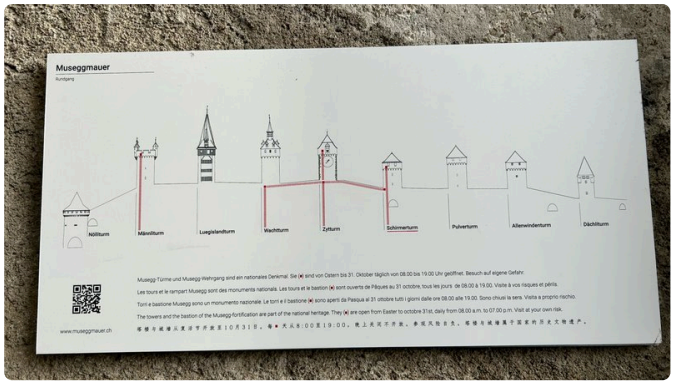


G Chateau Gütsch

The Château Gütsch is a historic château in Lucerne, Switzerland.

Kanonenstrasse, 6003 Lucerne, Switzerland (47.05168, 8.29505)

chateau-guetsch.ch/de/, +41 41 289 14 14



H Männliturm

One of nine defensive towers along the 14th-century Musegg Wall. Standing 33 meters high, it serves as a public observation point with views over the city and Lake Lucerne.

6 Auf Musegg, Luzern 6004, Switzerland (47.05350, 8.30082)



I Fritschibrunnen

Renaissance-style fountain on Kapellplatz depicting Brother Fritschi, a legendary figure of the Lucerne Carnival. The current structure dates to 1918, replacing a 16th-century original.

6 Kapellplatz, Luzern 6004, Switzerland (47.05261, 8.30765)



J Rathausturm

The prominent clock tower of the Renaissance Town Hall, constructed between 1602 and 1606. It serves as a central landmark within the Old Town.

23 Furrengasse, Luzern 6004, Switzerland (47.05203, 8.30609)



K Wasserturm

Octagonal 34-meter-high defensive tower built around 1300. Standing in the Reuss River next to the Chapel Bridge, it has historically served as a treasury, prison, and archive.

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



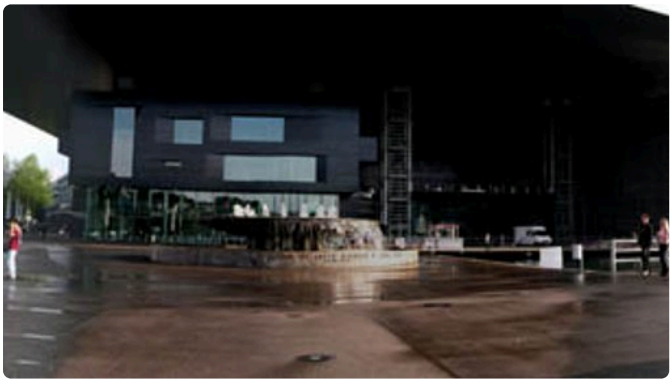
L Museum of History Lucerne

Museum of city's history based in a building from 16th century. Interesting exhibition includes handicraft and weapons.

Pfistergasse 24, Universität Luzern, 6003 Lucerne, Switzerland (47.05135, 8.30173)

Mo	Closed
Tu–Su	10:00–17:00

museumluzern.ch, +41 41 228 54 11



M 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

Lucerne Museums

Lucerne's museum landscape spans local history, fine art, and the natural world. The Museum of History, located in a 16th-century building, displays regional handicrafts and weaponry, while the Lucerne Nature Museum focuses on regional flora and fauna. Art highlights include the Rosengart Collection's modern works and the Hans Erni Museum's extensive lithographs. Additionally, the Richard Wagner Museum preserves rare musical instruments and significant scores in the composer's former residence, offering a comprehensive look at the city's cultural and scientific evolution.





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museumluzern.ch, +41 41 228 54 11



B Lucerne Nature Museum

Natur-Museum Luzern or Lucerne Nature Museum is a museum in the Swiss city of Lucerne.

Kasernenplatz 6, 6003 Lucerne, Switzerland (47.05166, 8.30103)

Mo	Closed
Tu–Su	10:00–17:00

naturmuseum.ch, +41 41 228 54 11



C 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

E Hans Erni Museum

Museum of the Lucerne-born graphic artist. Extensive collection of paintings and lithographs.

Lidostrasse 6, 6006 Lucerne, Switzerland (47.05323, 8.33444)

hans-erni.ch, +410 41 370 44 44

D Museum of Richard Wagner

The museum exhibits some of the most important works of Richard Wagner and a collection of rare musical instruments.

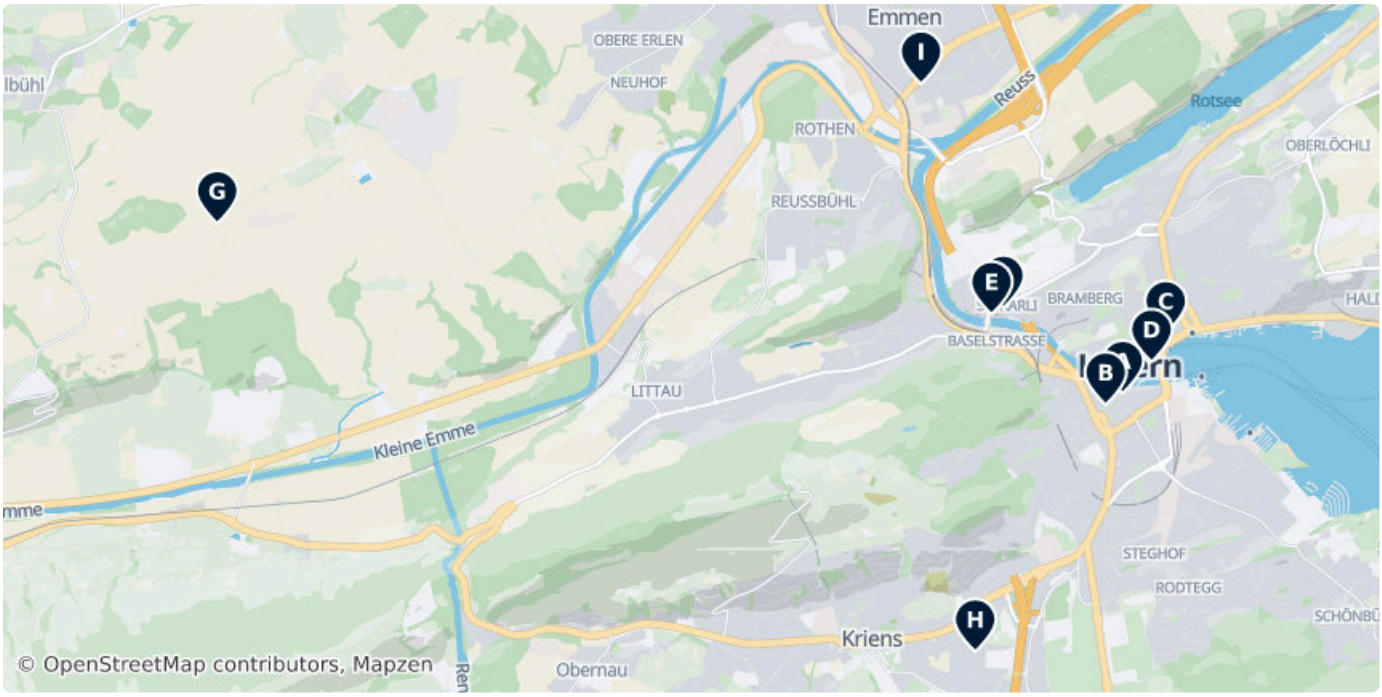
Richard-Wagner-Weg 27, 6005 Luzern (47.04239, 8.32904)

Tu–Su	10:00–17:00

richard-wagner-museum.ch, +410 41 360 23 70

Lucerne Places of Worship

Lucerne's religious landscape features a mix of architectural styles, from the 17th-century Baroque Jesuit Church to the modernist St. Karl. The collection includes the Franciscan Church, known for its Gothic roots, and the city's oldest parish church, Peterskapelle. These sites represent Roman Catholic and Evangelical-Reformed traditions, offering insights into the city's spiritual history through ornate altars, frescoes, and unique structural designs.





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jesuitenkirche-luzern.ch, +410 41 240 31 33



B Franziskanerkirche

A Roman Catholic church dedicated to St. Maria in der Au, featuring Gothic architecture and significant 14th-century choir stalls. It remains one of the most historically important Franciscan buildings in Switzerland.

1 Franziskanerplatz, Luzern 6003, Switzerland (47.04969, 8.30349)



C Matthäuskirche

An Evangelical-Reformed church located on Hertensteinstrasse. Built in the Neo-Gothic style, it serves as a primary place of worship for Lucerne's Protestant community.

9 Seehofstrasse, Luzern 6004, Switzerland (47.05440, 8.30932)



D Peterskapelle

The oldest parish church in Lucerne, situated at the end of the Chapel Bridge. The building features a simple exterior with an interior renovated in the late 20th century to emphasize contemporary spiritual space.

4 Kapellplatz, Luzern 6004, Switzerland (47.05252, 8.30794)



E Kirche St. Karl

A Roman Catholic parish church designed by architect Fritz Metzger and constructed between 1932 and 1934. It is recognized as an important example of modern ecclesiastical architecture in Central Switzerland.

(47.05567, 8.29240)

F Karl-Borromäus-Kapelle

A Catholic chapel dedicated to Saint Charles Borromeo.

(47.05608, 8.29356)

G Spitzkappelle

A Roman Catholic chapel located in the rural outskirts of the city.

(Unnamed Road), 6016, Switzerland (47.06167, 8.21724)

H Bruder Klaus

A Catholic church dedicated to Nicholas of Flüe, the patron saint of Switzerland. The building includes wheelchair-accessible facilities.

20 Alpenstrasse, Kriens 6010, Switzerland (47.03336, 8.29083)

Kirche St. Maria

A Roman Catholic church serving the local parish.

6 Talstrasse, Emmen 6020, Switzerland (47.07089, 8.28557)

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