Stans

Nidwalden Canton · Switzerland

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Stans is the main town of the canton of Nidwalden, in central Switzerland, just south of Lake Lucerne. It has a small, quiet old centre with a large square and a church with a tall tower.

A cable car climbs from the nearby village to the Stanserhorn, a mountain with wide views. Stans is a calm base for the lake and for Lucerne.

When to visit

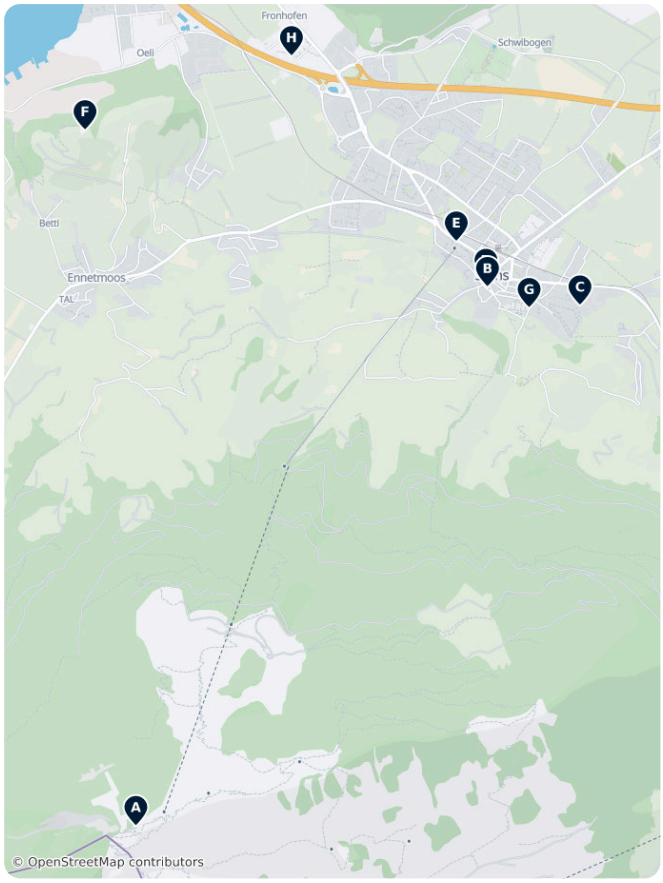
May to October is best for the Stanserhorn and the lake. Summer is warm. Winter is cool and foggy in the valley, and the mountain cable car runs in a shorter season.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for sightseeing	5° / 11° Feels like 1°	-2° / -9°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
February	Poor Poor for sightseeing	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 sightseeing	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 Stanserhorn is a mountain with a cable car, including a roofless upper deck.
- B Winkelrieddenkmal is a monument for a hero of Swiss history.
- C Winkelriedhaus is a museum in a historic house.
- D St. Peter und Paul is the main parish church of the town.
- E Salzmagazin is an old salt warehouse used for art shows.
- F Burg Rotzberg is a castle ruin above the lake.
- G Bourbaki-Denkmal Stans recalls the French soldiers who found refuge in Switzerland in 1871.
- H Frey Näpfli Stiftung is a small museum of a foundation.



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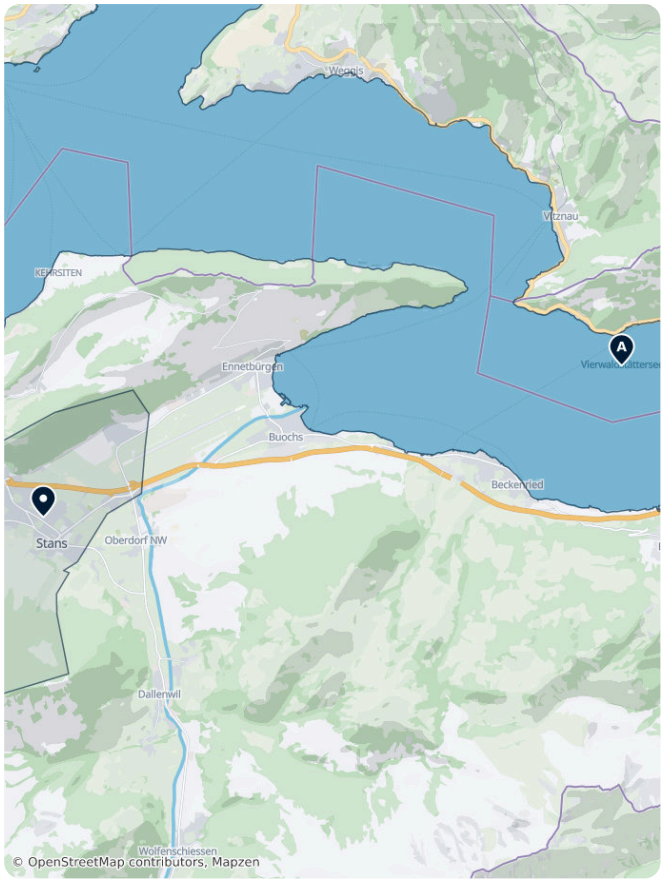
What to experience

- Ride the cable car to the top of the Stanserhorn.
- Walk through the old square and see the monument.
- Take the train to Lucerne for a day.
- Take a boat on the lake from a nearby harbour.
- Hike on the paths above the town.

Day trips

- Lucerne is about 15 minutes away by train.
- A Lake Lucerne is nearby, with boats to many villages.
- Engelberg is a mountain resort with an abbey, about 40 minutes away.
- The Bürgenstock is a hill with a famous lift and views over the lake.



Where to explore

- Lake Lucerne is the main lake region next to Stans.

Getting there

- By air: Zurich is the main airport, about 1 hour 30 minutes away.
- By train: Stans is on a regional line from Lucerne. Check times on SBB.
- The train from Lucerne takes about 15 minutes.

Getting around

- The old centre is small and easy to walk.
- Local buses link Stans with the nearby villages.
- A cable car goes up the Stanserhorn from the nearby village of Kälti.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The old centre is small and flat.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

High

Flat paths run to Lake Lucerne.

Driving

- A car is not needed for the town.
- The A2 motorway passes close by.
- Parking in the centre is easy.

Food & drink

Try cheese, dried meat and cream dishes from central Switzerland. Local apples are a specialty. Nidwalden also has a tradition of fine pastry.

People speak German with a local 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

- Stans is very safe.
- Mountain weather changes fast.
- The cable car may close in wind.
- Stay on marked paths.

History

Stans is one of the oldest settlements of the Swiss Confederation. In 1481, a diet held here ended a conflict between the cantons. A local man who offered help is remembered as a saviour.

The town was damaged in 1798, when French troops attacked, and was later rebuilt.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Switzerland at a glance:

CURRENCY
CHF CHF

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY

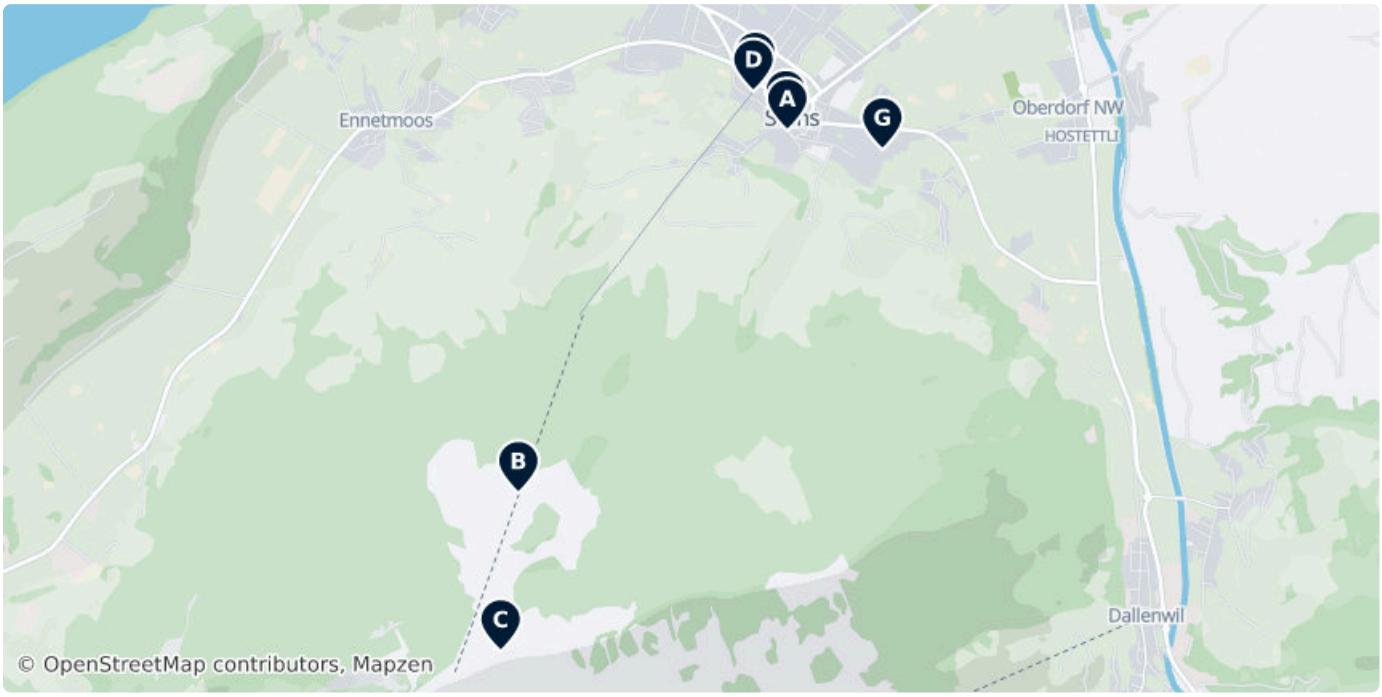
Type C / Type J
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
German, French, Italian, Romansh

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Stans Essentials

Stans combines Alpine engineering with deep-rooted Swiss history. The ascent to the Stanserhorn peak begins at the 1893 funicular station, leading to the CabriO, the world's first open-top cable car. The town center is marked by the Winkelried Memorial, honoring the 1386 Battle of Sempach. Cultural highlights include the Salzmagazin, an 18th-century salt warehouse, and the Winkelriedhaus, a 15th-century manor. The skyline is dominated by the Parish Church of St. Peter and Paul, which retains its 12th-century Romanesque bell tower.





A Winkelried Memorial

The Winkelried memorial was erected in memory of Arnold von Winkelried, who sacrificed his life in the Battle of Sempach on the 9 July...

8 Rathausplatz, Stans 6370, Switzerland (46.95649, 8.36579)



B Luftseilbahn Kälti-Stanserhorn (CabriO)

The world's first double-decker cable car featuring an open-air upper deck. It connects the Kälti intermediate station to the Stanserhorn summit, providing 360-degree views of the surrounding Swiss Alps and Lake Lucerne.

6370, Switzerland (46.93902, 8.34678)

C Stanserhorn (Rinderalp)

The mountain station at the 1,898-meter summit of Stanserhorn. The site includes a revolving restaurant, a marmot sanctuary, and the start of several high-altitude hiking trails.

(46.93138, 8.34551)



D Talstation Standseilbahn Stanserhorn-Bahn

The historic valley station for the vintage funicular railway established in 1893. It features original Belle Époque architecture and serves as the primary departure point for the journey up the Stanserhorn.

19 Stansstaderstrasse, Stans 6370, Switzerland (46.95839, 8.36339)

stanserhorn.ch/informationen/fahrplan, +41 41 618 80 40



E Salzmagazin

An 18th-century former salt storehouse now operating as a branch of the Nidwaldner Museum. The building hosts rotating exhibitions focused on the regional history and cultural heritage of the canton.

Stansstaderstrasse 23, 6370 Stans (46.95875, 8.36352)

Mo–Tu	Closed
We	14:00–20:00
Th–Sa	14:00–17:00
Su	11:00–17:00

nidwaldner-museum.ch



F St. Peter und Paul

A Catholic parish church characterized by its 12th-century Romanesque bell tower. The current nave was built between 1641 and 1647, reflecting a transition between Renaissance and Baroque architectural styles.

7A Dorfplatz, Stans 6370, Switzerland (46.95690, 8.36568)



Winkelriedhaus

A historic 15th-century manor house and part of the Nidwaldner Museum. It houses significant collections of regional art and exhibits detailing the cultural evolution of Central Switzerland.

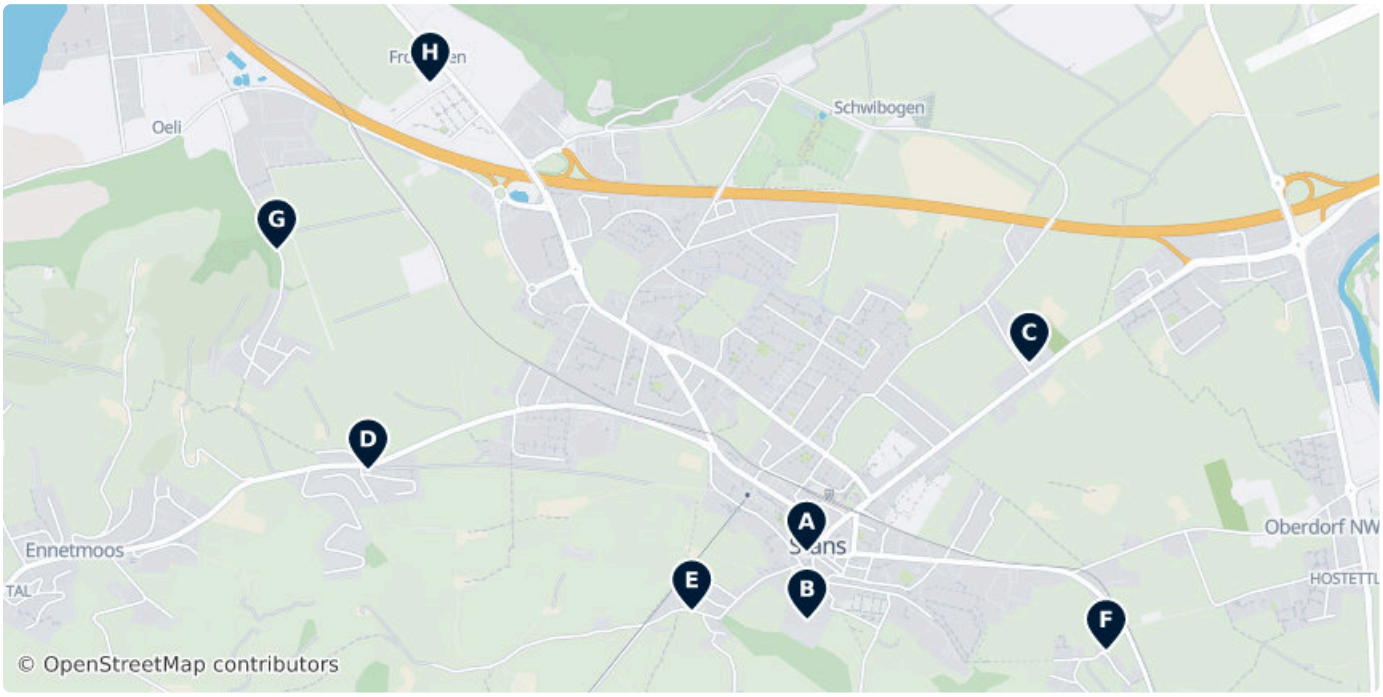
Engelbergstrasse 54a, 6370 Stans (46.95558, 8.37250)

Mo–Tu	Closed
We	14:00–20:00
Th–Sa	14:00–17:00
Su	11:00–17:00

nidwaldner-museum.ch, +41 41 610 96 06

Religious Heritage

Stans preserves a diverse collection of Catholic landmarks reflecting centuries of Swiss religious tradition. The centerpiece is the 17th-century parish church of St. Peter and Paul, which retains its original Romanesque tower. The town's spiritual landscape includes the 16th-century Capuchin Monastery of St. Klara and several specialized chapels, such as the historic Galgenkapelle and the hillside Lourdesgrotte. These sites range from grand Baroque architecture to modest pilgrimage stations scattered throughout the valley.





A St. Peter und Paul

Early Baroque parish church built between 1641 and 1647. It features a distinctive 12th-century Romanesque bell tower that survived from an earlier structure on the site.

7A Dorfplatz, Stans 6370, Switzerland (46.95690, 8.36568)

B Kloster St. Klara der Kapuzinerinnen

Founded in 1582, this monastery for Capuchin nuns was a significant center during the Counter-Reformation. The complex includes a simple chapel and historic living quarters.

Stans 6370, Switzerland (46.95512, 8.36569)

+41 41 619 08 10

C Mettenweg Kapelle - Maria Heimsuchung

A Baroque chapel dedicated to the Visitation of Mary, featuring an ornate altar and serving the local community near the Mettenweg district.

45 Buochserstrasse, Stans 6370, Switzerland (46.96187, 8.37428)

D St.-Josefs-Kapelle

Small 17th-century chapel dedicated to Saint Joseph, located on the western outskirts of Stans featuring traditional local religious architecture.

3 Sankt Josef, Gotthardli 6370, Switzerland (46.95906, 8.34874)

E Knirikapelle

A small roadside chapel located in the Kniri area, serving as a quiet point of reflection for those traveling between the town and the mountain slopes.

18 Knirigasse, Stans 6370, Switzerland (46.95535, 8.36124)

F St.-Heinrich-Kapelle

A traditional Catholic chapel dedicated to Saint Henry, situated on the eastern edge of the town.

7 Sankt-Heinrich-Strasse, Ifangi 6370, Switzerland (46.95431, 8.37725)

G Lourdesgrotte

A devotional grotto modeled after the Massabielle cave in Lourdes, France, featuring a statue of the Virgin Mary set into the natural rock.

Rotzhalde, 6370, Switzerland (46.96485, 8.34521)

H Galgenkapelle

Historically known as the "Gallows Chapel," this small structure stands near the site of former public executions and was traditionally used for final prayers.

6 Fronhofenstrasse, Stans 6370, Switzerland (46.96925, 8.35114)

DATA SOURCES

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