

Rail holidays to Switzerland



Centovalli Express Holiday



Centovalli Express

5 NIGHTS / 6 DAYS

Zurich

Locarno

Centovalli Express

Bern



Ticino

Getting its name from the region of the Hundred Valleys through which it passes, the Centovalli Express is one of the most romantic rail journeys in Europe. Take in views of mountains, waterfalls, rich vegetation, vineyards, lakes, colourful glades, and historic villages as you pass, travelling over more than 80 bridges. This tour begins with your arrival into Zurich. Spend one night at your choice of luxury Zurich hotel, taking time to explore this famous city. On your second day, catch a three hour train to Locarno, where you will spend three nights. On day five, board the Centovalli Express from Locarno, through Domodossola, to Brig, arriving three hours later if you do not choose to stop. Perhaps spend a few hours in this historic town before catching another train to Bern, where you will stay for your final night. From Bern, return to Zurich for your journey home.

ABOUT THE CENTOVALLI EXPRESS

Route length Nearly 60km or 2 hours from Locarno or Domodossola

Stops Locarno, Ponte Brolla, Tegna, Verscio, Cavigliano, Intragna, Corcapolo, Verdasio, Palagnedra, Camedo, Ribellasca, Re, Malesco, Santa Maria Maggiore, Druogno, Coimo, Marone, Verigo, Trontano, Creggio, Masera, Domodossola

Facilities Panoramic coaches on some services

PRICES

From £1,440 per person

Based on double occupancy in 4 star hotels, with flights to and from, and rail travel within Switzerland in 2nd class.

1st class rail travel and five star hotels can be added for a supplement.

DATES

This rail holiday can be arranged throughout the year. Timings can vary depending on the month and day of the week. For more information regarding rail services to and within Switzerland, view our train guide.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Flights from UK to Zurich and back from Zurich OR rail travel London to Switzerland and back via Paris (first class can be booked at a supplement)
- 4 day rail flex pass (first class can be booked at a supplement)
- 1 night's bed and breakfast in Zurich
- 3 nights' bed and breakfast in Locarno / Ascona
- 1 night's bed and breakfast in Bern

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Optional extra nights in Zurich, Locarno, Bern, Brig, Zermatt, or Geneva
- Transfers in Paris
- Transfers in Switzerland station to hotel unless offered by your hotel

A luggage transfer service is available within Switzerland, please contact us for further details.

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Zurich - Locarno - Centovalli Express - Bern

Expressions

Day one: Arrive in Zurich

Fly into Zurich on your first day, arriving early afternoon, or journey from London by train, arriving in the late afternoon. If time permits, spend a few hours exploring the city. Make sure you have time to visit the Grossmünster Church, perhaps climbing the Karlstrum, one of the church's two iconic towers. Enjoy the pretty streets, cafes, and boutiques of Zurich's old town, and have dinner either at your luxury hotel or in one of the many high-class gourmet restaurants in this area.

Days two to four: Zurich to Locarno

After one night in Zurich, board a train south to Locarno in the province of Ticino. This journey will take approximately three hours, ideally arriving mid-afternoon. Once in Locarno, spend three nights at your choice of hotel, using the time to explore the Swiss side of Lake Maggiore and the romantic rolling plains of Ticino. Locarno is known for having the warmest climate in Switzerland, which propagates a very Mediterranean feel, particularly amongst the palm trees and sand on the lake banks. For a taste of the city's religious heritage, visit one of the many idyllic churches, including the 17th century Church of St Anthony, the 16th century Church of San Francesco, the mid-17th century New Church, and the late 15th century Sanctuary of the Madonna del Sasso, all of which are dotted around the historic streets. Your priority within Locarno is likely to be the brooding Visconti Castle, in which there is a permanent Roman glass exhibition. On one of your days here, venture outside Locarno to see the turquoise, clear waters of the rivers and streams around the lake, to relax on a lake cruise, or to climb up to the Cadada Cimetta, from where you can see both the highest and lowest parts of Switzerland in one glance: the Valais High Alps and Lake Maggiore.

Day five: Locarno to Bern

In the late morning of your fifth day, board the Centovalli Express to Domodossola; a journey that takes around two hours. You will begin by travelling north into the Maggia Valley, where the Ponte Brolla crosses the turbulent river. Rocks smoothed by centuries of rushing water prove popular with cliff divers, and tunnels and caves offer much in the way of exploration. Grottos hide beneath the rock surface. At the prehistoric ruins of Tegna, the Centovalli Express turns west, passing shallow river beaches, traditional Ticino villages of ramshackle roofs and bright plastered walls, and imposing hilltop churches. At Cavigliano, the valley opens out; the ground quilted by geometric agricultural fields. Cross a



Lake Maggiore

Roman-style bridge and head towards the iron bridges of Intragna, the sparsely populated villages that follow, and Monte Camino and the isolated hamlet of Rasa. The Centovalli Express now crosses the Italian border just before pulling into secluded Ribellasca and Re, home to the impressive and startling Sanctuary of the Madonna of the Blood, which definitely warrants a brief stop for a tour. Pass through more quaint villages on your way to the truly unique Santa Maria Maggiore. Here, the valley becomes narrower and dense with vegetation and forest. A series of small settlements nestle between the steep slopes, seemingly cut off from the larger villages at either end of the valley. In Trontano, the Swiss influence is still visible in the architecture, but it peters out as you pass through Creggio and Masera, and finally arrive in Domodossola. Spend a few hours enjoying the sight of the tall townhouses crowded around the vast squares, and have lunch in a pavement café. Visit the Sacro Monte del Calvario, built by Capuchin Monks, the 14th century Palazzo Silva, and the medieval Motta district. Then, when your exploration is complete, board another train to Brig. This fairly direct route takes less than half an hour and makes very few stops, giving you time to sit back and fully enjoy the views across the mountains and valleys without interruption. Once in Brig, take a self-guided tour around the cobbled streets, stopping at the Stockalper Castle, which is undoubtedly the town's most impressive monument. Your train will then take you north to Bern, the Swiss capital, where you will

spend your final night.

Day six: Return via Zurich

Spend your final night in Bern, tucked away on a meander of the Aare River, and home to a beautiful Old Town that is continually popular with artists and writers. Over 100 fountains are dotted around the city, some dating back to the Middle Ages, and some topped with folkloric figures. Key cultural sites in Bern include the House of Parliament, topped by an iconic copper-clad dome, Bern Cathedral, the largest ecclesiastical building in Switzerland, the Bernisches Historisches Museum, housing an Einstein exhibit and several Burgundy tapestries, and the astronomical Zytglogge Clock Tower, with its revolving faces and unique hands. Perhaps extend your stay here to ensure you have time to explore the whole city; otherwise, continue on your sixth day to Zurich for your return flight to the UK. You may choose to travel home by train, in which case we would recommend spending an extra night in Zurich.

OPTIONAL

It is possible to add extra nights in Zurich, Locarno, or Bern. Consider also adding an extra night in Brig on day 5, or extending the holiday in Zermatt before travelling home via air or rail from Geneva.

HOTELS

At Zurich, Ascona, and Bern, you can choose between a range of different luxury hotels, details of which can be found below.

ZURICH

Hotel du Theatre 3 star

This three star option in the centre of Zurich offers sophisticated and quirky accommodation in a hotel that adopts a cinema theme. Rooms are therefore suitably glamorous, with wholly unique features and excellent access to Lake Zurich and the city's important cultural sites. [read more](#)

Hotel Ambassador a l'Opera 4 star

As a member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World group, the Hotel Ambassador a l'Opera prides itself on the high quality of its service, its seasonal and locally-sourced food, and the very particular, serene style of the rooms. It is well-placed for enjoying Lake Zurich, the Limmat River, and the small marina at the end of the street. [read more](#)

Hotel Storchen Zurich 4 star deluxe

Since the beginning of its hospitality 650 years ago, the unique and charming Hotel Storchen Zurich has offered an authentic insight into Swiss culture, design, and lifestyle. A pavement café lines the riverside, and behind the distinctive pink façade are high-ceilinged, tastefully decorated rooms, and the Rotisserie Restaurant, the ceiling of which is decorated in frescoes. [read more](#)

Hotel Baur au Lac 5 star

Set on the banks of Lake Zurich, the Hotel Baur au Lac is equipped with a Michelin-starred restaurant, extensive tranquil parkland, and a rich, warm interior design. Guests can enjoy the beauty of the lake from the promenade or from a boat cruise, before returning to the hotel to enjoy the serene gardens, the chic luxurious indoor spaces, and the circular restaurant that juts out across the water. [read more](#)

ASCONA

Hotel Castello Seeschloss Ascona 4 star

Possessing all the charm, character, and personalised service of a boutique hotel, this four star option in Ascona looks out across Lake Maggiore with a distinctly Mediterranean façade. This intimate converted castle still has its original tower, in which some of its rooms are held, though the dining room is of a particularly contemporary design. [read more](#)



Ambassador a l'Opera, Zurich



Giardino Ascona, Ascona

Giardino Ascona 5 star

Between Lake Maggiore and extensive lush parkland, the Giardino Ascona offers a haven of peace beside the city of Locarno. The Roman Baths-style spa, the pretty, flourishing gardens, and the choice between fine and casual dining make this an idyllic place to spend a few days by the lakeside. [read more](#)

BERN

Hotel Kreuz 3 star

Well-positioned in Bern, the Hotel Kreuz offers good value for money, convenience, and comfortable accommodation. The cosy restaurant serves up expertly-cooked Swiss delicacies, which can be followed up with relaxing drinks in the lounge bar. [read more](#)



Giardino Ascona, Ascona

Hotel Bern 4 star

In the centre of the Swiss capital, the Hotel Bern prides itself on its modern style, sleek minimalist rooms, and glamorous restaurant. Chandeliers add to the romantic feel of the hotel interior, and the striking artworks on the walls continue to add character. This hotel provides excellent value for excellent service. [read more](#)

Hotel Schweizerhof Bern 5 star

A sophisticated hotel that blends grandeur with modern style, the Hotel Schweizerhof Bern is a veritable jewel in the capital. Guestrooms and public rooms are lit by flickering fireplaces and the occasional glass chandelier. Warm, neutral colours prevail, be it in the plush sofas, the intricately embroidered bed throws, the guestroom feature walls, or the leather armchairs. An elegant restaurant and well-equipped spa completes the luxury experience. [read more](#)

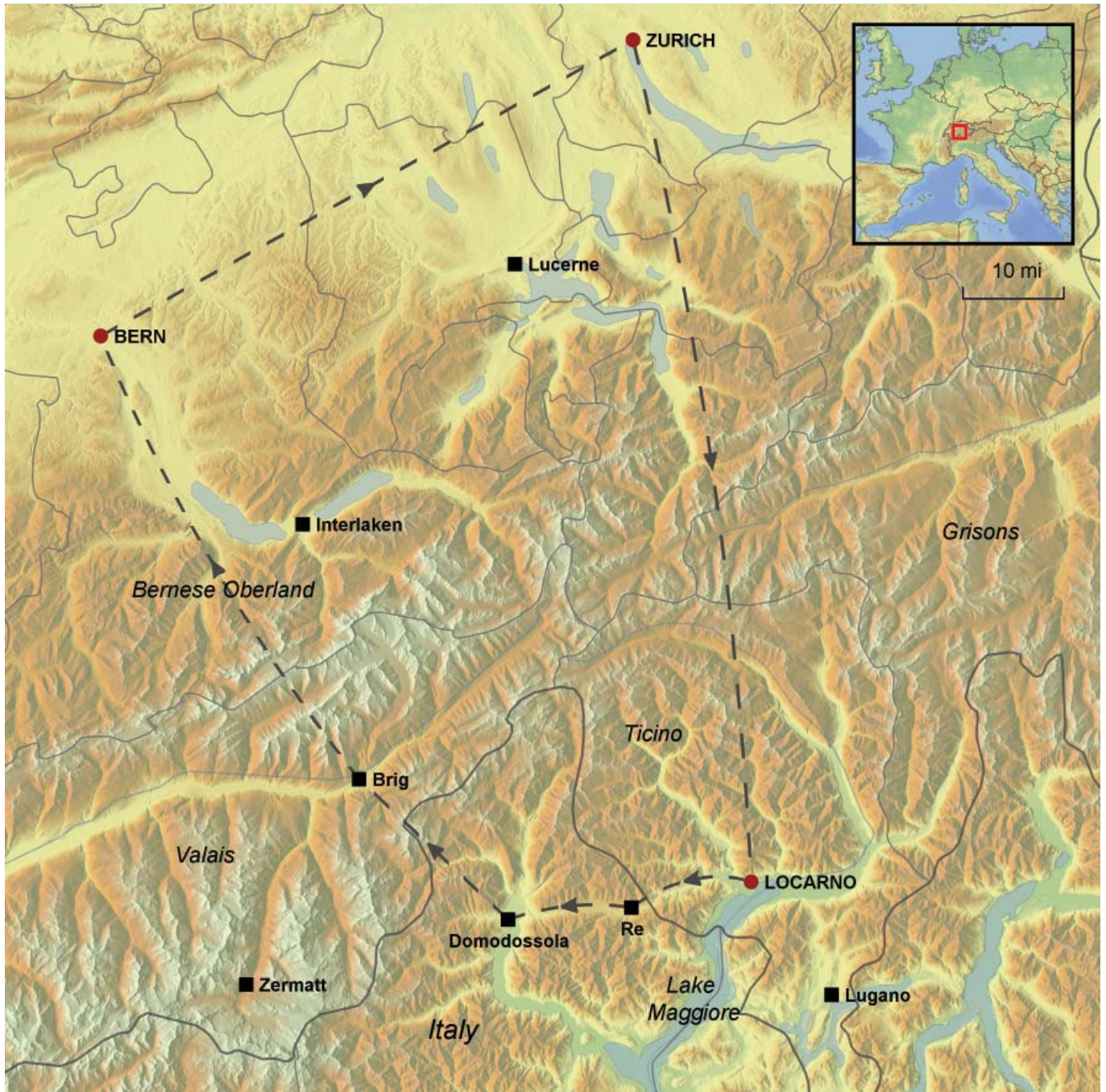


Hotel Bern, Bern

MAP OF THE CENTOVALLI EXPRESS TOURING HOLIDAY



The map below illustrates the route outlined in this touring itinerary, with overnight stops and places of interest highlighted.



GENERAL INFORMATION

This rail holiday is one of several suggested rail holidays we can offer you exactly as it is but also with any alterations you might want including extra nights in one or more places or adding in extra places. All our tours can be extended so that you can include a longer stay in one mountain or lake resort too, perhaps at the end of the itinerary. Do call to discuss the options with our travel consultants.

The logo for Expressions, featuring the word "Expressions" in a white, elegant script font on a dark blue rectangular background.

OUR TOURS

Our rail tours are for individuals travelling on their own or in their own family group. You do not join a group and you are not escorted.

FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENTS

Our arrangements are very flexible in that you choose to travel on any day you want, subject to availability of trains and hotels. As mentioned above, additional nights can be added at any point.

FLEX PASS INCLUDED

We include travel to and from your first and last hotel but also a Flex pass is included for the rest of the holiday, depending on its length. For example, on a long stay we would include an 8 day Flex pass. This gives you 8 non-consecutive but selected days of travel within a one-month period.

The pass gives you a choice that includes

- Unlimited travel by rail, road and waterway on your selected days of validity, including most panorama routes and public transport in 75 towns and cities
- Free admission to more than 490 museums on the selected days of validity
- Children under the age of 16 travel free of charge when accompanied by at least one parent holding the Swiss Family Card

If we have included a panoramic route in your holiday, we will automatically include any applicable supplements for that train.

TRAIN TIMES

We have planned our itineraries based on train times that work day by day at the time of planning which can be up to a year before you travel. Usually train times stay more or less the same every day, season by season. The times we have planned will be discussed with you at the time you enquire about the holiday and they are detailed to you in your written holiday quotation. It may be that the timetable changes between the planning of the itinerary and when you come to book but we can always adjust the itinerary to suit the actual train times and any requirements you have for particular times of travel.

FIRST OR SECOND CLASS

We will automatically include travel in second class but lots of our clients do upgrade to first class service. On Eurostar this is called Premier Standard for leisure travellers as it gives you an upgraded on-board service and more spacious seating but without paying for the fully-flexible business tickets. On the TGV trains from France to Switzerland, upgrading to first class gives you more spacious seating with increased legroom. Within Switzerland, first class gives you again more space and more comfortable seats, often with a quieter environment. The price of upgrading varies from route to route but is something that is not always proportionately a lot more on the price of the overall holiday, so well-worth considering.

LUGGAGE TRANSFER SERVICE

Swiss rail operates an efficient transfer service for your luggage. This works in a number of ways:

For travel to Switzerland by air, you can check-in your baggage with any airline, from any airport in the world and it will be forwarded to our destination station in Switzerland from Zurich, Bern or Geneva airports. Simply collect your baggage from the station at your destination.

For departure from Switzerland if flying with Swiss, you can check-in for your flight at the train station the day before you fly (major stations only). You receive your boarding pass and your seat allocation and your baggage will be transported onto the aircraft.

For departure from Switzerland with other airlines eg British Airways or Easyjet, you can have your baggage transported to the airport train station ie Zurich or Geneva and you collect it from there to take it to check-in as usual. Just allow enough time for the luggage to reach the airport station, so well before you travel. Your station will be able to advise a day or two beforehand.

Within Switzerland you can transfer your luggage from one location to another. The Fast Baggage service is available between 45 destinations. You just have to check-in your luggage before 9am at your departure station and collect it by 6pm on the same day at your destination (or sometimes the following day, depending on the actual destination). The cost of this service is approximately £17 per item.

TRANSFERS

Transfers in Paris between stations and from the station to each hotel are not automatically included in the price of the holiday. In Paris most clients choose to take a taxi between the stations rather than go on the Metro but we can arrange a private car with driver to take you in between. This is quite useful if you are a family group that can't fit into one Paris taxi. In Switzerland, depending on the location, hotels sometimes have their own transfer vehicles that they will send to collect you if we advise them in advance (eg in St Moritz and Zermatt this is usual) but elsewhere some hotels are within walking distance and others are a short taxi ride away.

OUR PRICES

The sample prices mentioned in this leaflet are generally a 'from' price based on the cheapest season of travel. However, train fares and hotel rates can change (up and down depending on offers), so we give you an accurate price for your holiday when we provide you with a quotation. Our sample prices should be used as an indication of how much a particular combination will cost and to show the differences on average between the hotel categories on offer.

PRICE INFORMATION IN MORE DETAIL

Rail (standard class on Eurostar and second class on all other trains) from London and throughout back to London at 4 star hotels (eg Hotel Ambassador a l'Opera, Hotel Castello Seeschloos, and Hotel Bern).

From £1,520 per person

Supplement: Standard premier on Eurostar and first class on all other trains £290 per person

Flights to/from Switzerland and second class rail travel in Switzerland at 4 star hotels (eg Hotel Ambassador a l'Opera, Hotel Castello Seeschloss, and Hotel Bern),

From £1,440 per person

Supplement: First class rail in Switzerland £190 per person

Rail (standard class on Eurostar and second class on all other trains) from London and throughout back to London at 4 and 5 star hotels (eg Hotel Storchen Zurich, Giardino Ascona, and Hotel Schweizerhof Bern).

From £1,860 per person

Supplement: Standard premier on Eurostar and first class on all other trains £290 per person

Flights to/from Switzerland and second class rail travel in Switzerland at 4 and 5 star hotels (eg Hotel Storchen Zurich, Giardino Ascona, and Hotel Schweizerhof Bern).

From £1,780 per person

Supplement: First class rail in Switzerland £190 per person

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Our booking conditions apply to all holidays. A copy can be found on our website and a copy is also sent to you with a written quotation and when you make a booking.

FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Expressions Holidays offers full financial protection for all holidays you book with us. If your holiday includes a flight, the ATOL (3076) covers the costs of the holiday. If the holiday does not include a flight, it is the ABTOT bond that protects the cost of the holiday. We are also members of AITO (the Association of Independent Tour Operators) and ABTA.



Expressions Holidays
Lynx House, Pynes Hill, Exeter EX2 5JL

HOW TO BOOK

To make a booking, just phone us on

01392 441217

and we can take you through the details we need and start the booking process. A deposit is required to confirm the arrangements and this can be paid by debit or credit card over the phone. No handling fee is charged on deposits up to £1000. The level of the deposit will be confirmed at the point of booking and will depend on the ticketing deadlines of the rail tickets involved in your booking.