

The Swiss Lakes

Hotel-to-hotel independent cycling

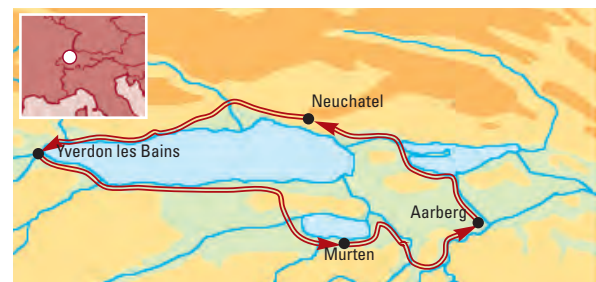
- Perfect for families and first timers: effortless cycling, flexible routes, virtually traffic-free trails
- Interest-packed routes: Roman remains, frescoed medieval squares, majestic châteaux
- Picture postcard pretty villages, chic waterfront cafés, lakeside swimming
- Distant Alpine views - Eiger, Mont Blanc, High Bernese Alps - and protected nature reserves
- **Electric bikes possible - a great “plus” if you’ve not been on a bike for years!**



Beautifully flat and unspoiled, the enticing Swiss Jura region, on the French border, and is perfect for exploring on two wheels! Vineyards and châteaux charge east before sweeping down fertile hillsides to meet a necklace of sparkling Swiss lakes – Neuchatel, Biel and Murtensee. This broad valley has been at a crossroads of ancient trading routes for centuries, so grand castles and Roman ruins go hand in hand with nature reserves, vineyards and waterfalls - all scattered like chaff across a patchwork countryside served by an intricate network of dedicated cycling paths.

Families will love stopping for cool swims and ice creams in shady waterfront parks, while culture lovers will revel in highlights like Roman Avenches and the swarms of castles and museums you’ll pass as you pedal effortlessly from one hotel to the next. En route you’ll discover the picturesque sugar town of Aarberg, elegant Neuchatel’s frescoed mansions, soothing hot spa baths in Yverdon des Bains and medieval arcaded streets in Murten. Our selected hotels are an eclectic mix of old coaching inns, grand townhouses, and cutting edge style boutique accommodation on the Neuchatel waterfront. We have included evening meals in Aarberg and Murten, but left dining options free in Neuchatel and Yverdon for you to explore the many restaurant options on offer.

The flexibility of this holiday is a fantastic added bonus – all cycling days can be shortened, just by hopping on a local train, post bus or ferry with your bicycle. Or, we can even fit you out with an electric bike - it doesn’t get any easier!



THE SWISS LAKES | DAY BY DAY

Day 1 Arrive in Aarberg

We collect you at Zurich airport and take you (90 mins) to collect your bikes en-route to Christophe and Astrid Muller's half-timbered hotel in Aarberg. Time to explore the pretty town before dinner.

Day 2 Aarberg to Neuchatel 35km/22mi

Rumble over Aarberg's old moat on the 300 year old covered bridge and you soon pass farmers threshing fields of wheat. On reaching Lake Biel, dive in for a swim, then enjoy lunch under shady poplars on St Petersinsel. Pass below Erlach's pretty castle, stopping off perhaps at one of the chic cafés lining shimmering Lac Neuchatel below the Jura Mountains. Enjoy a drink on the hotel terrace this evening, watching streamlined yachts moor up for the night below you.

Day 3 In Neuchatel

Famous for its fountains (140 of them!) and Louis XIV architecture, Neuchatel is a real pleasure to explore. You can see antique mechanical figures – the ancestors of Swiss watch making – in the local museum, or visit genuine craftsmen and antique timepieces at the Watch Making Museum in nearby La Chaux de Fonds. For views to the Eiger and Mont Blanc, ride the funicular from La Coudre to Chaumont summit (1180m), or sail to Cudrefin on the opposite shore to pedal back along cycle trails through lakeside cornfields.

Day 4 Neuchatel to Yverdon les Bains 42km/26mi

What a contrast! You can almost reach out to pick grapes as you sail through the sea of vines that lap Lac Neuchatel's western shore. Sample Jocelyn and Cinzia Vouga's zesty wines in Cortaillod, then after a short ascent through cool, fragrant pinewoods, pick a village café for lunch with distant Alpine views. Drop into Grandson Château to see weapons, armour and Greta Garbo's Rolls Royce before reaching Yverdon - a spa town where soothing hot springs await, and in whose medieval streets you will dine out for the next two nights.

Day 5 In Yverdon

Quirky wooden sailors' huts and open parks line Yverdon's waterfront, and well-mapped and signposted cycling excursions lace local country lanes. Apart from lake or hot spa swimming, the town is packed with history! The marketplace is dominated by a C13 château – visit the Swiss Fashion Museum housing 200 years of vintage clothing, browse 6000 years of regional history in Yverdon's Museum, and appreciate artwork decorating the walls of the old town granary vaults!

Day 6 Yverdon les Bains to Murten 21km/13mi or 49km/30mi

Look out for white egret, purple heron and honey buzzard as you coast through shady forest along Lake Neuchatel's eastern shore – much of it protected nature reserves linked by sun dappled bike trails. Reach Estevayer's warren of tangled streets in time for lunch - you can shorten the day by hopping on the train here, or tackle Montmagny Hill. Spin down the other side for a splash in the Murtensee, then pedal into Murten village, so pretty it could be a medieval film set!

Day 7 In Murten

Cycle around Murtensee lake today, stopping for lunch below the vines on Mt Vully, or cycle 7km/4mi to nearby Avenches – once the Roman city of Aventicum! Packed with Roman ruins including an impressive amphitheatre, it makes a perfect day trip. Alternatively, hop on the train (36 minutes) to Switzerland's UNESCO capital Bern, to explore miles of *lauben*, (mediaeval arcaded shops), visit Einstein's old home, and watch the animated puppets on the Zytglogge, the historic city clock.

Day 8 Murten to Aarberg 26km/16mi

The area between Murten and Aarberg is known as the *Grosse Moos* - the market garden of Switzerland! Your route meanders between sleepy villages dotted amid immaculate fields of summer vegetables and sunflowers, cobwebbed with irrigation canals full of egrets chasing turquoise dragonflies. Picnic in the shade of a hay bale, framed by views of the High Bernese Alps, then coast back into Aarberg's bustling town square for a final charming al fresco dinner.

Day 9 Leave Aarberg

A private transfer takes you back to the airport for your flight home.

"One of the best trips in our 19 years of cycling holidays."

Mrs Milne

Dates and Prices

Departs every two days	Tour Only
2012 departures	
May 7-25, Sep 12-24	\$3,336
May 27-31, Jun 8-12	\$3,336
Sep 2-10	\$3,336
Jun 2-6, Jun 14-Jul 8	\$3,399
Aug 29-31	\$3,426
Jul 10-Aug 27	\$3,426
Child (any date, see notes)	\$2,099

Singles: Add \$102 per night (4 nights will be in a single room; 4 nights will be sole occupancy of a double room).

Child: Over 2 and under 12, sharing with 2 adults.

Room upgrade: Prices from \$19 per person, per night, based on 2 sharing.

Holiday type: Independent cycling, hotel-to-hotel, no minimum group size, however airport and luggage transfers are subject to at least 2 people (in total) booked on each departure.

Departs: Every two days from May 7 to Sep 24.

Duration: 9 days (8 nights).

Meals: Buffet breakfast and 4 evening meals.

Other details: Supplement for electric bikes for the duration of this holiday \$359 per person. For "What your holiday price includes," see "Holiday Planning" section pp 48-51.

Tailor-made travel choices

Nearest Arrival Airport: Zurich Airport

Flights can be arranged from most US/CANADA airports, with connecting transfers as required, prices and details on request.

The above prices include our standard transfers: Zurich Airport at 11:35, (transfer to hotel, 90 mins, provided). **Return:** Zurich Airport by 13:30 (transfer provided).

Tour only: Transfers included from Zurich airport at 11:35, and back to Zurich airport departing hotel at 12:00.

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THE SWISS LAKES | WHERE YOU STAY



Hotel Krone
★★★
Aarberg
Days 1+8



Hotel Beaulac
★★★★
Neuchatel
Days 2+3



Hotel du Theatre
★★★
Yverdon les Bains
Days 4+5



Hotel Murtenhof and Krone
★★★
Murten
Days 6+7

For extra nights we recommend Aarberg and Murten.