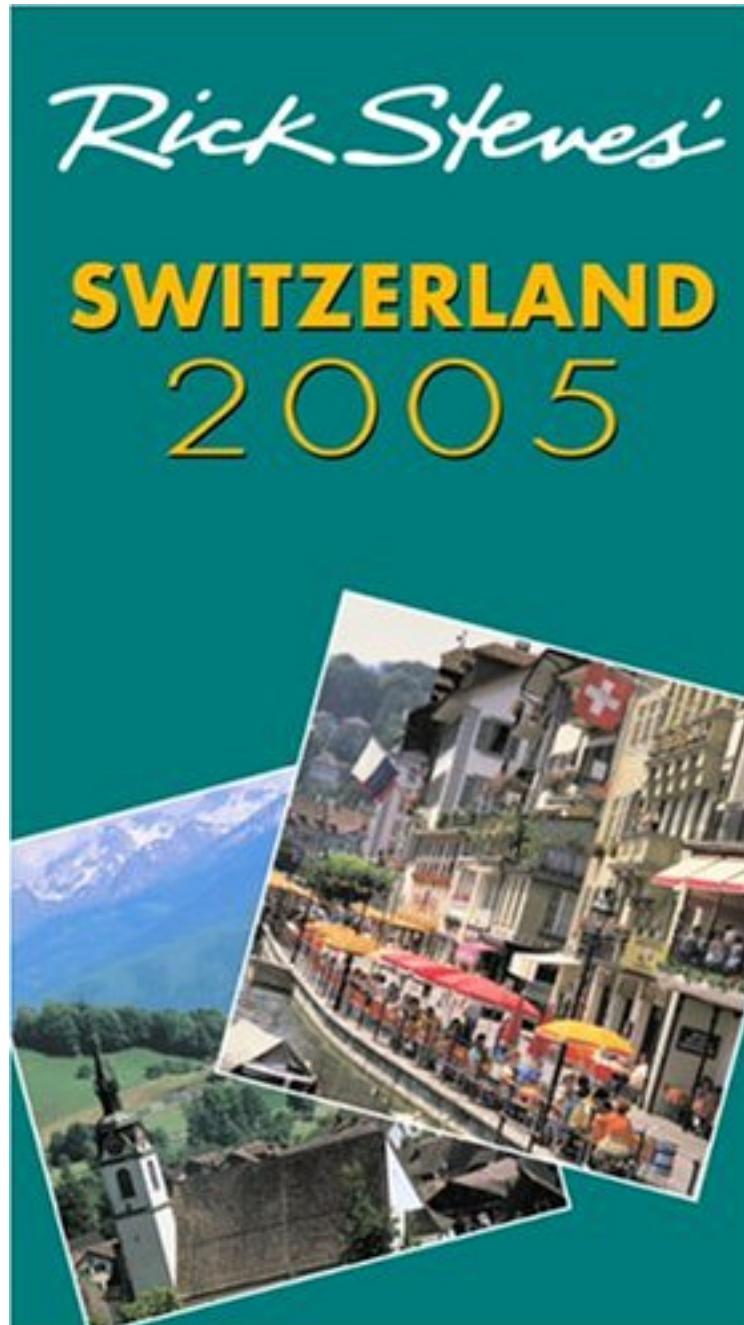


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## Rick Steves' Switzerland 2005

*Rick Steves*

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**Rick Steves : Rick Steves' Switzerland 2005** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth

my time, and all praised Rick Steves' Switzerland 2005:

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Very Good, Practical Guide By J. A. Bell I bought this so that I could plan an independent trip for my husband and me. In spite of Switzerland's small size, I couldn't sort out a good trip for us using only this guide -- it wasn't so much the itinerary and the purchase of the train pass (pages 10-11, an excellent plan!) as it was choosing and reserving the hotels. Many of the towns in Switzerland do not have the big chains my husband and I have come to depend on (Holiday Inn Express, Marriott with their 24-hour-cancellation policies) and will not hold a room for you without receiving non-refundable payment. The hotel options in this guide didn't appeal to us. So I ended up booking a Cosmos trip that dropped us off in Interlaken for one week ("Interlaken Extension"). This allowed us the comfort of transportation and pre-booked hotels, with a week for independent exploration. "Rick Steves' Switzerland" was useful both during the Cosmos leg (even though our tour director had encyclopedic knowledge) and during our independent week when we were in the Berner Oberland which the guide devotes 59 pages to. It was most useful for sorting out our excursions to Jungfrau and Shilthorn and for figuring out "What's What in the Berner Oberland." (134-135) We visited Gimmelwald, which this guide lists six places for sleeping and calls a "good home-base option." (162-164) I certainly did think this was a most charming area and my husband was thrilled to be walking the same "zigzag street" he has seen Rick walk (twenty times at least) on reruns of his TV show. Although Gimmelwald is Steves' "home base in the Berner Obeland," let me caution you about staying here for more than one day or two at the most. A week in this bucolic setting might make those who feel at home in big cities go stark-raving mad. (If your sole purpose is to hike the trails or to ski this area in winter, then Gimmelwald would probably be a good choice no matter how long you're going to be here.) If you're more of a city person, and you're staying more than two nights, then stay in Interlaken! This guide lists only nine places for sleeping in Interlaken, although Interlaken is many times larger than Gimmelwald and has many hotels and other lodgings. (Metropole looked nice but expensive; Best Western appeared to be a dive; there were many huge, classy-looking Victorian hotels that must've cost a Swiss bank account. If I went again, I'd scrutinize tripadvisor for ideas. I'm not going to mention where we stayed because to print the name is to advertise for them and I wouldn't recommend that hotel!) Interlaken has a variety of places to eat and also has a food Co-op and a Migros (this guide mentions both under "Cheap Eats"). We ate at Migros a few times, I liked it, and it ain't "cheap," but it's one of the most cost-effective ways of getting nutrition aside from loading up at Co-op and having picnics (we did this a few times, too). Interlaken is also a good home-base because of the two train stations (Ost and West) for zipping you in either direction without having to use a cable car, cable train or another train line to get you to Bern, Lucerne or Meiringen (a village that isn't mentioned in this guide). Perhaps Meiringen should be mentioned. On our walk through the nearby Aare Gorge (Aareschlucht), we met Israelis who were staying at The Hotel Victoria in this town who raved about the food. (We took their advice, ate lunch at Hotel Victoria and it WAS wonderful.) Sherlock Holmes fans already know about Reichenbach Falls above this town. We took the cable railway halfway up and hiked a forest trail to the top. There is also the small Glacier Gorge Rosenlauri nearby. (You have to go to another source: myschweiz.com to get this information.) About Zermatt and the Matterhorn: "Be warned that Zermatt is a one-mountain town. If you have time for only one mountainous region on your trip, I'd suggest the more interesting Berner Oberland over Zermatt. Many visitors find Zermatt touristy and overrated, especially considering its inconvenient location (at the end of a long dead-end valley in the southwest corner of the country)." (190) If I were editing the next edition of this guide, I'd definitely rewrite this bit! Instead, I might suggest that when taking a trip to Switzerland, plan on a minimum of 10 days so that you can be sure to have time to go up to Gornergrat with its breathtaking view of Matterhorn and Rothorn. (If you're an American, the flight over is expensive, grueling and a shock to one's biorhythms. Try for 10 days; two weeks even better.) Would you really want to visit Switzerland and miss The Matterhorn? (This guide is right about a couple of things, though: Zermatt IS a tourist trap, and the weather can be "iffy." Try to go in July, go early in the morning, and keep an eye on the weather forecast.) Our lodgings were in Taesch, (a tiny town that is omitted from this guide) a short, easy train ride from Zermatt. (I won't be mentioning the name of our hotel in Taesch, either.) I especially liked this guide for the "walks." Zurich Walk (45), the Bern Walk (100), Lugano Center (264) and other village/city walks. We often spotted tourists in large villages, holding this guide open on "the walks," with pages clearly highlighted in yellow marker. A couple of times, people approached us because we had this guide and we briefly chatted about our respective U.S. States, where they'd been, where they were headed. In spite of the omission of some villages, I still like this guide. But I would tap several other resources for a more rounded experience.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Nicely written - Hint By T. Karnes Nicely written - Hint: EAT at Hiediland Marche on big roads - seating, nice bathrooms - cost 1 Fr, but you get a 1 fr voucher back so hit the toilet first - wonderful buffet and single servings - Think of a luxury hotel buffet sat in a gas station, but pricing better. They have 3 different sizes for salad plates so you know what things cost, hot food, or cold meat sandwiches - and deserts! When the average pizza cost \$20.00 and a hamburger \$25.00 up - you will love the pricing of this place. Also if in ZURICH airport, nice café on far left, terminal 2. BUT go over the bridge/walk/way on the second floor and to your right is the car rentals, to your left an information booth with storage lockers around the side by bathrooms. HOWEVER keep going\*\*\* the

train station is in the basement - and blowing your mind - THERE IS A LARGE MALL WITH FOOD COURT JUST STEPS AWAY FROM THE AIRPORT\*\*\*\*!!! The airport is far from downtown Zurich, but with the train station inches away - have fun. THUN, Switzerland (other end of lake from Interlaken) is a must see! Smaller city with 2 rivers running into beautiful lake!. You will thank me! Restaurants, a castle, what more could you ask for. We did the local train from St. Moritz to Tirano. Was able to take the windows down - if you are a hiker check out the area around Monteratsch along the train route. Nice trees, water, and a mountain. Many folks with bicycles would take the trains up the hills, and ride their bikes down them. Pick up a schedule, last train from Tirano to St. Moritz was 17:40 hour. Look for the open car at ends. We went at 9:00 something from St Moritz and had easy seating. NOTE: If have a stoller - look for cars that have a stroller on the side - doors are skinny and you might have fun getting on, or once on, getting stroller thru inside door. Train had the nicest bathrooms!10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Same good quality but missing major part of countryBy Kindle CustomerThe Rick Steves' guidebook offers the usual good advice about places to see, stay, and eat, however, it completely overlooks Basel and the surrounding region-- which is considered one of the richest areas for museums, art, and architecture. No explanation or reason for the omission, and for a country that's as small as Switzerland, it's an obvious oversight. Rick: you need to get to this part of Switzerland and check it out. In the meantime, publicize that this major city in Switzerland was excluded in the guidebook so readers don't buy it with the wrong expectations (like we did).

With this guide, travellers can experience the best of everything Switzerland has to offer - economically and hassle-free. Completely revised and updated, this guide includes maps and photos, opinionated coverage, suggested day plans, trip itineraries and more.

Steves preaches a low-cost, low-to-the-ground style that not only saves money, but gets you closer to the real Europe, the way Europeans experience it.