

# Rail holidays to Switzerland



## By Rail to the Valais Holiday



## By Rail to the Valais Holiday

7 NIGHTS / 8 DAYS

Zermatt

Matterhorn

Gornergrat

Aletsch Glacier

Riffelhorn

Vineyards



Matterhorn

We recommend travelling to Switzerland by train from London to Zermatt, via Paris, Lausanne and Visp. Return flights from the UK with rail travel in Switzerland can also be arranged. Your destination is Zermatt, nestled between the rocky sides of an Alpine valley, and home of the Matterhorn. This town is unendingly popular during the winter for ski holidays, though sits so close to the Italian border that during the summer it makes the perfect sunny hiking destination. Glaciers remain intact on the creaking slopes between mountain peaks, high-altitude pathways offer sensational and unforgettable views, vineyards to the south produce some of the best wine in the country, and the picturesque streets of Zermatt are laden with chic bars, characterful chalet houses, and gourmet restaurants. A seven night stay here proves to be the ideal length for any in-depth exploration, allowing guests to enjoy the treasures of the region at their own pace.

### DAY-BY-DAY SUMMARY

#### Day one

Travel from London to Zermatt by rail on your first day; or fly into Geneva and travel the rest of the journey by rail. The Eurostar leaves a little before seven in the morning for Paris, where you change to a TGV train headed to Lausanne. Here, change for a train along Lake Geneva to Visp in northern Valais. Finally, change for a direct train to your destination, Zermatt, arriving in the early evening. Check into your chosen resort hotel.

#### Days two to seven

Spend seven nights enjoying the highlights of the Valais, making the most of your eight-day rail pass to explore the mountains, the glaciers, and the hidden towns and villages.

#### Day eight

On your eighth day, board an morning train from Zermatt back to Visp and Lausanne. Take the TGV back to Paris to meet the Eurostar here and cross the Channel, arriving in London in the early evening.

### CHOICE OF HOTELS

**Romantik Hotel Julien** 4 star

**Grand Hotel Zermatterhof** 5 star

### PRICES

**From £1,740 per person**

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

1st class rail travel 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

- Rail travel from London to Switzerland via Paris and back in standard class (first class can be booked at a supplement), return OR scheduled return flights from the UK to Geneva
- 3 day Swiss rail pass (first class can be booked at a supplement)
- 7 nights' bed and breakfast in your resort hotel

### WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- 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.

## ABOUT THE RESORT

Under the imposing stare of the Matterhorn, Zermatt is a charming Alpine resort immersed in Switzerland's most stoic and sublime landscape.

Expressions

At over 1,600m above sea level, Zermatt offers excellent access to Valais' 8000km of hiking and walking paths, which weave between mountains, through valleys, and around crystal clear lakes and white glaciers. Zermatt is now a haven for elite sports visitors and the glamorous who want to experience the luxury hotels and excellent restaurants. The town centre is car-free, so retains a real sense of peace and serenity, without sacrificing its sophisticated, exclusive feel. Nature lovers will also find themselves at home here, with exceptional examples of Alpine flora, fauna, and panoramas in abundance.

### Places of interest in Valais

- **Matterhorn** – Zermatt's main attraction; hike or take the cable car up to visit the glacier
- **Matterhorn Museum** – on the slopes of the Matterhorn, this museum is divided into 14 huts that mimic the style of the original mountain villages
- **Gornergratbahn** – a cogwheel railway that takes you up to Gornergrat at 3100m, from where you can walk to the Gorner Glacier and take in the views across 38 mountains
- **Gornergrat** – the village itself holds a great deal of historic significance, with a Parish Church containing intriguing murals, a collection of very old timber houses, a cemetery that is the final resting place of many mountaineers, and the Alpine Museum
- **Parrotspitze** – on the Monte Rosa Massif, this almost perfectly-conical summit looks particularly beautiful when it emerges through the layer of clouds
- **Findel Glacier** – to the east of Zermatt, this glacier is reportedly gaining mass
- **Trockener Steg Mountain Station** – accessible by cable car, you can then walk to a nearby glacier and collection of shallow pools
- **Schwarzsee** – the Black Lake is a small expanse of water not far from Zermatt that offers sublime views, and is named after the colour of its water when reflecting the dark surrounding rocks; it is accessible via cable car
- **Stausee Mattmark** – a large lake with easy walk and trickling waterfalls
- **Lac de Moiry** – contained by the Barrage de Moiry, the waters of this lake are incredibly blue
- **Glacier Paradise Cable Car** – takes you up to Europe's highest viewing platform
- **Hornlihutte** – the restaurant and inn where climbers have stayed for decades before advancing up the Matterhorn
- **Alpine Folklore Parade** – held on 15th August each year, and involving over 1200 participants



Gornergratbahn above Zermatt

- **Ice Pavilion, Saas Fee** – an underground museum that informs visitors of the importance of glaciers and how they are formed; above ground is a revolving restaurant
- **Aletsch Glacier** – a river of ice; the longest glacier in the Alps, and reaching from the Jungfrau to the Rhone River; to the south is the Aletschwald, one of the highest pine forests in Europe and an excellent location for summer hikes
- **Riederalp** – home to an Alpine dairy and an Alpine museum
- **Brig** – further north in Valais is the city of Brig, home to the 17th century Stockalper Castle, built out of granite and volcanic rock and recognisable for its onion domes; it is the emblem of Valais
- **Brigerbad** – this town has the most open-air thermal baths in Switzerland, suited to those seeking the curative properties as well as more leisurely visitors
- **Leukerbad** – home to the hottest springs in Switzerland, Leukerbad was once a Roman settlement
- **Mauvoisin Dam** – a stunning piece of engineering, the dam is wedged in the narrow Bagnes Valley, and holds back 180 million cubic metres of water; public transport to this area is infrequent, so the trip requires a long hike
- **Sierre** – home to many beautiful Chateaux and surrounded by vineyards; the Chateau de Villa holds a wine museum

### Local sports

- Hiking – hikers may wish to tackle the challenges of the Matterhorn, the Hohtalli, the Enterrorthorn, the Breithorn, the Theodul Pass, the Riffelhorn, and the Gornergrat
- Hang-gliding and paragliding in Verbier
- Golf at Crans-Montana and Verbier
- Summer skiing on the Matterhorn – the Klein Matterhorn has the highest cable station in Europe, at 3820m.

The abundance of available activities, from exploring picturesque historic towns and villages to scenic walks and hiking, will ensure that each of your days in Valais is unique and memorable. This seven night rail holiday allows you to make the most of this variety and get to know the region in-depth.

### OPTIONAL

Combine this holiday with one of our Iconic Swiss Rail Journeys or another long stay in a different part of the country.

## HOTELS

As part of this single centre rail touring holiday, we include a seven night stay at your choice of 4 or 5 star hotel. Other options in Valais are available on request, and additional nights can be added here or in other destinations.

*Expressions*

### ROMANTIK HOTEL JULEN

*4 star*

A traditional wooden building, with a homely, welcoming ambience, the four star Romantik Hotel Julen captures the best of Swiss hospitality near the centre of Zermatt. This family-run business still carries the ethics and values of its founder, Meinrad Julen, who put the wellbeing and comfort of his guests at the forefront of his ambition. The dark wood panelled façade, complete with red shutters and colourful window boxes, introduces you to the traditional style of the interior, inspired by the 'Tradition Julen' that the owners pride themselves on. The rooms have a distinct chalet feel, with wooden walls and ceilings, colourful carpets, and rich textures and fabrics. Warm, golden lighting illuminates the space around the beds, and wide windows offer views across the mountains and icy peaks in the distance. Higher room categories have more individual details, such as wrought iron candle holders and emerald tiled chimney breasts. The Julen Spa provides guests with a sanctuary in which to unwind after a day hiking across the mountains or exploring the pretty streets of Zermatt. A pool, equipped with waterfall and bubble bench is refreshing after a spell in the Finnish dry sauna. A caldarium relaxes muscles with its hot, bubbling water, and a laconium offers a cooler alternative to the sauna. On the walls, scenes of the ancient Egyptian landscape have been painted to contrast the turquoise tranquillity of the pool. Guests can also enjoy the atmospheric spa at the Hotel Alpenhof, which has additional Kneipp basins. Restaurant Julen, on the ground floor of the hotel, proves continually popular with local residents, serving snacks and light lunches until 2pm, and gourmet cuisine in the evenings. We would recommend reserving a table to ensure you are able to dine here during your stay. The decoration of the restaurant reflects the homely, friendly atmosphere of the hotel, with embroidered cushions, characterful details, and rustic wooden tables. Guests are also free to use any of the restaurants and bars at the Julen family's other Zermatt hotels: the Hotel Alpenhof, and the Hotel Daniela. The brand new Paperla Pub, just across the road



*Romantik Hotel Julen*

from Hotel Julen, for example, is the perfect place to spend the evenings, with live music, international guests, and a lively atmosphere. The Romantik Hotel Julen offers an authentic and memorable taste of traditional Swiss lifestyle, with many quirky characteristics and a very welcoming vibe.



*Romantik Hotel Julen*



*Romantik Hotel Julen Guestroom*



*Romantik Hotel Julen*

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*Expressions*

### GRAND HOTEL ZERMATTERHOF 5 star

The five star Grand Hotel Zermatterhof in Zermatt is possibly the most prestigious address in the town. Its majestic façade, flanked by the hotel wings, has been rendered a pale cream. Accompanied by the wooden frames of its windows and the balconies, the building achieves a faintly French impression that sets it apart from others in Zermatt. This grand image is topped with gold lettering and fluttering red flags. Traditional themes, with French and Swiss flare, are continued inside. The dining room of the Prato Borni Gourmet Restaurant reflects the excellent Alpine ingredients that it serves. Beautiful crafted wooden chairs and tables are dressed with white and natural green cloth, while glass chandeliers hang above. An open kitchen allows guests to watch the impeccable design of their food come together under the hands of expert gourmet chefs. Brasserie Lusi enhances the French touch, but with the influence of the meaning of its name: in Zermatt, 'Lusi' is the name for the lantern that climbers used to take with them up the mountainside. The restaurant is therefore light, airy, and fresh, with mirrored walls framed by light polished wood and lilac flowers in the centre of the tables. To taste the most authentic local cuisine imaginable, enjoy the fondue at the dedicated Cheese Restaurant, which celebrates the most prosperous product of the Alps. In the two hotel bars, guests can choose between old-world Swiss style and bright modern interior design while they enjoy a specially crafted cocktail or a glass of wine from the vineyards of Valais' southern border. The guestrooms have the kind of individual detail and luxurious comfort that is associated with five star hotels, as each one seems to have been taken from a regal Swiss stately home. Warm-hued wooden furnishings are accompanied by neutral bed covers, bold golden cushions, rich fabric curtains, and subtle, homely ornamentation. Large windows look out onto wrought iron French balconies decorated with pink flowers. The overall effect is one of warmth, comfort, and light. There is space enough here to spend a few hours enjoying peaceful, private relaxation



Grand Hotel Zermatterhof

at the end of a day exploring Zermatt. The Alpine Spa is perfect for whiling away a few hours one afternoon or morning; equipped with swimming pool and waterfalls, soothing treatment rooms, a cosy lounge, an intriguing ice grotto, and a range of saunas that promote different aspects of wellbeing. Guests are sure to finish their stay here feeling rejuvenated and revived. The Grand Hotel Zermatterhof is recommended for those looking for a relaxing, indulgent few nights at the foot of some of Switzerland's most popular mountains.



Grand Hotel Zermatterhof lobby



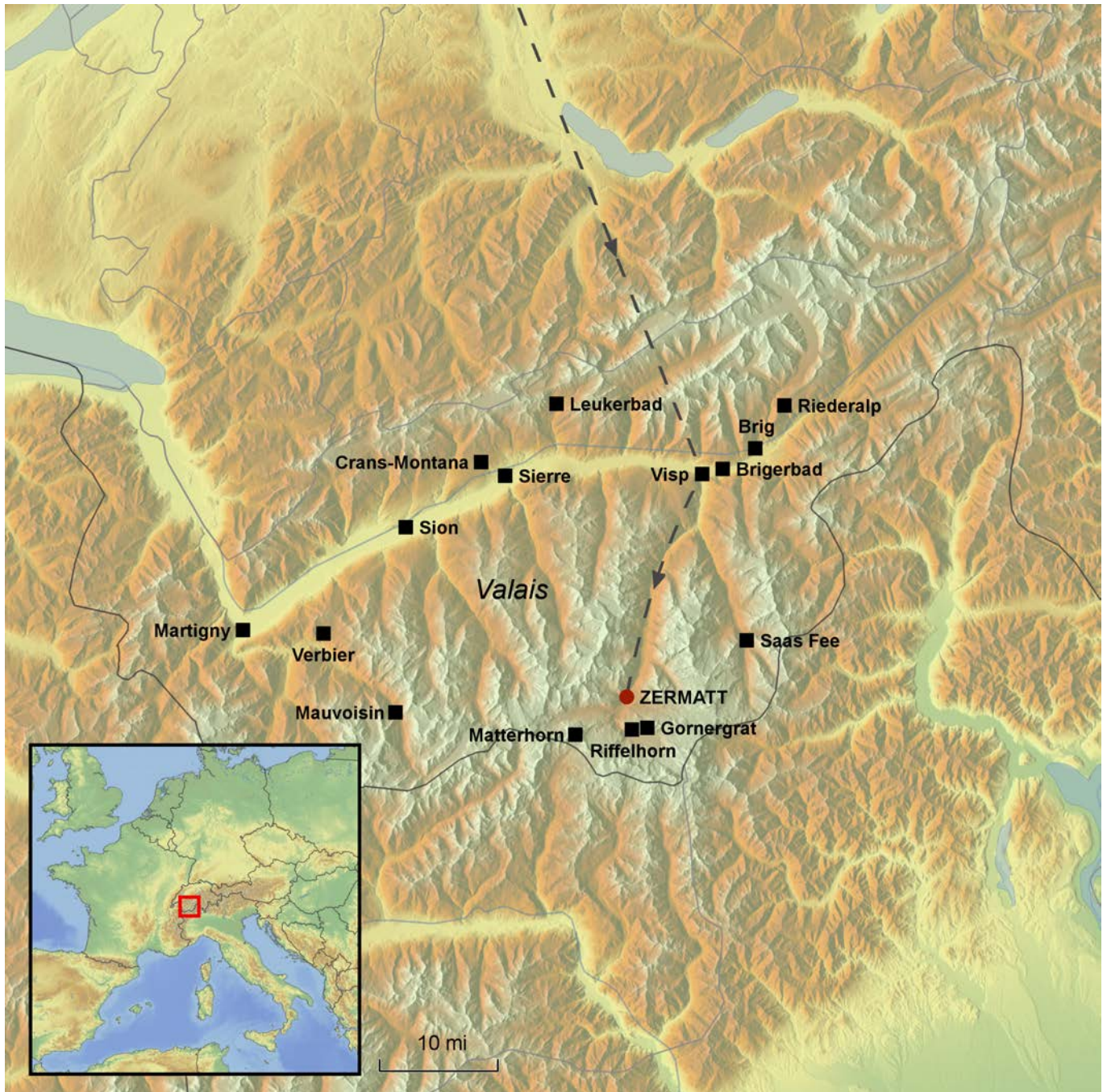
Grand Hotel Zermatterhof pool



Grand Hotel Zermatterhof Deluxe Double Room

# MAP OF BY RAIL TO THE VALAIS HOLIDAY

The map below illustrates the route outlined in this touring itinerary, with 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

### By rail all the way

**Rail (standard class on Eurostar and second class on all other trains)** from London and throughout back to London at the Romantik Hotel Julen.

**From £1,880 per person**

**Rail (standard class on Eurostar and second class on all other trains)** from London and throughout back to London at the Grand Hotel Zermatterhof.

**From £2,260 per person**

Supplement: Standard premier on Eurostar and first class on all other trains £420 per person

### By air and rail

**Flights to/ from Switzerland and second class travel in Switzerland** at the Romantik Hotel Julen.

**From £1,740 per person**

**Flights to/ from Switzerland and second class travel in Switzerland** at the Grand Hotel Zermatterhof.

**From £2,010 per person**

Supplement: First class on all trains £210 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).

Expressions Holidays

Lynx House, Pynes Hill, Exeter EX2 5JL



## HOW TO BOOK

To make a booking, just phone us on

**01392 441250**

and we can take you through the details we need and start the booking process.