

# 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 £1,490 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.

The holiday is also possible by train all the way from London and back.

## 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.

### Day two: Zurich to Locarno

Say goodbye to Zurich and 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, stay at your luxury hotel, using the time to explore the Swiss side of Lake Maggiore and the romantic rolling plains of Ticino.

### Days three and four: Locarno

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 via the Centovalli Express

In the late morning of your last day in Locarno, 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,



Lake Maggiore

and imposing hilltop churches. At Cavigliano, the valley opens out; the ground quilted by geometric agricultural fields. Cross a 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. You may like to 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, you have the option to 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 be staying.

### Day six: Return via Zurich

Bern is 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 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

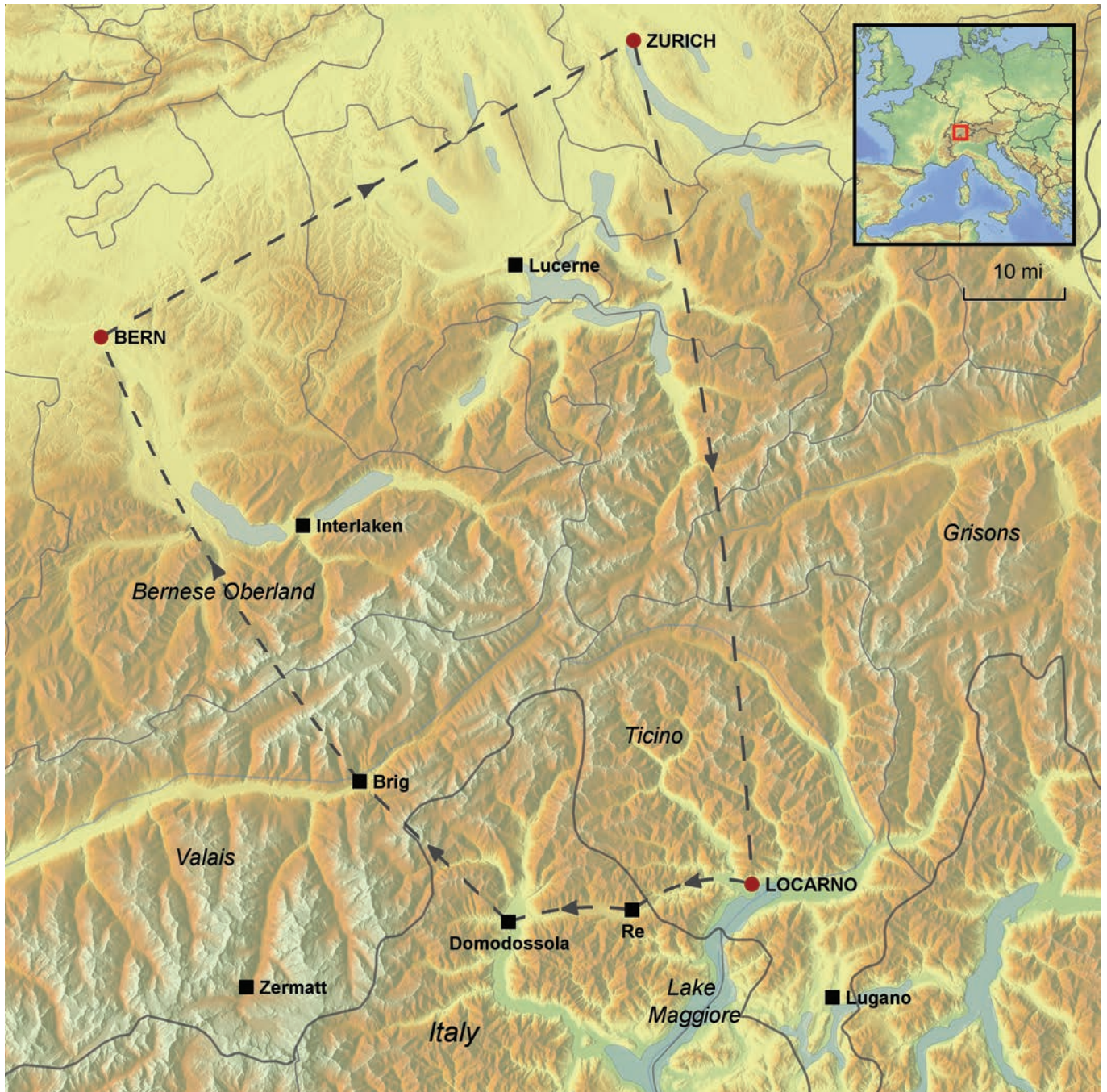
It is possible to add extra nights in Zurich, Locarno, or Bern. Consider also adding an extra night in Brig on day 5, or extending the holiday in Zermatt before travelling home via air or rail from Geneva.



# 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

### 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 4 star hotels (eg Hotel St Gotthard, Hotel Castello Seeschloos, and Hotel Bern).  
**From £1,590 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 £2,050 per person**

Supplement: Standard premier on Eurostar and first class on all other trains £390 per person

### By air and rail

**Flights to/from Switzerland and second class rail travel in Switzerland** at 4 star hotels (eg Hotel St Gotthard, Hotel Castello Seeschloos, and Hotel Bern),  
**From £1,490 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 £1,950 per person**

Supplement: First class rail in Switzerland £155 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.