



## **12 DAY GRAND RAIL TOUR ITINERARY**

### **DAY 1: ZURICH AND LUCERNE**

Depending on when everyone arrives in Lucerne, we will set the briefing time that will be held in the Lucerne hotel. The actual time and Lucerne hotel will be listed in the “final itinerary” you will have received in the mail. During the briefing, each of you will introduce yourselves so you will see who all your other travel companions are. Also your guide(s), will review the itinerary and answer all your questions. At this time, we will also pass out the Daypacks, ECHO Rails & Trails ball caps and make sure each of you have an adapter for the wall outlets. After the briefing, we'll take a leisurely stroll around the old town that includes stops at historic Chapel Bridge, Lion Monument, St. Ledger's Church, and other sites of interest. We'll also visit the Glacier Garden and see glacier potholes and learn about Lucerne's ecology & glacier past. Depending on when we do the briefing, early in the morning or at 1:00 p.m. for those arriving Lucerne the same day, we may have time to visit a nearby Cheese-dairy farm or go up the Stanserhorn Cabrio Cable car for a view of the surrounding Swiss Alps. That evening, we'll dine at one of Lucerne's fine restaurants.

Meals Included: Dinner

Accommodations: Continental Park Hotel (or comparable lodging)

### **DAY 2: MT. PILATUS AND MT. RIGI**

Day 2 is a delightful introduction to the Swiss transportation experience in Switzerland, a travel system of interlocking parts, all of which are perfectly synchronized.

We'll be enjoying spectacular alpine views from Lucerne's two home peaks, Mt. Rigi and Mt. Pilatus. We'll travel on the Mt. Rigi Railway featuring the very first cogwheel train, in service since 1871. This is where the tourism business began in 1863 when Thomas Cook in brought the first packaged-tour group to the region. In the afternoon, we'll scale the sister peak by Pilatus Rail, still the steepest (48% grade) cogwheel train in the world.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodations: Continental Park Hotel (or comparable lodging)

Transport: Mt. Rigi Railway, Pilatus Rail

### **DAY 3: ST. GALLEN & THE GLACIER EXPRESS ROUTE**

We depart on the Voralpen Express, traveling through the rolling landscapes of Eastern Switzerland to St Gallen where we'll visit the Abbey Library—one of the oldest libraries in the world. Built in the 9th Century A. D., the library maintains priceless manuscript collections from the Carolingian and Ottonian period. In the afternoon, we'll continue on to Chur, where we'll transfer to the legendary Glacier Express route bound for St. Moritz. Sites along the way include the spectacular Landwasser limestone railway viaduct, a World Heritage Site on the Albula Railway.

Once in St. Moritz, we will take the legendary Muottas Muragl Funicular where we have dinner on top of the mountain overlooking the Engadin valley, between the towns of Samedan, St. Moritz and Pontresina.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodations: Hauser Hotel (or comparable lodging)

Transport: Volparen Express, Glacier Express

#### **DAY 4: ST. MORITZ AND THE ENGADIN VALLEY**

Our group boards the Bernina Express to travel across the highest railway in the Alps, a route that offers spectacular views of mountain peaks, glaciers and waterfalls. These are the Alps at their most impressive. In the afternoon, after we have visited the 9,700ft Diavolezza summit and return to St. Moritz, there is an opportunity to do a 1 ½ hr leisurely walk through the forest on the public path from Pontresina to St. Moritz. The rest of the day there is time to stroll around St. Moritz and explore on your own.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodations: Hauser Hotel (or comparable lodging)

Transport: Bernina Express

#### **DAY 5: ANDERMATT IN GOTTHARD GLACIERS**

Day 5 provides another opportunity to take the Glacier Express route, universally acclaimed as one of the world's great railway journeys. You'll cross the Albula line and Landwasser Viaduct a second time, but from the South. The train continues along the Rhine Gorge (Switzerland's 'Grand Canyon') and up to the Oberalp Pass (2033 meters/6000 feet). Enjoy a rarity, a hot meal at your seat, as the train climbs over 1000 meters from Disentis to Oberalp, before arriving at Andermatt in the early afternoon.

In the afternoon, the group will take a 2-hour ride in the Furka Cogwheel Steam Train, a historic rail transport fully restored to its original condition. The second highest rail crossing in Europe—after the Bernina—the Furka train offers unparalleled views of the Rhone and Mutt glaciers.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodations: Crown Hotel (or comparable lodging)

Transport: Glacier Express, Furka Cogwheel Steam Train

#### **DAY 6: ELASSO GOTHARDO FORTRESS**

In the morning, we'll ride up to the Gotthard Pass summit to get a sense of Switzerland's defense system during World War II. A Swiss military historian will be on hand when we visit the formerly top-secret Elsasso Gothardo military bunker built to protect Switzerland's southern flank from invading forces. If you tire of military relics, there are plenty of trails and beautiful mountain scenery to explore.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodations: Chedi Hotel (or comparable lodging)

#### **DAY 7: FURKA TUNNEL AND ZERMATT**

Saying goodbye to Andermatt, we'll travel through the Furka Tunnel connecting the German-speaking region of Switzerland to the Swiss Canton of Valais where both Swiss German and French is spoken. The peculiarity of the Swiss German spoken in Valais is one of the most difficult to understand.

The Furka Base Tunnel is a Swiss railway base tunnel on the Matterhorn Gotthard Bahn's Furka–Oberalp line, an east-west railway connecting the cantons of Valais and Uri.

We'll arrive in picturesque Zermatt early enough for a relaxed amble around town, with views of the Matterhorn around every corner. Even after a little shopping, there's plenty of time left to enjoy wellness services at our hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodations: Resort La Ginabelle (or comparable lodging)

### **DAY 8: THE MATTERHORN**

Experience breathtaking views of Mt. Matterhorn and the Alps in an excursion that combines a cogwheel train ride with an easy-to-moderate day hike

You'll ride Europe's second highest railway and the highest open-air railway on the continent—the Gornergrat cogwheel train climbing up to the 10,134 feet (3089 meters) offering incredible views of the Matterhorn along the way.

The group walks up to the 360-degree platform area providing a panoramic view of 29 alpine peaks higher than 13,123 feet (4000 meters)—including the world-famous Matterhorn.

Our 1-2 hour guided hike travels along sign-posted trails of an alpine nature reserve feature awe-inspiring views of the Matterhorn mirrored in pristine alpine lakes.

Along the way, you'll learn about the origins of Zermatt and the people of the canton of Valais (French) or Wallis (German).

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodations: Resort La Ginabelle (or comparable lodging)

### **DAY 9: GRINDELWALD & THE GOLDENPASS LINE**

Travel through the French speaking Canton of Valais – know as the fruit basket of Switzerland offering delightful views of terraced vineyards and fruit trees.

This segment is branded as the Goldenpass Line with either a Classic train car or the Panorama Car with big panorama windows.

Experience what it was like during the Belle-Epoque, Golden Age period when the rich and famous where the only ones traveling on such trains.

We continue on the GoldenPass Line through the Préalps of the canton of Fribourg and through the beautiful Simmental Valley known for the sturdy brown and white cows and the world famous resort town of Gstaad, home to many Hollywood stars.

View Alpine valleys and rolling hills, green pastures and grazing cows, wooden chalets and picturesque villages as we journey to the Jungfrau region – one of Switzerland's oldest and most popular resorts in the UNESCO World Heritage Jungfrau region.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodations: Hotel Alpina, Grindelwald (or comparable lodging)

### **DAY 10: JUNGFRAUJOCH AND TRUMMELBACH FALLS**

Day 10 is a memorable one, starting with a train ride to the top of the Jungfrauoch, a complex built between the Mönch and Jungfrau mountains—the perfect venue for viewing Europe's largest Aletsch glacier. Mountains, snow, and ice as far as one can see. Sit in a deck chair, go tubing or simply walk on the glacier and become one with nature. The afternoon finds the group on a train to Lauterbrunnen where we transfer to a postal bus on its way to Trümmelbach Falls, a series of ten glacier-fed waterfalls within the mountain, made accessible by a tunnel-funicular—a complex of lifts, galleries, tunnels, paths and platforms constructed in 1913. The falls carry melt water from the glaciers—up to 20,000 liters of water per second, rushing over 20,000 tons of boulders. The mountain shudders and thunders unceasingly—a stage for nature's majesty.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodations: Hotel Alpina, Grindelwald (or comparable lodging)

### **DAY 11: BERNESE MOUNTAINS & UNESCO BIOSPHERE**

After taking the Lake Brienz steamer from Interlaken to Brienz, the group boards the Rotbahn Steam train, in continuous operation since 1892. Ascending up to 7,700 feet, the railway offers views of emerald-green Alpine pastures, Swiss farmhouse—and at the peak— 360-degree views of the Bernese mountains.

A cable car takes us down into the Entlebuch valley to visit the pre-Alpine landscape UNESCO has designated as Switzerland's first biosphere reserve. Later in the day, we'll catch a local bus to Schupfheim train station where everyone transfers through Bern to the Zürich airport.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodations: Radison Blu (or comparable lodging)

Transport: Lake Brienz Steamer, Rotbahn Steam Railway

### **DAY 12: ZURICH AND BEYOND**

Departure to home or your next destination.

### **OPTIONAL PRE-TOUR AIRPORT MEET-AND-GREET**

Arrive early and acclimate! For more peace of mind, add the Pre-Tour Airport Meet-andGreet option when booking the 12-Day or 3-Day rail tour.

Those who add the Pre-Tour option are met at the airport by their tour guide, who accompanies them on the train to Lucerne, the starting point for both rail tours. You'll appreciate an extra night in Lucerne before meeting your tour companions.

Pre-Tour option highlights

Tour guide meets you at the airport

First-class train transfer from the airport to Lucerne

One-night accommodation in beautiful Lucerne (breakfast included)

Pre-Tour option rates

USD \$350.00 per person (double occupancy)

USD \$405.00 per person (single occupancy)

NOTE: The Pre-Tour option rate does not include alcoholic beverages or personal items.

### **OPTIONAL POST-TOUR TOUCH OF ITALY**

Not ready to go home? The Post-Tour option extends your rail tour with 3 days of Italian flair, both in the Swiss canton of Ticino and the Lake Como-Bellagio-Lugano region of Italy.

Add to the memories by selecting the Post-Tour option when booking a 12-Day or 3-Day rail tour.

Thank you for your interest in our tours. Please contact us if you have any questions.

René Welti, Founder & CEO



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