



## CUT-OUT-AND-GO GUIDE | ALFRESCO LAKE GENEVA

## SEE &amp; DO

• Rainbow sun umbrellas and sandcastles cover the sands at Genève-Plage, where the whole city meets to cool off, **dipping and dozing all day at lakeside beaches and pools** (from £5; [geneve-plage.ch](http://geneve-plage.ch)). Around sunset, decamp to Les Voiles, the evenings-only beach club, to toast the sleek yachts moored in the marina from an outsized armchair.

• Meandering in the warm air, pick up a bargain designer bag or pretty crockery at one of Geneva's 'La ville est à vous' markets. The Swiss love a spring-clean, and set up piles of covetable stuff at these neighbourhood affairs. Between the stalls, **brass bands play, kids attempt painting and music**, and food vans vend all kinds of calorific grub, from Ethiopian to Caribbean.

• Just 40 minutes away by train, Lausanne is smaller and prettier than Geneva, as bohemian as Switzerland gets. Make for grey-stoned Place de la Palud and watch eccentric snappy dressers wander past as you sip coffee under a parasol. Now climb the steep streets of the old town, stopping to window-shop the many antiques boutiques, and crane your neck **admiring the soaring Gothic ceilings of the immense cathedral**.

• Novell lunch jaunt? On a ferry from Lausanne's pretty port at Ouchy, you can **glide to France across the glowing green water**. Aim for Evian (for

timetables and lake maps, see [cgn.ch](http://cgn.ch); around 35 minutes; from £25 return), with its pastel-painted streets, where restaurants include *Une Histoire de Goût* (menus from £20; *Ave Général Duper 1*). The **sublime red mullet provençale** makes the journey alone worthwhile.

• The stroll-worthy lakefront town of Montreux (20 minutes from Lausanne by train) is famously **where Freddie Mercury settled, recording vocals for Queen's last album**. From his sky-punching statue by the market square, meander along the hazy waterside. In about 40 minutes, you'll reach the 13th-century Château de Chillon, emerging from lake mist like something from legend, glowing burnt orange with the rising sun ([chillon.ch](http://chillon.ch); entry £8.40).

• You'll get postcard-worthy shots from Montreux's **rickety, centenarian funicular railway as it click-clacks 1,575m up a mountain edge** towards the craggy peak at Rochers de Naye. Disembark at Caux for an amazing view: hay-coloured forest descending to shimmering water on one side; on the other, the Belle Epoque jumble of Le Bouveret town tumbling towards the lake (from Montreux station; about £14 return).

Perchance to steam:  
left, a paddle-  
steamer sets off  
across Lake  
Geneva; below,  
from left, Château  
de Chillon bathed  
in sun; shuttered  
windows in  
Lausanne's old town

• There's different viewing in Vevey, Montreux's lesser-known sister town, the two linked by the 201bus. Its neatly criss-crossed cobbled streets are packed with posh boutiques meeting an urbane, cafe-lined waterfront. Go for **Saturday morning's market: fine cheese, fresh flowers**, and hirsute Monsieur Barbieri, who sells excellent calabrese sauce (made from allotment-grown veg).

• Switzerland's biggest secret? Not Nazi gold but excellent wine, of which they export just one per cent. Chocolate-box cute Lavaux (between Lausanne and Vevey) is a good place to taste it: neat rows of vines pour down the mountains, while shady restaurant terraces hide in sunny lakeside villages. **Savour a few vintages on the Lavaux Panoramic Wine Train, which trundles between the vines** (April-Oct, £8; tickets from local tourist offices).>



## Alfresco Lake Geneva

Beach clubs, mountain air, jazz – the outdoor scene rocks in summer

Switzerland isn't just for ski season: its ornate cities, crisp air and charming waterfront towns make the country cool and refreshing in summer, too, despite regular highs of 30°C. Add fertile vines, lakeside pools and clickety-clack mountain trains and you have a breezy, boozy, beachy weekend break. By **Amanda Hyde**



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## EAT

## ● The city bargain

## CHEZ MA COUSINE (Mains about £8)

**Because:** Eating in Geneva is usually pricey, but the cheap, simple chicken, roast potatoes and veg at this little chain will have you salivating. **Travel's tip:** The Old Town branch, with its teeny terrace, is the most atmospheric. Place du Bourg du Four 6; [chezmacousine.ch](http://chezmacousine.ch).

## ● The portside lunch

## RESTAURANT DU PORT (Mains about £17)

**Because:** Finding a good meal in Ouchy, Lausanne's tourist-trodden lakeside suburb, is hard – but the mussels and chips here hit the spot. **Travel's tip:** You'll want an outside table – which means you'll have to reserve a couple of days beforehand. Place du Port 5; 00 41216120444; [hotel-du-port.ch](http://hotel-du-port.ch).

## ● The tropical terrace

## MAITHAI (Mains about £25)

**Because:** Nothing says summer indulgence quite like the spicy king prawns served on this shady lakeside Montreux deck. **Travel's tip:** The time to be here is dusk (around 9pm), as the mountains turn pink and the lake shimmers electric blue. Rue du Lac 40; 00 41219642536; [maithai.ch](http://maithai.ch).

## ● The golden oldie

## HOTEL VICTORIA (Mains about £30)

**Because:** This antiques-stuffed hotel in the chocolate-box village of Glion is like a peep into the area's early 20th-century heyday. **Travel's tip:** The old-fashioned menus are haphazardly executed – stick to simple dishes and savour the incredible atmosphere. Route de Caux, Glion; 00 41219628282; [victoria-glion.ch](http://victoria-glion.ch).

## ● The brilliant brunch

## HOTEL TROIS COURONNES

## (Buffet brunch about £50)

**Because:** Despite the five-star fairy-tale surroundings (glittering chandeliers, frescoed ceilings), Sunday buffet brunch at this grand dame, commanding the lake at Vevey, is a wonderfully relaxed affair. **Travel's tip:** Go for the sweet langoustines and homely rack of lamb. Rue d'Italie 49; 00 41219233200; [hoteltroiscouronnes.ch](http://hoteltroiscouronnes.ch).

## DRINK &amp; SHOP

## ● The secret jazz club

## ANCIENNE POSTE DES PLANCHES

**Because:** The fantastic Saturday-night live music at this makeshift Montreux jazz joint packs in music lovers and oozes atmosphere. **Travel's tip:** They say you have to reserve, but wait until someone steps out for a smoke and they may let you sneak in. Place des Planches 4; 00 41786542826.

## ● The tip-top tea room

## P'TIT BAR, LAUSANNE

**Because:** This cute little cafe does homemade infusions, such as warm elderflower or cool ginger. **Travel's tip:** There's real colour early on a Saturday, as market-stall holders set up in the shadow of the cathedral. Rue Louis-Curtat 6; 00 41213235359.

## ● The eccentric brewery

## DOCTEUR GAB'S, SAVIGNY

**Because:** Seasonal surprises at this industrial-estate microbrewery are made for connoisseurs: try summer's heady 'Cascade'. **Travel's tip:** The shop, in the hills above Lausanne, is a top Swiss secret, but only opens Saturdays 10am–4pm. Chemin de Geffry, Savigny.

## ASK THE LOCAL

Full-time mum Tercia Zivanovic lives in La Tour de Peilz, between Montreux and Vevey

**“** Always look at the lake before you board a boat trip: if the water's running left to right and you see lights blinking on the far left-hand shore, it's going to be choppy! Swiss attractions are seriously expensive. If you visit the **fun lakeside ones, such as the amazing Aquaparc** or Swiss Vapeur Parc ([aquaparc.ch](http://aquaparc.ch) and [swissvapeur.ch](http://swissvapeur.ch)), check online for discount vouchers first. Montreux is at its best during the **Jazz Festival, when the lake is lined with pop-up bars and restaurants** (July 4; [montreuxjazzfestival.com](http://montreuxjazzfestival.com)). But you don't have to buy an expensive ticket to enjoy the fun – **musicians perform all day (and night) in the free outside area by the main arena.**



## STAY

## ● The Old Town bargain

## HOTEL TRALALA (Doubles from £90, room only)

**Because:** The music-themed Tralala, in Montreux, may have OTT red and white furnishings, but it's a great place to stay when the town's two-week Jazz Festival kicks off in July. Plus, many rooms have fantastic lake views.

**Travel's tip:** Avoid the £12 buffet breakfast; turn right out of the hotel and walk for two minutes to a cute cafe with a sunny terrace. Rue du Temple 2; 00 41219634973; [tralalahotel.ch](http://tralalahotel.ch).

## ● The boozy bolthole

## HOTELL LAVAUX (Doubles from £96, room only)

**Because:** The chic white rooms in this '60s low-rise are right by Lavaux's vineyards (although also a railway line).

**Travel's tip:** Look out for the excellent packages such as 'Winemaker's day', which includes lake-view rooms, time working in a vineyard and a tasting from £80pp per night. Route Cantonale; 00 41217999393; [hotellavaux.ch](http://hotellavaux.ch).

PHOTOGRAPHS: 4CORNERS; GETTY; ROBERT HARDING; TRAVELPICTURES; MAP: MAIDENHEAD CARTOGRAPHIC

## ● The chic B&amp;B

## LEBOURG7 (Doubles from £109, B&amp;B)

**Because:** This cosy, cool B&B in the medieval lakeside village of Lutry is as non-corporate as Switzerland gets, with rooms adorned in plush velvets and pretty embroidery.

**Travel's tip:** The cosy wine bar is a great place to while away an evening. Rue du Bourg 7; 00 41217963777; [lebourg7.com](http://lebourg7.com).

## ● The city sleepover

## EASTWESTHOTEL (Doubles from £190, room only)

**Because:** This central-Geneva boutique number is delightfully eccentric, with yellow-walled rooms, a cosy scarlet bar and a restaurant doing delicious French/Asian fusion.

**Travel's tip:** Ask for a room at the back, to avoid road noise. Rue des Paquis 6; 00 41227081717; [eastwesthotel.ch](http://eastwesthotel.ch).

## ● The place to be seen

## FAIRMONT LE MONTREUX PALACE (Doubles from £250, room only)

**Because:** Cinderellas on the up will



adore star-spotting at this grand Belle Epoque pile, with its startling white rooms, lakeside pool and Harry's Bar.

**Travel's tip:** It's not widely advertised, but under-fives sleep and eat free. Avenue Claude-Nobs 2; 00 4121962121; [fairmont.com/montreux](http://fairmont.com/montreux).

## ● The luxe escape

## BEAU-RIVAGE PALACE (Doubles from £275, B&amp;B)

**Because:** The service is superb, there's a Michelin-starred restaurant, and the sprawling terrace comes with knockout lake views. At weekends, Geneva's ex-pats flock to this Lausanne five-star

with good reason. **Travel's tip:** Make time for the spa, a lavish affair that does sublime massages. Place du Port 17-19; 00 41216133333; [brp.ch](http://brp.ch).

GET ME THERE  
GO INDEPENDENT

**EasyJet** ([easyjet.com](http://easyjet.com)) flies to Geneva from 14 UK airports from £95 return.

**BA** ([ba.com](http://ba.com)) flies from Heathrow (and Gatwick and London City in winter), from £150 return. **Swiss** ([swiss.com](http://swiss.com))

flies from Gatwick, Heathrow and London City, from £175 return.

## GO PACKAGED

**Crystal Summer** (08712308180, [crystalsummer.co.uk](http://crystalsummer.co.uk)) has a week at a four-star in Montreux from £1,037pp half board, including Luton flights and rail transfers. **Railbookers** (020 3327 0800, [railbookers.com](http://railbookers.com)) has two nights at the Fairmont Montreux Palace from £479pp, including Eurostar travel from London and train transfer to Montreux.

## GET AROUND

The highly reliable Swiss rail network connects Geneva airport with Geneva (20mins), Lausanne (40mins) and Montreux (1hr 20mins). You can change for regional stations. See [sbb.ch](http://sbb.ch) for fares and timetables. Driving is easy and relatively traffic-free too: **Auto Europe** (0800 3581229, [auto-europe.co.uk](http://auto-europe.co.uk)) has three nights' car hire from £95.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

See [myswitzerland.com](http://myswitzerland.com) and [montreuxriviera.com](http://montreuxriviera.com).