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page 52*



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ADVENTURE



TOURING ZÜRICH Clockwise from top: Sun worshippers at Enge, Seebad; a gargoye fountain at Hauptbahnhof; a decorative water fountain in Zurich; Frau Gerolds Garten; and the Marktgassee Hotel

ENGE, ELISABETH REAL © ZÜRICH TOURISM/ZÜRICH TOURISMUS; GARGOYLE, BRUNNEN © ZÜRICH TOURISM/ZÜRICH TOURISMUS; FOUNTAIN, MARTIN RÜTSCHE © ZÜRICH TOURISM/ZÜRICH TOURISMUS; FRAU GEROLDS GARTEN, SALVATORE VINCI © ZÜRICH TOURISM/ZÜRICH TOURISMUS; MARKETGASSE HOTEL, ZÜRICH

ADVENTURE

DEPARTURES

A Swiss ‘Don’t Miss’

Before heading into the Alpine countryside, make a summer stop in charming, bustling Zurich

BY GIGI RAGLAND



WATERFRONT VIEW Zurich, as seen from the River Limmat

Anyone who's ever watched the opening sequence of Julie Andrews spinning on a mountaintop in "The Sound of Music" (and is there any reader out there who has not?) knows the summertime charms of the Alps. The hills are alive not only with the sound of music but also with great hiking, gorgeous flowers and alpine lakes.

But before setting out on your alpine journey, take a few days to enjoy Zurich, an easy city to navigate, where you can rub shoulders with the locals and sample the best of Swiss culture. Like most Swiss cities, Zurich is warm and sunny in the high season (June through August). The higher temperatures also bring higher prices, but the allure of lakeside leisure and convivial outdoor cafés creates a lively, upbeat atmosphere.

Zurich is home to more fountains than any other city in the world and some of the best drinking water on the planet, so bring a water bottle and fill up at one of the city's 1,200 decorative public fountains—yes, you can really drink out of those gushing gargoyle mouths and dainty cherub spouts.

Or chill out with a dip in one of the city's 40

outdoor swimming pools, known as "badis." It's common to see families and friends swimming or sunning themselves at Lake Zurich, the River Limmat or one of the outdoor pools, and with cafés and restaurants lining the river and lakeside promenade, a meal or drink is not far away. Lake Zurich also is a great place to cycle or walk around. Rising above the city is Uetliberg mountain, a quick 30-minute train ride away, where a panoramic view awaits.

If you like history, stroll the cobblestone streets of Old Town Zurich—no need for a car. For a medieval vibe, you can stay at the Marktgasse Hotel, in the old market square district. Welcoming guests since the 15th century, the hotel has been recently renovated, giving it a modern aesthetic while maintaining the integrity of the historic building. Its cozy and intimate Baltho Bar has cocktails and international cuisine, and there's a small ground-level café that offers a light breakfast and lunch and provides a great place to perch outside with a coffee and people-watch. The hotel also partners with a neighborhood wellness hammam to provide guests a complimentary visit to the baths and sauna.

Zurich has been a major hub for centuries, and the surrounding neighborhood is filled with art and architectural sites from the medieval ages up to today. A few blocks from the hotel is the Fraumünster Church, a ninth-century landmark with a tall green steeple and five stained-glass windows by Marc Chagall. Zurich has no fewer than 100 galleries and 50 museums to explore, from the obscure (the birthplace of the Dada Art Movement, Cafe Voltaire) to the Swiss National Museum, near the main railway station, stuffed with comprehensive exhibits on Swiss culture and history.

No matter where the cobblestone streets of Old Town Zurich take you, you'll be sure to find a few of your favorite things before continuing happily on to an alpine journey. **DLM**



NEED-TO-KNOW INFO

PLAN: zuerich.com/en/visit/explore/summer

STAY: marktgasseehotel.ch

RESEARCH: myswitzerland.com

PARTY: Zurich's annual "Street Parade" in August is the biggest techno-party street dance in all of Switzerland and possibly Europe.