

Rhineland, Alsace & the Swiss Alps

16 Marvellous Days – Frankfurt to Zurich



Thun, Switzerland

Albatross gives you more...

- ✈ Enjoy 2 nights in the Rhineland exploring the beautiful Moselle River, ancient Trier, Rudesheim and magnificent Castle Burg Eltz
- ✈ Cruise through the Rhine Gorge and visit the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg
- ✈ Stay 4 nights in an Alsace chateau hotel and visit postcard perfect Colmar, cruise on the River Ill through Strasbourg and discover the pretty wine villages along the 'route Alsace du Vin'
- ✈ Visit medieval Triberg and gothic Freiburg in the Black Forest
- ✈ Stay 3 nights in the Swiss Gruyère region near Lake Geneva and visit Berne, Murten, Montreux, Charlie Chaplin's Vevey and the hilltop village of Gruyères
- ✈ Visit Chateau Chillon and the Olympics Museum in Ouchy, follow the Lavaux wine road and ride on the Swiss Chocolate Train
- ✈ Relax over 4 nights in the heart of the mighty Swiss Alps in Lauterbrunnen – in the 'Valley of the Waterfalls'. Cruise on Lake Thun, visit Interlaken and the chic ski resorts of Gstaad and Grindelwald, see the north face of the Eiger and the Trummelbach Falls.
- ✈ Experience an alpine walk from the Grütschalp to Mürren, visit Meiringen and stay by the lake in Luzern

The Albatross Difference



More sightseeing time off the coach, average 110 kms travelled



Max 30 passengers for a more personal touring experience



Over \$1,600 value of extras included with no hidden costs

DAY 1 FRANKFURT

Your tour commences this evening with a welcome drink before dinner in your hotel. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. (D)

Your Frankfurt Hotel – Hilton Frankfurt.

DAY 2 TRIER

Soon after leaving Frankfurt we reach the River Rhine and make a morning stop in delightful Rudesheim where you can wander up the famous Drosselgasse, a narrow cobblestone avenue lined with overhanging half timbered buildings, cafes and shops. Later we enjoy a Rhine Cruise past the Lorelei Rock and through the Rhine Gorge lined with vineyards and 'Robber Baron' Castles. Following lunchtime at leisure in Boppard, we cross over to the more dramatic Moselle River and enjoy a guided tour through Castle Burg Eltz. Untouched in over 700 years this magnificent castle emerges from a lush forest perched high above the river gorge. The interior is furnished much as it was 500 years ago. Following the winding Moselle we reach Trier where we stay for the next two nights. Your hotel is superbly located by the Porta Nigra Roman gate and the central pedestrian mall. (B, D)

Your Rhineland Hotel - Mercure Hotel Trier Porta Nigra.

DAY 3 TRIER

This morning we are joined by a local guide who will take us on a walking tour of this fascinating city. Trier is the oldest city in Germany and was once the northern capital of the Roman Empire. The city is adorned with sights including the Roman Basilica, Trier Cathedral and the ruins of the Roman Amphitheatre and Baths. The rest of your day is free to relax and enjoy this wonderful town. (B)

DAY 4 CHATEAU DE L'ILE IN THE ALSACE

After a leisurely start we arrive in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, one of the smallest countries in the world. Luxembourg city itself displays a thousand years of history. It has a striking location built on a promontory overlooking deep valleys and precipitous gorges. After an orientation tour of the city, we have free time to explore the maze of cobbled streets that

make up the pedestrianised Old Town around the Grand-Ducal Palace. This afternoon we continue into the Alsace region where we stay for the next four nights in a chateau hotel, located just five kilometres outside Strasbourg. (B, D)

Your Alsace hotel – Chateau de L'ile. Set in 4 hectares of private grounds this 19th century castle hotel is ideally situated on a tree-lined bend on the Ill River. With its half-timbered style traditional Alsatian architecture, riverside terrace and spa centre the 'de L'ile' makes an ideal base to explore the Alsace region.

DAY 5 CHATEAU DE L'ILE IN THE ALSACE

This morning we are joined by a local guide and together we will explore Strasbourg, the seat of the European Parliament. Retaining its old world charm, there are massive fortified towers beside three bridges spanning the River Ill, and the pedestrian streets around the Place de la Cathédrale and Place Broglie are a delight. We also enjoy a river cruise around the heart of this beautiful city, in a glass topped boat. The rest of the day is free to shop and maybe relax in one of the numerous cosy cafes on the canals and pedestrian walkways. This evening we will dine out in a local brasserie called the Ancienne Duane, which dates back hundreds of years. (B, D)

DAY 6 CHATEAU DE L'ILE IN THE ALSACE

Driving south we reach postcard perfect Colmar and have an orientation tour. Brightly painted, half-timbered houses on narrow, twisting lanes make a perfect backdrop as the River Lauch winds its way through the centre, known as the Little Venice district. In the afternoon we will follow the famous Route Alsace du Vin (Alsace Wine Route) through the pretty villages of Ribeauville, Riquewihr and Kaysersberg. We will stop at one of the manicured vineyards to enjoy a wine tasting of various different local wines. The remainder of the afternoon will be at leisure back at our hotel, and the

evening will be free in Strasbourg where you can discover your own character bistro to enjoy dinner. (B)

DAY 7 CHATEAU DE L'ILE IN THE ALSACE

We will spend the day in the beautiful Black Forest. Crossing into Germany we will follow the Schwarzwaldhochstrasse (Black Forest High Road) into the heart of the region and the old town of Triberg. After visiting the Black Forest Museum, illustrating this region's history and folklore, take time to wander amongst the cuckoo clock shops and maybe enjoy coffee and Black Forest Cake in one of the local cafes. Your afternoon will be spent in the capital of the Black Forest – the gothic city of Freiburg. Here we are joined by a local guide. Sensitively restored, Freiburg is one of the most charming of German cities, located where the Black Forest meets the Rhine Plain. Arcaded shopping streets and little streams lead through the old town to its great gothic cathedral. (B, D)

DAY 8 CHARMEY IN THE GRUYÈRE REGION

Reaching Switzerland we stop to explore the medieval cobbled stoned streets of Bern. A UNESCO World Landmark, this capital city is set on a spectacular bend above the River Aare and boasts kilometres of sheltered arcaded shopping ways, an intriguing clock tower and the famous 'Bärengraben' bear pits. In the afternoon we take a short diversion to enjoy an afternoon stop in the historic town of Murten by Lake Murten. Entering the Gruyère region we soon reach Charmey, in the foothills of the Alps, where we stay for the next three nights. (B, D)

Your Charmey Hotel – Cailler Hotel. This purpose built chalet style hotel boasts balconies and window boxes, a lounge bar and gourmet restaurant with panoramic views, large bedrooms and a huge spa and wellness complex. See www.hotel-cailler.ch



Swiss village scene





Petite France in Strasbourg © C.FLEITH

DAY 9 CHARMEY IN THE GRUYÈRE REGION

Driving to Montreux, we have included entrance and a guided tour through the 13th century fortress of Chateau Chillon which juts out imposingly onto Lake Geneva. The rest of the morning is at leisure on the grand lakeside promenade and foreshore of Montreux. This afternoon we drive to Lausanne where we visit the Museum of the Olympic Games on the quai d'Ouchy. The memorabilia and interactive displays make this a fascinating visit. Later we follow the incredibly scenic Lavaux wine road (UNESCO World Heritage Listed) through steep, stone terraced vineyards that tumble down into Lake Geneva. At Charlie Chaplin's hometown of Vevey we enjoy an afternoon stop. (B, D)

DAY 10 CHARMEY IN THE GRUYÈRE REGION

Today we enjoy an excursion on the famous Chocolate Train. After boarding our 1915 vintage, first-class "Belle Epoque" Pullman car in Montreux, we enjoy coffee and croissants enroute to Gruyères. On arrival we take a tour of a cheese factory before driving up to the unique village of Gruyères. Rising out of the flat valley floor, Gruyères village and castle are perched on top of a steep rocky hill. The broad cobbled stone main street, flanked by centuries old houses, is an astounding time capsule and one of the great sights of Europe. Later we drive to Broc and visit Maison Cailler-Nestle, Switzerland's first chocolate factory. (B, D)

DAY 11 LAUTERBRUNNEN IN THE BERNESE OBERLAND

Driving into the mountains we pass Chateau d'Oex, and make a morning stop in the chic ski resort of Gstaad. Later we continue deep into the heart of the Bernese Oberland to Grindelwald where we have lunchtime at leisure. World famous for its skiing, the village is full of restaurants, cafes and shops and the views directly onto the north face of the Eiger are exceptional. In the afternoon we continue to the Lauterbrunnen Valley and visit the unusual Trummelbach Falls. Taking a funicular up inside the cliff face we then walk through the mountain caverns that are still being carved by these 'living waterfalls' as they thunder beside us through the mountain. An extraordinary sight!

The nearby delightful village of Lauterbrunnen is in a spectacular setting with 1,000 foot sheer cliffs rising either side of this narrow 'valley of the waterfalls' (these are the cliffs that James Bond keeps leaping off when he is being chased by the baddies). The valley's most famous landmark, the impressive Staubbach Falls, is several hundred metres high and is right behind the village. You will be staying here for four nights. (B, D)

Your hotel in the Bernese Oberland - Oberland Hotel, Lauterbrunnen. The Oberland Hotel dates back well over 100 years and is located in the heart of the village. You will be the guests of Ursula and Mark Nolan-von Allmen. Mark's passion for Swiss hill walking led him from Australia to Lauterbrunnen, where he met and married Ursula. The dining is excellent plus there is a relaxing bar/café and lounge. Please note the Oberland is a 5 storey hotel and does not have a lift and does not offer portage. See hotel photo page 7 or visit www.hoteloberland.ch

DAY 12 LAUTERBRUNNEN IN THE BERNESE OBERLAND

We have left this day entirely free for you to enjoy the spectacular Swiss scenery. Perhaps go hill walking or catch the cog train up to Wengen, Kleine Scheidegg or even to the snowbound Jungfrauoch. At 11,333 feet high there is a large restaurant complex and the views are breathtaking. (B, D)

DAY 13 LAUTERBRUNNEN IN THE BERNESE OBERLAND

A very relaxing day as we first visit nearby Interlaken set between Lake Brienz and Lake Thun. Later we will catch the ferry along the length of Lake Thun to the town of Thun where we will enjoy time at leisure. (B, D)

DAY 14 LAUTERBRUNNEN IN THE BERNESE OBERLAND

Catching the Grütschalp cable car to the top of the cliffs we enjoy an easy 1 ½ to 2 hour flat walk along the broad hiking path to the ski town of Mürren. The surrounding scenery is spectacular. The trails in Switzerland are very well marked and this one in particular is extremely easy to follow, with an ideal refreshment stop part way along at the Winteregg mountain restaurant. *Note: those not wishing to enjoy the walk can easily catch a ride*



Orschwiller Castle, Alsace Wine Road ©C.FLEITH



Lauterbrunnen, Switzerland - Hotel Oberland on the right, where we stay four nights

up to Murren and meet the group at lunchtime. The rest of your day is free. There is plenty to see in Murren village, and from here you can catch another cable car (not included) up to the famous revolving restaurant perched 10,000 feet on top of the Schilthorn Mountain. (B, D)

DAY 15 LUZERN

Driving along the length of Lake Brienz, we will make a morning stop in Meiringen (of Sherlock Holmes fame) and where the famous dessert 'meringues' originated. A perfect place to enjoy coffee and share a giant meringue! Later we continue to the lovely lake-side town of Luzern with its covered wooden bridges. Arriving around midday your afternoon is free to explore the old town, on the doorstep of your hotel. Your farewell dinner tonight promises to be an unforgettable experience as we enjoy traditional Swiss fare in a local restaurant. (B, D)

Your Luzern Hotel - Hotel Schweizerhof. This 5 star hotel located on the banks of the Lake, in the heart of Luzern's old town, is one of Switzerland's finest hotels. The stunning interior reflects the brilliance of the grand era of the 19th century. You will be charmed by the rooms which are discreetly elegant whilst being equipped with all the modern facilities required to ensure your comfort.

DAY 16 TRANSFER TO ZURICH AIRPORT AND STATION

After breakfast we will transfer you to Zurich. Arriving around midday we will make stops at Zurich airport and central train station. (B)

'Our leader and driver were both excellent. We enjoyed the more leisurely pace with several nights in the one spot and particularly enjoyed being out of the big cities – definitely the way to go!'
Christine and Clem

Tour Inclusions

- All the sightseeing, scenic drives and excursions (as per the itinerary)
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- First class air-conditioned touring coach
- End of tour tips to Tour Manager, driver and local guides
- 15 nights selected accommodation as described
- Hotel portage (1 bag per person)
- Welcome drink in Frankfurt
- Buffet breakfasts daily and 13 dinners, including welcome and farewell dinners, Strasbourg restaurant dinner
- Local guides Burg Eltz, Trier, Strasbourg, Freiburg, Chateau Chillon
- Entrances: Burg Eltz, Black Forest Museum, Chateau Chillon, Olympic Museum, Trummelbach Falls
- Rhine cruise, Strasbourg cruise, Alsace wine tasting, Lake Thun cruise, full day excursion on the famous chocolate train including a cheese factory visit and Nestle chocolate visit, Grütschalp and Mürren – Stechelberg cable car rides.
- Personal audio system whilst on tour



2012 Dates and Prices

16 days only \$6,189 pp twin share
Single supplement \$1,149 (land only prices in Australian dollars)

STARTS	ENDS
29 May	13 June
25 June	10 July
18 September	3 October

SPECIAL EARLYBIRD OFFER -
Book by 22 Dec 2011
to save \$300 pp!