

[Get free weekly meal plans! →](#)

urbanblisslife
FOOD • WINE • TRAVEL



[URBAN BLISS LIFE](#) > [TRAVEL](#) > [EUROPE](#) > [SWITZERLAND](#)

Travel Guide: Lugano, Switzerland



By [Marlynn Jayme Schotland](#) • Updated Jul 07, 2023, Published Sep 23, 2021

This post may contain affiliate links. Please read our [disclosure policy](#).

Straddling the border of Switzerland and Italy, the picturesque city of Lugano, Switzerland offers visitors breathtaking scenery, warm climate outdoor adventures, and culinary adventures that marry the two cultures.





urbanblisslife

MY LATEST VIDEO



When I mention Switzerland as a travel destination, most people think of the Swiss Alps, skiing, and fondue. The country doesn't always conjure up images of colorful Italian architecture, gelato stands, and sun-drenched lakesides.

Yet that's exactly what one will find if one travels to the Ticino region of Switzerland. This southern part of the country borders Italy, and is known as the Italian-speaking region. The north and northeast parts of Switzerland are known as the German-speaking regions, and the west and southwest regions are known as the French-speaking regions.

We've traveled to [Lugano](#) a few times now. First, as a couple, and subsequently as a family of four with two very young children, and finally with extended family. Having experienced various stages of our lives, with travel companions, I can assure you it is a wonderful destination for a

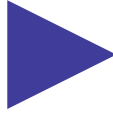




Table of contents

-  [How to get to Lugano](#)
-  [Weather](#)
-  [What to Pack](#)

[VIEW MORE](#)



How to get to Lugano





scenic train



Getting to Lugano is easier and faster than it used to be. It used to take us close to 4 hours by train from Zurich. Now, it takes **just a little under two hours.**

| Tip

🚆 For cheap train tickets and rail passes check out [Rail Europe](#)

That's thanks to the addition of more direct trains through the recently completed Ceneri Base Tunnel and the Gotthard Base Tunnel — the longest tunnel in the world at over 35 miles.

Either side of the tunnel is an absolutely beautiful train ride which passes through lakeside villages and the historic town of [Bellinzona](#), with its three medieval hillside castles. The trains run at least once per hour on this route.



Weather



Because of its Southern location, the rest of Switzerland. It has more of a Mediterranean feel, bordering Italy.

The average high temperature from June to August tops out at around to 80°F (about 27°C), but it's not unusual for the weather to reach into the 90s.

In the spring and fall, high temperatures hover around 65°F (about 18°C).



What to Pack





When visiting Lugano, most of the weather is mild. Pack light summer weather clothing. Shorts and t-shirts are perfect for the most places during the spring through mid-fall. It can be breezy at the lake and colder during late fall and winter months, so pack sweaters and light

jackets to layer. And, of course, don't forget your swimsuit if you're going to be spending time on the lake!

In addition to packing a variety of layered clothing, you'll definitely want to pack:

Comfortable shoes – Lugano is full of gorgeous hillsides and steep steps (see the photo above). You'll want to be sure to wear comfortable walking shoes.

I personally have relied on Sorel shoes for over a decade of frequent travel. During the summer, these are [my favorite Sorel sandals](#) – I wore them during our recent trip to Lugano and you can even see them peeking out in the photo of paddleboats below. During colder months, I rely on these [comfortable waterproof ankle boots](#). And if it's snowy, these [snow boots](#) are comfortable and warm.

Sunscreen – Definitely pack [sunscreen](#) if you're headed to the Ticino region! It gets very warm during most months and when we've traveled here, we spent most of our time outdoors. Your adventures in Lugano can include high elevations closer to the sun, so even on overcast days, you'll want to make sure you're wearing sunscreen.



Where to Stay





Grand Hotel Villa Cas

If 5-star luxury is your style, the [Grand Hotel Villa Cas](#) is not disappoint. Nestled alongside Lake Lugano, the hotel offers a mix of old-world charm, modern conveniences, and breathtaking views. It also features



a Michelin-starred restaurant housed inside an art gallery.

Explore the [Grand Hotel Villa Castagnola](#).

Hotel International Au Lac

Relax on the lakeside promenade while staying at the [Hotel International au Lac](#). This recently renovated hotel sits in the historic town center close to shops and right next to the city arts center and museum. And if you're a late riser, their breakfast buffet serves until 10:45 a.m.

Explore the [Hotel International Au Lac](#).

Hotel Walter Au Lac

Located in the heart of Lugano, the family-owned [Hotel Walter au Lac](#) boasts lakeside views and easy access to the main train station, city shops and restaurants. All rooms also feature air conditioning and WiFi.

Explore the [Hotel Walter Au Lac](#).



Where to Eat





restaurants in the Lugano

One of my favorite things about Lugano is the variety of places to eat.

places to

Lugano is home to hundreds of restaurants and cafes, as well as numerous

food carts along the lake. Italian cuisine dominates the restaurant scene here, but you'll also find Swiss, French, and German restaurants.

In the town's main square, the Piazza della Riforma, you'll find several options for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Ristorante Federale





On our trip this year, we enjoyed lunch at Ristorante Federale. The food menu is long and the wine menu is even longer! Love this place. The pastas and pizzas are delicious. My daughter ordered the tuna poke (an unusual choice at an Italian restaurant), which was beautiful and tasty. Prices were reasonable, service was friendly, and it's a great place to enjoy a meal while people watching in the main square.

Gelato stands





Just like in Italy, you'll find numerous gelato stands in the Ticino region of Switzerland. You'll come across them while walking along the waterfront of Lake Lugano.

I highly recommend getting gelato from any of the lakeside stands and

then taking a seat on any of the many benches facing the lake. It's a great mid-afternoon treat and will give you a nice little break from walking.

Wine Cellars and Breweries



Ticino is one of the six wine regions in Switzerland. It's relatively small

compared to other wine regions, but the warm Mediterranean climate and various south-facing slopes allows vintners to grow the big red varieties unable to grow further north. Ticino is home to Merlot – 80 percent of the grapes planted here are Merlot. The rest are mostly other red varieties, such as Bandola and, at higher elevations, Pinot Noir.

There are several wine bars and wine shops around the center of town. One of the largest is [Bottega Del Vino Gabbani](#).

For a true wine tasting experience, venture a bit further out of the city and visit one of the wineries, such as [Frattoria Moncuchetto](#).

Lugano is also home to a few interesting craft breweries, such as Broken City Brewing and [Officina Della Birra](#).

Where to Shop





As you can imagine, the streets s are filled
with high-end, luxury shops and

For luxury shopping, visit international clothing names like Hermés and
beauty shops for Kiehl's and Lush Cosmetics.

For those with kids or grandchildren, a visit to the local toy shop, Zooeyland, is sure to bring some joy.

My favorite kind of shopping is stopping by the local gourmet shops, like [Fattoria del Faggio](#) – a shop featuring fresh products from local farms.



What to Do

From outdoor adventures to modern art to historic churches, you'll find much to do in Lugano, Switzerland. Here are just a few ideas to add to your travel itinerary.

Outdoor activities





On two different trips, we've taken paddleboats on the lake. You can rent them at waterfront stands or through local businesses. Some paddleboats have slides, so if you want to spend time *in* the lake, be sure to wear your swimsuits and bring a change of clothing.

You can also take a [boat cruise](#) along Lake Lugano.

For the truly water-loving adventurers, Lake Lugano offers numerous [water sports](#). Spend an afternoon or day windsurfing, water skiing, stand up paddleboarding (SUP), or sailing.

☀ **Ways to explore Lugano**

- [Short excursion](#) during which you will learn the most intriguing facts about the history and the local lifestyle
- [Private tour for a personal group](#) with highlights of the city
- [Full-day trip](#): shopping, risotto cooking class and more

Churches and Historic Buildings





Inside the



If you walk into the center of town, you will see the tower of Cattedrale di San Lorenzo. The cathedral marks the entrance to the main steep street that will lead you down into the town square. It is

the seat of the Bishop of Lugano, and was built in the high middle ages. It was rebuilt in the late 15th century, and features beautiful ornate frescoes and baroque decorations.

You can also visit the Church of Santa Maria degli Angioli, which houses the most famous Renaissance fresco in Switzerland.

Modern Art





Sculpture outside of the M

For more contemporary exhibits, Svizzera Italiana. Situated across from the lakefront promenade, and across from the colorful head sculpture in the photo above, the museum is

housed in a modern building that is in stark architectural contrast to neighboring structures. Inside, you'll find some of Switzerland's most fascinating modern art exhibits.

Getting Around Lugano

Walking is the best way to explore the city center and main shopping areas of Lugano. Its many squares and side streets make it perfect for leisurely strolls and on-foot sightseeing.

The city center is located down a fairly steep hill from the main train station. You can reach it in two main ways: a roughly 10-minute walk or via funicular, which is located right inside the station itself. The ride takes only a couple of minutes.

Like all Swiss cities, Lugano also has an efficient public transportation system consisting of buses which run frequently throughout the day and can take you to most parts of the city.

If you're looking to explore Lake Lugano, consider an afternoon cruise on one of the many tour boats. Several trips are available each day around the lake. You can also take a ferry to the nearby town of [Gandria](#) for a few hours to take in the breathtaking sights and enjoy some lunch, before grabbing jumping on another boat to take you back to Lugano. Ferries leave from the Lugano city center about every hour and cost around \$20.

Lugano Switzerland

What language do they speak?



Is Lugano expensive?

Is Lugano Switzerland a safe place to visit?

What currency is used in Lugano?

If you visit, please be sure to let them know that you read about it on Urban Bliss Life! And if you snap some pics, tag us **@UrbanBlissLife** and **#UrbanBlissLife** on [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#).

✈️ Planning a trip?

Here are my favorite items and resources I use whenever I travel.

 **Away Luggage** – I've traveled all over the world with [Away luggage](#) and can't say enough about their durability and style.

 **Backpack** – This is my go-to [travel backpack](#). It has pockets everywhere and enough space to fit everything from my laptop to extra shoes.

 **Apple Air Tags** – I always hide these [airtags](#) away in my luggage, especially if I check bags. That way I can track them and know exactly where they are.

 **Packing cubes** – Take the stress out of packing and make sure everything fits in your bags with [packing cubes](#).

 **Portable charger** – I always travel with a portable charger for my devices, and I've found [this one](#) to be perfect for my stinging.

 **Travel adapter** – Planning to travel to Europe? I found this [all-in-one international travel adapter](#) to make sure my devices work wherever I go.



✈ **Flights** – I've found the best savings [savings on flights here](#).

🏠 **Hotel** – I always snag the best lodging deals with this [booking tool](#).

🚗 **Rental cars** – You can get some great savings on rental cars on [this site](#).

I use all of these products and earn a small commission through these affiliate links.

More Switzerland Travel Guides

- [Travel to Zurich, Switzerland with Kids](#)
- [Family Travel to the Swiss Alps](#)
- [Castles of Bellinzona, Switzerland](#)
- [Travel Guide: Lucerne, Switzerland](#)

Pin it:





About Marlynn

I'm a cookbook author, recipe developer, photographer, WSET 2 Certified wine pro, mom of two, and dog lover. I'm here to help you with fast, easy, and delicious recipes, food & wine pairings, cooking & baking tips, plus food and wine travel guides.

LEARN MORE ABOUT ME

Leave a comment

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked *

COMMENT *



NAME *

EMAIL *

☐ Save my name, email, and website in this browser for the next time I comment.



Success!


CLOUDFLARE
[Privacy](#) • [Help](#)

POST COMMENT

This site uses Akismet to reduce spam. [Learn how your comment data is processed.](#)

Cozy Fall Recipes

[MORE FALL RECIPES](#) →



SOUP RECIPES

AIR FRYER RECIPES

Pumpkin Soup with Sausage

Air Fryer Chicken Pot Pie

SOUP RECIPES

Classic Beef Bourguignon

BREAKFAST RECIPES

Pumpkin Pie Spice Pancakes

[MORE FALL RECIPES →](#)

Popular Family Faves

CAKE RECIPES

Banana Crumb Coffee Cake



DAIRY-FREE RECIPES

The Ultimate Creamy Dairy-Free Mac and Cheese

FILIPINO RECIPES

Jollibee Spaghetti (Filipino-style Spaghetti)

CHICKEN RECIPES

Healthy 30-Minute Instant Pot Moroccan Chicken

Food & Wine Travels



SWITZERLAND

Hotel Storchen Zürich

OREGON TRAVEL IDEAS

A Weekend in the Columbia River Gorge: Where to Eat, Drink, and Stay Between Hood River and The Dalles



COLOMBIA

Cartagena Restaurants

PORTLAND OREGON RESTAURANTS

Jeju restaurant































As Seen In





RECIPES

COOKBOOKS

MEAL PLANS

ABOUT

FAQ

CONTACT

©2026 Urban Bliss Life. All rights reserved.

[Privacy Policy](#) • [Accessibility Statement](#) • Powered by [CultivateWP](#).

