



Recommended Reading and More

We have compiled this selection of books especially for your trip. Please visit your local library, bookstore or favorite online bookseller to obtain any of these titles.

Recommended

John McPhee. “*La Place de la Concorde Suisse.*” **Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994.** John McPhee deploys his usual insight and wonderful prose on the phenomenon of the Swiss army, presenting an irreverent portrait of Switzerland and the Swiss mindset.

Fergus Fleming. “*Killing Dragons: The Conquest of the Alps.*” **Grove/Atlantic, Inc., 2007.** Fergus Fleming spins lively tales of man against nature in this entertaining history of the eccentrics, adventurers and publicity-hounds who sought to conquer the Alps, including Whymper and his first ascent of the Matterhorn 150 years ago.

Eyewitness Guides. “*Eyewitness Guide Switzerland.*” **DK Publishing, 2017.** A compact, thoroughly illustrated guide, featuring over 900 photographs, good maps, and plenty of information on hiking in the Swiss Alps, natural and tourist attractions and the history and arts of Switzerland.

Michelin Maps. “*Switzerland Map.*” **Michelin Travel Publications, 2012.** A colorful, shaded relief map of Switzerland at a scale of 1:400,000.

History

Stephen O’Shea. “*The Alps: A Human History from Hannibal to Heidi and Beyond.*” **W. W. Norton & Company, 2018.** In an entertaining narrative, Stephen O’Shea drives, hikes and climbs through 500 miles of the Alps while musing on the historic personalities who braved the forbidding range, including Napoleon, Hitler and James Bond.

Diccon Bewes. “*Slow Train to Switzerland: One Tour, Two Trips, 150 Years and a World of Change Apart.*” **Perseus, 2014.** Best-selling author Diccon Bewes follows in the footsteps of an 1863 tour group who traveled from London to Lucerne, Switzerland. In his trademark breezy, intelligent prose, Bewes traces how tourism and time have caused a sea change in Switzerland.

Culture

Andrew Beattie. “*The Alps: A Cultural History.*” **Oxford University Press, 2006.** Andrew Beattie explores the turbulent past and vibrant present of the Alps, where early pioneers of tourism, mountaineering and scientific research have each left their mark.

Jonathan Steinberg. “*Why Switzerland?*” **Cambridge University Press, 2015.** A masterly overview of the idiosyncrasies of Switzerland, its history, language, politics and identity as a naysayer at the center of Europe.

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Swiss Alps ~ Interlaken

Diccon Bewes. “**Swiss Watching: Inside Europe’s Landlocked Island.**” **Nicholas Brealey, 2012.** In this international best seller, Diccon Bewees, a neutral Brit, covers cheese, chocolate, William Tell, bureaucracy and banks, all with humor and thorough research. His cultural portrait of the one-of-a-kind nation includes tips on local customs, greetings and etiquette.

Art and Architecture

Michaela Unterdorfer, Miriam Cahn, Christoph Buchel. “**Swiss Made: The Art of Falling Apart.**” **Waanders Publishers, 2006.** “Swiss Made” is devoted to the work of fifteen Swiss artists, each of whom has made a permanent impression in the field of contemporary art. Their work is included in one of the world’s most important Swiss collections of contemporary art: Hauser & Wirth.

Boris Friedewald. “**Paul Klee: Life and Work.**” **Prestel, 2019.** Through the selections of author and art historian Friedewald, explore the works and life of Swiss modern artist and violinist Paul Klee.

Travel, Biography & Memoir

Anne Herrmann. “**Coming Out Swiss: In Search of Heidi, Chocolate and My Other Life.**” **University of Wisconsin Press, 2014.** Part memoir, part history, part travelogue, Anne Herrmann’s passionate celebration of what it means to be Swiss intertwines personal revelation with cultural fact.

Jon Krakauer. “**Eiger Dreams: Ventures Among Men and Mountains.**” **Rowman & Littlefield Publisher, Inc., 2009.** A collection of some of Jon Krakauer’s best journalism, these stories and essays focus on the mindset and determination of world-class mountaineers, including Alpine and Himalayan climbers.

Mark Twain. “**A Tramp Abroad.**” **Penguin Publishing Group, 1997.** Written 11 years after “Innocents Abroad,” this is Twain’s second foray into European travel. Filled with his characteristic wit and humorous observations, it documents his journeys through Germany, Switzerland, France and Italy.

Edward Whymper. “**Scrambles Amongst the Alps: In the Years 1860-69.**” **National Geographic, 2002.** Edward Wymper’s classic account of Victorian era mountaineering captures the geography, beauty and allure of the Alps.

Literature

J.R.R. Tolkien. “**The Hobbit.**” **Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012 (75th anniversary edition).** Revealed in letters to family, Tolkien was greatly inspired by Switzerland’s Lauterbrunnen Valley which he visited as a teenager. Middle Earth in “The Hobbit” and “The Lord of the Rings” series is a reflection of this nature in abundance—the Alps, waterfalls, peaks, valleys and vast scenery suitable for quests.

Anita Brookner, Robin Desser (Editor). “**Hotel du Lac.**” **Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1995.** Funny, stylish and spellbinding, Anita Brookner’s novel tracks the story of a romance novelist seeking evasive peace and quiet at the luxurious Hotel du Lac in Switzerland.

M. F. K. Fisher. “**The Theoretical Foot.**” **Counterpoint, 2016.** MFK Fisher’s first novel, considered too racy for its time, features two unmarried American couples tramping through Europe in the late 1930s whose love affairs are tested by the rise of fascism and looming war.

Henry James. “**Daisy Miller and Other Tales.**” **Penguin Publishing Group, 2017.** A classic story of a young American woman’s innocent flirtation and its misinterpretation by a sophisticated European man, set in Lac Lemman and Chillon. This is Henry James’ first fictional work to gain mass popularity and one of his great American female portraits.

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John Le Carré. “The Night Manager.” Random House Publishing Group, 2017. This best-selling, post-Cold War thriller about ruthless arms dealers in Geneva is a gripping read. Carrying on the great Le Carré tradition of espionage, a man who essentially gave up living after a tremendous failure is given a costly shot at redemption.

Ernest Hemingway. “A Farewell to Arms.” Scribner, 2014. Set in snowy Switzerland and the rainy Italian Lake Country during WWI, this semiautobiographical novel chronicles the romance between a British nurse and an American ambulance driver. This edition collects all of the alternate endings, along with early drafts of other essential passages.

Natural History and Field Guides

Lars Svensson. “Birds of Europe.” Princeton University Press, 2010. Featuring 3,500 glorious paintings by Killian Mullarney and Dan Zetterstrom, the second edition of this exquisite guide features updated text and maps.

Andrew Cleave. “Wild Flowers of Britain & Northern Europe.” John Beaufoy Publishing, 2015. A colorful field guide featuring commonly encountered species of the fields and gardens of Europe.

Music

Oesch's die Dritten. “Jodel Zauber.” Ais, 2007. Iconic to German-speaking Switzerland is yodeling, originating as a 16th-century signal communication between Alpine villagers. This compilation of oral song and rapid delivery is harmonized by an accomplished Swiss family group dedicated to keeping traditional folk yodeling alive.

Movies and TV

“Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith.” Directed by George Lucas, 20th Century Fox, 2005. The Bernese Alps surrounding Grindelwald provide the backdrop as Alderaan, the fictitious home planet of Princess Leia Organa. As the last of the Star Wars prequel trilogy, Anakin Skywalker decides between embracing the dark side of the Force or remaining a Jedi knight.

“On Her Majesty’s Secret Service.” Directed by Peter R. Hunt, Eon Productions, 1969. Switzerland, including the Schilthorn summit south of Interlaken, is an extensive backdrop for James Bond’s secret agent heroics. Sixth in the Bond film series, James counters villain Blofeld’s threat of the world’s food sources.

Guidebooks, Language and Maps

Padraig Rooney. “The Gilded Chalet: Off-Piste in Literary Switzerland.” Nicholas Brealey, 2016. In this amusing guide, a grand tour of literary Switzerland, Padraig Rooney profiles 200 years of outstanding works and their strong Swiss influences. He argues that the land of luxury hotels, fresh air and fresh milk deserves wide renown as a literary hub.

Kendall Maycock. “Culture Smart! Switzerland.” Kuperard, 2016. A concise, no nonsense guide to Switzerland’s customs, etiquette and culture.

Insight Guides. “Insight Guide Switzerland.” APA Publications, 2018. This handsome guide gives a profusely illustrated overview of Switzerland, featuring concise essays by well-regarded authors on history, politics and culture, as well as hundreds of photos and maps and other practical information.