

**Devon & Cornwall**  
8 Day First Class Coach Tour

Airfare Included  
**Sept 5** \$3998  
**Sept 12, 19** \$3798

Enjoy the best of the Southwest of England. Includes 7 nights accommodation, full English breakfast daily and 5 full course evening meals.

Enjoy stunning coastlines, dramatic Moorlands & charming villages

BOOK BY AUG 8, 2025 TICO# 50010152



Discover the beauty of  
**DEVON & CORNWALL**  
Airfare Included

RITC Royal Irish Tours | 1 866 907 8687 Proudly Canadian Owned & Operated

**Tour Inclusions**

- 5 full course evening meals
- Traditional fish & chip lunch
- Tregothnan Tea Tasting
- One pub dinner
- One night traditional entertainment
- Dartmoor National Park
- Exmoor Distillery Tour & Tasting
- Admissions to Salisbury Cathedral, Bodmin Jail Attraction, Devon Rail Journey, Eden Project

PRICES ARE PER PERSON SHARING INCLUDING FLIGHTS FROM TORONTO  
To view itineraries and full terms and conditions, please visit [ritvacations.com](http://ritvacations.com)

# TRAVEL



## Time travel

In Switzerland's 'Watch Valley,' I'm transported by medieval towns, age-old traditions & tales of the past

T7

COVER STORY

# Slow travel in Switzerland



A view of Neuchâtel, a watchmaking city in Switzerland, and its 12th-century castle.

JURA & THREE-LAKES

Exploring by train, I visited tiny villages and towns where time seems to stand still

LISA KADANE  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

As I stand on the ramparts of Murten, Switzerland, fairy-tale roofs topped with twisty chimneys draw my gaze toward Lake Murten and the Jura Mountains beyond. I'm among a handful of summer tourists walking the walls of this medieval town of roughly 8,000, which was founded in 1159.

From this lofty vantage, Murten's cobblestone streets, Gothic castle and ancient limestone tower take me back centuries, to a time of witch trials and, even more distant, to the bubonic plague of the 1300s. I can almost hear the town crier shouting to villagers, "Bring out your dead!"

"That's where we used to burn our witches," explains city guide Barbara Mueller, indicating the tower, where women suspected of witchcraft were imprisoned while awaiting trial. Those convicted were burned at the stake.

She also points out the baroque Berntor (Bern Gate) and clock tower, whose timepiece was built in 1712. The clock is still hand-cranked every 24 hours so it chimes on schedule, Mueller says. Incidentally, she set her phone alarm at the beginning of this media tour, so our group of travel writers wouldn't miss our onward train. I'd expect no less in a



The fairy-tale roofs and whimsical chimneys in medieval Murten (also called Morat).



Murten's clock was built in 1712 and must be hand-wound every 24 hours.

CruisePlus  
TRAVEL & TOURS

## Continue Your Journey

Visit your bucket list destinations, and travel with us at CruisePlus Travel & Tours for exceptional value and service

### 36 Night Voyage of the Vikings

July 17, 2026 | Zuiderdam | Roundtrip Boston

- » 1 night in a 4★ Boston hotel
- » 35 night cruise
- » Up to **\$500 US** per person onboard credit
- » Taxes

*with Red Bay, Paamiut, Nanortalik, Reykjavik, Eidfjord, Rotterdam & more!*

OCEANVIEW  
per person CAD

\$12,599

BALCONY  
per person CAD

\$17,649

### 14 Night Western Mediterranean

May 21, 2026 | Oosterdam  
Rome to Lisbon

- » Roundtrip Toronto airfare
- » 2 nights 4★ Rome hotel
- » 10 night cruise & taxes
- » 2 nights 4★ Lisbon hotel
- » **\$50 US** pp onboard credit
- » **21 night sailing available!**

OCEANVIEW  
PER PERSON CAD  
including taxes

\$4899

BALCONY  
PER PERSON CAD  
including taxes

\$5649

### 17 Night Hawaiian Islands

October 4, 2025 | Coral Princess  
Roundtrip Vancouver

- » Roundtrip Toronto airfare
- » 1 night 4★ Vancouver hotel
- » 16 night cruise & taxes
- » **\$50 US** per person onboard credit

OCEANVIEW  
PER PERSON CAD  
including taxes

\$3999

BALCONY  
PER PERSON CAD  
including taxes

\$4399

### 11 Night Alaska Inside Passage

May 5, 2026 | Grand Princess  
Roundtrip Vancouver

- » Roundtrip Toronto airfare
- » 1 night 4★ Vancouver hotel
- » 10 night cruise & taxes
- » **\$50 US** per person onboard credit
- » **Ask about other dates!**

OCEANVIEW  
PER PERSON CAD  
including taxes

\$3199

BALCONY  
PER PERSON CAD  
including taxes

\$3899

### 10 Night 185th Anniversary!

Dec 8, 2025 | Queen Elizabeth  
Roundtrip Miami

- » Roundtrip Toronto airfare
- » 1 night 4★ Miami hotel
- » 9 night cruise & taxes
- » **\$50 US** per person onboard credit
- » **Ask about other dates!**

OCEANVIEW  
PER PERSON CAD  
including taxes

\$1899

BALCONY  
PER PERSON CAD  
including taxes

\$1999

SCAN ME

1-800-854-9664

info@cruiseplus.ca

cruiseplus.ca/toronto

New bookings only. Fares are per person in currency noted, based on double occupancy. Cruise, air, and hotel are capacity-controlled and offers may be withdrawn without notice. The hotel includes any taxes payable to departure, but locally payable taxes, fees, and options are not included. Amenities are for the first two in a stateroom only and based on double occupancy. Future cruise credits and supplier travel insurance may not combine with this promotion. Travel company terms and conditions apply – see their websites. CruisePlus reserves the right to correct any human or electronic errors. Ship's Registry: Holland America: Netherlands | Princess Cruises: United Kingdom & Bermuda | Cunard: Bermuda. CruisePlus Travel & Tours Ltd. Consumer Protection BC License # 3325.



RETO DURIET

St. Ursanne was named Best Tourism Village by UN Tourism in 2023. It has restaurants, a bakery, a butcher shop and, like a good medieval rest stop, a brewery.

# Keeping the Swiss on time

## SWITZERLAND FROM T7

country with a global reputation for punctuality.

We're in Switzerland's "Watch Valley," a scenic patchwork of forests, fields, jewel-toned lakes and historic towns bordering France and Geneva on the southeastern flanks of the Jura Mountains. The region has been keeping the country ticking for centuries thanks to horology, the painstaking craft of making clocks and watches. Famous brands, from Omega to Victorinox, are headquartered here, in cities like Delémont and La Chaux-de-Fonds, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

But for most visitors, the draws are the region's villages and small towns like Murten, where time seems to stand still. These medieval relics are an analog answer to big, busy cities like Zurich and Geneva, where most international visitors go.

And Switzerland being, well, Swiss, the efficient public transportation — trains, buses and boats — delivers travellers comfortably to these bygone treasures, with plenty of time en route to appreciate the journey. This is how we slow-travel from Delémont to Neuchâtel and deep into Watch Valley.

Trains deeply influenced time-keeping in this mountainous country. Engineers realized the importance of running on time, to avoid collisions and maintain schedules, and precision became a priority. Although operating trains takes meticulous logistics, riding them is a leisurely pleasure, heightened by the anticipation of seeing a granite peak or walled town draw slowly closer.

My first glimpse of St. Ursanne is from the train window. The tiny hamlet appears as a storybook cluster of red-shingled homes and businesses circling a church steeple, snug on the banks of the Doubs river. We walk the kilometre from the station to the imposing city gate like wayfarers of yore.

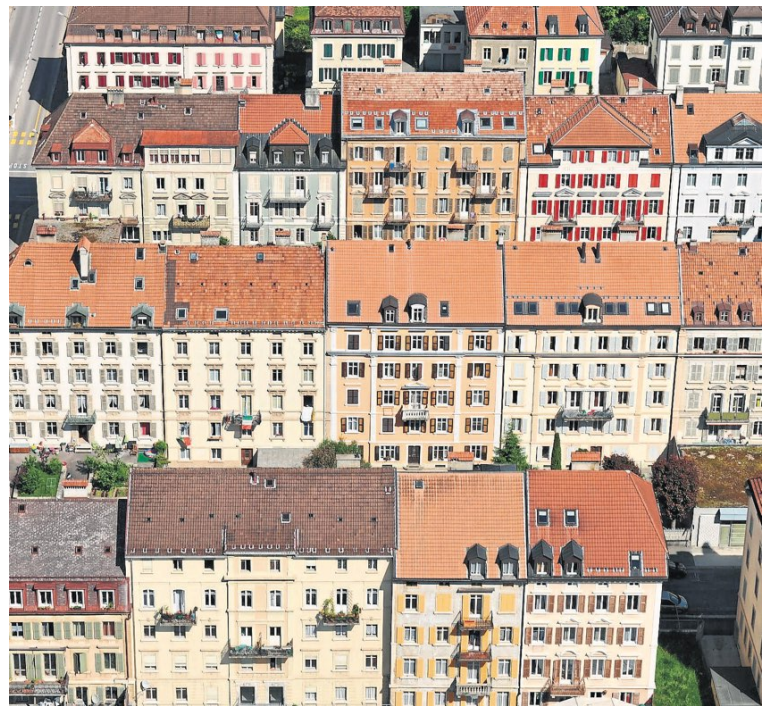
During the Middle Ages, some 3,000 pilgrims arrived daily to pray at the tomb of Ursicinus, an Irish monk who came to town in the 7th century. Today, we have the village's three cobblestone streets, and the 900-year-old church's secluded cloister, mostly to ourselves.

St. Ursanne was named Best Tourism Village by UN Tourism in 2023, in recognition of its medieval town centre, cultural heritage and commitment to sustainability. But outside of Les Médiévales, a festival held biennially in July, it remains largely under the radar. There are seven or eight tiny hotels in town, including the lovely, new Hôtel de la Cigogne, alongside a few restaurants, a bakery, a butcher shop and, like any good medieval rest stop, a brewery.



LISA KADANE

Before portable watches, towns like Neuchâtel relied on clock towers to keep everyone on time.



ALINE HENCHOZ

La Chaux-de-Fonds is considered the cradle of Swiss watchmaking. Even the townscape is orderly.



The Jura & Three Lakes region of Switzerland, also known as Watch Valley, includes "hidden villages" such as Auvernier.

SWITZERLAND TOURISM

Rumours of cold riverside beers draw me to a public beach along the Doubs. But the family-run Brasserie Tonnebière is on the far bank, so I settle for refreshment in the clear water of the languorous river. The afternoon stretches on without care as I float under a bright blue sky.

Equally as charming is Auvernier, a millennium-old town hemmed in by leafy vineyards on the shore of Lake Neuchâtel. Like clockwork, a train and bus deliver us to Auvernier's hilltop stop, with time en route to watch the passing fields and church steeples, or daydream about never driving a car again.

The town to our victory destination, Château d'Auvernier, feels like another step back in time. We pass snapshots of village life that belong on a faded postcard: pastel buildings with brightly painted shutters, public fountains adorned with flowers, a green-eyed cat perched imperiously on a stone fence.

One of Switzerland's oldest family-run wineries, Château d'Auvernier was founded in 1603 and is

located in a limestone castle. It's best known for a rosé called L'Oeil de Perdrix, made from Pinot Noir grapes, so called because its colour approximates that of a partridge's eye.

Cellar master Frédéric Droz tells us about harvesting grapes, fermenting juice and aging wine in French oak barrels. The process can't be rushed, but he often feels like he's fighting the clock. "We want always to go farther and do more than time allows," Droz laments.

That sentiment rings true on this trip, where each sleepy town unlocks stories from the past that point toward new-to-me destinations worth exploring.

In Neuchâtel, another watchmaking city, our historic walking tour ends by one of the city's numerous public fountains. Anne-Laure Pollet-Bolon, a guide with Neuchâtel Tourism, uses a key to open a secret compartment under the fountain's flower box. She pulls out a bottle of absinthe to share the famous drink of the Belle Époque, when the city

flourished and many of its grand limestone buildings were constructed.

While we sip the spirit, once banned in Switzerland for its high alcohol content and links to social disorder, she explains how it was invented in nearby Val-de-Travers (and not, as commonly believed, in France).

Inspired to learn more, the next morning I ditch the group and board a train for Môtiers, another ancient village, to reach the local museum, La Maison de L'Absinthe. Outside the train window, views of turquoise Lake Neuchâtel are soon replaced by green forests and fertile fields.

As the carriage rolls steadily up the lush valley, I reflect on the transportive power of even a short train ride, to take me from the present to the past. It's perhaps as close as I'll get to time travel, and it feels a bit like magic.

LISA KADANE TRAVELLED AS A GUEST OF SWITZERLAND TOURISM, WHICH DID NOT REVIEW OR APPROVE THIS ARTICLE.