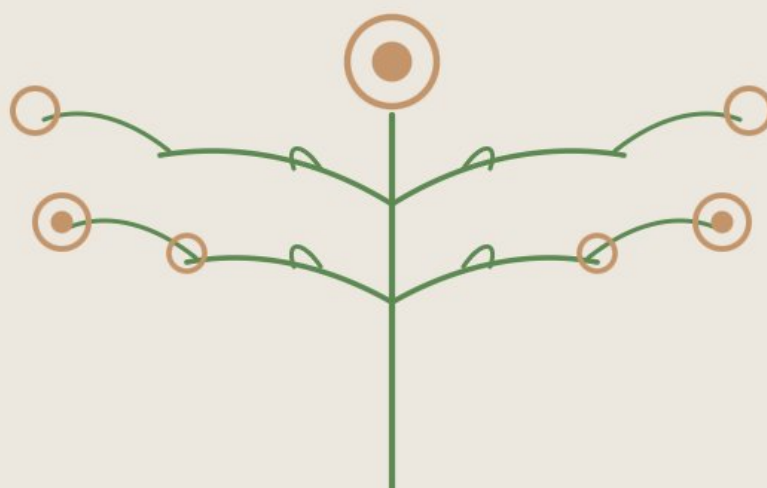




48 HOURS IN

Zurich

BLOOM WHERE YOU WANDER

WELCOME

GoingSolo.Life

Welcome to Zürich.

Zürich is Switzerland's largest city and its financial capital, but its identity runs deeper than banks and watches. The Limmat River splits the Altstadt in two. Lake Zürich opens to the south at the end of Bahnhofstrasse. The hills above the city offer views across the entire Swiss Mittelland to the Alps on days when the air is clear enough to see that far.

The city rewards the traveller who moves between its registers: the medieval guildhall streets of Niederdorf and the Lindenhügel on one side; the polished commercial boulevard of Bahnhofstrasse and Paradeplatz on the other; the post-industrial creativity of Zürich West in the evening. This guide gives you 48 hours built around how Zürich actually works.

How to Use This Guide

Read through once before you arrive — understand the geography of both sides of the Limmat.

Day 1 covers the Altstadt and Bahnhofstrasse — the medieval core and the commercial heart.

Day 2 moves to the Kunsthaus, the lake, and Zürich West — the cultural and after-dark city.

The ZVV day pass (Tageskarte) covers everything including lake boats — buy it at any machine.

Zürich is among the most expensive cities in the world. Budget accordingly.

Essential Quick Facts

Currency	Swiss Franc (CHF). Cards everywhere. ATMs give better rates than exchange desks.
Transport	ZVV network: trams, buses, S-Bahn, lake boats. 48h Tageskarte ~CHF 17.
Weather	Alpine climate. Warm summers, cold winters. Rain possible any month. One layer always.
Time Zone	CET (UTC+1) winter · CEST (UTC+2) summer.
Emergency	112 all emergencies. Tourist information: Zürich Tourismus at Hauptbahnhof.
Tipping	Not expected. Rounding up the bill is customary. 10% for outstanding service.
Cost note	Coffee CHF 5–7. Lunch CHF 25–45pp. Dinner CHF 50–90pp. Plan for Swiss prices.

DAY ONE

Day One

Altstadt · Bahnhofstrasse · Lakefront

Start on the right bank at the twin towers of the Grossmünster, walk through Niederdorf and across the river into the guild quarter, then south along the world's most expensive shopping street to the lake. Day One stays largely in the historic core — compact, walkable, and dense with nine centuries of accumulated civic life.

MORNING 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM**9:00 AM****Grossmünster Cathedral**

The twin-towered Romanesque cathedral on the right bank of the Limmat, built between 1100 and 1220. Ulrich Zwingli launched the Swiss Reformation here in 1519; the interior still carries the deliberate austerity he imposed. Climb the Karlsturm for the first panorama of Zürich — rooflines, the river, and the distant Alps on clear mornings.

INSIDER TIP

The tower climb is CHF 5 and takes eight minutes. Come before 10am for the clean low light and the least company. The view takes in both banks of the Limmat, Lake Zürich to the south, and the Uetliberg hill to the west.

10:00 AM**Fraumünster & the Chagall Windows**

Cross Münsterbrücke to the left bank and the Fraumünster — a 13th-century Augustinian convent church containing five stained-glass windows by Marc Chagall (installed 1970) and one by Augusto Giacometti. The Chagall windows are among the finest works of his later career: five tall lancets in blue, green, yellow, red, and lavender, depicting scenes from the Old and New Testaments.

INSIDER TIP

The windows read best on a morning with gentle light — the blue-dominant Prophets panel glows from inside. Photography without flash is permitted. The Giacometti rose window in the north transept is frequently overlooked and equally extraordinary. Arrive before the tour groups at 11am.

11:15 AM**Niederdorf & the Lindenhügel**

Walk north through Niederdorf — the cobbled right-bank quarter of bookshops, coffee houses, and the city's oldest restaurants. Cross back via the Rathausbrücke to the Lindenhügel: a shaded promontory above the left bank with one of Zürich's most photographed views down the Limmat to the Grossmünster. Allow thirty minutes to wander the Schipfe — a restored medieval guild quarter with workshops along the water.

INSIDER TIP

The Polybahn funicular from Central station to ETH Zürich runs continuously and is included in the ZVV pass. A 45-second ride to an elevated terrace with a clean view down the Limmat to the lake. The ETH terrace is free and takes four minutes total out of your morning.

AFTERNOON 1:00 PM – 7:00 PM**1:00 PM****Lunch: Zeughauskeller or Kronenhalle**

Zeughauskeller on Bahnhofstrasse: an 18th-century arsenal converted to a 200-seat beer hall with one of the best schnitzel and rösti menus in the city at honest prices by Zürich standards. Or Kronenhalle on Rämistrasse: Zürich's most celebrated traditional restaurant — Miró and Picasso on the walls, Zürcher Geschnetzeltes (veal in cream sauce with rösti) on the plate, since 1924.

INSIDER TIP

Zeughauskeller is the best-value lunch in central Zürich. The Züri Geschnetzeltes — sliced veal in white wine and cream sauce over rösti — is the dish to order. Kronenhalle is significantly more expensive but one of the few experiences in the city where the art collection and the cooking are equally the point.

2:30 PM**Bahnhofstrasse & Paradeplatz**

Walk south along Bahnhofstrasse — 1.4km from the Hauptbahnhof to the lake, one of the world's most expensive retail corridors. The department stores (Jelmoli, Globus) are worth entering for the architecture. Paradeplatz at the midpoint is the historic centre of Swiss banking: Credit Suisse and UBS occupy facing corners of the square as they have for a century.

INSIDER TIP

Sprüngli at Paradeplatz has the best Luxemburgerli (miniature Swiss macarons invented here) in Switzerland. The café upstairs is expensive; the ground-floor pastry counter is not. Buy a small box and walk the final stretch of Bahnhofstrasse to the lake. Do not eat in the Bahnhofstrasse restaurants.

4:00 PM**Lake Zürich & Bürkliplatz**

The foot of Bahnhofstrasse opens onto Lake Zürich at Bürkliplatz. ZSG lake boats depart from here — the standard tour takes 90 minutes around the inner lake with views of the Alps on clear days. Or walk the Seequai promenade south toward Zürichhorn. The Le Corbusier Pavilion at Zürichhorn is free to enter and worth 20 minutes.

INSIDER TIP

The ZSG lake boats on the Zürichsee inner lines are included in the ZVV Tageskarte (Zone 10). The Zürichhorn section has the Le Corbusier Pavilion — one of his final buildings, completed posthumously, small and precise. The lake view back toward the city in late afternoon is the defining Zürich photograph.

EVENING 7:30 PM – LATE**7:30 PM****Dinner: Frau Gerolds Garten or Hiltl**

Frau Gerolds Garten on Geroldstrasse in Zürich West: a summer garden restaurant in reclaimed urban space between railway viaducts — one of the finest outdoor dining atmospheres in the city, with a seasonal menu that works at every price point. Or Hiltl on Sihlstrasse: the world's oldest continuously operating vegetarian restaurant (1898), with a buffet format and cooking that does not feel like compromise.

INSIDER TIP

Zürich West between Hardbrücke and the Im Viadukt market hall has the most interesting restaurant concentration in the city after the Altstadt. Frau Gerolds operates May–October. In winter, Hiltl is the better anchor for the evening. The Im Viadukt arches themselves are worth walking at any time.

DAY TWO

Day Two

Kunsthaus · Seefeld · Uetliberg

The second day moves to the city's cultural institutions and its natural edges. The Kunsthaus Zürich is one of the finest art museums in Europe. The Seefeld neighbourhood has the best café-to-tourist ratio in the city. The Uetliberg rises above it all — Zürich's local mountain, reachable by S-Bahn in 23 minutes, with a panorama that makes the scale of the Swiss landscape legible in one view.

MORNING 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM**9:00 AM****Kunsthaus Zürich**

The finest art museum in Switzerland and one of the great European collections: medieval panel paintings through Monet, Picasso, Munch, and the world's largest Giacometti collection. The Chipperfield extension building opened in 2021 and more than doubled the space — the photography wing and the new Giacometti Foundation rooms are in the extension. Allow three hours minimum.

INSIDER TIP

*Book online at kunsthaus.ch — the extension sells out on weekends. The Giacometti gallery in the old building is the anchor: a dedicated room of his elongated bronzes in natural light. The Munch collection (including several major versions of *The Scream* era paintings) is largely overlooked compared to the Giacomettis. It should not be.*

12:00 PM**Kunstmeile & Seefeldquai**

Walk south from Kunsthaus along the Kunstmeile — a concentration of galleries and cultural institutions on Heimplatz and Rämistrasse — to the Seefeldquai lakeside promenade. The Seefeld neighbourhood is Zürich's most pleasant residential district: café tables on the pavement, the lake at the end of every cross-street, and the mountains visible on clear days from the waterfront.

INSIDER TIP

Kafi Deli on Seefeldstrasse for excellent cortado and a sandwich. Conditorei Schober on Napfgasse in the Altstadt (a fifteen-minute walk back) for the benchmark Zürich Kaffee und Kuchen: marble tables, Zürichertorte, newspaper holders. The house has been a confectionery since 1778.

AFTERNOON 1:00 PM – 7:00 PM**1:00 PM****Lunch in Seefeld**

Memories of China on Dufourstrasse: the most respected Chinese restaurant in Switzerland since 1975 — formal, precise, nothing to do with tourist-facing pan-Asian cooking. Or café lunch at Marktküche on Seefeldstrasse for a daily-changing market menu at lower price. Both are significantly better than returning to the Altstadt density for lunch on Day 2.

INSIDER TIP

The Seefeld neighbourhood has the best restaurant-to-tourist ratio in Zürich. Kafi Deli for coffee and a sandwich if budget is a concern. Memories of China requires advance booking at busier times — call ahead or reserve online.

2:30 PM**Uetliberg — Zürich's Local Mountain**

The Uetliberg is Zürich's home mountain: 871m above sea level, reached by the S10 train from Hauptbahnhof in 23 minutes. The summit panorama on a clear day covers the entire Swiss Mittelland to the Alps — Rigi, Pilatus, the Bernese Oberland, and on exceptional days the outline of Mont Blanc. The ridge trail to Felsenegg takes 90 minutes and ends at a cable car down to Adliswil and tram back into the city.

INSIDER TIP

The Uetliberg S10 train is included in the ZVV Tageskarte if you have a Zone 21 extension — worth buying. The ridge trail is the best walking option if weather holds. Do not attempt in poor conditions — the path becomes slippery on leaf-covered sections. The view from the summit in clear autumn air is among the finest urban viewpoints in Europe.

4:30 PM**Swiss National Museum (Landesmuseum)**

Adjacent to the Hauptbahnhof in a neo-Gothic castle built in 1898 — the comprehensive history of Switzerland from prehistoric alpine settlement through 20th-century neutrality. The armour and weapons collection is the best in the country. The Christ & Gantenbein extension (2016) is architecturally significant — worth seeing from the outside even if you skip the interior.

INSIDER TIP

The Landesmuseum is worth two focused hours. The medieval collection on the upper floors is more interesting than the ground-floor Swiss history overview. Free on Mondays; CHF 10 otherwise. Closes at 5pm — check current hours at nationalmuseum.ch.

EVENING 7:30 PM – LATE**7:30 PM****Final Dinner: Kronenhalle**

Kronenhalle on Rämistrasse: Zürich's most historically important restaurant, unchanged since the 1920s. Miró, Picasso, Giacometti, and Matisse on the walls; Zürcher Geschnetzeltes, wiener schnitzel, and one of the city's finest wine cellars on the menu. The dining room itself is a working museum of 20th-century Swiss-Parisian art world connections.

INSIDER TIP

Reservation essential at kronenhalle.com — book well ahead. Kronenhalle is expensive by any standard but is one of the few experiences in the city where setting, cooking, and history converge. The bar downstairs (Bar Kronenhalle) opens without reservation and serves lighter food alongside the wine programme.

Where to Eat

The No-Tourist-Trap Food Guide

BREAKFAST & COFFEE

Conditorei Schober

CHF 8–18

Napfgrasse 4, Altstadt

Café and confectionery since 1778. Marble tables, newspaper holders, Zürichertorte, strong coffee. Tourist-adjacent but the real article — one of the finest coffee house interiors in Switzerland.

Kafi Deli

CHF 5–12

Seefeldstrasse, Seefeld

Specialty coffee and sandwiches in the Seefeld neighbourhood. No tourist overlay, good cortado, honest pricing. The benchmark for a working Zürich breakfast.

LUNCH

Zeughauskeller

CHF 22–38

Bahnhofstrasse 28a

18th-century arsenal converted to a 200-seat beer hall. Züri Geschnetzelt, wiener schnitzel, rösti. The best value for lunch in central Zürich. Recommended: the Züri Geschnetzelt.

Hiltl

CHF 20–35

Sihlstrasse 28

World's oldest vegetarian restaurant (1898). Buffet format with global influences alongside Swiss classics. No compromise cooking — the quality is consistent and the format is genuinely novel.

Kronenhalle

CHF 45–80

Rämistrasse 4

Art-hung institution since 1924. Miró and Picasso on the walls; Geschnetzelt and schnitzel on the plate. One of the finest traditional Swiss restaurants in the country. Reservation essential.

DINNER

Frau Gerolds Garten

CHF 35–55

Geroldstrasse 23, Zürich West

Summer outdoor garden restaurant in a reclaimed railway space. Seasonal menu, exceptional atmosphere between the viaduct arches. The most enjoyable outdoor dining in Zürich. May–October only.

Memories of China

CHF 30–50

Dufourstrasse 1, Seefeld

Switzerland's most respected Chinese restaurant since 1975. Formal and precise — nothing to do with tourist-facing pan-Asian cooking. Book ahead.

Clouds

CHF 55–90

35th floor, Prime Tower, West

Panoramic views from 126m above Zürich West. Ambitious seasonal Swiss cooking. Better for the view than strictly the food, but both are above average.

BARS

Bar Baccarat

CHF 12–22

Ankerstrasse, Kreis 4

The best natural wine programme in Zürich. Small, unhurried room. The opposite of the banking district.

Bogen 33**CHF 8–14**

Viadukt arches, Kreis 5

Craft beer under the railway viaducts in Zürich West. Weekend evenings are the peak. Local crowd, honest pricing.

Hive Club**CHF 15–25**

Geroldstrasse, Zürich West

One of the best electronic music venues in Europe. Opens midnight, closes at 6am. Fri–Sat primary nights.

A Note on Eating in Zürich

Zürich is one of the most expensive cities in the world. Budget CHF 25–45 for a good lunch and CHF 60–120 for a serious dinner. Tipping is not expected but rounding up is customary. Tap water (Hahnenwasser) is exceptional — ask for it and save the markup on bottled water.

Navigating Zürich

Zürich's ZVV public transport network is comprehensive, punctual, and covers trams, buses, S-Bahn trains, and lake boats on a single ticket. The 48h Tageskarte is the correct choice for this itinerary — buy it at any tram stop ticket machine or at Hauptbahnhof.

Trams You Will Actually Use

Tram 6

Hauptbahnhof Kunsthaus ETH/Universität. The academic and cultural artery of central Zürich.

Tram 7

Hauptbahnhof Bellevue Zoo. The right-bank scenic route along the river.

Tram 4

Bellevue Helvetiaplatz Langstrasse. Connects the lakefront to Kreis 4 nightlife.

Tram 2/9

Bellevue Bürkliplatz Enge. Lake access and Seefeld connections from the centre.

S10 S-Bahn

Hauptbahnhof Uetliberg. 23 minutes to the summit. Included in Tageskarte with Zone 21 extension.

ZSG Lake Boats

Bürkliplatz Zürichsee inner lines. Included in ZVV Tageskarte within Zone 10.

Practical Tips

The 48h Tageskarte (CHF 17 approx.) covers trams, buses, S-Bahn, and lake boats — buy at any machine at tram stops or Hauptbahnhof.

Validate your ticket before boarding. Inspectors board trams frequently; fines are CHF 100.

Zürich's trams run until approximately 12:30am, then night buses take over. Night bus tickets cost extra.

Taxis are expensive. Uber operates in Zürich. Never take an unmarked taxi.

Zürich Airport (ZRH): Direct train from Hauptbahnhof in 10 minutes. Trains run every 10–15 minutes from Airport terminal.

Bicycles: Zürich has extensive cycling infrastructure. Nextbike rental available throughout the city.

Contingency

Backup Plans

Zürich in the rain is one of the most comfortable cities in Central Europe. The museum concentration in the Kunstmeile, the covered Viadukt market halls, and the traditional coffee house culture all function better in wet weather.

Museum Rietberg

Non-European art in a lakeside villa — African, Asian, Oceanic, and South American collections of genuine depth. The park surrounding the villa is itself one of the finest in Zürich. Free on Mondays.

Swiss National Museum

The comprehensive history of Switzerland from prehistoric alpine settlement to 1990. The medieval collection and the armour room are the highlights. The Christ & Gantenbein extension (2016) is architecturally significant.

Lindt Home of Chocolate

Kilchberg, 15 minutes by S-Bahn: the Lindt museum and the world's largest Lindt chocolate fountain. Surprisingly serious as a museum — the history of Swiss chocolate production is more interesting than the marketing suggests.

Kunsthalle Zürich

Contemporary art in Zürich West. The programme changes quarterly and the quality is consistently high. Worth checking what's showing before you arrive.

Polybahn + ETH Terrace

Free with ZVV pass. 45-second ride to the ETH Zürich elevated terrace with a clean view down the Limmat to the lake. Takes four minutes total; worth it whenever you're near Central station.

Zürich Zoo

One of Europe's finest — the Masoala rainforest dome is an enclosed tropical ecosystem, not a zoo exhibit. The Kaeng Krachan elephant park is the largest elephant facility in Switzerland.

Queue-Beating Strategies

Kunsthau: Book online at kunsthau.ch for the Chipperfield extension, especially weekends.

Swiss National Museum: No booking required. Free on Mondays.

Uetliberg: No queue. S10 runs every 30 minutes from Hauptbahnhof.

ZSG Lake Boats: No booking required. Board at Bürkliplatz. Most scenic in morning light.

Know Your City

Know Your Neighbourhoods

The districts that matter for your 48 hours in Zürich.

Altstadt Right Bank (Niederdorf)

KREIS 1 · MEDIEVAL CORE

Grossmünster, Niederdorf's cobbled lanes, the city's oldest restaurants and bookshops. Dense with history.

Altstadt Left Bank (Lindenhügel)

KREIS 1 · GUILD QUARTER

Fraumünster, the Schipfe workshop quarter, the Lindenhügel viewpoint. Quieter and more local than the right bank.

Seefeld

KREIS 8 · LAKESIDE RESIDENTIAL

Kunsthaus, the Seefeldquai lakefront, the best café-to-tourist ratio in Zürich. Where the city actually lives.

Zürich West

KREIS 5 · POST-INDUSTRIAL CREATIVE

Im Viadukt market halls, Frau Gerolds Garten, Hive Club. The city's post-industrial creative quarter. Best on Friday evenings.

Langstrasse (Kreis 4)

KREIS 4 · NIGHTLIFE & CHARACTER

Zürich's most mixed, most alive street. Wine bars, clubs, late-night food. Gentrifying for 15 years without quite gentrifying.

Enge / Wollishofen

KREIS 2 · SOUTH LAKE

Residential south lakeside. The Bürkliplatz flea market on Sundays (May–Oct). Quieter version of the lakefront.

Oerlikon

KREIS 11 · BUSINESS & CONVENTION

The convention centre and trade fair district north of the city. Worth knowing for business visitors; otherwise peripheral.

Wipkingen / Höngg

KREIS 10 · QUIET HILLSIDE

Vineyard walks above the right bank. Local Zürich, almost no tourists. The Röschibachplatz area for a local café.

Essential Tips

What Nobody Tells You About Zürich

CHF is not EUR

One Swiss Franc is approximately 1.05–1.10 EUR. Check the rate. Prices that look reasonable in euros are not — a CHF 32 salad at lunch is a CHF 32 salad.

Sunday closures are real

Most shops are closed on Sundays. The Hauptbahnhof shopping complex stays open. Plan grocery or pharmacy needs for Saturday.

The tram is the city

The ZVV tram network is comprehensive and punctual. There is almost no reason to take a taxi within the central districts. The 48h Tageskarte covers everything.

Bürkliplatz Sunday market

May through October, the lakefront flea market at Bürkliplatz is Zürich at its most relaxed and local. Antiques, records, vintage clothing.

Restaurants close midday

Many Zürich restaurants close between 2pm and 6pm. Plan lunch before 1:30pm and dinner after 7pm or face closed kitchens.

Tap water is exceptional

Zürich's tap water is among the finest in the world, drawn from Lake Zürich. Ask for Hahnenwasser at restaurants. Paying for bottled water is optional.

Zürich is extremely safe

One of the world's safest cities. Standard urban awareness applies but petty crime is rare. The main risk is arriving unprepared for the prices.

Book Kronenhalle ahead

Reservation essential — often 2–3 weeks ahead at busy periods. Kronenhalle bar is walk-in and serves lighter food alongside the wine programme.

Connections

Rail & Onward Connections

Zürich Hauptbahnhof is Switzerland's largest station and one of the best-connected rail hubs in Europe. Direct services to most Swiss cities run multiple times per hour. International services are direct or require one easy change. Switzerland's rail network is justifiably famous — trains are punctual, scenery is extraordinary, and the rolling stock is consistently excellent.

By Train

Zürich Bern	55 min IC/ICE direct Hourly
Zürich Basel	55 min IC/ICE direct Hourly
Zürich Lucerne	45 min IC direct Every 30 min
Zürich Interlaken	2h IC via Bern Daily
Zürich Geneva	2h 40 min ICE direct Hourly
Zürich Salzburg	4h 30 min EC via Innsbruck Daily
Zürich Munich	3h 30 min EC direct Several daily
Zürich Milan	3h 40 min EuroCity through Alps Daily — book the scenic route
Zürich Vienna	8h 30 min EC/ICE or Nightjet overnight Daily
Zürich Budapest	10h EC via Salzburg/Vienna Book Nightjet

The Zürich–Milan EuroCity crosses the Gotthard Base Tunnel and continues through Ticino to the Italian lakes. It is among the most scenically rewarding train journeys in Europe. Advance booking recommended at [sbb.ch](https://www.sbb.ch).

Zürich awaits.

You have the plan. You know which side of the Limmat in the morning,
which museum for the Giacomettis, and where to eat without paying bank rates.
The lake is at the end of Bahnhofstrasse. The rest is just showing up.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE: FINAL CHECKLIST

- Screenshot Day 1 and Day 2 itineraries for offline use
- Buy ZVV 48h Tageskarte at airport or Hauptbahnhof on arrival
- Book Kunsthaus extension at kunsthaus.ch — weekends sell out
- Reserve Kronenhalle for dinner — book 2+ weeks ahead at kronenhalle.com
- Check Frau Gerolds Garten opening dates (May–Oct only)
- Download SBB Mobile app for Swiss rail timetables
- Download Google Maps Zürich offline before you land

Your interactive map is one scan away.

All locations from this guide, colour-coded by day, open on your phone.

goingsolo.life/maps/zurich

GoingSolo.Life

TRAVEL ALONE. LIVE FULLY.

