



More than 40 interesting facts about Switzerland....

Did you know...

Nature / Geography

Switzerland has 48 peaks above 13'000 feet

The Matterhorn is not the highest mountain. The highest peak is shared with Italy – the Dufour peak

Switzerland is rich in water: the Rhine, Rhone, Inn and the region of Ticino all have their water sources in the Gotthard

The Gotthard separates the northern and southern parts of Europe

Switzerland borders 5 other countries: Germany, France, Italy, Austria and Liechtenstein

Lac leman (Lake Geneva) is the largest land locked lake in Western Europe

In Switzerland you are never more than 13 miles from a lake or river in which you can swim

Juf has the highest elevation of any European town

The largest edible chestnut forest in the Alps is in Malcantone near Lugano

The longest Glacier in the Alps can be found in Switzerland: the Aletsch glacier is more than 14 miles long and a UNESCO World Heritage Site

The highest Waterfall in Europe is the Murrenbachfall with a 2450 foot drop

Technology

Highest Train station in Europe: Jungfrauoch, 11'330 feet

Highest subterranean station in Europe: Mittelallalin Saas Fee, 11'482 feet

Highest cable car station in Europe: small Matterhorn, 12'739 feet

Only revolving aerial cableway in Europe: Titlis

Steepest cogwheel station in the world: Pilatus with a 48% incline

Steepest aerial cableway in the world: Gelmerbahn with a 106% incline

Steepest Posbus route in Europe: kiental in the Bernese Oberland with a 28% incline

Slowest express train in the world: Glacier Express

The only scenic train in the Alps that takes you over the pass instead of through a tunnel: Bernina, 7637 feet

Highest man-made cement dam in the world: Grande Dixence with a height of 935 feet

Longest pedestrian stairs in the world: 11'674 steps, 5577 feet of height difference, Niesen

Highest fountain in Europe: Jet d'eau, Geneva with 459 feet

Highest openair – passenger elevator in the world: Hammetschwand at the Bürgenstock, 525 feet high

The densest railway system in the world: 3107 miles of tracks

All major bridges leading to and from Manhattan were designed by Swiss engineers

Sport

Only country in the world with more than 1 km of hiking trails for each km² of area: 62'000 km (38'525 miles) of hiking trails total

20 Ski resorts that are situated at an elevation of 9842 feet or above

Longest ski run in the Alps: Klein Matterhorn-Zermatt

Longest, most famous and most beautiful World Cup Downhill Racing slope: Lauberhorn

Craziest freestyle competition in the world: Extreme in Verbier

The largest ice sculpture in the Alps: bob run in St. Moritz, it is the only natural ice bob run in the world

Horse racing on the snow for over 101 years: White Turf StMoritz

The best sailing nation in the world: Alinghi

Oldest ski racing competition in the world: inferno Race in Muerren, since 1928

18 hole golf course with the highest elevation in Europe: Arosa at 5905 feet

People

Mr. Louis Chevrolet hailed from La Chaux-de-Fonds

First person to circumnavigate the globe in a hot-air balloon was the Swiss Bertrand Piccard

European record astronaut: Claude Nicolier

Famous life-saving dog: Barry

Legendary storybook heroine: Heidi

First 007 girl: Ursula Andress

(soon to be) best tennis player ever: Roger Federer

Famous director of Neverland and the next James Bond movie: Marc Forster

Four time Academy Award winner: Arthur Cohn

Economy

Switzerland has the most types of bread in relation to the population. 1:250

Highest located vineyard in Europe: Visperterminen at 4265 feet

The first bar of chocolate was produced in Switzerland: François Cailler in 1819

First ready made “cup of soup” in the world: Julius Maggi, in 1889

The best selling watch brand: Swatch

World’s largest food and beverage company: Nestlé headquartered in Vevey

Largest Wellness and Spa-Resort in the Alps: Leukerbad

Most famous knife in Europe: Victorinox

The Swiss are the world’s largest consumers of chocolate: on average each Swiss consumes 22 lbs of chocolate a year

Number of wines produced in the Valais: 50 (the most wines grown in such a small area)

Arts and Culture / Customs

There exists a town with 400 inhabitants and 3 official languages: the town of Bivio near Savognin speaking Italian, German and Rhaetoromansh

Only Olympic Museum in the World: Lausanne

Largest collection of Paul Klee paintings in the world: Klee Museum in Bern

Longest covered bridge in the world: Chapel Bridge in Lucerne

Cheese - Food and Wine

Did you know that the real Swiss eat Fondue only during the winter?

Did you know that when you loose your piece of bread in the cheese, you have to pay for the next bottle of wine, sing a song or do something embarrassing.

Did you know the other very popular Swiss cheese dish, called Raclette, where cheese is melted and scrapped directly from the wheel of cheese.

Did you know that people in Switzerland raise their eyebrows when they see Americans eating fondue with fries and Coke.

Did you know that in Switzerland you can lease a cow, and during the time of the lease, you get all the cheese that is made from your cow’s milk.

Did you know that – while Switzerland is very famous for its cheese – it’s also the home of the first wine growing area in the world that has been made a UNESCO world heritage site. It’s the area called Lavaux between Montreux and Vevey on Lake Geneva.

Did you know that Switzerland doesn’t just have holes in its famous cheeses. It also has holes in its mountains, among them the world’s longest train tunnel through a mountain.

Did you know that Switzerland is famous for fondue and chocolate, but chocolate fondue wasn’t invented there.

Did you know that the Swiss also eat fondue with meat or vegetables instead of cheese, which they cook in broth or even wine?

Did you know that many Swiss have a class of Kirsch – cherry schnapps – with the fondue. The more adventures ones dunk their piece of bread in it before they load it with cheese.

Did you know that “fondue” is French and means “melted”. Even though it’s a French word, it’s called fondue in all four official languages of Switzerland.

Did you know that Gruyere is not just the name of the world famous cheese, but also the name of a wonderful town and a beautiful region close to the mountains and on the border of the French- and German-speaking parts of Switzerland.

General

Did you know that in 2008, Switzerland, together with neighbor Austria, will host the third biggest sports event in the world: the European soccer championship Euro 2008.

Did you know that yodeling started as a means of communications for farmers from one mountain to another?

Did you know that you’re never more than 15 miles away from a lake or a river, wherever you are in Switzerland?

Did you know the water in the streams and lakes of Switzerland is so clean that you can swim with your mouth open.

Did you know the size of Switzerland is less than a third of NY state - but if you could just flatten the Alps, it would be much bigger...

Did you know that in some Swiss villages in the Alps, the locals play a game called Cow Bingo. On a field with a grid of numbered squares, every participant bets on one or several fields. Then a cow is put on the field and the people wait... and wait... and wait, until the cow is doing her business. Whoever bet on the square she hit wins!

Did you know that Switzerland is only a sever hour flight away from here, and there are four daily departures with Swiss International Airlines from the tri-state area to Zurich and Geneva.

Did you know Switzerland has the highest and most beautiful mountains of the Alps.