

Lake Zurich Vacation Area

Leisure Activities at Zurich's Gate

Rolling hills, broad expanses, an idyllic mountain world, natural rivers and lakes, historic cities and villages – the Lake Zurich vacation area at Zurich's gate offers you natural beauty and a wealth of fun, sports and adventure. Whether swimming or pony trekking, a trip through a tunnel or an exuberant water slide, you'll find it all in this region.

This area was already known to travelers from the north in the Middle Ages. Lake Zurich lies on the Route of St. James, which has passed through Rapperswil on its way to Santiago de Compostela for hundreds of years. One crossed the lake at that time on a rickety, winding wooden footbridge with loose boards. Since the 19th century it has been possible to drive across the dam built at the narrowest point, between Rapperswil and Hurden, and a far better wooden footbridge now exists also. Built in 2001, the modern, still winding wooden footbridge is 841 meters long. A walk across is an adventure; one finds oneself in the midst of the lake and at the same time firmly anchored to both shores.

The Historic City of Rapperswil

The wooden bridge is a perfect addition to the attractions of Rapperswil-Jona, for the medieval cityscape, with its silhouette of towers, is evidence for awareness of tradition. At the same time, restrained modernity is everywhere. The old buildings crowd together on the bit of land that sticks out into the lake, like a peninsula. Because of its location, the city has always been a bone of contention among competing rulers, and the stories that have grown up about Rapperswil are thus interesting, strange and entertaining. They come to life during a city tour, past the Gothic town hall and the nested half-timbered houses with a view of the stocks, and inside the castle.

Sporty and Active on the Lake Zurich Trail

From Richterswil Horn over the Etzel to Pfäffikon's lower village: the "royal mile" of the newly opened Lake Zurich Trail includes mountains and valleys, agglomerations and provincial countryside. The landscape around Lake Zurich is not only one of the most sought-after residential regions in the world, it is also hiking country, offering a wealth of enjoyment and surprising contrasts. The Lake Zurich Trail, with its ten sections, shows the region in its most varied aspects. It leads through historic villages and small cities, castle parks and neighborhoods of villas, but also through unspoiled shore landscapes, broad stretches of woods and wild ravines. The SchweizMobil route of 124 kilometers is well marked (follow the signs with the number 84).

Steamboat on Lake Zurich

Shiny, polished lanterns, scrubbed planks, nostalgically turned-out salons and the rhythmic stamping of the perfectly oiled steam machinery as a background. A round trip on one of the historic steamships on Lake Zurich is a special experience, not least because one can watch the machinists at their work and the turning paddle wheels. Depending on one's appetite, one can be pampered on one of the various culinary trips, for example the BBQ or the after-work boat, or on Sundays with a generous brunch.

Go for a slide in the Largest Water Adventure Center in Europe

Crossing the lake, one can enjoy the Alpamare in Pfäffikon. The largest fun and adventure pools in Europe offer many attractions: a "Rio Mare" a hundred meters long with strong currents, a pool with waves a meter high, a warm iodine-salt pool, whirlpools and saunas. Ten slides of 1400 meters altogether pass through cylinders and into the water. They have names like Thriller, Niagara, Cresta Canyon or Cobra and you use inflatable bobs and mats to whoosh down on them. The latest slide is called the "Tornado" and features a number of crazy surprises!

A Slide without Water? Also possible!

In Atzmännig, near Goldingen, you can also slide – but not into water. Here the fun feature is a 700-meter long summer toboggan run that whizzes you around many curves. Up on the chair lift, down on the bobsled. A slides facility with tubes and "waterfall" slides, bungee trampoline and a nautical jet complete the fun for adventurers. In winter you'll enjoy the cozy ski area with three lift sites and eight kilometers of easy to medium slopes; very popular with families. A new snowshoe trail invites you to climb up to the Chrüzegg at 1,265 meters.

Petting Zoo: Knie's Children's Zoo

Parents and children know Rapperswil above all because Knie's Children's Zoo and the Circus Museum are must-sees for families in Switzerland. The children's zoo is associated with the winter quarters and "old animals home" of the Knie National Circus. Today it is a petting zoo, where children can pet lamas and camels, ride on elephants, and, on their birthdays, be kissed by a seal! Starting in spring 2008, a new camel section takes you into a Mongolian world of adventure. An area of 3,500 square meters contains a yurt, a robust nomad's tent, in the middle and stalls built in central Asian style for the camels. Here you and the camels can get acquainted. What you won't find in the children's zoo are predators and reptiles. "They are too dangerous for a petting zoo," explains zoo director Benjamin Sinniger. On the other hand, the animals that one sees in the

Eating and Sleeping as you like it

The Lake Zurich region offers a large selection of gastronomic possibilities, hotels and inns: the Design-Hotel with its gourmet cuisine directly on the lake is one, as is the farm with its dormitory where you sleep on straw and then feast on the hearty breakfast prepared by the farmer's wife. Scattered around the lake are a number of Gault-Millau restaurants, as well as simple inns with regional cooking and mountain restaurants with sunny terraces featuring splendid views of the Alps.

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EVENT HIGHLIGHTS AROUND LAKE ZURICH 2010

Ironman 70.3 Switzerland and Triathlon Challenge on June 6, 2010 in Rapperswil-Jona

On Sunday, June 6, 2010 Rapperswil-Jona will be the site of the IRONMAN 70.3 SWITZERLAND and the Triathlon Challenge for the third time. The center for this sport festival (including a school kids' triathlon) is near the Diners Club Arena. Around 2,500 athletes from more than 40 countries are expected in Rapperswil-Jona. More information at www.ironman.ch and www.triathlonchallenge.ch.

7th Lake Zurich slowUp, September 26, 2010

On the fourth Sunday in September the Riviera of upper Lake Zurich is always given over to those underway by means of their own muscle power. The 7th Lake Zurich slowUp reserves for itself the lakeside road from Meilen through Rapperswil-Jona to Schmerikon. In the towns along the way culinary, cultural and sports offerings create a unique festival route. Children can recover from the race during a colorful accompanying program for children in the sponsors' village in the Rapperswil old town. Further information: www.slowUp.ch

Further information:

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