

Winter activities

Good to know:

Cable cars and lifts usually open around 08:00 and close around 16:30 (opening hours may be extended on the weekends or when it is light longer, later in the season).

In most mountain top restaurants, picnics are not allowed unless indicated in designated areas.

In most locations, various types of lift cards are available including full day tickets, half day tickets, multiple fare tickets and occasionally early morning tickets.

Renting ski or snowboard equipment directly at the ski resort will often be less expensive and easier in terms of logistics.

In many resorts, you can hire a guide for an alpine tour, a snowshoe trek or other snow related activities. Check local tourist offices and websites.

For cross-country skiing, there are national daily, weekly or annual passes which can be bought in cross-country centers or tourism organizations in the regions where there are trails. These passes are valid throughout the country.

Most winter resorts are also accessible by public transportation, check www.sbb.ch. When purchasing your public transportation ticket, enquire about packages or other special offers (such as **Snow'n Rail**: train ride and lift tickets combined).

Also check each individual resort for:

- Discounts upon presentation of the Half-Fare Travel Card (**Halbtaxabonnement**): some ski resorts offer discounts on ski passes and some mountain resort restaurants offer discounts for dining there.
- Ice skating activities, especially on natural ice surfaces (see *Sports* chapter for more information on ice skating).
- Local ski schools.
- Up to date information on weather and snow conditions.

In addition to winter activities, summer activities are also available in the same areas (see *Excursions and other activities* chapter).

Pizol, Flums, Flumserberg, Amden, Kerenzerberg and St. Margarethenberg are part of the Heidilandregion. Resorts in Heidiland are located only about 1 hour away from Zürich. Please check the Heidiland website for more details.

www.heidiland.com

Canton Zürich (ZH)

Steg im Tösstal: Hörnli

1 133 m above sea level

This place is very often just above the clouds. Sledding and hiking offer you a gorgeous panoramic view of the Alps. The Berggasthaus Hörnli has great Fondue and Rösti. You can also hold private events there.

Sledding

Hörnli slope (length: 4.5 km), also for children. Full moon sledding tours possible until midnight (reservations need to be made in advance).

Hiking

There are paths available; however it is recommended that you ask at the Berggasthaus.

T Berggasthaus Hörnli, Hansruedi Häne, 8496 Steg

TEL 055 245 12 02

E info@berggasthaus-hoernli.ch

W www.berggasthaus-hoernli.ch

C Monday–Sunday: 09:00–nightfall (in good weather);

Sundays and Mondays: 09:00–18:00

Access: The Berggasthaus can only be reached on foot.

You can start at the following places: Steg (1 h 25min), Gfell (50 min), Hulftegg (1 h 15 min), Allenwinden (1 h 15 min), Fischingen (2 h 30 min), Bauma (2 h 15 min). These places are also accessible by public transport (either train or **Postauto** (bus)). For timetables, check under **Anreise** on the website above or consult www.sbb.ch.




Canton Schwyz (SZ)

Bennau-Rothenturm Ski area: Biberegg-Neusell

950–1 330 m above sea level


Biberegg-Neusell is a very small ski area in Rothenturm, close to Einsiedeln. It is especially suitable for small children learning to ski. The ski-lift is 1 500 m long. There

is a free children's ski-lift near the Valley Station close to the Beaver Creek restaurant, which is a very pleasant place to have a meal. There are 10 km of slopes and deep snow skiing is also possible.

-  Skilift Neusell AG, Postfach, 6418 Rothenthurm
-  info@neusell.ch
-  www.neusell.ch (also available in English)

By car: coming from Zürich drive in the direction of Chur, then follow Einsiedeln. In Biberbrugg, drive in the direction of Schwyz. After Rothenturm, turn left into Bennau village. From there you can already see the ski lift.

Restaurant Beaver Creek







-  041 838 04 04
-  www.beavercreek.ch

Brunni-Haggenegg (Mythen)

1 100–1 500 m above sea level





The delightful ski area of Brunni-Haggenegg is based at the foot of the majestic Mythen and offers 8 km of ski slopes. It is a small ski resort, and a very comfortable one if you have children. At the top of the Haggenegg in particular, you can enjoy a unique alpine panorama view. There are also 6 guesthouses, restaurants and numerous

Pistenbeizli (slope taverns), whose staff will take care of your well-being. The Swiss Snow Ski+Board school in the Einsiedeln region provides lessons for individuals and groups.

-  Skilifte Brunni-Haggenegg, Dorfstrasse 24, 8849 Alpthal
-  055 412 43 31
-  skilifte@brunni.com
-  www.brunnialpthal.ch
-  www.holzegg.ch (information for (snow-)hiking and (snow-)walking, in German)
-  www.brunni.com: see Hotels & **Beizli** (tavern) for pictures and addresses of the **Pistenbeizli** (tavern located on the slopes)

By car: It is only 10 km from Einsiedeln to the ski lift parking at Brunni-Haggenegg; coming from Zürich follow the signs towards Einsiedeln, and once in Bibberbrugg, drive in the direction of Alpthal-Brunni.

Swiss Snow Schule Einsiedeln

-  Postfach 423, 8840 Einsiedeln
-  055 412 86 17 or 055 412 86 14
-  info@swiss-snow-schule.ch
-  www.swiss-snow-schule.ch

Skiing in Switzerland



Like cheese fondue, chocolate and wrist watches, skiing is something inherently Swiss. Switzerland has the terrain, weather and top class facilities that justify its reputation as a ski Mecca. This writer has just returned from seven days of heliskiing in British Columbia (I mention this because the heli operation was founded and is run by a couple of Swiss guys!), and it remains my opinion that some of the best skiing in Europe and North America can be found on either side of the Swiss Alps.

I generally like to ski fast, very fast in fact. As a youngster my style developed out of necessity as I learned to ski on icy slopes in Eastern Canada and the US. I am very thankful that skiing in Switzerland is far different from the icy (and relatively short) slopes of my youth. Catering to all from beginners looking to learn the slow cruise through to racers and freeride skiers looking for adrenaline, skiing in Switzerland is difficult to beat in all respects.

Terrain (key ingredient #1)

Sometimes I ponder whether the Swiss border was defined by a skier. Any topographical depiction of the country provides some support to my assertion – Switzerland can

generally be characterized by its larger Alpine region to the South when compared to the fertile and somewhat more horizontal region to the North (skiers and mountaineers must eat). While historians would argue the border was defined by 'natural defenses', 'battles won and lost', 'dowries' and the 'lay of the land', I would assert that a skier took one long and hard look, then simply concluded that there was a need to give some of the mountains to the neighbors to avoid jealousy (and historical argument #2) and to ensure enough farmland to support both the skiing natives and tourists.

This is a rather obtuse way to make the following point: in terms of terrain, there are few areas with the high level of development and sheer density that Switzerland maintains for skiers. From any location worth living in Switzerland, you should be no more than one hour from a world class ski resort. Many Swiss towns seem deserted on winter weekends as everyone heads to the mountains. Day trips are very easy – load the car the night before, wake up and pretend to go to work, just turn left instead of right on the Autobahn, one hour later (+/- equipment changes and children) you can be on the lift heading to your favorite carving piste or off piste powder bowl.

Ski Facilities (key ingredient #2)

Generally, Swiss ski facilities are like Swiss trains: qualified by the adverb "extremely", they are reliable, efficient,