



# Switzerland, Germany & Austria with Laura

9 days | 11 days with Prague extension | Jun 22 2024—Jun 30 2024

Switzerland, Germany, and Austria—all mountainous, all momentous. From Lucerne's riverside promenades to Bavaria's natural majesty to Vienna's cultured cafes, this weeklong itinerary showcases the best of three sensational countries. The castle that inspired Sleeping Beauty's? You'll find it here, along with landscapes that spurred some of the world's finest classical compositions. And if you're interested in architectural paradise, take up the trip's extension to Prague and lose yourself among its whimsical spires.



## Your tour package includes

- 7 nights in handpicked hotels
- 7 breakfasts
- 3 dinners with beer or wine
- 6 sightseeing tours
- Expert Tour Director & local guides
- Private deluxe motor coach

## Included highlights

- Kapellbrücke
- Neuschwanstein
- Nymphenburg Palace
- Salzburg Cathedral
- Melk Abbey
- Belvedere Palace

## Tour pace

On this guided tour, you'll walk for at least 2.5 hours daily across mostly flat terrain with some cobblestone streets, hills, and stairs.

For more information, contact

<https://groups.goaheadtours.com/tours/switzerland-germany-austria-with-laura> | 816-377-4921

# Switzerland, Germany & Austria with Laura

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## Overnight Flight → 1 night

### Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Zurich today.

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## Swiss Alps → 2 nights

### Day 2: Arrival in Zurich & transfer to the Swiss Alps

*Included meals: welcome dinner*

Welcome to Switzerland—or, as they say in the local dialect, gruezi (“GROO-tsee”)! From the Zurich airport, transfer to your hotel in the Swiss Alps, where you’ll meet your Tour Director and the rest of your group. Unwind, then continue getting to know one another over a welcome dinner, served with beer or wine.

### Day 3: Sightseeing tour of Lucerne

*Included meals: breakfast*

Set out into lakeside Lucerne, one of Switzerland’s most populated cities, for a guided sightseeing tour and enjoy a taste of Alpine life—complete with clear views of Pilatus, Rigi, and the rugged ridges of other neighboring mountains.

- View the Lion Monument, a tribute to the Swiss Guards who sacrificed their lives in Paris during the French Revolution.
- Pass the hand-painted facades that line the cobbled streets of the Old Town—the traditional core of the city that dates to medieval times.
- Cross the famous Kapellbrücke (say it “ka-PELL-broo-kuh”), the covered wooden “chapel bridge” that spans the Reuss River, and view the adjacent Water Tower. Octagonal in shape and stone in build—with a complicated past as a sentinel’s post, state treasury, and prison—it predates the Kapellbrücke by roughly a century.
- See the Jesuit Church, the first large Baroque building of its kind to be built north of the Alps in Switzerland.

If you’d like, add an afternoon journey to the top of Mount Pilatus and explore Lucerne’s surroundings by ferry, cogwheel railway, and cable car. Alternatively, hang back in town and

treat yourself to some rosti. Pronounced “ROO-sty,” this dish centers on grated, fried potatoes—kind of like a Swiss hashbrown. Top it with eggs or sausage to elevate it from a satisfying snack to a hearty meal.

+ Mount Pilatus

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## Munich → 2 nights

### Day 4: Munich via Liechtenstein & Neuschwanstein Castle

*Included meals: breakfast, dinner*

Cross into Liechtenstein, a tiny Alpine principality that dates to the Holy Roman Empire. (And we mean tiny: With a population of just under 40,000 people, it’s the sixth-smallest nation in the world.) Visit the capital, Vaduz, and pass the royal family’s namesake castle. Perched atop a hill, it has watched over the region since the 12th century and serves as the royal residence to this day.

After getting your passport stamped, continue into the Bavarian Alps, a range of limestone mountains and valleys furrowed by retreating glaciers during the last ice age. Amid this expanse of rocky peaks and alpine forests, you’ll take a slight detour.

- Pause for photos of Neuschwanstein Castle’s unique mix of Gothic, Romanesque, and Byzantine architecture, and marvel at the fairytale retreat of “Mad” King Ludwig II.
- Revel in the trim fields, mirrored lakes, and soaring peaks of the Alps as you relax and explore during your free time, or grab lunch in Schwangau, the town below Neuschwanstein.

Travel on to Munich and sit down to an included dinner, served with beer or wine.

### Day 5: Sightseeing tour of Munich

*Included meals: breakfast*

Today, embark on a guided tour of Munich. Founded in the 12th century and boasting traditional and cosmopolitan appeal, the capital of Bavaria is the third-largest city in all of Germany. It’s also home to the original Oktoberfest—a massive Volksfest that, to this day, remains the largest beer festival in the world.

- Travel past the 18th-century Englischer

Garten—a gargantuan urban park that counts a Japanese teahouse and an open-air, Greek-style temple among its many monuments—and the fashionable Schwabing district, formerly home to Munich’s bohemian residents.

- Enter Nymphenburg Palace, the Baroque home to past Bavarian royalty, and walk through its elaborately carved halls on a guided tour.
- Walk from Odeonsplatz—Munich’s large central square, named after an adjacent former concert hall—through the well-manicured grounds of the Hofgarten to view the Residenz, once home to the Wittelsbach dukes of Bavaria.
- Explore Marienplatz, Munich’s medieval heart, and see the famed Glockenspiel clock. Maybe you’ll catch it as it chimes!

If you choose, join your group on a visit to Dachau—the former site of a notorious Nazi concentration camp—and gain sobering perspective on one of humanity’s darkest eras. If you’d prefer to stay behind, spend the remainder of your day at your leisure—perhaps sipping a pint of local ale at a biergarten.

+ Dachau

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## Salzburg → 1 night

### Day 6: Transfer to Salzburg & sightseeing tour

*Included meals: breakfast*

Depart Munich and head to Salzburg, Austria, a city famed for its churches and musical history. Upon arrival, a guide will lead you on a walking tour of its Old Town. Known locally as the Altstadt, Salzburg’s historic core has been recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1996, honoring its legacy as the confluence of Italian and German culture.

- Pass by the University of Salzburg—an institution of higher learning first established in 1622—and St. Peter’s Abbey. Operating in some form or another since 696, it’s the oldest continually operating monastery in German-speaking Europe.
- See a trio of famous squares: the Kapitelplatz,

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former site of the Cathedral Abbey; Residenzplatz, once home of the Prince-Archbishops of Salzburg; and Alter Markt, where the city's weekly market used to set up shop.

- Walk by the dashing yellow facade of the Mozarts Geburtshaus, the birthplace and childhood home of the virtuosic composer himself.
- Enter the richly ornamented Salzburg Cathedral. Although the current Baroque structure was built in the 17th century, the building's roots go all the way back to 774, when Saint Rupert founded the church atop the remains of an old Roman town.

Want to make plans for the evening? Serenade your senses by opting for tonight's dinner, served in one of Europe's oldest restaurants and accompanied by live performances of Mozart's music. Alternatively, relax in your hotel room and enjoy the sounds of the city.

+ Mozart Concert & Dinner

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## Vienna → 2 nights

### Day 7: Vienna via Melk Abbey

*Included meals: breakfast*

Travel east to the Austrian capital of Vienna, stopping along the way in the little town of Melk for a guided tour of its Benedictine abbey. Built over the centuries following its foundation in 1089, this mammoth monastery typifies the Baroque style and offers immaculate views of the Wachau Valley's stepped vineyards. Explore its pavilion, library, and chapel, then continue your journey through the Danube River Basin. Arrive in Vienna and settle into your hotel. To bookend your day with some revelry, relaxation, and a glass or two of wine, take up tonight's outing to the Prater—a historic amusement park in the heart of the city—before heading to a heuriger (a traditional Austrian tavern). Or, spend your evening strolling Vienna's beautiful boulevards at your own pace.

+ Traditional Viennese Heurigen Evening

### Day 8: Sightseeing tour of Vienna

*Included meals: breakfast, farewell dinner*

Coffeehouse culture. The Age of Empires. Symphonies and orchestras. Vienna has influenced world affairs for centuries; today, you'll enjoy the best of "The City of Dreams" on a guided sightseeing tour.

- Step inside Belvedere Palace, home to the world's largest collection of paintings by artist Gustav Klimt, and admire acre upon acre of impressive gardens.
- Travel down the tree-canopied paths of the Ringstrasse—Vienna's gorgeous Ring Road—passing the Austrian Parliament Building, Vienna State Opera, and Kunsthistorisches Museum as you go.
- See the grand Hofburg Palace. Once the seat of the Habsburg dynasty, it now serves as the official residence and office of the president of Austria.

Celebrate a memorable trip with your group at a farewell dinner this evening and toast your adventures with beer or wine.

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## Flight Home

### Day 9: Departure

*Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)*

Transfer to the airport for your flight home—or head to the Czech Republic, home of the pilsner and birthplace of famed author Franz Kafka, for two more days of history and fun in picturesque Prague.

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## + Prague extension

Why is Prague known as The City of a Hundred Spires? All you have to do is look up. You'll find the copper-clad points of St. Vitus Cathedral, the corrugated towers of Prague Castle, and plenty of others strewn throughout this city. And we haven't even mentioned the highlights at street level. Let a local guide show you around and gain a newfound appreciation for this Central European gem.

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## Prague → 2 nights

### Day 9: Transfer to Prague

*Included meals: breakfast*

Head for Prague by way of Bohemia, the Czech Republic's westernmost region. Oaks and spruces in varying shades of green, along with fertile fields populated by free-roaming livestock, typify this pastoral landscape. Drink it all in as you drive to the Czech capital. Upon arrival, unwind in your hotel before setting off into the city streets. If you choose, you'll

spend an evening atop the Vltava River, enjoying a dinner cruise. Otherwise, take an evening to yourself and meander through the city, snacking on sweet kolaches—pillowy discs of yeast dough loaded with fruity fillings—as you go.

+ Evening in Prague: River Cruise & Dinner

### Day 10: Sightseeing tour of Prague

*Included meals: breakfast*

Today, develop a deeper understanding of Prague's history on a guided sightseeing tour, led by a local guide.

- Begin with a visit to Prague Castle. Considered the largest ancient castle on the planet, this 1,150-year-old structure utilizes Gothic, Romanesque, and other architectural styles over its grounds. It isn't just a relic, either: Once the seat of Bohemian kings, it currently serves as the presidential residence.
- Admire the Gothic vaults of St. Vitus Cathedral, the final resting place of Rudolf II, Charles IV, and other Holy Roman emperors.
- Walk down to the red shingles and Baroque buildings of the Mala Strana district. Originally founded by royal decree in 1257, the "Little Quarter" stands opposite the Old Town, just across the Vltava. Pop into a local cafe for a cup of coffee before continuing down to the riverbank.
- Cross Karluv Most—the elegant Charles Bridge. Hewn from Bohemian sandstone and lined by statues of Catholic saints, it has connected Mala Strana to Prague's Old Town since the 15th century.
- Stroll through the Old Town Square to the Old Town Hall. There, on its southern wall, you'll find Prague Orloj—the city's famous Astronomical Clock. First hung in 1410, it's the oldest timepiece of its kind still in use, marking each passing hour with a mechanized "Walk of the Apostles."

Tonight, enjoy a farewell drink as you celebrate your trip with your fellow group members.

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## Flight Home

### Day 11: Departure

*Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)*

Transfer to the airport for your flight home.

# Customize your experience

Customize your tour by adding excursion options. Excursions offered on the same day will occur at different times, so there's no need to choose. Save \$10 when you book your excursion up to three days before your tour departs.\* Excursions requiring advance reservation only list this discounted price. Call or go online to customize your tour: <https://groups.goaheadtours.com/tours/switzerland-germany-austria-with-laura> | 816-377-4921

## Day 3: Mount Pilatus

From \$135.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (4.5 hours, departs in the afternoon)

This scenic excursion begins with a cruise on Lake Lucerne. After docking, ascend 7,000-foot Mount Pilatus on the world's steepest cogwheel railway. Legend holds that the mountain was named for Pontius Pilate, blown here by the devil after the Crucifixion. From the peak, the views of the Alps are stunning; on a clear day, you can see for 200 miles. Toward the end of your trip, you'll return to the base of the mountain via gondola. Please note: The cruise and cogwheel railway only run from mid-May through October. During the winter months, this excursion includes the cable car ride only. If the cogwheel railway is unavailable, you'll enjoy lunch on the mountain.

hours, departs in the evening, dinner included)

As the longest river in the Czech Republic, the Vltava traces a line from the Bohemian Forest up through Prague to the great River Elbe. Tonight, take to its serene waters aboard a cruise ship and marvel at The City of a Hundred Spires from its decks. You'll sail past Castle Hill and Prague's famous bridges, dining on authentic Czech dishes as you go. After having your fill of food and live music, dock once more and draw your evening to a close.

## Day 5: Dachau

From \$40.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (4 hours, departs in the afternoon)

Once a typical German town, Dachau served as the first Nazi concentration camp during World War II. Visit this somber site, which has since been transformed into a Holocaust memorial museum that serves as a testament to the strength of the human spirit. You'll take a self-guided audio tour through Dachau's poignant exhibits, which are echoed by the memorials to the victims that adorn the grounds.

## Day 6: Mozart Concert & Dinner

From \$155.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (4.5 hours, departs in the evening, dinner included)

Step inside the 1,200-year-old St. Peter Stiftskeller, located within St. Peter's Abbey, to enjoy an evening of fine dining and music. Mozart composed over 600 works in his short life, and tonight, you'll hear his masterpieces accompanied by opera singing as you sample local delicacies during a three-course dinner. Please note: The temperature in the room can be hot in the summer, therefore we recommend dressing accordingly based on the season.

## Day 7: Traditional Viennese Heurigen Evening

From \$119.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (4 hours, departs in the evening, dinner included)

After a brief drive, your first stop is Vienna's Prater Ferris Wheel. Take a breezy ride to the top, which offers a one-of-a-kind view of the city. Next, continue on to a picturesque village and sit down at local restaurant where you'll indulge in a festive night of music, food, and entertainment. Dinner will feature dishes typical of traditional Austrian heurigen, or wine taverns. During your meal, you'll have the chance to try some of the tavern's own locally made wine—the perfect addition to your cozy, Old-World setting.

## Extension excursion options

### Day 9: Evening in Prague: River Cruise & Dinner

From \$109.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (4

\*Optional excursions may be purchased up to three days prior to departure or while on tour. Pre-purchased optional excursions cannot be canceled within three days prior to departure or while on tour. Select optional excursions require advance booking and cannot be purchased or canceled after the advanced reservation deadline. Go Ahead Tours accepts payment by cash, Visa or MasterCard for optional excursions purchased on tour. Additional fees may apply for optional excursions purchased on tour. Excursions require a minimum number of participants to operate. Details and prices are subject to change. Due to seasonal hours of operation and availability, some excursions may not operate. If this occurs, you will be refunded any payments made for that excursion post-tour. Learn more at <https://www.goaheadtours.com/about/terms>.