



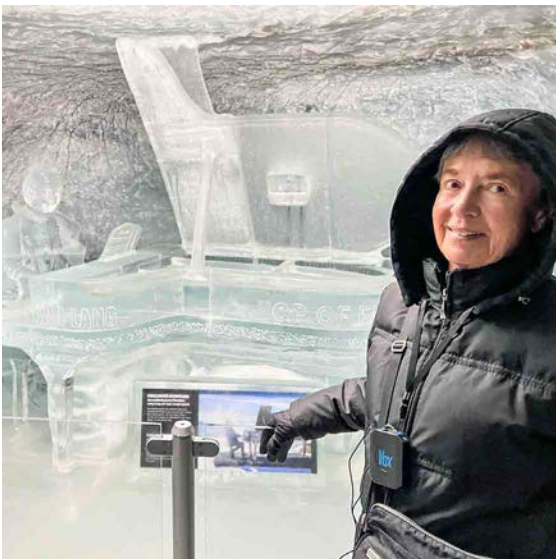
MIKE and JUDY go to **SWITZERLAND!**

Switzerland. The name alone can be the beginning of a series of thoughts going in many directions. It's the home of the Alps, as well as other mountain ranges. Hiking and skiing, with famous resorts hosting guests from around the world, are legendary. The financial and banking institutions are long-established and respected. Its position of neutrality has kept it out of both world wars. Swiss watch and clock makers are creators of exquisite and treasured timepieces. Its chocolate and chocolate confections are not only delicious, but elegant. And then, there is the scenery.

In size, California is nearly 10 times larger than Switzerland. Yet there are 2 mountains over 15,000 feet high, 16 are over 14,000 feet, 40 are over 13,000 feet, and dozens more are over 10,000. They can be shoulder to

shoulder, though, and the valleys between them hold enormous amounts of snow and ice compressed into glaciers. The landscape levels out to form the Swiss Plateau, in the middle of the country, with hills and pastures, lakes and farms.

How does a traveler manage to see enough? Our 12-day tour with Tauck included travel by coach and train, with trips up to view the Matterhorn and the Jungfrau on cable cars, and a funicular to a mountain-top restaurant. We arrived in Zurich, connected to Geneva, and were driven to Lausanne, where we met our group. Zermatt was next, for our first sight of the Matterhorn. It was magical, but it loved to hide its peak with clouds. A cogwheel train took us to the top observation point, for a view of the mountain and its neighbors.





Traveling to Lugano via the Simplon Pass we passed Italy's Lake Maggiore. In the Lugano region the official language is Italian. That's one of the four official Swiss languages (German, French, Italian, and Romansch). The food and atmosphere here are Italian, but the administration and organization are Swiss. The best of everything!

A quick stop in St. Moritz was on the way to the Jungfrau, where we spent a day going up to the "Top of Europe". We were at over 11,000 feet high, viewing other, higher, peaks. It was breathtaking! (No pun intended.) Tauck included a visit to the Ice Palace, where a slippery walk through ice tunnels in the glacier ended with drinks and snacks at the ice bar. It was very interesting, but perhaps rubber slip-on soles would have helped us feel more secure. Yes, there were handrails, but how do you enjoy champagne while holding tight? Everyone was safe, though, and then we had hot chocolate at the observation deck.

The tour ended with an overview of Bern, watching the famous astrological clock perform its routine at high noon, and then a stay in Lucerne. Walking across the famous covered bridge, and a deeply touching visit to the "Dying Lion" sculpture, made this city one of our favorites. Our final dinner was at a hotel across the lake, and a moonlight sail back to the hotel made us feel nostalgic.

You can see our whole trip at <https://www.mikeandjudytravel.com/2023-2Switzerland-01.htm>

