

Switzerland: Walks and Music at the Gstaad Menuhin Festival

<http://www.kudutravel.com/tours/gstaad-menuhin-festival>

11 – 17 August 2019

Each summer the Swiss Alpine town of Gstaad is the setting for the Menuhin Festival, the inspirational legacy of one of the world's greatest violinists, Yehudi Menuhin. The Festival, which has long been synonymous with musical excellence, is mostly held in the beautiful frescoed churches of the Saanenland region of the Swiss Bernese Oberland. During our week-long visit, we attend 4 Festival concerts.

Based in an exceptional 5-star hotel in the south-facing village of Schonried, overlooking Gstaad, we enjoy gentle morning walks in the high pastures, accessed by using the excellent *gondelbahns*, chairlifts, mountain railway and local bus services. In fine weather, the views are truly superb with a panorama of much of the Alps.

In the afternoons, there is time to relax on the terrace, swim in one of the 2 heated pools or shop in the world class boutiques of Gstaad. Before a concert performance, we have an early dinner then a short vehicle transfer to the concert venue, returning to the hotel for cheese and dessert. There are some delicious Swiss wines to try, such as light, flowery Fendant made with the Chasselas grape or Oeil de Perdrix AOC, a Pinot Noir.

HIGHLIGHTS of our Gstaad Menuhin Festival and walking tour include:

- Attending 4 concerts of the internationally renowned Gstaad Menuhin Festival in the frescoed churches of the Bernese Oberland
- Daily walks - undemanding, and reached by cable car or gondola - in outstanding Alpine scenery
- Staying throughout the trip in one 5-star hotel, with impeccable Swiss service and delicious meals and wines
- Afternoons to relax, by the pool or on the sun terrace, before the evening performances

Guests' comments on this trip:

'Altogether a lovely holiday. Excellent spa hotel. Delicious food which included appetizing choice of dishes for lactose intolerance. Rooms had beautiful mountain views which could also be enjoyed on the high pasture walks. Concerts were a wonderful memorable experience.'

'One of the many perks of this trip was being settled in a five star hotel for the duration of the trip, not living out of a suitcase, and yet still being able to hike among the many slopes where every turn in the trail revealed to us a new and majestic vista.'

Itinerary

DAY 1

D included

We meet at Geneva airport and board the train from the airport to Montreux on the lake. We change onto the charming mountain railway that chugs up through a spectacular Alpine landscape to the village of Schonried – definitely the way to arrive! After settling into our 5-star hotel, noted for its Alpine chic and impeccable service, there is time for a

swim or a stroll. Dinner is served in the pretty restaurant with a large open-air terrace. Perhaps we shall try the sought-after fish, Omble Chevalier, a delicate lake Char.

DAY 2

B, L, D included

For our first walk, a *gondelbahn* whisks us up the Rellerli mountain (1,833 m), from where we take easy paths with astonishing views over to the Quille du Diable and les Diablerets (3,209 m, 1.5 hrs). After a simple picnic, we can either walk back down to Schonried following a winding mountain track, (approx. 2 hours) or descend by *gondelbahn* with time to swim in the delightful hotel pools, suitable for all weather use as they are heated and partly covered.

DAY 3

B, L, D included

A short train ride to the Alpine village of Zweisimmen (948 m) enables us to access Rinderberg (2,011 m) by *gondelbahn*. Our glorious high level walk (3.5 hrs) traverses the meadows, affording splendid mountain vistas. After contouring the Hornberg, we return to the valley by the Horneggli lift. Tonight, we dine on the hotel terrace, with an opportunity to sample wild mushrooms and trout, followed by the spectacular cheeseboard including such cheeses as Höbelkase, Sbrinz and Appenzeller.

DAY 4

B, L, D included

We take the bus to Launen and follow delightful tracks and paths through fields and forests up to the magnificent Launensee, situated at 1,381 m (2 hrs). After a light lunch in the local restaurant, we walk around Launensee and then choose either to return directly to Gstaad by bus, or to walk through the broad valley back down to Launen.

DAY 5

B, L, D included

From the charming village of Gsteig, we walk for about half an hour to reach the Sanetsch lift. Exiting the lift at 2,062 m we find ourselves in true alpine landscape with incredible views and amazing geology. On our 3-hour walk, we circumnavigate Lake Sanetsch, our path bordered by the most incredible array of wildflowers.

DAY 6

B, L, D included

After another delicious breakfast on the sunny terrace, we follow the scenic *panoramaweg* down to Gstaad. Just beyond the village, we take the Wispile *gondelbahn* and ascend to the second station at 1,907 m. We enjoy truly spectacular views as we follow an easy track along a rounded ridge, slowly descending through pastures with the Spitzhorn massif ahead. We picnic, then make our way back to the *gondelbahn* and return to our hotel, to prepare for our final concert of the week and to toast our memorable week together.

DAY 7

B included

After a leisurely breakfast and a swim in the pool, we take the train back to Montreux and transfer to the Geneva airport rail service and our flights home.

Activity Level

Standard

5 walking days, 2 - 3.5 hours daily. Lightweight boots with a proper gripping sole and good

ankle support are essential and walking poles/sticks are helpful.

Temperatures

August temperatures in Switzerland range between 16°C and 26°C during the day (though the direct sun can feel warmer), with cooler evenings. It is cooler at altitude.

Accommodation

- 6 nights in a 5-star hotel, with impeccable Swiss service and delicious meals and wines

Trip Price, per person sharing

£3,135.75 until 10th November 2018

£3,220.50 until 10th February 2019

£3,305.25 until 10th May 2019

£3,390 after 10th May 2019

<https://www.kudutravel.com/faq#discounts>

£0 single room supplement or **£640** double for single supplement

£600 deposit per person

PLEASE NOTE THAT **EARLY BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL** FOR MUSIC AND OPERA TRIPS

Kudu Travel reserves a block of seats for each performance, approximately 1 year in advance, and unsold seats will be released in mid-May 2019.

Late bookings will be subject to an administrative fee of £30 per person. In addition, please be aware that it may not be possible to retrieve seats in the same category, or indeed, to obtain any tickets at all for sold out performances.

Caveat

The performances described are (very rarely) subject to change by the organizers. Actual activities or their order may therefore vary from those described in the itinerary.

Price Includes

- Accommodation for Days 1 through 7, on a twin shared basis
- Meals (with beer/soft drinks at lunches and wine at dinners) as listed in the notation
- Land transportation by train, *gondelbahn*, chairlift, hotel/festival bus and mountain railways, as described
- Top category tickets for 4 Menuhin Festival concerts
- Entrance and sightseeing fees, as described
- Gratuities for hotel and restaurant staff (appreciation for tour leaders is discretionary)

Price does not Include

- Flights to and from Geneva, Switzerland
- Trip cancellation, medical or other insurance
- Immunisations, prescriptions or other medical requirements
- Passport, visa and health documentation
- Personal expenses (laundry, alcohol, besides beer with group lunches & wine with group dinners, free time activities, etc.)
- Meals noted as excepted in the daily notation
- Transport and transfer of excess baggage
- Swiss departure tax, if any

VALUE FOR MONEY - SO MUCH IS INCLUDED

On Kudu trips, you will only need money for postcards, presents to take home, the odd G & T or an irresistible ice cream. Festival and opera tickets, museum and gallery entrances, National Park fees, all meals (with a very few exceptions specified in individual itineraries), wine with lunch and dinner, access to specialist books carried by the guides, gratuities for porters and hotel and restaurant staff, boat rides, train trips, internal flights, wine tastings, 4WDs with drivers, the services of skilled local guides and trackers etc. are ALL INCLUDED in the cost of your holiday.

We are confident that, like previous very satisfied guests, you will discover that our tours give you excellent value for money.

Visa and Health Requirements

Visitors from the EU, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand currently require a valid passport, but not a visa, for entry to Switzerland. If you are a national of any other country, please check visa regulations with your nearest Embassy of Switzerland.

At present, there are no specific and compulsory health requirements for entry to Switzerland. Residents of countries in the EU can only claim free (emergency) medical treatment in Switzerland by presenting their European Health Insurance Card (EHIC).

Insurance

It is essential, and a condition of booking, that you protect yourself with a suitable travel insurance policy as soon as you book a trip. We can arrange comprehensive cover for UK residents. For further details, please see our website or ask our office.

Size of Party

This trip will run with a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 14 guests.