Lucerne, a compact city in Switzerland known for its preserved medieval architecture, sits amid snowcapped mountains on Lake Lucerne. Its colorful Altstadt (Old Town) is bordered on the north by 870m Museggmauer (Musegg Wall), a 14-century rampart. The covered Kapellbrücke (Chapel Bridge), built in 1333, links the Aldstadt to the Reuss River's right bank.

The nearby Rigi and Pilatus mountains offer skiing and hiking. The Museggmauer's 9 medieval watchtowers are connected by walkways and offer views of the lake, mountains and river. Steamships take sightseers out on Lake Lucerne, and a cogwheel railway, believed to be the world's steepest, runs through vertical rock walls up Mt. Pilatus. The Rosengart Collection highlights Paul Klee and Picasso. Architect Jean Nouvel’s modernist Kultur und Kongresszentrum (KKL Luzern) is a waterfront center for the performing arts, notably symphonic music.

Lugano is a city in southern Switzerland’s Italian-speaking Ticino region. Its Swiss-Mediterranean mix of cultures is closely related to that of Italy’s northern Lombardy region. This mix is reflected in its architecture and cuisine. The city stands on the northern shore of glacial Lake Lugano, surrounded by mountains. Its main square, Piazza della Riforma, is ringed with pastel-colored, neoclassical palazzi.

The medieval Church of St. Mary of the Angels is renowned for its frescoes by Bernardino Luini. San Lorenzo Cathedral has Renaissance doorways, a baroque interior and views over the red-tile roofs of Old Town, where chic boutiques line pedestrian streets. The Museo Cantonale d’Arte displays regional 19th- and 20th-century art, along with works by masters like Renoir and Degas. A lakefront promenade, the Lungolago, is flanked by trees, sculptures and gardens. Funiculars ascending Monte Brè and Monte San Salvatore lead to panoramic views and a network of hiking and mountain-biking trails.

Geneva is a city in Switzerland that lies at the southern tip of expansive Lac Léman (Lake Geneva). Surrounded by the Alps and Jura mountains, the city has views of dramatic Mont Blanc. Headquarters of Europe’s United Nations and the Red Cross, it’s a global hub for diplomacy and banking. French influence is widespread, from the language to gastronomy and bohemian districts like Carouge.

A signature site is the Jet d’Eau fountain, which shoots up 140m above Lake Geneva. On the Rhône River’s Left Bank, the cobbled Old Town features the Jardin Anglais’ landscaped Flower Clock, the Reformation bastion St. Pierre Cathedral and cafe-lined square Place du Bourg-de-Four. High-end Swiss watches and chocolate are staples of the city center’s luxury shops. The river's Right Bank is home to parks and museums such as the Musée d’Art et d’Histoire, with an expansive collection of European art and archaeological objects. Les Pâquis is a neighborhood with funky bistros, nightclubs and boutiques.

Lake Thun is an Alpine lake in Switzerland’s Bernese Oberland region. Its shore is dotted with towns, including Thun, and Romanesque churches. In Thun’s old town, 12th-century Thun Castle houses a museum exhibiting prehistoric and medieval artifacts. To the south, Schadau Park has the Thun Panorama, a 19th-century 360-degree painting of the town. Farther south is Spiez Castle, with furnished 15th-century courtrooms.

On the eastern shore of the lake, St. Jacob’s Trail leads to St. Beatus Caves, in the interior of the Niederhorn Massif. These limestone grottos feature a prehistoric settlement and the cell of St. Beatus, a monk who, according to legend, defeated an ancient dragon. The steep, pyramid-shaped Niesen Mountain, accessible by funicular, has trails, as well as views over the Alps, the lake and Simmen Valley. Other hiking areas include Justistal Valley, on the north shore. Aeschi, Heimenschwand and Heiligenschwendi are nearby ski resorts. Sailing and surfing are popular summer activities on the lake.

**Chillon Castle** Lakeside castle with underground vaults & 4 great halls, home to exhibitions & cultural events. **Chillon Castle** ([French](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_language): *Château de Chillon*) is an island [castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castle) located on [Lake Geneva](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Geneva) (Lac Léman), south of [Veytaux](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Veytaux) in the canton of [Vaud](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaud). It is situated at the eastern end of the lake, on the narrow shore between [Montreux](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montreux) and [Villeneuve](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villeneuve,_Vaud), which gives access to the [Alpine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alps) valley of the [Rhône](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rh%C3%B4ne). Chillon is amongst the most visited castles in [Switzerland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Switzerland) and Europe.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chillon_Castle#cite_note-1)

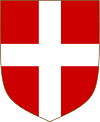
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**History**

Chillon began as a Roman outpost, guarding the strategic road through the [Alpine passes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Principal_passes_of_the_Alps).[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chillon_Castle#cite_note-2) The later history of Chillon was influenced by three major periods: the Savoy Period, the Bernese Period, and the Vaudois Period.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chillon_Castle#cite_note-3)

**Savoy period**

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Arms_of_the_House_of_Savoy.svg)

Arms of the House of Savoy

The oldest parts of the castle have not been definitively dated, but the first written record of the castle is in 1005.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chillon_Castle#cite_note-4) It was built to control the road from Burgundy to the [Great Saint Bernard Pass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Saint_Bernard_Pass)[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chillon_Castle#cite_note-5) From the mid 12th century, the castle was summer home to the [Counts of Savoy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_of_Savoy), who kept a fleet of ships on Lake Geneva. The castle was greatly expanded in 1248[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chillon_Castle#cite_note-6) by [Peter II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_II_of_Savoy).[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chillon_Castle#cite_note-FOOTNOTECox196720-7)

**Chillon as a prison**

During the 16th century Wars of Religion, it was used by the dukes of Savoy to house prisoners. Its most famous prisoner was probably [François de Bonivard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_de_Bonivard), a [Genevois](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annecy) monk, prior of St. Victor in [Geneva](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva) and politician who was imprisoned there in 1530 for defending his homeland from the dukes of Savoy.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chillon_Castle#cite_note-8)

**Bernese period**

Over his six-year term, de Bonivard paced as far as his chain would allow, and the chain and rut are still visible. He was rescued in 1536 by his countrymen and Bernese, who took the castle by force. The prison was residence for the Bernese bailiff until Chillon was converted into a state prison in 1733.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chillon_Castle#cite_note-9)

**Vaudois period**

In 1798, the French-speaking canton of [Vaud](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaud) drove out the German-speaking [Bernese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bern) authorities and declared the [Lemanic Republic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lemanic_Republic). The Vaudois invited in French troops to help them maintain autonomy from the other Swiss. When the French moved in and occupied, Chillon was used as a munitions and weapons depot.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chillon_Castle#cite_note-10)

**Today**

Today, Chillon is currently open to the public for visits and tours. According to the castle website, Chillon is listed as "Switzerland's most visited historic monument".[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chillon_Castle#cite_note-11) There is a fee for entrance and there are both parking spaces and a bus stop nearby for travel. Inside the castle there are several recreations of the interiors of some of the main rooms including the grand bedroom, hall, and cave stores. Inside the castle itself there are four great halls, three courtyards, and a series of bedrooms open to the public. One of the oldest is the *Camera domini*, which was a room occupied by the [Duke of Savoy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duke_of_Savoy) - it is decorated with 14th Century [medieval](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medieval) [murals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murals).[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chillon_Castle#cite_note-12)

**Popular culture**

Chillon was made popular by [Lord Byron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Gordon_Byron,_6th_Baron_Byron), who wrote the poem [*The Prisoner Of Chillon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Prisoner_Of_Chillon) (1816) about [François de Bonivard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_de_Bonivard). Byron also carved his name on a pillar of the dungeon.

The castle is also one of the settings in [Henry James](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_James)'s novella [*Daisy Miller*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daisy_Miller) (1878).

Chillon is also well known to be the castle in the Disney animated film [*The Little Mermaid*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Little_Mermaid_%281989_film%29).[[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chillon_Castle#cite_note-13)