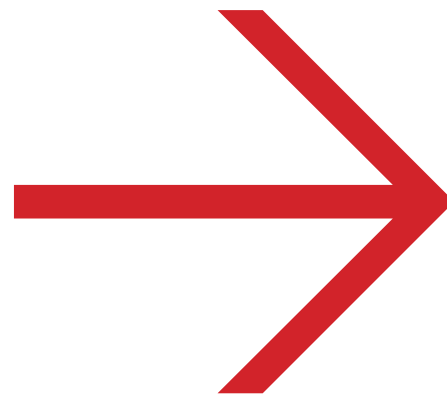


# SWITZERLAND

# 2017-18



**BASEL**  
**BERNE**  
LAUSANNE  
LUCERNE  
LUGANO  
ST GALLEN  
**SION**  
**THUN**  
**ZÜRICH**



Berne

Dominated by **FC Basel** since 2010, the **Swiss Super League** is wide open in 2017-18. Recent three-time runners-up **Young Boys of Berne** are currently in the box seat for a first title since 1986.

**Basel** is the hotbed of Swiss football, its **St Jakob Park**, known by all as the 'Joggeli', providing the fieriest atmosphere for the Swiss national team as well as FCB. The other populist side is **FC Zürich**, who share the **Letzigrund** stadium with record champions **Grasshoppers**. Once considered

footballing royalty, 'GC' now attract gates of well under the league average of 11,000.

**St Gallen** have long overtaken Grasshoppers as top dogs in Switzerland's far north-east, up by the German border. Like several others, **FCSG** play in a new-build stadium.

Some, such as **Lausanne**, **Lucerne**, **Lugano** and **Thun**, have gorgeous Alpine backdrops, within reach of a lake served by sightseeing boats.

**Sion**, capital of the Valais, home canton of disgraced ex-FIFA boss Sepp Blatter, is one of two current top-tier clubs from French-speaking Switzerland. With Lugano representing Italianate Ticino, the ten-team Swiss Super League is a microcosm of Switzerland's (mainly) three-language divide.

Supporters from six teams chant in the same quirky form of Alemannic German that created the universal mantra to back the national team, 'Hopp Schwiiz!!'. We're not in Hamburg anymore, Toto.



Letzigrund, Zürich



The Great Escape, Lausanne

Like in Scotland, the modest size of the league means that teams meet each other more than once home and away. This four-game fixture set-up has been looked at by the Swiss Football League, worried by the Basel monopoly and low gates. Unlike in Scotland, the season isn't split after Christmas. In 2017, Basel won the title with six games to spare.

In addition, for 2018-19, the Swiss champions do not gain an automatic slot in the group stage of the Champions League. Local neutrals welcomed Berne's early lead in 2017-18, bringing competition and variety.

For foreign neutrals, away from the big two in Basel and Berne, Swiss football is a quaint throwback. No, it's not cheap, but then nothing in Switzerland is. The beer will be decent, the *cervelat* sausage too.

## Station to station

Switzerland is well served by budget airlines, with hubs in **Basel**, **Geneva** and **Zürich**. Connecting all major towns, **Swiss Rail** ([sbb.ch/en/home.html](http://sbb.ch/en/home.html)) offers **Supersaver** tickets online.



Letzigrund, Zürich

Those paying full fare can at least take advantage of the **City-Ticket** scheme that incorporates urban transport at your destination and/or setting-off point.

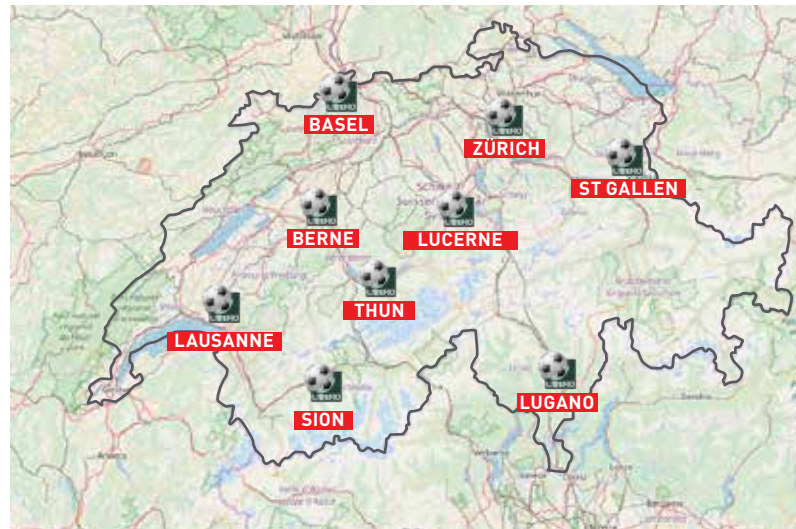
Areas not covered by rail are served by **PostBus** ([www.postauto.ch/en](http://www.postauto.ch/en)), regional buses run by the Swiss Post Office. Some are also the main transport provider in smaller towns, such as **Thun**. Larger cities have a tram network.

Swiss **motorways** require drivers to buy an **annual tax disc** (*vignette*) of SF40, valid from December 1 of the previous year to January 31 of the following one. They are sold at petrol stations, post offices and customs posts.

## Tables & trophies

The **Swiss Super League** consists of ten teams who play each other home and away twice. As of 2017-18, the winners no longer gain automatic admission into the group stage of the Champions League but must enter at the play-off round stage.

Super League runners-up join the second qualifying round. The third-placed side goes into the Europa League third qualifying round, the fourth-placed, the second qualifying round. Unless the winners of the **Swiss Cup** have already qualified for the Champions League, then they go into the group stage of the Europa League.



The last-placed team from the top division drops into the second-tier **Challenge League**. Also consisting of ten teams who play each other home and away twice, the Challenge League currently includes **FC Vaduz** from **Liechtenstein**, who can qualify for the Europa League by winning the national cup organised by the tiny principality.

The winners of the Challenge League swaps places with the lowest side from the Super League, with no play-off system in place. Similarly, the lowest-placed team in the second tier demotes to the third rung, the **Promotion League**, whose 16 teams face each other on the traditional home-and-away basis. The reserve sides of top clubs such as Basel and

FC Zürich cannot gain promotion to the Challenge League – otherwise, the winners go up.

The bottom two clubs of the Promotion League demote to the fourth-tier **1.Liga**. Their replacements are decided by play-off, as the 1.Liga (aka 1.Liga Classic or Erste Liga, Première Ligue, Prima Lega) comprises three regional groups, roughly French-speaking West, Central (German) and East (German, Italian and Liechtenstein). The top two from each of these divisions go forward to the eight-team play-off round, accompanied by the two best third-placed finishers. Play-offs are home-and-away, the semi-finals producing four winners, the finals two.



Lugano

The bottom two from each regional division of the 1.Liga Classic demote to the amateur **2.Liga Interregional**, currently consisting of six regional groups. Each winner goes up to the fourth flight at the end of the season.

Below this level, the Swiss league pyramid fans out into a myriad regional groups, from the sixth-flight 2.Liga to the ninth-tier 5.Liga.

The Swiss Cup, the **Schweizer Pokal**, begins with qualifying rounds within each level of the nine-rung pyramid – between the hundreds of clubs within the 2.Liga, the 3.Liga, and so on – before 64 teams take part in August's Round 1. This involves all Super League clubs from two seasons before, the previous season's top four from the Promotion League, plus the 40 to have won through by qualifying.

In 2017-18, ninth-tier Montfaucon (population 629) made Round 1, only to lose 21-0 to Neuchâtel. As for Rounds 2 and 3, the draw is seeded, lower-level





# SWITZERLAND 2017-18

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Gabbani, Lugano



Lugano

INTRO

clubs granted home advantage, ties decided over one game, with extra-time and penalties if required.

Giantkilling is rare. The quarter-finals are also one-game affairs, invariably involving top-flight clubs. Semi-finals are over one leg, home advantage drawn for. The final in May is staged at a showcase stadium, the **Stade de Suisse** in Berne or the **Stade de Genève**.

## Season's dealings

The **Swiss Super League** starts early, usually in late July, even as early as the third week if it's a tournament

summer the following June. All stops for the winter break before Christmas, the spring season starting up in early February and running until mid to late May. Match days are Saturdays and Sundays, the usual kick-off times being 4pm or 7pm. Occasional midweek games, on Wednesdays and Thursdays, are scheduled for 8pm.

The **Challenge League** synchronises its July kick-off with the top tier. The weekly schedule runs from Friday to Monday evenings at 7pm and 8pm. Some Sunday games start at 4pm. The winter break comes a week earlier

than the Super League's, everything re-starting in early February and running until mid to late May.

## Entry level

Apart from big games involving FC Basel and Young Boys Berne, availability is rarely a problem and pay-on-the-day the norm. Cash payments are in Swiss francs. Nearly all clubs offer advance sales, online and in person.

A place behind the goals is usually around SF25, prices rising to around SF50-SF60 on the sidelines. Home fans generally have a standing area.

Facilities are generally excellent, with beer and wine sold at stadium bars. With Lausanne's new ground in 2019, and the overhaul of stadiums for Euro 2008, you'll see the game in comfort, perhaps with an Alpine backdrop.

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The digital travel guide for football fans, **liberoguide.com** is the most up-to-date resource, city-by-city, club-by-club, to the game across Europe. Using only original photos and first-hand research, taken and undertaken over five seasons, **liberoguide.com** has been put together to enhance every football weekend and Euro night experience. From airport to arena, downtown sports bar to hotel, **liberoguide.com** helps you get the best out of your visit to football's furthest corners and showcase stadiums.

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# SWITZERLAND 2017-18 Basel

[www.liberoguide.com/basel](http://www.liberoguide.com/basel)



Hotel Euler

## Basel

**Basel** may adjoin France and Germany but this Rhine river port is the hotbed of Swiss football. **St Jakob Park**, home of eight-time consecutive champions **FC Basel** and stage for the 2016 Europa League Final, has the country's fieriest atmosphere.

The 'Joggeli' was rebuilt for Euro 2008, staging the opening match and dramatic semi-final, Germany's 3-2 win over

Turkey. Four months later, Basel faced their historic cousins FC Barcelona in the Champions League. The two clubs were formed by the same man, Johannes ('Hans') Kamper, a young Swiss entrepreneur. On November 12, 1893, he saw an ad in the 'National-Zeitung' asking to form a football club, FC Basel. Five years later, business took Kamper to Barcelona. There he became Joan Gamper and founded FC Barcelona. Back home, Basel didn't become a regular on the European circuit until the 1970s.

The St Jakob stadium was built for the 1954 World Cup, seeing 44 goals in six games. These included the hosts dumping Italy out of the competition, 4-1. The game established the Joggeli's credentials as a real football ground, with crowd scenes never before seen in sleepy Switzerland.

### Bearings

**Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg Airport** is actually in France, 6km (4 miles) north-west of Basel. **Bus No.50** (every 8-10min, 17min journey time, SF4.70)



Basel SBB station

runs to the main **Basel SBB** (Swiss rail) station. Tickets are available from the desk in Arrivals or the machine at the stop outside the terminal.

Based near St Jakob, **Taxi-Zentrale** (+41 61 222 2222) charges SF45 from airport to city.

German trains use **Basel Bad** station, on the other side of the Rhine.

**City transport** consists of trams and buses. A day pass is SF9.90, a single ticket SF3.80 but local hotels offer a **Mobility Ticket** giving checking-in guests free use of public transport.

### Bed

The **Basel Tourist Office** ([www.basel.com/en](http://www.basel.com/en)) has a hotel-booking service.

There are no hotels near the stadium. Close to Aeschenplatz on the No.14

tramline for St Jakob, the **Radisson Blu**, has a pool and gym.

Also central but cheaper, the **Stadthof** near Barfüsserplatz occupies a landmark building dating back to 1295.

By picturesque Rheingasse, the historic **Hotel Merian am Rhein** has balconied rooms overlooking the river.

Hotels surround the SBB station. These include upscale chains such as the **Dorint** as well as traditional railway hotels such as the **Euler**, the **Schweizerhof** and the **Victoria**. The conversion of the venerable **Helvetia** to the self check-in **b-smart motel Basel**, however, is a sign of the times.

### Beer

**Barfüsserplatz** is lined with restaurants and cafés – the timeless **Rio** (No.12) the best bar, the beerhall of **Zum Braunen Mutz** the best pub.

For TV sport, Swiss pub chain **Mr Pickwick** is central and displays seriously recherché retro football artefacts. Nearby **Jerry's** is where the Swiss go to watch big matches. It's also a decent late-night cocktail spot. The prominent Irish bar, big on sport, is **Paddy Reilly's** near the station.

On Rheingasse, **Fischerstube** is a homely old bar that serves its own Ueli lager – regulars take turns to play the piano. **LE9**





# SWITZERLAND 2017-18 FC Basel

[www.liberoguide.com/fc-basel](http://www.liberoguide.com/fc-basel)



St Jakob Park

## FC Basel

Formed in 1893 by Hans Kamper, the later Joan Gamper who also founded FC Barcelona, **FC Basel** ([fcb.ch/en-US/Home](http://fcb.ch/en-US/Home)) are the top dogs of Swiss football. Title winners eight times running, FC Basel have dominated the Swiss game since the turn of the millennium.

FCB's 38,500-capacity **St Jakob Park**, or 'Joggeli', is two miles south-east of the city centre, part of a shopping complex and opposite a group of sports halls and pitches.

This is not the elegant St Jakob built for the 1954 World Cup, but a late 1990s rebuild, inaugurated in 2001, for Euro 2008.

Set beside a railway line and the St Alban stream, it allowed little room for expansion when Basel was awarded hosting rights for Euro 2008. The solution was to rebuild.

Carried out by Basel-based architects Herzog & De Meuron, of Tate Modern and Allianz Arena fame, this cost of reconstruction was SF 220 million, creating a three-floor retail complex of some 30 shops.



Basel Fan Shop/Museum

While capacity for Euro 2008 was 42,500, seats were later removed to provide more spectator comfort, reducing the maximum accommodation to 38,500. Considering the huge numbers heading from Liverpool, the



St Jakob Park

wisdom of holding the 2016 Europa League Final at such a relatively small arena was questioned.

Today's Joggeli comprises four stands, lettered A-D, A being the main stand with the best seats, and bars and restaurants behind it. Stands B and home end D are behind the goals. Away fans are allocated sectors B1 and B2 between Stand A and B.

## Transport

The St Jakob has its own **train station** behind Stand C, with a regular direct connection (8min) with Basel SBB station on match days only.

Regular transport is provided by **tram No.14** (direction Pratteln) that runs every 7min from downtown **Barfüsserplatz** eight stops away. It also passes through Aeschenplatz, linked by **tram No.15** to the station. Allow 10-12min from town. The tram drops you right by Main Stand A.

## Tickets

There's a **ticket office** (Mon-Fri 9.30am-6.30pm, Sat 9am-6pm) at the back of the club shop behind Stand A. Online sales are German-language only.

The best seats in Stand A are SF65-SF75, while a decent spot in Stand C opposite is SF48-SF59. Tickets behind the goals, and in the away sector are SF25.

## Shop & Museum

Behind Stand A, the **FC Basel Shop** (Mon-Fri 9.30am-6.30pm, Sat 9am-6pm, match days) stocks souvenirs from doormats to FCB-branded condoms.

At the back of the main store is a ticket office, beside which is a discreet **FCB Museum**. Among the artefacts is a photo of the teams before Basel took on the great Uruguay side, Olympic champions in 1924.

## Bars

The only venue near the ground is the **Wirtshaus St Jakob** (St.Jakobs-Straße 377), a traditional restaurant that has been serving guests since 1526.

At the stadium, behind Stand A, the **Rotblau Bar-Bistro** is decorated with old sports cuttings outside, and tasteful football iconography. Menfolk can lay into big burgers and Schlossgold beers while kids get their own menu and a table football table. 

FC BASEL



# SWITZERLAND 2017-18 Berne

[www.libero guide.com/berne](http://www.libero guide.com/berne)

## Berne

Outside the **Stade de Suisse** in Berne stands a reconstructed version of the famous Longines clock that timed matches here when this was the **Wankdorfstadion**.

The scoreline on it reads 'Ungarn 2 Deutschland 3'. The World Cup Final of 1954, a shock German win over a previously unbeatable Hungary one wet July afternoon, changed football history.

Set in the middle of Switzerland, easily accessible from the main airports of Basel and Zürich, this charming, cobbled capital hosted three matches for Euro 2008, the Wankdorf knocked down to make way for the eco-friendly Stade de Suisse.

A regular venue for the Swiss Cup Final, Berne is also home of **Young Boys** ([www.bscyb.ch](http://www.bscyb.ch)). Eleven times league champions, Young Boys have been placed in the top three of the Swiss Super League nine times in the ten years since 2008. YB will again be knocking on the door come May 2018.

### Bearings

**Berne airport** is 9km (5.5 miles) south-east of town, used by Berne-based SkyWork for business connections with London City, Bristol and Southampton.



**Taxi Bern** (+41 31 312 12 12) offers airport transfers for SF49 into town.

A direct train service runs from Zürich Airport (1hr 25min) and **Basel** station (1hr) to **Berne**, a short stroll to the centre. The Stade de Suisse is over the river north-east of town.

Buses and trams form Berne's **transport network**. A single ticket is SF2.60, SF13 for six journeys or a

day pass. Public transport is free for match-ticket holders for three hours before kick-off and two hours after.

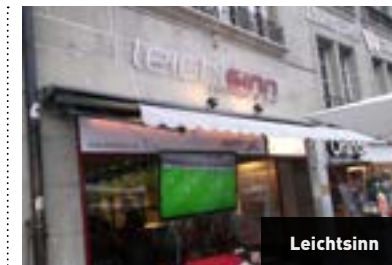
### Bed

The **Berne Tourist Office** ([bern.com/en/detail/tourist-information](http://bern.com/en/detail/tourist-information)) has a **hotel-booking service**.

The nearest hotel to the Stade de Suisse is the four-star, business-friendly **Hotel Novotel Bern Expo**, by the terminus of the No.9 tram. The

more budget-conscious **Ibis Budget Bern Expo** stands alongside.

Also in the vicinity at Militärstraße 38, the **Hotel Jardin** is a traditional, mid-range lodging with its own restaurant. In the Old Town. Equally old-school hotels include the historic **Hotel Bern** at Zeughausgasse 9, the **Goldener Schlüssel** at Rathausgasse 72 and the more affordable **Metropole** at Zeughausgasse 26.



Finally the hostel-like **Hotel Glocke** at Rathausgasse 75 has a mix of singles, doubles and multi-bed rooms with shared bathrooms, plus private doubles.

### Beer

Bars dot the Old Town. Many gather on the terrace of the **Leichtsin** at Kornhausplatz 10 to watch match action – inside is an intimate, two-floor contemporary space.

Round the corner, **Rathausgasse** is lined with cellar bars, most only open after dark.

At the edge of the Old Town, **GOAL** at Junkerngasse 1 is a football bar with a YB bent, where Swiss, Italian, German, English and Spanish top-league matches are screened in a cellar that once hosted a Louis Armstrong aftershow in 1955. Other soccer-friendly spots include **Mr Pickwick** on Wallgasse near the station and, on Spitalgasse, the **Nelson**, both Berne branches of nationwide chains. **LE**





# SWITZERLAND 2017-18 Young Boys

[www.liberoguide.com/young-boys](http://www.liberoguide.com/young-boys)



Wankdorfstadion/ Stade de Suisse

## Young Boys

The flagship club of the Swiss capital, **Young Boys** (bscyb.ch) are regular top-three finishers – but have only won the title once in modern times.

The Gäub-Schwarz were founded in 1898 by students from Berne University, inspired by Basel's Old Boys in yellow and black. Early success led to the construction of the **Wankdorfstadion**.

Built in 1925, the then 22,000-capacity Wankdorf, named after this area of north-east Berne, was remodelled and expanded to a 64,000-capacity stadium worthy of staging a World Cup final. On July 4 1954, all-conquering Hungary fell to West Germany, a turning point in football history.

Three years later, YB won their first of four consecutive championships. This side also made the semi-final of the European Cup in 1959. When the

Wankdorf was closed in 2001, Swiss watchmakers Longines renovated the famous clock from 1954 to stand outside the new **Stade de Suisse**, a high-tech rebuild. Built for Euro 2008, the Stade opened in 2005, solar panels covering an artificial pitch and 32,000 seats.

Attracting Switzerland's second biggest crowds after Basel, YB have put in credible title challenges, gained a draw with Liverpool and wins over Napoli and Udinese in the Europa League.



Eleven

Home fans gather behind the goal in the Ostkurve, even-numbered sectors D2-D14 standing. Away fans are allocated B12-B15 in a corner of the opposite end. The best seats and boxes are accessed through Quartierplatz, the pedestrianised square containing the Restaurant Eleven.

## Transport

**Bern Wankdorf S-Bahn** stop is by the stadium, 5min from Bern main station on lines S1, S2, S3, S31 and S44.

Alternatively, **tram No.9** leaves every 5-10min from outside the station (eight stops, 10min), via the main square of **Zytglogge** (6 stops, 7min).

## Tickets

**Ticketing** (Mon-Fri 8am-noon, 1pm-5pm) at Papiermühlestraße 71 (third floor) sells advance tickets, including by email (ticket@bscyb.ch) from 14 days before the game. The **YB-Fanshop** (Mon-Fri noon-6.30pm, Sat

9am-5pm) in the Wankdorf Center, Papiermühlestraße 85, also distributes.

**Online sales** are dealt with by **Eventim** and **TicketCorner**.

On match days, **kiosks** on three corners of the stadium open 90min before kick-off. Kassenhaus 1 on Papiermühlestraße and Kassenhaus 3 on Sempachstraße then close 15min before the match starts, Kassenhaus 2 stays open.

**Prices** start at SF25 to stand in the home end, Tribüne D sectors, and SF35 to sit – places limited. In Tribüne B behind the opposite goal, it's SF35, and SF25 for away fans in the Gästesektor, B13 and B15.

Along the sidelines in Tribüne A or C, prices run from SF45 to SF70 for prime seats.

## Shop

At the **YB-Fanshop** (Mon-Fri noon-6.30pm, Sat 9am-noon, 1pm-5pm, match days) in the **Wankdorf Center**, Gäub-Schwarz paraphernalia includes T-shirts bearing the foundation date of 1898, plus replica shirts.

## Bars

By the stadium on Quartierplatz, **Eleven** (Mon-Fri 8.30am-11pm, Sat 5pm-11pm, Sun match days only) offers quality Italian food, live match screenings and YB souvenirs.





# SWITZERLAND 2017-18 Lausanne

[www.liberoguide.com/lausanne](http://www.liberoguide.com/lausanne)



## Lausanne

On the northern shores of Lake Geneva in French-speaking Switzerland, Olympic capital **Lausanne** has connections with football dating back longer than almost anywhere else in Europe. In either 1860 or 1880, English students created **Lausanne-Football and Cricket Club**, one of the ten who formed the Swiss

FA in 1895. **Montriond** became main football team in Lausanne. In 1904, they moved to La Pontaise north of town. It became a proper ground in 1926, by which time Montriond were Lausanne Sports, LS to all.

La Pontaise was rebuilt for the 1954 World Cup as the **Stade Olympique**, hosting Hungary's 4-2 semi-final victory over Uruguay.

In 2002, LS were relegated after 70 years. Then followed bankruptcy and the creation of **Lausanne Sport**, who joined the top flight in 2011.

By 2019, LS will move to the **Stade de la Tuilière**, near Lausanne Airport.

### Bearings

The nearest airport is **Geneva** 69km (43 miles) south-west of Lausanne. From



the airport rail terminus, a regular train to **Lausanne** takes 50 minutes (SF14).

**Lausanne station** is south of the city centre, connected as **Lausanne-Gare** to the bus and metro network. One stop away on métro M2 is central **Lausanne-Flon**. You'll need a bus for the stadium, it's too far to walk. A **single ticket** from machines is SF3.70, a short journey of three stops or under SF2.30, ideal from the station to Flon, but not to the stadium.

Local hotels offer a free transport pass to guests.

**Pronto Taxi Lausanne** can be called on +41 79 297 21 06.

### Bed

**Lausanne Tourisme** ([www.lausanne-tourisme.ch/en](http://www.lausanne-tourisme.ch/en)) has an online hotel-reservation service through [booking.com](http://booking.com). Opposite the station, the **Continental** is a business-friendly four-star. The nearby **Victoria** offers a gym and a pay-for sauna.

Behind the Continental at rue du Petit-Chêne, the **Alpha Palmiers** features a Thai restaurant, sauna and hammam. Under the same umbrella, behind the station, chic **Agora Swiss Night** is Swiss-themed down to its cow-print armchairs while stablemate **Swiss Wine** opened in 2016 by Bessières métro with its own wine bar.

Classic **Hôtel de la Paix** has stood at avenue Benjamin-Constant 5 for over a century. By Flon, **LHOTEL** comprises 26 rooms tucked into a tall townhouse, plus a rooftop bar.

### Beer

Pubs dot the commercial quarter downtown, around **rues Saint-Pierre, Enning** and **Caroline**. On rue Enning, the **Captain Cook** offers match screenings and table football.

By Riponne/M.Béjart on the M2 line, **The Great Escape** wins most votes as best bar in town, a freehouse showing English Premier action.

Near Flon at place Pépinet, McCarthy's Irish Pub shows different games on several plasma screens. Opening hours stretch to 2am on Fridays and Saturdays.

Near the station, **Les Gosses du Québec** leans more towards ice hockey than soccer but it's a classic sports bar nonetheless, lined with pool tables and decorated with framed shirts. **LB**



# SWITZERLAND 2017-18 Lausanne Sport

*www.liberoguide.com/lausanne-sport*



Stade de la Pontaise

## Lausanne Sport

Known as LS, revived **Lausanne Sport** (lausanne-sport.ch) are based at **La Pontaise** – for the time being. Opened in 1904, converted into the **Stade Olympique** for the 1954 World Cup, the stadium will soon be knocked down and LS move even further north to the new-build **Stade de la Tuilière**, in 2019.

Local teenagers founded **Montriond Football Club** in 1896, renamed **Lausanne Sports** in 1920. The golden

years came in the 1950s, a packed Stade Olympique enthralled by 'King' Richard Dürr. Head of the 'Seigneurs de la Nuit' team, Dürr led LS to the title in 1965.

The club's next key figure was Stéphane Chapuisat, who had spent his first three seasons at LS, returning in 2005-06. By then, bankrupt Lausanne Sports were Lausanne Sport, and in the lowest ranks. The prodigal Chapuisat pushed LS closer to top-flight promotion.

A surprise appearance in the Swiss Cup final in 2010, and return of the influential

Fabio Celestini, helped drive an unexpected run in the Europa League. In 2011, LS joined the Swiss elite for the first time since the ignominy of 2002.

The Stade Olympique comprises the main Tribune Interima (Nord) and facing Tribune Bertholet+Mathis (Sud) along the sidelines, Blocs Est and Ouest behind each goal.

Home supporters stand in the Bloc Lausannois, sector N, by the Tribune Sud. Away fans are allocated sector 3, the Bloc Visiteurs, in Bloc/Tribune Est.



Restaurant Lausanne Sport

Official capacity is 15,700 reduced for domestic league fixtures, Blocs Est and Ouest empty except for the single away sector.

### Transport

The **Stade Olympique** has its **own stop** on frequent bus **line No.1**, ten from **Lausanne-Gare** outside the train station, journey time 15min. On the way back, if by chance you miss one, stroll the short distance down the hill to **Casernes**, and pick up the **No.3** that terminates at Lausanne-Gare.

### Tickets

Advance tickets are distributed at outlets of **TicketCorner** such as the CFF ticket office at the train station. The club's English-language online sales service ([www.lausanne-sport.ch/tickets-english/#](http://www.lausanne-sport.ch/tickets-english/#)) also goes through TicketCorner. Tickets are available on the day, from the windows by the **main entrance**.

A seat in the main Tribune Interima is SF49, opposite in the Tribune Bertholet+Mathis SF30. LS fans pay SF25 to stand in Bloc N, away fans the same to sit in the Secteur Visiteurs.

### Shop

Inside the main entrance, the match-day **Boutique du Lausanne Sport** sells woollen hats with or without a pompom, Allez Lausanne flags, branded umbrellas and corkscrews.

### Bars

Near **Casernes** bus stop, two venues sit on **avenue de la Pontaise**: **Swish Gate 11.11** at No.52 is equipped with a lounge bar and a TV while at No.48, **Les Alliés** is a neat café in the blue-and-white of LS.

At the stadium, by the main entrance the **Restaurant Lausanne Sport** is now a decent eaterie, while the **Tennis Club** serves sought-after Boxer beer from Yverdon on the shores of Lake Geneva. **LB**





# SWITZERLAND 2017-18 Lucerne

[www.libero guide.com/lucerne](http://www.libero guide.com/lucerne)



Lake Lucerne

## Lucerne

The lakeside resort of **Lucerne** is as pretty a setting as you'll find for a football match – even in Switzerland. Home of flagship club **FC Luzern** ([fcl.ch/home](http://fcl.ch/home)), the **swissporeana** is not lakeside but close to snow-capped mountains, and by a classic Swiss chalet restaurant.

A city bus takes you there from Lucerne's busy station in less than ten

minutes, to the site of the old Stadion Allmend that served the club from 1934.

Overlooked for the 1954 World Cup and Euro 2008, railway hub Lucerne is set in the heart of Switzerland, convenient from Zurich, Berne and Basel.

A top-flight proposition since 2006, FC Luzern have lost three cup finals in recent years but, in Swiss terms, manage to attract healthy crowds, quite used to European football.

### Bearings

The nearest airport is **Zürich** 67km (41.5 miles) away. One **train** an hour runs directly from Zürich Airport to Lucerne 1hr away, tickets SF28.

Buses comprise the **public transport**. A single ticket is SF3.20, a day pass SF6.40. The **Swissporeana** is in the same **zone 101** as Lucerne station. There's an **S-Bahn regional train network** that also serves the stadium. A single ticket is SF3, day pass SF6.



Hotel Spatz



Chapel Bridge

A valid match ticket allows free use of the bus or S-Bahn to and from the stadium for up to three hours before and after the game.

**Ernst Hess taxis** (+41 41 310 10 10) are based near the **swissporeana**.

### Bed

The **Lucerne Tourist Office** ([www.luzern.com/en/index.cfm](http://www.luzern.com/en/index.cfm)) has a **hotel-booking service**.

The only hotel near the stadium is the **Spatz**, with its own restaurant. Prices are about 20% higher in high season, which runs between April and October inclusive.

In town, the **Luzernerhof** on Alpenstraße is a reliable mid-range choice close to the lake. Nearby **Rebstock** on St Leodegarstraße has a sister operation the **Hotel Hofgarten** on Stadthofstraße.

Overlooking the lake and the Chapel Bridge, the **Hôtel des Alpes** is classier (and pricier) than its three-star status might indicate. Alongside, the **Pickwick** is attached to the chain pub of the same name, with simpler, cheaper rooms, all with waterfront views and most with balconies.

### Beer

Perhaps because of its location in the middle of Switzerland, this city with one Swiss title to its name has plenty of football bars. Eichhof is the local beer. **Boat restaurants** offer it with a view – though at a price.

Pick of the pubs is **Legends Luzern**. Run by the indefatigable Billy, it is a tucked away near the lake on Löwenstraße. Nearby **Anfield Pub** (Seehofstraße 7) is a somewhat predictably themed sports bar, busy for big matches.

The Lucerne branch of Swiss chain **Mr Pickwick** sticks to the standard formula of its counterparts but also offers an unsurpassable view of the lake from its terrace. It has rooms upstairs.

On the other bank on Wagenbachgasse, the Irish-run **Shamrock Irish Pub** has a raised terrace in the Old Town. **LE**



# SWITZERLAND 2017-18 FC Luzern

[www.liberoguide.com/fc-luzern](http://www.liberoguide.com/fc-luzern)



swissporarena

## FC Luzern

Europa League competitors in 2017-18, **FC Luzern** ([www.fcl.ch](http://www.fcl.ch)) have rarely set the Swiss League alight but can count on a loyal and lively fan base.

FCL have only three major trophies to their name, one title and two cups, and their fans in blue-and-white have

long envied the success of Basel or Grasshopper Zürich.

FCL had the courage to invest in the future, the €65 million **swissporarena**, replacing the venerable **Allmend** on the club's 110th anniversary. Architects Daniel Marques and Iwan Bühler created a contemporary, 17,000-capacity venue also suitable for Switzerland internationals.

Completed in 2011, it comprises a distinctive gold-tinted exterior, with interior seating in blue, FCL lettering clearly outlined. For domestic fixtures, 3,000 standing places fill sectors B2-3 in the home end, B Tribüne (blue).

Away fans are allocated C6, at the other end of Tribüne C (red), facing the main stand, Tribüne A (yellow). Tribüne D (green) is behind the other goal.



## Transport

The transport stop by the stadium is for the **No.20 bus** (every 7min). It takes 7min from Lucerne train station, where the stop is clearly marked near the archway.

Alternatively, towards town by the roundabout, **Allmend/Messe S-Bahn** is one stop south on the S4 (direction Stans or Wolfenschlessen) and S5 (direction Giswil) lines from Lucerne station. Trains leave every 15min, usually from platform 14.

A match ticket allows use of the bus or S-Bahn to and from the stadium for up to three hours either side of the game.

## Tickets

Advance tickets are sold at the **FCL-Fanshop** (Mon-Fri 9am-6pm) behind D Tribüne and at the **LZ-Corner** of the 'Neue Luzerner Zeitung' (Pilatusstraße 12) in town. On match days, **kiosks** 1 and 2 operate behind A Tribüne on main

Horwerstraße. Visiting fans should use kiosk No.5, cash only.

**Online sales** operate through the **Eventim** ([eventimsports.de/ols/fcluzern](http://eventimsports.de/ols/fcluzern)) via the club website.

For domestic fixtures, standing tickets (B Tribüne) are SF28. Seats alongside are SF33, SF41 behind the opposite goal (D Tribüne), and SF58 in the sideline C Tribüne. Seats in the A Tribüne are SF62-100. Visiting fans are charged a flat SF28 for a seat in sector C6.

For all-seated European games, admission is cheaper at SF43-70 in A, SF23 in B, SF29 in D, and SF41-48 in C. Away fans are charged SF20.

## Shop

You'll find toy FCL lions amid the blue T-shirts and kits at the **FCL-Fanshop** (Mon-Fri 9am-6pm) behind D Tribüne.

## Bars

By the stadium, the **Wirtschaft zum Schützenhaus** is a traditional restaurant in Swiss chalet style.

**Allmend** (Moosmattstraße 51) is attached to the bowling alley where FCL players changed in the park-pitch days.

On Horwerstraße, the **Militärgarten** was opened before FCL were founded. Scarves decorate a wooden interior, where Eichhof and Hubertus dark ale are served. It has a terrace, too. **L9**





# SWITZERLAND 2017-18 Lugano

[www.liberoguide.com/lugano](http://www.liberoguide.com/lugano)



## Lugano

By the pretty lake of the same name, in the Italian-speaking region of Ticino by Switzerland's twisting border with its southern neighbour, **Lugano** is more suited to pleasure boats, Eurovision Song Contests and financial services than football.

**FC Lugano** found success in the 1940s. The **Stadio Cornaredo** was built for the 1954 World Cup, 24,000 Italians cheered a 4-1 win over Belgium.

Still based at the same quaint municipal stadium, i Bianco-Neri enjoyed a run in the Europa League in 2017-18.

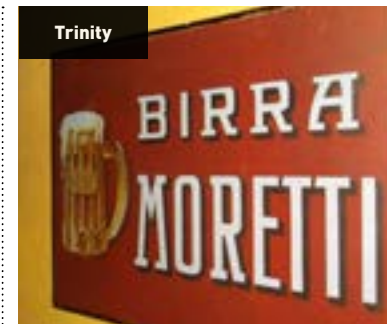
The Cornaredo is also home to **Rapid Lugano**, in the regional Ticino divisions. The stadium is almost as close to the Italian border as it is to Lugano's landmark casino.

### Bearings

**Lugano Airport** 4km (2.5 miles) west of town receives regular services from Zürich and Geneva.

Milan's **Malpensa** and **Linate** airports are 90km (56 miles) and 100km (62 miles) from Lugano. **Lugano Servizi** and **Malpensa Express** buses run 10-12 times a day between Malpensa terminals 1-2 and **piazzale Besso** in Lugano (1hr 20min journey time, €25/€40 return). There is no direct public transport from Linate to Lugano.

From **Milano Centrale**, a EuroCity train takes 1hr 10min, internet price €23. **Lugano station** stands high over the city, connected by **funicular**. City buses serve town and station. A single **ticket**



(valid 30min) is SF1.90, a **day pass** (carta giornaliera) SF7.20. You'll need a bus for the stadium. Some hotels offer free public transport if you book a room through their website.

Taxi Luganese (+41 91 967 24 24) is a reliable local firm.

### Bed

**Lugano Turismo** (luganoturismo.ch) has **online booking**.

For age-old hospitality by the waterfront, the classic **Hotel International** has an outdoor pool in summer while the **Walter Au Lac Lugano** features a roof terrace.

Set back from the waterfront, the **San Carlo** is a more affordable two-star and, by the foot of the funicular, the **Acquarello Swiss Quality Hotel** is another handy and affordable find. Nearby, the **Hotel Lugano Dante** is a notch-above four-star. Round the corner, **Gabbani** is an urban lodging



set around a pre-war delicatessen, Mediterranean restaurant and bar.

Also in the centre, the **Pestalozzi** hides recently rooms behind a historic façade. Nearby, the family-run **Zurigo Garni** has been in operation since 1951.

By the station, the **Continental Parkhotel** echoes the steam era.

### Beer

On the main square, piazza Riforma, the classic **Olimpia** dates back to 1845, its lived-in bar where older Lugano supporters meet. On the waterfront, the **Bar Vela** has sport on TV and tables outside overlooking the lake.

Further round the lake, chic **Seven** is a sport-forward lounge bar, with a waterfront terrace. Upscale chatty **Bistro Lugano** near the Hotel Zurigo Garni buzzes during aperitivi hour.

Irish pub **Trinity** is at via Canonica 19, by a waterway that leads from the lake. **LD**

LUGANO



# SWITZERLAND 2017-18 FC Lugano

[www.liberoguide.com/fc-lugano](http://www.liberoguide.com/fc-lugano)

## FC Lugano

The biggest club in Ticino, Italian-speaking Switzerland, **FC Lugano** ([fclugano.com](http://fclugano.com)) are enjoying a modest revival. Swiss Cup finalists in 2016, the Bianconeri came within a point of qualification from the group stage of the Europa League in 2017.

In 2003, Lugano had been forcibly relegated, then declared bankrupt. A new outfit, AC Lugano, was created, formed of under-21 players. In 2004, it merged with nearby FC Malcantone Agno, and became FC Lugano, again, in 2008.

The Bianconeri last won the Swiss title in 1949. Lugano then prepared for 1954 World Cup hosting by building a new ground. As elegant today as when it opened in 1951, the **Stadio Cornaredo** is a classic Swiss stadium backdropped by dramatic hillsides and under seemingly permanent bright blue skies.

Crowds have dropped dramatically since the 1950s but the graceful main stand, the Tribuna Centrale, remains, on via Trevano that runs from town.

Opposite, the Tribuna Monte Brè holds almost half the current 6,330 capacity. Each end is open to the elements, home ultras gathered in the Curva Nord, up to 800 away supporters accommodated in the Curva Sud.



Stadio Cornaredo

The Stadio Cornaredo also hosts lower-league **Rapid Lugano** – supporters have their own bar behind the Curva Sud.

### Transport

From **Lugano station**, lines **No.4** and **No.6** take 10min to reach the stadium. From **Lugano Centro**, on via Pestalozzi near the Hotel Zurigo Garni, the **No.7** also takes 10min. The **No.3** from via Pestalozzi runs along the waterfront, a pretty ride to the ground 15min away.

### Tickets

Tickets are sold from the **club office** (Mon-Fri 9am-noon, 2pm-5pm) at

the stadium or via national agency **ticketcorner** which also distributes online. On match days, tickets are sold at the **kiosks** behind each goal.

The cheapest seats (SF25) are in the Spalti, the areas either side of the central seats in the main stand, as far as the home and away sectors behind each goal.

A seat in the Tribuna Monte Brè is SF40, under-14s SF15, under-6s free. The main stand is divided into the Tribuna Laterale (settore 1 & 4, SF65) and Centrale (settore 2 & 3, SF80).

### Shop

The main outlet is the **Lugano Store**, a match-day kiosk behind the Tribuna Monte Brè. FCL shirts with the cool V across the chest come in black, white and red versions and there are also the standard frilly pennants, scarves and keyrings.

### Bars

Behind the Curva Nord, the **Pizzeria Resega** (via Sanvico 1) has been in the Albieri family for decades. A lovely little tavern run by an equally affable old landlord, it offers wood-fired pizzas and Felschlösschen beer.



Behind the Curva Sud, the **Buvette Rapid** is a small, basic bar with a terrace overlooking the adjoining training pitch. There's also a **Buvette Monte Brè** on match days, serving local Luganighetta spiral sausages.

The main venues are the **Osteria Bianconero** and adjoining **Bar Lugano** behind the main stand. The restaurant operates during the week until early evening.

For match days, reserve via [ristorazione@fclugano.ch](mailto:ristorazione@fclugano.ch). The bar serves Calanda beer from Chur. **L9**

FC LUGANO





# SWITZERLAND 2017-18 St Gallen

[www.liberoguide.com/st-gallen](http://www.liberoguide.com/st-gallen)



St Gallen

## St Gallen

The tranquil shores of Lake Constance that divide Switzerland from Germany and Austria are where football took root in Europe. On the Swiss side, **St Gallen** is home to the oldest club side still in existence on the Continent.

On 19 April 1879, an advert in the *St Galler Tagblatt* announced a meeting at the **Hörnli** restaurant, with a view to starting a football club. **FC St Gallen** duly won the Swiss title in 1904. The

Grün-Weißen then went almost an entire century trophy-less.

The club's long-term home was **Espenmoos**, its record attendance of 16,200 set in 1985 with the visit of Internazionale in the UEFA Cup. Fifteen years later, it witnessed St Gallen lift their first league title in 96 years.

St Gallen's senior side moved out to a new-build on the eve of Euro 2008, Switzerland christening the **AFG Arena** with a 3-0 win over Liechtenstein. Before 2016-17, the stadium, at the

western outskirts of town, was renamed **kybunpark**.

### Bearings

The nearest international airport to St Gallen is **Zürich** 87km (54 miles) away. A half-hourly **train** runs direct from the airport to St Gallen, journey time 50min-1hr, single SF14.50. If you're going straight to **kybunpark stadium**, the hourly ICN train allows you to change at Gossau for **Winkeln**, and reach the stadium in 1hr from the airport. Otherwise, change at St Gallen main station. All local buses



Café Hörnli



O-Five Pub

close, **New Star** also has its own car park. Staying near the stadium means that you'll be far from town.

Near St Gallen station, the **Metropol** has been serving rail travellers for over a century while the four-star **Walhalla St Gallen** features a popular brasserie.

By Marktplatz, traditional **Hotel Am Ring** gleams with historic chintz. Across the street, the **Weisses Kreuz** offers mid-range rooms and a modern bar.

**Am Spisertor** by the station of the same name comprises 12 basic rooms with limited reception hours at weekends.

### Beer

A bar hub clusters around **Augustinergasse**, **Engelgasse** and **Metzgergasse** near Marktplatz. On Metzgergasse, **Gallus** offers those watching a whole St Gallen game a free drink should the Green-and-Whites win. The traditional **Hörnli** on Marktplatz is where the meeting took place to form FC St Gallen. Nearby, the **Süd Bar** attracts young hipsters with varied beers and cocktails until the early hours. Behind it, **Seeger** is another St Gallen landmark, a bar/restaurant with a popular terrace.

Towards the station, the **O-Five Pub** on Poststraße provides jugs of Guinness to go with the European match action. Behind Spisertor, **Da Sláinte Inn** goes more for live music than sport. **LO**

pass via the station near the city centre. Match-ticket holders and many local hotel guests travel for free. A **single ticket** is otherwise SF2.40, a day pass **Tageskarte** SF6.40. Based near St Gallen station, **Herold Taxi** (+41 71 2222 777) accepts credit cards.

### Bed

**St Gallen Bodensee Tourist Information** ([www.st.gallen-bodensee.ch/en](http://www.st.gallen-bodensee.ch/en)) has a **hotel database** and **booking function**. Near **kybunpark stadium**, the **hotel one66** is a handy three-star with weekend deals. Also



# SWITZERLAND 2017-18 FC St Gallen

[www.liberoguide.com/fc-st-gallen](http://www.liberoguide.com/fc-st-gallen)

St Gallen store



## FC St Gallen

The oldest football club still operating on mainland Europe, **St Gallen** ([www.fcsg.ch](http://www.fcsg.ch)) have had meagre reward for some 120 years of competitive play. Rarely out of the top flight since the early 1970s, St Gallen won a rare Swiss title in 2000, moved into a new stadium in 2008 then made the group stage of the Europa League in 2013.

Opened as the **AFG Arena**, the currently named **kybunpark** holds nearly 20,000, average gates usually around 12,000.

St Gallen fans fill the home forster-Tribüne, sectors D2 and D3 standing



ones behind the west goal. Visiting supporters are allocated Gästesektor 4 of the arbonia-Tribüne opposite. The main stand, the former Piatti-Tribüne now the RWD Schlatter, houses the VIP and business seats.

### Transport

Public transport is **free** for match-ticket holders.

The quickest way to the stadium is to take the **S1** (direction Wil) or **S5 train** (direction Weinfelden) from St Gallen main station to **Winkeln**, two stops/five

minutes away. Winkeln is also served by the **No.1 bus** every 20min from the main station, journey time 20min.

After arriving at Winkeln station, take the underpass then the street ahead of you, **Herisauer Straße**. The stadium is about 7-8min ahead.

### Tickets

Unless Grasshoppers are in town, availability is rarely a problem.

The main distribution agents are **Starticket**, both **online** and at local

outlets such as the **Post Office** outside the train station and the **Tourist Office** on Bankgasse.

Match-day **Tageskassen** also operate but expect to pay SF5 extra. **Prices** start at SF20 to stand with the home fans, and for a seat in the corner of the opposite end. You'll pay SF35 to sit either side of the standing fans in the forster-Tribüne. Seats in the sideline EgoKiefer Stand run from SF30-SF50, from corner to halfway line, and in the main stand it's SF55-SF80, apart from the family area (A6).

### Shop

The main **FC St Gallen store** (Mon-Sat 9am-5pm, match days 2hrs before kick-off 30min after final whistle) is in the **Shopping Arena** by the Eingang West.

Merchandise includes woolly Alpine hats with earflaps, baseball caps bearing the foundation date of 1879, Swiss watches, FCSG monopoly games, branded cigars, shot glasses, beer glasses and spirit flasks.

Kiosks dot the stadium on match days.

### Bars

Near Winkeln station on Herisauer Straße, typical Swiss bar/restaurant **Landhaus Winkeln** opens on match days, serving Bratwurst and chips, and local St Galler Schützengarten beer.

Further along on the other side, the standard bar/restaurant **Brücken Waage** at No.54 has tables outside in warmer weather.

Of the outlets at the Shopping Arena by the stadium, chain bar/restaurant **Marktplatz** offers several types of St Galler Schützengarten beer on draught, schnitzels, spare ribs and burgers.

All payments at the stadium are with a **Stadionkarte** from orange-dressed vendors. **Match-Die Stadion Bar** is the main place for home fans, behind the forster-Tribüne, decorated with framed black-and-white shots of FCSG action. **LD**

FC ST GALLEN





# SWITZERLAND 2017-18 Sion

[www.liberoguide.com/sion](http://www.liberoguide.com/sion)



## Sion

Capital of the canton of Valais, just down the A9 motorway from Sepp Blatter's home village of Visp, French-speaking **Sion** is nestled halfway between the Matterhorn and Lake Geneva.

Here **FC Sion** ([fcsion.ch/fr](http://fcsion.ch/fr)), in the 13 stars and red livery of their canton, have survived thanks to controversial president Christian Constantin and a knack for winning the Swiss Cup – even when in the second division.

Sacking coaches every other week, stepping in to do the job himself, signing unignorable players and fielding the ineligible, Constantin has made many enemies but Sion have been top flight since 2006 and regular competitors in Europe.

With no immediate rivals – although it's always good to beat Servette – cup specialists Sion attract regional as much



as local patriotism. The population of Sion is only just twice that of the Stade de Tourbillon, just over a narrow stretch of the Rhône, so many head in from around the canton, taking advantage of the A9 motorway alongside.

### Bearings

The nearest airport to Sion is **Geneva** 160km (100 miles) away. A train runs from Genève-Aéroport to Sion (every 30min, 2hr journey time, SF26 single). Trains from Bern, Basel and Zürich, including Zürich airport, require a change in **Visp**.

Sion's adjacent bus and train stations are a stroll from the town centre.

**Public transport** consists of buses, singles SF2.70 from the driver.

### Bed

**Sion Tourisme** has an **online booking system**. The centre has three three-star hotels. Old-school **Castel**, closest to the stadium, has standard doubles



from SF160. Also on rue du Scex, the **Hôtel du Rhône Sion** is quiet. The **Hôtel-Restaurant Elite** at avenue du Midi 6 has offers in the run-up to Christmas.

Also near the stadium but on the other side of the A9 motorway, the **ibis Sion Est** has 71 two-star rooms.

An alternative, also close to the station, is **La Pension du Vieux-Canal** (chemin du Vieux-Canal, +41 27 322 7200, +41 79 947 0398), with a dozen simple rooms.

### Beer

Surrounded by vineyards, Sion also drinks local **Walliser/Valaisanne beer**.

Bars surround **place du Midi**, including **Café de la Place**, **Le Brésilien**, and, also with football action, old-school **Au Boulevard**. In summer, their terraces merge in the Valais sunshine.

Close by on rue de Scex, opened by sponsors of FC Sion, the **Dugout** is a standard sports bar with TVs ranged

over the bar counter and tables outside in nice weather.

The main football spot in town, though, is **Au Poker** at avenue de la Gare 25. With a bar interior decked out in Sion line-ups over the seasons, some autographed, Au Poker also provides a large screen for match coverage.

Party-minded **Saint James** at rue de la Dents-Blanche 9 is more club than bar, with DJ nights and late-opening hours. **LG**



# SWITZERLAND 2017-18 FC Sion

*www.liberoguide.com/fc-sion*



Stade de Tourbillon

## FC Sion

Run by controversial Christian Constantin, **FC Sion** ([fc-sion-live.ch](http://fc-sion-live.ch)) had the envious record of winning all 13 Swiss Cup finals they appeared in – until defeat to FC Basel in 2017.

For all the criticism, this architect from nearby Martigny saved the club in 2003. Sion rebounded, and have been regulars in the top flight since.

Another feature of Constantin's ownership, along with attacking a TV reporter in 2017-18, has been the frequent sacking of managers.

Sion moved to the **Stade de Tourbillon** in 1968. Nestled between a winding stretch of the Rhône and the Alps, the Tourbillon was named after a medieval castle on the surrounding hilltops.

Its chalet-like home North Stand adds to the charm – behind, the A9 motorway

is barely noticeable as you approach from town. However, the 14,000-capacity stadium is gradually losing its quaint feel: the wooden benches that used to line the East Stand were replaced by plastic seats in 2011.

With home fans in the standing Tribune Nord, away ones occupy blocks D5 and D6 in the standing Tribune Sud. VIPs are housed in the Tribune Ouest, the best seats in A2 and A8 facing the ones over the halfway line in Tribune Est, C3-C5.



## Transport

The stadium is a **20-min walk** from Sion's main train station – head straight out to avenue de Tourbillon opposite, bear right and keep following it until the river. Cross it at the junction with rue du Scex and the stadium is ahead of you down rue du Stade.

By bus, take **No.BS2** (every 20min) from the station stop by the Orient Express bar. Alight at either **Promenade Rhône** nearest the Café Le Parc or the next one, **Manège 1**, near the equestrian centre slightly closer to the stadium. It's 10min by bus from the station, passing central place du Midi on the way.

## Tickets

Tickets are sold at branches of the **Post Office**, **Manor stores** and at **train station** offices, as well as at the **stadium** from 90min before kick-off by the Tribune Est. **Online sales** are via [ticketcorner.ch](http://ticketcorner.ch).

For domestic fixtures, prices start at SF25 in the standing home end, secteur B (Tribune Nord), rising to SF35 in secteurs D1-D3 for home seats behind the opposite goal, Sud. It's SF55 for excellent seats in secteurs C3-C5 in Tribune Est.

## Bars

The nearest venue is the **Café Le Parc** (route de Vissigen 72), a simple wooden bar with Feldschlössen beer, local Valais wine and a small front terrace.

At the equestrian centre next to the stadium, **Le Paladin** serves grilled meats, pancakes and cheese fondue, as well as beers – there's a TV for football action too.

Buvettes ranged around the ground offer local Fendant white wine and red Gamay, as well as beers in 25cl measures.





# SWITZERLAND 2017-18 Thun

[www.liberoguide.com/thun](http://www.liberoguide.com/thun)

## Thun

South of Berne, beneath the Bernese Alps, **Thun** has made its footballing presence felt over the last decade or so. Flagship club **FC Thun** have embarked upon four European campaigns since their surprise debut in the Champions League in 2005.

Back then, Arsenal, Ajax and Sparta Prague were hosted in Berne, Thun's venerable but modest **Stadion Lachen** deemed unsuitable. The last major international team to play there was West Germany, for training before winning the World Cup of 1954.

In 2011, the club opened the **Arena Thun**, on the edge of town. It was later named after cable-car firm **Stockhorn**.

With average gates for domestic fixtures above 5,000, FC Thun are ticking over without making any credible challenge for major silverware. The Alps and more prestigious Berne still provide ample reason for the floating fan to spend his Saturday afternoon elsewhere.

The Stadion Lachen still stands, its bar displaying posters from that Champions League campaign of 2005-06.

### Bearings

The nearest main airport to Thun is **Basel** 130km [81 miles] away. **Online** with **Swiss Rail**, a ticket all the way to



Thun, including the airport bus to **Basel SBB train station**, costs SF27.70. The half-hourly rail service to Thun takes 1hr 20min. **Thun station** and **main bus concourse** are alongside each other on the west bank of the Aare river. The stadium on the outskirts of town is too far to walk but the city centre is close. All local **STI bus lines** call at the station. A **single ticket**, from machines or the driver, is SF3.

**Oesch Tagsi** (+41 33 222 2222) is located halfway between the stadium and the station.

### Bed

The **Thun Tourist Office** [www.thunersee.ch/en/stadt-thun.html](http://www.thunersee.ch/en/stadt-thun.html) has a hotel database and booking function.

Across from the club's old ground, Stadion Lachen, the **Alpha Thun Hotel** provides pleasant, mid-range accommodation, close to the lake. Also



nearby is the modern **Holiday Thun**. Behind it on the main road, the **Gasthof Rössli Dürrenast** is basically an old-school restaurant with six guest rooms with or without private facilities. These three hotels are 15-20min walk to the stadium.

Of the options in the city centre, the **Freienhof** on Freienhofgasse enjoys waterside views but charges four-star Swiss prices.

The **Krone** on focal Rathausplatz was a guildhouse, now a 29-room hotel renovated in 2014. Across the square, the **Hotel-Restaurant Rathaus** dates back even earlier, its comfortable rooms also the result of stylish renovation.

### Beer

You'll find bars and restaurants on either side of **Obere Hauptgasse**, around **Mühleplatz** near the river. These include the **Cadillac Café** with pool and

table football. Bright **El Camino** offers a fair range of beers on tap.

For TV football, head to **McArthur's**, with matches on a 55-inch HD screen, live bands and good grub. On Rathausplatz, prominent **Ratsstübli** also shows sport and hosts live music.

Former football bar **Schleusenbar** at Bälliz 67 has changed its focus to food but cherishes its heritage as **Tifo**. **LE**



# SWITZERLAND 2017-18 FC Thun

[www.liberoguide.com/fc-thun](http://www.liberoguide.com/fc-thun)

## FC Thun

Since promotion to the top flight in 2002, **FC Thun** ([www.fcthun.ch](http://www.fcthun.ch)) have qualified for Europe four times, played Arsenal and Ajax in the Champions League and gained a new stadium.

Currently, though, this little club overshadowed by nearby Berne is treading water, surviving in the Swiss Super League but without the clout to challenge the big boys.

Home is the **Arena Thun**, aka **Stockhorn Arena**. It bears all the hallmarks of a new-build: artificial turf, out-of-town location, retail park alongside, motorway nearby, little else in the vicinity. Opened in 2011, renamed in 2014, the stadium holds 10,000, of which 2,000 are standing places in the Heimsektor, the home end of the Südtribüne. Away fans are allocated sectors D9 and D10 in the Nordtribüne.

### Transport

**Arena Thun** has its own **bus stop** on the **No.3 line**. Buses leave every 10-15min from Kante 2 outside Thun station, taking 7min to cover the six stops there.

### Tickets

Availability is rarely a problem. **Advance sales** in person are through **Ochsner Sport** in the **Panorama Center** next to the stadium and Sport XX in the **Zentrum Oberland** retail centre at Talackerstraße



Stockhorn Arena

62, by the junction with Weststraße. Branches of TicketCorner also distribute.

The club offers online booking through **Eventim** ([eventimsports.de/ols/fct](http://eventimsports.de/ols/fct)).

The **Tageskassen kiosks** outside the ground open on match days only. To **stand** with the home fans costs SF26, SF13 for 6-15s. The cheapest seats are Kategorie 3, in three corners of the stadium and behind the goal in the Nordtribüne, SF32/SF16 reduced. For the visits of YB Berne and Basel, it's

SF40/SF20. Kategorie 2, better seats around the corners, are SF44/SF22, SF52/SF26 for YB Berne and Basel. The priciest seats are SF64/SF32, SF72/SF36 for YB Berne and Basel. Visiting supporters pay SF25, SF20 reduced.

### Shop

The **FC Thun shop** (Mon-Fri 8am-noon, 1.30pm-5pm, match days) is by Eingang A. Replica tops are either first-choice red-and-white or away lime green. A retro version has a string collar and a bright yellow starburst badge.

The beautifully knitted winter scarves also feature the yellow sunburst logo on red-and-white bars.

### Bars

The only bars near the stadium are the two cafés at street level at the **Panorama Centre** opposite: the **Cappuccino Club**, with its table football table outside, and **Migros**, attached to the supermarket of the same name. Both have terraces, the Cappuccino Club sells beer, Migros coffee, soft drinks and snacks.



Stadion Lachen



Under the main stand on match days, the **FanZelt** is a beer-dispensing marquee, with sausages at SF6.50. Depending on the opposition, the beer might be alcohol-free Carlsberg.

The best FC Thun drinking spots are at the old **Stadion Lachen** on Gwattstraße. The **supporters' bar** is decorated with vintage pennants and autographed posters from the 2005 Champions League campaign. It should be open and serving beer most evenings. Across the street, the **Restaurant Lachen** is another age-old Thun haunt with pennants to prove it. Beer and main dishes, are served on the terrace. **LG**





# SWITZERLAND 2017-18 Zürich

[www.liberoguide.com/zurich](http://www.liberoguide.com/zurich)

## Zürich

Basel might be the hotbed of Swiss football culture but the league title has gone to the financial capital of **Zürich** more than twice as many times.

Switzerland's largest city is the only one to host a long-running cross-town rivalry – between record champions **Grasshoppers** and the more recent winners, working-class **FC Zürich**, aka 'FCZ' or 'Eff-Tsay-Tszett'.

Both currently share the **Letzigrund**, built by FCZ members in 1925. Shortly afterwards, Grasshoppers, GCZ, moved into the nearby **Hardturm** – and **FIFA moved to Zürich**.

Before Euro 2008, the original first choice of finals venue was the proposed **Stadion Zürich** (aka Zürich West), later rejected by locals in a referendum.

### Bearings

**Zürich Airport** is 13km (eight miles) north of town, linked by **Swiss Rail** and **S-Bahn trains** (SF6.60 one way with 1hr onward transport, SF13.20 24hr pass/return, 12min journey time) to Zürich station. A **taxi** should cost about SF70.

**City transport** consists of trams, buses and S-Bahn lines, tickets available at machines by most stops. A single is SF2.60, a day pass SF5.20/SF8.60. For a **city taxi 444**, call +41 44 444 44 44.

### Bed

The **Zürich Tourist Office** ([zuerich.com](http://zuerich.com)) has a free hotel-booking service online.

Right by the Letzigrund, the **H+ Hotel Zürich** is the former Ramada, still business-friendly with a gym and sauna.

Also on main Badenerstraße, one tram stop nearer to town, three more hotels are also within easy reach. First, the four-star **Crowne Plaza Zurich** offers a heated indoor pool, high-spec fitness facilities and the LetziLou restaurant.

Towards town, are standard four-star **Mercure Stoller Zurich** and old-school but comfortable **Hotel Olympia**.

By the station, the **St Gotthard** is a renovated four-star while the **Schweizerhof** combines the tradition of a railway hotel with modern features.

### Beer

Zürich is where Hurlimann beer comes from. You'll still see plenty of it around the bar hub of **Niederdorfasse**, behind the Limmat embankment. There, the **Züri Bar** (No.24) is a cult spot, though it's lost its FCZ iconography. It leads to a late-night bar, the **Kontiki**. Grasshopper fans convene at the upscale **Heugümper** restaurant run by the club.

On the same street towards Bahnhofbrücke, **Big Ben** is more bar than pub and goes big on rarer ales.



ZÜRICH

**Kennedy's** on Freischützasse is the busiest pub, with a huge terrace and plenty of TVs. Irish-owned **Paddy Reilly's** on Talstraße has a large screen and ten plasma ones. **The Lion** at Oetenbachgasse 6 is more refined and restaurant-like – but still has TV sports.

Elsewhere, Zürich is dotted with curiosities, bar-wise. **Kaiser Franz**

on Rolandstraße is an bohemian corner spot, named and themed after Beckenbauer, where staff of cool Swiss football magazine **Zwölf** meet.

The excellent **Le Calvados** on Idaplatz, a self-styled *bar sportif*, is tastefully done out with pictures of major Swiss players when they were teenagers. Its terrace fills on summer evenings. **LE**





# SWITZERLAND 2017-18 Letzigrund

[www.liberoguide.com/letzigrund](http://www.liberoguide.com/letzigrund)



## Letzigrund

The **Letzigrund** ([www.stadionletzigrund.ch](http://www.stadionletzigrund.ch)), created by and for the members of **FC Zürich**, is now shared between FCZ and **Grasshoppers**.

Its long history can be divided between the original stadium opening on November 22, 1925 – and the Euro 2008 rebuild on the same site, unveiled on August 30, 2007.

Top-flight football and world-class athletics have always featured. The first ratified ten-second 100-metre dash was run here in 1960.

Although ownership passed from FCZ to the City of Zürich in 1937, improvements were slow and stopped by war. The Letzigrund was overlooked for Switzerland's hosting of the 1954 World Cup, five matches (and 28 goals) hosted at the Hardturm, Grasshopper's ground less than 1km away.



Both grounds are set in north-west Zürich. But when it came down to which one to modernise for Euro 2008, on the table was also a proposal to build a new arena in Zürich West.

In the end, though the public voted for a reconstruction of the Hardturm, residents objected and the rebuilding of the Letzigrund was rushed through. In 2006-07, city's two clubs shared the Hardturm for one last season. It was later demolished – and the new stadium plans rejected. In August 2006,

FCZ fans were invited to enter the old Letzigrund and take home pieces of turf for souvenirs.

Exactly a year and SF125 million later, the new Letzigrund opened its doors. With a capacity of nearly 31,000 for Euro 2008, 26,000 for domestic league fixtures and 24,000 for internationals, it is the fourth-largest football stadium in Switzerland.

Apart from the skyboxes, a media centre and the Oval restaurant, the

main new feature is the roof. Rust-coloured and elliptical, it complements 30 toothbrush-shaped floodlights, set beside the solar panels that generate enough heat to grill 1,800 sausages during one match.

Traditionally, FCZ fans occupy the *Südkurve*, with standing places in Sektor D on Badenerstrasse. Away fans are allocated Sektor B opposite. Grasshoppers supporters have the Baslerstrasse end, Sektor B, and away fans are allocated in Sektor D.

## Transport

The Letzigrund has its own stop on **tramline No.2** eight stops/14min from central **Paradeplatz**, direction Farbhof. Trams run every 8-10min.

From the **Bahnhofplatz/HB** stop at the train station, take Nos.3 or 14 to Stauffacher and change onto the No.2.

## Tickets

Home clubs **FC Zürich** and **Grasshoppers** occupy different areas of the stadium and have different ticketing systems.

For international matches, the Swiss FA use online agency **Ticketcorner** for distribution – a seat in a corner of the main stand is just under SF50.

## Bars

On main Badenerstrasse, **Libero** (No.451) is a classic Balkan grill serving Yugo meaty favourites such as *ćevapčići* and *pljeskavica*. At No.526, spacious Italian **Ristorante Da Cono** takes its bowls seriously. There are big screens for TV sports, and a *bocciodromo*, Letzi.

For beers, the **Schlachthof** on Herdernstrasse is a pre-match favourite thanks to its draught Dunkle Perle Feldschlößchen.

At the stadium, the **Oval restaurant** opens to all on non-match weekday lunchtimes – you'll have to reserve a table for the game. **LE**

LETZIGRUND





# SWITZERLAND 2017-18 Grasshoppers

[www.liberoguide.com/grasshoppers](http://www.liberoguide.com/grasshoppers)

## Grasshoppers

Switzerland's most successful club last won the league crown in 2003. For **Grasshopper Club Zürich** ([www.gcz.ch](http://www.gcz.ch)) – known in the English-speaking world as **Grasshoppers** – this has been a decade to forget, alleviated only by a solitary Swiss Cup win on penalties in 2013.

Groundsharing the **Letzigrund** with age-old city rivals FC Zürich since 2007, Grasshoppers are little further with the proposed **Stadion Zürich** than when they vacated their former home of the **Hardturm** before Euro 2008.

In 2016-17, average gates dipped below 5,000 and Grasshoppers hovered over the relegation zone.

For a club once perceived as representing the elite, it feels a long time since the 1980s and 1990s, when Grasshoppers were winning titles and beating Real Madrid in Europe.

Englishman Tom Griffith and pupils from Manchester Grammar School founded Grasshopper Club Zürich at the start of the new term in 1886. Blue-and-white shirts were obtained from Blackburn Rovers.

In 1909, Grasshoppers moved to Hard, an industrial district by the river Limmat. Hungarian Izidor 'Dori'



Heugümper

Kürschner then brought tactical nous. Escaping the chaos of Budapest after World War I, Kürschner led Grasshoppers to three titles and two cups, the club moving to the Hardturm stadium in 1929.

Still in his thirties, Ottmar Hitzfeld arrived to win the double in 1990, then the title again in 1991. Under Zürich-born Christian Gross, Grasshoppers took back-to-back titles in 1995 and 1996. Gross left for Tottenham, but his signings Viorel Moldovan and Kubilay

Türkyilmaz provided the goals to grant Grasshoppers a 25th title in 1998.

Financial and boardroom upheavals then saw a swift turnover of coaches as FC Zürich and Basel monopolised the Swiss championship.

The demolition of the Hardturm, and subsequent failure to set up a new-build groundshare with FC Zürich, have dictated economics ever since. At the rebuilt Letzigrund, Grasshoppers supporters occupy the Fancurve GC in

Sektor B at the Baslerstraße end of the ground. Away fans are allocated blocks 27-31 in Sektor D on Badenerstraße. For **Transport** and **Bars**, see **Letzigrund**.

### Tickets

Tickets are sold **online** via Eventim ([eventimsports.de/ols/gcz](http://eventimsports.de/ols/gcz)) and on the day (SF5 levy) from the **Tageskassen** on Baslerstraße.

**Admission** is SF25 for the home end, SF50 in the sideline Gegentribüne and SF70 in the main Haupttribüne.



### Shops

The main outlet for merchandise in Zürich is at general football store **Fussball-Corner Oechslin** by **Schaffhauserplatz** tram stop, on the same No.2 line as the Letzigrund. On match days, a **stand** sets up on the corner of Baslerstraße and Herdenstraße.

### Bars

As well as the bars and restaurants near the ground – see **Letzigrund** – two venues in town are geared towards Grasshoppers.

**Sächs Foif** refers in local dialect both its address – Heinrichstraße 65, near Limmatplatz tram stop – and the scoreline of the Swiss Cup semi-final of 2004, city rivals FCZ on the receiving end. Closed whenever Grasshoppers have an away game, it's decorated with classic line-ups down the decades.

Business clients gather at the club's restaurant of the smart **Heugümper** on Waaggasse near Paradeplatz. It serves the public on weekday lunchtimes. **LO**



# SWITZERLAND 2017-18 FC Zürich

[www.liberoguide.com/fc-zurich](http://www.liberoguide.com/fc-zurich)



FC ZÜRICH

## FC Zürich

Quickly promoted back to the Swiss Super League in 2017, **FC Zürich** ([www.fcz.ch/en](http://www.fcz.ch/en)) are the populist team in Switzerland's most populous city. League champions a dozen times, 'FCZ' share the **Letzigrund** with local rivals Grasshoppers.

Der Stadtclub ('The City Club') date back to 1896.

The original FC Zürich wore red, changing to their current blue and white in 1909, by which time they had picked up a first Swiss title.

Having built the multipurpose Letzigrund, stage internationals and cup finals, the club was later forced to sell it to the City of Zürich.

FCZ only picked up after legendary Edi Nægeli became president in 1957. With his trademark hat and cigar, this owner of tobacco kiosks oversaw his beloved Stadtclub during their glory years. Thanks to the toss of a coin, FCZ reached the semi-final of the European Cup in 1964. An ageing Real Madrid side duly tonked the Swiss 6-0 at the Bernabéu. After Nægeli's death in 1979 came stagnation and relegation. Thanks to a goalscoring machine from Conakry, the Guinean Keita, Zürich

sparked back to life in 2006. Needing a win in the last game at Basel's St Jakob-Park, FCZ went into stoppage time with the score pegged at 1-1. Zürich's Iulian Filipescu struck with the very last kick of the game, giving the visitors a shock title win and igniting the worst riot in Swiss football history.

Zürich won the league again in 2009, making the Champions League group stage for the first time, the prestigious visits of Real Madrid, Milan and Marseille filling the rebuilt Letzigrund.

The Swiss Cup win of 2016 coincided with relegation from the Swiss Super League, and fans storming the players'

tunnel. Order was restored with a swift return to the top tier in 2017.

At the Letzigrund, FCZ fans occupy the Südkurve, with standing places for domestic fixtures in Sektor D. Away fans are allocated Sektor B at the opposite end.

For details of **transport** and surrounding **bars**, see **Letzigrund**.

### Tickets

Advance tickets are sold at the **FCZ Fanshop** at Werdstraße 21, near the Stauffacher tram stop on the same No.2 line as the Letzigrund, and from **Ticketcorner** outlets in town. There are also **online sales** via **Eventim** ([www.eventimsports.de/ols/fcz-onlineshop](http://www.eventimsports.de/ols/fcz-onlineshop)). On the day, stadium **ticket windows** open 90min before kick-off.

The cheapest **admission** of SF20 is for standing in the home end (Sektor D).

Sitting there costs SF25, also in the away end (Sektor B). It's SF40 to sit in Sektor C, and SF50 for a prime seat in Sektor A.

### Shop & museum

FCZ run their own **Fanshop** at Werdstraße 21.

Merchandise includes branded Swiss Army knives, belts and beer glasses. In the same building, the free **FCZ-Museum** contains pennants, trophies and historic club shirts.

### Bars

For details on bars at the stadium, see **Letzigrund**. The one leaning towards FCZ is the **Versus-Bar** at Badenerstraße 281.

When the club had its offices on Letzigraben, nearby **Café Letzistübli** at Albisriederstraße 171 was patronised by employees and officials. **LE**