



# ACCESSIBLE SWISS PUBLIC TRANSPORT

WORDS: TARA WELLS

Switzerland squeezes 3000km of rail networks into a country two-thirds the size of Tasmania. Trains are clean, on-time and information is multilingual. Accessibility is mandated by Swiss law and embedded into every level of service. This combination makes public transport possible for every type of traveller.

A Swiss Travel Pass is key to discovering the network. Like the more well-known Eurail Pass (but restricted to travel within Switzerland), it covers unlimited train, bus and boat travel for 3-15 days. Most mountain excursions (such as cable cars and funiculars) require an extra discounted payment. Entry to more than 500 museums and castles is free with a wave of the pass.

[swissrailways.com](http://swissrailways.com)

## LUGGAGE SERVICE

There's a solution to unwieldy luggage. Available at extra cost, a transfer service transports bags between hotels in 26 Swiss cities. Book ahead, label bags with the next destination's hotel and leave at the current hotel's reception.

Search 'luggage' on [sbb.ch/en](http://sbb.ch/en)

## PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

Most Swiss trains have wheelchair-accessible toilets and wide-opening doors with little to no gap at platform level. The Swiss



Image: Swiss Travel System AG, Daniel Ammann

take accessibility seriously enough to list details of exactly what is available per train model.

Not all carriages have accessible toilets or wheelchair space. Use the SBB Mobile app to view train formation maps. These maps indicate where to wait on long platforms (Section A, B etc) for the required carriage, as well as the bistro location and first and second-class carriages.

When a train is not accessible, or in-person assistance and advice is required, call the dedicated helpline.

Search 'accessible travel' on [sbb.ch/en](http://sbb.ch/en)

Similarly, buses are usually equipped with low floor entrances or lifts, making it easier to board with a wheelchair or walking aid. If boarding independently or staff help is not possible at certain stops, a replacement shuttle service is provided to transport passengers to the next accessible stop.

Search 'travelling with reduced mobility' on [postauto.ch/en](http://postauto.ch/en)



Image: SBB CFF FFS

## VISUAL AND AUDITORY ASSISTANCE

For planning a public transport journey, use the SBB Mobile app for timetable information. Then for the actual trip, the SBB Inclusive app is invaluable. It helps people navigate train stations, the train journey, as well as tram and bus stops.

The app is useful for vision or hearing-impaired travellers who can't see signage or hear announcements. Information is either read aloud by voiceover or displayed in dark mode or with an enlarged font.

Once on board, the app confirms which train the passenger is on, shows upcoming stops and connections, which side to exit the train, plus any disruptions.

Search 'inclusive app' on [sbb.ch/en](https://www.sbb.ch/en)

## HIDDEN DISABILITIES

Switzerland's SBB joins businesses across more than 70 countries in adopting the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower. Wearing the sunflower lanyard indicates to staff that extra support may be required for travellers with invisible conditions such as neurodivergence, mental health issues, chronic pain and more.

This extends support for visitors arriving via Zurich and Geneva airports, both already sunflower hubs with facilities meeting international standards.

[hdsunflower.com](https://www.hdsunflower.com)

## DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Travellers with dietary needs benefit from the legal requirement for restaurants to name major allergens, such as gluten, nuts,

milk, eggs and soy. That includes bistro dining carriages on select trains as well as the more glamorous Glacier Express panoramic train known for its dining experience. Menus and ingredient lists can be found on-board and online. Search 'food and beverage menu' on [sbb.ch/en](https://www.sbb.ch/en)

## A MUSEUM AT THE FOREFRONT OF ACCESSIBILITY

Lucerne's Swiss Museum of Transport celebrates the past, present and future of mobility. There are displays of boats, cable cars, steam locomotives, motorbikes, cars and more. The museum is designed for accessibility (including two wheelchairs available to borrow) but the Swiss know that talking about mobility means featuring every aspect.

MovAbility is an interactive exhibition for people to experience the perspective of having a physical disability. A wheelchair course across 12 distinct surfaces (like smooth asphalt or bumpy cobblestones) shows how different surfaces affect steering. As Swiss racing wheelchair athlete, Heinz Frei, says: "It is crucial that visitors, especially decision-makers, experience what it means to be confronted with such barriers."

Swiss Travel Pass holders receive a 50% discount on museum entry.

[verkehrshaus.ch/en](https://www.verkehrshaus.ch/en)

## MORE

Search 'barrier-free travel' on [myswitzerland.com/en-au](https://www.myswitzerland.com/en-au) for suitable accommodation options, accessible excursions and accessible tour specialists. ●