



The opening of the space exhibition in the Swiss Museum of Transport
 Photograph by Philipp Schmidli

BE TRANSPORTED TO THE ULTIMATE MUSEUM OF MOVEMENT

All roads lead to Lucerne and the Swiss Museum of Transport

By Barbara Gibbs Ostmann

In Italy, all roads lead to Rome. But in Switzerland, all roads lead to Lucerne, the picture-postcard city nestled between mountain and lake in the heart of the country. Lucerne is a microcosm of the fabled Swiss Travel System, with its punctual and precise network of trains, boats, buses and cable cars that seamlessly links large cities and small villages throughout the country.

It seems fitting that the Swiss Museum of Transport (*Verkehrshaus der Schweiz* in German) is located in Lucerne, which is itself a transportation hub. The museum, Switzerland's largest, attracts around 800,000 visitors a year from around the world.

If you're just expecting a collection of trains or cars, you are in for a big surprise (although there are indeed plenty of trains and cars). The museum exhibits lead visitors of all ages on a fascinating journey via road, rail, water, air and space. Simulators, multimedia shows, interac-

tive platforms and more than 3,000 objects are all part of the experience.

Established in 1959, the museum continues to evolve, building bridges between the past, present and future of both traditional and unconventional modes of transportation and mobility. Your voyage of discovery could include:

RIDE THE RAILS: Test your skills by driving a train via one of three railway simulators in the Rail Hall. Get up close and personal with original rail stock, including cogwheel, steam and electric locomotives, or check out the model railway Gotthard line.

EXPLORE THE WATER: Take a journey through the history of marine navigation at the Nautirama, a 20-minute interactive audio-visual exploration that ends on the 160-year-old *SS Rigi*, the oldest side-wheel paddle steamer in the world. See the inside of the Mesoscafé submersible, the only Swiss submarine approved for operation, or visit the bridge of the *MS Adalboden*, a Rhine River freighter.

FLY LIKE A BIRD: More than 30 historic aircraft set the scene in the Aviation and Space Travel Hall, where you can try your hand at piloting a helicopter or a plane in a simulator. Get a sense of space travel in the Space Transformer, a rotating walk-in cube.

CHOCOLATE TOUR: Climb aboard for a ride through the Swiss Chocolate Adventure, learning about chocolate via your eyes, ears, nose – and, yes, palate. From the cultivation and harvest of the cocoa bean, to shipping it to Switzerland, then manufacturing and distributing the finished product around the world, the transportation chain involves ships, trucks, trains and aircraft.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN: You'll know you're at the Road Transport Hall when you see 344 Swiss road signs plastered on the sides of the building. This hall is being renovated and will reopen in April, with new displays and a horse-drawn carriage simulator. The ever-popular car collection has not been changed.

These activities represent just a few of the many things to see and do in this comprehensive museum of mobility. You can also visit the planetarium, 3-D cinema and areas focusing on information technology and modern communications.

Because you can easily spend the entire day at the museum, plan a lunch break at one of the three cafés. Allow time for some shopping at the museum gift shop. By the end of your visit, you'll know why the Swiss Museum of Transport is one reason all roads lead to Lucerne.

BEFORE YOU GO:

- Swiss Museum of Transport, Lidostrasse 5, CH-6006 Lucerne, Switzerland. Exhibits presented in English, German, French and Italian. Take a visual tour of the museum at Verkehrshaus.ch/en.
- Learn more about transport in Switzerland at SwissTravelSystem.com.
- For help planning your trip to Switzerland and Lucerne (*Luzern* in German), visit MySwitzerland.com and Luzern.com/en. **B**

Barbara Gibbs Ostmann spent two years in Switzerland doing graduate study and has been returning to the Alpine country ever since, exploring every canton and sampling every regional food specialty. Train travel and hiking are her favorite means of transport in Switzerland.