

The Two Cultures Wildflower Tour - Daily Itinerary

- Day 1 We personally meet you at the Zurich airport or the Zurich main train station on the morning of June 26 to validate your Swiss Travel Pass and exchange currency. We board our first train to the lovely city of Bern, the capital of Switzerland and a World Historic Site. We lead you on a tour of the city with highlights such as the picturesque farmer's market, the beautiful minster (a three-aisled pillared basilica) and the famous Zeitglockenturm (towering clock). We next visit the small village of Thun and enjoy a light lunch (provided by Yankee Travels) during a wonderful lake steamer ride while traveling down the Thunersee. We will then complete our picturesque train journey to Saas Fee.
- Day 2 The light hikers do an exciting part of the famous panorama hike above Saas Fee. This will include a very close approach to a glacier and its outwash plain. You may choose to descend by a cable system or walk back to the village through a unique area covered with acres of alpenrosen. The rigorous hikers will do the complete panorama hike above Saas Fee enjoying constant but ever changing vistas.
- Day 3 The light hikers enter a dramatic hidden valley filled with waterfalls and vistas of glaciers. The rigorous hikers trek to a high pass, which actually takes us into Italy for a short time as we gaze down from this high vista. This day will feature high alpine flowers as well as the spectacular vistas.
- Day 4 The light hikers do a famous high walk along the valley back to Saas Fee. A highlight of this walk, other than the fantastic views, is a visit to a mountain wood carver's hut to watch him at work. This is a long ridge walk with unsurpassed views which winds its way down to the valley through several lovely hamlets. The rigorous hikers do at least part of an exciting Hohenweg (high path) through a fabulous area of alpenrosen, several cascading waterfalls (under one of them via a tunnel) and enjoying airy but very dramatic vistas. We will be treated to a special dinner featuring raclette cheese.
- While staying in Saas Fee, we can do one day of hiking in ZERMATT. We would likely choose to ride high above Zermatt on the Gornagrat cog-railway so that we could hike near the highest mountains in Switzerland with a view of the Matterhorn. (see Day 3 of the Three Cultures Tour)
- Day 5 We travel a short distance to Wengen, our second village. This is a great day to use your travel pass for a lake steamer ride on the Brienersee or Thunersee near the town of Interlaken. You may also consider visiting the Swiss National Open Air Museum in Ballenberg or renting a bicycle for a ride along one of the lakes. Many of us will have lunch on a wonderful sun terrace of a grand hotel overlooking a lake on one side and a fabulous waterfall on the other, along with doing a lake steamer ride on the Brienersee.
- Day 6 After taking the cog train down to the beautiful Lauterbrunnen Valley, the light hikers take a cable car to the start of a high level walk above the Lauterbrunnen Valley, gazing at the Jungfrau, Monch and Eiger on the way to the small village of Murren. We lunch at a terrace overlooking the valley and return on a lower trail viewing the trio of peaks from a different perspective. In the afternoon we visit a roaring waterfall that has eroded its course through a mountain. The rigorous hikers will take a cable car to the little village of Murren. From there they will walk into a lovely alpine valley and climb up to a high hut in the shadow of the Schilthorn. They will return to Murren on a higher trail with wonderful valley and mountain views.
- Day 7 Both groups will travel to the end of the Lauterbrunnen Valley and take the cable car to a village featured in one of Rick Steeves' PBS travel shows. The rigorous hikers will soon climb by a ridge trail into the very end of the Lauterbrunnen Valley, with views of waterfalls and snow-covered peaks, and a lunch at a berg hotel famous for its fruit custard tarts. The light hikers will go all the way into a lovely hidden and wild valley, picnicking in a meadow beneath the magnificent headwall and with waterfalls and wildflowers all around.
- Day 8 The light hikers go by cable car from Wengen to a high ridge where we enjoy a superb panorama of the Interlaken lakes, the Lauterbrunnen Valley and the magnificent trio: the Eiger, Monch and Jungfrau. The rigorous hikers climb the ridge to where we often see the wild goat species of Switzerland. We hike to the famous Kleine Scheidegg with the massive trio constantly in view. You may choose to spend your last afternoon visiting the Jungfrauoch or hiking part of or all the way back to Wengen. The group usually has lunch in a fabulous meadow with the famous trio of mountains looming before us. We always end our tour with an "awards night" and a celebratory dinner.
- Day 9 We board an early morning train back to Zurich for your flight home. Some of you will travel to Zermatt to begin your next week with Yankee Travels. The earliest you can arrive at the Zurich airport is 8:16 AM.