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### Epic Places in Switzerland

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- The Consul Reflects
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Photo © St Beatus Caves@Dietrich Michael Weidmann/WikCommonshttps://

Epic Places in Switzerland that even the Swiss don't know about. Switzerland is spoiled when it comes to scenery, with stunning lakes and the Alps. However, there are many more sights to see that are less well known, but not any less breath-taking.

The St. Beatus Caves are located on the northeastern shore of Lake Thun near Interlaken and lead deep into the interior of the immense Niederhorn Massif.

The legend of the cave revolves around its namesake, the wandering Irish monk St. Beatus, who lived around 100 AD, and chose this cave in which to spend his pious hermitage. To his annoyance, however, he discovered someone was already living there; a horrible dragon, who shot lasers of fire from his blazing eyes. St. Beatus, however, would not be run out of his cave so easily, and held his cross up to the beast, invoking the Holy Trinity. Thrown into a hysterical fit, the dragon ran down the cliff and threw himself into Lake Thun below, causing the placid clear water to rise and boil. So the legend goes.

Like the Alps once were, the St. Beatus Cave is largely unexplored. A beautiful old fashioned Swiss-style building that serves as the cave entrance clings to a vertical rock face. A

waterfall seems to leak from beneath the structure, and into Lake Thun below. Bridges and walkways cross the waterfall, and as one climbs to the top, each vista is more inspiring than the last.

The cave has charmingly named stalactites and stalagmites, and a number of underground waterfalls and lakes. A prehistoric settlement as well as the cell of St. Beatus can also be viewed in the caves. A small museum with cave bear artifacts discovered within and a history of the dangers and delights of caving is also housed here. The cave museum also informs about cave research and surveying. For children and adults with a fascination of the mystique of dragons, the Fable House is full of displays on dragons throughout history and Bernese Oberland legends.

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<https://theculturetrip.com/authors/sean-mowbray/>  
[www.myswitzerland.com](http://www.myswitzerland.com)

## Epic places

Continued from front page



**Aare Gorge: Aareschlucht, Meiringen**  
10,000 years ago glacial run-off eroded a deep fissure into limestone to carve out the nearly 200 metre deep Aare Gorge. With the help of a network of trails and tunnels, it's possible to walk along the entirety of the 1.4 kilometre



### Creux de Van, Jura

It took millions of years of erosion for the giant natural amphitheatre to form in Jura mountains. The 160 metre high curving vertical cliff is a haven for ibex, marmots, birds of prey and many other species of wildlife. The Creux de Van is found close to Val-de-Travers district of Neuchâtel, and is a two hour drive from Geneva.



### Saut de Brot, Brot-Dessus

At the bottom of the lush green Areuse Gorge stands a stone bridge that turns a walk through nature into something a bit more magical; like a gateway to Terabithia. Arching across the river between the two steep cliff sides, the Saut de Brot is perfectly placed to allow you to admire the power of nature that created the Areuse Gorge years ago. You can take it all in as part of a hike through the Val-de-Travers.



### Etang de la Gruère, Saignelegier, Jura

Hidden in the Jura mountain range is a beautifully small lake surrounded by a boggy marsh. This is the Etang de la Gruère and it's considered a peat bog of national importance. Its atmosphere and scenery is more like that of the Nordic regions than central Europe. It takes around 45 minutes to walk around the entirety of the lake and there are also guided tours of the wider nature reserve.



### Cascade du Dard & Tine des Conflens waterfalls, Vaud

A two hour hike from the town of Romainmôtier in the canton of Vaud takes you to two beautiful, and relatively unknown, natural waterfalls. After trekking through the Nozon gorge, which has been compared to the Grand Canyon, you'll be greeted by the Cascade du Dard waterfall. The trail then leads to the Venoge valley and the Tine des Conflens, a stunning waterfall shrouded in greenery.



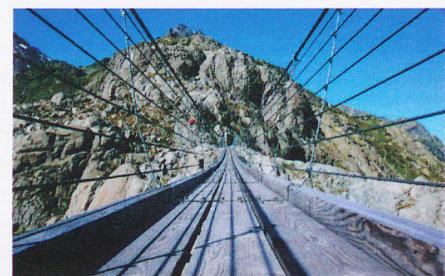
**Château de Tourbillon & Valère, Sion**  
All eyes may be on the famous Château Chillon in Montreux, but in the town of Sion, there are a pair of other castles worth checking out. The two imposing castles sit on two hills opposite one another, overlooking the town that back

in its day was the capital of Valais. The old town of Sion is also worth visiting as its medieval buildings are well preserved.



### Oeschinen Lake, Kandersteg

The mirror-like lake Oeschinensee captures the reflection of the surrounding mountains in its still waters. The lake is accessible via a gondola rail from the peaceful resort of Kandersteg.



### Trift Bridge, Bern

Stretching 170 metres and over 100 metres high, the Trift bridge is the longest pedestrian bridge in the Swiss Alps. We have climate change to thank for this marvel, as the bridge was built in 2004 because the Trift Glacier was no longer high enough to allow hikers access to the Swiss Alpine Club's Trift Hut. A word of warning, this is definitely not for the vertigo stricken.



### Sonierio, Bavona Valley, Ticino

The small village of Sonlerto has no electricity, and it's 35 chalets are only full during the summer. It takes less than three minutes to walk the only paved street of this hidden town in the heart of nature. This village is the most remote of The Bavona Valley. Built against the rock, Sonlerto is a fairytale hamlet and an easy walk on a well marked path across meadows and along the river brings one to the imposing waterfall of Foroglio.