

DEPARTURES

A Gourmand's Guide to Zürich —Switzerland's Hottest New Culinary Capital



Courtesy Zürich Tourism

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Where to eat and drink in this exciting
foodie hotspot.

By Michaela Trimble on June 14, 2018

Once seldom making the list of coveted gourmand getaways, [Zürich](#) often harbors the distinction as Switzerland's financial epicenter. But Zürich is quickly skirting its regimented, somewhat lackluster reputation as a business destination with the debut of gastronomy concepts from the country's leading culinary talents.

Much of this is thanks to [FOOD ZÜRICH](#), an annual production where more than 150 tasting sessions and culinary workshops are held throughout the city from May to June. The 11-day festival attracts locals and travelers alike, all vying for coveted tickets to events held everywhere from inconspicuous tunnels and museums to [over-the-top castles](#) and the city's finest restaurants. In its first year of production in 2016, FOOD ZÜRICH hosted around 62,000 visitors, with that number continuing to spike as foodies come from near and far to the event's annual street food festival, held in the city's trendiest district, Zürich-West, where experimental Swiss dishes are served side-by-side Sri Lankan pop-up stands and Argentine empanada booths.

While the festival showcases Zürich's rise as a culinary melting pot rife with international influence, a slew of next-generation chefs, farmers, and producers are busy opening new eateries reimagining Swiss cuisine, leading Zürich to claim it's much-deserved spot on Europe's culinary map. Here, the city's not-to-miss restaurants, food halls, and chocolate shops.



Courtesy Rübis & Stübis/Frau Gerolds Garten

Gamper

At this vegetable-forward kitchen in Zürich's vibrant Langstrasse quarter, chef Marius Frehner prepares rustic dishes over a charcoal grill to build [Gamper's](#) menu of sustainable Swiss cuisine. Perfectly crisp white asparagus marinated in chamomile kombucha complements heartier dishes like grilled lamb shoulder prepared in fennel, cilantro, and white wine, with almost every ingredient—from game to foraged plants, flowers, and mushrooms—found wild in the Swiss Alps. Gamper doesn't accept reservations, so expect to wait before you dine, but this eatery's surprise 5-course menu (changing monthly due to seasonality) is worth the wait.

Bauernschänk

Helvetiaplatz and Bürkliplatz markets inspire and supply laid-back, unpretentious [Bauernschänk](#), a restaurant with a rotating menu of 15 to 20 dishes like charred asparagus topped with a slow-poached egg and Swiss-French saucisson sausages dusted with shaved pecorino. These small plates accompany delicacies by Zürich makers: sourdough bread from Eigenbrötler bakery, meat from butchery Holzen Fleisch, and Swiss wines from natural producers like Markus Ruch. As the newest restaurant in Zürich's emerging culinary scene, Bauernschänk, translating to farmer's tavern in Swiss German, stays true to its name with its homemade production of syrups, kombuchas, and shrubs to make delicious lemonades.

Zunft Haus Zur Waag

It's hard to miss [Zunft Haus Zur Waag](#), the iconic baby blue linen and wool weaver guild house overlooking Münsterhof, one of Zürich's most picturesque Lindenhof squares, adjacent to Fraumünster Church, where the stunning stained-glass windows by Marc Chagall attract aesthetes worldwide. At this Zürich mainstay, chef Alain Koenig elevates traditional Swiss staples like the famous Zürich-style sliced veal served with *rösti*, a potato fritter crisped to perfection with ladles of butter.

AuGust

Equal parts brasserie and butchery, the gray-and-white marble tiled **AuGust** celebrates the finest meat and sausages in Switzerland. Housed within the luxurious Widder Hotel, and formed as an ode to the property's original roots as the Zum Widder guild of butchers, executive chef Tino Staub and Daniel Käser combine Swiss products with an international influence to create a provincial menu dedicated to almost forgotten staples. These include *leberkäse* meatloaf baked with forest mushrooms and bacon, *wiedikerli* sausage by Zürich-based butcher shop Metzgerei Keller, and small plates like boiled beef salad, chitterlings, and homemade pies and tartars.



Oliver Nanzig/Courtesy Widder Hotel

BANK

The fresh focaccia this Swiss-Mediterranean eatery-bakery hybrid serves fresh is reason enough to visit [BANK](#), especially when it's presented atop a wooden plank, piping hot, with a medley of house-made dips: baba ganoush, lima bean hummus, and feta cream. Served in an urban oasis by Helvetiaplatz in Zürich's Kreis 4 neighborhood (greenery inhabits almost every space and lights are streamed throughout the former bank's vaulted ceilings), try shareable small plates like crispy meatballs, a flagship Swiss prime beef burger, and roasted cauliflower topped with almond flakes, sour cream, and pomegranates.

Ooki

This Japanese Isakaya is one of many new restaurants putting Zürich on the map as an international culinary destination. Sitting just west of Zürich's Old Town in the residential Wiedikon neighborhood, [Ooki](#) is a warm space, accented with natural wood and steel, and beloved by locals for renditions of Japanese staples made Swiss with regional ingredients: peppery udon soup, donburi rice bowls, and hearty ramen made from pork bones. Go for dinner to enjoy to enjoy these dishes, but be sure to start with miso soup prepared fresh daily and end with one of nearly a dozen saki varietals on rotation.

Chocolat Dieter Meier

Along the banks of the Limmat River and down a cobblestoned road near Zürich's Old Town, get your Swiss chocolate fix at new age [Chocolat Dieter Meier](#). Here, chocolate is extracted cold, meaning the individual components of the cocoa bean are separated, creating a new way to taste chocolate's seven flavor variants. Dark chocolate lovers will find this shop especially appealing, as the outfit produces the varietal with a bitter-free 90 percent cocoa ratio.



Nelly Rodriguez/Courtesy Markthalle im Viadukt

Markthalle at Im Viadukt

At the revived Im Viadukt—a railway transformed into a strip of over 30 concept shops housed within the viaduct's stone arches—is [Markthalle](#), a food hall opened in 2010 in the once industrial Zürich-West neighborhood. Of the twenty vendors, visit small Swiss producers like Kick Cheese for mountain-fresh dairy, Kaeser Schloss for whiskey and gin, and Berg und Tal for mustard made in historic mills and honey sourced from bees in Ticino. Don't miss a chance to dine at Restaurant Markthalle, too, for bone marrow topped with fleur de sel, an authentic and delicious Swiss dish rarely appearing on menus in the city's most popular restaurants.

Frau Gerolds Garten

After browsing the stalls at Markthalle, venture to the ultimate summer hangout at [Frau Gerolds Garten](#), where you can drink Swiss beers and eat *wiediker* sausages at the outpost's rooftop terrace overlooking Zürich's Hardbrücke railway station. Opened in the summer of 2012, this outpost is more like a day party than a dining destination, as the area—situated behind the Freitag Tower—has been transformed into a modular city garden, draped with pennant streamers and featuring its own garden and pop-up shops.