

	what you order
	medium to high
	snacks, soups, lunch specials, tapas, breakfast
	free, clean; the Ladies' has lavender colored highlights and actual dried lavender in a basket
	free WiFi, ask for the code, the network is called "schön, dass du da bist" (nice to have you here)
	alt/punk neighborhood
	rare wall sockets
	part of former factory with pleasant outdoor seating. They also sell books from local publishers
	Lorrainestrasse 15, 3013 Bern
	wartsaal-kaffee.ch
	46°57'23.85"N, 7°26'41.22"E



+ **Book club** Books on the corner shelf are handpicked by Bern's bookstore network, b-lesen, every three months. The aim is to present high quality literature and local or international writers you might not find at the big chains.

A quotation from Heinrich Heine expresses how the people at Wartsaal feel about this part of the café: "Of all the worlds ever created by mankind, that of books is the most powerful."

-----► The idea behind Wartsaal is to offer lovers of books a café for reading, discussions or good old-fashioned food. There are local and international newspapers (in German) to read, and a bookshelf in the corner next to the bar holds books that are specially selected four times a year by the local bookstore network (→ + on opposite page).

You won't be the only one working here. Before and after lunch the tables are often taken by people writing, reading or having some sort of quiet discussion. The ambience is relaxed and friendly, there is free WiFi and the mood during the day is mainly calming, as everyone hunkers down and gets things done.

Wartsaal holds readings by both established and first-time writers every few weeks (occasional events are in English) and on Monday evening, the management shows its compassion for those short of pocket by offering a warm meal and a drink for just CHF 15 – you can also pay more if you have it and want to support the cause.

They played Patent Ochsner the first time I was there – this is like going to a bar in New Jersey and hearing them play Bruce Springsteen all afternoon.



Four Seasons des Bergues, Geneva

D1

28

	what you order
	medium to high
	in-house café, bar, restaurant
	free, luxurious
	free basic WiFi, fee-based highspeed WiFi
	Geneva's lakeshore, old town and shopping district
	rare wall sockets
	historical landmark that dates back to 1834
	Quai des Bergues 33, 1201 Geneva
	bergueshotel.com
	46°12'25.19"N, 6° 8'48.92"E



+ **Geneva Festival** There won't be much room for you in the lobby during this festival held in early August, when there is an increase in the number of hyper-rich – many from Persian Gulf oil states – here to visit the fortunes they have housed in the local banks. Extended families rent entire floors in the five-star hotels lining the river and lake, and you'll see children in the company of the men in the family out strolling through the fair held along the quai du Mont-Blanc, as their burqa-clad mothers, aunts and grandmothers wave to them from the balconies above. Stores have been known to close to the public while a private group of customers stocks up on luxury goods. These visitors are just one of the reasons why the rues basses surrounding the rue de Rive have such a high density of top brand boutiques.

-----► Spending time in this sumptuous grand hotel lobby, opulent with ornamental stucco, marble and Louis Philippe furniture, is like sitting down for tea with a very classy aunt of a certain age. But where other Swiss hotels of this era can be snotty, musty and fraying at the edges, the des Bergues is fresh and fun, with a love of fabulously complicated floral arrangements and service that is genuinely warm and unpretentious. It first opened in 1834, so the staff have had time to perfect their approach. Luxury hotels around the world could learn a lesson from this grand hotel.

To reserve your seat for a while, you can order a Barolo Brunate Bricco Rocche 2005 by the glass for CHF 42, but they also have a regular cup of coffee for a fraction of that, so all budgets are welcome. Another rarity on offer is free WiFi for anyone on the premises, with a speed good for emails and internet searches. If you need something faster, you can upgrade to the fee-based package.



Gstaad Palace

C 2

29

	what you order
	medium to high
	2 bars, 5 restaurants
	free, luxurious
	fee-based WiFi
	Gstaad
	wall sockets
	Grand hotel, large lobby
	Palacestrasse 28, 3780 Gstaad
	palace.ch
	46°28'23.04"N, 7°17'23.28"E



+ **Will they even let me in?** Many people feel funny about going into a five-star hotel lobby, because they don't think they will be welcome. The best way to get into any luxury hotel around the world is to dress nicely – clean and slightly stylish is enough to do the trick, you don't need to wear your tiara. And act like you belong: cultivating the right air of entitlement is the key to the whole thing. It also helps if you order a drink.

But there's really no need to worry: all the luxury hotels in this book have been selected because they also target non-guests, so you will fit right in anyway. For them it is one more bit of revenue in the food and beverage column, with the hope that you might one day even be inspired to stay the night. But really you'll just start playing the lottery again.

----->▶ Having a drink or snack in the lobby of the Palace in Gstaad is not as expensive as you may think – I once tweeted an offhand comment about how my wallet would be empty the rest of the week if I had lunch there. The social media person at the Palace immediately responded, encouraging me to let the menu convince me it was affordable. This not only told me they are at an NSA level of tracking what is said about them, it also means they are happy to welcome non-guests to have a drink or lunch and hang out in their lobby.

Which is good for the purposes of this book, because the Palace has that perfect living room vibe that makes it really easy to work in. There is also a large, multilevel terrace overlooking the village of Gstaad and the surrounding mountains. Thanks to a motorized canvas canopy, it can be quickly covered in case of rain.

There are also plenty of interesting people to watch if you suddenly feel the need to procrastinate. Longtime celebrity residents and regular visitors to Gstaad include: Formula One CEO Bernie Ecclestone; the legendary Mary Poppins herself, Julie Andrews; actress Anne Hathaway; and marketing guru Madonna. Some are here for the skiing, the hiking or Switzerland's reputation for not getting overly excited at the sight of them; others come for high society events like the Menuhin Festival Gstaad or the Hublot Polo Gold Cup.



Villa Castagnola, Lugano

D5

30

	what you order
	medium to high
	terrace, bar, two restaurants, kebab stand down the street
	free, luxurious
	fee-based WiFi
	Monte Bré, Lake Lugano
	wall sockets
	Belle Epoque grand hotel with lush garden, terrace and lawn chairs
	Viale Castagnola 31, 6906 Lugano
	www.villacastagnola.com
	46° 0'23.37"N, 8°58'11.20"E



+ **Monte Bré** The funicular to one of Lugano's two fantastic viewpoints (the other is of course Monte San Salvatore), is right behind the hotel. The ride takes about 20 minutes and there is a restaurant at the top. If you are feeling energetic, there is also a series of paths that go up the very steep slope to the peak and the village of Bré; the hike takes about 1½ to two hours, depending on how fit you are. If that is too much of a challenge, there is also a loop walk that circles the top of Monte Bré and takes about an hour. It ends up at the funicular again, which makes it easier to get back down without ruining your knees. Another popular option is to ride the funicular to the peak and then walk down diagonally to Gandria (about 6 km, 2 hrs) and go back to Lugano by boat.

-----> At the edge of town in a quiet garden is one of Lugano's most luxurious hotels. Because it is not a busy hub in the city center and because there is a retirement home right behind it, the hotel tends to be quiet and the lobby is not very busy. Since you therefore will not be in the way, the very friendly staff is more than happy to let you work at one of the many tables in the lounge behind the reception area. These tables are the right height to make good desks and the upholstered armchairs are sturdy and comfortable. There is also a lush Mediterranean garden with a view of the lake – you can either sit on the terrace or lie on one of the lawn chairs. It is advisable not to do that, though, because you know you will just fall asleep in the sun.

The style of the Russian aristocrats who initially built a winter residence here in the late 19th century is still in evidence. Guests dress elegantly even during the day – you will not find ugly tourists in cheap t-shirts, shorts and flip-flops at the Villa Castagnola. Look down at what you are wearing before you enter and make sure you will not embarrass yourself.

This makes a nice stop on the way to or from Gandria (→ **51**) and the information → **+** on opposite page).

