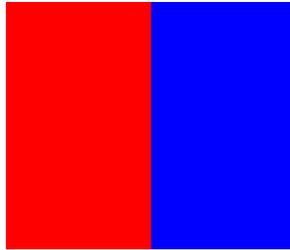
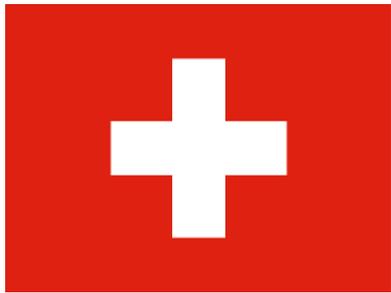


Welcome in Ticino (Switzerland)

v.2016



TICINO



Information for exchange students



With this guide we wish to give you some useful information to make your stay in Ticino (and in Switzerland) the most pleasant.

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1. How to reach Ticino



Located in the centre of Europe, the Region Ticino is easily reachable by all public means of transports. The optimal transport communication network of Ticino, also allows people arriving at any airport to easily travel within and to this region.

1.1 By train

All Ticino urban centers are connected to the national and international railway network, thus are easily reachable from any European train station.

By accessing the following website, which contains all information about available means of public transport to reach your destination (bus, tram, train, walking distance), you can plan your journey ahead: www.ffs.ch

1.2. By car

You can also easily reach Ticino by car: you need to drive onto the highway A2 through the San Gottardo Tunnel in Airolo, or onto the highway A13 through the San Bernardino tunnel. On both highways you can then reach Bellinzona (or Locarno and Lake Maggiore by taking the exit in Bellinzona South), Lugano, Mendrisio and Chiasso.

1.3 By airplane

Many airlines fly to the second biggest airport of Italy and there are lots of options with low cost flights. Milano-Malpensa airport is at 1 hour distance from Ticino and offers various possibilities to reach Ticino by shuttle. (<http://www.giosytours.ch/orari.pdf>).

The other option is to fly to Bergamo-Orio al Serio. (<http://www.orioshuttle.com/le-linee.cfm>)

Also in Lugano there is an airport which connects Ticino with Europe and the world with daily flights from and to Lugano (www.lugano-airport.ch).

2. Useful information during your stay in Ticino

2.1 Swiss currency

The official currency in Ticino is the Swiss franc. It is better if you change the necessary money in an Exchange bureau (you can find them at the train stations or in the city centre), as in a bank you'll have to pay an exchange fee. The official exchange rate is (as of 1.4.2016):

1 CHF = 0,9136 EUR / 1 EUR = 1,10 CHF

2.2 Phone calls

To make a phone call in Ticino, the cheapest way is to use a Swiss phone card. This applies also to your mobile: it is more convenient if you get a Swiss card SIM, considering that you can charge it with Swiss francs without any problem.

On the website www.comparis.ch you can compare different telephone operators and their rates. For further information, you can also consult the website of the main operators:

Swisscom (www.swisscom.ch)

Sunrise (www.sunrise.ch)

Salt (www.salt.ch).

If someone wishes to phone you in Ticino, he/she has to dial the international code **0041** for Switzerland, and then the local code **91** for Ticino leaving out the 0.

For instance 0041-91-8151071 (LSE phone number).

Emergency numbers in Ticino:

Police	117
Ambulance	144
Information Service (also for first aid doctor or dentist)	1811

3. Canton Ticino

3.1 History

Ticino, long a rural buffer area between the Swiss German cantons north of the Alps and Italy to the south, was absorbed by the Swiss in the late 15th century after centuries of changing hands between the lords of Como and the dukes of Milan. In earlier days it had been a loosely controlled Lombard fiefdom and, before that, a Roman frontier stronghold.

When the founding cantons of the Swiss confederation, Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden, had secured their independence of Habsburg Austrian control, they decided to move to protect the soft Alpine underbelly to the south. This they managed to do with surprising alacrity, defeating a superior Milanese force at Giornico in the Valle Leventina in 1478 and taking fortified Bellinzona in 1503.

Napoleon came to upset the Swiss apple cart in 1798 and ended Swiss German domination of Ticino. For a while it became an independent republic, then in 1803 it entered the new Swiss Confederation concocted by Napoleon as a free and equal canton. (fonte: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/switzerland/ticino/history>)

The official language in Ticino is **Italian** and its people maintain a strong bond with the Italian culture. Having assimilated the best aspects of Italy and Switzerland, the *Ticinesi* reunite the vitality and hospitality of the South with the efficiency and the sense of order of the North.

3.2 Geographical position

Situated at the South of the Alpes, Ticino borders northward with the cantons Vallese, Uri and Grigioni, and southward with Italy. Known and appreciated for its mild and Mediterranean climate on the lakeshores Maggiore and Ceresio, Ticino offers also an alpine landscape, with mountains rising up to 3'000 m, and quiet valleys with traditional villages. Its capital is **Bellinzona**, a city known for its famous carnival, but also for being listed in the UNESCO heritage for its 3 castles and medieval fortresses.

Other urban centers are Lugano, Locarno, Mendrisio, Chiasso.

Lugano, the economic capital, attracts tourists for its magnificent lake, which is even more suggestive if it is admired from the top of Mount Bré or Mount San Salvatore. A city of 70'000 inhabitants, it offers all the infrastructures, recreational, sportive and cultural services as well as various cultural and international events.

Locarno, with the nearby town of Ascona, is a well known city mainly by German tourists and certainly not only for its famous international film festival, which starts on the first week of August. Worthwhile doing it is the boat tour on the lake Maggiore, with a visit to the botanical gardens of the Brissago islands, or an excursion to the wild and suggestive valleys: Verzasca, Maggia, Centovalli, Onsernone.

Going southward from Lugano there is **Mendrisio**, a quiet medieval village, immerse in the hills of an almost Tuscan landscape. One can also visit "Swissminiature", an open museum by the lake in Melide, which reproduces the most characteristic Swiss attractions on a reduced scale. Mendrisio is a good point of start to reach the top of Mount Generoso (by cog railway); its 2'400 m offers a magnificent view of the Padana plane and also of the Mount Rosa. You can also go to the Mount S. Giorgio, which is rich in fossils and it is listed in the Unesco heritage for the finding of a particular type of dinosaur, the *Ticinosaurus*.

Chiasso is the most southward city of Ticino and the door to Italy; a typical frontier town which borders with Como. In less than 1 hour you can reach Milan, the city of fashion, culture and show business.

3.3 Demography

With a territory of 2'812 km² (7 % of Switzerland) and a population of 350'000 people (about 4,3 % of Swiss population), Ticino is the only canton situated to the South of the Alps.

3.4 Ticino economy

With its efficient policy in the field of employment, Switzerland holds the first place in Europe, and of course even the Canton Ticino plays its role. In average, people work about 42 hours per week.

60 % of GDP (gross domestic product) originates from Tourism and the tertiary sector, which employs 56 % of the active population. One of the key sectors that has mostly grown in the last years, is the banking domain: with about 60 banks, Lugano is third on the financial markets of Switzerland. On the other hand, agriculture employs only 2 % of the workers.

Its international position is an additional strength of Ticino.

The population is highly qualified and speaks different languages (French, German and English), which favors business relations with companies abroad.

Remuneration per capita is in average over 37'800 CHF, which corresponds to about 23'925 EUR per year.

However, Ticino is only on the 20th position amongst the 26 cantons.

Please note that the shops opening hours in Ticino are the following:

Monday:	08.00h – 18.30 h	
Tuesday:	08.00h – 18.30h	
Wednesday:	08.00h – 18.30h	
Thursday:	08.00h – 21.00h	(not everywhere till 21:00h)
Friday:	08.00h – 18.30h	
Saturday:	08.00h – 17.00h	

4. Tourism Ticino



4.1 Ticino Tourism office

You can consult the official website of the Ticino Tourism office (www.ticino.ch) for any information about the region Ticino. You can easily find online the following:

- Updated information
- Gastronomy
- Meteo forecast and webcams
- Postcards with Ticino themes to be sent as e-postcard
- Information about cultural events
- Suggestions for excursions and sportive activities
- History and geography of Ticino
- Downloads of various pamphlets about Ticino
- Apps: HikeTicino and visitTicino
- App TiSale → for events

4.2 Free time activities

Ticino offers recreational activities for everyone, students, families with children or business men, all in a fascinating frame which won't be easily forgotten.

With its international events, Ticino is a good reference point for culture and sport. During the whole year various type of events occur in the region; musical and film festivals, concerts, sport contests and shows animate the cultural life of Ticino, further enriching the tourist stay.

For further info: <http://www.ticino.ch/what-to-do.html>

- <http://www.agendalugano.ch/> → *Weekly and monthly events programme*

(Fonte: Ticino Turismo Bellinzona)

5. Useful websites

http://www.swissinfo.ch/ita/index.html	Portal of news and information in nine languages of the SRG SSR idée suisse (Società svizzera di radiotelevisione) with a wide list of links concerning Switzerland
http://www.myswitzerland.com/it/home.html	Official website of <i>Turismo Svizzera</i> with all information about Switzerland
www.swissworld.org	Information about different aspects of Switzerland (economy, politics, culture, society..)
http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Svizzera	Information about Switzerland in the <i>Wikipedia</i> Encyclopedia
www.ticinohelp.ch	Portal of information on websites of Ticino and about Canton Ticino
www.ticino.ch	Website of <i>Ticino Turismo</i> with hotel guide, news, events calendar, etc. in the region Ticino
www.ffs.ch	Swiss railway – with timetable, booking online, individual calculation of the journey
http://www.lugano-airport.ch/	Airport of Lugano, with flight schedule
www.arcobaleno.ch	Arcobaleno – pass for the public means of transport in Ticino
www.postfinance.ch	Information on how to open a post account
http://www.ticino.ch/multimedia/webtv.html	Videos of Ticino