

**Ep #153: Switzerland on Points:
Jess's Jungfrau & Zurich Adventure**



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Hosts

Alex Payne, Jess Field, and Pam Lorg

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Ep #153: Switzerland on Points: Jess's Jungfrau & Zurich Adventure

Alex: Wanna hear all about Jess's recent trip to Switzerland with her mom? She scored business class flights to Zurich and used a mixture of points and cash for her hotel stays. Listen up as she shares exactly how she did it and how you can do it too.

Welcome to *Points Talk with the Travel Mom Squad*. We are three moms who've discovered how to leverage credit card welcome offers to get hundreds of thousands of dollars of travel expenses for nearly free. We've used credit card points and miles to take vacations to places like Hawaii, Paris, Greece, Maldives, Japan, and so much more. And the best part? We each still have 800 plus credit scores. Imagine being able to take the vacation of your dreams for nearly free. It's totally possible, and we're here to show you how.

Alex: Hey, I'm Alex.

Pam: And I'm Pam, Alex's mom.

Jess: And I'm Jess. Let's talk points.

Alex: So Jess, when I say just returned, I mean you flew in yesterday from a mother-daughter trip to Switzerland. If it's no surprise here, we here at TMS love our mother-daughter trips. So Jess, we want to hear all about how you got there and where you stayed. We haven't covered Switzerland. I know you've been, Mom. I've never been, but we haven't...

Pam: I've been to much of where she went. I am so excited to hear about it because it seriously is one of the most beautiful places in the world. Grindelwald will forever have my heart, and I have to go back. And I know after I listen to her, I'm going to be like, okay, I'm planning one for next year.

Jess: Okay, well, technically, you both went to Switzerland. But it was more like you were in Italy than Switzerland because it was so close to Italy.

Pam: Exactly.

Alex: We were, where did we go again, Mom?

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Pam: The Villa Orselina.

Alex: That's right. In what part of... Lugano, is that right?

Pam: Yes.

Alex: Something with an L.

Jess: Yes. It was Lugano. Okay. But it's like right by the Italy border.

Alex: Yes. It's like right by, it's not even very far from Lake Como. It's kind of more like that kind of feel to it. So I don't really feel like I've been to, when you think of Switzerland, that's not where I was. So I still need to go do that. So anyway, we're super excited to hear about your trip. First up, tell us about your flights because I know this trip kind of came about because of a flight deal, right?

Jess: Thrifty Traveler, once again coming through with a flight deal. So, Switzerland had been on my bucket list for a very long time. I was waiting for a deal. It's funny, though, because this route that I flew actually isn't super hard to find award availability. So if you do want to go to Switzerland in business class, I feel like this is one of the better ways to get there and the easier ways to get there on points.

So we're in Houston, obviously. We positioned from Houston to Boston, and then we just paid cash for that flight on United. But then, no, I redeemed points through Points Boost. That's what I did. So I was able to get first class seats for me and my mom from Houston to Boston via Points Boost, and it was like 3,000 points more than economy to fly first class because I was getting two cents per point for first class. And so I was like, done. I usually never redeem points for domestic first class, but in that instance, I was like, we're doing it.

So we actually did redeem Chase points via Points Boost for our flights to Boston. We had about six hours in Boston. We went to the Chase Sapphire Lounge®, so that was exciting. I got to get me and my mom in with my new Chase Sapphire Reserve®. And then we flew from Boston to Zurich on Swiss Air, but we booked it through Air Canada.

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And so this is kind of a sweet spot to get to Switzerland. It is only 60,000 points, plus we paid \$57.17 each in business class and taxes. And those are really, really low taxes. I know sometimes people are a little bit scared of taxes because if you're flying Air France or KLM, sometimes the taxes can be \$200, \$300 a person. But \$57 in business class is pretty dang good. And so huge sweet spot to Switzerland.

Alex: And 60,000 points is good too.

Pam: Yeah, that's amazing.

Jess: So we, so I transferred from American Express to Air Canada. This is my little trick. I transferred all 120,000 points, and then I had my mom transfer 60,000 Chase points to me to pay me back because she doesn't have Amex points. So I feel like it works out well for both of us for me to just book it that way.

Alex: Did she transfer the Chase points to you or did she transfer Hyatt points to you?

Jess: Oh, she, no, she transferred from Chase to Hyatt and then Hyatt points combining from to me, because we do not live in the same household.

Alex: Yes.

Jess: So yeah, 60,000 points, it's a great option. I thought the, I thought as far as business class goes, it was okay. I'm never going to complain about a lie-flat seat to Europe, but the flight was only, we were only in the air for like less than seven hours. And so it's kind of hard to get a decent amount of sleep when the flight's so short. And so we were in the older business class, it was the A330. The configuration is bizarre. It's like one, two, two, it like alternates. It's it's weird. So anyways, we were both, I got us each window seats so that we were by ourselves.

But starting in November, they are going to start flying the new A350 from Boston to Zurich. And so I feel like that experience is going to be much better. I think it was like more on par with Iberia. It wasn't like Emirates or Singapore, it was, but you're only paying 60,000 points. The service was really good. I just

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found the seat uncomfortable, and the in-flight entertainment screen was like really small and dated. But I only watched the flight map anyway, so that didn't really matter to me.

Pam: I have to say, Jess, this is hilarious to listen to this. Can you imagine 10 years ago if we even thought we could have laid in any lie-flat seat? And now we're like, yeah, that one didn't like it as well. Oh yeah, the screen was only three times bigger than economy instead of four or five. It's definitely first-world problems or first-world problems for points and miles users.

Jess: I know, it totally is. But yeah, the service was great. The food was just like, the food was fine. But yeah, I mean, 60,000 points and \$58 to fly lie-flat to Europe is a steal. So, really glad we got that deal. And then coming home from Switzerland, we actually flew economy that time. I was able to find Zurich to Houston. There's no direct flights, but we stopped in Chicago. So Zurich to Chicago, Chicago to Houston on United for 40,000 United miles each and \$66 in taxes.

And so I feel like that, like 40,000 miles to get all the way to Houston from Zurich, only \$66 in taxes, like so often, taxes coming home from Europe are also really high. So I mean, we're talking like a little over \$100 total in taxes for both of these flights. So I transferred those from Chase. I booked it for both of us. I considered, I was thinking, okay, I'll just upgrade to Polaris Business Class, you know, at check-in. It was \$3,000 a person to upgrade.

Pam: Was it almost packed or something? Because I've never seen it be that high.

Jess: There were maybe six or seven empty seats.

Pam: Whoa. That's surprising.

Jess: So, leading up to check in, it was \$6,500. And obviously, like I, I would never pay that.

Alex: That's crazy.

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Jess: And then I was waiting to for check-in, I was like, okay, maybe because you know my rule is I'm willing to pay \$100 an hour for long-haul business class. And so it was a 10-hour flight. So I was like, okay, \$1,000 is my cutoff. You know, I knew that going in. And then at check-in, it was \$3,000 each, and I was like, that's a no. I do have I have Silver...

Alex: Did you check again later? Sometimes, like, okay, like I'll check in at the check-in and then like the next morning, I've seen it drop down to a reasonable amount.

Jess: Yeah. So, but it was a daytime flight and I was like, I...

Alex: Yeah, that's not worth it at all.

Jess: I wouldn't have paid \$3,000 regardless. Like, it could have been an overnight flight, and I wouldn't have paid that. I do have Silver status with United, and so I was able to get us a row of two Economy Plus for the flight home. And that was free. And so, it wasn't, it really wasn't that at all.

So and I really like, I mean, United's always good. I thought the food was good and the in-flight entertainment was good. I got my mom to watch The Pit. She watched the entire series on the flight home. I was like, you have to watch it. It's so good. So that is how we did it. So it was a total of 100,000 points and a little over \$100 per person round trip, which I think is pretty good for, you know, Switzerland.

Alex: Yeah.

Jess: Now, we stayed, okay, everything in Switzerland is pronounced differently. So I'm going to try and do my best. J's are pronounced as Y's, and W's are pronounced as V's. And so I'm going to do my best to pronounce everything correctly.

So we went to the Jungfrau region of Switzerland. That is where I wanted to go. There are no great points options to go there. But I was like, I don't care. That's where I want to go. So we flew into Zurich. We took the train from the Zurich airport to Grindelwald, which is where we stayed.

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Okay, there are pros and cons of transportation in Switzerland. And this was the biggest stressor for me leading up to this trip. Okay, so they have a robust public transportation system. They have boats, cable cars, trains, buses, trams, like everything you can think of. But it is a pain to figure out which pass you need. There are like 10 different passes. And I was like, I don't know which one to get. Like, I feel like I'm a reasonably intelligent person, and I had to watch like seven YouTube videos. I was like, I don't know which one to get.

I ended up, okay, so if you are going to Switzerland, you need to follow this account. It is called Aplins in the Alps. I'm going to link everything in the show notes because I'm probably going to mispronounce things, but they are Americans who now live in Switzerland, and they have YouTube videos and guides, and resources for every possible thing in Switzerland.

I actually bought their one-week guide to the Jungfrau region, and I ended up just doing what they said because it was like, buy this pass, do this, do this. And so I was like, I'm just doing what they say. It does seem, so there's a half-fare card, okay? And basically, that doesn't actually get you anything. It just gets you a discount on your transportation tickets. And so you pay, it's around \$150 a person. That's a, that's for adults 16 and over. You pay that up front, and then you save 50% off all your transportation for the whole time you're there. It seems like for most people, the half-fare card is the way to go.

I also got the three-day Jungfrau travel pass. That's what they recommended. It ended up working out better. You can buy from three to eight days. So if you're going to follow my exact itinerary, you're going to want the three-day, but it's just going to depend on how long you spend there.

Kids under six are always free on public transportation in Switzerland. So you don't need to buy them any sort of passes or tickets. Kids ages 6 to 15 can travel for half price. So they don't even need the half-fare card. They're just automatically getting half price because of their age. And then if you get the Jungfrau travel pass for kids ages 6 to 15, it's just 30 Swiss francs, which is around \$37, no matter the length of days. And so I feel like that's the way to go if

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you are going to this region. But again, you're going to, I could spend an hour talking just about transportation in Switzerland. And so you're going to...

Alex: I'm already confused.

Pam: Hey, Jess, would you ever have considered renting a car? Because when I went, I went with my brother-in-law, my brother, my son-in-law, and my daughter, and they were driving, of course. That just was so simple.

Jess: I would never rent a car.

Alex: Jess has very... Jess never rents cars.

Jess: No, it's not because of that. It's not because it's not even because of that. It's because even if you rent a car, you have to, you can't drive your car into the mountains. You still have to buy tickets, like even these people, Aplins in the Alps, I'm just going to call them Brett and Jana because they're my friends now, because I've watched all their videos. They're like, it pretty much never makes sense to rent a car in Switzerland if you're going to the mountains. If you're going where I went, because you're going to rent a car, you're going to have to pay to park your car, you're going to have to pay for the rental car, you're going to have to pay for gas, and you're still going to have to pay for tickets to get into the mountains because you can't drive into the mountains.

So, unless you want to spend a crap ton of money, which you're already going to spend just on these passes.

Alex: Well, that's what I'm thinking. I'm like \$150 to get a, you have to pay \$150 to get a discount?

Jess: Yes, but you end up, it ends up paying for itself because you buy so many tickets and they're so expensive.

Alex: Yeah. So I mean, we already knew Switzerland's crazy expensive, but I'm like, I thought public transportation was supposed to be cheap when you go out of, when you go places. This doesn't seem very cheap public transportation.

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Jess: No, not in Switzerland. It's not. Nothing is cheap. If you're looking for a budget trip, don't go to Switzerland. The SBB app is crucial. Again, I'm going to link it. The nice thing is you don't need to buy your tickets in advance because they, the price doesn't change. And so I was literally buying like our tickets from the airport to Grindelwald when we got to Zurich. I wasn't, you don't really have to plan ahead that much as far as your tickets. And so that is really nice. So...

Pam: So the SBB app is how you buy your tickets, then?

Jess: And that's how, that's how you buy your tickets, and that's also how you can see, you can plan your journey on there. You can say, like going from here to here, and it tells you like which cable car to take, or which bus to take, or which tram to take. And so it just, it makes it so much easier, and I would have been lost.

Pam: Jess, maybe you, Alex, and I need to do this. You just need to go with us. It would be a lot easier to not have to tax my brain and just have someone that knows how to do this already.

Jess: It was funny though, because like I was super stressed about it...

Alex: You've been there, you should kind of know, I guess

Pam: I know, but I was with Alan and Lindsay in a car. I didn't have to think about it. This was actually before I started points and miles. So yeah. It was a whole, it was a lifetime ago.

Alex: It's nice when you go with other people. Like, I'm sure your mom didn't even have, she just was there. She didn't have to use her brain because you're figuring it all out. Like, have you seen those reels where it's like traveling with so-and-so, and like, don't need my brain? Like that's what it's like if you go with Jess to Switzerland, you won't have to use your brain.

Jess: That was 100% my mom. She was just like, Where are we going? What are we doing? And I was having to plan everything, but I found it so stressful because I'm like, you know, I'm in charge of getting us where we need to be. And...

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Alex: And you're like, I've never been here either. I'm figuring this out for the first time.

Jess: It was easier than I expected once I got there, but it's still, you know, how we did the whole episode about, this is a great place for someone to go for their first trip to Europe. If you're planning to take public transportation, not Switzerland. So we stayed four nights in Grindelwald. Like I said, really no great points options in the Jungfrau region. But if you want to use Points Boost, you could get a good deal where we stayed.

So we stayed at the Bergvelt Grindelwald. We paid cash because I booked this like in January. I think I booked this hotel, and so I locked in a really good rate. But then once Points Boost came out, I found it on Points Boost for two cents per point if you have the Sapphire Reserve or the personal, or the business Sapphire Reserve. And so it was something like 160,000 Chase points. I looked like the week before we went for our dates. It was 160,000 or 70,000 Chase points for four, for our four nights, which I was like, okay, that's like 40,000 points a night. That's equivalent to a Hyatt category eight, if you think about it that way.

So if you want to say where we stayed, which I highly recommend, there is a points option available to you. I just happened to lock in a really good cash rate since we booked it so early that if I were to cancel it and rebook through Chase, I was going to, you know, it was going to be like \$500 more, and I was like, I'm not doing that. So I just kept it at the cash rate. Perfect location. I am obsessed with Grindelwald, like Pam said. It is so cute. There are a few...

Pam: The church, that church. You know the view in the Alps? Oh.

Jess: There are like a few different popular options, I would say in the Jungfrau region of where people want to stay. And so Grindelwald is one of them. That's why I chose it. I chose it because it was like, it's a little bit bigger than some of the like really tiny villages. Like I wanted the option to have lots of restaurants. I'm not cooking in my room. I'm not like eating ramen in my room. I want to like have fondue and eat cheese and like sausages. I don't want to eat in my room. And so I liked the option of Grindelwald because it has really good public

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transportation access, and it has lots of options for like shopping and restaurants, and stuff.

The hotel offered a free shuttle. They picked us up and dropped us off at the train station, which was really nice because we had our luggage, and it would have been like, we had to climb up a hill to get there. And so really nice to have that option. They offered free breakfast, which probably saved us \$200 a day with the cost of food in Switzerland.

And so we were kind of really strategic about our food. We would fill up at breakfast. I was like, Mom, eat like, eat like you're not going to eat the rest of the day. You know what I'm saying? You're not eating until dinner. And it's funny because she's like, I'm not a huge breakfast eater. And I'm like, I don't care. Fill up. We're sitting here for like an hour and a half, and we're eating so that we're not hungry until dinner time. So we would like eat a really big breakfast and then we would just go to a cafe and get like a coffee and a pastry and then we would eat out for dinner.

And so we were really only paying for one meal a day, and that allowed us to save a lot of money. The other nice thing is there are grocery stores everywhere, and so you can go get anything you need in any of these little villages. And those really aren't that much more expensive than like American grocery stores. And so if you did want to get like bread and peanut butter and jelly and just make sandwiches or, you know, get your own stuff for breakfast if you're a family and you're staying at a vacation rental, that would be really easy to do.

We also got a free Grindelwald guest card, which allowed us free public transportation, like free bus travel all around Grindelwald, which came in handy. They have a really pretty spa. They have an indoor pool and an outdoor. It's like an outdoor pool, but it's actually a jacuzzi with like little seats with jets with views of the Alps. Like I would like sit, I was like sitting there in the, in the hot tub, drinking my hot tea with like a view of the Alps, and I was like, this is amazing. Like I was...

Alex: That sounds amazing.

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Jess: Yeah, I was like, I just want to live here.

Alex: Did you get a video of that? Of you in there?

Jess: Yes, I did. Okay. I will share it whenever you...

Alex: So we'll have to... Yes. So people can see that when they go to your Switzerland story highlight.

Jess: Yes. So we got, we booked a junior suite at this hotel. It technically sleeps three because it had a king bed and a pullout sofa. The pullout sofa was for my mom because she snores. And so, yeah.

Pam: You guys, please... that's what happens to moms when they snore.

Jess: You know what, we need to travel together, and Alex and I can have a room, and you and my mom can share. We can have like a snoring room for you and my mom, for Pam and Linda to share.

We got, so but our suite had like a balcony with a view of the Eiger and so I think that is 100% worth it. Like, if you're going to Switzerland, you want to be able to just like walk outside and see the Alps wherever you are. And so I do think it was worth it to splurge on that. So overall, I loved this hotel. I think if you're going with more than three people, it could make sense to just get an Airbnb or a VRBO because, you know, two rooms, a lot of the, you know, it's it's Europe, a lot of the room occupancy is two, maybe three. But two rooms in Switzerland is going to be really, really expensive with just how much things cost there.

Okay, so now on to what we did in the Jungfrau region. So in my opinion, the best time to visit is mid-May to mid-October. I didn't know this when I booked the trip. I was just like, I have this opening in my calendar. We should go now. And I was watching one of Jana and Brett's videos, and they were like, our absolute favorite time to visit Switzerland is the last, is like the end of September through mid-October. And I was like, that's when we're going. Like that's amazing. Summer's really crowded, but you know, if you're if you're wanting the warmest weather, then summer would probably be the best time to go.

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I'm not speaking to skiers. If you're going to ski, I'm not the person to be giving you advice. And so I don't know when the, I mean, I'm assuming if you want to ski, you should go like December to February. But mid-May to mid-October, if you want to do a lot of things that we did because the other thing is like a lot of the cable cars will not be open when it's like really cold and snowy.

You always want to check the weather before you do anything. And so this was another thing I had to get used to. I'm like type A. I want to have my itinerary with what we're doing every day. And everything I read was like, don't. Like, have a loose idea of what you want to do, but don't get too locked in on it because depending on the weather, you might want to change your plans. Like if you were planning to go to the top of a mountain and it's raining and cloudy and you can't see anything that day, then you're not going to want to do that.

So the nice thing is they have webcams that you can look at for all these different areas we went to. And so we would get up in the morning and have our breakfast, and I'd say, okay, well, here's what I want to do today. Let me check the webcam and make sure it's clear and that we're good to go. And so that's really nice.

This is the perfect vacation spot for me and probably for y'all because everything closes early. And so it's a very much like a wake up early, do your thing. Every, you know, like the train and the buses and the cable cars, they stop running at like 6:30.

Alex: Oh, wow. So it's like the opposite of Spain.

Jess: Yes, which is my vibe. Like I do not want to live the Spain way of life. I want to live the Switzerland way of life. I want to get up early and go to bed early. Like, we were literally in bed by like 8:30 every night just because there's nothing. If you're looking for a party scene, the Jungfrau region is not the place for you, okay? Like it's just, it's just not, but it was perfect for us because that's like my, I love waking up early and going to bed early on vacation. And so it was great. Some of the things that we did were Grindelwald First. We took a gondola. It's, that's right by our hotel. It is this mountain with sweeping views over the Grindelwald Valley.

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We did a cliff walk. It's not as scary as it sounds. It's basically just like a bridge that wraps around the mountain. You have really cool views. There are so many hikes that you can do in Switzerland. I was with my mom who is 76 and doesn't really love hiking and isn't, you know, we can't, not capable of doing a lot of the hikes that were recommended. So I'm not going to talk about some of those, but there are tons of options for hikes.

We went to Pfingstegg. This is like made for families and kids. And my mom was like, Why are we going here? Because I was like, I want to ride the toboggan run, which is like this little car that you sit in. It's kind of like a go-kart, but it's on like a track and you like go around the mountain, and it's really fun.

It probably would have been more fun if I was like seven, but I still had fun on it. So we took the cable car there from Grindelwald also. That's this is another reason why Grindelwald is such a great place to stay. A lot of what we did and a lot of what you're going to want to do is super easily accessible from Grindelwald. So I did the toboggan run. I did my little car. They also have a fly line, which is kind of like zip-lining, but less intense. You're just like secured to these stainless steel pipes and you glide through the forest.

I think it would be a really fun place for families and kids. My mom thought it was kind of lame. She was like, We paid way too much to get up here just for this. They have like a bounce house. I mean, it was... Yeah, if you have kids, I would definitely recommend it. We had fondue at this restaurant. I'm not even going to attempt to pronounce the name, but I'm putting it in the show notes. Amazing views. Like we were literally sitting there like dipping our bread in fondue with like views of the Alps and like cable cars passing. It was just like, when you think of Switzerland, like that's the image you think of. And so that was really cool.

And then my favorite thing we did the entire trip was we went paragliding over Lauterbrunnen Valley. I had seen, I know y'all think that I'm nuts. I had seen videos of people doing this on Instagram, and I was like, Oh my gosh, I have to do that. Like that looks amazing. That's like a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. And so I figured my mom would want nothing to do with it.

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But I, you know, it's on Viator. I was like, I got to get my points through Rakuten, booking on Viator. So I texted my mom, and I was like, Hey, I'm going to book paragliding. Do you want to come? Do you want to just stand and watch? And she was like, No, I want to go. And I was like, okay. So I booked it for both of us. It's funny, though, because I booked it months ago, and our weather was beautiful. Like they it's one of those things where like they're they say, book it early on in your trip in case we need to, you know, reschedule you for a later date because the weather there is so unpredictable.

We had beautiful, sunny weather. And so I was really like, I didn't sleep very well the night before because I was like, I'm not going to die, right? Like, I it's like it's going to be fine. But yeah, so we did it. It was amazing. We took the cable car to Murren, and then we explored Murren a little bit, which is another little village, and then that is where we paraglided from.

We went through Airtime Paragliding, and they were amazing. They made my mom feel so comfortable because she was, you know, she was nervous. She's 76, and she's like, I've never done this before. They made her feel really comfortable. And we did have to like do about a 10-minute uphill climb to the spot. And I think that was the hardest part for my mom. Like the uphill climb to get to the spot, the launch point was harder than the actual thing. Um, but yeah...

Alex: How long were you guys in the air for?

Jess: I was in the air longer than my mom because I think that the guy, I think the guy was like, Do you want to keep going? And she was like, No, I'm good. Like I'm done. I was probably in the air for, I was probably in the air for like 20 minutes. She was probably in the air for like 10 to 15, I would guess.

Alex: It looked amazing. Like, I actually would love to do it because it looks so cool. But I've heard, like your mom said she got dizzy. We have another friend who did it. It got super dizzy. And I get dizzy very easily. So I think it's out for me based off the fact of getting dizzy.

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Pam: But I love looking at the people paragliding. It's one of the most beautiful sights from the Alps to see all these paragliders. It is such a spectacle and a beautiful thing to see. But I'm there with Alex. I'm going to enjoy the beauty from down on the ground.

Jess: Okay, Pam, if I go with you, you have to go paragliding with me if we go to Switzerland together. No, I don't... Here's the deal. I don't, like I would never, what's it called when you jump out of an airplane?

Alex: Skydiving.

Jess: I would never, I would never skydive because I hate that feeling of like free-falling. Like I will not ride Tower, Alex knows this. I will not ride Tower of Terror.

Alex: Well, she barely would ride Big Thunder Mountain, and there she is paragliding in Switzerland. Like, I don't get it.

Jess: It's because you don't like, you don't jump off of anything. It's, the parachute is inflated before you even leave the ground. You know, there's no question of, is this going to work? Am I going to like hit the ground without my parachute? Like, I'll post a video. I took a video of my mom taking off, and so y'all can see it. But it's like the parachute is inflated. You have someone, you have a pilot strapped to the back of you, and then you kind of just run, and the wind like picks you up.

And so there's no feeling of like falling or anything like that. It's kind of like the wind just takes you, and you're just gliding. It's like on Peter Pan's ride at Disney. You know, like when you're up in the little ship and then you can just like look down and see everything. That's what it feels like. I do wish I had taken like Dramamine or Bonine beforehand because towards the end it felt like how you get sick, like uh sickness in a boat, like seasickness.

Alex: Okay.

Jess: You know, like when you're in a boat and like you're going and everything feels fine, but if you're just sitting there and like...

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Alex: Yes.

Jess: That's kind of what it felt like towards the end. Like, it felt like we were just kind of like there in the wind, like just sitting there. And so I was like...

Pam: Alex is saying, I'm really not going now.

Alex: Oh, yeah.

Jess: But my pilot was great and he was like, just tell me, like if you start feeling like nauseous or sick or if you just want, if you're just done, just tell me. And so...

Alex: He's behind you, right?

Jess: Yeah. So he doesn't want me puking on him. Because the wind would just like force it all the way back on him. But it was really cool because they also have a GoPro. And so he took all the photos and all the videos, and then at the end, you can purchase them for 40, 40 francs, which is like \$50, which I thought was more than worth it. But it was nice for me because I feel like I'm always like, oh, I need to take a picture. I need to take a video. But I got to actually enjoy it and not worry about that aspect of it. And so he got all our pictures and videos, which I will share also.

But it was crazy. It was like we were up there and we're like just gliding next to a waterfall, you know, over the Swiss Alps. Like it was, it was really, really cool. So that was the highlight of the trip for me. Another day, we went to Mannlichen, which is a mountain. I don't, y'all don't hold me to any of this, but again, you can ride the cable car from Grindelwald to Mannlichen. I did the royal walk. I left my mom at the bottom for this one because I think she was a little bit like tired of climbing steep, winding pathways.

So I did the royal walk. You climb up to a crown-shaped observatory. You can, you can just like see the entire Jungfrau region from there. So it was really, really cool. They have the cutest playground. I'm going to share pictures and videos. There's a slide shaped like a cow. Like you go up, you basically go up its butt, and then you slide down its mouth. And it's so cute. They have like a little bowling alley. They have in-ground trampolines.

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And so I feel like Switzerland is so family-friendly. Like I would not, I don't think I would, I don't think I would take kids that require a stroller there because, like I said, a lot of like steep walks, but I think once kids are old enough to like walk on their own, I would, or if you were comfortable carrying them, I would totally, it's so family friendly. There's like playgrounds everywhere you look, and just like beautiful, you know, like what kind of playground do you just go to, and you're on a seesaw, and there's the Alps in the background. You know, like it's just ridiculous. So I would not hesitate to bring my family there.

I would love to bring them. And then we took the lift from Mannlichen to Wengen, which is a cute car-free village. Wengen is another one that is really popular for people to stay at because it's well connected, but it's really small, it's car-free, not as many options as far as restaurants, cafes, grocery stores. And so that could be a good one if you want to just do more of your own thing in your rental. But I was like, this is a cute place to walk through, but I wouldn't want to stay here. Like, I need more coffee options than this has to offer.

I'm going to put in the show notes a few of our favorite places in Grindelwald that we ate or went to, Eigerbean, amazing coffee in Grindelwald, and amazing pastries. Pam, I had this cake. It was a plum cake, and I was like, Pam would love this. Like so, all their pastries are so good. And that one is right in the middle of, you know, Main Street, Grindelwald. So easy to walk to. If you're saying there, there was an Uncle Tom's pizza place right across the street from it that we had dinner our first night. Again, Pam, I know you love your pizza. It was funny because my mom was like, we're going to a pizza place in Switzerland? And I was like, it's right by Italy.

Like they're going to have, they're going to have good pizza. And so I thought that was really good. And then there was another cafe called Cafe 3692. This is one that Jana and Brett were like, you have to go here. This is our favorite place.

Pam: I think we went to that one. Yeah, sounding so familiar.

Jess: It's so cute. It's not, you, we took the bus to get there, or like y'all have, this is where the car would come in handy. Like some of these places that

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required us to take a bus to and the buses stop running at 6:30. And so, you know, we would have to, we would be like, okay, we're going to have dinner at 4:30 and then we're going to make sure we're done by 6:30 to catch the last bus to take us back to our hotel. And so that was a little bit of a complication with not where come where having our car would come in handy, but the cutest cafe with great views.

We had soup, and I had sausage. I had like sausage and this mustard that was, I'm not even like that big of a sausage eater, but I was like, dang, I can put back some sausage in Switzerland. Like it's so good. So it's only open Friday to Sunday, though. And so you'll want to go, you know, one of those days. We made it a point. I was like, I have to go to this place. And so we made it a point to go there.

I will also say that German is the main language spoken in this area of Switzerland, but everyone spoke English also. And so we never ever had any sort of issue with a language barrier anywhere we went. Everyone was so nice, and everyone spoke English. And again, I was like, gosh, I'm so lucky that to speak English. You know, like everyone speaks English, and you just don't have to worry about it. And so I felt like that was really, that was really lucky.

Pam: Okay, I have a big question. You didn't have me there going to the ATM and getting the local currency. How did that work for you?

Jess: We never needed cash. Never. We used our credit card for everything.

Pam: And you could put tips and stuff, just even on the credit cards?

Jess: Well, most places don't even, like in Switzerland, tipping is just not a thing. Like, restaurants don't even, I think we maybe ate at one restaurant that was like had a line for a tip. But otherwise, it was just like, they make a, they make a living wage without a tip there, you know? And so, but yeah, we never needed cash.

Although we could have, there were, there were ATMs um readily available where we could have gotten cash if we needed to. The nice thing about, so with

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the paragliding, the pilots are like independent contractors. And so when you buy, like they take the photos and the videos, and then if you purchase it, they keep that money. And so it was kind of like by us purchasing our photo packages, like that was their tip, you know? And so it was really nice.

And then, so we spent four nights in Grindelwald. I thought that was a really great amount of time. Maybe one more night would have been perfect. There was like one or two things that we didn't get a chance to do. But I feel like four to five nights is great for that area.

Then we took the train back to Zurich because I can't go to Switzerland and not stay at the Park Hyatt Zurich. I was like, I mean, if I'm going to be in Zurich, I got to stay at the Park Hyatt.

So we took the train from Grindelwald to Interlaken. And then there's a scenic train between Interlaken and Lucerne. This is all on the way back to Zurich. So it kind of makes sense as to why we did it this way. So there's a scenic train between Interlaken and Lucerne that we really wanted to take.

And so we did that. We got to Lucerne and we stored our luggage for like four or five hours at the train station. They have luggage lockers where you can just pay, I think it was around \$10 to store our luggage for six, you can store it for up to six hours. And so it was really nice because we were able to see Lucerne, walk around, we had lunch there, we stopped and got a coffee at a cafe, we walked across the Chapel Bridge, we sat by the water, and like watched the swans and the ducks. And so it was really nice to be able to kind of tack on that day trip while on our way back to Zurich anyways.

I will say that we, we packed carry-on only, of course. And it was funny because the night before we left, my mom was texting me and she was like, Are you sure that we have to pack carry-on only? And I was like, yes. I promise you, like you don't want to be walking between these trains and like taking these cable cars and everything with huge luggage. You know, it's just going to be a pain.

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There were not any luggage lockers for like huge luggage available. And so if we had huge checked bags, we wouldn't have been able to even do this day trip because we wouldn't have been able to check our, to leave our luggage there.

So that's another plug for packing carry-on only because it allowed us to do this. So then we took that scenic train. It was gorgeous. We passed so many mountains, so many lakes, and then spent, you know, four hours in Lucerne. And then we took the train from Lucerne to Zurich. It's about an hour from Lucerne to Zurich.

And then we spent two nights at the Park Hyatt Zurich. So this is where some more points came in. This is a category eight, and so it'll run between 35,000 and 45,000 Hyatt points a night. It was standard pricing for our two nights. So it was 80,000 points for two nights. Service was amazing.

I actually, I bought some chocolate in Lucerne and accidentally left it on the train and we were, I realized it while we were checking in. And the guy was like, Let me call the train company and see if they found it. And I was like, it's okay. Like, it was only like \$10 worth of chocolate. And he was like, No, tell me the train you were on. Like, he legitimately called the train company to try and get my chocolate back. And I was like, this is going above and beyond. So...

Alex: Yeah. Did you ever find it or no?

Jess: Well, he said, he was like, they could find it and ship it to you. And I was like, I'm going to pay more for them to ship it to me than I spent on the chocolate. And who's going to find a bag of chocolate in Switzerland and turn it in? I was like, someone's probably already eaten all of it. So I was like, it's fine.

The breakfast was in the restaurant. It was delicious. They had the choice of buffet or off, or a la carte, or both. The location was great. We were able to walk pretty much everywhere in Zurich that we wanted to go. We did take an Uber to, we went to the Lindt Museum, which I'll get to. We took an Uber there because it was raining the day that we took it. And then we took an Uber to the airport. It was like around \$40 to \$50 for our Uber to the airport, which I feel like for Switzerland isn't terrible.

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And so the things we did in Zurich, we were there for two nights. I obviously prefer the Jungfrau region to Zurich. Like I would not personally go to Switzerland and only go to Zurich. There is so much more to see. But we were there when Taylor Swift's album came out. And so, of course, I had to book us tickets to see the Taylor Swift movie.

So we saw, so our first night in Zurich, we saw the Taylor Swift album release party movie. And it was kind of fun to get to experience a movie theater in a different country.

Switzerland is very, I learned, honor system. And so, even like the transportation, like no one, I think one time someone checked our tickets on the train. So we could have literally just been getting on and off. No, no train pass, all that work for nothing. But then I think if you get caught, you have to pay a fine that would be like \$1,000. And so I was like, I'm not chancing it.

But the movie theater is the same. Like they just have the popcorn and the candy out and you just grab it and you go to like, you just go to a self a self-pay machine and pay for it. And I'm just like, this would never fly in America. Like, people would just be pocketing all of this candy. But yeah, so they are very like honor system, which I, which I really liked.

We walked around the town, down by the water. We went to a church so my mom could see the stained glass windows. And she was like, Oh my god, this is so beautiful. And I was thinking, Mom, I have got to take you to Barcelona because this is nothing compared to Sagrada Familia. But yes, you just take your videos and your pictures and talk about how beautiful this is.

The highlight of Zurich for me was the Lindt Museum. I am a chocoholic, and so, you know, being able to go and get, learn about, I thought it was fascinating just learning about the history of chocolate and the history of chocolate in Switzerland. But also, they have free samples. And so you can just like, they give you a little spoon and you just like get your free sample from under all the chocolate fountains, and you can do it as many times as you want. And so I was in heaven at the Lindt Museum

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I will say you should buy your tickets really far in advance because I tried to buy our tickets a week in advance, and they were sold out, and I had to buy through Viator, and they were a lot more expensive. The nice thing was the ones through Viator were just like you can go anytime of the day. It wasn't like a timed ticket. And so that aspect was nice, but yeah, I would try for like at least two weeks in advance to buy your tickets to the Lindt Museum.

Alex: Did you buy a bunch of chocolate to make up for the chocolate you lost?

Jess: Yes, I did. I spent over \$100 in the Lindt store buying chocolate.

Alex: How much is it to go to the Lindt Museum?

Jess: I want to say if you buy directly through Lindt, it was around 25 francs a person, which is equivalent to maybe \$35-ish. But, you know, if you go hungry, you can get, it's like going to the airport lounge. You know, like Pam could get her money's worth.

Alex: Yeah, you'll feel really good afterwards too. You won't feel like heartburn or sugar overload or anything.

Jess: Yeah, it was, I was, I was like, I don't want to leave. Like, it was, it was way better than I was expecting. Like I thought the actual information was interesting, and they also, so we did like the audio guide, but I noticed they also had audio guides for kids. And so I would totally have brought Molly there and like I think your, I think your kids would have liked it too.

But yeah, I think just overall, Switzerland was amazing, beautiful. Like everywhere you look, you just like walk outside and it's just like 360 beautiful. Like, no matter which way you look. And there was like cow, like all the cows have bells around their necks, and so you're just like walking through the towns and you're just like hearing bells from the cows eating their grass, and there's like sheep, and I was like, oh my god. I would, I would, and it's like clean and pretty and I don't know. I would live there. I would totally live in Switzerland. I might get a little cold, but...

Alex: Yeah, maybe you might be singing a different tune in January.

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Pam: Well, I'll tell you what, I loved hearing about your trip. It's made me want to go back so badly. I am so glad that you and your mom had such a great trip. And it's only fitting that somehow Jess fits some Taylor Swift into her trip, even though she's off the Eras trip. Somehow, she was able to do that.

And one of the best things is that some hotel nights and her flights were covered with points and miles. That makes everything even better. If you're ready to get started to turn your bucket list dreams into reality, like we seem to be doing time after time, get our free beginner's guide to travel on points. We'll include a link to snag your guide in the show notes.

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