

# Liechtenstein

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Europe : Central Europe : Liechtenstein

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### The Principality of Liechtenstein

[1] (<http://www.liechtenstein.li/>) (German: *Fürstentum Liechtenstein*) is a small alpine German-speaking country doubly landlocked by Switzerland and Austria (it is landlocked by landlocked countries). It is the last remnant of the Holy Roman Empire and is an independent state with very close ties to Switzerland. It enjoys a very high standard of living and is home to some incredibly beautiful mountain scenery. The principality's capital, Vaduz, is a major center of commerce and international banking and mainly a modern city.

## Understand

### History

The Principality of Liechtenstein was established within the Holy Roman Empire in 1719 and became a sovereign state in 1806. Until the end of World War I, it was closely tied to Austria, but the

economic devastation caused by that conflict forced **Liechtenstein** to conclude a customs and monetary union with Switzerland. Since World War II (in which Liechtenstein remained neutral), the country's low taxes have spurred outstanding economic growth.

Shortcomings in banking regulatory oversight have resulted in concerns about the use of the financial institutions for money laundering and tax evasion. However, the days of bringing suitcases of money into banks for deposit without questions asked is over.

Liechtensteiners are also very proud of the fact that their nation has never been physically involved in a battle



#### Location



#### Flag



#### Quick Facts

<b>Capital</b>	Vaduz
<b>Government</b>	Hereditary constitutional monarchy on a democratic and parliamentary basis
<b>Currency</b>	Swiss franc (CHF)
<b>Area</b>	<i>total</i> : 160 km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Population</b>	33,987 (July 2006 est.)
<b>Language</b>	German (official), Alemannic dialect
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic 76.2%, Protestant 7%, unknown 10.6%, other 6.2% (June 2002)
<b>Electricity</b>	230V/50Hz (European plug)
<b>Calling Code</b>	+423
<b>Internet TLD</b>	.li
<b>Time Zone</b>	UTC +1

or military confrontation with an "enemy state" and see their flag as a banner of peace.

- Liechtenstein Tourism [2] (<http://www.tourismus.li/en/welcome.cfm>) (official site)

## Economy

Despite its small size and limited natural resources, Liechtenstein has developed into a prosperous, highly industrialized, free-enterprise economy with a vital financial service sector and living standards on a par with the urban areas of its large European neighbors. The Liechtenstein economy is widely diversified with a large number of small businesses. Low business taxes--the maximum tax rate is 20%--and easy incorporation rules have induced a large number of holding or so-called letter box companies to establish nominal offices in Liechtenstein, providing 30% of state revenues.

The country participates in a customs union with Switzerland and uses the Swiss franc as its national currency. It imports more than 90% of its energy requirements. Liechtenstein has been, since May 1995, a member of the European Economic Area, an organization serving as a bridge between the EFTA and the EU. The government is working to harmonize its economic policies with those of an integrated Europe. Liechtenstein has one of the highest personal income rates (GDP Per Capita) in the world, with the base rate of income tax currently standing at just 1.2%.

Liechtenstein was the home of the Curta calculator.

## Geography

Liechtenstein is very mountainous and one of the world's two doubly-landlocked countries (along with Uzbekistan). Most of the country's population lives in the long and wide Rhine Valley in the western third. Roads are mainly laid out in a north-south pattern following the valley as well. To the north the main roads lead to the border with Austria, to the south they enter Switzerland, and to the west across the river the bridges also cross into Switzerland. The eastern border to Austria is not passable and is only accessible by foot as it is very mountainous. The country's highest point is the **Grauspitz**, which stretches to 2,599m. Liechtenstein is 2.5 time bigger than San Marino and it is 81 times bigger than Monaco.

## Climate

Liechtenstein has a continental climate featuring cold, cloudy winters with frequent snow or rain, making the country a moderately popular ski destination. Summers are cool to moderately warm, also often cloudy and humid.

## Cities

- Vaduz — capital city of Liechtenstein and the seat of government
- Balzers — this town is home to a very beautiful church and castle
- Malbun — an area for skiing and snowboarding
- Schaan — the largest populated area in the country
- Triesen — a small town south of Vaduz
- Triesenberg — an alpine town high in Liechtenstein's mountains
- Ruggell — a town in northern Liechtenstein where there is a nature reserve of rare plants and animals
- Bendern — where Liechtenstein was born in 1699
- Nendeln — Where there are a ceramics works and Roman ruins

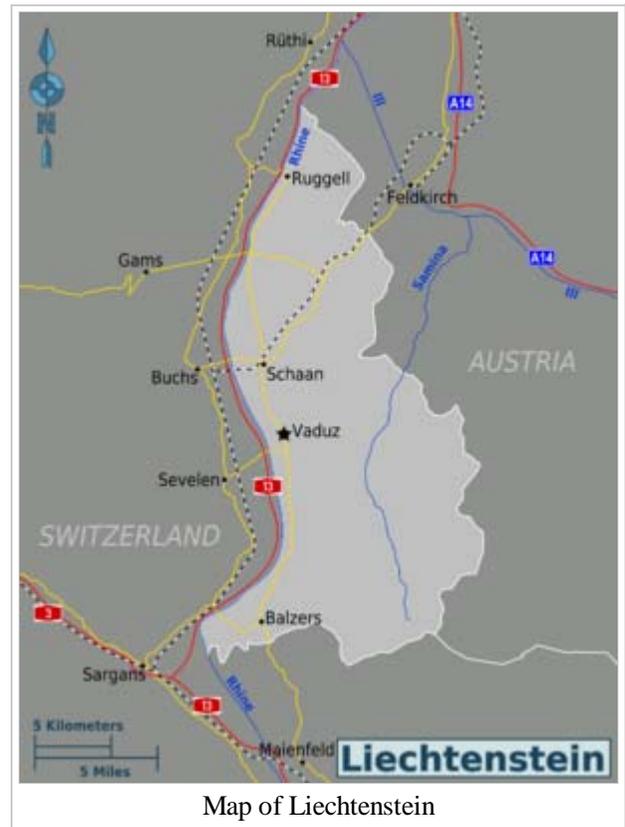
- Schellenberg — a town with a museum of rural homes

## Get in

### Entry requirements

Liechtenstein is a member of the Schengen Agreement.

There are no border controls between countries that have signed and implemented the treaty - the European Union (except Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ireland, Romania and the United Kingdom), Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. Likewise, a visa granted for any Schengen member is valid in all other countries that have signed *and* implemented the treaty. But be careful: not all EU members have signed the Schengen treaty, and not all Schengen members are part of the European Union. This means that there may be spot customs check but no immigration checks (travelling within Schengen but to/from a non-EU country) or you may have to clear immigration but not customs (travelling within the EU but to/from a non-Schengen country).



Map of Liechtenstein

Airports in Europe are thus divided into "Schengen" and "non-Schengen" sections, which effectively act like "domestic" and "international" sections elsewhere. If you are flying from outside Europe into one Schengen country and continuing to another, you will clear Immigration and Customs at the first country and then continue to your destination with no further checks. Travel between a Schengen member and a non-Schengen country will result in the normal border checks. Note that regardless of whether you are travelling within the Schengen area or not, many airlines will still insist on seeing your ID card or passport.

Nationals of **EU and EFTA** (Iceland, **Liechtenstein**, Norway, Switzerland) countries only need a valid national identity card or passport for entry - in no case will they need a visa for a stay of any length.

Nationals of **non-EU/EFTA** countries will generally need a passport for entry to a Schengen country and most will need a visa.

**Only** the nationals of the following non-EU/EFTA countries do **not** need a visa for entry into the Schengen Area: Albania\*, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Bosnia and Herzegovina\*, Brazil, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Israel, Japan, Macedonia\*, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro\*, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, San Marino, Serbia\*/\*\*, Seychelles, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan\*\*\* (Republic of China), United States, Uruguay, Vatican City, Venezuela, additionally persons holding British National (Overseas), Hong Kong SAR or Macau SAR passports.

These non-EU/EFTA visa-free visitors may **not** stay more than 90 days in a 180 day period in the Schengen Area *as a whole* and, in general, may not work during their stay (although some Schengen countries do allow certain nationalities to work - see below). The counter begins once you enter any country in the Schengen Area and is **not** reset by leaving a specific Schengen country for another Schengen country, or vice-versa. However,

New Zealand citizens may be able to stay for more than 90 days if they only visit particular Schengen countries - see [3] (<http://www.safetravel.govt.nz/destinations/europetips.shtml#borders>) for the New Zealand Government's explanation.

If you are a non-EU/EFTA national (*even if you are visa-exempt, unless you are Andorran, Monégasque or San Marinese*), make sure that your passport is **stamped both when you enter and leave the Schengen Area**. Without an entry stamp, you may be treated as an overstayer when you try to leave the Schengen Area; without an exit stamp, you may be denied entry the next time you seek to enter the Schengen Area as you may be deemed to have overstayed on your previous visit. If you are unable to obtain a passport stamp, make sure that you retain documents such as boarding passes, transport tickets and ATM slips which may help to convince border inspection staff that you have stayed in the Schengen Area legally.

Note that

- while British subjects *with* the right of abode in the United Kingdom and British Overseas Territories citizens connected to Gibraltar are considered "United Kingdom nationals for European Union purposes" and therefore eligible **for unlimited access** to the Schengen Area,
- British Overseas Territories citizens *without* the right of abode in the United Kingdom and British subjects *without* the right of abode in the United Kingdom as well as British Overseas citizens and British protected persons in general **do require visas**.

However, all British Overseas Territories citizens except those solely connected to the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas are eligible for British citizenship and thereafter unlimited access to the Schengen Area.

Further note that

(\*) nationals of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia need a **biometric** passport to enjoy visa-free travel,

(\*\*) Serbian nationals with passports issued by the Serbian Coordination Directorate (residents of Kosovo with Serbian passports) **do need** a visa and

(\*\*\*) Taiwan nationals need their **ID number to be stipulated** in their passport to enjoy visa-free travel.

Liechtenstein is **not** a member of the EU. Therefore, travellers entering Liechtenstein from Austria (and vice versa) are subject to non-systematic customs controls even if there are no immigration controls after Liechtenstein formally joined the Schengen Area on Monday 19 December 2011.

Liechtenstein, however, maintains a complete customs union with Switzerland and is represented by Switzerland in embassies around the globe. Since 1923 there have been no border formalities needed for crossing between the two countries. In essence there is nothing more than a sign announcing your arrival in Switzerland or Liechtenstein (when you cross the Rhine or the land border), similar to the situation at smaller border crossings in many EU nations, (Austria/Germany/France/Italy etc.) Stamp hunters can, however, get an authentic Liechtenstein entry stamp in their passport at Vaduz's tourist office for 3.00 Swiss franc (CHF) or €2.00. The stamp is not available at the Liechtensteinisches Landesmuseum; the tourist office is the only place that you can purchase the stamp.

## By plane

Liechtenstein has no airports due to the size of the country. You can take a flight to the Zürich Airport (115 km). Although the airport was the only major airport near Liechtenstein, there were some limited services from

Vienna to St. Gallen-Altentrhein Airport (53 km) by Austrian Arrows [4] (<http://www.aua.com>) . There was also a private airport in Bad Ragaz, very near the country. Another popular point of entry is through Friedrichshafen in Germany, which is served by low-cost airlines.

Liechtenstein's Prince has a heliport in the Southern low lands.

## By train or bus

ÖBB, the Austrian federal railway company, has been continually providing a limited service from Buchs SG station in Switzerland, to the Schaan-Vaduz station near Schaan. Trains only run a few times a day. Rail timetable for 2009 [5] ([http://www.fahrplanfelder.ch/bav\\_assets/files/2009/at/5320.pdf](http://www.fahrplanfelder.ch/bav_assets/files/2009/at/5320.pdf)) . The Best and most frequent option is to arrive by bus. Buses run every 15 minutes form Buchs SG train station to Schaan and Vaduz. Tickets can be purchased on the bus for 2.60 CHF and it only takes about 10 minutes to Schaan and another 5 to Vaduz.

If you're coming by rail from the direction of Zürich, it's sometimes quickest to get out at Sargans and catch a bus to Schaan (where you can change for Vaduz). Consult the SBB timetable [6] (<http://sbb.ch/en/index.htm>) to find out what'll be quickest when you're travelling. There are lockers at the Sargans station so you can leave your luggage there. Here is a map [7] ([http://mct.sbb.ch/mct/en/infra\\_services-uebersicht-bahnhofplaene-sargans-a4.pdf](http://mct.sbb.ch/mct/en/infra_services-uebersicht-bahnhofplaene-sargans-a4.pdf)) of the station showing the lockers and where to catch the bus from.

You can also catch the number 12 bus directly from Sargans station to Vaduz or Buchs. It leaves from outside the railway station and runs approximately every 20 minutes. The buses are yellow-green in colour and the fare is 3.60 CHF.

## By car

The Swiss Autobahn A13/E34 runs along the swiss side of the Rhine River, the border between Switzerland and Liechtenstein. There are several access points that cross the Rhine into Liechtenstein, the two that are most commonly used are the bridge crossing into the southern town of Balzers and the crossing into Vaduz. Parking in Vaduz is easy, with a large parking garage located below the Kunstmuseum. Driving in Liechtenstein is relatively safe, but extra care should be taken on narrow and winding mountain roads. Speed traps are everywhere!

## Hitch-Hiking

Very easy indeed from Feldkirch in Austria. Rush hour sees lots of commuters head into the capital. A simple sign as you stand by the main road in Feldkirch should get you a lift within minutes.

## Get around

Public transport in Liechtenstein is amazingly efficient and commonly used. The country's sole bus operator is LBA [8] (<http://www.lba.li/>) . The LBA fares are very cheap, as a 7-day unlimited use card costs just CHF 10. Another cheap way to travel, weather permitting, is by bike. The roads in Liechtenstein are in excellent condition and many (in the Balzers-Schaan corridor) even offer bike lanes. Biking through the whole country (entering from Austria going all the way south through to Switzerland) takes only a few hours, but is worth every minute of the wonderful alpine scenery!

## Talk

The national language is German, but the main language in everyday use is Alemannic German dialect, which Liechtenstein shares with German-speaking Eastern Switzerland, Baden-Württemberg (south of Stuttgart, Germany), and Vorarlberg, Austria. Almost everyone can speak standard German when necessary, and English is also prevalent. French and Latin are also widely taught in the secondary public school system.

## See

Liechtenstein boasts a number of attractions that are of interest to visitors.

**Balzers** - Home to a beautiful church and a spectacular gothic castle.

**Vaduz** - The capital is the main shopping area in the country, with many souvenir stores and assorted restaurants. The city is also home to a modest *cathedral* and the decade-old *Liechtenstein Kunstmuseum*. A ski museum is north of downtown.

**Schloss Vaduz** - This imposing and historic castle, home to the royal family, overlooks the city of Vaduz and is approachable on the main Vaduz-Triesenberg road (bus route 21). It is not open to the public, but it is possible to view it from quite close up.

It is entirely possible to encounter the royal family at the Kunstmuseum, coming in and out of Schloss Vaduz or skiing during winter time. This is one benefit of such a small country. They are recognizable in their cars, which use their birth year for their licence plate number.

## Do

Liechtenstein offers great hiking, road biking, and mountain biking terrain. Skiing and snowboarding are also offered at a reasonable price at the country's small resort, Malbun, in comparison to the expensive lift prices in neighboring Switzerland or Austria.

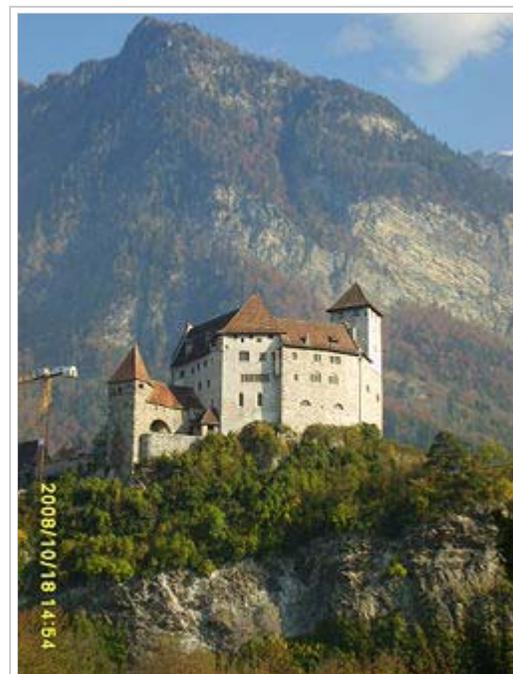
Get up early one morning and drive up the mountains on the east side of the river. From here you have an incredible view over Vaduz & Switzerland that you can stand and admire.

## Buy

Liechtenstein uses the **Swiss franc** (CHF) as its currency. Many shops will also accept the Euro, but the exchange rate may not be very advantageous.

## Costs

Costs in Liechtenstein are roughly equivalent to those in Switzerland and are therefore somewhat more expensive than other European countries.



Balzers Castle

## Eat

You will find a few restaurants in the larger cities of Liechtenstein. There is also a McDonald's restaurant (opened in 1996; serves wine), which is very popular and is widely publicised by road signs throughout the country.

The many small bakeries are a great place to get a warm, fresh roll or pastry.

One recommended restaurant is the Old Castle Inn (Aeulestrasse 22 9490 Vaduz, Liechtenstein, +423 232 10 65) in the centre of Vaduz. It is impossible to miss and offers authentic food at a reasonable price and with a pleasant atmosphere.

## Contact

Internet access is available with one station at Telecom Liechtenstein immediate south of Vaduz's downtown on the main road, but this is only open during business hours. Most hotels and some bars/restaurants will have net access such as in Schaan. The last real Internet cafe disappeared, because every one in the country has net access in their homes, so the local market completely disappeared and only visitors need access.

## Drink

There is a small amount of wine that is produced in Liechtenstein that is available in supermarkets and tourist shops throughout the country. Expect to pay around 25 Swiss Francs for an average bottle. The Prince even owns his own vineyard in Vaduz, off the main road. Beer is also available for purchase that is made with malt from Liechtenstein, although most of the beer itself is brewed in Switzerland. A variety of other European wines, beers, and soft drinks are also available. There is now a brewery in Liechtenstein that produces a variety of beers; lagers including Helles (blonde) and Hefe Weizen (unfiltered wheat) styles are brewed.

There is also a one-man distillery in Triesen who makes liquors and schnapps from fruits. Tours on Saturdays.

## Sleep

There are a few hotels in Liechtenstein, but they tend to run on the expensive side. There is one youth hostel [9] (<http://www.hihostels.com/dba/hostel055067.en.htm>) located in Schaan, but it closes for the winter. You will probably be able to find cheaper accommodation in neighboring Feldkirch, Austria.

Camping Mittagspitz is the only full-service campsite in the Principality. It offers excellent facilities, a friendly reception and a fabulous reasonably priced restaurant. There are three other campgrounds in Liechtenstein. One in Bendern, one in Vaduz, and one in Triesen. All are pretty much full year round.

- **Gasthaus Krone**, Dorf 36, 9488 Schellenberg (*next to post office and bus-station*), ☎ +423 373 1168, [10] (<http://www.hotelkrone.li/>) . Very inexpensive rooms. Family run hotel and restaurant. 15 km away from Vaduz, regular (hourly) bus service to all parts of Liechtenstein. 60 CHF (double).  <sup>edit</sup>

## Learn

Liechtenstein's university offers courses only in technical sciences. Without either Liechtenstein/Swiss or EU

citizenship, a large bank balance and a fluency in German, it is unlikely to interest visitors.

## Work

Finding work in Liechtenstein is difficult. A majority of non-nationals working in the Principality are Swiss, with a smaller number of Austrians and Germans. Liechtenstein is not a member of the European Union, so the government has no obligation to let nationals of EU member states work and live in the country.

## Stay safe

Liechtenstein is easily one of the safest countries in the world, though it is not without its problems. The most common crime in Liechtenstein is of a non-violent nature, though the Principality maintains a well-equipped police force which maintains a presence on the streets. In the late 1990s, the *Liechtenstein Landespolizei* launched a crackdown on prostitution in Vaduz. Considering the largest cities nearby are Innsbruck and Zürich, outside of Schaan and Vaduz, the whole place can seem very rural. Drunk drivers and winter road conditions may be your only "realistic" concern. Speed limits are strictly enforced by speed cameras which will be very pricey. Don't speed, enjoy the scenery instead!

The country's beautiful scenery is also very dangerous. Cases of hikers finding themselves in difficulty are very common, and extreme care should be taken when leaving the well-marked trails. Follow local advice, read local weather forecasts (newspapers in the Principality print individual forecasts for the different cities in Liechtenstein, which is beneficial because the difference in altitude often cause different weather conditions), and ensure that you have the correct equipment before setting out.

## Stay healthy

There are excellent medical facilities in Liechtenstein, but it is more likely that you would be transferred to a hospital in Switzerland should you require medical attention. If you are an Austrian or EU citizen you may want to seek medical attention in neighboring Feldkirch, Austria.

## Respect

The Principality of Liechtenstein has existed for centuries as an independent state and this should be remembered. Liechtenstein is not part of Switzerland or Austria, and its citizens will not hesitate in reminding you.

Remember that this is a traditional Catholic country. On Sundays, the streets are almost dead except for the tourists and the tourist shops.

Liechtensteiners are very proud of their national identity and would take offence at being wrongly labelled "German", "Austrian" or "Swiss". Those who may feel inclined to denounce the monarchy as a system of government should be advised: the prince is well loved and very popular, and he is certainly held in high esteem when discussing national politics.

## Get out

Feldkirch, Austria and Lake Constance make for wonderful destinations.

*This article is an **outline** and needs more content. It has a template, but there is not enough information present. Please plunge forward and help it grow!*

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