Your first rides in Zürich

A SwitchBike guide to parking, tram tracks and getting home with your bike

The first bit of Swiss German you'll need is **Velo**. It means bike. Look for **Veloparkierung** when you need a place to park, especially at Zürich HB, the main train station.

Catching a train at Zürich HB?

Find a marked bike space and read the time limit before you lock up. Around HB, most public bike spaces have a **48-hour limit**. Even a bike parked neatly in a rack can be removed if it stays too long. If the rack is full, use the city's map to find another one. A row of bikes against a railing can look like official parking even when it isn't.

Away from Friday morning until Sunday evening? That's already more than 48 hours. The city lists longer-stay parking at **Velostation Europaplatz** and a **specially marked seven-day area inside Velostation Stadttunnel**. At Stadttunnel, look for the seven-day sign at your space. If you can't find it, use the posted limit or choose Europaplatz. Take a photo of your row and its sign before heading to the platform.

Open the City of Zürich's HB bike-parking map · Check bike-station access and prices

Where can I park elsewhere?

A bike rack is the easiest choice. If you park on a pavement where signs allow it, Swiss rules require **at least 1.5 metres of clear walking space**. Count from the part of your parked bike that sticks out furthest. Keep entrances, ramps, tram stops and the raised guide lines used by people with visual impairments clear. If a wheelchair user would need to turn sideways or leave the pavement, find another spot.

We recommend always using both locks, even for a quick coffee. The wheel lock stops the rear wheel from turning. The chain secures your bike to a fixed object, such as a bike rack, so it stays where you parked it. Take your keys with you. Two words worth recognising on signs are **Parkverbot** (no parking) and **max. Parkdauer** (maximum parking time).

Swiss pavement-parking rule, Art. 41 · SwitchBike locking instructions

My bike is gone. What do I do?

Start with where you parked. Use the table below to check whether your bike was moved. Keep your keys and note the exact spot and when you last saw it.

On a public street or at an outdoor city rack
Use the city's missing-bike search (Velosuche). The city registers bikes it collects. If you're checking a possible removal, it asks you to wait for its reply before filing a theft report.

Inside Velostation Stadttunnel at HB
Use the Stadttunnel operator's search form. Include the row or space number if you know it.

On private property, such as a courtyard
Ask the building manager or parking operator whether the bike was moved. The city's search covers public ground only.

You know the bike was stolen
Report it promptly to the police and SwitchBike. We can help with the bike details for your report. Police reporting information

Riding around Zürich

• **Cross tram tracks as squarely as you safely can.** A front wheel can catch in the groove if you drift across at a shallow angle. Look behind you before changing your line and slow down before the rails, especially in the rain. If there's no room for a safe crossing, stop somewhere safe and walk the bike across. Tram-track safety

• **Ride on the right and use the bike lane or cycle path where provided.** If there's no cycle lane, adults ride on the road. To use an ordinary pavement, get off and push. A bicycle sign can indicate a shared path. Give people walking plenty of room there. Swiss cycling rules

• **Follow the bicycle traffic light where there is one.** At red, wait. You may turn right on red only where a black sign shows a yellow bike and right arrow. People crossing and traffic on the road you're turning into have priority. Zürich's guide to bicycle signals

• **At a junction, wait behind buses and lorries.** Even in a marked bike lane, a driver turning right may be unable to see you alongside. When passing parked cars, leave enough room for a door to open. City riding advice

• **Check your lights before setting off.** Use a white front light and a red rear light at dusk, at night, in tunnels and when visibility is poor. Riding an e-bike? Switch your lights on during the day too. If a light or brake on your SwitchBike needs attention, message us before your next ride. City lighting guidance

Who has priority?

• **At an unmarked junction, check to your right.** Where two ordinary streets meet, traffic from the right generally has priority. Follow any lights, signs or road markings. When you ride out of a courtyard or car park, give way to traffic on the street from either direction. Swiss right-of-way rules

• **At a zebra crossing, slow down when someone is waiting to cross.** If they're clearly about to step out, stop if needed to let them cross. They don't have to wave you down. Pedestrian crossing rules

• **At a roundabout, give way to traffic already circulating.** On a single-lane roundabout, you can ride in the centre of the lane so drivers can see you. Once you pass the exit before yours, signal right and check over your shoulder before leaving. Roundabout guidance

• **Before turning left, look behind you and signal with your left arm.** Wait for oncoming traffic to pass before crossing its path, including trams. Cycling hand signals · Swiss right-of-way rules

If you're ever unsure what to do or would just like a hand, you can always reach us on WhatsApp. Whether it's a parking sign you can't make sense of or a bike that's gone from its spot, we're happy to help. If you'd prefer us to check with the city or station operator for you, just send us the location and when you last saw your bike.

Oscar & the SwitchBike team

Updated 18 November 2026