

Welcome to L'Abri!



Thank you for your interest in L'Abri Switzerland!

We would like to introduce you to life in our community, answer some common questions, and help prepare you for the experience that L'Abri offers.

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What to expect during your stay

1. Who comes to L'Abri

People come to L'Abri from all walks of life — some with big questions, some navigating a transition, and some simply needing a change or time of rest.

L'Abri is in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, but our shared language — and most of our library resources — is English. For this reason we tend to have a fair number of students from English speaking countries, but it's always a mix.

The minimum age requirement to be a student is 18, although we do have a separate family apartment for people who would like to come with their children.

2. Where is L'Abri

L'Abri is located in a small alpine village called Huémoz. It spans 6 different chalets spread out on the mountainside towards the edge of the village. The village is small, with about 250 inhabitants and is composed of residential homes, a farm and one tiny cafe. There is a ski resort village up the hill (5min by bus, 45 on foot) where there are other stores. There are many walks of varying difficulty to take in the area, and the view from L'Abri is beautiful.

3. Studying at L'Abri

Study is central to life here, so come ready to engage — with ideas, with others, and with yourself. We ask that scheduled study time be spent in our onsite library, Farel House, which holds our book and lecture collection along with a wide range of articles and papers.

That said, your study time here is self-directed. Most people read, journal, or pray in the library, but you might also take a walk or find a quiet spot outside when the weather allows. Please note that study time isn't set up for third-party online courses, computer work, long hikes or exercise.

4. Technology at L'Abri

We try to approach technology thoughtfully and with intentionality — not as a rule for its own sake, but because we've seen how much it shapes attention, community, and the quality of time set aside for study.

Laptops and tablets

We encourage you to leave your laptop and tablets at home if you can. Many students find the break genuinely refreshing — and yes, that includes rediscovering the art of handwritten notes. If you do bring one, use is limited to days off; we store laptops and tablets in a locked cabinet during the week.

On your days off (Thu all day + Sun pm), you can use your laptop in the library, or go to a cafe in the town up the hill to use wifi.

Wifi

There is no wifi available to students at L'Abri. A communal computer with internet access and a printer is available during free time for a small fee.

Smartphones

Please keep your phone on flight mode at all times and in your pocket or in your room. If you need to use the internet on your phone, we ask that you do so either in your bedroom or in the student office.

We especially ask that phones stay put away during meals, lectures, discussions, and other shared moments — and ask that you be mindful of your roommates in your use of your phone, for example not using your phone after 10pm or making phone calls in your room.

A few exceptions to phone use:

- Taking an occasional photo is okay so long as it is not disruptive and you have asked other students for their consent
- You may use your phone during your study time in the library to connect to the lecture server
- You may use your phone with headphones to listen to music or a podcast/lecture during a solo work crew. (When with others, please do not listen to music and take your headphones off.)

Many students have told us they found it helpful to let their families and friends know ahead of time that they will have limited availability for calls and texts while here. They have found it helps set realistic expectations due to tech limitations and it also allows them to be fully present and undistracted while here.

5. Living in community

Living in community takes work. Everyone needs to be willing to limit themselves for the wellbeing of others, and also to extend hospitality to each other.

Here are a few guidelines in particular that we have found help us all care for others' needs:

- Alcohol and drugs — storing or consuming either on L'Abri property is strictly prohibited.
- Quiet hours — from 10pm, please keep noise down inside and outside. Our walls are thin, so that includes voices and musical instruments. (Quiet hours are also a nationwide rule in Switzerland, so this applies everywhere.)
- Please be considerate of those you share the house and room with. For example, don't watch videos or play music out loud on your phone. (However, music played on the piano or guitar in the lounge is welcome.) Also, make an effort to be on time and pitch in when needed to help keep things running smoothly, such as doing dishes once a day.

6. The weekly schedule

Life at L'Abri follows a fairly regular rhythm:

- 8:00am — Breakfast
- 9:30am–1:00pm — Work or study
- 1:00pm — Lunch
- 2:00–3:00pm — Free time
- 3:00–6:30pm — Work or study
- 6:30pm — Dinner
- After dinner — Free time

The schedule shifts a little when there are lectures, special activities, or community events. Please check with us ahead of time if you are planning to come to visit for the day.

Lectures

We have lectures on two mornings a week (usually Tuesdays and Fridays) from 9:15 to 11am. This includes about 45min of discussion time.

Our lectures cover a variety of topics: philosophy, theology, biblical studies, history, art, christian living, ethics, culture...

Formal lunches

Three times a week, we have a formal lunch, where we divide into smaller groups and have an intentional discussion facilitated by a worker. Any student can bring up a question or topic they would like to discuss, and we talk for about an hour.

Sundays

On Sundays, one of the workers presents an hour long, in-depth study or leads a discussion on a Bible passage or topic. It's an important part of community life here. Our Sunday meetings don't include singing or liturgy — a considered decision on our part, though one we're happy to talk about if you're curious.

In the evening, we have what we traditionally call a “high tea”, which is a meal followed by a community activity.

Days off

Thursdays are the main day off. Meals are still served but are optional and just a little later — breakfast at 9am and dinner at 7pm. Sunday afternoons (12–7pm) are also free. On both days, you'll get a packed lunch so you can head out if you like — hiking, skiing, sightseeing, or simply wandering. Of course, you're equally welcome to stay and rest.

Evenings and free time

You are free to spend your free time as you prefer - whether it is going for a walk, spending time in your room or the library, or hanging out in the lounge. Students often enjoy playing ping pong, playing games, making music or just relaxing together. Workers will sometimes host an optional mid-week film night with a discussion afterwards.

Prayer meeting

Prayer is an important part of life at L'Abri, so we have a prayer meeting on Mondays to begin the week to remind us of our dependence on God. However, we are very aware that some students are not in a place where they are able to or desire to pray, so we set things up in such a way that it is a low pressure environment and we hope all feel welcome regardless of where they are at spiritually. We often will spend about 30 minutes reading from a book that we have found helpful, or will present a short devotional. We then open up a time of open prayer for those who want to pray out loud. Feel free to talk about it with us when you are here if you have concerns or questions.

7. Practical considerations

Accommodation

Students live together in Chalet Bellevue, our main student house. There are 11 rooms with two to four people in each. They are separated into men and women's rooms. We do our best to put married couples in a two person room together, but this depends on length of stay and availability. We also have one separate apartment for families.

All students share rooms — we're not able to offer single rooms. We ask that students not stay in their room during study or work hours.

We ask everyone to shower no more than twice a week due to the limited number of showers and to help conserve resources. You'll have a washcloth for daily sink washes, and most students find they adapt more quickly than they expected. If washing your hair is a concern, dry shampoo is a popular solution — worth tucking into your bag before you come.

What to pack

- Toiletries (these can be picked up at local shops too)
- Casual clothing for work, study, and everyday life — including at least one set you don't mind getting dirty, since everyone pitches in with cleaning and grounds work
- A pair of slippers, since shoes come off indoors
- Rain gear
- Shoes that are suited for walking up and down hills in all weather
- Sun protection, a water bottle, and good walking shoes are a must if you plan to hike.

You don't need to bring towels, washcloths, sheets, blankets, or pillows — all of these are provided. Laundry is done for all students on working days and is included in your stay. Clothes are washed and line-dried, so depending on the weather, allow two to three days for things to dry.

Most terms span more than one season, so if you're coming for a full term, it's worth packing for both warmer and cooler days. When in doubt, layers are your best friend.

Dietary needs

We're happy to cater for medically diagnosed allergies and intolerances as well as vegetarian diets. Beyond that, we're not able to adapt to individual preferences.

Please let us know about any dietary needs when you apply so we can plan ahead and have a conversation if needed. Note that we are not professional cooks, so if you have a serious allergy and cannot have any cross contamination, this will need to be discussed when you reserve.

You're welcome to supplement with your own food if you want to. There's a student fridge, kettle, and microwave available, and you can buy snacks before you arrive or on days off. Students don't have access to the main kitchen for private cooking, so please only bring microwavable foods if they need to be heated.

Staying in touch

By phone

For emergencies, friends or family can reach you at +41 24 495 2139.

Letters and packages

Post and parcels can be sent to:

[Your name]
c/o L'Abri Fellowship
Route de Villars 89
1884 Huemoz
Switzerland

A note on packages: anything declared over CHF 60 may be subject to customs fees (even if it is a gift). It's best to have items labelled as "gift" with a declared value under CHF 50 — though even then, customs handling can be inconsistent. More info on [Swiss customs and import fees](#).

Preparing your trip

1. How to get to L'Abri

By public transportation

The nearest airport is Geneva (2hrs). Zurich is also an option (3.5hrs). From either, take the train to Lausanne, then on to Aigle (direction Brig), and a bus up to Huémoz.

We recommend coming by public transportation.

[For train and bus timetables, prices and platform info, SBB is your best resource.](#)

[Downloading the app](#) is an easy way to check times and prices, as well as purchase tickets. Please note you cannot buy a ticket on the bus itself so most students find it helpful to have the app on their phones while here. The name of our bus stop is “Huemoz, Bellevue” (pronounced Way-Mo), please purchase a ticket that includes this as the final destination.

Look for the 144 bus towards Villars. Walking away from the station, the buses are on your right, beyond the train tracks. The ride to the "Huémoz–Bellevue" stop takes about 20 minutes.

Press any of the STOP buttons on the bus right after the "Huémoz, Village" (aka “Huémoz, Poste/Centre”) stop which is at the entrance to the village. After pressing the button, stand up near the door to signal you want to get off (if you feel comfortable doing so on a moving bus).

Note: The drivers sometimes forget to stop even when the stop button is pressed. For this reason, we recommend that when you get on the bus, you inform the driver that you plan to get off at L'Abri at “Huemoz Bellevue” (pronounced Way-Mo Bell-View). Sitting towards the front can be a helpful reminder too, if a spot is available there.

Once off the bus, walk up the gravel path to the main building. There is a sign saying “L'Abri” and “Chalet Bellevue” on the building. If you do not see this sign, you are probably at our neighbors house.

By car

Please only [drive to Chalet Bellevue \(the main building\)](#) if you are coming for a short day visit, are coming later in the evening, or want to drop off your luggage. There is limited parking at the main building and the driveway is very narrow.

You are free to park at Farel House at any time, and we encourage you to do so if you are nervous about narrow driveways.

L'Abri is on the left when driving up the mountain, but once you spot us, continue driving up the hill, turn around (at the next bus stop, next to the cemetery), and come back down into the driveway – this makes entry much easier on our narrow driveway.



The entrance is next to the "Huémoz Bellevue" bus stop, so look for the green bus stop sign.



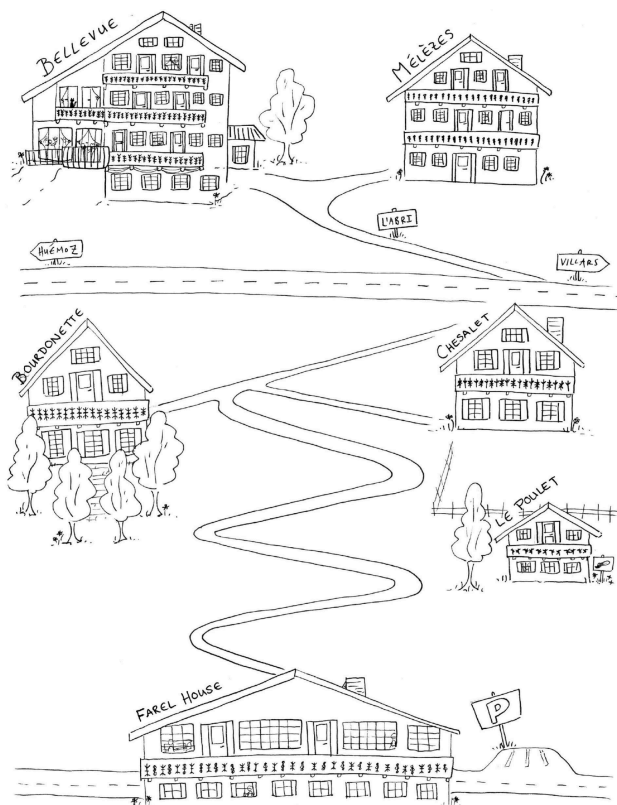
Keep an eye out for the "L'Abri" sign on the driveway and "Chalet Bellevue" on the building. If you don't see these, you're probably at the neighbors' house.

To park at Farel house library

If using Google maps, the pin to look for is [“L’Abri Parking, Farel House”](#)

The address is Chemin des Murasses 10, 1884 Huemoz.

It is a 5 minute walk up to Chalet Bellevue (see map below).



2. Good to know before booking your trip

Arrival and departure times

Before you book your flight, check that your arrival and departure times would allow you to make the bus/train connections. Planning around these times will help you avoid the extra cost of a taxi between Aigle and Huemoz (about 60fr) or an unexpected hotel night. If you have a choice, it is best not to arrive too late in the evening since you will be sharing a room, but we will make it work if needed.

Please let us know your approximate arrival time as soon as you have booked your flight.

Travel during your stay at L'Abri

If you're hoping to explore Europe or Switzerland beyond what can be seen on a day trip, we ask that you plan to travel before or after your stay at L'Abri. In our experience, trips away tend to disrupt the rhythm of community life in ways that affect everyone.

If something comes up and you genuinely need to leave for a few days, please let us know as soon as possible. We also ask for you to continue paying for your bed while you're away.

Visa requirements

We're not able to give visa advice, so please check directly with your local Swiss embassy to find out what you need as a citizen of your country.

For non-European nationals: A Schengen visa lets you visit any of the 29 Schengen countries (including Switzerland) for up to 90 days within any 180-day period. Our three terms are set up with this 90-day limit in mind.

For US nationals: The US State Department has helpful info on [the visa application process](#) and on [travelling to Switzerland](#).

Please note that L'Abri doesn't issue student or work visas. Everyone comes on a tourist visa — and while we use words like "students," we're not officially recognised as a school.

Fees and payment

All fees are to be paid in advance or promptly upon arrival.

If you shorten or cancel your stay, we will refund your fees minus an administrative charge of 50 swiss francs and any transfer or conversion fees.

You can find more [information about fees and payment methods on our website](#) or by [contacting us directly](#).

Your time in Switzerland

1. Money

Switzerland uses the Swiss franc (CHF). Euros are accepted in some places, but change will be given in francs. You can check current exchange rates at [xe.com](https://www.xe.com) and exchange money at the airport or larger train stations.

Most places take card or contactless payment, but smaller businesses often have a minimum spend, so it's worth keeping a little cash on you — CHF 20 in your wallet is a safe bet. ATMs are available in Villars and Aigle, though most have a daily withdrawal limit of around CHF 350–500.

2. Safety

Switzerland is generally very safe, but we've had students have laptops and other belongings stolen on public transport. Keep an eye on your things while travelling, especially from the airport.

3. Health insurance

Please check whether your health insurance covers you in Switzerland before you come. If it doesn't, we'd strongly recommend taking out traveller's health insurance — especially if you're planning on skiing or other sports.