Things to do in Olten...

In Switzerland, everywhere you look there are mountains and green fields and cows... with bells! It is amazing! Olten is more of an industrial city, but there are some fun hiking trails in the Jura, right behind the city, that are within easy walking distance. The city itself is fun, it is like an island with a river all around it, and to cross over you get to walk on one of the oldest covered bridges in all of Switzerland. There are some hiking trails, a vita par cours, and some shopping. About 1 ½ miles away is a castle city!!! Rock climbing, bike riding, and lots of night clubs are easily accessible and an absolute blast!

Travel Opportunities...

Switzerland is so small that you can pretty much go anywhere! What they call a “half pass” is available to you as a student. This pass lets you ride the trains for half price. There is also an after 7 pass which allows you to ride the trains for free after 7pm. If at all possible try to get an international student card in order to receive discounts. Hostels are a great way to save money and can be found easily on the internet. Because of Olten’s central location connections to Basel and Zurich’s airports are easy to get to by both rail and road and make international travel very easy and affordable.

Olten’s in within 30 minutes of Zurich, Bern, Basel, and Lucerne by train, and is a rail hub of Switzerland. The population of Olten is approximately 17,500 people. The central location of the city of Olten in the heart of Switzerland is a will remain one of the most important advantages for the city and the region of Olten.
Before you go...

You will need to complete the study abroad application for SUU. Once this is complete you will be submitted for acceptance at the school in Olten. Once accepted you will choose classes from the provided class list and have them approved by the department heads at SUU. You will then receive a letter of acceptance which you will need to apply for a visa. Obtaining you visa can be a bit time consuming. It is suggested that you leave a minimum of six to eight weeks to receive your visa. The following website gives all requirements and has links to the application...


After you have submitted your visa application you can get started on purchasing plane tickets to Switzerland. Here are some options...

You can fly into any of Switzerland’s international airports. The easiest option is generally to fly into Zurich, but you could also choose to fly into Geneva, Basel, or Lugano.

After landing you can take a bus or train from the city you land in to Olten.

Applying for Housing...

Various housing options are available and once you’ve been accepted, the University will send you a packet with a list of you options. You are given the option to live in a dorm style apartment or with a host family.

If you live in the dorms, you will be living with other international students. Internet, furniture, and basic utilities are included with this option. These dorms actually used to be hospital housing and they have about 13 floors, the downfall is that it is a ways from campus (about a 15 minute walk).

You may also choose to live with a host family. With this option you may or may not be closer to the school. It is a bit more expensive, but it’s a good advantage to live with people who are actual natives to Switzerland.

The average cost for housing is around $350 per month with the dorms being around $300.

Arriving in Olten...

Once you arrive, there is a mentor assigned to you by the University to pick you up. Make sure you’ve arranged this ahead of time. Keep in mind that they speak mostly German in this part of Switzerland so brushing up on that may be a good idea in case of an early or late arrival. The people are VERY friendly and helpful though and will go out of their way to help you in any way they can.

About the University...

The school is very different from SUU. There is no real campus, just 3 buildings that are spread out through city. Classes are done in levels, so you basically have the same people in every class. The do a lot of group work and most of your grades are based upon how well your group does. The classes are long, but you get a break every half hour. The schedules are very different from what you are used to as well. For some classes, you will only go once a week. For others, you’ll go every day or on random days.

The education is top notch and you’ll learn so much just from interacting with other international students.

Prices in Switzerland...

The cost of living is noticeably higher than you would see here in the States. Dining out is nearly double and they charge you for water. There is a place called Denner, which is in the city center, that sells everyday items and food for a lot cheaper.

Transportation...

In Olten, the transportation is GREAT! The city is a hub of the train system, which if you have not heard is AMAZING. Buses are also available, but the majority of the people just walk since things are fairly close.

Weather...

Switzerland experiences fairly cold winters with little snow and hot, muggy summers. Rainfall is frequent so it is advisable to bring an umbrella and rain jacket.