

Grisons : little Switzerland within Switzerland

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Grisons

Little Switzerland within Switzerland



The jubilee scheme "Visit Switzerland in 1991" was a stunning success. This year's continuation is called "Visit Switzerland – see the world". It will take place each year from now on under the aegis of one Swiss canton, starting with Grisons in 1992.

Why begin with Grisons? Because this "holiday corner of Switzerland" not only offers visitors from home and abroad countless new experiences in sport and art amid magnificent scenery, but it also has a history of emigration. Many Swiss Abroad originally from the Grisons would like to come back to Switzerland – and this year's follow-up scheme "Visit Switzerland – see the world" is intended particularly for them.

Grisons sweetmeats the world over

There was a long period in the history of the Grisons when the bare mountain

landscape was unable to feed its inhabitants and give them work. From the 17th century to the 1920s emigration was an economic necessity for many of them. They were famous mercenaries in the armies of foreign powers, but they also became known abroad for a more peaceful activity: as confectioners or vendors of sweetmeats. Many different types of secular building, such as the splendid Engadine mansions or the famous "palazzi" in the Val di Bregaglia bear witness to their success. But the 1914 war brought the sweetmeat industry to a sudden halt, and the Grisons confectioners found themselves out of work.

Development of tourism

The vast improvement in transport routes was largely responsible for the development of sport and recreation tourism in the Grisons. And the growing evidence of the health-giving power of the mountain climate and the canton's mineral springs also played a large part.

But tourism really came into its own in the second half of the present century. It had been originally limited to a few summer months, but then winter sports

developed with astounding speed, with St. Moritz, Davos and Arosa leading the way. Many other villages then seized the opportunity and turned into tourist resorts overnight.

Living from the holiday trade

Now Grisons attracts as many as six million visitors a year. Half of these are day trippers, but the other half stay in the canton. Every year 17 million nights are spent in Grisons holiday beds.

Suggestions for walks

- *Castle walk through Domleschg, with more castles than anywhere in Europe: Scharans–Almens–Cano-vasee–Tomils–Rothenbrunnen. 3 hours.*
- *From glaciers to almond trees: Bernina Hospice–Alp Grüm–Caviglia–Cadera–Poschiavo. 4 hours.*

There are 1.5 beds on average to each permanent inhabitant – which bears ample witness to the important tradition of hospitality of the people.

Holidaymakers spend Sfr. 3.5 billion annually in the Grisons; and revenue from tourism gives employment, directly or indirectly, to every second inhabitant of the canton.

"Switzerland's holiday corner"

In all seasons a holiday in Grisons is a special experience. This goes for young and old, families and groups, lone travellers and sportsmen. Grisons is adventure: in nature, by rail, in art, in sport. The traveller finds a special atmosphere, distilled by visitors from many population groups mixing with hosts of similar texture. Three of Switzerland's four languages – German, Italian and Romansh – are spoken in the Grisons –, a token of its rich history as a transit land between north and south. The tourist connoisseur is alive to the variety of natural beauty specific to the Grisons, as also to the living traditions, the special characteristics of the people, the intact villages and the many historical sights.

Grisons Tourist Office ■

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