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Chalandamarz: Every 1 March, the children of Guarda ring bells around the village to chase away the winter. Children's book "A Bell for Ursli" brought this Engadine custom to the world's attention.



Holy dodgems: Blessing the 'congregation' at Basel's autumn fair – a traditional if unconventional Sunday service for travelling fairground operators



Lichterschwimmen: Every 6 March, the children of Ermensee turn the village stream into a flotilla of lights.

A journey through Swiss customs and traditions

"A wild array of customs and traditions are condensed into our small country," note folklorist Sibylle Gerber and photographer Dominique Rosenmund. Along with two journalists, Gerber and Rosenmund have traced at first hand and then documented some of these diverse rituals in a new book. With 21 written commentaries and over 100 images, the book draws the reader directly into the events as they occur – from the intense heat of the Chienbäse fire procession in Liestal, to the Lichterschwimmen (floating lights) of the Seetal valley; and from the weeping women of Romont to the annual fish festival on the shores of Lake Maggiore. Besides popular traditions, the book delves into some less well-known local customs. This attractive, handily sized publication is ostensibly a travel guide, but is also interesting as a book in its own right. The authors avoid the usual tourist clichés and flag-waving. As such, they manage to convey the fascination and community value of these rituals all the more authentically. (SWE)

Dancing Pines. By Dominique Rosenmund, Sibylle Gerber, Karin Britsch and Stephanie Hess. Verlag Benteli 2020, available in English and German. www.benteli.ch



Sbrinz Route: Men and women in traditional dress follow this route all the way to Domodossola in Italy every August, commemorating the traders who used to export the iconic Sbrinz cheese.



Sagra del Pesce: Fish is the glue that binds everyone together in Ticino at the beginning of spring. The fish festival in Muralto is a mystical, tranquil occasion early in the morning – before turning lively and raucous later in the day.