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This and That Corner

Solothurn, town of ambassadors

The Canton of Solothurn does not possess geographic unity, but is the result of a political development. The canton's history is mirrored by the history of the town of the same name, which possesses some of the best-preserved baroque and neoclassical buildings in all Switzerland.

The town of Solothurn is unmistakably French in character. Although cut off from the rest of the Catholic federation by the powerful Protestant canton of Bern, it always remained loyal to the Catholic church and to France; the town even used to maintain an office for recruiting Swiss mercenaries. This formerly rather insignificant place thus grew prosperous, a happy state which the citizens expressed in a zealous fondness for building. Their supreme architectural achievement is the imposing-looking Altes Zeughaus (Old Arsenal), on Zeughausplatz 1, which today contains what is regarded as the most important collection of weaponry and uniforms in Switzerland.

Another impressive site in the town is the Jesuit Church built in 1680. The backdrop of patricians' houses is dominated by the Neoclassical St Ursen Cathedral built in 1762 by the Pisoni Family of Ascona and still counted as one of Switzerland's greatest baroque treasures; the interior is even more

impressive. The tower provides an excellent vista of the surrounding countryside.

Solothurn is also a good place for museums; most worthy of mention is the excellent and free-admission Kunstmuseum, containing works by Holbein, Buchser and especially Hodler, to name but a few of the artists.

The surrounding countryside has some hidden attractions. In a wooded ravine up on the Weissenstein to the north lies the Hermitage of St Verena, steeped in legend and set amid beautiful scenery. The Hermitage is not open to the public but you could ask to see its chapel which has a fresco and painted ceiling.

Following the ridgeway leading from the Weissenstein, where there is also a Botanical Garden, in the direction of Grenchenberg, you will finally end up in the second-largest town in Solothurn, Grenchen, which lies on the cantonal border with Bern. This is a rather haphazard collection of houses, dominated by the all-powerful Swiss watch industry.

Source : Insight Guides Switzerland

Canton Solothurn does not have many of its own recipes, but they use dishes of the adjoining cantons.

RECIPES

Nusstorte (nut cake)

This cake is time consuming as it is baked in three parts, but is delicious and worth the effort.

Top and Bottom - Beat three egg whites until stiff. Add 100gr sugar and 1 tbsp cornflour. But two pieces of baking paper the size of your cake tin. Spread egg mixture on paper. Bake mid heat for 15 minutes until golden. Let cool on a cake rack and remove paper.

Cake - Beat three egg yolks with 100gr sugar until creamy. Mix 50gr flour, 1 tbsp baking powder and 50gr grated nuts and add to the egg mixture. Beat egg whites until stiff and add to the mixture. Bake in buttered cake tin for 30 - 40 minutes. Leave to cool.

Filling - Beat until creamy 200gr butter with 150gr icing sugar. Add 50gr grated nuts.

Place bottom on flat dish, spread half filling. Place cake on top. Spread other half of filling and finally place the lid on top.

Leave in a cool place for one hour before cutting the cake with a sharp knife dipped in hot water.

Dorrbirnen in Rotwein (dried pears in red wine)

200gr dried pears
1 litre red wine
cinnamon
3 cloves
100gr sugar

Bring to the boil the wine, spices and sugar. Pour over previously washed pears and leave aside for one day or until pears are soft. Serve with the red wine marinade on vanilla ice cream.

Bon Appetit

Lisette, who is currently in New Glarus attending the 80th Benkert reunion!!!



St Georges fountain was built in 1549, one of the eleven magnificent fountains of the city of Solothurn. This town has a very close tie with the watch industry, which started very slowly in 1852, but then flourished in 1882.

Over the last few weeks several people have asked for the Raw Carrot Salad recipe, so here it is!!!

Enjoy!!!

Place grated carrots in a salad bowl, and add finely cut garlic. Make a 'french' dressing as follows : 2-3 tbsp mustard, salt, pepper (ordinary pepper, garlic pepper or seasoned pepper or a mix), aromat (or chicken stock), vinegar, oil (about three to four times as much as the vinegar) and cream (as much as you wish depending on whether you like the dressing a bit tasty or milder). Pour the dressing over the carrots and garlic about five to six hours prior to eating, and garnish with chives or parsley. I hope the salad turns out great!!!