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The Northeast

The rural Northeast is one of Switzerland's best-kept secrets - visitors can still enjoy tranquil, picturesque medieval settlements and lush green alpine valleys; but how long will peace reign?

Switzerland, the saying goes in Bern, Zurich, Basel and Luzern, "ends at Winterthur". It is a monumentally arrogant statement that really amounts to nothing less than this: the northern and especially the eastern part of the country is basically of very little relevance to the way the Confederation sees itself, and if the country were ever forced to relinquish any of its territory the east would be the first part to come under consideration, since it is almost a part of Germany anyway.

In the opinion of the average Swiss citizen, northern and eastern Switzerland are only of secondary importance industrially, culturally and touristically - and, on top of that, the eastern Swiss have a dialect that is considered by much of the rest of the country to be shrill, sharp and quite simply unpleasant. In short: eastern Switzerland is seen as a border region.

As with most sayings, the vox populi expressed here is, first and foremost, merely an expression of ignorance; northern and eastern Switzerland need not fear either industrial or cultural comparison with other parts of the country. Measured in terms of industrial output alone, the cantons of northeastern Switzerland - not including the two Appenzell half-cantons - occupy a solid midfield position. The special characteristic of this often-neglected part of the country is its landscape and cultural heritage.

Thurgau, with its meadows, forests, fruit plantations and monasteries, has been spared the excesses of industrial expansion. If one disregards the increasing clusters of



detached family houses that have sprung up almost overnight along the motorway to Zurich, many of the small towns and villages in Thurgau still seem draped in history.

The area around the broad expanse of Lake Constance (Bodensee), with its colourful, flowery parks and vine-covered slopes alternating with reeds and marshes, with its fields and orchards, its forests, meadows and historic towns, fishing villages and wine villages, is a scenic oasis on a scale scarcely equalled elsewhere in Switzerland.

Thus, in terms of landscape and history, northern and eastern Switzerland seem able to exist quite happily without the approval of the rest of the country. There is, however, a grain of truth in the quotations at the beginning of this chapter: a part of the country with a character all its own actually does

begin beyond Winterthur. Northeastern Switzerland is a Swiss creation that is not so much oriented towards Zurich or Bern - the industrial and political centres of Switzerland respectively - as towards the cultural region of Lake Constance with the three countries (Switzerland, Austria and Germany) surrounding it; that is where its cultural identity lies. The Lake Constance area has very little to do with national borders. Here, in the basin formed by the "Swabian Ocean" (as the lake is popularly referred to), the common Alemannic culture, unique geographical location and strong trading history have contributed to the formation of a region that is occasionally described perhaps exaggeratedly, as "the cultural heart of western Europe".

Source : Insight Guides Switzerland.





This and That Corner

As canton Thurgau grows a great variety of fruit trees, including apples trees, I have various Apfelmus Recipes (Apple Sauce) for you to try...



Apfelmus mit nudle (Apple Sauce with whipped cream)

Peel and cut apples in slices. Cook apples for five minutes in apple juice or water and lemon juice. Beat apples until smooth, and add sugar and cinnamon. Whip cream and mix with apple mixture while luke warm.

Apfelmus mit mandel or nuss (Apple Sauce with nuts)

Fry 2 tbsp nuts in dry frying pan until golden. Place 1 tbsp of sultanas in rum or brandy and leave to stand for 1/2 hour.

Cook apples and beat well until creamy. Add cinnamon and sugar. When cold and just before eating, mix in nuts and sultanas. Serve with whipped cream.

Apfelmus mit meringue (Apple Sauce with meringues)

Cook apples and beat until creamy. Put in a buttered oven dish. Beat four egg whites until firm, and add 160gr of sugar and beat again. Garnish apples, and bake in oven at 200C until meringue is golden.

Apfelmus mit Karamel (Apple Sauce with caramel)

Place apple sauce in a dish. Brown 100gr of sugar in a pot, and add 1 tbsp water. Mix well and pour over apples.

Apfelmus "a l'ancienne" (Old fashioned Apple Sauce)

This gives the sauce a very distinctive flavour. Fry apple pieces in butter and stir until apples are cooked. Mash apples until creamy and add sugar and cinnamon. When cold can add a little cream.

Bon Appetit,

Lisette

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