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This and That Corner

The Suisse Romande

The Suisse Romande, French-speaking area of the Helvetic Confederation, comprises six Cantons, each with a distinct character of its own: Fribourg, Geneva, Jura, Neuchâtel, Valais, and Vaud.

These Cantons offer a series of horizons that vary according to their geographical situation; they range from the Jura chain, the Swiss plateau, to the Alps. Historically, the Suisse Romande was by turns Celtic, Roman, Frankish, Burgundian, Savoyard and finally Swiss. It has shown a remarkable facility at assimilating these successive influences while fashioning its own identity. The diversity of this heritage within such narrow territorial confines provides the key to the region's unbelievable cultural richness.

A glance at the map reveals at once the elegant aquatic arc formed by the Lake of Geneva. Beginning at its southeastern end, we discover Geneva surrounded by the Jura massif and the majestic Alps of Haute-Savoie in France. The eleventh-century Cathedral of St Pierre soars above this city with its international reputation. It boasts grandiose parks and gardens, and on summer evenings

when the fountain soars to 130 metres above the lake basin, the effect is nothing short of magical. Climb to the top of one of the cathedral towers and you will marvel at the view over the Saleve, Mont-Blanc, the Jura and the Lake of Geneva. Following the shoreline suffused in the gentle reflections of the lake along the Vaud side, we perceive Lausanne with its multi-tiered facade rising on the banks of the vast basin. Its cathedral remains one of the purest exemplars of the Gothic style in Switzerland. To discover the Vaud country, turn your back to the Lake of Geneva. Here you will discover, scattered among the meadows and woods, more than three hundred villages and many lakes. Each municipality has its fountains and its church. The Vaudois farmers have mastered one of the finest lands of Europe, which is still today sheltered from exhaust smoke, industry and concrete. We return to the shore of Lake Geneva, site of the feudal fortress of Chillon, dating to the eleventh century, a castle that seems to rise out of the water.



Beyond, the Dents-du-Midi (peaks called the "Teeth of the Southland"), covered with snow, form the first ramparts of the Alps.

On entering the Valais region, we are truly in the heart of the Alps. Here we find as many as fifty peaks measuring 4000 metres. The Canton, the cradle of the River Rhone, has developed a valley 150 kilometres long. Nature is seen here at her most charming: cascades of foam course down from abrupt peaks, and the pre-Alps in flower rise up towards the tallest jagged summits, laced in eternal snow. This valley, the loveliest in the Alps, already known and appreciated in Roman times, unfolds for us today the panorama of its castles, its churches and treasuries of religious art. No visitors can fail to be struck by this canton's unspoiled, still somewhat savage splendour.

The back-country and the natural setting that surround Fribourg could hardly offer greater variety: green rolling hillsides, lush forests, lakes full of fish, fertile plains and snow-capped mountains. Fribourg's cultural wealth is not just a legacy from the past, but is continued in the form of intense present-day activity. The local traditions, like the sense of hospitality, have remained as vital and lively as ever. Fribourg city, capital of the Canton, is a gem. This city protected by its old town, largest in Europe, includes some two hundred Gothic houses, quite a few mansions combining the German Baroque and French classicism, as well as churches and many monuments. The prestigious Museum of Art and History reflects this wealth, housing the richest collection of medieval religious sculpture in all of Switzerland.

The Neuchatel country ... A lake set amidst an incomparable plain varied landscapes, with valleys, raised plateaus, forests and vineyards. There are extraordinary natural sites, such as the circle of Creux-du-Van or the gorges of the River Doubs, or the Jura pasturelands. The Canton of Neuchatel is comprised of two different districts, the <Lower Country> and the <Heights>. They are two different worlds. The city of Neuchatel, built on the lakeshore, is proud of its medieval ensemble, its chateau, its Collegiate Church and the Tower of the Prisons. Surrounded by famous vineyards, Neuchatel is also a centre of clockmaking research. The <Heights> form a vast tract of natural beauty that preserves the silence of solitary lands. In the Jura you can wander for hours from peak to peak, enjoying the prospect over vast, miraculous horizons. Set amidst these mountains, at an altitude of 2,000 metres, La Chaux-de-Fonds, a modern town, is the cradle of the watchmaking industry; it is the proud owner of the International Watchmaking Museum.

The Canton of the Jura is characterised by its emerald-green pastures, its dark pine forests, its farms scattered far and wide or clustered about villages. It is a region furrowed by mountain chains, cut in turn by narrow gorges. Life here is harsh; the farmers raise cattle and horses. The villagers live off several lucrative industries, including watchmaking. For the tourist on a quest for beauty and peacefulness, the Jura offers the ideal quiet haven.

Croute au fromage from "La Suisse Romande" (Cheese dish)

8 slices of toast bread
10mls of white wine
(sprinkle on bread)

Then mix 400gr grated tasty cheese, 2 tbsn flour, 2 eggs, 15mls white wine, pepper and spread over the bread. These can be fried in oil in a frying pan or baked ten minutes in a warm oven (250C). Serve with a green salad.

Telephone numbers in Switzerland are changing



From 1 April 2007 the area code 044 replaces 01

For calls to the Zurich region (Switzerland) the area code +41 1 will not be valid after 1 April 2007. It must be replaced by +41 44.

Example of a call to the Zurich region from abroad: +41 44 765 43 21 instead of +41 1 765 43 21.

Example of a call within Switzerland: 044 765 43 21 instead of 01 765 43 21.

The remaining seven digits of the number following +41 44, telephone numbers with the area code +41 43 and all other telephone numbers in Switzerland remain unchanged.

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Summer Picnic



Ashleigh Zehnder in her pretty Swiss costume having a chat with Daniel Drummond



Kim Danz and Urs Lustenberger ready to do battle.



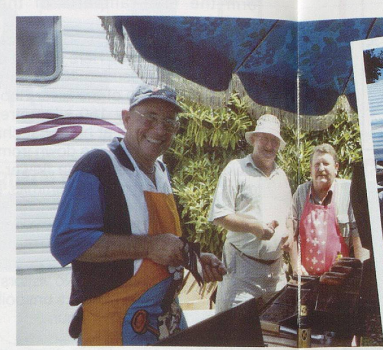
Children enjoying a go at the fishing.



Kim fighting for survival against Urs, and after a galliant battle, loses the bout



Tony Hess and Luke Scherrer leave the rink after the final of the juniors, won by Luke.



Our BBQ chefs Leo, Johnny and Walter... you guys did a great job!



Visitors from Aussie for the picnic, Ross and Trish, flanked by Ermi and Adrian (...miss that export in Aussie, eh Ross??)



Laura, Joe, Nita, Doreen and Charlie enjoying the shade of the gazebos.



The team taking the results in the Schwingen; Sonia, Therese, Marianne, Remigi and Nic (with Peter, on the left, enjoying the company).



Erwin Hebler and Bruno Limacher (eventual winner) ready for a bout, under the watchful eye of referee, Franz Schuler.



Bruno Limacher and Thomas Werder ready to do battle, (with Bruno winning).



A small part of the crowd watching the Schwingen.