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HELVETIA



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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Switzerland's Three Lakes Region
- Organisation of the Swiss Abroad news
- Helvetia survey results
- Swiss Society Games results

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The Three Lakes Region of Switzerland

Switzerland's beautiful Three Lakes Region (Drei-Seen-Land or pays des trois lacs) lies at the foot of the Jura mountains, comprising the three lakes of Morat (Murten), Neuchâtel and Bienne (Biel).

It is one of Switzerland's most important growing regions for vegetables (and let us not forget the wine!). The region is at the boundary of the cantons Bern, Fribourg, Neuchâtel and Vaud, forming part of the linguistic boundary region between French and German-speaking Switzerland.

Originally a swampy floodplain of the Aare River, chroniclers reported regular flooding of lakes and adjacent swamps from the 15th century, at times even causing the complete merging of the three lakes.

The original landscape provided an ideal environment for our ancestors who created lake-side settlements built on piles to deal with the periodic changes in water levels (pile dwellings). Significant archaeological remains of these settlements were discovered in the 19th

century during a period of prolonged drought (refer page 24). Other significant Swiss Celtic finds of the later la Tène period were discovered at the northern end of Lake Neuchâtel around the same time.

The Jura Water Correction aimed to mitigate flood risk in a series of hydrological works. This included the diversion of the Aare River from Aarberg directly into Lake Bienne through the Hagneck canal, and building further canals between the three lakes (Broye and Thielle/Zihl canals).

A side effect of this correction was the creation of the longest navigable waterway in Switzerland - much to the delight of modern tourists who make extensive use of boat tours between Solothurn in the north to Yverdon in the south.

The area is historically and culturally rich, including lovely cities such as Morat (Murten), Biel (Bienne), Neuchâtel and Yverdon. There are limitless opportunities for walking, cycling and all manners of water transport.



The three lakes of Morat (Murten - far right), Neuchâtel (foreground) and Bienne (Biel) (far left)

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