

**Zeitschrift:** Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Herausgeber:** Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Band:** 78 (2012)  
**Heft:** [6]  
  
**Artikel:** Swiss customs  
**Autor:** Meyer-Knecht, Renate  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-944078>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 12.12.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**



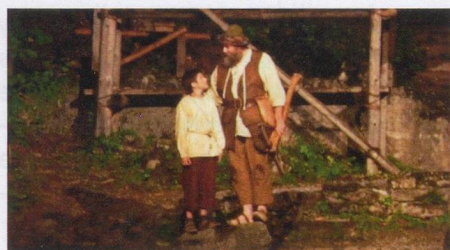
## Swiss Customs

### William Tell Open-Air Theatre

The tradition of the William Tell Open-Air Theatre in Interlaken began in 1912. Since then, Friedrich Schiller's play "William Tell" has been performed from 1912 to 1914, from 1931 to 1939 and every year since 1947, in the Rugen woods in Matten. Performances were only interrupted during the two world wars.

The William Tell Open-Air Theatre today involves about 190 performers, from children to old men, all in historically authentic costumes. The fascinatingly realistic backdrop, with live goats, cows and horses, allows ample room for action-packed riding scenes that raise the hairs on the back of your neck.

In this performance, the splendidly staged scenes of the swearing of the Rütli Oath and the shooting of the apple are turned into an exciting historical detective story. The curious can also take a look behind the scenes, a privilege not granted to normal theatregoers. In this intensely exciting show, the fine town of Interlaken and the magnificent scenery of the Jungfrau region also play glittering cameo roles.



Source: <http://www.myswitzerland.com>

He who has a thousand friends has not a friend to spare. And he who has one enemy will meet him everywhere.

Ali ibn-Abi-Talib (602 AD - 661 AD),  
A Hundred Sayings

Contributed by Edith Hess

### Funfairs in Switzerland

Switzerland is a country of fete days, fairs and festivals, particularly so during the summer seasons. Just as each canton has its own beautiful traditional costumes which have been passed down from father to son and from mother to daughter for many generations, each canton possesses its own unique festivals.

#### The Festival of St. Albans (Albanifest) in Winterthur

This particular festival is somewhat exceptional since it is based on an historical event but has only recently been reinstituted. Up until the eighteenth century, the custom was regularly observed but only since 1971 has the "Albanifest" been celebrated in grand style again.

The festival dates back to June 22, 1264, when Winterthur received its status as a free town from Rudolf of Habsburg. Political and military matters were discussed and settled on St. Albans day. Of interest here is the parallel development of events that took place in Winterthur and later at the Rütli in 1291.

All the citizens were then invited to celebrate with a free meal (bread, cheese and wine) after church service up until 1866, when the town could no longer afford these hand-outs. As it was on St. Alban's Day (one of the town's four saints), the festival was thus named "Albanimahl". From 1971 each year, during the last weekend in June, the

old city centre of Winterthur is now transformed into a fairground with dozens of open air eating places, more than twenty dance- and light entertainment orchestras, several amusement stands and an enormous "Chilbi", a fair ground carnival with eateries and stalls. Thus, Winterthur's City Centre is transformed into one big party location. More than 100,000 festival fans converge on what "Winterthurers" claim to be the largest annual city party in Europe.

By Renate Meyer-Knecht

Sources: <http://albanifest.ch>, <http://www.winterthur-tourismus.ch>



**FRIBESCO**  
quality european tools and products

Looking for superb quality european tools and products? We import and sell tools and products for roofers, builders and many more...  
check it out on [www.fribesco.co.nz](http://www.fribesco.co.nz)