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## Weird and wonderful facts of Switzerland

1) The average salary of a teacher in Switzerland in 2014 was NZ\$90'000 per year, the highest paid teachers in the world.

2) In Switzerland, it is illegal to deny that the holocaust happened.

3) There is a 500-year-old statue on a fountain of a man eating a sack of babies in Bern and no-one really knows the history behind it. (Kindlifresserbrunnen)



4) In Switzerland, it is illegal to keep just one guinea pig. You have to have small pets in pairs (same with birds, rabbits etc.) There is such a thing as "rent-a-pet" so you can give one back if your older pet dies.

5) Switzerland is unique for having enough nuclear fallout shelters to accommodate its entire human population.

6) One of Switzerland's main defence strategies is to demolish every main access into the country via roads, bridges, and railways. There are at least 3,000 locations currently prepared to blow at a moment's notice in case of an attack.

7) In Switzerland, a group of citizens may challenge a law passed by Parliament, if they are able to gather 50,000 signatures against the law within 100 days. A national vote is then scheduled where voters decide by a simple majority whether to accept or reject the law.

8) The German township of Büsingen am Hochrhein is entirely surrounded by Switzerland, by the canton of Schaffhausen to be precise.

9) About 56% of Electricity generated in Switzerland is from hydroelectricity and another 39% from nuclear power, resulting in a nearly CO2-free electricity-generating network.

10) The BBC pulled an April Fools prank, duping hundreds of thousands of individuals into thinking spaghetti was annually harvested from "Spaghetti Trees" in Switzerland. (in the 1950s)

11) There is a political party in Switzerland, called the "Anti Powerpoint Party". It works towards decreasing the use of

Powerpoint in professional presentations. Founded in 2011.

12) A lawyer in Switzerland represents animals in court. He has even prosecuted a fisherman for taking too long to catch a Pike.

13) Switzerland, which is often praised as a model for direct democracy, did not grant women in certain cantons the right to vote in any of the elections until 1990. (Appenzell Ausserrhoden 1989, Appenzell Innerrhoden 1990).

14) Amongst industrialized nations, Switzerland has one of the highest rates of gun ownership, but has nearly half the rate of gun-related deaths that the United States has.

15) The country of Liechtenstein is so small that in 2007, Swiss troops accidentally invaded it after getting lost in a rainstorm.

16) Charlie Chaplin's corpse was stolen by a small group of Swiss mechanics in an attempt to extort money from the Chaplin family. After retrieving his body, he was reburied under 6 feet (1.8 m) of concrete to prevent further attempts.

17) There is a giant three-legged chair in Geneva, Switzerland dedicated to the opposition of use of landmines. (A symbol for peace - The Broken Chair)



18) There was a war in Switzerland in 1802 called Stecklikrieg that was fought out with wooden clubs because Napoleon took away the soldiers' weapons.

19) The Swiss Army Knife's corkscrew tool is not made in Switzerland, but in Japan. All other parts are purely Swiss-made.

20) The Swiss military keeps fully stocked artillery bunkers, disguised as quaint country homes, in the middle of populated villages.

21) Dalai Lama owns the smallest vineyard in the world, which is located in Switzerland. It consists of only three vines and has an area of 1.67 meters squared.

22) In certain apartment complexes you should not flush the toilet and definitely not have a shower after 10pm - not to disturb the other owners

23) A Swiss Jeweller made a \$68 million ring that was made entirely out of diamonds.



24) In some apartment complexes you should not wear shoes after 10 pm. You have to put on house slippers.

25) You should not mow the lawn on Sunday because the mowers are too noisy.

26) The license plate of your car is issued in your own name. You keep the plate all your life. If you have two cars, but only use one at a time (the other stays in the garage) you can have only 1 plate and put it on whatever car you want to use at the time.

27) Drivers of vehicles standing in stationary traffic (i.e. a red light) must switch off their engines to reduce pollution.

28) Rivella is made with the by-product of cheese - whey in fact.

29) Switzerland is trying to enforce to only sell toasters for 2 pieces of bread - in order to save electricity.

30) And last but not least...

When we grew up we always had to close the curtains just as it got dark - it would be rude not to and the neighbours would notice if we didn't... so when I told my boys recently that we're going to Switzerland for a holiday soon, my Luca said: "Mummy, we mustn't forget to always close the curtains at 6pm!"

*I have researched all of the above facts but take no responsibility if one or the other fact is not entirely accurate. T Latham-Zurbrugg*