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Swiss Holiday Scene

Compiled by the Swiss National Tourist Office



The highlight comes when the children pull a gingerbread man to pieces

One, two, goat's leg!

SHORTLY after 2pm on March 3, as the Town Council and other leading citizens of Rapperswil sit at their Shrove Tuesday lunch in the decorated Town Hall, the school children of this little town in the canton of St. Gall, on the upper shores of Lake Zurich, congregate beneath the windows, waiting for them to be opened and for fanfares to announce the "distribution."

"Eis, zwei, Geissebei" – literally translated "one, two, goat's leg," a sentence whose meaning is just as absurd in the original Swiss dialect – scream the throng increasingly louder

and quicker until one of the aldermen asks: "Are all my boys here?"

The vociferous answer is one big shout of "Yes," and further choruses of "Eis, Zwei..." Out of the many windows, oranges, rolls and chains of sausages come flying through the air.

Whole crates of food had been sold to the worthy gentlemen by local tradesmen. Boys and girls push and elbow their way to the front in an attempt at grabbing something. The delicacies are caught in

mid-air, swiped from under a neighbour's nose, and pockets and mouths are stuffed.

Lastly a huge gingerbread man appears in a window and is slowly lowered by a rope in the midst of the children. Weasel-like some children climb the façade, struggle on one another's shoulders in an endeavour to capture a piece of the swinging, jerking edible victim.

A foot is gone – a leg disappears, but the gingerbread man keeps on laughing with his sugar-coated mouth until finally

his head too "rolls."

After half-an-hour the bestowal fades out, the windows are closed, and the children return home, loaded with their loot which varies in size according to either the agility or even more probably to the boisterousness of the pillager.

Although there is no record of how this carnival custom came into existence, it is known for a fact that it dates back to the year of 1350, and is connected with a conflict between the towns of Rapperswil and Zurich.



Carnival off those winter

MARCH is carnival month in Switzerland, a modern version of the ancient heathen rites which Christianity later adopted for its own needs. Originally it was a spring festival meant to drive off winter demons. In the Christian era it was decided that it should take place immediately before Lent, and for this reason its date depended on Easter.

In Lucerne this year the main jollification is on March 2 and 3 – "Güdis Monday" and "Güdis Tuesday."

On Fridolin's Day (6th March) 1446, the Swiss defeated the Austrians in a battle near Ragaz. In remembrance of that victory the Lucerne Town Council provided for an annual thanksgiving service to be held on Fridolin's Day at the Franciscans' Church, which was to be followed by a display of weapons and armour with subsequent general merry-making in the different guildhalls and taverns. The same day was also chosen for the guilds' annual dinners.

The carnival parade always

FIVE leading Swiss tourism organisations have announced the joint promotion of a Discover Switzerland programme for 1981 – with prices guaranteed until the end of September.

Discover Switzerland – details of which are outlined in a brochure entitled "Who says Switzerland is expensive?" – has been launched by the Berne City Tourist Office, Budget Rent-a-Car, Swiss Federal Railways, Inter-Hotels Switzerland and their marketing organisation Tourismart of Berne.

The organisers describe the programme as "a unique all-inclusive go-as-you-please holiday package for the individual traveller."

Discover Switzerland combines hotel accommodation, unlimited rail travel or self-drive car hire, and vouchers worth at least Sfr 200 (approximately £50) for free or reduced-price tourist facilities.

Prices are from only Sfr. 425 (£110) for eight days, and from Sfr. 679 (£170) for 15 days per person. There are no high season charges, and children up to 12 years old sharing a room with parents pay only half these rates.

Tourists can travel when and where they please, selecting their own itinerary from any of

Go-as-you-please holiday package

the 23 participating resorts and cities. They may stay as many or as few days as they like in any one place, the only exception being Berne where the minimum stay is three nights.

Hotels cut rates

FIFTY hotels of all categories in Locarno offer special rates for a minimum stay of three days throughout the year except from April 13 to 26, June 1 to 14 and July 13 to August 16.

Information and bookings from: Official Tourist Office, 6600 Locarno, Switzerland.

Spa resort offers

HOTELS in the famous spa resort of Baden near Zurich are again offering three week all-inclusive arrangements during the coming summer and the next winter season.

Brochures giving full details are available from the Swiss National Tourist Office.

Conference centre reopens

AFTER a complete facelift costing Sfr. 1.6 million, the popular conference centre at Berne's Kursaal has been reopened.

The centre now has the first computer-operated sound equipment and installation in Switzerland. It has two large conference rooms, one seating 500-860 participants, the other 1,000-1,500.

The Congress Centre is within five minutes walking distance of the city centre.

Further information can be obtained from the Convention Bureau of the City of Berne, Postfach 2700, Bahnhofplatz 10b, 3001 Berne, Switzerland.

New travel brochure

THE SWISS Transport System has issued the new brochure for 1981 on the various Swiss regional holiday season tickets. It can be obtained from the Swiss National Tourist Office.

Unlimited ski-ing

THE combined ski-ing areas of Samnaun in the Lower Engadine and Ischgl/Silvretta in the Austrian Tyrol can boast another five new skilifts and two mountain restaurants.

Samnaun now offers 1,250 beds in all price categories and, for the ski enthusiasts, 140km of prepared runs, four aerial cableways, two chairlifts and 22 skilifts.

A Swiss ski school is also available, and special all-inclusive arrangements are on offer until the beginning of May.

Further information from: Official Tourist Office, 7571 Samnaun, Switzerland.

I drives e lemons

follows the same route. It starts from Baselstrasse, crosses the Seebrucke, goes up to Luzenerhof and then into the city. It is always closed by the traditional Fritschi carriage, on which Father and Mother Fritschi, wearing their terrifying wooden masks, are to be seen with their attendants throwing chaff and oranges to the crowd and into open windows, thus causing merry confusion as everyone grabs for the fruit.

When the parade is on its countermarch, the Fritschi carriage branches off to drive three times round the Fritschi fountain on Kapellplatz. In the meantime, the real Father Fritschi and Master of the Saffron Guild, seated at a window of Joseph-Willmann-House, receives homage from his men.

When the parade is over, a merry crowd fills the streets—the Weggisgasse confetti battle is famous—as well as hotels and restaurants, where fancy-dress balls are organised in the evening by the various carnival societies.



Events of the month

March 1	Baden	Carnival procession and mask awards	March 3	Einsiedeln	«Güdel Tuesday»: bread throwing and masked balls
March 1	Bellinzona	Carnival: Open-air risotto feast	March 3	Lucerne	«Güdis Tuesday»: Lucerne carnival and monster concert
March 1	Engadine	«Chalandamarz», traditional Engadine public and youth festival	March 3	Rapperswil	«Eis-Zwei-Geissebei», traditional carnival custom
March 1	Engelberg	17th «Brunni ski carnival»	March 3	Uster	Stadthof: «Bockabend», children's masked ball
March 1	Kreuzlingen	«Bodanesen-Clique» carnival procession	March 3	Zinal	«Mardi Gras»: Children's procession, masked competition
March 1	Locarno	Solduno: Carnival with risotto feast, masked festivities, entertainment	March 6-9	Langenthal	Carnival
March 1	Walenstadt	«Rölliauftritt», carnival procession	March 7	Kreuzlingen	«Bodanesen» ball
March 1-3	Fribourg	Fribourg carnival	March 7-9	Murten	Murten carnival with procession
March 2	Einsiedeln	«Güdelmontag». «Sühudi» procession, carnival procession, masked balls	March 8	Locarno	Fishermen's festival
March 2	Lucerne	«Güdis Monday»: Lucerne carnival and procession	March 8	Uster	Carnival procession and confetti battle
March 2/3	Brunnen	«Güdelstage»: Brunnen carnival	March 8	Zurich	Zurich carnival
March 3	Ascona	Carnival: Risotto feast on Piazza	March 9-11	Basel	Basel carnival
March 3	Champex-Lac, Verbier	«Dirty Tuesday»: Mask contests for children	March 14, 15, 21	Zollbrück i. E., Bad Tarasp, Müren	Ski chilbi
March 3	Locarno	Lake promenade: Carnival with risotto feast, masked festivities, entertainment	March 21	Schaffhausen	112th City Band Foundation festival
			March 21	Uster	Farmers' ball