

Little guided visit of Gruyères



GRUYÈRES
VIVEZ LA LÉGENDE

Gruyères





1. ENTRANCE TO THE TOWN

Town walls:

This was the site of the Chavonne postern gate, demolished in 1860. The markings on the ground indicate the outline of the former entrance.

Along the inner wall is a former slaughterhouse and butcher's shop that has backed onto the ramparts since the 18th century. It now houses a chocolate factory and office.



2. THE CHUPYÁ BÂRBA TOWER ("BURNT BEARD" TOWER)

It is standing at the entrance of the town, on the right side. This is where the final interrogations of the condemned people took place. Their beards were burnt, hence the name of the tower. Inside, there used to be instruments of torture.



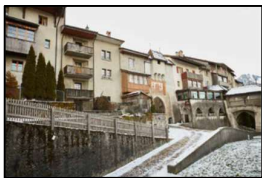
3. TERRACE BEHIND CHUPYÁ BÂRBA

This spot offers a panoramic view of the eastern facades of the town, the Intyamon countryside and the cirque of the Haute-Gruyère Alpine foothills.



4. BELLUARD FOUNTAIN

In the olden days, there used to be wells and water tanks in Gruyères but no running water. It was a great event when water was brought into the town. It was brought in 1755 through wooden pipes. But because of pressure problems, they exploded. Therefore they have been replaced by other pipes, in cast iron.



5. BELLUARD ENTRANCE

The term "belluard" probably means "boulevard".

This was the main entrance point of the town in the Middle Ages. It dates back to around 1475, with access through the Epagny (east) and Pringy (west) doors on opposing sides, flanked by watchtowers (small corbelled rooms which would have been occupied by a watchman).



On the fortified gate (above the entrance to the town) you can see a representation of two warriors of the 1349 War of Everdes. Those were the heroes Clarembos and Bras de Fer, who distinguished themselves in the reign of Peter IV of Gruyères (XIVth century). They resisted the first assault of the Bernese with nearly no external help until reinforcements finally arrived.



6. WESTERN FACADES OF THE TOWN

Historical access to the town. (East side)



7. GRAIN MEASURES AND MARKET HALL (L'AUBERGE DE LA HALLE)

On the former market square, you can see the grain measures of the former market hall, carved in stone in the 15th or possibly 16th century.



L'Auberge de la Halle was once a place where only alcohol could be sold. Please note that at the time, the ground floor of the inn was the cowshed.

This is where most goods were sold, such as salt. The "saunerie" (salt turnover) was on the ground floor of the guardhouse. On ancient lithographs, the Auberge de la Halle is depicted with long eaves reaching the measures.

As for many other cities in the Middle Ages, the Auberge de la Halle's nickname is "Bouchon" (cork). While there was a market, those houses could indeed use a pine tree, a kind of *mé* (branch of a bush) as a sign. In dialect, the French word *buisson* (bush) was pronounced as "*bochon*" and then the translation went from *bochon* to *bouchon*.



8. CALVARY

This name derives from the sculptured group that was conveniently put there, the overhang protecting it from bad weather. Please note that it is not a former oratory. Inside, goods such as grain and salt used to be delivered on the ground floor. Later on, it was also used as fire premises. And now, this is where local artisans come to exhibit their work for a week.

To the left is the public washing basin.



9. PLACE DU BOURG D'EN BAS

A house dating from 1330, rebuilt in 1410–1415 with a frontage framed in local limestone from 1703 and a roof structure from 1803.



10. RUE DU BOURG 39

Maison Gachet dating from 1745. Note the entrance lintel with double-curved arch dating from 1591. On the 2nd floor is a medallion with the coat of arms of Gruyère (1618 and 1788) below one of the few preserved panelled overhanging eaves.



11. RUE DE BOURG 41

House bearing the arms of Dafflon, thought to have housed the 1552 mint and with an exceptional polygonal staircase tower. Note the double picture windows on the ground floor dating from 1691. Above them are hard plaster frames with a late-Gothic ogee from the early 16th century.



12. PILLORY – THE STONE OF THE STOCKS

The circular stone of the stocks is located on the floor, just in front of the store "Filet de Gruyères". An oak post was placed in the middle of it. Thieves who were caught red-handed were tied up there for a whole day.

Previously located on the market square in front of the salt shop, they were moved here in 1783 and probably removed in the 1830s.



13. CHALAMALA'S HOUSE – RUE DU BOURG 47

The jester, whose real name was Girard, played the flute and the pipe (chalumeau), hence his nickname of Chalamala. He was very wealthy, probably even more than the Count of Gruyères. He lived at the time of Peter IV (XIVth century).

The house dates back to 1334 and was rebuilt in 1510; the roof frame is from 1701. The frontage is dated 1531 and is from the late Gothic–Renaissance transition period. The building was reconstructed in the Swiss Village of the National Exhibition in Geneva in 1896.



14. CHÂTEAU ST-GERMAIN

It is the fortified house of the Saint-Germain family, who were ministers to the Count from 1351 to 1578. This medieval construction dates from the end of the 13th century. You can still see the trace of a harrow of defense (perhaps of a drawbridge). This castle was actually a fortification. In the 19th century, the Balland family, owner of the Château de Gruyères, lowered the road to pass through it with their carriages. Since 1998 the Hans Ruedi Giger Museum has been housed there.



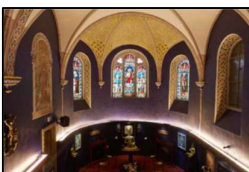
15. GIGER MUSEUM

Housed in the former Château Saint-Germain since 1998, the museum holds exhibits including the designs from the film Alien (1979). Originally from Graubünden, the artist established a permanent exhibition of fantasy art, his works and his private collection in the building.



16. ST-GERMAIN FIREPLACE – FORMER HOSPITAL

Serving as the town hall until 1890, this was the town's hospital. Founded in 1411 and completed in around 1445, it continued the fortification of the upper village of the massive Château St-Germain. It was an almshouse from 1863 onwards. The large council chamber dates from 1559 and boasts a spectacular ornamental frieze painted in 1680.



17. TIBET MUSEUM

Located at Rue du Château 4, the museum is housed in the former chaplaincy and chapel of the St. Joseph Institute, 1891–1892 (plans attributed to Mauritius Gisler); the neo-Gothic chapel is from 1908–1909. The complex houses an exhibition of the Alain Bordier Foundation's exceptional and rare collection of Tibetan art.



18. LE CHATEAU

The castle of the Counts of Gruyère was built in the form of the “carré Savoyard” under Peter III during the second half of the 13th century before becoming the seat of Fribourg’s bailiffs (1555–1798) and later a prefecture (1798–1848). After its acquisition in 1849 by the industrialist Bovy family from Geneva, the castle was transformed into an artistic colony before it was bought by the State in 1938.



A visit to the castle brings you to a journey over eight centuries of history (from the 13th to the 19th century). The French gardens are reminiscent of the time of the bailiffs, while the interiors are of Baroque style, from the Renaissance to the Romanticism. Nineteen counts succeeded one another from 1080 to 1554. Since the beginning of 2008, a multimedia show completes the visit of the castle with sound and pictures of the history and legends of Gruyères.



19. FORMER REGIONAL SCHOOL

The school burnt down in 1925 and had to be completely rebuilt then. It has been possible to use some parts of the former façade. The date of 1650 is still featured on the building. The school was in use until 1988.



All the children could attend this school. At Gruyères, a class was generally taught by priests, as the chaplains of Minsier were usually teachers. There was also a school of choristers in the count’s little town. There was quite a lot of music and singing, and the pupils wore costumes. They also took part in the church services, as there were usually 8 priests in Gruyères. Three of them were younger (the priest, the vicar, the chaplain of Minsier as the school teacher) and the other ones were usually retired priests who still took the daily services.



20. THE CHURCH OF ST-THÉODULE

The tower, built in 1682, was first an observatory before it became the belfry. The choir of the church (1730-1731) was formerly a Gothic style chapel. Inside the church, there are three naves: a main nave and two side aisles, that were lateral chapels separated from the church by walls. The side chapels have been integrated to the central nave around 1800. The stained glass windows are by Yoki, an artist from Fribourg. The vault of the counts and the bailiffs is located beneath the altar of Notre Dame de Compassion.

THE REMPARTS

You can see the Ecrenis rampart outside the church. From the cemetery, it joined up with the castle. We can see even higher, against the tower of the Castle, the end of the rampart. From the presbytery, it continues up until the watch gate, the "porta dou gai" in dialect, altered over the centuries to become St. Agatha’s Gate, but officially there is no writing on this name. Near the presbytery is the Clos aux Cerfs (Deer Park) where the cattle was brought to keep them safe from thieves.



21. PARISH CHURCH

The 1711 parish church, with a gable facing the street and paneled barrel overhanging eaves, backs onto the town walls.





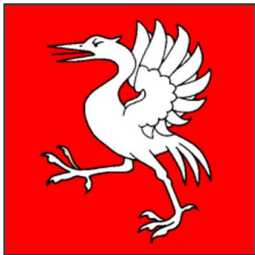
22. CLOS-AUX-CERFS

Built in around 1433 and containing the oratory of the calvary (sculptures from the workshop of Jean-François Reyff, 1639), it backs onto the town walls.



23. MARKINGS ON THE GROUND – SITE OF THE SAINTE-AGATHE GATE

The gate was levelled in 1831 (note the markings on the ground). At the end of the path is the Charrière des Morts, along which funeral processions would travel and which used to lead to Haute-Gruyère. Its original name was said to be the donkey path because the counts' mules used to pass along it.



THE CRANE (LA GRUE IN FRENCH)

The counts have been first mentioned at the end of the 11th century. The heraldic bird gave its name to the counts' family, and also to the city and the region.

Thank you for your visit!

LA GRUYÈRE 

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