

ESTAVAYER ET PAYERNE

CHARMING CONTRASTS

The small medieval town of Estavayer-le-Lac is situated on the south bank of Lake Neuchâtel. Narrow lanes brimming with history invite visitors to stroll and linger, as does the spacious shoreline of the lake. Sandy beaches and coves and a first-class water sports centre are a hit with keen swimmers. Estavayer-le-Lac has been a haunt of wakeboarders for many years. Cool, fun-packed rides can be enjoyed thanks to the 800 metre Cable Ski lift, which pulls visitors across the water. The small town of Payerne in the Broye Valley, only a few kilometres from Lake Neuchâtel, is blessed with a rich history. The town centre is dominated by the magnificent 11th century Abbey Church. The largest Romanesque building in Switzerland is a classic example of Cluniac architecture. Reopened after undergoing extensive renovation in May 2020, the building speaks for itself, and 20 stations provide visitors with an interactive experience. Marvellous!

The Grande Cariçaie, one of the most beautiful wetland areas in Europe, gives visitors an excellent insight into its ecosystem. It extends for approximately 40 km along the south bank of Lake Neuchâtel. The 3,000-hectare reserve is reputed to contain one quarter of the flora and fauna of Switzerland, i.e. around 800 plants and over 10,000 animal species. Numerous endangered animals breed here or stop over during the migratory period. The marked trails make this area very accessible to walkers and cyclists. The oldest relics are to be found in the lake, namely the remains of prehistoric lake dwellings. They were included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2011. A Neolithic settlement as it was 5,000 years ago has been reconstructed in nearby Gletterens. Visitors can explore this prehistoric site on their own or take a guided tour. >>



NEOLITHIC VILLAGE



An experience – Switzerland's prehistory comes alive in the model Neolithic settlement in Gletterens on Lake Neuchâtel. Events and workshops provide a unique insight into the life of the lake dwellers around 4,500–800 B.C. Children and adults can learn to make a fire, throw a spear, produce jewellery, a lamp or a stone-age knife, using the techniques of that age. It is advisable to book an overnight stay in a tipi to complete the visit (*May to October*). >>

SUMMER BY THE LAKE



High spirits – Whether it's cool action on a sailing course, windsurfing, water skiing, wakeboarding on the Cable Ski or a leisurely trip on a stand up paddle or in a canoe or pedalo: whatever you choose, the Alphasurf Water Sports Centre on the Nouvelle Plage has got you covered. You can chill out by the waterfront and enjoy a fondue in the restaurant La Dérive, with your feet in the sand. Groups stay in the dormitories of the nearby Abri-Côtier and schools benefit from reduced rates. >>

URBAN ART



ArtiChoke – Contemporary urban artworks create a trail through the small town, which blends in with the local cultural heritage. There is a downloadable map, which enables visitors to explore the street art on their own (approx. one hour), or they can book a guided tour. >>

NATURAL PARADISE



Discover – Estavayer-le-Lac is situated in the centre of the Grande Cariçaie, the 3,000-hectare nature reserve on Lake Neuchâtel. 50 kilometres of hiking trails and cycling paths lead through the wetland area with its diversified ecosystem. There are observation platforms and look-outs, information boards and plenty of space and time for individual discoveries in the realm of 800 plants and over 10,000 animal species. The nature centres La Sauge near Cudrefin and Champ-Pittet, as well as individual experts, offer guided tours – even in a canoe. >>

KEY DATES

- 1000** Construction of the Romanesque Payerne Abbey Church
- 1284** Construction of Chenaux Castle
- 1982** Creation of the Grande Cariçaie Reserve
- 2011** Inclusion of the prehistoric lake dwellings in the UNESCO World Heritage List

IN NUMBERS

- Population:**
10,090 inhabitants (Estavayer-le-Lac),
10,288 inhabitants (Payerne)
- Language:** French
- Altitude:** 448 m