

# GRUYÈRES

## TRAVEL BACK IN TIME TO THE MIDDLE AGES

The small picturesque town of Gruyères appears to have emerged straight out of the Middle Ages. A visit to the fortified 13<sup>th</sup> century Gruyères Castle is a must. As well as magnificent exhibitions, a new augmented reality audio guide app vividly brings the rich history of this remarkable building to life. Roaming through the Castle with its Knights' Hall, turrets, battlements, defensive walls and garden is a fantastic experience in itself. When visitors are tired of looking at the panorama of the Alpine foothills from the Castle terrace, they can stroll through the traffic-free streets of the small town. New photo opportunities present themselves at every step. The Museum and Bar of HR Giger, who won an Oscar for designing the xenomorphs in the film 'Alien', offers a completely different kind of cultural experience, as does the Tibet Museum. Traditional restaurants serve the legendary specialties of the Fribourg Pre-Alps, such as fondues and traditional Bénéichon dishes. The

Fondue Academy gives visitors an insight into the art of fondue preparation by master cheesemakers. Chocolate fans can reserve a place in a workshop at the Chocolaterie de Gruyères or indulge their sweet tooth with the impressive range of delicious treats on offer. Nearby is Maison Cailler, the Swiss Chocolate Factory, which takes visitors on an unforgettable voyage into the world of chocolate.

According to legend, Gruyères was founded in 400 B.C. by the Vandal King Gruerius. He saw a crane ('grue' in French) flying across the crimson evening sky and decided to build his town on that very spot. This is why the coat of arms of Gruyères depicts a crane on a red background.

In December 2021 Gruyères was awarded the 'Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO' label in recognition of its tourism development strategy which respects and promotes the local heritage, local communities and nature. >>





## PACKAGE



**La Gruyère Passport** – This package offers the most cost-effective way of discovering the region. Two nights starting from CHF 175 are bookable together with, for example, a traditional dish, public transport, discounts on mountain railways and admission vouchers for attractions like Gruyères Castle, the HR Giger Museum, Maison Cailler, the Swiss Chocolate Factory, and La Maison du Gruyère demonstration cheese dairy. >>

## GRUYÈRES CASTLE



**Storyteller** – We are off to meet Chalamala, the contemporary witness and living history book! The last jester from Gruyères Castle still has first-hand knowledge of the myths. Counts and birds followed in quick succession, while the same old Chalamala related their victories and defeats to the people in simple verses. His tales allow modern-day visitors to experience the emotions of past centuries. >>

## HIKING



**Worthwhile** – An easy hiking trail takes you from the foot of Gruyères Hill to the 'Chapelle des Marches'. There are wonderful views of Moléson, Dent de Broc and the Vanils mountain range, while the old swaying bridge takes hikers across the Sarine river. >>

## DEMONSTRATION CHEESE DAIRY



**The favourite cheese of most Swiss people** – La Maison du Gruyère demonstration cheese dairy is dedicated to the king of cheeses, the world-renowned Gruyère AOP. This is where 36 farmers come twice a day to deliver the milk from their cows that graze in the lush green meadows and Alpine pastures. Visitors are invited to watch the cheese production demonstrations between 9 am and 12.30 pm. An interactive and entertaining tour tells visitors everything they need to know about Gruyère AOP, and ends with a cheese tasting experience. >>

## KEY DATES

- 13<sup>th</sup> c.** First mention of Gruyères Castle
- 1938** Canton of Fribourg buys the Castle and turns it into a museum
- 1998** HR Giger Museum opens
- 2009** Tibet Museum opens
- 2021** Gruyères awarded the 'Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO' label

## IN NUMBERS

- Population:** 63 inhabitants (town), 2,241 inhabitants (commune)
- Language:** French
- Altitude:** 810 m



# BULLE

## TRADITION, COMMERCE AND FINE DINING

Bulle, situated at the foot of the Fribourg Pre-Alps, is the second largest town in the canton of Fribourg. The modern industrial and commercial centre in La Gruyère has a century-old tradition of cattle markets and fairs. These traditions are continued in contemporary fashion in the Gruyère congress and event centre Espace Gruyère. Connoisseurs and fans of regional products meet in late autumn at the 'Salon Suisse des Goûts et Terroirs'. This national food fair brings together more than 280 producers of specialties from all over Switzerland and abroad. Numerous producers from the canton of Fribourg showcase their cheese, meat, wine and vegetables at the fair. A lively atmosphere, authentic treats as well as arts and crafts await visitors at the traditional weekly market held on Thursday mornings, all year round, on the market square. In July and August, the market is even bigger, with around 270 exhibitors. Cooking demon-

strations, musical entertainment and other artistic performances are a wonderful opportunity to meet locals. The town centre of Bulle is dominated by a fortified castle, which was commissioned by the Bishop of Lausanne in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It now houses the prefecture. The Musée gruérien, situated at the foot of the castle, presents the history and treasures of a region steeped in tradition in the interactive exhibition 'Gruyère, Footprints and Detours'.

Bulle has a varied culinary heritage and a lively cultural scene, with concerts, plays, festivals and exhibitions. There are also plenty of sites to discover and things to do in the surrounding areas. Mount Moléson, the giant Alpine playground, is nearby and the countryside around Lake Gruyère (dam) is ideal for hiking, cycling and mountain bike tours. La Chia, a family-friendly ski resort with snowshoeing trails, is only five minutes from Bulle. >>



## MUSÉE GRUÉRIEN



**Regional heritage** – The tour of the interactive Musée gruérien in Bulle is an emotional journey through time. Models, scenes, films and sound sequences from the collection of traditional costumes and old tools used by herdsmen, to the traditional farmhouse on a 1:1 scale depict La Gruyère's diverse cultural heritage. Tribute is, of course, paid to the region's most famous ambassador, Gruyère AOP cheese. A wonderful portrait of the region! >>

## FONDUE TRAIN



**Fine dining onboard** – In winter, the historic Fondue Train departs from Bulle for a relaxing and scenic gourmet evening. An aperitif, the traditional, homemade Fribourg 'moitié-moitié' cheese fondue and the famous meringues with double cream are a wholesome reminder of bygone days. The picturesque countryside of La Gruyère is an additional treat, but without the calories! A popular excursion among Swiss and international visitors alike. >>

## RAMBLE



**Poor People's Path** – The seven-kilometre-long circular route starts on the outskirts of Bulle. Created by monks in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, this path was taken by the poor to attend Mass at the Part-Dieu Monastery. Their devotion was rewarded with a bowl of soup. >>

## HISTORIC WALKING TOUR



**Exploring** – Visitors explore the historic centre of Bulle at their own pace on this walking tour. The tour takes you to lots of sites, where not only the buildings, monuments, squares and parks are explained, but their exciting history as well. Churches, indoor markets, a very special instrument, a popular uprising and some outstanding personalities bring this journey through time to life. A brochure is available for this walking tour and can be downloaded on your smartphone. >>

## KEY DATES

- 1239** Construction of Bulle Castle
- 1805** Fire destroys a major part of Bulle
- 1998** Congress and event center Espace Gruyère opens
- 2012** Musée gruérien launches its interactive exhibition
- 2018** Bulle dungeon opens to the public

## IN NUMBERS

- Population:** 25,070 inhabitants
- Language:** French
- Altitude:** 771 m



# LA BERRA AND LAKE GRUYÈRE

## PARADISE FOR WATER AND MOUNTAIN SPORTS

La Berra, situated in La Gruyère, is a small but beautiful recreational and sports area. The view from the 1,719-metre-high summit of La Berra is spectacular. You can see Lake Gruyère with the Ogoz Island and far beyond, the Three-Lakes Region and the Jura, past the Fribourg Pre-Alps, to the snow-covered peaks of the Bernese Alps.

Located in the vicinity of Fribourg and Bulle, skiing began here in the 1920s. Today, the family-friendly La Berra offers a hybrid lift with chairs and cable cars, as well as four ski lifts. La Berra is a popular destination for snow sports enthusiasts thanks to over 20 kilometres of slopes, three restaurants, a ski school, signposted snowshoe trails and great conditions for ambitious ski tourists.

In summer, La Berra is transformed into a hikers' paradise, and attracts cyclists from far and wide to the Berra Bike Park and its two downhill runs. Forest, pastures and typical Alpine chalets, with their shingle roofs, characterise the landscape. There are loads of

great vantage points on the circular biking trail that runs from Plaffeien along the mountain ridge around the Plasselbschlund. Before heading back down via the Schwyberg, a stop at La Berra offers breathtaking panoramic views. The signposted hiking trails can be combined with the cableway, which is accessible by public transport from La Roche at the weekends. From the Chalet de La Berra, the restaurant at the summit, which was fully renovated in 2021, it is possible to take panoramic walks to the Gîte d'Allières Alpine tavern or to the nice Buvette du Gros Cousimbert, for example. Visitors who cannot get enough of the spectacular views of Kaiseregg and Schwyberg can spend the night in two Alpine huts. It is very easy to get into the holiday mood on the theme trails, the playground and by studying the panorama boards in La Berra and its surroundings. Water sports enthusiasts should head to Lake Gruyère, where they can hire all the kit they need – kayaks, stand up paddles, boats, and much more besides. >>





## BERRA BIKE PARK



**Action** – La Berra (altitude: 1,719 m) offers beautiful panoramic views and is a great destination for mountain bikers, with two cool downhill runs with elevation gains of 600 m. The blue 5.4-kilometre-long run starts at the top station and goes past the Alpine tavern Gîte d'Allières. The steeper red route is 3.4-kilometres-long and runs directly under the cableway. The Berra Bike Park also has a free pump track, located at the bottom station. Equipment can be hired on site. >>

## WATER SPORTS



**On the lake** – Lake Gruyère has everything that water sports fans might need. You can rent single or double kayaks, canoes, pedalos, stand up paddles and even a giant SUP for the whole family, not to mention fishing and sailing boats. Adventure-seekers can set sail, either alone or with a guide, for Bird Island or the scenic Ogoz Island. Other activities include sailing courses and fun treasure hunts, including photo scavenger hunts. >>

## LAKE WALK



**Discover** – The hike around Lake Gruyère can be done in stages or over two days. Interpretive panels and the augmented reality app Novilé provide lots of interesting facts. New highlight: the 105-metre-long footbridge at the Rossens dam. >>

## OGOZ ISLAND



**Excursion** – The village of Ogoz had been inhabited for at least 10,000 years before it became an island in 1948, when the dam was built to create Lake Gruyère. The two castle ruins and the chapel dedicated to St. Theodul originate from the Middle Ages. From May to October, there is a boat trip every Sunday at 2 pm and 3.30 pm from Le Bry harbour on the lake and a guided tour of the Ogoz Island. It is also worth making enquiries about a group tour, a taxi ride or even a wedding on Ogoz. >>

## KEY DATES

- 1934** The first ski lift opens
- 1947** Construction of the dam and creation of Lake Gruyère
- 2013** New combined cableway with chairs and cable cars opens
- 2017** Inauguration of the new lower station
- 2018** Launch of the downhill trails and the Novilé app

## IN NUMBERS

- Population:**  
1,801 inhabitants (commune of La Roche)
- Language:** French
- Altitudes:** 673 m (lake),  
1,719 m (La Berra summit)



# CHARMEY

## ADRENALINE AND WELLNESS

The name says it all: Charmey is a charming mountain village. It offers an authentic taste of life in the Fribourg Pre-Alps with a variety of activities. The Désalpe, a traditional festival marking the descent of cattle from their summer Alpine pastures, always takes place on the last Saturday in September. Sports enthusiasts recommend a completely different highlight: the unique zip line run from the Vounetz top station (1,627 m) to the adventure park at the middle station, 400 m below. Eleven zip lines up to 200 metres long provide two hours of fun, sliding against the backdrop of the breathtaking Fribourg Pre-Alps. Adrenaline-fuelled sightseeing from a different perspective!

In summer, Charmey is an ideal base for a wide variety of hikes and mountain bike tours, while in winter it is a family-friendly skiing area. The Bains de la Gruyère promise sensory indulgence and absolute relaxation

with the magical watery landscape and the uninterrupted view of the mountain scenery of La Gruyère.

The Carthusian monastery La Valsainte, founded in 1294, is situated in Cerniat, not far from Charmey. After the French invasion, 80% of the Carthusian monastery was destroyed. The Carthusian monks began rebuilding and extending the monastery in 1863. The monks have always played a decisive role in the regional economy. They still live in the Carthusian monastery today and are frequently encountered during their weekly stroll in the mountains. If you wish to gain an insight into daily life in the monastery and the spiritual life of the Carthusians, pay a visit to the Valsainte room complete with monastic cell at the Musée de Charmey. The museum also celebrates local history, traditions and works of art, both past and present. >>





## TOTAL RELAXATION



**Bains de la Gruyère** – Absolute relaxation and sensory indulgence await you here. The watery landscape with heated indoor and outdoor pools features a waterfall and spectacular mountain views. In the wellness area, which is divided into a Nordic and an Oriental area, saunas, hammams and Turkish baths tempt visitors. The chocolate massage is a hit, apparently. Why not try it for yourself! >>

## WANDERLUST



**Chemin du Gruyère** – This is where the cheese barons set out on their journey to France in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in order to sell the highly sought-after Gruyère cheese. Walk in their steps from Charmey via the Jogne gorge to Broc. The trail goes past picturesque wooden bridges and through rock face galleries – a mini adventure with lots of photo opportunities. If children need motivation to carry on, remind them that the path goes past the famous Maison Cailler, the Swiss Chocolate Factory, in Broc! (11 km, 3 hours, easy). >>

## ALPINE CHEESE



**Look inside** – In the Les In-vuettes, Hauta-Chia or Vounetz chalets, visitors can see in summer time how Alpine dairy farmers milk their cows and make Gruyère d'Alpage AOP by hand. An insight into traditional daily life on the Alpine pasture in La Gruyère. >>

## TRADITIONS



**Charmey Désalpe** – For insiders, this is the most picturesque descent from the Alps in Switzerland! The traditional festival pays homage to the Alpine farmers and their cows and goats when they return to the valley after a busy summer in the Alps. The herdsmen wear their brezdons, the women their dzaquillons, and the animals are adorned with flowers and magnificent bells. The festivities attract visitors from near and far and include a market where you can buy some of this Alp cheese and many more regional specialities besides. >>

## KEY DATES

- 1920** Construction of the dam and the Lake Montsalvens
- 2007** Inauguration of the Bains de la Gruyère
- 2011** New chairlift opens in Vounetz
- 2012** Charmey Aventures opens its zip line attraction
- 2018** Charmey re-opens the Old Forge to the public

## IN NUMBERS

- Population:** 2,587 inhabitants
- Language:** French
- Altitude:** 900 m (village),  
1,627 m (Vounetz summit)



# JAUN

## AT THE FOOT OF THE GASTLOSEN

Jaun, and its district Im Fang, is the only German-speaking commune in La Gruyère. The village is situated on the road that goes over the Jaun Pass to the Simmental in the Bernese Oberland. Many of its 650 or so inhabitants speak the specific Jaun Valley Swiss German dialect. The waterfall in the centre of the village and the vicinity of the Old Church are situated in a force field with a remarkable amount of positive energy. The Old Church is now a concert hall and houses the Cantorama, the home of Fribourg choral music (open July/August, Sundays from 2 to 5 pm). The cemetery of the Catholic Church, with its hand-carved wooden crosses, is worth a visit. Jaun is surrounded by majestic peaks such as the Gastlosen mountain range, and offers unspoiled nature and wonderful leisure activities. The Gastlosen Express brings hikers to the Alpine tavern Bärghus. This is where the Gastlosen tour starts with rest stops in the

legendary mountain restaurant Chalet du Soldat and the family-friendly Alpine tavern Chalet Grat. With over 800 routes, the Gastlosen mountain range is a first-rate destination for climbers. The well-known mountaineer Erhard Loretan climbed here, virtually on the doorstep. Walkers have also come to the right place here: a panoramic path leads from the top station to the vantage point with a view of the Gastlosen. The spectacular 'Grossmutterloch', a 15-metre-high and five-metre-wide window in the rock, is legendary. The two-hour 'Erlebnisweg' (interactive adventure trail) and the Gastlosen geological path are enjoyable activities for families. In winter, Jaun is a family-friendly skiing area and offers magnificent routes for ski and snowshoeing tours. The cross-country ski runs are among those in the region with a virtual guarantee for snow and the six-kilometre-long sled run is renowned far and wide. >>



## WINTER WONDERLAND



**Winter sports** – The Gastlosen mountain range is the site of a natural phenomenon during the winter months when the low sun glistens through a hole in the rock face. The best observation point is a spot a few minutes away from the top station. This is also where the six-kilometre-long sled run to Jaun begins. Cross-country skiers can get some training thanks to the 2 x 10 km groomed tracks that run between Charmey and Jaun. The Nordic Centre offers a range of courses and lessons. >>

## HIKING TRAIL



**Gastlosen** – The Gastlosen circular route is regarded by many as the best mountain hiking trail in the canton of Fribourg. It takes five hours from/to the Gastlosen Express chairlift station and has an elevation gain of more than 855 metres. The Gastlosen Express runs daily. You can also rent a scooter for the six-kilometre descent to Jaun. Information about the mountain restaurants along the route – the Bärghus, the Chalet du Soldat and the Chalet Grat – is available online. >>

## CASCADE



**Natural force field** – The source of the water lies 15 km away in the Les Morteyes Valley. From there, it embarks on a 10-day-long subterranean journey before gushing out of the rockface in Jaun, crystal clear and teeming with precious minerals. >>

## CROIX EN BOIS



**Hand carved** – The cemetery of St. Stephen's Catholic Church in the centre of Jaun is unique. In 1948, local artist Walter Cottier carved the first cross for his grandfather's grave. The inhabitants of Jaun liked his work and many other wooden crosses were carved. The carvings, which are each protected by a shingle-covered roof, depict the profession or favourite activities of the deceased, and tell the story of their lives. Since Cottier's death, Reynold Boschung has been keeping the tradition alive. >>

## KEY DATES

- 1945** The Alpine hut Chalet du Soldat opens
- 1992** Cantorama opens
- 2011** Gastlosen Express chairlift opens
- 2014** Jaun sled run opens
- 2017** Renovation of the Hotel Wasserfall in Jaun

## IN NUMBERS

- Population:** 644 inhabitants
- Language:** German
- Altitude:** 1,050 m



# MOLÉSON

## LEISURE PURSUITS AND VIEWS TO THE WEST

Moléson-sur-Gruyères, a small village situated 1,100 metres above sea level, overlooks the small medieval town of Gruyères and the 'Les Marches' plain. The Moléson itself is the most popular mountain for its panoramic views of the Fribourg Pre-Alps. Its convenient funicular and cable car make it accessible to everyone. A breathtaking 360-degree panorama unfolds from the summit at 2,002 m above sea level, stretching from Lake Geneva to the Jura, and from Mont Blanc to the peaks of the Bernese Oberland. As a popular local saying goes: everyone can see their house from up here! The mountain, with its wide range of leisure activities, offers winter action in the ski area with its famous black ski slope, a four-kilometre-long sled run and lovely snowshoe trails. In summer, the 'balcony of Western Switzerland' is extremely popular with mountaineers and day trippers

alike. Tours with magnificent views, for example across the Moléson ridge past Alpine pastures to the middle station, are a hit with hikers. Trail runners train on the steepest slopes. Mountain bikers cross the flanks of the Moléson on the national panoramic bike route towards Les Paccots and stop for a well-earned rest in one of the typical Alpine taverns. In addition to traditional activities, more contemporary sports also attract visitors to the mountain, for example two Via Ferrata routes with permanent belays, a summer mountain coaster, mountain go-karts, mini-golf and a playground. On the summit of the Moléson, experts also offer introductions to night-time astronomy and visitors can embark on a fascinating journey across thousands of light years. It is impossible to get any closer to the stars. In summer, the mountain hosts concerts and an array of culinary events. >>





## AN ADRENALINE HIGH



**Up and down** – Head for heights and nerves of steel: the ascent of Mount Moléson is not for the faint-hearted. Two fixed rope routes – the Via Ferrata de la Face and the rather easier route Le Pilier – provide a far better foothold. Both of them lead to the peak (2,002 m) in 3.5 hours of panoramic climbing. >> The Fun Park has a thrilling summer mountain coaster which whizzes through the trees and meadows (under-8s must be accompanied) and a cool 500-metre-long downhill mountain cart run (min. height: 1.40 m). >>

## CHEESE DAIRY TRAIL



**An experience** – The path between the Alpine cheese-dairy in Moléson village and La Maison du Gruyère in Pringy is an entertaining and educational experience. The walk across meadows and through woods takes around two hours and offers plenty of opportunities to admire the Moléson. Visitors who fancy a delicious meal en route, cooked on a wood-fired stove, will plan their walk so that it passes through Les Mongerons Alpine restaurant (open from May to September). It's so cosy! >>

## HIGH FONDUE



**Romantic** – In summer, the cableways going up to the Moléson are opened on Friday and Saturday evenings, allowing visitors to enjoy tapas, burgers or a classic 'moitié-moitié' fondue in the mountain-top restaurant while admiring the magnificent sunset. Book ahead! >>

## ALPINE DAIRY & TAVERN



**Journey through time** – The oldest part of the shingle-covered Alpine demonstration cheese dairy dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is a historic monument and visitors flock from near and far to discover what life was like for Alpine herdsmen in days of yore. From May to September, the cheesemaker lifts the cheese out of the copper kettle at 9.45 am and explains their work. Visitors can then dine on the panoramic terrace or stock up on delicious specialities in the farm shop. >>

## KEY DATES

- 1963** First winter season in Moléson
- 2011** New cable car opens
- 2014** 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Moléson

## IN NUMBERS

- Population:** 199 inhabitants (village), 2,241 inhabitants (commune)
- Language:** French
- Altitude:** 2,002 m (Moléson summit)



# LES PACCOTS – LA VEVEYSE

## ENJOY TRADITION AND NATURE

The district of La Veveyse, on the outskirts of the canton of Fribourg, faces south, towards Vevey and Lake Geneva. Only a half hour drive from Fribourg and Lausanne, it attracts visitors all year round, with sporting and leisure activities in the fresh mountain air. Les Paccots and Rathvel are ideal starting points for winter sports. Snowshoe trekkers will find a large network of signposted trails and a lot of unspoiled nature in this Pre-Alpine countryside. Winter hikers also flock to the area for the peace and quiet. The indoor ice rink in Les Paccots is also very popular with locals and day trippers.

Summer visitors can experience the austere beauty of the region by foot or by mountain bike. Mountain restaurants and Alpine huts attract visitors with their specialities, including 'soupe de chalet', fondues and of course, meringues with double cream. You can even combine feasting and fitness in Les Paccots with the

fun 'E-bike and fondue' package. The Rand'eau theme trail, which entertainingly informs visitors about aspects of water in the area of Corbetta, is a fun way for a family to discover nature.

The region has several nationally protected landscapes: the Lac des Joncs, a very deep, 5,000-year-old mountain lake, is part of the national amphibian spawning areas and is home to endangered species such as the turtle and the red-eyed dragonfly. The Niremont, a small mountain range, forms part of the moorlands of national significance and provides a habitat for many rare plants and animals. Nature enthusiasts can visit these protected areas on woodchip-covered paths. Illustrated interpretive panels, oversized board games and other outdoor play equipment help to raise awareness of the need to protect these fragile landscapes. >>



## BÉNICHON



**Autumn** – For centuries the canton of Fribourg has celebrated ‘Bénéichon’, the local patois word for ‘blessing’. It was originally a religious festival to give thanks for the harvest gathered during the warmer months. Today, locals and visitors continue to tuck into the delicious regional specialities on the Bénéichon menu. In Châtel- St-Denis, Bénéichon is always held on the third weekend of October. >>

## GOURMET TRAILS



**Gourmet hiking** – Whichever gourmet trail you choose, calorie counting is definitely off the menu! On the family-friendly ‘L’Épicurien’ hiking trail (2 hours), walkers stop at the top of Le Niremont, take out their fondue kit and cook their own lunch. On the ‘Le Cerf’ trail (3.5 hours), walkers enjoy a meal at the cosy mountain restaurant. The package also includes a starter, dessert and a visit to the petting zoo. A healthy appetite is a must for the ‘Panorama’ trail as it takes in four mountain taverns in four hours! >>

## SKI TOURS



**Sporty** – The popular signposted ski tour route, the Creux des Tables (movement touring track), takes you through the most beautiful winter landscapes to Le Pralet (altitude: 1,568 m) in two hours. >>

## FEASTING AND FITNESS



**Fondue to go** – The ‘E-bike and fondue’ package is a real crowd pleaser. First, you conquer the Alpine paths around Les Paccots on a state-of-the-art electric mountain bike. Second, all this physical exertion makes you hungry. Thankfully, you have everything in your backpack to prepare a delicious ‘moitié-moitié’ fondue. Third, you get to choose the best spot outdoors to enjoy your well-earned lunch. There is also the very popular ‘Snowshoes and fondue’ package during the winter months. Advance booking required. >>

## KEY DATES

- 1938** The first ski lift in Les Paccots opens
- 2000** Inauguration of the gourmet trails
- 2013** Launch of the Rand’eau theme trail
- 2014** Rando prize for the Rand’eau theme trail

## IN NUMBERS

- Population:** 1,002 inhabitants (village), 8,000 inhabitants (commune)
- Language:** French
- Altitude:** 1,061 m (Les Paccots)



# SCHWARZSEE

## FOR THE MOST RELAXING FAMILY HOLIDAYS

Lake Schwarzsee, covering an area of 0.5 km<sup>2</sup>, nestles romantically in the Fribourg Pre-Alps. The small village that shares its name is part of the German-speaking Sense district. The lake shimmers turquoise, deep blue or jet black, depending on the light. Meadows and trees line the predominantly flat lakeside, creating a magnificent contrast to the limestone mountains and rocky ridges. The Brecca nature reserve, a natural heritage site of national importance, was hollowed out by glaciers and is one of the most beautiful and unspoilt Alpine valleys in Switzerland.

On the subject of ice: winter visitors come to Schwarzsee expecting a cold snap. Ice skating, ice hockey, cross-country skiing and walking are, after all, twice as much fun on the frozen mountain lake! Even after dark, Schwarzsee has been an unrivalled visitor attraction for 33 years: ice palaces and grottos invite visitors to discover a fairy tale world of ice and light.

Pure magic! The illuminated ice slide is a real favourite with kids. There is also the new 'Light in the Forest' outdoor display where visitors of all ages will fall under the spell of the sweet animated forest creatures. The Schwarzsee skiing area is also very family-friendly.

Schwarzsee is ideal for an active summer holiday in the mountains. There is something for everyone: panoramic hiking trails and the 'Häxewääg' (Witch's Trail) for children, cool mountain bike routes, a bike trail and bike park, as well as a mini-golf course, stand up paddling, swimming, fishing, boating, a summer mountain coaster, monster scooters, and much more. Schwarzsee does its utmost to live up to its reputation as a destination for nature enthusiasts.

There are very many legends and fairy tales about Schwarzsee. Why is the lake called the 'Black Lake'? The giant Gargantua washed his muddy feet in the lake, turning the water dark and murky! >>



## ALPINE DESCENT



**Tradition** – The ‘désalpe’ is the day on which the magnificent final homage is paid to the Alpine summer. Hundreds of cows and goats, adorned with flowers, return to the valley after four months on fragrant mountain pastures. Herdsmen and women wear their traditional costumes and look forward to the appreciation of their hard work and the festivities welcoming them back. These festivities are popular with everyone, from families to visitors from all over the world. >>

## SENSE HEART TRAIL



**E-bike round tour** – The 72-kilometre-long Heart Route Circular Trail No. 299 has every chance of achieving cult status. The Sense river is worth taking the time to explore: it is, after all, “an Alpine wild river of excellence” according to the WWF. The rolling Alpine foothills form natural river valleys with valuable pastureland, forests and hills and invite visitors to explore the area by e-bike or bicycle. The free Sense Heart Trail map can be ordered online. >>

## ICE PALACES



**Winter wonderland** – An enchanting, illuminated dream world awaits warmly dressed visitors two kilometres away from Schwarzsee. You can also observe the cute animated creatures in the new ‘Light in the Forest’ display. >>

## PRIMEVAL LANDSCAPE



**Round tour** – The four-hour walk around the wild and romantic landscape of the Brecca Valley begins with a chairlift ride to the top of the Riggisalp (1,493 m). Now a conservation area, this beautiful valley was hollowed out by glaciers. The limestone cliffs, whose white teeth stretch up to the sky above the green Alpine pastures, are truly magical. Along the way, stop for a fondue at the little Alpine restaurant St. Antoni Brecca (1,400 m), and finish with meringues and double cream at the Hubel Rippa Alpine hut (1,140 m). >>

## KEY DATES

- 19<sup>th</sup> c.** Sulphurous water is used for therapeutic baths
- 1996** The Brecca primeval landscape is registered in the Federal Inventory of Landscapes and Natural Monuments of National Importance
- 2020** The playground ‘Dragonland Kaiseregg’ on the Riggisalp opens

## IN NUMBERS

- Population:**  
634 inhabitants (village),  
3,595 inhabitants (commune)
- Language:** German
- Altitude:** 1,047 m



# FRIBOURG/FREIBURG

## INNOVATIVE BRIDGE BETWEEN TWO CULTURES

The Old Town of Fribourg/Freiburg is deemed to be one of the most beautiful in Switzerland. Its location alone is enchanting: the extremely picturesque town nestles in the meanders of the Sarine river and extends from the riverbank through the lower part of the town to the Old Town. Moreover, the many medieval buildings in the Old Town, with their Gothic façades, constitute one of the most important collections of its kind in Europe, particularly the façade of the town's landmark St. Nicholas Cathedral. The town fortifications, which are freely accessible during the day, offer new vistas and perspectives. With the help of augmented reality, the multimedia guide 'Frÿburg 1606' offers an immersive tour of medieval Fribourg. Visitors can also admire the incredible 52m<sup>2</sup> scale model (1:250) of the Old Town. The city is home to many works by contemporary artists like Jean Tinguely and Mario Botto as well. Fribourg not only creates the cultural bridge between the German and French areas of Switzerland, but also boasts 14 bridges with interesting architecture, the old-

est of which were built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The latest addition, the Poya Bridge, which was completed in 2014, is an impressive cable-stayed bridge with the longest distance between two piers nationwide.

The museums present a wide variety of themes, from modern art and cultural history and puppets to sewing machines. A stone's throw away from the Botanic Gardens is the Villars Chocolate Factory's shop and café as well as the newly inaugurated experience boutique 'La Fabrik'. Chocolate lovers can also admire the incredible sculptures by master chocolatier Jorge Cardoso in the Rue de Lausanne.

Let's not forget the cool five-stop food tour 'Taste my Fribourg'. In the evenings, visitors are spoilt for choice with culture and gastronomy, including typical cosy bistros, trendy bars and an exceptional number of fine dining restaurants. With its impressive culinary heritage, it is not surprising that the city has been named the 2023 culinary capital of Switzerland ('Ville du Goût'). >>



## URBAN GOLF



**Popular** – Fribourg has been offering urban golf since 2008. It is a way of discovering the town in a very family-friendly and entertaining manner. The 18-hole course goes from the centre via the cable railway (funicular) in the lower town, where it crosses old wooden and stone bridges. Mini-golf with additional features and a makeover! Moreover, the Fribourg City Card (for one or two days) includes urban golf, a ride on the tourist train, museum admission, and public transport. >>

## BACK TO THE MIDDLE AGES



**High-tech city tour** – 'Frÿburg 1606' is a multimedia guide that takes visitors back to medieval Fribourg. With the help of augmented reality, you discover what the streets would have looked like in 1606, enjoy 360° views, and observe the medieval townsfolk going about their business. The high point of the tour is a visit to 'Espace 1606', in the Old Werkhof, and its 52 m<sup>2</sup> scale model (1:250) of the Old Town. Based on the Martini Map of 1606, it shows the foundation and development of the city. >>

## ORIGINAL



**Contemporary** – Art lovers will find a lovely homage to the artist couple Jean Tinguely – Niki de Saint Phalle in their Espace. The exhibition includes some of the machine-like sculptures by the Fribourg artist (1925–1991). >>

## FEAST OF ST. NICHOLAS



**Steeped in tradition** – The celebrations in honour of St. Nicholas, the patron saint of the city, take place every year and have been organised by the pupils of St. Michael's College since 1906. At the end of the afternoon, St. Nicholas, accompanied by his helpers, rides his donkey through the streets, handing out gingerbread to the waiting children. The highlight is his speech from the steps of the Cathedral, in which he casts a critical but humorous eye on the events of the past year. Be sure not to miss the confectionery and handicrafts market held on the same day. *Friday, 1 to Sunday, 3 December 2023.* >>

## KEY DATES

- 1157** The town is founded by Duke Berthold IV of Zähringen
- 1481** The canton of Fribourg joins the Swiss Confederation
- 1889** The University of Fribourg is founded
- 2020** 'Frÿburg 1606' multimedia guide is nominated for the prestigious Milestone tourism award
- 2023** City of Fribourg is named the 2023 culinary capital of Switzerland ('Ville du Goût')

## IN NUMBERS

- Population:** 37,776 inhabitants (city), 82,765 inhabitants (agglomeration)
- Languages:** French and German
- Altitude:** 610 m



# ROMONT RÉGION

## HEARTLAND OF GLASS ART

The small town of Romont, situated 22 kilometres southwest of Fribourg, has preserved much of its medieval heritage. Surrounded by impressive town walls, the small town is situated on a hill in the upper Glâne Valley. In fact, the hill is a 'drumlin', an oval mound moulded by the action of the Rhone glacier in the Ice Age. The present-day name Romont originates from Latin ('rotundus mons') and means round hill. The architectural treasures of the picturesque town include Romont Castle, the Abbey Church of Notre Dame de l'Assomption, the town fortifications, the Cistercian Abbey of La Fille-Dieu, a former Capuchin monastery and numerous merchants' houses and mansions. Romont has always been an important stage for pilgrims on the Way of St. James. Although it is 2,000 kilometres from the destination in Santiago de Compostela, the small town offers splendid highlights – and in the true sense of the word. The regional glass art

and in particular the Vitromusée, the Swiss Museum of Stained Glass and Glass Art housed in Romont Castle, are a crowd puller. The exhibitions include magnificent glass works from the Middle Ages to the present time. Renowned stained glass artists such as Brian Clark, Marc Chagall and Baldwin & Guggisberg have exhibited their works here. Valuable glass windows from different periods also adorn the churches and other buildings in the region, justifying Romont's reputation as the heartland of glass art. The glass-themed 'Vitroparcours' trail combines these sights and can be walked or cycled. The delightful countryside, which is characterised by livestock farming, invites visitors to discover it at leisure and under their own steam. You can easily combine your visit to Romont with a trip to the countryside, sightseeing in the hamlet of Rue or a visit to the Wallpaper Museum in Mézières. >>



## STAINED GLASS



**Glass and wallpapers** – Romont Castle is a fitting home for the Swiss Museum of Stained Glass and Glass Art. The collection includes sumptuous and fascinating stained-glass windows dating from the Middle Ages to the present day. >> The Wallpaper Museum and its impressive collection could not have found a better home than Mézières Castle, which still boasts 18<sup>th</sup> century wall coverings of its own. >>

## BAREFOOT



**Natural experience** – “Going barefoot heightens the senses. After a ramble in the countryside accompanied by a wealth of anecdotes, your feet feel totally liberated ... and your head as well!”, says Frédéric Perritaz, the architect of the barefoot trails in Villarimboud near Romont. ‘Le Pied Total’ invites visitors to explore the rich and diverse plant life in the garden of an old mill. Visitors who wish to spend the night in a tree bivouac have also come to the right place. >>

## GLASS TRAIL



**Vitroparcours** – The tour takes walkers on a fun and educational journey through the world of glass. The interpretive trail, which runs along the medieval town walls and castle courtyard, is a great day out for all the family. >>

## POWER OF THE MONASTERY



**Ora et labora** – The nuns from the Abbey of La Fille-Dieu in Romont meet seven times a day, and once a night to pray. When the nuns are not praying, the active Cistercian community produces consecrated wafers and various kinds of mustards, and sells them in their own shop, in stores and online. The monastery also continues its tradition of welcoming visitors. Women and men, who seek peace or spiritual assistance, can stay up to eight days here as a guest and enjoy the peace and quiet of its garden. >>

## KEY DATES

- 1240** Founding of Romont by Peter II of Savoy, and construction of the castle, abbey and town walls
- 1981** Founding of the Swiss Museum of Stained Glass and Glass Art (Vitromusée)
- 2006** Restructuring and expansion of the Vitromusée
- 2019** Launch of the ‘Vitroparcours’ interpretive trail

## IN NUMBERS

- Population:**  
5,505 inhabitants (commune),  
24,957 inhabitants (region)
- Language:** French
- Altitude:** 780 m



# MORAT/MURTEN

## JEWEL IN THE LAKE MURTEN CROWN

Murten, the capital of the Fribourg Lake District, is a case of love at first sight. The small Zähringen town, in its idyllic location overlooking Lake Murten, simply delights everyone. This is also attested to by the 'Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO' label, which it obtained in December 2022, beating out more than 130 international applications. The Old Town has nestled against its defensive town walls since the Middle Ages. The walls are part of a fortification that is very well preserved and accessible, waiting to be explored. A real adventure, brimming with history that fascinates children and adults alike! Fortified towers, dungeons, narrow stairs and secret rooms bring Murten's turbulent history to life. The Battle of Murten on 22 June 1476, in which the Swiss Confederates defeated the army of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, who then "lost heart", is still commemorated today. History buffs should visit the Murten Museum in the old mill, adjacent to the town walls. Sports enthusiasts take part in

the legendary Murten run, a road race from Murten to Fribourg. Held every October, it commemorates the Swiss Confederates' victory. And for the young people of Murten, the school festival 'Solennität' at the end of June is an occasion to remember and celebrate. A stroll in the Old Town through quaint lanes and arcades, past impressive town houses and historic fountains, is a must for all visitors. The view from the 13<sup>th</sup> century castle extends over the deep blue water of Lake Murten to the vineyards on Mount Vully where winegrowers cultivate more than 20 varieties of grape, but mainly Chasselas and Pinot Noir. These splendid wines can be enjoyed in one of the typical taverns in the Old Town or on the bustling lakeside promenade, perhaps with a regional fish dish. This is a good time to discuss what to do next from a wide range of options that include cultural attractions, museums, boat trips, beaches, cycling tours and fine dining. >>



## GOURMET TOUR



**A movable feast** – Pack your swimsuit and voucher booklet ('Genussbüchlein'), and set off on a leisurely gastronomic e-bike tour around Lake Murten. Power up with a slice of Murten's legendary creamy 'Nidelkuchen' before you head off to Avenches, cycling along the lake. From there it is on to Mount Vully, where you can savour some perch fillets and views of the vineyards, lake and mountains. At sunset, head to the lakeside Muntelier camp site for a glass of Chasselas. >>

## LAKE CRUISES



**Lake Murten** – A boat trip can be romantic, practical or gastronomic. But if it is the Attila Boutique Boatel, it can be totally hip, too. LNM, the shipping company that operates on Lakes Neuchâtel and Murten, offers 75-minute cruises around Lake Murten. The starting point is always Murten, but you can go ashore wherever you want, like Praz and its sun-drenched vineyards at the foot of Mont Vully. LNM runs year-round services, and tickets can be booked in advance. >>

## PAPILIORAMA



**All year round** – 1,001 butterflies and many exotic species to discover in the tropical forest, mangrove swamp and orchid ponds. The Nocturama shows the nocturnal jungle inhabitants. The Papiliorama in Kerzers has something for the whole family. >>

## CITY OF LIGHTS



**Let there be light** – In 2016, Murten held its first Light Festival, brightening and bringing a touch of magic to the dark winter skies. Since then, the festival takes place every January, and now includes some 20 arteplices dotted around the 'Stedtli' and the lake shore which attract locals and visitors in their droves. The 7<sup>th</sup> edition will run *from 18 to 29 January 2023*. >> From October to May, the interactive 'Circuit Secret Murten Licht' experience takes visitors on an immersive and mysterious journey through the fantastic and poetic world of lights and dreams. >>

## KEY DATES

- 515** First mentioned as a defensive site called 'Muratum'
- 1170** Town founded by the Zähringen dynasty
- 1476** Battle of Murten, victory of the Swiss Confederates over the Burgundians
- 2002** Expo.02 National Exhibition, Monolith in Lake Murten
- 2022** Murten awarded the 'Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO' label

## IN NUMBERS

- Population:** 9,365 inhabitants
- Language:** German 82%, French 15%
- Altitude:** 453 m



# VULLY

## GOURMET COUNTRY ON LAKE MURTEN

Situated opposite the small town of Murten, Vully is the sunny riviera of Lake Murten. Mont Vully is only 653 m high but has magnificent views. The view from its ridge extends over the vineyards and lake to the snow-covered peaks of the Bernese Alps. The villages on the southern slope, from Môtier, Praz and Lugnorre to Guévaux, are traditionally characterised by winegrowing. Where the Romans planted the first vines 2,000 years ago, winegrowers from Fribourg and Vaud now produce excellent wines. The whole of Vully, with 150 hectares of vines or 1% of the cultivated area in Switzerland, is a small, but excellent wine region. At the same time, excellent restaurants await visitors in search of culinary delights. The nearby 'Grosses Moos' is regarded as the vegetable garden of Switzerland. Fertile land was created after the course of the inshore waters was corrected twice (1868–1891 and 1962–1972). Around 60 types of vegetables are now grown here. Regional wine, fish and

vegetables: no wonder Vully is reputed to be gourmet country.

It is best to approach Vully slowly. The journey from Murten with the scheduled boat is particularly relaxing. Trails with spectacular views as well as the vineyard path await walkers and hikers in Vully. Historians and families can visit the Vully sandstone caves above Môtier. This system of defensive tunnels was excavated by the Swiss army during World War I, and is now a fascinating area to explore. Remember to bring a torch!

And last but not least, the Lake Murten Region is also the birthplace of 'Veloland Schweiz', the best network of cycling paths in the world, and other innovative cycling projects like the 'slowUp' events. A cycling tour around the lake, 33 kilometres on predominantly flat terrain, is an enjoyable way to spend the day. There are also boat cruises for those who prefer a more leisurely pace. >>





## VULLY WINES



**Enjoyment** – On the vineyard path between Sugiez and Môtier, visitors can sample the subtle Chasselas, fruity Pinot Noir and the Traminer and Fribourg specialities. These are the star grape varieties grown on this sun-drenched vineyards. With its 150 hectares, Vully is the smallest of Switzerland's major winegrowing regions. Over Pentecost weekend, all winegrowers open their cellars to visitors. In September, Praz hosts the Vully Grape Harvest Festival. A visit to a winery is an interesting experience (advance booking required). >>

## CULINARY HERITAGE



**Regional speciality** – Vully Tart is part of the culinary heritage of Switzerland. This delicious tart is a must at regional festivals and it is extremely popular with a glass of white wine. Anni Simonet from Le Petit Château winery in Môtier, for example, serves freshly baked Vully Tart with a wine tasting or with an aperitif, speckled with bacon and caraway seeds or with caramelised sugar baked into the handmade 'love wells'. Visitors can buy Vully Tart at the Guillaume bakery in Sugiez. >>

## FOOD AND HIKE



**Gourmet country** – The 'Route gourmande du Vully' (24 June 2023) and the 'Balade gourmande' (15 July 2023) walking tours are a must for anyone who loves food. A chance to take in the beautiful scenery and sample regional specialities like the famous Vully Tart. >>

## GUIDED TOURS OF VULLY



**À la carte** – In just under two hours, expert guides share their impressive knowledge and a few anecdotes besides. There is something for everyone, whether it is village architecture, the vineyard trail, the botanical trail or the historical trail. There is also the opportunity to visit the Celtic oppidum, the Vully sandstone caves and the World War II military bunker. The adventure is concluded with a glass of wine or a meal in a typical restaurant on Mont Vully – the ideal occasion to discuss burning questions about Vully with the guide. >>

## KEY DATES

- 558 B.C.** First mention of Vully ('Vistilius') and first vines are cultivated by the Romans
- 1868** First correction of the Jura inshore waters, lake water level lowered by 2.5 m
- 2011** First intercantonal AOC winegrowing region (Fribourg and Vaud)
- 2019** Awarded the 'Prix d'encouragement de la Poste pour le sentier historique'

## IN NUMBERS

- Population:** 4,452 inhabitants
- Languages:** French 56%, German 30%
- Altitude:** 431 m



# 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 11<sup>th</sup> 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