



CULTURE AND HISTORY

RICH HERITAGE, ATTRACTIVELY PRESENTED

The region of Fribourg has a rich cultural heritage, and the inhabitants take care of it with love and pride. The narrow lanes of the medieval towns of Fribourg, Gruyères, Romont, Murten and Estavayer-le-Lac are picturesque, yet full of life. Fortifications, churches and monasteries – many of them on the Way of St. James – castles and manor houses attract visitors with fascinating cultural activities. The capital, Fribourg, enchants visitors with its magnificent Gothic architecture, first and foremost St. Nicholas Cathedral, as well

as entire streets – over 200 in total – of 15th century Gothic façades. Then there are the 14 bridges and 11 historic fountains, which alone are worth a visit. La Gruyère is also a cultural region: its everyday farming and festival culture are traditions, many of which are still practised today. They are presented in the Musée gruérien in Bulle. All of this and a profound openness give rise to contemporary and unusual customs, as well as a great deal of culture. >>

FRIBOURG, A HUMAN-SIZED MEDIEVAL TOWN



Town fortifications – The medieval fortifications are accessible during the day from May to October. Five gates, six towers, seven sections of walls, a large rampart: the most significant heritage of medieval military architecture in Switzerland is open to visitors. Exploring the impressive fortifications with a guide and historian is a good way to learn about the history of the town, built in the meander of the Sarine river, and discover the best vantage points. Book your tour at Fribourg Tourism. >>



St. Nicholas Cathedral – The town's landmark, whose construction began in 1283, depicts a bas relief of the Last Judgement on the main door, has magnificent glass windows, wonderful old organs and a 74-metre-high observation tower – and a rich history! >>

FUNICULAR



The Fribourg 'funi' is part of the public transport system and is listed in Switzerland's cultural heritage inventory. It started running between the town centre and the lower town in 1899 and is the only remaining water ballast-powered funicular railway in Switzerland. The ballast comes from a renewable source – the city's waste water. Despite the sometimes funky odour, the funi's appeal is not to be sniffed at! >>

VISIT OF CASTLES



Ideal models for painters of fairy tale castles: surrounded by the impressive Fribourg Pre-Alps, Gruyères Castle, the former seat of the Count of Gruyère, overlooks the medieval town from the top of the hill. A tour takes visitors through eight centuries of history and culture. >> The beautiful Chenaux Castle in Estavayer-le-Lac, which has overlooked Lake Neuchâtel since the 15th century, is also well worth a visit. >>

GLASS ART



Romont Castle houses the Vitromusée, the Swiss Museum of Stained Glass and Glass Art, and its exhibition of 500 or so works, some of which were made over 1,000 years ago. >>

BEHIND CITY WALLS



Not far from Romont lies Rue, a charming medieval hamlet. It may be one of the smallest towns in Europe but its history makes up for its diminutive size! A signposted one-hour walking tour takes you through its picturesque streets, tells the stories of their rich past, and that of the castle, churches and oratories that dot the town, not to mention the hamlet's historic residences and former workshops. >>

AWARD-WINNING SACRED HERITAGE

The Sarine basin, with its numerous monasteries, churches and chapels, was awarded the title 'Landscape of the Year 2018' by the Swiss Foundation for Landscape Protection. Many of the sacred buildings in the region, which has been "strongly influenced by religion", are open to visitors. The Hauterive Abbey, a Cistercian monastery built around 1138, enjoys a picturesque location in a loop of the river Sarine outside Fribourg. You can listen to the monks literally singing God's praises or spend a few days in quiet contem-

plation. Peace and quiet can also be found with the hospitable Cistercian nuns in the Fille-Dieu Abbey in Romont or the guesthouse of the Maigrange Abbey in Fribourg's Old Town. Competent guides are on hand to share their extensive knowledge of the numerous abbeys, public churches and chapels, which have an eventful history and the most exquisite ecclesiastical art. An overview of the sacred heritage can be found online. >>

ART AND LOVE



The Espace Jean Tinguely – Niki de Saint Phalle is dedicated to Fribourg's most famous partners in art, and in life. It is a fascinating exhibition in the former tram depot in the town of Fribourg. Tinguely's meta-mechanical devices appear to be timeless and ready to go and the 'Nanas', voluptuous female figures by Niki de Saint Phalle, are also clearly non-conformist. Creativity, elaborately implemented! >>

MUSÉE GRUÉRIEN



The everyday life of herdsmen in La Gruyère in a by-gone age is now part of the cultural heritage, while their traditional festive customs are kept alive. A wonderful interactive exhibition transports visitors to the crafts in the Middle Ages, relates the triumph of Gruyère cheese in Paris, allows them to enter an Alpine hut and take part in a Bénichon festival. The museum is conveniently located in downtown Bulle, not far from the castle. >>

FROG MUSEUM



Estavayer-le-Lac has the quirkiest museum in the region: 108 stuffed frogs in satirical scenes from everyday life in the 19th century. It's always popular with children! >>

HR GIGER MUSEUM AND BAR



The Château St-Germain in the medieval town of Gruyères houses a futuristic treasure, the Museum of the Swiss artist HR Giger. In 1980, he won an Oscar for the best visual effects in the film 'Alien'. His sculptures, pictures and stage designs still fascinate visitors today. The HR Giger Bar opposite also gives visitors an impression of his work, as well as goose bumps. >>

DISCOVER MEDIEVAL FRIBOURG

Visitors to Fribourg's Old Town can enjoy a fully immersive journey back to the Middle Ages thanks to the 'Frÿburg 1606' multimedia guide. Your time-travelling adventure starts at the Fribourg tourist office, where you can rent a tablet or download the 'Frÿburg 1606 AR' to your smartphone. Thanks to augmented reality technology, you will be able to explore the medieval alleyways, enjoy panoramic views, glimpse the fortifications that have long since disappeared and meet the

locals. You can even help one of them resolve a mystery. The highlight of the tour is 'Espace 1606' in the Old Werkhof with its 52 m² scale model (1:250) of medieval Fribourg, based on the 1606 Martini plan of the town. The model captures 1,700 buildings, 17 metres of fortifications, the river banks, bridges, fountains, gardens, 3,000 trees and 2,000 figures. There is also the interactive 'Secret of Auge' mystery tour – a fun group activity that puts your sleuthing skills to the test. >>

NEOLITHIC VILLAGE



Our ancestors settled in Gletterens, on the southern shore of Lake Neuchâtel, 5,000 years ago. The reconstructed lakeside village is a typical Neolithic settlement. Guides provide information about the everyday life of the lake dwellers in and around the mud houses thatched with rushes. There are also assorted themed workshops (fire-making techniques, and the creation of weapons, tools and jewellery), as well as events and overnight stays. >>

BATTLE OF MURTEN



On 22 June 1476, the Swiss Confederates successfully launched a surprise attack on the Burgundian army and their leader Charles the Bold. Every year, Murten commemorates the battle with a series of events, including the 'Solenntät', the Historic Murten Shoot and the Murten run. As well as interpretive panels along the town walls (a must-see in the city!), the Murten Museum depicts the battle in a multimedia show. >>

FILM FESTIVAL



With its thought-provoking programme, the Fribourg International Film Festival encourages cross-cultural dialogue. *17 to 26 March 2023.* >>

ON THE TRAIL OF THE ROMANS



The Lake Murten Region has much to offer history buffs, such as Avenches (VD) and Aventicum, the capital of Roman Helvetia. The forum's thermal baths, the theatre and the Roman Museum, in particular, are worth a visit. Restoration work on the amphitheatre will be completed by 2029. >> The Roman Museum in Vallon is well worth a visit, too. >> The faithful reconstruction of the Celtic oppidum on Mont Vully, formerly part of a 600-metre-long fortification, is also impressive. >>

FRIBOURG IN THE TWILIGHT

'Fribourg at dusk' is a 2.5-hour guided storytelling tour set in 1490. Rendez-vous: the inner courtyard of the former Commandery of the Knights of St. John, in Fribourg's picturesque Old Town. By lantern light, one of the warrior monks, Christobald von Erlach, leads you through the alleys close to the banks of the Sarine, into steep, dark woods. Joining the mystery tour is the gossipy Catherine, a maid and herbalist, who knows all sorts of secret passages. As you make your

way through the twilight, Christobald and Catherine share the legends and history of different spots and buildings in Fribourg's Old Town. If only the old walls and alleys could talk! As night falls, fact and fiction imperceptibly merge... An entertaining and informative way to spend the evening. You can book a group tour or sign up for a public tour at the Fribourg tourist office. >>

ARTICHOKE URBAN ART



The medieval town of Estavayer-le-Lac has also recently shown itself to be very hip – along the Arti-Choke Urban Art Route, at least. Contemporary urban artworks create a trail that blends into the cultural heritage of the small town. A map is downloadable for individual exploration (approx. one hour). Visitors can obtain a brochure from the tourist office or book a tour. >>

PAYERNE ABBEY CHURCH



The recently renovated Payerne Abbey Church is a masterpiece of Romanesque architecture. An immersive and interactive tour offers a deep dive into 1,000 years of history. The 20-part audio guide gives you everything you need to know about the church that had close ties with Cluny (FR), as well as the symbolism of its sculptures and paintings. You will also discover how the monks lived and how natural light shaped the structure of their days. >>

OPEN-AIR BATHS



The open-air public swimming pool Les Bains de la Motta was built in the classical style by architect Beda Hefti in 1923. Backstroke swimmers enjoy the coolest view of the Old Town. >>

'ESPACE 1606'



The Werkhof in the lower part of the Old Town has risen like a phoenix from the ashes. Fribourg as it appeared in 1606 is now captured in the largest scale model of its kind in Switzerland (52 m²). Multimedia animations projected on giant screens bring us face to face with the locals like Martin Martini, a peasant, natural healer, and general jack-of-all-trades. >>

A REGION OF SINGERS

Choral music is a very lively tradition in Fribourg. Around 5,800 singers are organised into 214 religious and secular groups. The choral associations also developed outside the religious milieu, occasionally also as a backlash against it. Abbé Joseph Bovet (1879-1951) succeeded in uniting all voices. His melodies and texts are engraved on the hearts and memories of the citizens of Fribourg. A monument is dedicated to him in the Grand-Places park in Fribourg. Cantorama, the 'House of Fribourg Choral Music', in Jaun preserves and promotes this rich historic and cultural heritage, with concerts and collections. >>

CONTACT

We would be happy to help with any queries you have or offer interesting media coverage ideas.

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