



TRADITIONS

PRESERVING FRIBOURG'S HERITAGE

In the region of Fribourg, living traditions are still primarily rooted in the daily life of the locals. Their value for social cohesion is recognised and awareness of cultural heritage is part of the school curriculum. Customs are also appreciated by visitors from all over the world, who often witness scenes that seem to originate from a bygone age. An inventory of the living traditions of the region of Fribourg was made under the auspices of the Musée gruérien in Bulle

and divided into four main groups. For visitors, the emphasis is naturally on the centuries-old transhumance culture with its colourful Alpine ascents and descents, varied crafts and workmanship. Catholic traditions with numerous processions and the ubiquitous choral singing, as well as historic anniversaries with patriotic and military connotations, are very popular. >>

FRIBOURG CULTURE, A LIVING TRADITION



Poya painting – In the Fribourg patois, the syllables 'po-ya' signify the Alpine ascent in early summer, when the cows and goats are brought to higher Alpine pastures. However, it is now understood to mean the visual representation of this important and symbolic event. Poya paintings have adorned the farmhouse façades of the Fribourg Pre-Alps since the early 19th century and this art is still practised. This typical Fribourg rural art can be admired in the villages and in particular on the Poya-themed trail. >>



May singing – On 1 May, the children of the canton of Fribourg go from house to house, singing to announce the arrival of spring. Many, such as the Gruyère youth associations, wear the traditional dzaquillon and bredzon. >>

MUSÉE GRUÉRIEN



The tour of the interactive Musée gruérien in Bulle is an emotional journey through time. Models, scenes, films and sound sequences, from the Hutbändeli collection, traditional costumes and old tools used by herdsmen, to the traditional farmhouse on a 1:1 scale, depict the varied cultural heritage. Tribute is, of course, paid to the most famous ambassador for the region, the cheese Gruyère AOP. >>

SHINGLE MAKER



Léon Doutaz has devoted himself completely to the traditional craft of shingle making. He is one of seven men in the canton who learnt this trade from scratch. Besides strength and concentration, he needs an excellent feeling for the wood to ensure that his roof is capable of controlling the temperature of the chalet. He welcomes visitors interested in learning more about this traditional craft. >>

BEARDED MEN



The 'barbus' of La Gruyère preserve the transhumance traditions... Back in those days, shaving was difficult, but wearing a smart shirt under the bredzon during festivals was a matter of honor. >>

TRADITIONAL ALPINE CHALET'S



Alpine chalets with wooden roofs are part of the preserved landscapes of the Fribourg Pre-Alps. Six traditional chalets are situated along the 12.4 km hiking trail from Vounetz to the village of Charmey. Good to know: the wooden roofs have a lifespan of approximately 40 years. >>

ALPINE DESCENT, HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR

The Alpine descent is of the utmost importance for the Pre-Alpine region. Humans and animals return to the valley after four months on the Alpine pastures. The festival pays homage to the herdsmen, who have assumed a lot of responsibility for the animals and for cheese production. Traditional Alpine descents are a feast for the eyes! The highlight is the procession of animals adorned with flowers and wearing their magnificent bells, accompanied by proud women and

herdsmen in traditional dress. There is also a sermon, market stalls, folk music and customs. It would be impossible to pack more traditions into one day. In Jaun, the Alpine descent of the sheep has been celebrated for over 400 years. There are over 400 animals which, upon arriving in the valley, are sorted (separated) and loaded or sold. A large market ensures that no one has to go home without souvenirs. >>

WOODEN SPOONS



Carved wooden spoons are one of the many traditions of La Gruyère. Herdsmen were making them at the end of the 17th century to ladle double cream or 'soupe de chalet'. As the craft evolved, elaborately carved spoons were passed down from generation to generation, like family silver. A high-quality souvenir! And even more so when it is associated with memories of delicious food in a Fribourg Alpine hut. >>

EIGHT-COURSE FEAST



Once a year, the entire canton of Fribourg celebrates a Bénichon, the harvest thanksgiving festival that also commemorates the homecoming at the end of the summer Alpine pasture season. This is when everyone comes home; when town and country, locals and visitors come together. Living traditions may be reinterpreted, but the multi-course Bénichon meal remains the same! The cantonal Bénichon festival will be held in Gurmels *from 29 September to 1 October 2023*. >>

ALPINE GAMES



Against a fantastic mountain backdrop and directly by the Schwarzssee: the Wrestling and Alpine Games Festival is steeped in folklore and a major event for locals and fans. *Sunday, 18 June 2023*. >>

CHORAL SINGING



Abbé Joseph Bovet (1879-1951) left the canton of Fribourg an extensive musical heritage. He subsequently became the music director of St. Nicholas Cathedral and wrote around 2,000 religious and secular works. Whether they are sung in Fribourg patois, in French or German, his choral music and songs still bring people together today. >>

7,500 CHEESE ROUNDS FROM THE FRIBOURG PRE-ALPS

The production of cheese in the region of Fribourg dates back to 1115. Within 100 years, cheese makers had begun exporting Gruyère to Genoa and Marseille. 'Les caves d'affinage de La Tzintre' in Charmey have existed since the 16th century. Today 7,500 cheese wheels are aged in these cellars until their taste is perfect. The Gruyère d'alpage and Vacherin fribourgeois d'alpage produced by the Fribourg Cooperative of Alpine Cheese Producers were awarded the national quality certificate AOC (Appellation d'origi-

ne contrôlée) in 2001 and 2005 respectively. In May 2013, the certificate was changed to AOP (Appellation d'origine protégée) throughout Europe. In 2021, 190 tonnes of Gruyère d'Alpage AOP and 78 tonnes of Vacherin Fribourgeois d'Alpage AOP were produced. Cheese lovers will be in seventh heaven on the guided tour of La Tzintre's hallowed halls. You can also book a wine and cheese party to round off your experience in style. >>

SOLENNITÄT MURTEN



The festival that used to commemorate the victory against the Burgundian Duke Charles the Bold in the Battle of Murten in 1476 is now celebrated as a school festival. Uniformed cadets and girls dressed in white with flowers parade through the 'Stedtli' (Murten's Old Town). The 'Solennität' is an annual town festival with a church celebration, dancing, games and arbalest shooting. *Thursday, 22 June 2023. >>*

MURTEN RUN



A messenger brought the good news of the victory in the Battle of Murten (1476) and a linden branch to Fribourg. The first national commemorative run took place in 1933, with 14 participants. The 17.17-kilometre-long Murten run is the oldest road race in Switzerland, and attracts around 10,000 runners every year. The 89th edition will be held on *Sunday, 1 October 2023. >>*

VULLY TART



Community-building tradition: After several hours in front of the communal oven, the associations in Vully sell the delicious, freshly baked Vully Tarts locally. >>

PRAZ GRAPE HARVEST FESTIVAL



Even if Vully is regarded as the smallest of Switzerland's major winegrowing regions, winegrowers know how to celebrate their festival in style. The lovely winegrowing village of Praz is decorated with flowers and has many market stalls and open wine cellars. With children's parades, marching carnival bands and brass bands, the Festival is a joyful celebration of wine and life. *Saturday, 16 and Sunday, 17 September 2023. >>*

CARNIVAL OR MARDI GRAS – WILD AND FUN

The Bolz Carnival has been celebrated in Fribourg's Old Town for 55 years. The tradition is upheld with colourful processions, costumes, marching carnival bands and razzmatazz in the bars and restaurants in the Old Town. The Carnival culminates in the spectacular burning of the giant Rababou. *Saturday, 18 to Tuesday, 21 February 2023. >>*

The crazy days and nights are also celebrated in Murten. The 'Mardi Gras Society' was established in 1950 to ensure that the Carnival adheres to the obligatory traditions. There are processions, marching carnival bands, fancy dress balls and ditties. Since 1965, it has been customary to put on trial the 'Füdlbürger' (petty bourgeois), who represents the winter, accusing him of everything that has gone wrong over the past 12 months before burning him. *Friday, 3 to Monday, 6 March 2023. >>*

FEAST OF ST. NICHOLAS



Students at St. Michael College in Fribourg have been organising the St. Nicholas Festival since 1906. After a festive market, at 5.00 pm it's time for the procession of St. Nicholas on his donkey, accompanied by his helpers and torch bearers. In a critical speech interspersed with irony from the steps of the cathedral, he looks back on the past year. The Festival ends with a solemn Mass. *Friday, 1 to Sunday, 3 December 2023. >>*

CATHOLIC FESTIVALS



Female mourners dressed in black (in French 'pleureuses') and cross-bearers march through the town of Romont, singing and praying in remembrance of Christ's suffering and crucifixion. *Good Friday, 7 April 2023. >>* In Fribourg, on Corpus Christi, a procession takes place after mass. It passes by a series of lavishly adorned altars, and the congregation stops at each one to pray and sing. *Thursday, 8 June 2023. >>*

LOCAL ARTIST



The influence of professional artist Hubert Audriaz on the cultural life of Fribourg is like no other, particularly in the lower town, where the Bolz dialect is still spoken occasionally. >>

HOME OF GLASS ART



The Vitromusée, the Swiss Museum of Stained Glass and Glass Art in Romont Castle, pulls out all the stops of modern communication: exciting attractions such as Vitromatinées or Vitrobrunches, workshops for adults and children as well as special exhibitions and exciting events draw visitors. The free tour of the museum on the first Sunday of each month lasts a good hour. >>

LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

Every year, on 26 September, the canton of Fribourg holds 'Bilingualism Day'. The event celebrates the region's two official languages: French and German. The canton's linguistic landscape is further enriched with local dialects like 'Seislerdütsch', spoken in the German-speaking Sense district, and 'Jaundeutsch'. 'Patêjan fribordzê' speakers are the region's largest linguistic minority, and Fribourg patois is still actively spoken today. There is also 'Bolz', an unaffected and fun mix of conversational French and German. You can find out more with a new tour of the Auge quarter in the city's Old Town. >>

CONTACT

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

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