



# Murten - Enjoy It

The City by the Lake

Events • History • Attractions • City map • Excursions



# Welcome in Murten

**You can obtain information from our tourist office:**

Murten Tourism  
Hauptgasse 27  
3280 Morat

Tel. +41 (0)26 670 51 12  
[info@regionmurtensee.ch](mailto:info@regionmurtensee.ch)

[regionmurtensee.ch](http://regionmurtensee.ch)





Its relaxing atmosphere and mild climate lends a Mediterranean feeling to this historic medieval town, in the heart of Switzerland. Whether you stop off in one of the cafés or stroll along the lake, Murten shall certainly be a grand experience. Have a nice city tour!

### **Morat in French or Murten in German**

Bilingualism is an important element of Morat's/Murten's identity. About 83% of the population is German speaking and 15% is French speaking. Throughout the ages, the region has been a bridge between languages and cultures.

### **In the Heart of a Beautiful Region**

Murten is the Lake District's main town, in the canton of Fribourg. It plays both a cultural and a commercial role for the entire district, as well as for the neighboring cities of Fribourg, Berne and Neuchâtel. Murten overlooks the lake, which has taken its name from the town, at 453 m. above sea level. The Mount Vully's southern slopes, with vineyards and French speaking villages, can be seen on the other side of the lake.

### **Vully Vineyards**

The Vully vineyards cover a 150 ha. area. Chasselas grapes are grown on nearly 72 ha.; about 48% of the Vully's production. Red grape varieties, mainly Pinot Noir, take up 28% of the vineyards. What's more, Vully wine growers cultivate thirty different varieties of grapes. The main white wine specialties are Pinot Gris, Gewürztraminer, Freiburger, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, etc. Red wines include Gamaret, Gamay, Garanoir, Diolinoir, Merlot, etc.

### **The Great Marsh and the Three Lakes**

To the north of Murten, is Switzerland's largest vegetable growing region; known as the Great Marsh. This location in the Three Lakes Region is an important agricultural and vegetable production zone. The farmland emerged following the Jura Water Correction; a vast hydraulic structure implemented in three phases (19th-20th centuries) in the region of the three Jura lakes: Lake Murten, Lake Neuchatel and Lake Biel. The Broye Canal between Lake Murten and Lake Neuchatel, as well as the Thielle Canal between Lake Biel and Lake Neuchatel were built during that time. Thus, the Three Lakes landscape was redesigned.

## 2 Events

### Murten Light Festival

January

The medieval Zähringen city of Murten is transformed into a magical light spectacle each January for 12 days. The artistic production lets the visitor sink into a world of enchantment.



### Carnival of Murten

March

Murten Carnival, famous all over the country, takes over the old town for three days and nights of partying.



### slowUp Lake Murten

April

33 km of human-powered mobility: cycling, skating, skateboarding, hiking, or running around Lake Murten. On this day, a variety of events and activities ensure there's something for everyone to enjoy.



### Mai Market

May

Merchants and other exhibitors offer wonderful treasures at lively stands throughout Murten's streets.



### Murten's Solemnity

June

The Youth Festival commemorates the 1476 Battle of Murten. The colorful Youth Festival features many activities and the finely decorated, flower-filled city fountains.



### Stars of Sounds

July

During three days the grassy field of the Panschau down by the harbor of Murten becomes a fabulous open-air stage.



### Open Air Cinema

July-August

An air of summer at the rampart walls! A first-rate movie program is waiting for you after sunset!



**Swiss National Day**

1st of August

The 1st of August celebration on Lake Murten's shore – Festivities begin with a concert by Murten's Brass Band followed by a lantern-lit procession and a huge fireworks display over the lake.

**City festival**

August

The annual open-air festival is held in the charming streets of the old town. Fine food, drinks and lots of fun await you.

**Murten Classics**

August-September

Renowned orchestras and famous soloists take you on a journey into the world of classical music. Symphony and serenade concerts with main events in the castle courtyard and the German-speaking Church.

**Organic delights in Murten**

September

At various booths, visitors can taste a menu made from regional and organic ingredients with a matching wine accompaniment.

**The Murten-Fribourg Race**

October

The race takes place on the first Sunday of October. This great classic brings around 8,000 runners and walkers together every year.

**Murten on Ice**

November-February

An icy, winter pleasure for adults and children! The skating rink is located in front of Murten's rampart walls.

**Christmas Market**

December

Three days of holiday joy in the small medieval town of Murten. Over 70 attractive stands delight visitors with seasonal specialties, tastings, and a multitude of handmade Christmas gifts.





## History

Duke Berchthold the Fourth or the Fifth from the house of Zähringen officially founded the city in the 2nd half of the 12th century. Murten has a typical Zähringer city layout: It has three long streets that are cut transversely by a narrow crossing lane.

After the Zähringer dynasty died out, Murten came into the hands of the Savoyards. During this time, the castle was built.

A terrible fire in 1416 virtually leveled all the homes built in wood and destroyed the town hall. Following this sad time in Murten's history, all buildings were constructed in stone. Today's cityscape was mostly built during the 17th and 18th centuries.

The building materials that enhance Murten's structure are the warm, yellow Jura limestone quarried from Hauterive in Neuchâtel, and the local gray-green sandstone.

Les différents matériaux de constructions employés sont des pierres jaunes du Jura en calcaire, très répandues ainsi que des pierres de molasse de la région de couleur gris-vert.

### Important Dates in Murten's History

- In **1013**, known as a fortress, then in 1228 as a Free Town at the end of the Dukes of Zähringen's dynasty.
- In the **13th century**, the city follows Bern's politics and is under the protection of Peter of Savoy.
- **1377** Count Amédée of Savoy confirms the privileges given earlier by Duke Berthold of Zähringen.
- **1416** The Great Fire: The Town is destroyed and rebuilt in stone.
- **1475** The city proclaims its loyalty to Bern and Fribourg.
- **1476** Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, besieged the city but was defeated by the Swiss Army.
- From **1484**, and for 300 years, Murten is governed by the two States of Bern and Fribourg. Bern and Fribourg alternate governing Murten every 5 years.
- **1798** The French invade the town and destroy the Ossuary.
- **1803** Napoleon gives the city of Murten to the State of Fribourg, against the wishes of Murten's citizens.



Foundation for the Panorama, The Battle of Murten 1476, photo: Thomas Wiedmer, Berne  
[murtenpanorama.ch](http://murtenpanorama.ch)



## Battle of Murten

In **1476**, Murten was the scene of war between the Swiss Confederates and the Burgundians, led by Charles the Bold.

Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, possessed a Patchwork-Empire that stretched from the North Sea to as far as the Mediterranean. This empire was wedged in between the German Empire and France.

Charles's goal was to consolidate his empire by means of diplomacy and war and then to become king of his empire. During that time, the Canton of Bern was a major block on his path towards his dream. Today, this same area that was once a part of Bern's territory is known as the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

Charles was handed his first defeat and severely looted by the Swiss Confederates in March 1476 in Grandson, on the shores of Lake Neuchatel. Charles went to Lausanne to lick his wounds and gathered up fresh troops in order to prepare another attack; this time through the Broye valley, aiming against Bern. In April of that same year, Murten had mustered 2'000 men, under Adrian von Bubenbergs command.

On the 22nd of June 1476, it was raining heavily as the armies were gathering. The Swiss Confederates succeeded in a surprise attack on Charles the Bold's artillery position on the "Grünhag." The shock and awe of this maneuver was perfect and the Burgundian Army was dealt a fatal blow. Charles fled away on a fast horse but could not flee his fate. He lost his life in the third battle in Nancy, France. Thus, the Burgundy Empire vanished from the European map, quickly following Charles' demise. A famous saying, handed down through generations – notes the losses of Charles the Bold: "In Grandson he lost his goods - in Murten he lost his courage and in Nancy he lost his blood."

## In Memory of the Battle

**The Obelisk of Meyriez:** A column erected by the Canton of Fribourg, following the Ossuary's demolition in 1798. The ossuary was a monument which contained the bones of the Burgundians, in memory of the battle.

**Domingue Woods:** The Burgundians command site during the Battle of Murten. Find an information panel about the battle at this location. This hill can be seen from the rampart walls from the Tournaletta Tower, facing south.

### Berne Gate

1



The Berne Gate was first mentioned in history in 1239. It was completely destroyed during the battle against Charles the Bold. Over the years, it had to be rebuilt several times. Today's Berne Gate dates from the second half of the 18th century, when it was built by Berne's master architect, Niklaus Hebler, who also renovated the famous "Zytglogge" Tower in Berne.

The clock, high above on the Berne Gate, was made in 1712 by the Ducommun Brothers in La Chaux-de-Fonds. It is still wound every day. Three heavily weighted stones, probably cannonballs from the Battle of Murten, are raised by hand cranking every 24 hours. The clock face on the outside wall has only one hand, showing the hour. This symbolic "hand of oath" signifies that Murten was a free city.

### Primary School

2



The Primary School was built between 1836 and 1839 by Murten native and architect Johann Jakob Weibel. It is a testimony to Liberalism, particularly characteristic of the first half of the 19th century. It is also the oldest public building built in this style, owing its originality to Italian Renaissance and following the rules of the Munich School of Architecture. Fallen rampart wall stones were used in its construction. The schoolhouse has three entrances for separate use by girls, boys and teachers.

### Kanonenmätteli

3



The meadow-like site of the Kanonenmätteli is located at the eastern entrance to the town. It was here in 1476 that Charles the Bold set up his cannons and artillery to bombard the city walls. During the annual commemoration of the Battle of Murten on June 22nd, a canon is set up and fires a salute during the festivities.



## French church

4



The French Church was built in the late-Gothic style in 1481 to replace the earlier chapel dedicated to St. Catherine. The memorial plaque above the church's entrance commemorates the reformer, William Farel (1530). Until 1476, the St. Catherine Chapel once stood where the railway station is now located. The chapel was demolished prior to the Battle of Murten and then re-built in 1481 at this location.

## Rathausgasse

5



The "Rathausgasse" was once the scene of a real-life, tragic-comic theater. In the summer of 1866, an American circus performed one day in Murten, featuring an elephant act that thrilled the spectators. The next morning, residents were awakened by a cry of terror: the bull elephant had killed its keeper and gone on a wild rampage throughout the city. Finally, the elephant was driven into a stable. Two loaded cannons were hastily ordered from the Fribourg armory, and they finally arrived at 11:00 a.m. A 6-pounder cannon was used to bring down and kill the elephant. The cannonball is displayed at the Murten Museum and the elephant's skeleton is in the Natural History Museum in Berne. Since this event, the lower part of the Rathausgasse is known as "Elephant Lane."

## Town Hall

6



The building, which is used today as the town hall, was rebuilt after the city fire in 1416. Between 1748 and 1750 it was renovated and enlarged.

The baroque tower and clock were added in 1816. The ground floor was formerly used as a storage area and arsenal. Now it is used as a prestigious reception hall.

### German Rectory

7



The German Rectory was built in 1729, in the Bernese country house style, featuring a canted roof.

The popular poet, Jeremias Gotthelf (Albert Bitzius) was born here in 1797.

### German Church

8



According to historical records, a chapel existed here in 1399 and was dedicated to Saint Mary. It was rebuilt in 1710 in the Baroque style. The old chapel has been preserved in the choir section. The choir, in Gothic style, dates from 1683 and it is part of the fortification tower. The polygonal pulpit, dating from 1484, is carved from a single oak tree trunk and is decorated with eight pinnacle florets ending in a finial. The oak stall has thirty seats and was made between 1494 and 1498. On the ceiling, there is a stucco relief in the Louis XIV style, which shows the coats of arms from Berne, Fribourg and Murten.

### Town Rampart Walls

9



The rampart walls were built in several stages and from a variety of materials such as gravel, tuff and sandstone. The lower 15 layers of stone date from before the town's construction (12th century).

According to original documents in the town's archives, King Conrad IV requested his citizens to build a 12 foot high wall around the city. In return, King Conrad issued a 4 year tax exemption to all citizens, following the wall's completion. A pebbled, herringbone building pattern can be observed in the lower part of the wall.

The wall's middle section was built from recovered stones about 100 years later. The upper part of the wall was fitted with sandstone blocks, just prior to the Battle of Murten in 1476.

## Rübenloch

10



The building is a late Gothic-styled jewel and adds an elegant, harmonious final touch to the town's main street (Hauptgasse).

The building was acquired by the town in 1874. It was to be demolished in order to provide direct access to the new railway station (the Broye Valley railway was inaugurated in 1876). Fortunately, due to lack of funds, the project was abandoned and the Rubenloch was left standing.

## Castle

11



The castle dates to the time of Count Peter of Savoy II who ordered its construction in 1255. Under the castle gate, dating from 1516, much re-building took place. Today's castle is from 1755. Step through the entry and immediately look on the ground. You'll find the outline, in stone, of the original castle water well. The tall quadrangular tower or the keep, known as the "Luegisland," served as a watch tower for Adrian von Bubenberg so that he could oversee the Battle of Murten.

Following the reign of the Savoy, the castle served as a residence to the bailiffs from Bern and Fribourg. Throughout history, it also served as a hospital, prison and barracks. Today it houses the Canton of Fribourg's Prefecture of the Lake District.

## Lindensaal

12



The Lindensaal is one of Murten's oldest promenades. This open area offers an exceptional view of Lake Murten.

In the Middle Ages, Murten's youth would assemble on the terrace. They would play and pretend to be an army regiment. By imitating adults, they began their education in the art of warfare.

### Museum Murten

13



The Murten Museum is one of the oldest in the canton Fribourg. Since 1978, it is located in the former mill, outside the rampart walls. The permanent exposition illustrates 6,000 years of Murten's history, as well as that of the surrounding area. The museum's treasures relate to the people who used them in their everyday lives.

A multimedia show presents the Battle of Murten's memorable events. There are also temporary exhibitions each year.

### Murten's Linden Tree

14

When the Battle of Murten ended, a runner carried a Linden branch to announce the Swiss victory over Charles the Bold.



This Linden tree is a descendant of the Murten Linden tree in Fribourg. It was grown from cuttings taken from a branch of the old tree. This tree directly commemorates Murten's victory and indirectly, serves as a reminder of Fribourg's and Solothurn's entry into the Swiss Confederation (1481), following the Battle of Murten.

### Moat and Towers

15

Today, the moat is a pleasant green area and home to gardens from Murten's inhabitants. A path on the edge of the former moat leads along the city walls and is a nice place for a walk outside the old town.

12 fortification towers are built into the rampart walls. Each tower's name comes from the specific tower's position or function at different times throughout history—these are listed from east to west:



Castle Alley Tower (Schlossgassturm) - Witches Tower (Hexenturm or Red Tower), its name is related to its function during the Middle Ages - New Tower or Death Tower (Schaalturm or Totentanz), located at the site of the first city slaughterhouse - Round Tower (Kleiner Schimmel) - Prison Tower (Grosser Schimmel or Käfigturm) - Small Tower (Tournaletta) - Priests' Tower (Pfaffenturm) - Semi-circular Tower - German Church Tower - Powder Tower - Bern Gate Tower (Berntor) - Boilermakers' Tower (Kesslerturm or Zerschossener Turm (shot-filled tower)).

## Catholic Church

**16**

The Catholic Church was built outside the city walls by Adolphe Fraisse in 1885. Together with the nearby rectory, it is in Neo-Gothic style; the church tower was added in 1925.

The beautiful, modern stain glassed windows were installed in 1984.

## Törlplatz

**17**

The Törlplatz is the city's southern point of entry. The square's fountain played an important role in the past. See item h) in the section: Fountains.

The various construction stages of the rampart walls are clearly visible here. See item 9) in the section: Sightseeing.

This site is well known for the yearly arrival of "its" swifts which nest between early May and early August, while raising their young, before flying away to spend the winter in Africa. Swifts live almost exclusively in the air, except when nesting.

## Main Street (Hauptgasse) and Arcades

**18**

Here is a marvelous view of the Baroque-styled town of Murten, enhanced by the various arches, giving way to the arcades. In 17th/18th century it became a masterpiece of architecture.

Every house has its very own history; such as the "Schwarzen Adler" (Black Eagle), the oldest hotel in Murten. Its construction on the main street side consists of two 16th century houses that have been merged. It is easily recognizable by its wrought iron sign.

Even today in Murten, business signs must be kept simple. Neon lit signs have been banned, helping to maintain the old town's charm.

# 12 Fountains

More information and other fountains on [regionmurtensee.ch/brunnen](https://regionmurtensee.ch/brunnen)

## a Bubenberg Fountain

The fountain was made by Menth, the stone sculptor, following the school's construction in 1840. The original statue of Adrian von Bubenberg was destroyed in 1953 but replaced with a free copy by Willi Burla, Murten, in 1955.



## b World Time Sundial

This "world time" sundial is a unique work of art, sculpted in 1973 by Daniel Burla, master stone carver in Murten.

It combines five dials and a fountain. Different world time zone hours, planet position and spatial information can be read on this sundial.



## c City Hall Fountain

First mentioned in 1520. New stone fountain built by Hensli Spiritus, in 1599. Renovation of the fountain and basin by Lambelet, master stone carver, in 1737. The fountain's exterior was partly covered with limestone slabs in 1889.



## d Laundry House Fountain

First mentioned as "bornel de la chappalla," in 1491 and then noted in 1535 as the "school fountain." The new fountain was made by Menth, stone sculptor from Lengnau/BE, in 1867.





**e Lower Street Fountain**

Verified in 1470. Stone basin, water stock in wood. Rebuilt in 1614 by Offryon Mejan, stone sculptor from Biel. Restored in 1818 by Jonas Rieser, from Neuchâtel.

**f Mid-Street Fountain**

Noted in 1473 as the "magnum bornellum." Designated as the Kreuzgasse Fountain in 1504. Renovated in 1549 by Anthonj Spiritus, stone sculptor. Moved in 1768 to facilitate access to Kreuzgasse.

**g Higher Street Fountain**

Noted in 1473 as the "bornellum superior." Made from stone in 1558. Renovated in 1828 by Frédéric Beljean, from La Neuveville.

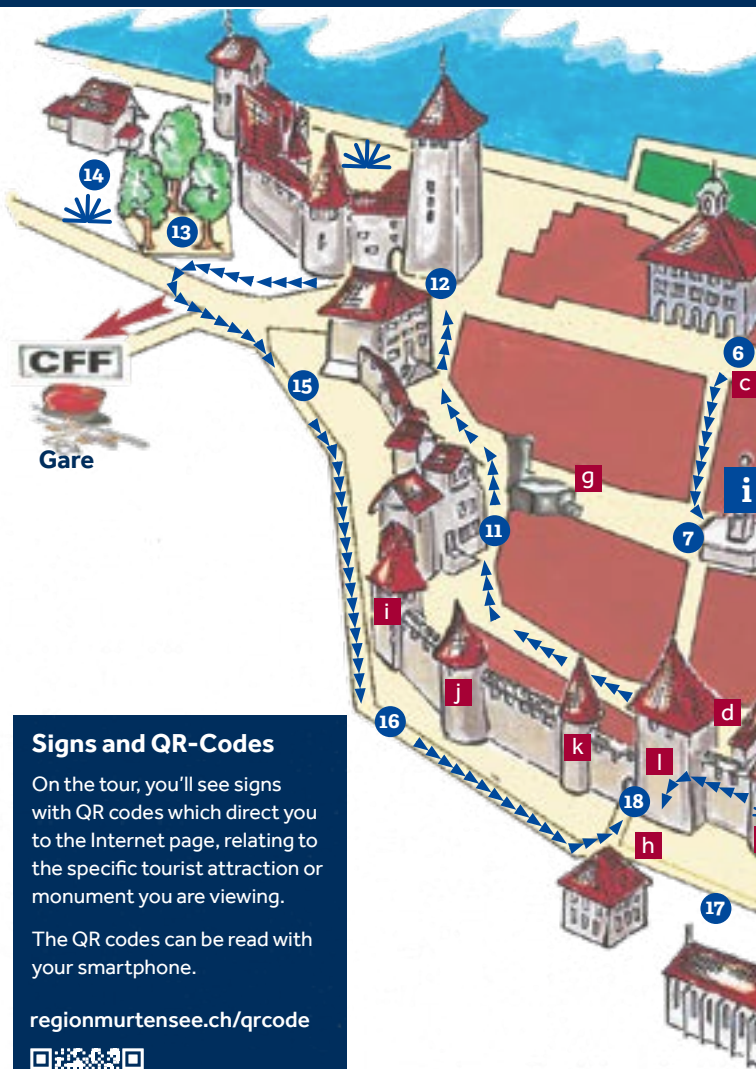
**h Törlplatz Fountain**

A fountain was historically verified between 1484 and 1583, near the Schimmelturm and the bath houses. This fountain was made and installed in 1842, by Menth, the stone sculptor from Lengnau/BE.

**Fountains' Historical Facts**

The Törlplatz fountain was the most important city water supply. Spring water from several sources were fed into this fountain, and consequently channeled to the other 5 fountains in the old town. Residents fetched fountain water for cooking and washing until the end of the 19th century. City houses were connected to running water by a water line in 1890.

In the past, an open stream flowed from fountain to fountain. Waste water was also collected in open sewers, known as "Ehgräben," and then was mixed with clean water before being discharged into the lake.



## Signs and QR-Codes

On the tour, you'll see signs with QR codes which direct you to the Internet page, relating to the specific tourist attraction or monument you are viewing.

The QR codes can be read with your smartphone.

[regionmurtensee.ch/qrcode](http://regionmurtensee.ch/qrcode)



## Legend

-  *Viewpoint*
-  *Tourist office*
-  *Recommended path*
-  *Fountains historic*
-  *Attractions*

## Fountain

- a Bubenberg Fountain
- b World Time Sundial
- c City Hall Fountain
- d Laundry House Fountain
- e Lower Street Fountain
- f Mid-Street Fountain
- g Higher Street Fountain
- h Törlplatz Fountain

# Old town of Murten



## Attractions

1. Berne Gate
2. Primary School
3. Kanonenmätteli
4. French Church
5. Rathausgasse
6. Town Hall
7. Main Street and Arcades
8. Town Rampart Walls
9. German Church
10. German Rectory
11. Rübenloch
12. Castle
13. Lindensaal
14. Murten Museum
15. Murten's Linden Tree
16. Moat and Towers
17. Catholic Church
18. Törlplatz

## Tours

- i Witches Tower
- j New Tower
- k Round Tower
- l Prison Tower
- m Small Tower
- n Priests' Tower
- o Semi-circular Tower
- p German Church Tower
- q Powder Tower
- r Boilermakers' Tower

Le Vully

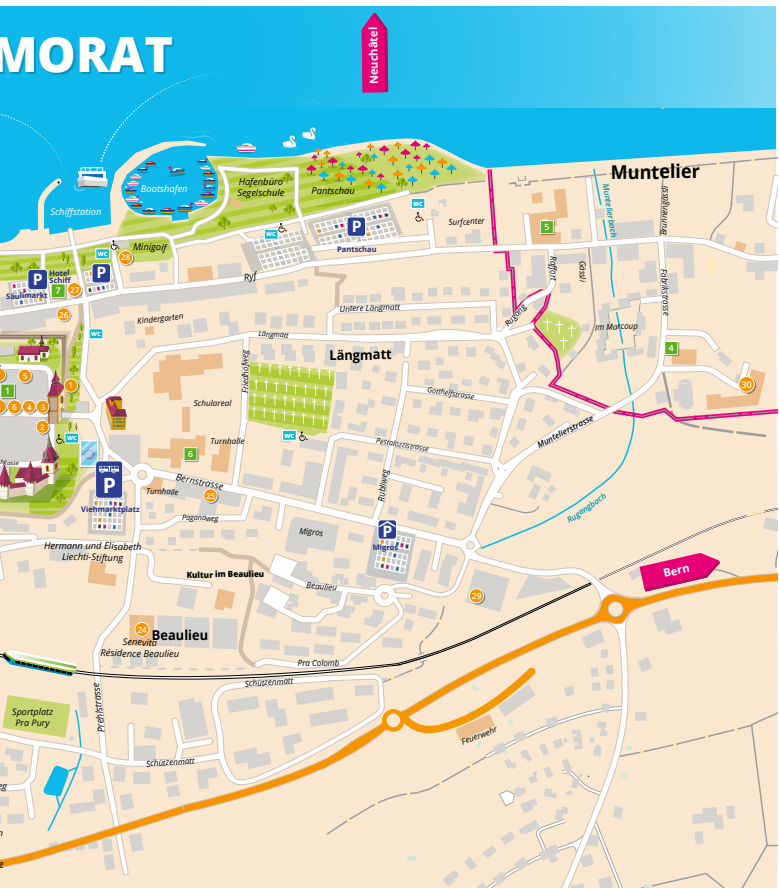
# MURTEN -



## Restaurants & B

- |                        |                              |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Berntor              | 11 Confiserie Beeler         |
| 2 Fontana              | 12 Restaurant Agora          |
| 3 Bistrotino           | 13 Confiserie Monnier        |
| 4 Jäger                | 14 Monkey Bowl               |
| 5 Käserei              | 15 Eintracht                 |
| 6 Anatolia             | 16 La Brasserie              |
| 7 Chesery              | 17 Altstadt Apéro-Bar        |
| 8 Freiburger Falle     | 18 Saveurs Berbères          |
| 9 Muratum Bar & Lounge | 19 Pizzeria Taverna Italiana |
| 10 Läf Musik Bar       | 20 Meat and View             |

# MORAT



## Bars

- 21 Roma
- 22 Da Pino
- 23 La Pinte du Vieux Manoir
- 24 Senevita Résidence Beaulieu
- 25 Masala Indian Cuisine
- 26 Gelateria Emilia
- 27 Crêperie La Chaloupe
- 28 Minigolf
- 29 Pizzeria Fellini
- 30 Le Jardin

## Hotels

- 1 Adler
- 2 Ringmauer
- 3 Murtenhof & Krone
- 4 Seepark
- 5 Bad Murtensee
- 6 Hotel Murten
- 7 Schiff
- 8 Bahnhof
- 9 Perron 13

# Excursion Ideas

## City Tour Train Line

[wielandbus.ch/stedtlbummler](http://wielandbus.ch/stedtlbummler)

Discover the city of Murten in a comfortable and fun-filled way on the little tourist train.



## Boat Cruise

[regionmurtensee.ch/navigation](http://regionmurtensee.ch/navigation)

Enjoy the view of Murten, the Vully, and the mountains during a boat tour.



## Three Lake Area by Bike

[suissemobile.ch](http://suissemobile.ch)

Discover the region's diversity while cycling on the Three Lakes Tour: The vastness of the Great Marsh, natural lake shores, river landscapes and historical sites.



## Papiliorama, Kerzers

[papiliorama.ch](http://papiliorama.ch)

Under several glass domes, the Papiliorama takes you into a tropical climate where all kinds of animals, plants, insects, and of course, butterflies, live together.



## Viticultural Path, Le Vully

[levully.ch](http://levully.ch)

A thematic walk through the Vully's vineyards, in both Fribourg and Vaud, helps you to understand the different stages involved in wine production.



## Historical Museum, Murten

[museummurten.ch](http://museummurten.ch)

From the ancient lake-dwellers to the Battle of Murten, you'll discover the region's history in this former mill.



## Site romain d'Avenches

[avenches.ch](http://avenches.ch)

A historical site of national importance: The ancient capital of Roman Helvetia, Avenches had more than 20'000 inhabitants at the beginning of this era.

