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This and That Corner



Canton Fribourg / Freiburg

The Village of Gruyère

The history of Canton Freiburg is not so simple. They speak two languages - French and German - with very strong dialects; two denominations - Catholics and Protestants. The rivers flow into two basins. This canton is not flat, yet it has no high mountains.

Communications were very limited in the olden days as Canton Freiburg has no pass to the South, North, East or West. In the last century the rail between Bern - Lausanne - Geneva was built through the canton.

Herdsmen, Alphorns, a bucket of cream, the Mountain Moleson in the background, and a castle ... this is the lovely village of Gruyère.

The Gruyère Region
(source : Insight Guides Switzerland)

To the south of Fribourg is the Valley of Gruyère, through which the River Sarine flows. The valley is a microcosm of Switzerland: a plateau surrounded by mountain peaks, and right in the middle, in a commanding position, a small town with a chateau, whose lords have ruled the region for centuries. The whole Gruyère region is steeped in history.

Every year over a million people visit the small town of Gruyère and its chateau, some 30km from Fribourg. Just outside the town is the Fromagerie (Cheese Dairy), so clean that it looks more like a laboratory than the popular image of a rural dairy. The town has only one street, so can be walked through quickly. The chateau, no longer in private hands, has been turned into a major tourist attraction complete with restaurants and souvenir shops. The corridors once walked by counts and their ladies are now packed with tourists from as far away as San Francisco and Tokyo.

As in German-speaking Switzerland, a rich cow-herding culture has developed in the alpine foothills. Folk artists immortalised the Poya in colourful paintings, which decorated crossbeams and barn doors: many depict the cows, along with a horse piled high with luggage, a pig and several goats, zigzagging their way up the mountainside, accompanied by herdsmen with rucksacks and walking-sticks on their way to the alpine hut. A

fascinating collection of this farm art, so typical of the Gruyère region, can be found in the Musée Gruérien, in Bulle, a rewarding place to visit a few kilometres to the north of Gruyères on the road to Fribourg; the museum's exhibition of costumes and farm tools is also worth a look.

Now a few recipes from this lovely region:

Tomato and Cheese from Canton Freiburg

Cut the lid from 8 tomatoes. Empty the inside of the tomatoes (use for a sauce).

Mix 300gr of grated cheese, 2 eggs, pepper and nutmeg. Arrange in a buttered oven dish, and cook in oven until cheese is melted and tomatoes are cooked.

Spread from Canton Freiburg

Mix 20mls of white wine and 1 tbs of mustard powder and leave for one day.

Bring to the boil 200gr candied sugar, 1/2 litre water, 5 cloves, and 1 tspn cinnamon. Let cool for 15 minutes and remove the cloves.

Melt 200gr honey in water-bath and add wine and water mixture. Bring to the boil and add 125gr flour. Cook on low heat until smooth.

This is delicious spread on bread. Do not keep for more than two weeks.

Bon appetit
Lisette

Swiss and German Delicatessen

Munz Chocolates
Toggenburger Kagi fretli
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