

Discover Swiss Cuisine – French inspired



Activity Level

This Alpenwild trip is designed for people who are energetic, active, and filled with a spirit of adventure. We rate the physical demands of this trip as easy. You should be in good physical condition and capable of walking 1 to 2 hours per day on well maintained and graded walking paths with a vertical elevation gain of up to 200 feet per day, at an elevation up to 5,000 feet above sea level with a vertical elevation gain of up to 200 feet per day, at an elevation up to 5,000 feet above sea level.

Highlights

- Bake hearty artisan bread using ancient methods and a rustic wood-fired oven recovered from an old monastery
- Work side-by-side with an artisan chocolatier in his studio near the birthplace of chocolate
- Walk through an ancient terraced vineyard in Lavaux followed by a guided wine-tasting
- Enjoy an exquisitely prepared lakeside dinner at a Michelin-starred restaurant

Overview

The French-speaking region of the Swiss Alps produces some of the most delicious and distinctive food of Europe. Neighboring France has influenced their cuisine, but every dish has unmistakable Swiss flavors, ingredients, and personality. Culinary artistry has flourished here for centuries.

Authentic Swiss culinary traditions.

This is your opportunity to nibble on the delectable results of generations of creativity in Swiss farm kitchens. The need to preserve food has led to dozens of varieties of cheese, breads, dried meats, sausages, pickles, and fruit preserves. The Romans left a legacy of terraced viticulture on the sun-drenched slopes of the Alps leading to wines that are distinct to the region and can be found nowhere else.

French-inspired Switzerland is the home of meringues, fondue, Raclette, Gruyere, and double cream. And the confectioners of Suisse Romande, through decades of experimentation, have perfected fine chocolate as we know it. Switzerland's restaurants have been awarded more Michelin stars per capita than any country in the world.

More than just tasting

But your tour will be more than just tasting—you'll try your hand at this remarkable cuisine. Follow a 900-year-old recipe as you make Gruyère cheese in an alpine chalet over an open fire. Stand side-by-side with a master chocolatier as you create your own chocolate treasure. Heat a wood-fired oven to 700F and slide in your artisan loaf to bake. Discover how to put together a cheese board of Swiss cheeses that makes each cheese stand out. Learn the secrets of preparing a bubbling caquelon of classic cheese fondue.

Your culinary experience will be enhanced as you stroll through a thousand-year-old vineyard, take a spectacular cogwheel railway mountaintop excursions, and walk through walled medieval villages and storied castles.

Fully-guided tour features

Your Swiss food adventure includes round trip transfers from the Geneva Airport, six nights hotel accommodations, breakfasts, dinners, ground transportation, excursions, classes, demonstrations, tastings, guided walks, recipes, interpretive notes, and the services of an English-speaking expert guide. Prepare yourself for an unforgettable visual and sensory feast as you Discover Swiss Cuisine.

Is this tour for you?

If you want to taste French-inspired Swiss Cuisine, spread double cream on crispy meringues, try a hands-on chocolate truffle workshop, bake authentic artisan bread, dine at top Swiss restaurants, and explore the scenic beauty of Switzerland with a small group of like-minded culinary travelers, this is the ideal tour for you.

Itinerary

Day 1 – Rendezvous | Transfer to Gruyères | Artisan Chocolate Demonstration | Village & Castle Tour | Welcome Dinner

You'll be transferred to the walled medieval village of Gruyères, with its picture-perfect setting on a hill overlooking rolling pre-alpine farmlands. The cows that graze the lush grass and fragrant flora of alpine meadows in the peaceful valley of the River Sarine produce the milk for Gruyère cheese and Switzerland's finest milk chocolate. Once you've arrived and settled in, you will set off for a guided walk of the historic village and its 13th-century castle, home to the Counts of Gruyère. Within the village walls meet with a traditional chocolatier who roasts, grinds, and conches his own select cacao beans to produce his unique creations. We enjoy a welcome dinner in a traditional chalet within the village walls.

Day 2 – Traditional Gruyère Cheese-Making | Artisan Bread Baking Workshop | Hands-on Fondue Cooking Class

After breakfast we set off for the alpine village of Charmey where we're on hand for the morning cheese making. Over an open fire, and using time-honored tools and methods, the cheesemaker combines the morning milk with the evening milk before cutting the curds. Holding the hem of the cheesecloth in his teeth, he snatches the curds from the whey, and then presses the steaming hot curds into the round forms to produce hand-crafted wheels of Gruyère, Switzerland's most popular cheese and its most widely exported cheese. In the afternoon at your first cooking class you'll discover the secrets of traditional baking in a 200-year-old wood-fired oven. We'll learn successful techniques for kneading, rising, and shaping the dough. Then once in the oven we discover how to create a crackling crust. Later, you'll explore the history and tradition of cheese fondue—made with the finest Gruyère cheese, of course—then carefully prepare this classic Swiss comfort food to savor for your evening dinner, along with the bread you've just baked.

Day 3 – Gruyère Dairy and Cellars | Maison Cailler and Chocolate Master Class | Mountaintop Cogwheel Excursion

It's a gentle stroll from our hilltop retreat to the neighboring village of Pringy where twice a day 36 farmers deliver their milk to the fromagerie Le Gruyère. Under the watchful eye of expert cheesemakers, you see how they produce 48 large wheels a day of this celebrated Swiss cheese. You witness the affinage, where cheeses are nurtured and ripened to bring out their best qualities. After lunch we head for the nearby village of Broc where Nestlé produces Cailler chocolates, their premier

brand and Switzerland's oldest brand of chocolate. You'll immerse all your senses in the production (and unlimited tasting) of fine chocolate, and participate in a master class in tempering chocolate and creating your own designer chocolate bar. We say au revoir to the pastoral vales of Gruyère and board our private transfer to the glistening shores of Lake Geneva and the Montreux Riviera. On an afternoon excursion we ascend to an alpine paradise with views to the Mont Blanc and the Eiger. For the evening, you will be enjoying an exquisite dinner at a Michelin-starred restaurant.

Day 4 – Lavaux Vineyards UNESCO World Heritage Site

We explore the sun-kissed terraced vineyards of the Lavaux UNESCO World Heritage Site. We'll walk through the vineyards comprised of 14 wine villages nestled among the vines and reflecting the region's 1000-year wine making heritage. Our route leads through the medieval villages of Cully, Villette, and Grandvaux with their narrow alleys and characteristic vintner's houses from the 16th to 19th centuries. If you want to experience the scenery with all the senses you should also taste it. The vineyards are daringly constructed on steep hills, so a glass of Chasselas makes the trail to Lutry twice as much fun.

Day 5 – Making Chocolate Truffles at Läderach | Alpine Herbs | Farmstead Goat Cheese | Raclette at the Source

After breakfast, a funicular descent to Montreux and a short boat ride on Lake Geneva take us to the neighboring town of Vevey—a foodie Mecca. Imagine a town of just 18,000 people with four Michelin-starred restaurants and the world headquarters of Nestlé. In Vevey we are exclusive guests at the Läderach chocolate studios and shop. Läderach chocolate represents the highest levels in chocolate design, quality and taste, and you will learn the art and techniques for making chocolate ganache and truffles from a master chocolatier. In the afternoon, the terraced vineyards, a Roman amphitheater, and other ruins attest to the influence ancient Rome wielded in the Rhône Valley. Flanked by the Bernese Alps to the north and showstoppers like the Matterhorn and Weisshorn to the south, the sunny Upper Rhône Valley is Switzerland's leading wine region and an agricultural paradise where orchard fruits, nuts, and herbs flourish. At a nearby goat cheese dairy we taste the versatile and varied types of goat cheese from tangy chèvre to ash-ripened bleus. On a walk in the woods we discover the uses of available plants and use them in preparing our meal. Raclette cheese originates in this region and at dinner we'll create the dish over an open fire with this favored cheese from a local fromagerie and come to appreciate its nuanced characteristics from a knowledgeable racleur.

Day 6 – Montreux Market | Serving Cheese | Chillon Castle | Farewell Dinner

Montreux's vibrant weekly market is the perfect place to sample local fresh products—artisan oil, cheese, honey, liqueur, or local wine. In the company of a maître fromager we select an array of cheeses

you will use to create an impeccable cheese plate. You gain practical and professional guidance in how to select the cheeses used in your cheese course, along with serving, pairing, accompaniment, and presentation tips that will separate you from the novices and elevate you to the ranks of a true fromager. A tranquil walk along the shores of Lake Geneva takes us to the stunning and well-preserved 12th-century Chillon Castle. This impressive citadel with its exceptional natural setting on the lake was immortalized by Lord Byron. You'll conclude a perfect day and a perfect week with a multi-course lakeside farewell dinner where we relax and gaze out over the Alps.

Day 7 – Breakfast and Departure

After breakfast we depart our hotel for a return to Geneva or onward destinations.

Included

The services of an expert trip leader, all accommodations (6 nights hotel), meals as shown (B=breakfast, S=snack, D=dinner), all cooking classes, excursions, ground transportation including trams and mountain railways, admissions and luggage transfers.

Not Included

Beverages (beer, wine) with meals, items of a personal nature (laundry, phone calls, room service).

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