



Fribourg, Neuchâtel & Jura

POP 515,000 / AREA 3311 SQ KM / LANGUAGES FRENCH, GERMAN

Includes ➔

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Why Go?

A far cry from the staggering Alpine scenes more readily associated with Switzerland, this gentle corner in the west of the country remains something of a secret. From the evocative medieval cantonal capitals of Fribourg and Neuchâtel to the mysterious green hills and thick dark Jura forests, from the land of three lakes to gorgeous medieval villages such as Gruyères and St Ursanne, it proffers a wealth of sights and 'scapes off the tourist track.

Travelling here is a brilliant sensory experience... including for the taste buds: savour tradition-rich Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC) cheeses, let absinthe's green-fairy dance on your palate and make sure you try meringues smothered in double cream at least once. When you need to repent, thousands of kilometres of waistline-saving walking, cycling and cross-country skiing trails – not to mention sailing, downhill skiing and water sports – are there to save the day.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Des Bains (p85)
- ➔ Auberge de Mont Cornu (p91)
- ➔ Georges Wenger (p93)
- ➔ Café Tivoli (p86)
- ➔ Famiglia Leccese (p89)

Best Aperitif Spots

- ➔ Art-Buvette (p83)
- ➔ Elvis et Moi (p83)
- ➔ Le Port (p81)
- ➔ La Plage (p90)
- ➔ Le Bistrot du Concert (p90)

When to Go

- ➔ Summer is the perfect time to discover these verdant cantons when the green seems greener and sunflowers create seas of yellow.
- ➔ For watersports on Lac de Neuchâtel and lounging on its shores, hot and sunny July and August are the best.
- ➔ The curtain atmospherically rises in Avenches' Roman amphitheatre during its opera festival in July.
- ➔ Autumn ushers in the grape harvest in the Vully region and *la chasse* (game dishes) onto restaurant menus regionwide.
- ➔ Late spring and early autumn are perfect times of year for outdoor activities.

CANTON DE FRIBOURG

The southernmost of the three cantons, Canton de Fribourg (population 273,200) tots up 1671 sq km on the drawing board. Pre-Alpine foothills rise grandly around its cold craggy feet; Gruyères with its sprinkling of small mountain resorts pierces

its heart; and Fribourg heads the canton up north, where pretty lakeside villages slumber between vineyards and fruit orchards.

What makes this canton most fascinating is its *Röstigraben* (linguistic divide): west speaks French, east speaks German.



Fribourg, Neuchâtel & Jura Highlights

- 1 Enjoy cheese in a day of dairy-fied indulgence in **Gruyères** (p86).
- 2 See madcap creations by **Jean Tinguely** and **Niki de Saint Phalle** (p79) in Fribourg's Old Town.
- 3 Take a big hearty gulp of Vully wine, *saucisson du marc* and old-fashioned fresh

- air at the **Owl Farm** (p85) in Mur near Lake Murten.
- 4 Fall under the spell of medieval **Neuchâtel** (p88) and its boat-happy lake.
- 5 Enjoy family fun in **Jura** (p94): sleep in a haybarn, explore caves and spot dinosaurs between trees in Reclère.

- 6 Cook up the chocolate bar of your dreams with a workshop at chocolate factory **Maison Cailler** (p87), in Broc.
- 7 Gambol with the green fairy via a nip (or two!) of absinthe in the **Val de Travers** (p92).