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Media information – The Appenzell region, in general.

THE APPENZELL REGION: LIVING THE LIFE YOU LOVE, CLOSE TO HOME

In no other region are things like culture, crafts and conviviality so wholeheartedly embraced as in the green hills of the Appenzell region. Throughout the year, the people of Appenzell celebrate or commemorate happy (and sad) moments to honour the history of their forefathers and great-great-grandmothers. Alpine tours in spring, “Stobede” and other musical festivals in summer, cattle shows in autumn and “Chlausezüüg” at Christmas: here, traditions and customs are nurtured and cherished all year round. For the people here, this sense of caring is not simply a show for guests, but an expression of their genuine attachment to their homeland. Appenzell and its customs go hand-in-hand in a way that never ceases to fascinate outsiders.

The canton of “Appenzell Innerrhoden” has always been an agricultural region, mainly devoted to cattle breeding and dairy farming. It is not surprising, therefore, that many customs in this small area in north-eastern Switzerland find their origins in religious beliefs and in agriculture. One of the most important church holidays in Appenzell, for example, is Corpus Christi. This festival – which is celebrated ten days after Pentecost – is called “Ösehegottstag” by the people of Appenzell. The Eucharist, a Christian rite that is considered a sacrament in most churches, is commemorated. The procession in Appenzell is the largest and most magnificent in eastern Switzerland – provided the weather does its part and allows this spectacle to take place. In addition to the church dignitaries, the numerous women that can be seen in work or festival costumes have a particularly striking appearance. The noble, precious festive costume, in particular, is rather eye-catching – with its large headdress and bonnet, and is decorated with gold- and other handcrafted embroidery. It is considered one of the most beautiful and opulent in the whole of Switzerland. Today, it is still worn with a

sense of pride and dignity by many women of Innerrhoden at the numerous church processions and high church festivals.

A truly special choreography

In May and June, the Alps in the Alpstein mountain range are taken over by the cattle and the Alpine dairymen for a few weeks up until autumn. While in many parts of Switzerland, the journey to the Alpine pastures takes place without song and sound – because the animals are driven by lorries and trailers – in the Appenzell region, you often encounter a colourful procession of Alpine animals. All this involves an enormous amount of effort. This is because not only the cows get dolled up for this special day: the Alpine dairymen and their helpers also don their best dress, the men's costume ("Sennehääss").

There are a number of unwritten rules to be observed during this "Appenzeller Alpfahrt" ascent: a small boy wearing the "Buebetracht" ("boy's costume") always precedes with a flock of white Appenzell goats. Often, a girl in working dress drives the perky animals forward. Behind them strides the "Vorsenn" – the front Alpine dairyman – in his festive costume, wearing the famous yellow leather trousers, "de Geele". Over his left shoulder, he carries a carved dairy bucket with an exchangeable, artistically painted "Bödeli", a round wooden plate sporting a peasant theme. He is then followed by three cows, which carry large bells that hang from magnificently decorated straps. Behind them walk a further four Alpine dairymen, one in full costume with yellow leather trousers and three companions in brown trousers, white shirts and bright red waistcoats ("Liibli"). Behind the rest of the livestock, the animals' owner marches along, accompanied by his Appenzell dog, the "Bläss". Sometimes, a "Knecht" (servant) leads a bull along by a nose ring. The "Ledi" – a horse-drawn cart loaded with all the Alpine dairy equipment – is also a must for this classic Alpine procession.

During the Alpine summer, it has been a tradition in the Alpstein mountain range for generations to pray the "Betruf". This involves the Alpine farmers singing their prayers to God, the Virgin Mary and their patron saints, during which they ask for protection. The day-to-day life of the Alpine dairymen is livened up by festivities known as "Stobede". In autumn, a magnificent procession of Alpine animals returns to the valley farms, and at the cattle shows, animals are showcased and prizes are awarded – all this denoting the high point and the end of the year for many farmers in one go.

Handicrafts – just like from yesteryear

Various crafts are needed to make the magnificent Appenzell traditional costumes, be they for women or men. In the region's business directory, you can, therefore, still find professions in the Appenzell region that you would otherwise look for in vain elsewhere. Today, you will still find "Sennensattler" (Alpine saddlers), "Weissküfer" (dairy equipment craftsmen), gold- and silversmiths and even hand embroiderers. The demand for refined traditional costume jewellery, intricately engraved braces, carefully carved dairy buckets or meticulously crafted hand embroidery is still considerable. Especially in Appenzell – the picturesque main town of

Appenzell Innerrhoden – you will find traditional handicraft businesses, numerous specialist shops, cosy restaurants and family-run hotels in a very small area.

Appenzell music – an exclusive experience

Folk music enjoys a great tradition in Appenzell. “Appenzell music” is even a term in itself and the people of Appenzell in general are considered to be a musical bunch who are fond of singing and dancing. An original Appenzell string band consists of two violins, a cello, a bass and a hammered dulcimer. Appenzell music is exclusive by its nature, and is considered typically Swiss. Various local musical groups have already travelled the world. If a Swiss embassy (or a Swiss association) has something to celebrate, they typically like to put on an original Appenzell performance. This special grouping of instruments creates a certain sound and lends the pieces of music their own character. Of course, the fact that the performers wear traditional costume ensures both instant recognition value and a fantastic musical performance.

Appenzell – home to a unique culinary offering

Appenzellerland is not only the land of traditions and customs, but also a region for culinary connoisseurs. The range of specialities stretches far beyond the well-known Appenzeller cheese or “Appenzeller Alpenbitter” schnapps. The dish “Appenzeller Biber”, for example, comes in a variety of motifs and sizes, but always involves the same basic ingredients. This delicacy consists of a honey dough filled with a light almond paste.

Another typical pastry emanating from Appenzell is the “Landsgmeendschrempfli”. The “Landsgmeendschrempfli” used to be a popular souvenir for the men attending the “Landsgemeinde”, or political commune meetings, to take to their loved ones at home. These have a sugar and egg-based dough with a finely ground hazelnut filling. But there’s not only a typical pastry in the mix: a traditional sausage is also part of the classic “Landsgemeinde” menu, the “Appenzeller Siedwurst”. This boiled sausage – made mainly from beef – is traditionally served with cheese macaroni or potato salad. And if you feel thirsty after indulging in all of these culinary delights, the best way to quench your thirst is with a cool Appenzell beer or even enjoy a “Flauder” – a sweet drink with elderflower and lemon balm flavour from the producer Goba AG – Mineralquelle und Manufaktur.

Treasures from the Alpstein mountain range

The Alpstein mountain range belongs to Appenzell. Gracefully nestled in its midst are three mountain lakes, which enchantingly reflecting the surrounding landscape. The Alpstein has even more treasures to offer: fans of nature are free to choose from countless hiking trails – from easy walks to challenging mountain hikes.

The Alpstein massif is one of the most stunning mountain ranges in the pre-Alpine region. This is all thanks to the well-kept Alps, the centuries-old cultivation practices, the jagged ridges, the summits with their magnificent views and the stunningly beautiful flora. The “Säntis” that rises 2,502 metres above sea level, the “Hoher Kasten”, the “Kronberg” and the

“Ebenalp” are without doubt the best known destinations in the popular hiking area and, as such, are well served by cable cars. In addition, 25 cosy mountain inns will no doubt spoil their visitors with fine Appenzell specialties and offer homely overnight accommodation.

Arrive for free and enjoy your stay.

If you stay for three nights or longer with the same accommodation provider in Appenzell, you can enjoy the Appenzell Holiday Card. There are over 20 free offers for guests: free travel in 15 zones on Appenzell's railway network, free travel on the cable cars (Kronberg, Hoher Kasten and Ebenalp) and admission to museums, swimming pools and other leisure facilities. In addition, there are special offers such as free bike rental in summer, and free snowshoes for one day in winter.

If you book three nights or more, you will also get free travel to (and from) your place of residence in Switzerland by public transport (2nd class) and benefit from free luggage transport from your front door to your chosen accommodation. Nothing short of an irresistible offer!

Information about this unique offer is available from Appenzellerland Tourismus AI, appenzell.ch/grüninsgrüne

Note to editorial teams.

Up-to-date photo material can be requested from Appenzellerland Tourismus AI. Please do not hesitate to get in touch for further information:

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