



# TRADITIONS

## PRESERVING FRIBOURG'S HERITAGE

In Fribourg Region, living traditions are still primarily rooted in the daily life of the inhabitants. Their value for social cohesion is recognised and awareness of cultural heritage is part of the school curriculum. Customs are also appreciated by visitors from all over the world, who often witness scenes that seem to originate from a bygone age. An inventory of the living traditions of Fribourg Region was made under the auspices of the Musée gruérien in Bulle and divided into four main groups. For visitors, the emphasis is

naturally on the centuries-old transhumant culture with its colourful Alpine ascents and descents, varied crafts and workmanship. Catholic traditions with numerous processions and the ubiquitous choral singing, as well as historic anniversaries with patriotic and military connotations, are very popular. More information is available at [www.lebendige-traditionen.ch](http://www.lebendige-traditionen.ch) [www.fribourgregion.ch](http://www.fribourgregion.ch)

## FRIBOURG CULTURE, A LIVING TRADITION



**Poya painting:** In the Fribourg patois, the syllables “po-ya” signify the Alpine ascent in early summer, when the cows and goats are driven to higher Alpine pastures. However, it is now understood to mean the visual representation of this important and symbiotic event. Poya paintings have adorned the farmhouse façades of the Fribourg Pre-Alps since the early 19th century and this art is still practised. This typical Fribourg rural art can be admired in the villages and in particular, on the Poya Themed Trail.



**May singing:** On May 1<sup>st</sup> or the day before, the children of Fribourg go from house to house, singing to announce the spring. Many, for example the Gruyère youth associations, wear traditional costume, namely the dzaquillon and bredzon on this occasion.

## MUSÉE GRUÉRIEN



The tour of the interactive Musée gruérien in Bulle is an emotional journey through time. Models, scenes, films and sound sequences, from the Hutbändeli collection, traditional costumes and old tools used by herdsmen, to the traditional farmhouse on a 1:1 scale, depict the varied cultural heritage. Tribute is, of course, paid to the most famous ambassador for the region, the cheese Le Gruyère AOP.  
[www.musee-gruerien.ch](http://www.musee-gruerien.ch)

## SHINGLE MAKER



Léon Doutaz has devoted himself completely to the traditional craft of shingle making. He is one of five men in the canton who learnt this trade from scratch. Besides strength and concentration, he needs an excellent feeling for the wood to ensure that his roof will be in a position to control the temperature of the chalet for the next 40 years. He welcomes visitors.  
[www.dzin.ch](http://www.dzin.ch)

## BEARDED MEN



The “barbus” of La Gruyère preserve the transhumant traditions... shaving was difficult, but wearing a white shirt under the bredzon during festivals was a matter of honour.

## SHINGLE MAKING IN CHARMHEY



Traditional, shingle-covered Alpine huts characterise the landscape in the Fribourg Pre-Alps. There are six particularly lovely chalets on the hiking trail between the Vounetz top station and Charmey. At the large shingle-making festival, participants hike from hut to hut, meet the advocates of this old Fribourg craft and experience shingle making locally.  
*31 August - 01 September 2019*

## ALPINE DESCENT, HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR

The Alpine descent is of the utmost importance for the Pre-Alpine Region. Humans and animals return to the valley after four months on the Alpine pastures. The festival pays homage to the herdsmen, who have assumed a lot of responsibility for the animals and for cheese production. Traditional Alpine descents are a feast for the eyes! The highlight is the procession of animals adorned with flowers and wearing their magnificent bells, accompanied by proud women in their dzaquillon and herdsmen in their bredzon.

There is also a sermon, market stalls, folk music and customs. It would be impossible to pack more traditions into one day: *Schwarzsee 21 September, Charmey 28 September, Albeuve and Semsales on 5 October 2019*. In Jaun, the Alpine descent of the sheep has been celebrated for over 400 years. There are over 400 animals which, upon arriving in the valley, are sorted (separated) and loaded... or sold. A large market ensures that no-one has to go home without souvenirs. *16 September 2019*



## WOODEN SPOONS



Carved wooden spoons are one of the traditions of La Gruyère. Herdsmen were making them at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century to ladle double cream or Soupe de Chalet in the Gruyère Chalet. As the craft evolved, elaborately carved spoons were passed down from generation to generation, like family silver. A high-quality souvenir! And even more so when it is associated with memories of delicious food in a Fribourg Alpine tavern!

## EIGHT-COURSE MENU



Once a year, the entire canton of Fribourg celebrates a Bénichon, the harvest thanksgiving festival that also celebrates the homecoming at the end of the summer Alpine pasture season. The Bénichon or Kilbi Festival in Fribourg Region will take place in Ecuvillens in 2019. This is when everyone comes home, when town and country, locals and visitors come together. Living traditions may be reinterpreted, but the eight-course Bénichon meal remains the same!

## BEST BURGER



Valérie Véron shows visitors, with a twinkle in her eye, how a tasty burger is made from the delicious specialities of the Fribourg Bénichon. [www.dzin.ch](http://www.dzin.ch)

## CHORAL SINGING



Abbé Joseph Bovet (1879 - 1951) left the canton of Fribourg an extensive musical heritage. He subsequently became the music director of St. Nicholas Cathedral and wrote around 2,000 religious and secular works. Whether they are sung in Fribourg patois, in French or German, his choral music and songs still bring people together today.

## ALPINE CHEESE OF FRIBOURG REGION

The production of cheese in Fribourg Region dates back to 1115. "Les caves d'affinage de la Tzintre" aging cellars in Charmey have existed since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Today 10,000 cheese wheels age until their taste is perfect. The 18<sup>th</sup> century was the heyday of the Gruyère cheese industry. The Gruyère d'alpage and Vacherin fribourgeois d'alpage produced by the Fribourg Cooperative of Alpine Cheese Producers were awarded the national quality certificate AOC (Appellation d'origine contrôlée) in 2001 and 2005

respectively. In May 2013, the certificate was changed to AOP (Appellation d'origine protégée) throughout Europe. In 2017, 170 tonnes of Gruyère d'alpage AOP and 79 tonnes of Vacherin fribourgeois d'alpage AOP were produced in the canton of Fribourg. René Kolly, former cheese maker and now the President of the Cooperative of Alpine Cheese Producers, personally guides interested visitors through the Tzintre cheese cellar in Charmey. [www.dzin.ch](http://www.dzin.ch)

## SOLENNITÄT MURTEN



The festival that used to commemorate the victory against the Burgundian Duke Charles the Bold in the Battle of Murten in 1476 is now celebrated as a school festival. Uniformed cadets and girls dressed in white with flowers parade through the Old Town. The Solennität is an annual town festival with a church celebration, dancing, games and arbalest shooting. *Murten, Saturday 22 June 2019.*

## MURTEN MARATHON



A messenger brought the good news of the victory in the Battle of Murten (1476) and a Linden branch to Fribourg. The first national commemorative marathon took place in 1933, with 14 participants. The 17-kilometre Murten marathon is now the oldest fun run in Fribourg Region. Around 13,000 runners are expected for the 86th event: *Sunday 6 October 2019.*

## VULLY TART



Community-building tradition: After a night in front of the community oven, the associations in Vully sell the delicious, freshly-baked Vully tarts locally.

## PRAZ GRAPE HARVEST FESTIVAL



Even if Vully is regarded as the smallest of the Swiss wine-growing regions, winegrowers know how to celebrate their festival in style. The lovely wine-growing village of Praz, on the sunny slope of Lake Murten, is decorated with flowers and has many market stalls and open wine cellars. There are children's processions, guggen music and fanfares, while wine and life are celebrated. *Saturday/Sunday, 21/22 September 2019.*

## CARNIVAL OR MARDI GRAS – WILD AND FUN

The Bolz Carnival has been celebrated in Fribourg's lower town for 50 years. The tradition is upheld with colourful processions, costumes and guggen music and razzmatazz in the bars and restaurants in the Old Town. The Carnival culminates in the spectacular burning of the giant Rababou. *Saturday, 2 March to Tuesday, 5 March 2019.* The traditional Romont Carnival which takes place during the same weekend, is a unique experience. The crazy days and nights

are also celebrated in Murten. The "Mardi Gras Society" was established in 1950 to ensure that the Carnival adheres to the obligatory traditions. There are processions, guggen music, fancy dress balls and ditties. Since 1965, it has been customary to put on trial the "Füdlbürger" (petty bourgeois), who represents the winter, accusing him of everything that has gone wrong over the past twelve months and then burn him. *Friday, 1 March to Monday, 4 March 2019.*



## ST. NICHOLAS FRIBOURG



Students at the St. Michel College in Fribourg have been organising the St. Nicholas Festival since 1906. After a festive market, at 5.00 pm it's time for the procession of St. Nicholas on his donkey, accompanied by his helpers and torch bearers. In a critical speech interspersed with irony from the cathedral balcony, he looks back on the past year, before the festival ends with a solemn mass. *Saturday, 6 December 2019* [www.st-nicolas.ch](http://www.st-nicolas.ch)

## CATHOLIC FESTIVALS



Female mourners dressed in black (French pleureuses) and cross-bearers march through the town of Romont, singing and praying in remembrance of Christ's suffering and crucifixion. *Good Friday, 19 April 2019*. In Fribourg, on Corpus Christi, a procession takes place after mass. It goes to lavishly adorned station altars where the congregation prays and sings. *Sunday, 9 June 2019*

## CHARACTER



The influence of professional artist Hubert Audriaz on the cultural life of Fribourg is like no other, particularly in the lower town, where the Bolz language is still spoken occasionally. [www.fribourgtourisme.ch](http://www.fribourgtourisme.ch)

## THE FINEST GLASS ART



Romont Castle houses the Swiss Museum of Stained Glass and Glass Art. A wonderful setting for old treasures and modern exhibitions! With a glassware market, a wide variety of demonstrations and workshops, the Vitrofestival Romont pays tribute to this fascinating material and its finest facets. *27/28 April 2019* [www.vitrofestival.ch](http://www.vitrofestival.ch)

## FISH BROTHERHOOD

In Estavayer-le-Lac fishermen, journeymen, pastors and honourable brothers maintain their solidarity and brotherly love in the Honourable Fish Brotherhood Association, according to specific codes. This tradition originates from 1658. The Fish Brotherhood was revived in 1956 following the discovery of the flag. It depicts Saint Nicholas, patron saint of fishermen, and Laurentius, patron saint of the parish, side by side. The solemn ceremony to admit new brothers takes place on the Sunday on which the ships and fishing tackle are blessed on the place du port of Estavayer after mass. *Sunday, 11 August 2019*.

## CONTACT

We would be pleased to assist you with research trips and your search for interesting media topics.

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