

Little guided visit of Gruyères





1. THE CHUPIA BARBA TOWER ("burnt beard" tower)

It is standing at the entrance of the town, on the right side. This is where the final interrogations of the condemned people took place. Their beards were burnt, hence the name of the tower. Inside, there used to be instruments of torture.



2. THE FOUNTAIN

In the olden days, there used to be wells and water tanks in Gruyères but no running water. It was a great event when water was brought into the town. It was brought in 1755 through wooden pipes. But because of pressure problems, they exploded. Therefore they have been replaced by other pipes, in cast iron.



3. THE "BELLUARD"

The term "belluard" probably means "boulevard". On the fortified gate you can see a representation of two warriors. Those were the heroes Clarembos and Bras de Fer, who distinguished themselves in the reign of Peter IV of Gruyères (XIVth century). They resisted the first assault of the Bernese with nearly no external help until reinforcements finally arrived.



4. THE ANCIENT MEASURES

They used to be filled up with grain under the watch of the count, then that of the bailiff, who stood on a balcony at the Auberge de la Halle, for he had to control the sales.



5. L'AUBERGE DE LA HALLE

L'Auberge de la Halle was once a place where only alcohol could be sold. Please note that at the time, the ground floor of the inn was the cowshed.

This is where most goods were sold, such as salt. The "saunerie" (salt turnover) was on the ground floor of the guardhouse. On ancient lithographs, the Auberge de la Halle is depicted with long eaves reaching the measures.

As for many other cities in the Middle Ages, the Auberge de la Halle's nickname is "Bouchon" (cork). While there was a market, those houses could indeed use a pine tree, a kind of *mé* (branch of a bush) as a sign. In dialect, the French word *buisson* (bush) was pronounced as "*bochon*" and then the translation went from *bochon* to *bouchon*.



6. LE CALVAIRE – WAYSIDE CROSS

This name derives from the sculptured group that was conveniently put there, the overhang protecting it from bad weather. Please note that it is not a former oratory. Inside, goods such as grain and salt used to be delivered on the ground floor. Later on, it was also used as fire premises. And now, this is where local artisans come to exhibit their work for a week.



7. THE STONE OF THE STOCKS

The circular stone of the stocks is located on the floor, just in front of the store "Filet de Gruyères". An oak post was placed in the middle of it. Thieves who were caught red-handed were tied up there for a whole day.



8. CHALAMALA'S HOUSE

The jester, whose real name was Girard, played the flute and the pipe (chalumeau), hence his nickname of Chalamala. He was very wealthy, probably even more than the Count of Gruyères. He lived at the time of Peter IV (XIVth century).



9. ST-GERMAIN FIREPLACE

This bourgeois hospital was founded in 1411 and built from 1431 to 1445. It continued the fortification of the upper village of the massive Château St-Germain. It became a hospice in 1863.



10. CHÂTEAU ST-GERMAIN

It is the fortified house of the Saint-Germain family, who were ministers to the Count from 1351 to 1578. This medieval construction dates from the end of the 13th century. You can still see the trace of a harrow of defense (perhaps of a drawbridge). This castle was actually a fortification. In the 19th century, the Balland family, owner of the Château de Gruyères, lowered the road to pass through it with their carriages. Since 1998 the Hans Ruedi Giger Museum has been housed there.



11. FORMER CHAPLAINCY AND CHAPEL OF ST JOSEPH

This building from 1891 adjoins the château St Germain. It has been completely restored and houses the Tibet Museum nowadays.



10. THE REGIONAL SCHOOL

The school burnt down in 1925 and had to be completely rebuilt then. It has been possible to use some parts of the former façade. The date of 1650 is still featured on the building.

All the children could attend this school. At Gruyères, a class was generally taught by priests, as the chaplains of Minsier were usually teachers. There was also a school of choristers in the count's little town. There was quite a lot of music and singing, and the pupils wore costumes. They also took part in the church services, as there were usually 8 priests in Gruyères. Three of them were younger (the priest, the vicar, the chaplain of Minsier as the school teacher) and the other ones were usually retired priests who still took the daily services.



11. THE CHURCH OF ST-THÉODULE

The tower was first an observatory before it became the belfry. The choir of the church was formerly a Gothic style chapel. Inside the church, there are three naves: a main nave and two side aisles, that were lateral chapels separated from the church by walls. The side chapels have been integrated to the central nave around 1800. The stained glass windows are by Yoki, an artist from Fribourg. The vault of the counts and the bailiffs is located beneath the altar of Notre Dame de Compassion.



12. LA CHARRIÈRE DES MORTS-THE CART-TRACK OF THE DECEASED

It was through this gateway that the bodies of deceased members of the parish were brought from the outlying villages to be buried in Gruyères.



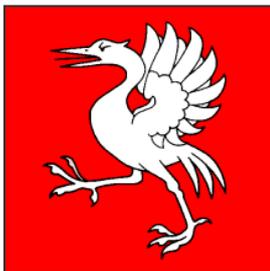
13. The remparts

You can see the Ecrenis rampart outside the church. From the cemetery, it joined up with the castle. We can see even higher, against the tower of the Castle, the end of the rampart. From the presbytery, it continues up until the watch gate, the "porta dou giai" in dialect, altered over the centuries to become St. Agatha's Gate, but officially there is no writing on this name. Near the presbytery is the Clos aux Cerfs (Deer Park) where the cattle was brought to keep them safe from thieves.



14. THE CASTLE

A visit to the castle brings you to a journey over eight centuries of history (from the 13th to the 19th century). The French gardens are reminiscent of the time of the bailiffs, while the interiors are of Baroque style, from the Renaissance to the Romanticism. Nineteen counts succeeded one another from 1080 to 1554. Since the beginning of 2008, a multimedia show completes the visit of the castle with sound and pictures of the history and legends of Gruyères.



THE CRANE (LA GRUE IN FRENCH)

The counts have been first mentioned at the end of the 11th century. The heraldic bird gave its name to the counts' family, and also to the city and the region.

Thank you for your visit!

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