



Permanent exhibition

Gruyère, footprints and detours

A marked out itinerary leading to unexpected discoveries, a joy for all, young and old alike.

One thousand square metres, over one thousand two hundred items: treasures of knowledge with emotional hindsight.

A contemporary, live and dynamic survey of regional heritage.

The Museum of La Gruyère

The Musée gruérien was founded in 1917 and opened in 1923. Its running expenses are covered by the municipality of Bulle, Switzerland. The current site, built in 1978, was extended in 2001 and converted in 2011-2012. It is a public, non-profit, institution which aims to give full meaning to regional historical heritage. Nowadays, Gruyère is a district of the canton of Fribourg located in the Lower Alps. It is also the area where the famous Gruyère cheese is made.

Switzerland, the postcard view

Mountains, chalets, herdsmen and cheese are the images conjured up by the name of Gruyère. The picture one tends to remember is that of a rural region attached to traditions with picturesque scenery: an invitation to break away from the rat race. A postcard view that is somehow both attractive and reassuring. This image is partially true but history provides another angle which is far more alive and real, more interesting, too. History reveals the Counts of Gruyère buffeted between the Duchy of Savoy and the burgeoning Swiss Confederation; cheese traders who export their unique product as far as India; citizens of Bulle who pit their forces against the patricians of Fribourg; industrial pioneers attracted by cheap labour, country dwellers who set themselves up as city dwellers and city dwellers who dream of country residences... Thus, the exhibition provides a picture of the urban versus rural inter-relationship: a very topical issue in both Bulle and Switzerland.

An exhibition that uses stories to narrate history

The driving force of the exhibition is to whet the visitor's curiosity: the circuit is a labyrinth with surprises and exciting discoveries round each corner, where history unfolds itself like a well-written story. *La Gruyère, footprints and detours* tells stories that find an echo in the visitor's personal experience and knowledge. A meaningful encounter between the visitor and local heritage is the focal point of the theme, enhanced by artefacts, illustrations and authentic documents.

Footprints and detours

The exhibition is woven around seven themes: *A cheese takes off, From haystacks to chimney stacks* (Alpine economy and its evolution towards manufacturing and service industries), *Homesteads, A market town moves on* (country and urban dwellings and lifestyles), *Twists and turns* (power struggles and territorial changes since the XIth century), *Worship and Symbolism* (religious heritage from the Counter Reformation to modern times) and *Living images* (highlighting the part played by artists, authors and cultural performers in the shaping and broadcasting of an image of the region).

The display offers clues to understanding and encourages discovery. It acts as a mirror where people can recognize aspects of their own lives portrayed in THEIR museum.

Emotion and intuition

The circuit stimulates emotion, intuition and interactivity. The structure and the staging both focus on these aspects. Each section offers its own brand of meaningful atmosphere. The exhibition highlights a complex region with many facets, a region that is ever moving with its times and the outside world.

Highlights

A flare path on the floor points the way; it includes necessary indications and coloured dots to show special features for children. The lighting lends itself to the visitor's choice of circuit. This system is not only an energy-saver, it also ensures improved conservation of the exhibits and helps create an atmosphere that furthers unexpected discoveries.

Chronological showcases place exhibits in context throughout the ages. Pull-out, drawer showcases enable close-up examination of precious or fragile documents. Audio-visual stations show media input (radio or television broadcasts as well as films). Works of art and large scale photos illustrate the various themes.

Geared to the general public

The exhibition is geared to attract a wide public. All texts are in three languages, French, English and German. Features have been specially designed for a younger public and include items that can be manipulated as well as various games which are directly linked to the theme of the section visited. Children and adults can, for example, build a wood-shingle roof, choose items best suited for a journey abroad, discover the town of Bulle as it was in 1912 or even make up their own image of the region. The circuit is also suitable for people with restricted mobility.

Visitors can even choose their circuit according to their time-schedule: they can either do a rapid tour of about 60 minutes (overall vision and main texts), a semi-rapid tour of about an hour and a half which includes a more meaningful examination of the exhibits and reading the various descriptions or they can do the detailed tour, looking through photo albums and watching or listening to the media input. People from all walks of life may recognize familiar objects that trigger a trip down memory lane. They can also discover surprising, unusual objects.

The Association of Friends of the Museum is a non profit organisation. The museum and the association organise guided tours highlighting specific aspects of regional heritage within the Museum, in the area and even further afield. The Friends of the Museum are encouraged to participate as volunteers in the dynamics of the institution by means of publications, events, visits and input from their personal experience. The public library, an essential part of the museum, is open to a public of all ages, from the very young to the elderly. Its mission is to stimulate reading (books are available in several languages) and to provide support for research.

Research and publications

Detailed research into the institution itself can be found in « Le Musée gruérien », *Cahiers du Musée gruérien*, 2009. Special collections and regional historical items provide a solid basis to the exhibition. The curators have set up a panel of about fifty researchers in human sciences. Their written works can be found, bound in a case entitled *La Gruyère dans le miroir de son patrimoine* which consists of five publications and a DVD.

Treasured collections

Five hundred metre square exhibition rooms offer a turnover of special theme exhibitions and/or paintings by either contemporary or earlier artists. Among other treasures, the special theme exhibitions present the most precious collections of items belonging to the museum such as the Girault de Prangey daguerreotypes, paintings, engravings, period furniture or interesting items of daily use.

Plans for the future:

1. An offer of audio-guides in different languages, particularly in Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese and Russian.
2. Initiate heritage theme tours round the town of Bulle and in the surrounding area.
3. Develop and provide more cultural and educational services to stimulate the visitor's awareness and interaction with the themes on display. A project, involving collaboration with teachers from primary to pre-university level, is underway. It offers different approaches to chosen themes according to the level of teaching.
4. Develop ways of encouraging recently established foreign population groups to visit the museum. Things are already being implemented in this field, meetings have been held with the people in charge of immigrant integration and non-French language communities. The idea is fast taking hold.

Museum shop

The shop offers publications on the area, books on art and photography, souvenirs, original works of art and postcards.

Opening Times

Tu - Fr 10-12 am / 1.30-5 pm

Sa 10 am-5 pm

Su - Bank Holidays 1.30-5 pm

Closed on Mondays

June to September:

Tu - Sa 10 am-5 pm

Entrance fee

Normal 8.-

Reduced price 6.-

Group price 5.- (min. 10 pers.)

Accompanied children

(up to 16 years old) free

School and student groups 3.-

Guided tours in English,

French and German

(Please book ahead) 100.-

Address

Musée gruérien

Bibliothèque de Bulle

www.musee-gruerien.ch

info@musee-gruerien.ch

Rue de la Condémine 25

1630 Bulle (Switzerland)

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Access

Public transport : 7 minutes' walk
from the train station.

Motorway A 12, Bulle exit n°4,

Parking at Bulle Centre.

Drop-off point for coaches:

rue de la Condémine,

opposite the Museum.

Access available for people

with limited mobility.