Ballenberg Häuser aus Museumsplan 2015

The history and culture of bread – from field to table – is explored at eight themed stations.

**The Oven House**

Workshop of the Farmer’s Wife

Professional bakers were formerly a rarity in rural areas. Instead, farmers’ wives would make their own bread in the oven houses, which were often owned by the local community. Larger farms would have their own oven house. Right up until the 1950s, the oven house from Breitenried was used by two families who baked there every two to three weeks. To fire up the oven took four hours’ work and a lot of firewood. After the bread was baked, the farmers’ wives would use the remaining heat to bake cakes and to dry fruit.

**Oven house from Breitenried/Heitenried, Fribourg**

Visit the oven house where farmers’ wives did their baking in the past.

**Grain**

One Plant – Many Products

As everyone knows, cereals are used to make bread. But as well as the grain itself, other parts of the plant can also be put to good use. During the threshing process the harvested cereal is separated into grain, husks and straw. Farming families used every bit of the plant – nothing was wasted.

**Farmhouse from Oberentfelden, Aargau**

The many different products that can be extracted from the harvested plants are displayed in the house from Oberentfelden. The tour begins on the threshing floor.

**The Bread of Törbel**

A Fascinating Story

In the village of Törbel high above the Vispa valley, the farmers themselves had to produce almost everything they needed to survive. This included the bread. On the sunny fields they planted rye that they subsequently ground in the mills by the stream and then made into rye bread in the village baking oven. Although each family was responsible for its own livelihood, the families had to work together to produce the life-sustaining rye bread. And this they did in a very clever and unusual manner.

**Mill from Törbel, Valais**

In the mill from Törbel you will find out how the people of Törbel organised themselves to produce their rye bread. The mill is in action every Saturday and Sunday.

**Agatha Bread**

Agatha bread would have been in the house since February. This bread was baked on the Feast of St. Agatha (February 5) and then blessed by the priest. People and animals were given the bread to keep them healthy. Agatha bread was also kept in the kitchen and pieces of it would be crumbled into a soup that was believed to help in sickness. The bread would also be hung in the house and barn to protect the buildings from fire.

**Rua Bread**

On every day of the year you would find this bread in the kitchen. This crusty bread is made from a mixture of rye and wheat flour and was the everyday bread of the people of the Sense Valley. It was baked quite infrequently and so had to be stored for a long time.

**Sensler Bretzels**

Sensler bretzels were also a must at any “Chilbi” (parish fair). These slightly salty, waffle-type products made from white flour and double cream formed the perfect conclusion to the festive meal.

**Bread as Diverse as Life**

Switzerland has many different types of bread. There is bread in all shapes, sizes and recipes. Particular regions have their own special types of bread and there are also breads that are baked specifically for religious and secular festivities. This wide range of bakery products reflects the cultural diversity of Switzerland itself. The farmhouse from Tengleningen serves as a good example of this “cornucopia of bread”. On the morning of the second Sunday of October four different types of bakery product were made in the houses of the Sense Valley region of Fribourg. This was the day when the local inhabitants had their parish fair (“Chilbi”) to celebrate the bringing in of the harvest and the return of the animals from the alpine meadows.

**Bakery Products in the Farmhouse from Tengleningen**

Already on the table in the parlour was the cuchaule (similar to a brioche), which was eaten at the start of the festive “Chilbi” midday meal. The slices of yellow saffron bread were spread liberally with butter and the special “Bichisch” mustard.

A trail through the Museum focussing on

**Grain and Bread**

The history and culture of bread – from field to table – is explored at eight themed stations.
BREAD DAILY LIFE AND CULTURE

Bread has been an essential part of everyday human life since time immemorial. The special features of Swiss bread culture are explored at eight information stations, which can be found throughout the museum at the places where the activities actually occur: in the fields, in the mill, in the bake house and in the farmhouse. The themed stations are indicated with . There is no fixed sequence. You can visit them in any order you like!

BREAD FROM THE BAKER

How the Experts Bake

The bakehouse at the Open-Air Museum – like most bakeries – is a place that comes to life when most people are still sleeping. The Museum bakers start to heat up the wood-fired oven even early in the morning. Many of the tasks are done by hand, as is still the case in many modern bakeries. Only the strenuous and time-consuming kneading is done by machine. Around 22,000 loaves are baked in the wood-fired oven, which are then sold in the nearby Museum Shop.

Visit the bakehouse before 12.00 and you’ll see our skilled bakers at work. You’ll also catch the wonderful aroma of freshly baked bread.

CEREAL CULTIVATION

Working to the Rhythm of Sun and Rain

Cereal crops can be cultivated in many different ways but the rhythm is always determined by the weather. In the Ballenberg Open-Air Museum the farmers grow cereal crops with equipment and machinery that were in common use around 1930. At that time farmers relied entirely on their own muscle power and that of their horses. The previous experience of the farmers and their knowledge of the weather determined when the various tasks should be done and, ultimately, how good or bad the harvest would be.

Cornfield close to

ABUNDANCE AND SCARCITY

1816 – a Disastrous Year

1816 was an unusually cold year. Every month it snowed at least once down in the valley. Experts now think that a volcano in Indonesia was to blame for the weather, although this was of course not known at the time. The consequences of this “year without a summer” were disastrous. There were major harvest failures and the price of food rocketed. The year of 1816 brought malnutrition, sickness and death, particularly to the poor, to home workers and to the urban underclass. The previously well-stocked grain stores of many rich farmers were also now empty.

Granary from Ostermundigen, Berne

The consequences of the “year without a summer”: Granary from Ostermundigen, Berne.

Spelt, wheat and rye are the most important grains used for bread making in Switzerland. In 1815, there was plenty to fill the granaries – in 1817, they were all in very short supply.

Cereal Production in Revolution

The cultivation and processing of cereal crops have changed greatly over the past 200 years. In the Switzerland of 1800 large numbers of workers and large areas of cultivation were required. These days we can produce more grain on less land and with a much smaller workforce. Individual technical innovations enabled this rapid change. An early example is the gin, a mechanical device that used the power of horses or oxen to drive a threshing machine.

Gin from Ecoteaux, Vaud

Turn the wheel of time! See how cereal production has changed over the past 200 years.

RAPID CHANGE

"Grain and Bread" is supported by:

The aim of the “Stiftung Brotkultur Schweiz” (Swiss Bread Culture Foundation) is to research the science and history and to promote the art of bread and baking. It is devoted to the recording of the entire history of baking and the bakery trade, as well as the protection and maintenance of the associated cultural heritage and traditions. www.brotkultur.ch

On behalf of the federal government, the “Schweizerische Brotinformation” (Swiss bread information organisation) produces marketing communications in order to promote Swiss bread in terms of its sale, positive image and consumption. It is actively involved in advertising and providing information about the products, their processing and cereal cultivation. www.schweizerbrot.ch

Brotkultur.ch

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