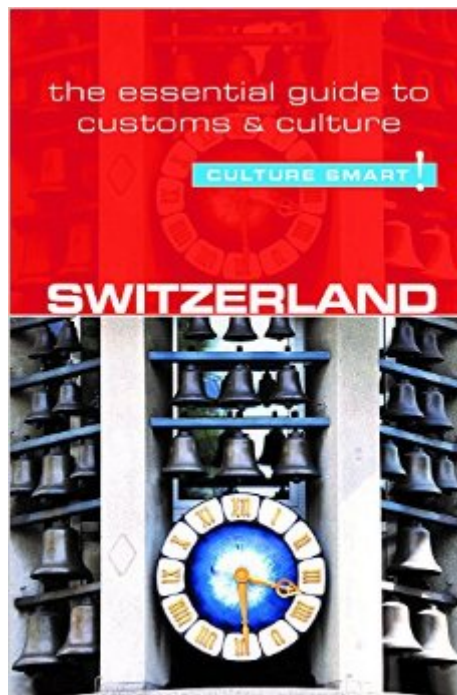


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Switzerland - Culture Smart!: The Essential Guide To Customs & Culture



Synopsis

There is far more to Switzerland than beautiful scenery, chocolate, watches, faceless bankers, and spotless cities. The real Switzerland is full of surprises and anything but bland. This small, rugged, landlocked country at the heart of Europe has been a confederation since the first three cantons came together in a defensive alliance in 1291. Four national languages are spoken within its borders. Its present twenty-six cantons are largely autonomous and retain their individual characters. In this grassroots democracy real power lies with the people, who exercise it directly through frequent referendums. Swissness is, above all, a spirit of independence and of communal involvement. Although it is a model of peace and multicultural cooperation, with one of the highest standards of living in Europe, Switzerland's prosperity has been hard-won.

Historically neutral, it maintains a semi-detached relationship within the European Union. In 2014, a national referendum supported quotas on EU migrants. Despite the several hundred thousand EU nationals living and working within its borders, and almost half a million Swiss working in the EU, this small, resource-poor country appears determined to retain its independence. Culture Smart! Switzerland provides an historical perspective, explores Swiss values and attitudes, and looks at the cultural continuity of festivals and traditions. It helps you navigate the workplace, the neighborhood, and the social scene. It offers crucial insights into Swiss business culture, and more generally on differences in communication style. Swiss people are not always easy to get to know. Proud, industrious, fair-minded, and creative, they respect the individual, which means that while they appreciate clear thinking and direct talking, they avoid confrontation. They will never intrude, yet will willingly help out if asked. Make the effort, and people will respond. Warmth, decency, intelligence, and wit are among the many hidden riches of this fascinating society.

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Customer Reviews

I grew up in Switzerland and bought this book out of curiosity to see how others see the Swiss. I found the information in this booklet very concise and easy to read. For the most part the book is very accurate and up-to-date. It is also fun to read and gives lots of information on understanding the Swiss, their history, and their customs. Highly recommended for anyone who wants to learn more about the Swiss and their country.

I bought this book as a gift for a graduate student who was going to work in Switzerland for two years. However, I did look through it before giving it away, and I had done quite a bit of research on line before picking this particular item. The book seemed to me a very practical guide for someone taking up residence in Switzerland, and was not so much meant for the casual 2-week vacationer. The sections on cultural differences between the Swiss and other people were particularly interesting, and would head off some awkward moments for a new immigrant. The parts about rules for apartment living sound quite strict for someone from America, but, again, would prevent misunderstandings between Swiss and foreign tenants. There are also the more usual guidebook sections on recreation, such as hiking, skiing, eating in restaurants, etc. The student who received the book proclaimed it "great", and I think it will come in handy in the months ahead.

I bought this book for a friend in the U.S.A. As a Swiss I was very curious to read how "the Swiss" are. I can agree with most things in the book and recommend "Switzerland - culture Smart!" to everybody who is interested in getting a quick overview about the general Swiss culture and attitude.

I have only read the intro and the first chapter but have found a few errors. The most glaring is the "German" language spoken in Switzerland. The Swiss speak a language called Schweizerdeutsch or Swiss German. It is NOT the high German (hoch Deutsch) taught in high school and college classes throughout the US. In fact, many Germans will have trouble understanding the native Schweizerdeutsch. Don't fret because most Swiss learn standard German in school and use it in official life. The book itself is really very good. I learned much I either did not understand previously

or that was new to me. I am looking forward to reading the whole book and then keeping it handy on my next trip to Switzerland. I am using the Pimsleur basic course in Swiss German available here on . I should be able to carry on a limited conversation in Schweizerdeutsch in Bern and surprise the heck out of my distant relatives and the innkeeper.

More of a series of extended tips for long term travelers. The ideas were however very helpful in understanding how to engage the Swiss on their terms and how to begin to navigate their milieu. An understanding of the French, German, and Italian/Mediterranean cultures are definitely helpful, since they all feed into the Swiss mix, but these cultures do not show how the Swiss are unique to any of them. A good book for those spending six months or longer in this beautiful country.

The Swiss people love to tell visitors about the history of their country. Reading this book first helps you understand them better and allows you to ask intelligent questions.

A quick read for anyone who wants a good understanding of the Swiss culture and people. Because of Switzerland's different regions and languages, the author does an excellent job of depicting how this diversity works.

This book describes Swiss culture very accurately and nicely. The author does a fine job in describing the diversity that exists in this country and yet identifies the common themes for the whole country. The author describes well how to approach Swiss people and how to work with Swiss people. An excellent introduction to Swiss Culture!

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