

World Heritage sites are selected for special protection due to their cultural, natural or scientific significance by UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization).

Switzerland has 12 UNESCO sites, which include magical cities, breathtaking landscapes, captivating history and hidden gems - and testify to the country's rich cultural and natural heritage. Here are six of our favourite:

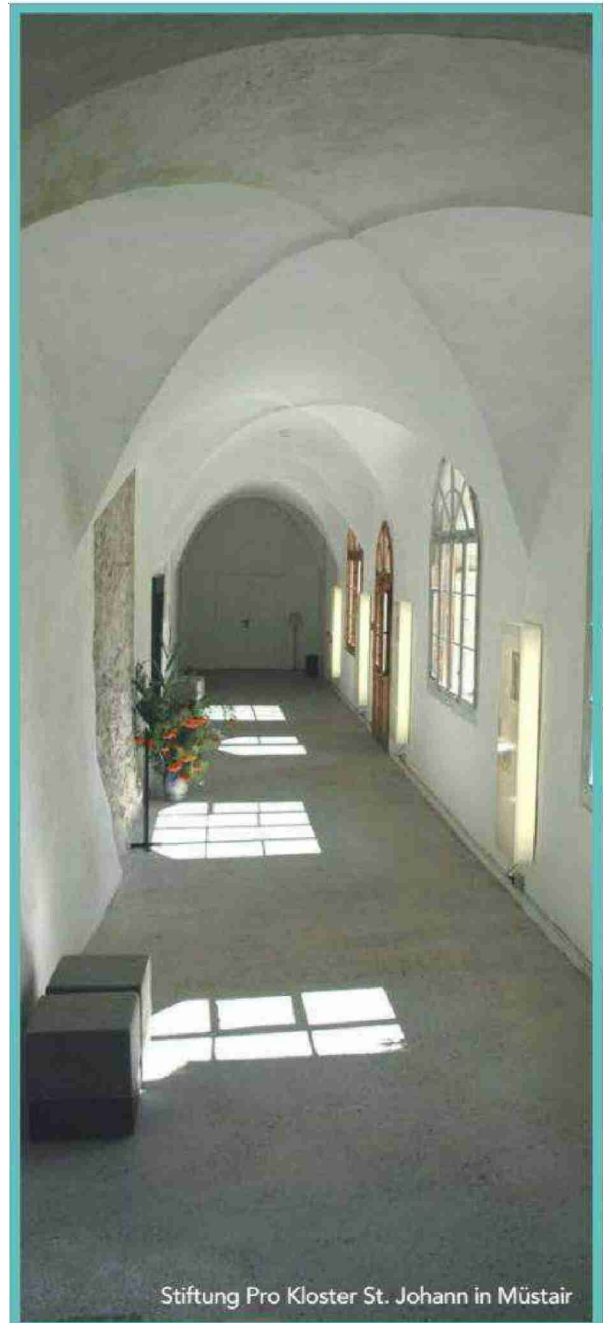


1 THE BENEDICTINE CONVENT OF ST JOHN AT MÜSTAIR IS A DELIGHT NOT ONLY FOR ARCHAEOLOGY AND ART-LOVERS

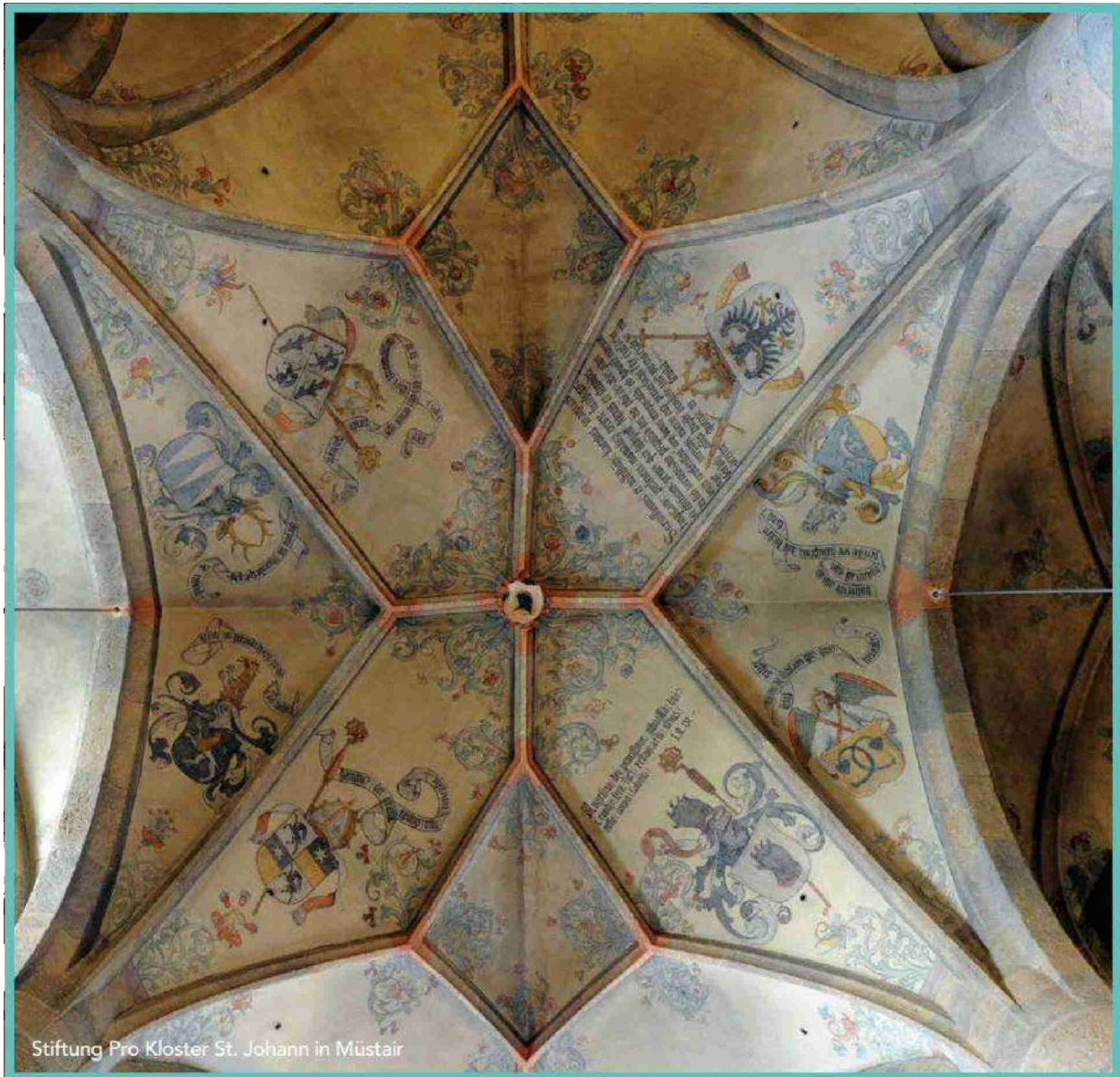
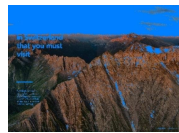
Standing in a valley in the Grisons, the Convent of Müstair is a striking example of Christian monastic renovation - and features Switzerland's finest figurative murals.

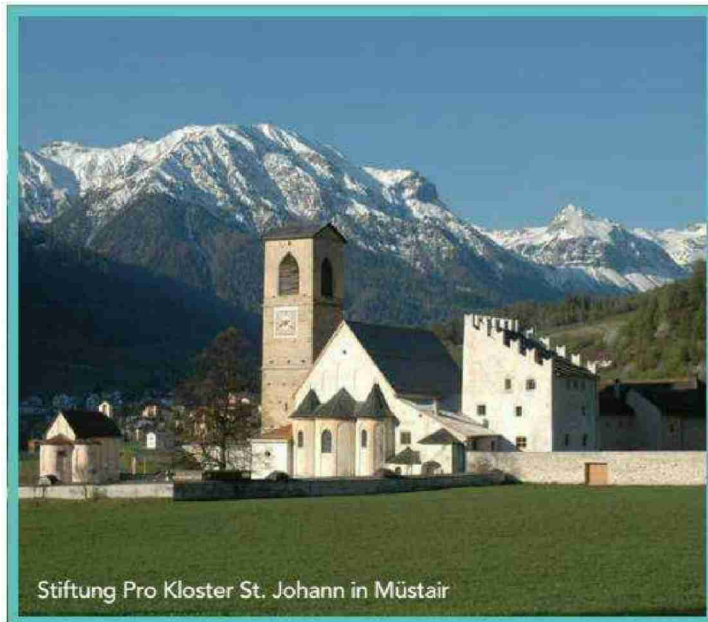
The monastery was founded by Charlemagne - the Holy Roman Emperor - in the 8th century, then converted into a convent for nuns in the 12th century. A community of nuns continue to live here, following the Benedictine principles of prayer and work.

St John's convent features many architectural styles and artistic expression spanning more than 12 centuries - offering excitement for anyone with an interest in archaeology or art history.



Stiftung Pro Kloster St. Johann in Müstair





Stiftung Pro Kloster St. Johann in Müstair

Activities

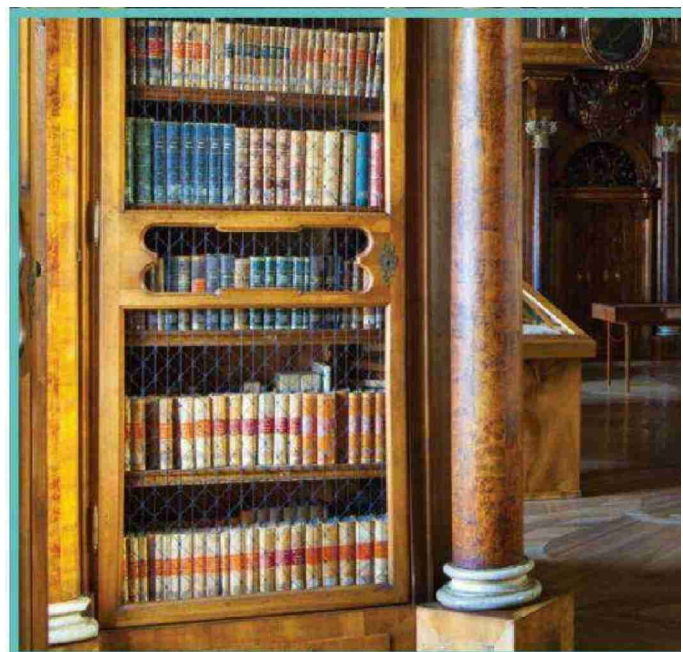
- Visit the Convent Museum and discover twelve centuries of monastic, architectural and artistic history, including guided tours.
- Take a church tour and explore the world's most extensive and preserved early-medieval fresco cycle.
- Enjoy a guided tour of the 8th-century Chapel of the Holy Cross.
- Spend the night at Guesthouse / Maensäss - a unique Benedictine guesthouse.

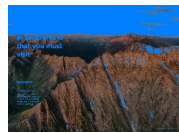
2 THE CONVENT OF ST. GALL'S CATHEDRAL AND LIBRARY WILL TAKE YOUR BREATH AWAY

The magnificent Baroque cathedral and Abbey District are world-class structures, set amidst a beautiful, historic city in eastern Switzerland.

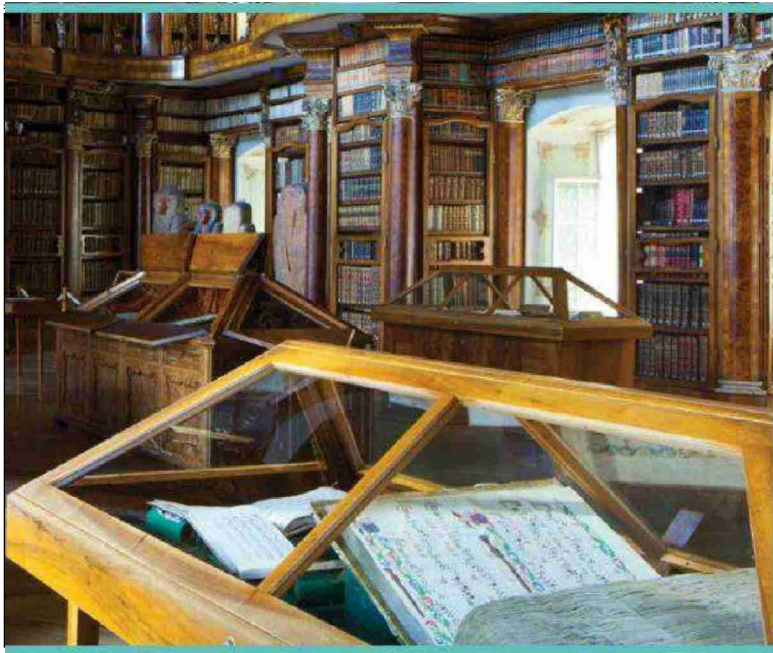
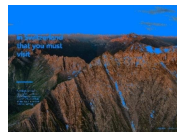
The Abbey's famous library, known as 'the Pharmacy of the Soul', includes a spectacular Rococo interior and 170,000 books - including 2,000 priceless medieval manuscripts.

St. Gall's charming, traffic-free old town is a great starting-point for cycle and rail trips to Lake Constance and Appenzellerland. And hikers can enjoy the 'Bridge Trail' - which crosses over 18 bridges in the Sittertobel.









Activities

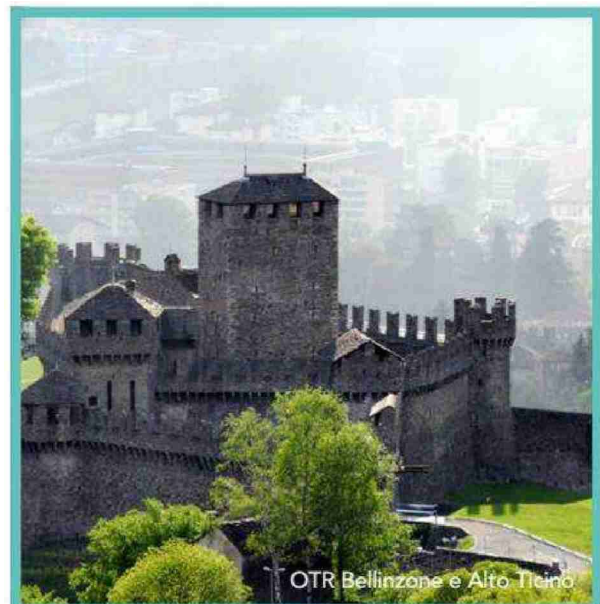
- Visit the Cathedral and the Abbey Library - one of the oldest libraries in the world.
- Take the breathtaking Old Town Tour.
- Follow in the footsteps of Gallus, the wandering monk, with the Gallus Tour and the Children's Gallus Tour.
- Take the Voralpen-Express from Lake Constance to Lucerne, via St. Gallen - and enjoy the stunning landscapes of the Toggenburg, Lake Zurich and Rothenturm.

3 EXPLORE THE MIGHTY THREE CASTLES OF BELLINZONA

The three mighty fortresses of Bellinzona are outstanding examples of 13th-century medieval military fortification.

Castelgrande, Montebello and Sasso Corbaro, linked by walls, provided essential defence to Bellinzona, were first mentioned in 590 and were recently restored to their former glory.

The oldest of the castles is Castelgrande, where the Archaeological Museum and the Museum of Art are located. The Old Town offer guests the chance to wander through medieval streets.





Activities

- Each castle has its own museum and captivating exhibits.
- The Old City Tour includes a variety of guided tours.
- Visitors can ride the Artù Tourist Train to the castle.

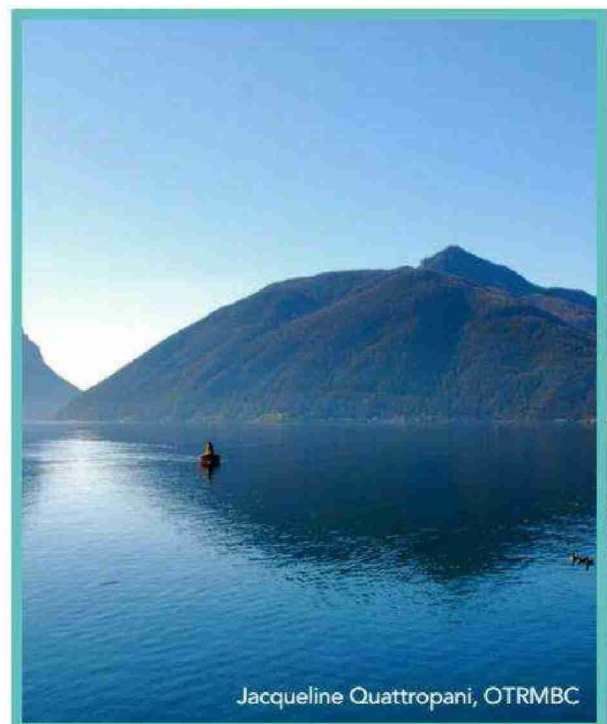


4 DISCOVER THE BEAUTY OF MONTE SAN GIORGIO AND ITS HIDDEN TREASURES

If the striking mountains rising above crystal blue water haven't captivated you, then the potential discovery of ancient fossils will.

Monte San Giorgio's beautiful countryside and marine lagoon could earn a UNESCO listing alone. And once you include fossils that are nearly a quarter of a billion years old, this special place clearly deserves a visit.

The mountain beside Lake Lugano is regarded as the best fossil record of marine life from the Triassic Period (245-230 million years ago), ranging from marine life that lived in the tropical lagoon, to the reptiles, insects and plants that lived on-land.

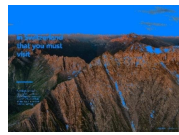




Activities

- Explore Monte San Giorgio's cultural trail on Monte San Giorgio, taking you from the lake to the forest.
- Discover fossilised animals and plants in the Fossil Museum.
- Uncover the history of Monte San Giorgio on the Geo-palaeontological path.

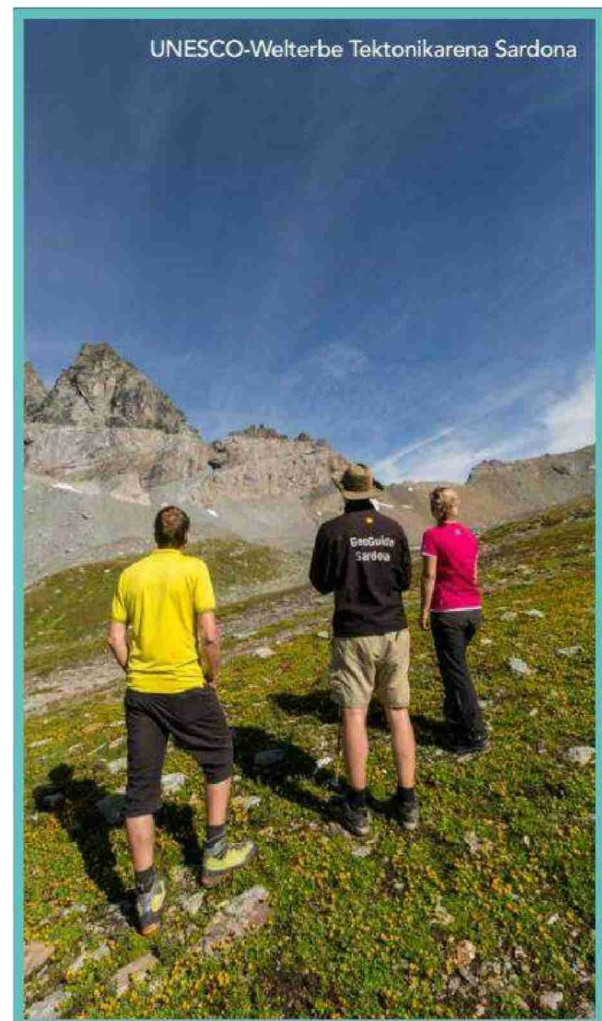




5 EXPERIENCE MOUNTAINS RISING, AT THE SWISS TECTONIC ARENA SARDONA

The collision of Africa and Europe resulted over millions of years in the formation of the Alps. Gargantuan forces propelled rock layers over one another, folding and splitting them. At the Tectonic Arena Sardona, shared between the Canton of Glarus, St. Gall and Graubünden, you can see the result of these processes clearly.

Seven peaks rise above 3,000 m and demonstrate mountain-forming with breathtaking clarity, as glaciated mountains rise above river valleys in the Central Alpine region.



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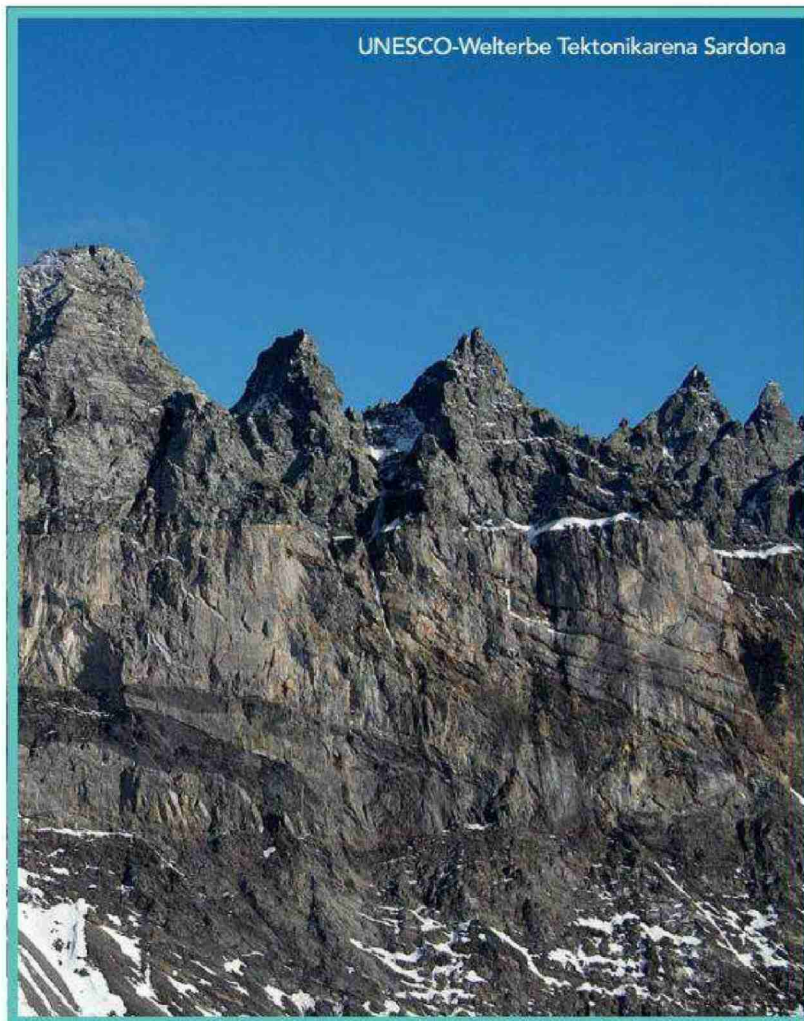
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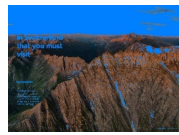
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Activities

- **Hike the Sardona World Heritage Trail.**
- **Discover the hidden treasures with a GeoGuide Sardona.**
- **Find out more at the Visitor centres in Elm and Glarus**



6 EXPERIENCE THE PREHISTORIC PILE DWELLINGS AROUND THE ALPS

The prehistoric life of Neolithic people is captured in these fascinating settlements.

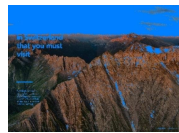
Many of these pile dwellings are underwater and hidden in marshes, making them difficult to access. Visiting one of the museums such as the Laténium in Hauterive offers the best way of experiencing them and getting an idea about what life between 5000 and 500 BC might have been like.





Activities

- Experience the pile dwellings by visiting Laténium - Switzerland's largest archaeological museum.
- Discover insights into the life of our ancestors, with demonstrations and workshops at the Lakeside Village of Gletterens.
- Visit the settlement of Warwilermoos.
- Discover how tools were made 5,000 years ago, at a Prehistoric Workshop.



UNESCO World Heritage in Switzerland

Three outstanding natural phenomena and nine great cultural achievements in Switzerland bear the most sought-after emblem of UNESCO, as Natural and Cultural World Heritage properties. Each of them stands for authenticity, quality and diversity for many generations to come. These values are part of the identity and mentality of the Swiss population.



1 Convent of St. Gallen
St. Gallen's magnificent emblem is its sublime cathedral, which together with the Abbey District forms a historic ensemble. A visit to the Abbey Library is a must.



2 Swiss Tectonic Arena Sardona
Over millions of years the continental collision between Africa and Europe created a pile-up of peaks. The Swiss Tectonic Arena Sardona reveals the extent of this phenomenon.



3 Convent of St John at Müstair
The monastery complex was founded by Charlemagne in the eighth century. It hides a fascinating blend of architectural styles and cultural treasures spanning 1,200 years of history.



4 Rhaetian Railway Albula / Bernina
The spectacular 122 km stretch between Thusis and Tirano is a masterpiece of engineering from the early days of rail travel.



5 Three Castles of Bellinzona
The three castles of Bellinzona – Castelgrande, Montebello and Sasso Corbaro – are among the most significant examples of medieval defensive architecture.



6 Monte San Giorgio
Marvel at perfectly preserved fish and marine reptile fossils at the Fossil Museum of Monte San Giorgio in Meride and be transported 240 million years back in time.



7 Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch
Dramatic mountain ranges, valleys steeped in traditions and the largest glacier in the Alps entice, as does the region's rich cultural heritage.



8 Lavaux, Vineyard Terraces
The Lavaux Vineyard Terraces are part of Switzerland's largest wine-growing region and are a shining example of how people harness their natural environment.



9 La Chaux-de-Fonds / Le Locle, Watchmaking Town Planning
The towns are important watchmaking centres and successful symbiosis of urban and industrial planning.



10 Prehistoric Pile Dwellings
The site counts 111 prehistoric settlements in six countries – of which 56 are in Switzerland. The best way to experience them is to visit the Laténium near Neuchâtel.



11 Old City of Bern
Founded in 1191, Bern features a historic Old Town quarter renowned for its medieval magic, impressive cathedral and attractive arcades.



Discover now
Embark on a journey to these natural and cultural treasures. Take advantage of our attractive offers:

www.whes.ch/ticket



Event
World Heritage Days
Every second weekend in June

The World Heritage Sites open their doors and invite you to discover their secrets, their uniqueness and their extraordinary value.

www.worldheritagedays.ch

