



Connecting Lives, Sharing Cultures

Featured Country: Switzerland



Country Information

Family life is important to the Swiss and they often spend time with family taking trips to nearby natural resorts, as well as having healthy meals together. The Swiss have a love for the outdoors in this country and like to go hiking, skiing, and bicycling in the beautiful mountains and forests.

Lifestyle and Family

The Swiss value hard work, sobriety, thrift and independence. They prize tolerance, punctuality, cleanliness, orderliness and a sense of responsibility.

The population is made up of four ethnic groups: German Swiss, French Swiss, Italian Swiss and Romansh. Germans dominate with 65% of the population. The French are located mostly in the west; the Italians in the south. Though ethnic variety divides Switzerland, the Swiss are unified by the common custom of having pets (90% of Swiss families have a cat or a dog).

Family privacy is important. The nuclear family is the most important social unit. On weekends, families are often active together, taking trips or visiting family or friends. Teenagers are generally given a fair amount of independence. To get around, Swiss rely on well-organized public transportation, but many also walk and bike. It is easy to get around, and cities are in most cases easily accessible.



Teen Life and Sports

The Swiss like to plan family outings and events. Students also join clubs or to get involved in community activities such as village festivals, gymnastics meets or historic celebrations during the

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week. Many Swiss teenagers play one or more kinds of sports and are members of a sports club or team, and they have practice once or twice a week. Many also play a musical instrument and take lessons in the evening. Many young people are involved in scouting. During the week, high school students usually do not go out because they have homework to do.

Diet

The evening dinner is the main meal of the day and is an opportunity for the family to eat together, exchange views and make plans. Swiss families tend to care about healthy foods. Swiss cuisine is mainly a union of French and German alpine cuisine. One famous dish is fondue in which Emmentaler and Gruyère cheese is melted with white wine and eaten with bread cubes. Rosti (a crispy, fried, shredded potato) is the Swiss-German national dish. Switzerland is famous for its chocolate. It is eaten frequently and used often in cooking.



Language and Religion

The official and written languages are German, French, Italian and Romansh. The Swiss-German dialect is spoken in the German-speaking areas of Switzerland. Romansh is a language that derives directly from ancient Latin and has survived and developed in the isolation of Alpine valleys. Approximately 41% of the Swiss are Roman Catholic, and approximately 35% are Protestant.



Corina's Mother's Day Message to her Host Mother, Amy

Dear Mom

As a stranger I walk into your house
Lost like a little mouse
But you were here
...This year
You have always been so near
Close to my heart
To leave you is going to be so hard
You have given me a second home
Used your loan
We have laughed together
And talked for like forever
We had arguments, too

But that has brought me closer to you
You and your family are the best
I am sure we will also enjoy the rest
The time is running
It's not even funny
Thank you for everything
I have felt like a king ;)
I hope you will have a great day tomorrow
I just want to let you know
I love you and I'll miss you ?
Corina

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