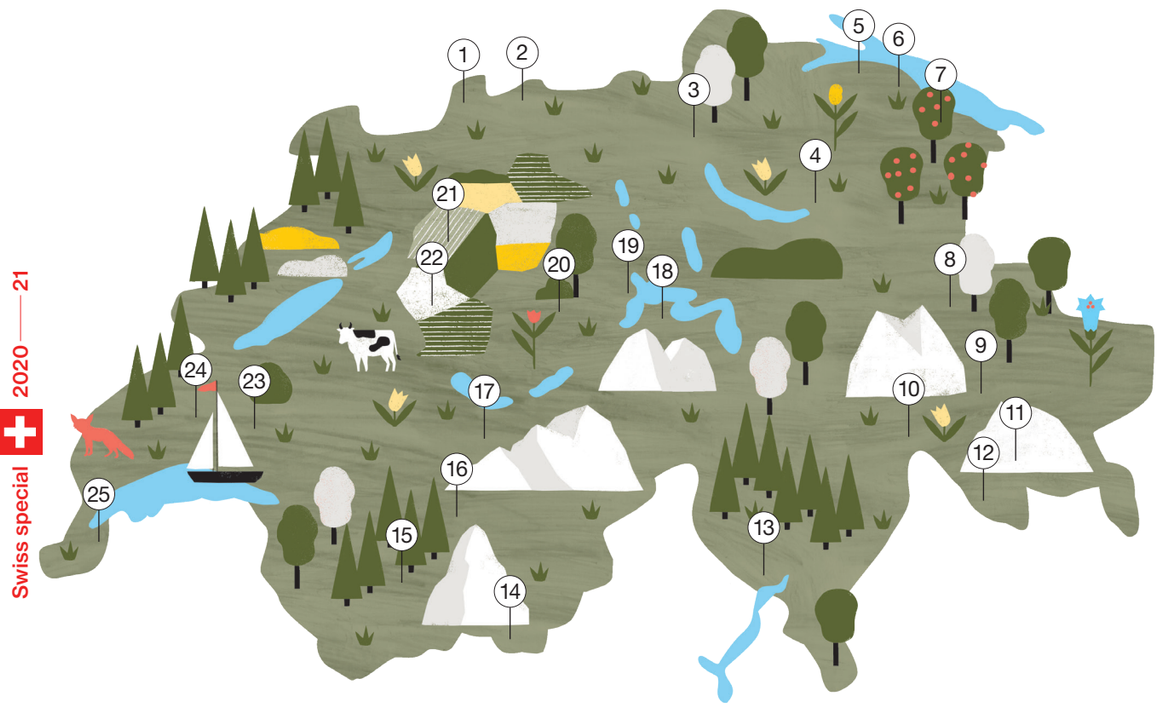
RALPH'S CULINARY TOUR/SWITZERLAND

In good taste

Regional produce, a passion for perfection and a rejection of the latest fads shows how a country can have an enviable culinary culture. We take a tour of the quietly pioneering Swiss food landscape.

By *Ralph Schelling & Josh Fehnert*
Illustrations *Alice Kolb*

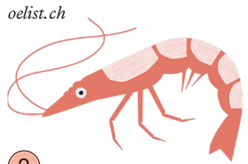


Swiss cuisine doesn't yet have the global cut-through of neighbouring Italian or French, nor the reassuring (if unglamorous) reputation of the hefty German fare served across its northern border. But that doesn't mean that it shouldn't – and a new crop of chefs is working wonders for its global reach.

Over the past few years, the landlocked Alpine nation has foraged some of the best bits of its neighbours' eating habits and tempted a new generation of farmers and brewers (sometimes from storied old families) to its valleys, pastures and pistes. To address the misconception that Swiss means either chocolate or cheese, we asked Zürich-based chef Ralph Schelling to pinpoint a few food-focused highlights that will keep visitors sated, in season and – perhaps most deliciously – surprised. — (M)
ralphschelling.com

1

Oelist *for* **apricot kernel oil**
This Basel specialist has made its culinary oils from rosehip, pumpkin seeds, almond and all manner of goodies since 2010. It also does a line of cosmetic oils for the skin.
oelist.ch



2

SwissShrimp *for*, **well, obvious reasons**
A 25-minute drive east of Basel brings you to an unlikely source of seafood, all farmed free from antibiotics. "I love them raw or quickly marinated like ceviche," says Ralph.
swissshrimp.ch

3

Schnupf *for* **dinner**
This small bar and restaurant in Zürich's Kreis 4 is unsurpassed for dinner and a drink, or an *Absacker* (nightcap). Schelling recommends the artichoke with vinaigrette or the steak frites.
schnupf.bar

4

Mürbel *for* **salted fudge**
And you thought Switzerland was limited in confectionery? Barbara and Niels Meijerink founded Mürbel in Mattwil to challenge that in 2015.
muerbel.ch

5

Willi Schmid *for* **Jersey blue cheese**
Willi is a world cheese champion. Try the Jersey blue, which Ralph insists is "better than all roquefort, stilton, gorgonzola".
willischmid.ch

6

Osci's Fischbeiz *for* **the pike burger**
Grab a lakeside berth (or, if it's chilly, a nook in the parlour) to see why Osci's on the shore of Lake Constance is a classic that's still netting fans. "Just try the pike burger," says Schelling.
oscis.ch

7

Metzgerei Urs Fuchs *for* **comfort food**
It might be a cliché but what's more comforting than *Weisswurst* and *Sauerkraut*? The restaurant is 20 minutes from St Gallen in aptly named Grub.
44 Dorf, Grub

8

Weingut Donatsch *for* **Completer wine**
The Completer vines here were dug up in 1947 then replanted in 1993. The resulting wine is best enjoyed after a tour of the vineyard in Grisons or in the tavern in Malans. A crisp white that goes well with seafood.
donatsch.info

9

Biohof Las Sorts *for* **'Albulataler Bergkartoffeln'**
Grown in the sandy soil of the Albula valley, 1,000 metres above sea level, the colourful mountain potatoes here are an unexpected treat that you will surely dig.
bergkartoffeln.ch

10

Sennerei Andeer *for* **a joyful spread**
Schelling assures us that his mother's village in the Grisons mountains is the best place for a pat of Alpine butter.
sennerei-andeer.ch

11

Tia Butia *for* **fresh produce**
A St Moritz institution that's piled high with the region's enviable produce, mountain-made goodies and friendly staff.
7 Via Gunels, Champfèr

12

Avventura Sils-Maria *for* **fondue and 'Gluhwein'**
A great way to see the best of the Engadine and sample a summer picnic. Locals and tourism school alumni Vitalba and Laurent will be your guides.
avventura-sils-maria.ch

13

La Dolcevita *for* **'gelato alla farina bona'**
Don't miss La Dolcevita for its ice cream made from roasted cornflour. A tempting Ticino classic that hints at the cross-cultural influences on the Italian border.
4 Via Vincenzo D'Alberti, Locarno

14

Zum See *for* **rösti or a creamy treat**
"Zum See is directly on the slopes," says Ralph. "It is great for rösti and the classics and has the very best *Cremeschnitte* [a creamy puff-pastry dessert]".
zumsee.ch

15

Thierry Constantin *for* **'vin Valais'**
Schelling couldn't resist recommending this maestro's chasselas, viogniers and sauvignon blancs.
thierryconstantin.ch

16

Chetzeron *for* **cabbage stuffed with lamb conduit**
"The perfect location for a hotel and restaurant, high above Crans-Montana," says Ralph. "I love the food directly from the fire."
chetzeron.ch

17

Tropenhaus Frutigen *for* **a taste of the tropics**
Bananas from the Bernese Alps? Yes, not to mention mango, pineapple and kumquats grown in a tropical greenhouse. They also produce Oona caviar here.
tropenhaus-frutigen.ch

18

Dallenwil *for* **'Älplermagronen' with 'Alpsbrinz'**
Alpsbrinz is a hard cheese that's handmade in the Dallenwil valley. The *Alpsbrinz des Presidio* (AOP), produced from mountain cows in the summer, is ideal for *Älplermagronen* (a Swiss take on macaroni cheese).
Dallenwil, Nidwalden

19

Meierskählen *for* **goat's cheese**
Meierskählen in Stans, the capital of Nidwalden, makes its products exclusively from its handsome herd of Toggenburg goats. "I love the smoked goat-ricotta," says Schelling.
meierskaehlen.ch

20

Gasthof Rössli *for* **a well-earned snack**
Chef Stefan Wiesner runs both a nature academy and a restaurant in Entlebuch, in the Canton of Lucerne. The changing roster of sandwiches shows how the chef can elevate simple ingredients.
stefanwiesner.ch

21

Bären Utzenstorf *for* **apple pie**
Visit this 200-year-old inn (in its 14th generation of family ownership) for a sense of why not everything needs updating. The recipe for the apple pie has been passed down for years and remains a guarded secret.
baeren-utzenstorf.ch

22

Moment *for* **the daily-changing menu**
This two-storey restaurant in the Swiss capital takes seasonal ingredients and regional specialities to new heights. Great for fans of natural wine.
moment-bern.ch

23

Berceau des Sens *for* **a memorable meal**
A smart affair in Lausanne with a twist: it's attached to the venerable EHL hospitality school. Expect to be served and catered for by the crème de la crème of the nation's hospitality students.
berceau-des-sens.ch

24

Mozza'Fiato *for* **Swiss mozzarella**
The Italian influences are improved in this cheese shop, which refuses to send its produce too far for reasons of freshness. Ralph's favourites are the *ciliegine* (similar to mozzarella) and the *fior di latte*.
mozzafiato.ch

25

Le Bologne *for* **the dessert trolley**
Next to Geneva's Fine Arts School, head chef Florian Le Bouhec's bistro has a fine dessert trolley. Schelling can often be spotted eyeing up a Paris-Brest or syrup-soaked savarin sponge.
lebologne.com