

Basic Copy Customs

Life in the Appenzellerland: Mystic, Original, Real

No other region in Switzerland lives traditions and customs as intensively as the Appenzellerland. As of mid May, the Alpine herdsmen wear their costumes as they bring the cattle up to the alme, where they meet others for the "Stobete"(meeting of folk musicians) accompanied by string music. In the fall, they hold cattle shows to select the most beautiful cow. On the new and ancient (13th of January) New Year's Day, the Silvesterchlausen occurs as an impressive spectacle, while the Bloch and Gidio Hosenstoss enrich carnival.

New Year's Event Silvesterchlausen

The likely most original Appenzeller winter custom is the New Year's Event Silvesterchlausen. On the final day of the year – and according to the ancient Julian calendar this also includes the 13th of January – men and boys in colorful garments or in a «Groscht» made of all natural materials and the typical Chlausen rolls wander through the communities of the Appenzell Ausserrhoder rear and central land (Hinter- and Mittelland). Some wear artful hoods and hats, while the others wear scary masks with wild head coverings. In the early morning hours, the «Beautiful», «Terrible» and «Beautiful Terrible» march in groups, the so-called «Schuppel», in the outer areas and come into the villages over the course of the day. «Strech» is what the New Year's marchers call the route they complete on this day. They carry bells and Chlausen rolls from door to door and present «Chlausezäuerli» (yodeling). The partially colorful and sometimes wild spectacle originated in the 15th century and every year, it fascinates the spectators from all over Switzerland and the surrounding countries.

More information [Silvesterchlausen](#)

[Images Silvesterchlausen](#)

[Images Making Hoods](#)

For more information please contact:

Walter Frick, Schwantelen, 9107 Urnäsch, Tel. +41 77 428 62 80, walter.frick@bluewin.ch

frick-appenzell.ch

Bloch

Unique traditions come to the surface in the Appenzellerland during carnival. The Bloch is one of them. To celebrate it, a trunk of a tree is bound on a cart embellished with fir tree twigs and pulled by men and sometimes boys or «Gofen» (girls and boys) through the villages of the Ausserrhoden back country. The Bloch parade is accompanied by sounds of whips and brass band music. Its origin: As a token of appreciation, the forest workers were given a trunk of a tree in the past.

Every year, the boys of Hundwil, Stein and Schwellbrunn march with their Buebebloch through the villages on the Monday after Ash Wednesday, which is called Bloch Monday. On the same day, the men of the Bloch Society Herisau also head out. The «Mannebloch» of Urnäsch takes place on the Monday prior to Ash Wednesday – however, only in the even years. Meanwhile, the Saturday of carnival is reserved for the girls and boys of the Urnäsch Goofebloch. It takes place annually.

[Infos on the Bloch](#)

[Trailer for the movie](#) (Urnäsch Bloch)

[Images Bloch](#)

For more information please contact:

Bloch President Urnäsch, Hans Frick, Tel. +41 79 785 88 24

Alpine Drives

As summer approaches, the Alpine herders take their cattle from the valley to the alme – very organized and one after another. A boy in his Alpine costume, carrying a driver's bucket on his shoulder, leads the climb. A few Appenzell goats follow him slowly. They are being driven by a girl wearing a child's costume. The Alpine herder follows in his festive costume: yellow leather knee length trousers, a white shirt with a red breast pocket handkerchief, Alpine strips, embellished suspenders, white knee high socks with leg straps, Alpine embellishments (pins, ear covers, watch chain) and a black hat decorated with flowers. On the left shoulder, he wears a richly embellished driver's bucket. He is being accompanied by the three most beautiful cows, which wear the six to nine kilogram heavy Alpine bells with decorated straps. You won't miss their ringing sounds. Four additional Alpine herders walk in front of the remaining cattle in their costumes. The horsedrawn carriages with the Alpine tools and the pigs come last, along with the farmers and the Appenzell wind instrument players. Sideline spectators do need some luck to experience an Alpine drive. There are no specific times. As of mid May, there should be plenty of opportunities. One option to gain possible insights into the scheduled times, would be the newsletter published by the Appenzellerland Tourism Office, AR. At the end of the Alpine summer (mid/end of September) the Alpine herders and their cattle move back into the valley.

[Images Alpine Drives Up and Down](#)

[Video Alpine Drive Down](#)

[Video Preparation Alpine Drive SRF](#) (Minute 08:03 am to 1:30 pm, 8:40 pm to 11:45 pm and 26:25 to 32:40)

Stobete – String Music – Natural Yodeling

The calmness on the alme is interrupted only briefly: The Alpine herders close the day on the individuals almes with a call for prayer, which is an ancient ritual. However, those who think that life on the alme is always introspective, are wrong. The Alpine festivals of the Alpine herders – the

so-called Stobete – are celebrated from June through September. The celebrations included yodeling, Talerschwingen, folkloristic dances, string music and «Schelleschötte» (the moving backwards and forward of three Alpine bells) bring a lot of fun to the occasion. Appenzell's string music featuring hammered dulcimer, contra bass, cello and two violins, only recently also accompanied by accordion, is internationally famous. The probably most popular string music formation is called «Streichmusik Alder» from Urnäsch. It was established in 1884 and by now plays in the fourth, fifth and sixth generation in different compositions. Yodeling is just as important as the string music. This format of music comes with and without lyrics. Besides yodeling songs and Ratzliedli (funny and teasing songs), non-lyrical singing is presented mostly in choir formations: the Zäuerli in Ausserrhoden, the Rugguusseli in Innerrhoden. Music and singing bring together culture, nature, customs and traditions in an impressive way.

[Information Alpine Stobete](#)

[Images Alpine Stobete](#)

[Hammered Dulcimer Builder Werner Alder \(offspring of the well-known string music dynasty Alder\)](#)

Cattle Shows

In the fall of every year, the people of Appenzell lovingly prepare their cows for the cattle shows. The farmers bring their decorated and polished cows and steers to the area. Expert judges assess and rank the animals. Besides their visual appearance, criteria such as milk delivery, bone structure and odder health also play an important role. The objective is to bring the most beautiful animal in the whole country home with you at the end of the day. These special «selections» follow the motto “see and be seens.” The cattle shows are not merely entertaining – after all, the crowned cow will deliver huger profits.

[Information and video on cattle shows](#)

[Images cattle shows](#)

Gidio Hostestoss

On Ash Wednesday, Gidio Hosestoss is remembered in Herisau and Waldstatt. He is said to have died eating a stolen sweet treat. A colorful children's parade accompanies the straw effigy to the abdication. Pupils dressed up as mourning survivors wear gigantic mask heads and sit on the cart. One of those left behind is Eulalia Fadehäx, nee Chuefödle, Gidio's mother. They are crying out to God heavily, and are wiping the tears out of their eyes as well as their gigantic noses with handkerchiefs. Other carts depict the events of the past year. On Sparkly Sunday (Funkensonntag), Gidio Hosestoss is finally burned on funeral pyre.

Funkensonntag also exists in Appenzell Innerrhoden, but it is not linked to Gidio Hosestoss. Instead, the objective is to drive away winter. And they compete ass villages for the one that lights the biggest spark.

[Information Gidio Hosestoss](#)

[Images Gidio Hosestoss](#)

Paintings by Farmers

The Alpine Drive and Stobete are popular subjects of Appenzell's Alpine drivers' paintings. The art developed as of the mid 19th century. However, the history of these paintings begins as early as the 16th century: during demolition work in an old farmer's chamber in Gais, paintings of an Alpine climb were discovered that could possibly date back to 1543 or 1545. A second branch of the typically naïve art of Appenzell is the painting of furnishings by the farmers. Chests, boxes and beds are lavishly painted with plants and birds. The naïve Alpine drivers' paintings, on the other hand, are usually dedicated to everyday life on the farm, on the alme or while hunting. An impressive collection of paintings can be explored at the Folk Traditions Museum in Appenzell.

[Information about farmers' paintings](#)

Famous Art and Farmers' Paintings:

Lilly Langenegger, Langgasse 35, 9056 Gais, Tel. +41 71 793 14 05, werlan@bluewin.ch

lilly-langenegger.ch

Artful Craftsmanship

Tradition and customs aren't merely celebrated – they are being lived. In the Appenzellerland craftsmen are still working in their vocations, while they have long disappeared in other places: Shell saddler, shingle maker, white cooper worker, bell smith, hand embroiderer – are just some of examples. Connoisseurs of Alpine bells or costume embellishments will sometimes travel a thousand kilometers to get one of these unique pieces of art. Different personalities from the Appenzellerland are among the creators who have a story to share.

[White cooper worker Hans Reifler](#)

[White cooper worker Mösli, Gais](#)

[Hammered dulcimer builder Werner Alder \(offspring of the well-known string music dynasty Alder\)](#)

[Bell smith Peter Preisig](#)

[Silver smith Wenk, Speicher](#)

Appenzell Style Costumes

The traditional costumes of Appenzell are artfully presented. With yellow knee breeches, red breast cloth, white shirt, dairyman's rags, studded suspenders, white knee socks, a black hat decorated with flowers and ribbons and dairyman's ornaments, the dairyman appears on the alpine journey. A "Spitzli embroidery" the size of a two-franc piece on the white collar of the women's costume takes seven hours to make by hand. The yellow pants of the dairyman's costume are dyed with a secret, home-made color mixture.

[Costumes Association Appenzell Ausserrhoden](#)

[Images of costumes](#)

Appenzell Museum of Customs

The focus of the Appenzell Museum of Customs in Urnäsch is on the traditions and customs of the Appenzellerland. The museum offers visitors insights into the most important customs of the region, for instance the Silvesterchlausen, the Bloch, the Alpine Drive or the string music. Moreover, a tour of the museum provides intimate insights into the life on the alme, the farmers' living rooms, the world of costumes, traditional workshops and folkloric art.

museum-urnaesch.ch

Main Events 2024

Silvesterchlausen (Old New Year's Eve)	Appenzeller Hinterland	www.appenzellerland.ch	13.01.2024
Urnäscher Goofebloch	Urnäsch	www.appenzellerland.ch	10.02.2024
Urnäscher Bloch	Urnäsch	www.appenzellerland.ch	12.02.2024
Funkensonntag	Various villages	www.appenzellerland.ch	18.02.2024
Buebebloch	Appenzeller Hinterland	www.appenzellerland.ch	19.02.2024
Herisauer Bloch	Herisau	www.appenzellerland.ch	19.02.2024
Gidio Hosestoss	Herisau and Waldstatt	www.appenzellerland.ch	14.02.2024
String Music Day	Urnäsch	www.strichmusigtag.ch	27.04.2024
Heiden Festival	Heiden	www.heidens-festival.ch	24.-26.05.2024
Appenzeller Kantonalschwingfest	Hundwil	www.hundwil2024.ch	6.-7.07.2024
Alpine Ball Passhöhe	Schwägalp		29.07.2024
Potersalp Stobete	Potersalp		20.07.2024

Passhöhe Stobete	Schwägalp		03.08.2024
Schwägalp Schwinget	Schwägalp	www.schwaegalp-schwinget.ch	18.08.2024
High Alme Stobete	Hochalp, Urnäsch		25.08.2024
Farmers' Music Meeting	Schwellbrunn		25.08.2024
Alpine Down Drive and Farmers Market	Urnäsch	www.appenzellerland.ch	14.09.2024
Cattle shows	Various villages	www.appenzellerland.ch	Mid September to mid October
Silvesterchlausen (New New Year's Day)	Appenzeller Hinterland/ Mittelland	www.appenzellerland.ch	31.12.2024

For more information please contact:

Appenzellerland Tourism Office AR

Jolanda Spengler

St. Gallerstrasse 49

CH-9100 Herisau

Tel +41 71 898 33 31

appenzellerland.ch

jolanda.spengler@appenzellerland.ch

Information on Available Events in the Canton of Appenzell Innerrhoden (Interior Land):

Appenzellerland Tourism Office AI

appenzell.ch