

Ep40 Swiss drinks

[00:00:00] Are you dreaming of visiting Switzerland? Planning a trip to Switzerland is very exciting, but it can also be overwhelming. How do you choose which of the many scenic cities, towns, and villages to visit? Which mountain top excursions should you take? And what's the best way to get around Switzerland? And of course, how much of the country can you realistically see within your timeframe?

[00:00:29] If you've asked yourself any of these questions, this is the podcast for you. This is the Holidays to Switzerland Travel Podcast and in each episode, your host, Carolyn Schonafinger chats with Swiss travel experts to answer your most commonly asked questions, provide practical tips and take you on a virtual visit to the most popular destinations - and of course, some hidden gems, to help you plan your dream trip to Switzerland. And you'll hear plenty of conversations about Swiss cheese and chocolate too.

[00:01:00] Are you ready to plan your trip to Switzerland? Well let's get started?

[00:01:05] **Carolyn:** Gruezi, welcome to the Holidays to Switzerland Travel Podcast. This is episode 40. Today

[00:01:12] I'm welcoming back Andie Pilot from Helvetickitchen.com. Andie is a pastry chef and cookbook author, and she was a special guest on episode 31 of the podcast. In that episode, Andie shared her knowledge of Swiss cuisine and told us all the must try dishes to order when we're visiting Switzerland. She had some fascinating stories to tell about the history of the different dishes, including fondue and raclette as well as some very delicious desserts to try.

[00:01:44] I had such great feedback about what Andie had to share with us, that I invited her back to talk about another topic she knows quite a lot about - Swiss drinks and yes, she has published a book about Swiss drinks too! Swiss wine and beer are rarely seen outside of Switzerland and Andy is going to tell us why that is.

[00:02:06] She's also got some great tips on where to see wine, beer, and spirits being produced and where you can go to try these drinks yourself. I can't think of anything better than enjoying a glass of Swiss wine at the top of a mountain summit whilst enjoying the peace and quiet around me. If you need quiet, please, you need Switzerland.

[00:02:31] Before I welcome Andie, I'd like to say a huge thank you to Switzerland Tourism, sponsors of the podcast, the Switzerland Tourism website, myschitzerland.com is packed full of information about traveling in Switzerland, so be sure to check it out.

[00:02:48] Hi, Andie.. Welcome back to the podcast.

[00:02:51] **Andie:** Thank you. Thank you so much for having

[00:02:52] me back. .

[00:02:53] **Carolyn:** Now for those listeners who haven't yet listened to the last episode that you were on, would you like to just give us a little bit of a brief background of how you came to be living in Switzerland?

[00:03:05] **Andie:** Of course.

[00:03:05] Yeah. Um, so I was born and raised in Canada, but my mom is Swiss. I spent a lot of my childhood summers visiting my grandparents in Switzerland, and later I trained to be a pastry chef in Canada and came to Switzerland to get some work experience. I ended up meeting my husband and 10 years later, I'm still here.

[00:03:29] And now I write about uh, Swiss food and drinks and develop recipes, write cookbooks. And yeah, it's my favorite thing talking about Swiss food and drink and eating and drinking all of that great food.

[00:03:43] **Carolyn:** Yeah. Well, I can see why, what a, what a great way to be able to combine your passion with your career and with something so delicious as well.

[00:03:54] Now you mentioned that you're a pastry chef and you are obviously a very good cook because you've already published two books on Swiss food, but you've also published a book called Drink like the Swiss. So I'm guessing that Swiss drinks are probably a favorite topic of yours.

[00:04:13] **Andie:** Oh, absolutely. And I have to say, uh, for me researching the Drink like the Swiss book was definitely some of the most interesting, uh, interesting stuff that I've researched and that I learned about.

[00:04:28] And, um, how so many of the drinks are folded into the culture here in Switzerland? It's really a fascinating topic. And one that I, uh, hope more people get interested in and love to talk about it. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:04:41] **Carolyn:** Okay. So yeah, I'd love to hear some about some of those traditions, um, as also, um, to hear about the wine and the beer in the spirits.

[00:04:52] Um, as well as I think there might be some other drinks that are quite unique to Switzerland. So how about we start with wine and, uh, what, what have you got to tell us about Swiss

[00:05:04] wine?

[00:05:05] **Andie:** Absolutely. Yeah. Wine is really interesting because Swiss wine is excellent, but it's not really well-known outside of Switzerland at all.

[00:05:15] And the reason is because only about 2% of the wine that's produced in Switzerland is, is exported outside of Switzerland. And most of it just goes to Germany across the border. Um, and really what the Swiss are doing is hoarding their wine, keeping it for themselves to drink because it's really, really delicious.

[00:05:33] Um, And the most popular red grape variety here in Switzerland is Pinot Noir, uh, in the German part, it's sometimes called Blauburgunder. And that's what, what Swiss are drinking when, when it comes to a red wine in Switzerland, that is usually a peppery, a fruity, a red wine, and it's produced in many different parts of the country, especially in the Valais.

[00:06:00] Uh, as for white wine, the grapes that is, is the most popular is Chasselas and this is also called Fendant, confusingly in Switzerland. Um, many of the grape varieties have different names depending on the region. So it can be a little bit, uh, confusing. Um, but this Chasselas Fendant is what you are typically having if you have fondue or other, other cheesy, uh, Swiss dishes.

[00:06:26] And this is Switzerland's favorite white wine. Um, in Ticino, of course, the Italian part what's known as also big wine producers and there you're drinking merlot uh, if you go to a grotto in Ticino, you have a cute little ceramic mug called the boccolino, and that's how your wine will be served to you.

[00:06:46] And, uh, another of the most popular grapes grown here in Switzerland is Gamay and in the Valais in Switzerland, that is a blended with pinot noir and you get another popular wine called Dole. That's a nice red, uh,

very aromatic. It's very different depending on the producer, but that's always a good choice when you're here.

[00:07:12] Um, so those are really the big wines that you're going to see when you come to Switzerland, what the Swiss people are drinking themselves. And of course, what's really interesting, there are also some lesser known grape varieties that are indigenous to Switzerland, or that maybe come from nearby countries, but are produced right now, uniquely in Switzerland.

[00:07:31] And you find lots of these in the Valais, which is the biggest wine producing region in the country. Um, there are whites like or Petit Arvine those are worth, uh, searching out. They also pair excellently with all of Switzerland's wonderful cheese dishes and there's reds. Some of the big names are Cornalin or Humagne Rouge.

[00:07:54] Uh, those are also from the Valais and yeah, these are some grapes, if you're in the region, definitely give them a try. They are a wonderful whites and reds.

[00:08:04] **Carolyn:** Okay. So the, the pinot noir and the chasselas, which you said are the two most popular, I guess they would be available in restaurants right across the country.

[00:08:14] Whereas some of the other, other less than on ones are only available when you're in that particular region where they're made?

[00:08:23] Typically.

[00:08:24] **Andie:** Yeah. Yeah. I mean, there are big producers in the Valais who are making things like Petit Arvine, so you can buy those throughout the country. But yeah, you'll definitely find chasselas everywhere.

[00:08:34] You'll find the Pinot noir. Uh, yeah, probably in most restaurants throughout the country.

[00:08:39] Yeah.

[00:08:40] **Carolyn:** Okay. And if, if someone is, is for instance, staying in an apartment and they want to buy a bottle of wine to have with their dinner, that they're cooking in their apartment, where, where do they buy that?

[00:08:52] I mean, I know in Australia we just can go to the supermarket and buy wine, but that's not, um, hasn't been a thing in Switzerland. Has it, or, or is that about to change?

[00:09:03] **Andie:** Uh, well, it just depends on the supermarket you go to actually. So, um, Switzerland has two main supermarket chains, one being the Migros and the other, the Coop, uh, the Migros historically, um, doesn't sell any alcohol.

[00:09:20] Um, it is potentially about to change in the next few years, but, uh, yeah, and that was because their founder. Uh, sort of made a mandate that he didn't want to support the sale of, of alcohol and cigarettes. And since its founding in the early part of the 20th century, they have never sold it and sort of, yeah.

[00:09:40] I mean, Swiss people have accepted that, and it's fine. Uh, but if they want to buy wine at a supermarket, then you would probably go to the Coop, um, or even the Denner which is another big Swiss, uh, chain store that is owned by the Migros. And that's kind of where they, they sell the wine. Um, You can definitely buy it there.

[00:10:00] And, uh, of course, if you're in a wine region, you'll have a better selection. Even at the, at the Coop or the big supermarket, they'll sell some of the regional wine there. And, uh, yeah, but you should be able to find it. And the price point is very low. You can find great wines for around 10 francs. Yeah, it's one of the things that's not so expensive when you, uh, when you come to Switzerland, your bottled water is costing you four francs, but a good, an okay

[00:10:27] bottle of wine is costing you 10. So it is better to drink wine than water. Maybe.

[00:10:32] **Carolyn:** Interesting, I guess, because Switzerland is such a mountainous country, uh, grapes, aren't grown everywhere. So are there, are there particular regions where, where wine is grown?

[00:10:44] **Andie:** There are six distinct,

[00:10:46] uh, wine-making regions in Switzerland.

[00:10:49] Um, they are the Valais in the south, Vaud, uh, Geneva, Ticino the Italian part. Um, then there is the Three Lake Region which includes, uh,

Fribourg, Neuchatel and parts of, of Bern. And basically they lumped the rest of German speaking Switzerland together. And that will be Schaffhausen, Thurgau have big wine producing parts, parts of Canton Zurich, and Graubunden has a, as a big wine producing section near Maienfeld sort of before you get up into the really mountainous part.

[00:11:24] Um, yeah. And in all of these places you can find wineries to visit. There are usually beautiful, beautiful, hikes and trails throughout the vineyards. Um, the most famous one is probably the region of Lavaux along lake Geneva. Uh, there you even have a Panorama train, you can take through the vineyards. You can take a ride on a boat on the lake and see the vineyards is just so beautiful.

[00:11:52] The terraces along there, and you can try wine at many parts there. And there's lots of independent tour companies who will take you through the vineyards there. And I recommend that a lot in, in Switzerland too. Maybe if you're really interested in wine, really interested in visiting a wine region, it is worthwhile seeking out a tour because it's just a lot smaller than maybe what people are used to in other countries with big, uh, wine, wine production.

[00:12:19] And, uh, sometimes. The very small wineries are closed or, you know, they're only open at certain times of day and a tour will help you avoid disappointment. If there are places you really want to visit and then why do you really want it to. Hmm.

[00:12:33] **Carolyn:** Okay. So, uh, if, if you're traveling independently and you want to just go and taste some wine from a local winery, uh, they mainly only open on, on weekends, or is it something that you can do fairly easily or you really need to plan that in advance?

[00:12:53] **Andie:** I would say plan a little bit to avoid disappointment, for sure. Like we have also been hiking in a region and wanting to try wine and then yeah, the winery is just closed or, um, you know, sometimes they also go on holiday for a whole month or something. So it's just a good idea. Maybe to look at the routes, see the wineries on the way, and just have a quick look on their website to see if any closures are mentioned.

[00:13:17] Um, but surely the regions where the, the. The wine is produced. All the vineyards. It's so beautiful to walk through there. You're always near a small

town. So maybe even if the winery is closed, you can sample the wine and in the small town that you walk through or things like that, pick up a bottle.

[00:13:35] **Carolyn:** I know that the Lavaux vineyards that you mentioned, that's, I've seen them from the water and from the road, or, you know, the main highway, but I'm really desperate to go

[00:13:45] and actually take that little train through the vineyards and, and see them there. Actually, a, a UNESCO world heritage site, aren't they? Which is amazing.

[00:13:54] **Andie:** Yeah, it's

[00:13:55] incredible. It's beautiful. I even know a woman who hosts, um, biking tours through, through the vineyards there too. And yeah, it's really, really a lovely region.

[00:14:06] **Carolyn:** Um, oh, that would be nice. Okay. Now we've, we've covered a bit of about wine. What about, um, distilleries? So I think there's some, um, plenty of spirits being produced in Switzerland.

[00:14:19] **Andie:** Absolutely. Yes. Um, of course probably the most famous Swiss spirit. I'm one that maybe people don't know originates in Switzerland is, um, Absinthe.

[00:14:29] And this comes from the Canton of Neuchatel, particularly in a little valley called the Val-de-Travers . And, uh, like in most parts of the world, it was banned for much of the 20th century and they just started producing it again, sort of at the turn, into the 21st century. And this region is really wonderful. If you're interested in Absinthe, if you want to hear about the history of the spirit and they have a great museum, um, in the town of , uh, it's all about the history of the green fairy as this drink is known.

[00:15:06] Um, It was banned in many parts of the world, of course, also in this place where it originated. But, uh, during the time that it was banned, the people who lived in this valley continued to make it. And there was a huge black market for Absinthe. And, um, in the museum, they do a really great job of showing the people who sort of kept it alive over, uh, over all these decades and who made it on the sly and who smuggled bottles of it.

[00:15:37] And they have all these firsthand accounts of people talking about the stills that they were hiding in their house and trying to avoid the police when they came to give them fines or came to destroy the stills. Um, and that, that makes that museum really, really excellent. And of course they have like a nice absinthe bar at the bottom.

[00:15:54] You can have a snack, they make lots of great desserts. Uh, with absinthe. Last time we were there, we had like a souffle with absinthe, which was just excellent. And you can try all the different kinds. Um, and there are great hiking paths in the region as well. You can hike around, uh, the Val de Travers where you can go from little town to little town and go to different distilleries.

[00:16:19] And, um, yeah, that's a really great, uh, tourist destination if you're interested in absinthe. As for other, uh, spirits that are being produced in Switzerland, Swiss farmers kind of make spirits out of every possible fruit on the farm. Um, as well as things like potatoes and hay in the mountains, they're making spirits from alpine herbs.

[00:16:41] You can even buy spirits made from Edelweiss. Uh, of course Switzerland's most famous flower and that is really regional. So in the Valais, of course they have many apricots which are beloved throughout Switzerland and they make a really wonderful apricots spirit. Um, they make spirits out of plums and, and kirsch, I guess most people associate with Switzerland as well.

[00:17:05] Um, Surely for the famous Zuger Kirschtorte, that's like a cake that's doused in, in lots of kirsch, which is their cherry spirit. Um, and you also often put a little bit of kirsch in cheese fondue. Um,

[00:17:19] **Carolyn:** Tell me about the, um, spirit made with hay. That sounds fascinating.

[00:17:26] **Andie:** Yeah. Um, they make it with fresh hay. It is from. I'm trying to think it's a hotel in, uh, oh, I wish I remembered the name.

[00:17:40] I think it's just called Heuschnapps.. Heu is the German word for hay. And, uh, that has a great story with it. They found the recipe in this old hotel somewhere in Canton Bern, but I can't remember the town. And, um, yeah, they found this recipe for distilling and flavoring the spirit with. And then yeah, they have this really great drink.

[00:18:04] I think it's just called . I'll have to look that up and, and let you know after, but yeah, that's a really good one. And yeah, that Edelweiss too, I think is so Swiss, you know, to have.

[00:18:15] **Carolyn:** You mentioned that we can go and visit the absinthe museum and do some tastings and so on there. What about with, um, with other spirits?

[00:18:22] Cause I know you mentioned, um, schnapps with the, all the fruit, uh, flavored spirits they're readily available at, at restaurants, um, uh, after, after you've eaten. But can you go, um, to, to any of the farms and see the farmers making them or, or have a taste?

[00:18:41] **Andie:** Yeah. So

[00:18:42] there's lots of distilleries who are turning the fruit into spirits.

[00:18:49] They have usually a great showrooms. They have shops attached to distilleries. Lots of them do tours on request. Um, my sister-in-law actually works for a distillery that's nearby in our region. Distillery Studer. And they, they make all the different kinds of fruits schnapps, and you can visit their showroom.

[00:19:09] They, they will, you can do tastings of all the, all the different spirits that they produce. Um, I think if you're more interested, because of course they're not always producing every day, unless they're one of the really big distilleries. Um, but most of them, I think you could contact them and ask them for a tour, ask them to take you around and see what exactly, uh, they're making them they're doing.

[00:19:33] And they're definitely give you tastings and usually have, um, beautiful displays of the history of, uh, of the company and the district. And I can mention one, uh, the Turicum Gin is produced in Zurich and there they have, uh, workshops where you can create your own gin. Um, so if you're in Zurich and you're interested in seeing how gin is made in creating sort of your own take on it, then that's the place to go.

[00:20:02] **Carolyn:** Hmm. Okay. All right. So what about beer for the beer lovers that are listening? I think there's quite a, um, an ever growing craft beer scene in, in, in Switzerland.

[00:20:14] **Andie:** Yeah. Um, beer is really interesting. That's one of my favorite topics and one of my favorite things to drink. Uh, I'll tell you a little bit about the history first

[00:20:24] cause I find it quite interesting. Um, so Switzerland, like many of the countries that surround it, like Germany, had a big brewing culture, um. In the year 1890. Switzerland had about 500 domestic breweries, but by the year, 1998, there were only 24 in the whole country. So what happened during the century there?

[00:20:47] Um, it goes back to the Swiss association of brewers, which was founded in 1887 and, uh, they sort of controlled the entire beer market for much of the 20th century after the first world war. Um, when the stock market collapsed, they lobbied for high tax on imported beer. So no imported beer was really getting into Switzerland and they kind of worked as a cartel.

[00:21:14] They controlled everything. From beer distribution, the size of bottles, the ingredients used and all the different businesses that depended on selling beer, like restaurants, hotels, shops, supermarkets, they were forced into exclusive contracts with the breweries owned by this, uh, cartel. Initially this was meant to protect Swiss beer.

[00:21:39] Um, but then it sort of backfired when there was no competition. The beer really suffered and got bad. And then in the 1990s, the cartel collapsed and then the market was just flooded with foreign beers and consumers finally had a choice and bought these more innovative beers out from outside of Switzerland.

[00:22:00] Um, ironically, almost all of the cartel breweries, um, were bought by foreign companies. Like Heineken and Carlsberg. So all of your big sort of seemingly historic Swiss brands like Felschlösschen and Calanda and Eichhof, they're all owned by huge international conglomerates. But fortunately, uh, lots of microbreweries sort of popped up in the meantime, uh, sort of at the beginning of the two thousands, this was, I mean the whole beer world was seeing a trend in craft beer, having all these microbreweries, making a lot of old, uh, beers, really good beers.

[00:22:41] And today Switzerland actually has the highest number of breweries to person, to citizen. And there are a thousand different breweries in the country.

[00:22:51] **Carolyn:** It would take a while to get around and taste a beer from each of those

[00:22:57] then.

[00:22:57] **Andie:** Absolutely. Yeah. And I mean, Swiss craft beer, it's still a really small part of the market.

[00:23:03] These big, big companies, um, still dominate. But, uh, my recommendation is always to, to see if you can find a regional beer, a local beer, and, uh, try that one out while you're here because they're really excellent ones.

[00:23:15] **Carolyn:** So what about other other drinks that are unique to Switzerland or produced in Switzerland?

[00:23:22] **Andie:** The Swiss

[00:23:23] drink a lot of Most, which is like apple juice, apple cider. This is really popular, especially in the fall once the apple harvest has happened. Um, there is an apple cider museum you can visit in Arbon. This is in Northern Switzerland, on Lake Constance, and it has a wonderful history of sort of apple juice and cider production, um, in Switzerland.

[00:23:48] Um, this is really popular and actually also goes back to some government initiatives. Uh, sort of in the middle of the 20th century when they were encouraging farmers, uh, not to make alcoholic beverages, uh, out of their apples. So they were asking them to make what's known here as Süssmost or like sweet apple juice and sell this to people.

[00:24:08] And they were encouraging Swiss people to, to drink non alcoholic drinks to drink this, this Most, this apple juice, rather than drinking um, Uh, yeah spirits, which would otherwise have been produced, um, possibly from the apples. Um, and. Yeah, but it's a little bit different sort of than the apple juice I know I was used to drinking in Canada as a child, which was just only sweet.

[00:24:38] Um, it's really delicious. It's often very tart and sour and, um, you can also get a Schörli, which is a drink where the apple juice is just mixed with, with sparkling water. And so it's like carbonated apple juice, which is really excellent. I remember that was one of my favorite drinks, uh, when I was a child visiting Switzerland.

[00:24:55] Um, so that's one popular. And you can actually also get a beer that's mixed with, with apple and pear juice called a Bschörli, that's from one of the big beer producers Appenzeller Bier. Um, and that's when, yeah, those two things are mixed. Uh, one of the other unique drinks to Switzerland, their most famous soda. I think I mentioned it in the last episode as well is Rivella.

[00:25:20] Um, this is made with whey, which is a byproduct byproduct of cheese production. Of course, it seems fitting that this milk, that their soft drink is like milky. Uh, um, and on average, the Swiss drink about 10 liters of Rivella per person per year, which is quite a lot. Um, it's definitely worth tasting a taste of, I don't know how to describe, it a little bit like ginger ale sort of, but um, people have told me it's really a, a love or hate kind of, kind of tastes.

[00:25:51] You can find that at all your supermarkets, so you should, um, check it out.

[00:25:56] **Carolyn:** Oh, I've never tasted it, but I have to say just, I don't know, the sound of it kind of puts me off thinking of milk and a soft drink combined. It, it doesn't sound right, but if you say it's a bit ginger-beerish, well, maybe I'll taste it next time.

[00:26:12] **Andie:** Yeah. Yeah. It's definitely worth the taste and maybe it will surprise you with, with what it's like

[00:26:17] **Carolyn:** If so many Swiss drink it, it must be

[00:26:20] OK.

[00:26:20] **Andie:** Yeah. Yeah, that's true. That's true. Um, another drink that they really love, which might be surprising is, uh, ice tea strangely, and they are the largest consumers of ice tea in Europe and they drink around 30 liters per person per year.

[00:26:39] And comparing that to the next highest European drinkers of, of ice tea who are the Belgium, Belgians. They only consume about 10 liters per person per year. And I think some of that comes from, uh, the Migros who have their own brand ice tea that they made in the seventies, which has sort of become like a cult product.

[00:26:59] It's in blue bottles. You just go to a Migros supermarket and you see all these blue bottles that say ice tea on them. And that, yeah, people all over the

country just always drink this. I always also remember it as a child drinking it in Switzerland. Um, and now they make a whole bunch of different flavors of it.

[00:27:16] There's like green tea and alpine herbs and rhubarb and, and, um, peach. Uh, but yeah, that's another one of the really popular drinks in Switzerland. Maybe something to try, uh, in the summer to see if you like it.

[00:27:31] **Carolyn:** Yeah. Okay. Well, a couple of, um, fairly quirky sort of drinks there. Now you mentioned earlier about when you were researching for your book, some of all the history and the traditions of, of the drinking culture in Switzerland, uh, fascinated you.

[00:27:47] So have you got any particular facts or things that you think are really interesting and worth sharing with us?

[00:27:55] **Andie:** Yeah, absolutely. Um, I'd love to tell you about, uh, one of my favorite liquers, which is made in the Canton of Graubunden, uh, it's called Röteli and it's made with dried cherries and spices, and they've been making it there since about the 19th century.

[00:28:13] Um, it's traditional to drink this drink on New Year's Eve. Um, in the olden days, uh, bachelors would go from farmhouse to farmhouse on New Year's Eve and they would visit unmarried farmer's daughters. And at each farm, they would sample a glass of Röteli that the single women, sort of under the watchful eyes of their moms, uh, had made to, to serve to the bachelors who were coming.

[00:28:39] And, uh, yeah, they kind of saw this drink as, as a love potion. And sometimes the, the visits would result in marriage proposals, um, and humorously, sort of the further back in the valley, the bachelors went, the drunker they got, and then the better looking, more appealing the daughters became, which kind of gave an advantage

[00:29:01] if you lived way back in the valley. By the time they got there, uh, everyone was feeling pretty friendly. Uh, yeah. So I, it's just sort of stories like this, um, that I discovered, uh, during the research that, uh, yeah, it was, yeah. So interesting.

[00:29:19] **Carolyn:** So, what are your favorite of each of each of the drinks that we've talked about?

[00:29:23] So if you had to choose one wine, one spirit, and one beer that you would recommend that any visitor tries, which ones would they be?

[00:29:34] **Andie:** What a great question. Um, so I think for a wine, I really liked the, the wine Petite Arvine. This is, uh, Uh, one of the indigenous ones to the Valais, the region in the south of Switzerland.

[00:29:50] And it's just a really nice, crisp, a little bit sweet, a white wine, and it's lovely paired with, with most cheese dishes. I like to serve that also with fondue, um, when it's not too, too sweet and, uh, Yeah, that for me is one of my favorite wines to drink here. Also, if we have a little Aperol, little cocktail party, I like to serve to serve that.

[00:30:17] Um, for beer, I have to mention my favorite brewery in Switzerland is the Brasserie de Franches Montagnes, that's for anyone who's interested in sour beers. Um, they've been making sour beers here in Switzerland. They're sort of the, the grandfathers of, of craft beer in Switzerland. They've been making beer since 1990.

[00:30:37] And, uh, their beer was once voted by the New York times, the best beer in the world, one of the famous sours that they make. And, uh, yeah, all of their beers are really interesting. They make some using, uh, different ingredients like lapsang souchong tea and, and one year they made beer with gummy bears. Um, and, uh, yeah, they're usually barrel aged and really excellent.

[00:31:04] And if you want a more, um, sort of, uh, commercially friendly beer or something, the beers from White Frontier, which is a brewery, um, that's in the Valais. These are where you get your, your IPA's and sort of lots of different craft beers. So that's another one. You can buy them at the Coop as well. And, uh, that would be another, another choice sort of for easy drinking, uh, the brewery White Frontier. And for spirits, um, Yeah, I just love all of the, the fruit schnapps.

[00:31:39] I think they don't get quite enough love, um, in Switzerland or abroad. Um, right now there's, there's was sort of a trend, you know, towards gins and different rums and vodkas, all these kinds of drinks. Um, but the, the Swiss fruit spirits like apricots, uh, Plum, cherry. It's such a nice thing to have at the end of a meal, sort of a little shot of that.

[00:32:04] And, um, you can use them really easily in, in your mixed drinks as well, which I, I write about in my book, sort of, uh, replacing maybe where you would put vodka or different, uh, schnapps in a, in a drink. Putting these, these fruit ones there instead. So really that my other favorite thing yeah, is to end a meal with, with a little bit of Apricotine, or, or a, or a kirsch at the end.

[00:32:30] **Carolyn:** Mm.

[00:32:31] Good idea. So what about festivals? Um, I guess there, there's probably festivals held at the time of, um, the, the harvest for the wine, but are there beer festivals as well?

[00:32:44] **Andie:** Yeah. Some of the biggest ones, uh, of course, yeah, there's huge number of wine festivals *Fete de Vendanges* throughout the, uh, the French speaking part, uh, of Switzerland in the fall.

[00:32:59] And, uh, there are smaller beer festivals. There's lots of craft beer festivals at the moment. You can just have a look and find them, um, in, in most of the big cities they have some craft beer festivals where lots of these microbreweries, uh, come. And my favorite festival of the year is a sour beer festival that is held at this, um, Brasserie de Franches Montagnes, brewery.

[00:33:27] And they have really great breweries from all over and even the north America, uh, coming there to show off their beers, some of the biggest sour beer producers in the world, like Cantillon and Loverbeer and places like this. They go to this tiny little town in the Jura in Switzerland and everybody drinks a lot of beer.

[00:33:46] It's really wonderful.

[00:33:49] **Carolyn:** Great. So what about etiquette when you're sharing, if you're having a meal or you're sharing a drink with someone in a restaurant or at a bar, what's the etiquette when it comes to drinking?

[00:34:01] **Andie:** Yeah. That's a really good point. Um, in Switzerland it's really important, uh, that everyone at the table has their wine and cheers.

[00:34:12] Cheers-es before any wine is consumed. It's a huge faux pas if you drink from your glass before you've cheered um, and also when you're cheersing, it's expected that you're looking directly in the eyes of the person you're cheersing and saying their name. Um, so this of course leads to a lot of,

uh, It can lead to, um, moments at parties where you've maybe forgotten the names of all the people that you've met and you're struggling a little bit.

[00:34:44] Um, but yeah, and, and of course, Cheers, in German Prost or, or Sante and French.

[00:34:51] **Carolyn:** Um,

[00:34:52] that would be quite funny if you're at a table with 10 people and everyone had to cheers and say every person's name, it could take awhile. You might be quite thirsty by the time you actually got to sip

[00:35:04] your drink.

[00:35:05] **Andie:** Oh, absolutely.

[00:35:06] Yes. With my in-laws at Christmas and things like that, people are up there walking around the table, their cheersing and it's quite a production. Yeah.

[00:35:15] **Carolyn:** It sounds like fun. Well, thank you, Andie, for sharing all that, uh, really interesting information with us now, where can people buy not only your book Drink like the Swiss, but your other books?

[00:35:28] **Andie:** Yeah. Um, I mean, if you're in Switzerland, they're available in most, in most shops here in the English section or the Swiss interest section. Um, you can also get them online directly from the publisher Bergli or they're available on the Book Depository or Amazon. And from most online booksellers and yeah.

[00:35:50] **Carolyn:** Wonderful. Well, I'll link to all those websites that you've mentioned as well as your own website, Helvetic Kitchen, uh, in the show notes for this episode. And I'll also include a list of, um, the different wine and beer and spirit varieties that you've mentioned and some of the different breweries and the different places so that people, if they're interested, can, can go and

[00:36:13] look them up and plan a visit to them while they're in Switzerland.

[00:36:17] **Andie:** Super. Yeah. Thanks again for having me also, it's been wonderful to, uh, to talk a little bit about Swiss drinks.

[00:36:23] **Carolyn:** Thank you again.

[00:36:26] There's certainly a lot to discover, enter taste. When it comes to Swiss drinks, I never would have imagined the Swiss to be Europe's largest consumers of ice.

[00:36:37] If you missed hearing Andie chat about Swiss cuisine, make sure you listen to episode 31 of the podcast. It's an episode you don't want to miss. As I mentioned, I'll include links to the local producers that Andie talked about in the show notes. So you can include a visit when you're in Switzerland. You can find those show notes at holidaystoswitzerland.com/episode40.

[00:37:02] A couple of other interesting places to visit include the smallest winery in Europe, which is owned by none other than the Dalai Lama. The winery is located in Saillon in the Valais region and all proceeds from the wine sales go towards helping disadvantaged people. The history of the winery is linked with the Swiss version of Robin Hood, Farinet, and the vines, of which there are only three, produce pinot noir and chasselas.

[00:37:32] There's an interesting trail in Saillon, which features a series of stained glass windows depicting Farinet's philosophy of life and leads up to the winery. So that's something definitely to check out.

[00:37:46] Beer lovers should visit Switzerland's oldest brewery, the Brauerie Schutzengarten in St. Gallen. It opened back in 1779, and it's still operating at its original site. Tours of the factory are available, although they are mostly in German.

[00:38:04] And there's an interesting beer bottle museum where you can see more than 3000 beer bottles from 260 different Swiss breweries.

[00:38:13] You can also visit Switzerland's highest brewery, bierVision Monstein at Monstein in the Canton of Graubunden. Located at 1,625 meters above sea level, the brewery calls itself the last beer stop before heaven and it produces around 300, ah, 300,000 liters of beer each year.

[00:38:38] Whatever your drink of choice, whether it's alcoholic or non-alcoholic, there are certainly plenty of great options in Switzerland, but please remember to drink responsibly.

[00:38:50] If you have enjoyed this episode, please leave a review on your favorite podcast app. You can also subscribe to the show so you never miss an episode.

[00:38:59] And if you have friends planning a visit to Switzerland, I'd love it if you told them about the podcast. Thank you very much for listening until next time, Tschuss.

[00:39:11] [00:33:25] If you'd like more information from today's episode, you can find the show notes at [holidaystoswitzerland.com/episode 39](http://holidaystoswitzerland.com/episode-39). There are links to the Basel Tourism website, a list of all the places and activities that Natasha has mentioned today, and other useful resources to help you plan your visit to Basel.

[00:33:47] Thanks for joining me today. Next time I'll be back chatting all about Swiss drinks and sharing where you can taste the best wine, beer and spirits in Switzerland. Until then take care. Tschuss!.

[00:34:02] If you'd like more great resources to help you plan your dream trip to Switzerland, there are lots of ways to connect with us.

[00:34:08] Visit our website holidaystoswitzerland.com, sign up for our monthly newsletter or join our friendly, helpful community of past and future travelers in our Switzerland travel planning group. You'll also find the links to connect with us in the show notes for this episode. Show notes and the list of all previous episodes are available at holidaystoswitzerland.com/podcast.

[00:34:32] Don't miss out on your fortnightly dose of Swiss travel inspo. Hit the subscribe button on your favorite podcast app so you never miss an episode. And if you enjoyed the show, please leave a rating. [00:34:44] That's all for this edition of the Holidays to Switzerland Travel Podcast. Thanks for joining us and happy travels.

You can see the full show notes for this episode, get a PDF version of this transcript and listen to the episode [> here](#)