

Luzia's Swiss excursion around Auckland : a Swiss day out in Auckland & Co.

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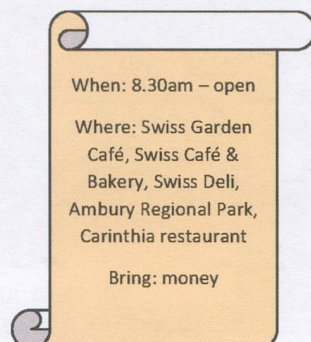
Luzia's Swiss excursion around Auckland

A Swiss Day out in Auckland & Co.

When I was seven, I became a scout in Switzerland. Every week before Saturday I would take a detour on my way home from school to read the 'Anschlag' (notice on pin board) by the old dairy. The 'Anschlag' was a piece of paper, sometimes plain, sometimes crafty, that the leaders pinned onto the wooden board. It always informed about the same three aspects (time, meeting place and things to bring) and ended with colourful drawings of their scout names. Despite the fact that by the third or fourth week as a scout, I realised that the information did not change, I would grab a pencil out of my school bag and diligently copy the words onto scrap paper week after week: Wann: 14.00 bis 17.00 Uhr. Wo: Wisenthalle. Mitbringen: Zvieri, Ztrinke, Sackmesser, Drahtesel. It came almost as a shock when in December, another element came into play: Schlechtwetterprogramm (bad weather programme). Yes, my scout leaders showed mercy on us when they suggested to meet in their parents' well-lit and cosily heated basement on really grey days. During those times, the Bratwurst was swapped for an apple and a piece of bread (sweets were never swapped), and pocket knives stayed at home.

I am 33 now, live in Auckland, and am no longer a member of the scouts. I nevertheless still tingle with excitement at the prospect of packing a sausage, a piece of bread, and my pocket knife for a weekend-day adventure. Yet where do I buy my Cervelat or my Ragusa for exactly these occasions here in New Zealand? The other grey day, I decided to kill two birds with one stone: to plan for an autumn-day 'adventure' (i.e. mostly bad-weather indoor programme)

with proper Swiss snacks. Poor James was the cub, I was the scout leader. The 'Anschlag' that I wrote to him ended disappointingly unromantically:



We started the day, very un-scout-like, driving up to the North Shore to the first destination of the day: The 'Swiss Garden Café' in Takapuna. Unexpectedly, we did not find Swiss breads or pastry, but handcrafted real-fruit ice-cream. Andre, the owner, explained to us that they specialize in Swiss ice cream making. Both the café and the ice cream shops are located next to each other and in fact liaise with each other. While ice-cream felt a little too cold for a breakfast, we decided to enjoy a nice coffee in the courtyard behind the ice cream shop instead. What a great hidden and serene spot!

The next place to stop at was the 'Swiss Café & Bakery' in Milford. Rather than taking the amazing sweets with us on our journey (as we had planned), we could not resist but try them all in the café. We enjoyed delicious Nussgipfel, Berliner, Fruchttörtli, Florentiner and Pflumewähe, along with flat whites in the great company of some lovely Swiss customers. We cannot wait to go back and give all the other treats a go.

Next stop: The 'Swiss Deli' retail shop

in East Tamaki that sells traditional European Delicatessen including truly good Swiss sausages, as well as Bündnerfleisch and Sauerkraut. This is another great place to remember if in need of quality Swiss products!

After our walk in the Ambury Regional Park (great for body and mind), James and I were lucky to find an already lit BBQ in Cornwall Park (yup, my scouting abilities have gone) where we grilled our sausages. Yum! Our final destination was the Austrian restaurant 'Carinthia' in Glendowie. No uniquely Swiss dishes can be ordered there but many Germanic dishes such as Spätzle, Schnitzel and Cordon Bleu. The food and the authentic setting were marvellous. It was in fact so good that we ordered sweets for dessert (despite a very full tummy) which they produced in their own 'Konditorei'.

The adventures of this bad-weather-scout-day revolved around Swiss and European traditional foods and the day was a real success. For a similar experience in other parts of New Zealand I have been informed that you can go to: the bakery 'Arobake' in Aro Valley, Wellington (try the cinnamon stars); 'Stony River Hotel', which does Austrian and Swiss Meals; the Pacific International Hotel Management School in New Plymouth; the Café 'at the Balcony' in Katikati; the 'Café Suisse' in Mt. Maunganui; and the Swiss Bakery 'Ciabatta' in Rotorua. For a great Swiss weekend experience, try the 'Dawson Falls' on Mount Taranaki.

Thank you to everyone who helped contribute to this last article. I wish you wonderful Swiss experiences in New Zealand, with or without Cervelat, with or without Sackmesser.

Liebi Gruess, Luzia

