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Autor: [s.n.]
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Cheesemakers celebrate boom year

Exports of Swiss cheese hit a record high in 2007, with 59,303 tonnes of various makes, including fondue mix, heading abroad.



Round of applause: Emmental is yet again Switzerland's star performer abroad

Imports of cheese also increased, showing that the gradual liberalisation of the European cheese market had led to a clear increase in the exchange of goods, according to the Swiss Cheese Organisation.

A total of 3,235 tonnes more cheese was exported in 2007 than the previous year, a rise of 5.8 per

cent. Emmental AOC was the star performer, shifting 1,291 more tonnes than in 2006.

Other cheeses that did well included Switzerland Swiss, Tête de Moine AOC and Tilsiter. Many specialist semi-hard cheeses were also in demand. Not doing so well however were Gruyère AOC and ready-to-use fondue mix, exports of which dropped by 294 and 266 tonnes respectively.

Cheese exports play an important role in the Swiss dairy but also national economy. More than 40 per cent of milk is turned into cheese, a third of which is exported. The main export market is Italy, followed by Germany, France and the United States.

The origins of cheesemaking are not known, but it is unlikely to be a Swiss invention.

The first historic reference to cheese is about 3,500 years old, in the Old Testament. The ancient Roman historian, Pliny the Elder, wrote in the first century about a cheesemaking tribe living in a region that is now Switzerland.

swissinfo

Glaciers are melting away

Throughout Europe skiing on glacier ski fields is becoming more and more of a problem as the glaciers are shrinking, especially in exposed areas. Austrian authorities took drastic measures as early as in 2004: They covered up parts of their glaciers with a plastic foil. The results are very promising: On the Piztaler Gletscher for example, a six hectare plastic sheet has preserved 1.5 m of snow from melting away.

In Switzerland the same technique is applied to the Gürschen Gletscher up on the Gemsstock (2961 m) in Andermatt. Due to a lack of snow and ice it got very dif-

ficult to prepare the ski ramp from the cable car station down to the ski slope.

Therefore the management of the Andermatt Gotthard Bahnen decided to install 3000 m² of this special foil. The removal of the sheet last September showed a very promising result. The reflection of sunrays on the foil and the modest washout through rain saved 80 % of the snow.

We all know, though, that this cannot be the over all solution. We have to do more to prevent global warming, or we might have to come up with a foil to ski on!

Paul Werthmüller

Walliser Safran-Lauchcrèmesuppe

1-2 Lauch
1 Zwiebel
1 Knoblauchzehe, gepresst
30g Butter
800ml Bouillon
Safran nach Belieben
300ml Rahm
4 Eigelb
2 El Schnittlauch, fein geschnitten
1 Tasse Brotwürfeli, knusprig gebraten

- Den Lauch feinblättrig schneiden.
- Die Zwiebel hacken.
- Beides mit der Knoblauchzehe in der Butter langsam andämpfen.
- Die Bouillon beigegeben und die Suppe etwa 8 Minuten leicht kochen.
- Den Safran dazugeben.
- Rahm und Eigelb verklopfen und unter ständigem Rühren in die heisse Suppe schwingen.
- Fast zum Kochen bringen bis die Suppe schön cremig gebunden ist.
- Mit Salz und Pfeffer würzen und mit Schnittlauch auf den Brotwürfeli anrichten.

En gnete!

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