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Day Trip to Fribourg

Drinking a cup of coffee in a leisurely fashion, admiring the old facades and beautiful fountains, listening to two local languages or gazing from the 74-meter spire of the Cathedral far into the countryside - this is an experience enjoyed in Fribourg (Freiburg).

Fribourg, nestled on a rock promontory, is surrounded on three sides by the Saane River. It is one of the largest medieval towns in Üechtland. Over 200 unique Gothic facades from the 15th century impart incomparable medieval charm to the Old Town.

Ramparts that are over two kilometres long used to protect the city in the past. Remnants of the walls, turrets and bastions are still preserved. Most impressive, however, is the Cathedral of Fribourg with its extraordinarily beautiful stained-glass windows. Construction started in 1283 and continued in several stages. Dedicated to St. Nicholas, it boasts a 74-meter-high tower that offers a fantastic panoramic view.

Another good viewpoint is the Italian-style early Baroque Loreto Chapel. From the Neuveville district (in the Lower Town), a funicular railway takes you up to the pedestrianised area of the Upper Town. Fribourg is a lively university town, with many students from all over the world, making this a cosmopolitan, multi-faceted mini-metropolis. In the narrow alleyways are tightly packed rows of little boutiques, antique shops, student cafés and restaurants, offering local and foreign specialities.

One of the favourite destinations for art-lovers is the "Espace Jean Tinguely et Niki de Saint Phalle", housed in a former tram

depot. More works by the two artists can be found on the Sculpture Trail through the town centre. Modern art is on display in the Fri-Art Gallery. Children will love the Puppet Museum or the highly educational Natural History Museum.

It is worth making an excursion to Hauterive Abbey, a Cistercian abbey founded in 1137, and once a stopping place on the pilgrims' route to Santiago de Compostela.

Accessible town walls

The fortifications of the town of Fribourg were built in the Middle Ages between the 13th and 15th century. Large sections of them have been preserved to this day, which makes them the most significant piece of medieval military architecture in Switzerland. The town's fortifications consist of gates and towers, some of which are linked with walls. This system of walls, which is at least two kilometres long, once served to protect the town against invaders. Today, you can visit the old town walls on your own or on a guided tour.

Between the Latin and Germanic cultures, as well as between the French and German languages, Fribourg builds bridges. Bridges also dominate the urban landscape: no less than 15 span the river Sarine.

Source: myschweiz.ch
Photos Walter Zuber

