

Where frogs eat spaghetti in Switzerland

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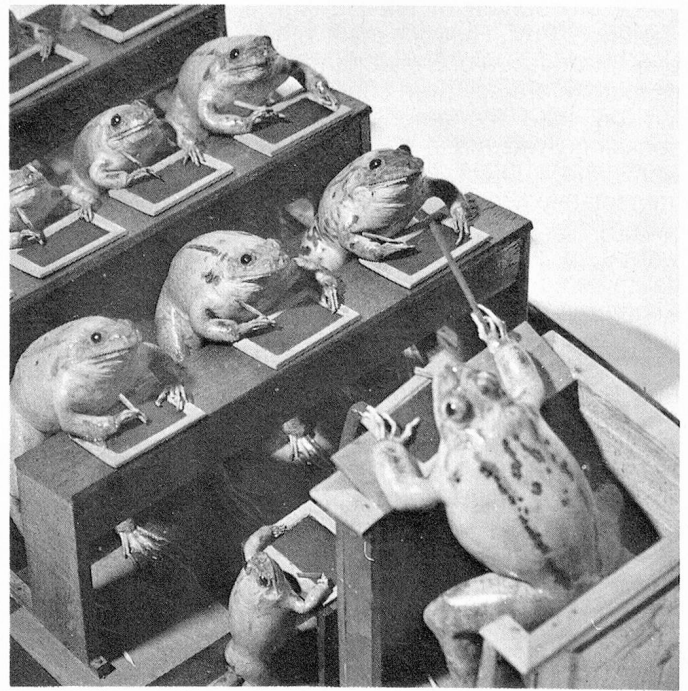
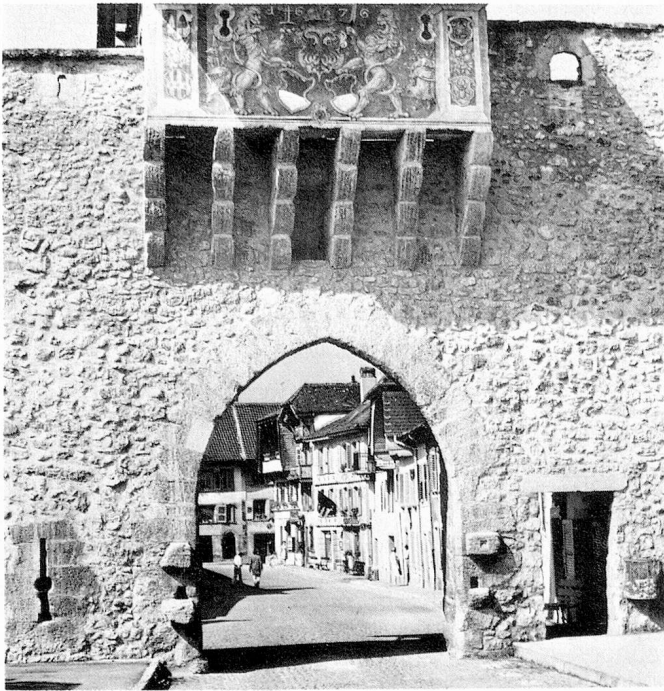
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WHERE FROGS EAT SPAGHETTI IN SWITZERLAND

Did you know there was a country where frogs eat spaghetti? No joke, it's true. And in Switzerland, too. Tourists from Japan, America, India Australia — from all over the world in fact — have seen it, so why not you?

Go to the little town of Estavayer-le-Lac on Lake Neuchâtel in Canton Fribourg, head for the most beautiful Gothic-styled building, and there you will see this world-exclusive spectacle. The building is the local museum so, as you may guess, the frogs are stuffed and in glass cases, and are assembled sometimes playing cards, at the hairdresser's, back in school — or tucking in spaghetti.

The origin of this comical group dates back 120 years, to the time when a citizen and former captain of the Papal Guard, François Perrier, spent his early retirement catching frogs from the nearby lake and

preparing them for his "show". With immense patience he filled their empty skins with sand, lacquered them, gave them dark artificial eyes of porcelain and bestowed his finished product with human expressions and gestures. And finally he assembled them in scenes that caricature human behaviour.

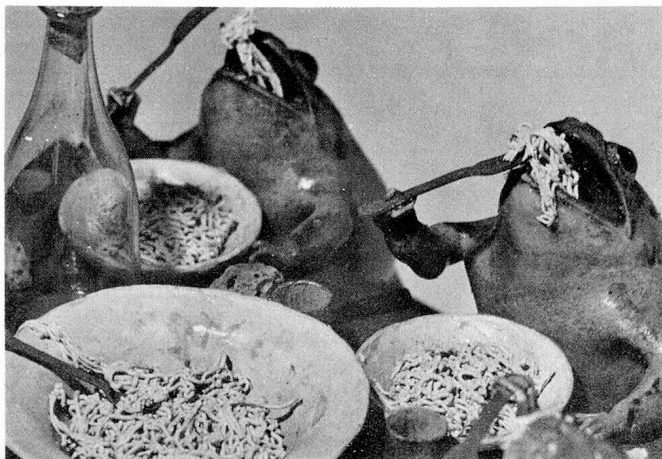
In this museum there are other astonishing curiosities; such as discoveries from lakeside stilt-houses and a splendid collection of train lamps from the Swiss Federal Railways.

A journey to Estavayer-le-Lac, built in the Middle Ages, is alone worth a visit. Chenaux Castle, a fairland sight, can only be viewed from the outside, because today, it is the seat of the local government. The fourteenth century church of Saint-Laurent has opulent Gothic

choir-stalls and an impressive high altar.

The town has managed to preserve most of its encircling defensive walls and its fortified gates — a rarity for Switzerland — and it is worthwhile to saunter through the town's narrow streets and discover small shops and cafés. In summer water-sport enthusiasts take advantage of the lake. Water skiers can, instead of the usual speedboat tow, try the moving cable tow which whisks them round a fixed course.

Part of the shores of Lake Neuchâtel are a nature reserve, and the rich, fertile landscape of the Broye is an open invitation to strollers and hikers alike. The museum is open from April to October from 9–11 a.m. and from 2–5 p.m. (from November to March only until 4 p.m.). It is closed on Mondays.



The Swiss Middle Ages town of Estavayer-le-Lac is the home of this strange, world exclusive spectacle of frogs attending school or enjoying a spaghetti supper, or playing dominoes. Picture story — SNT0