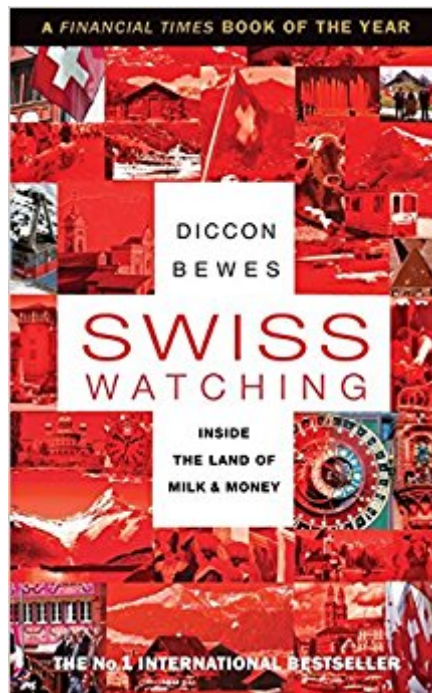




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Swiss Watching: Inside The Land Of Milk And Money



Synopsis

A FINANCIAL TIMES BOOK OF THE YEAR One country, four languages, 26 cantons, and 7.5 million people (but only 80% of them Swiss): there's nowhere else in Europe like it. Switzerland may be almost 400 km from the nearest drop of seawater, but it is an island at the centre of Europe. Welcome to the landlocked island. Swiss Watching is a fascinating journey around Europe's most individual and misunderstood country. From seeking Heidi and finding the best chocolate to reliving a bloody past and exploring an uncertain future, Diccon Bewes proves that there's more to Switzerland than banks and skis, francs and cheese. This book dispels the myths and unravels the true meaning of Swissness. In a land of cultural contradictions, this is a picture of the real and normally unseen Switzerland, a place where the breathtaking scenery shaped a nation not just a tour itinerary, and where tradition is as important as innovation. It's also the story of its people, who have more power than their politicians, but can't speak to one another in the same language and who own more guns per head than the people of Iraq. As for those national clichés, well, not all the cheese has holes, cuckoo clocks aren't Swiss and the trains don't always run exactly on time.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

We all know that Switzerland gave us the world of cuckoo clocks, triangular chocolate and penknives, but how about the Toilet Duck, Velcro and LSD? Europe's landlocked island is a great subject for a cultural anthropologist and Bewes is a perfect guide. •Financial Times, Book of the Year A fascinating book, teeming with facts, figures, and anecdotes which even the Swiss don't know. A journalist, anthropologist and satirist, Diccon Bewes gives us a book that is serious without

being academic and funny without ever falling into caricature. •L'HebdoIt's a real page turner, a treasure trove. Absolutely jam-packed with fascinating facts that really got me thinking. •Margaret Oertig-Davidson, author of Beyond ChocolateInformative and entertaining. •The Mail on SundayEverything you wanted to know about Switzerland, and then some. Not just a travel book, Swiss Watching is a no-stone-unturned exploration of what makes (and has made) this enigmatic country tick. •Peter Kerr, author of the Snowball Orange seriesDiccon Bewes has the Bryson touch, informing and entertaining readers with his observations, considerable knowledge and love for this little-known country. •LoveReading, Travel Book of the MonthBewes has an engagingly light and comic touch. The narrative moves with ease between subjects as diverse as graffiti and recycling, and it's easy to dip in and out of. •The Sunday Telegraph

Diccon Bewes is a travel writer. A world trip set him up for a career in travel writing, via the scenic route of bookselling. After ten years at Lonely Planet and Holiday Which? Magazine, he decamped to Switzerland, where he managed the Stauffacher English Bookshop in Bern. In addition to grappling with German, re-learning to cross the road properly, and overcoming his desires to form an orderly line, he has spent years exploring Switzerland. Following the incredible success of Swiss Watching he is now a full time writer. See his website at www.dicconbewes.com

We were in Switzerland while reading the book on our iPads. Made the trip more interesting and valuable in many ways. Have been to the country many times before, even lived there as a child, but almost everything in the book was either new information or a touching reminder of past experiences and perceptions. The writer's unique style makes it easy to keep going. Lots of laughs!! don't believe another book like this exists. Even if you don't have a trip to Switzerland planned, read the book anyway, just in case. And to impress your friends.Lots of history and "insider" info here, but so much contemporary lore that after reading this book Switzerland seem like the best place in the world. Go often, stay long.

Educational and hilarious compilation of Switzerland's many wonderful quirks, told with love by an expat. I bought the book after returning from a vacation Switzerland, which piqued my curiosity about everything Swiss. This is a great read for anyone who plans to go or has been to Switzerland. If you haven't yet had the pleasure of visiting Switzerland, the excellent hand-drawn maps throughout the book give great context for your trip. If you have been to Switzerland, this book will make you want to go back and visit all 26 cantons, taking same trips as the author to cheese

making facilities, chocolate factories, and so many more iconically Swiss attractions. I loved the writer's wry, witty, and highly descriptive story-telling.

Most of the time I really enjoyed reading this book. There were a few sections that were a bit trying to finish, and the author's jokes were sometimes a little to "hammy" for my taste (but I did get the occasional chuckle). The operative word in that last sentence is "few". In general, I found the book pleasurable and easy to read. *Swiss Watching* covers a variety of different topics, so in that sense the book is good for a rather large audience. This is not simply a guide for living in Switzerland, nor is it a history of the country. It combines elements of both in an artful way that leaves the reader feeling better informed about life in Switzerland. I learned a lot from this book. I would certainly recommend this book to anyone who is planning to move to or at least travel in Switzerland. But, I also feel that someone who merely has an interest in Europe or other cultures could get a lot out of this book.

Kind of quirky, but some interesting insights into the Swiss people, with cultural tips that will be very useful for my upcoming trip

I recently moved to Switzerland to live and needed a guide to help me understand the culture, the people, the rules-which are many, and to become familiar with my new temporary home. I lived in the United States for over 50+ years so this is a big adventure into unfamiliar grounds. The book has allowed me to understand why things happen, how they happen, when they took place and to feel just a little more in control. I recommend this to anyone who is thinking of exploring Switzerland or consider living here. I love the country and am enjoying getting to know it.

Diccon Bewes focuses on the German speaking Swiss, the largest population group in this small country; but he implies that the French- and Italian-speakers share many of their customs and life styles. Although Switzerland is politically Socialist, Bewes tells us that average citizens have a unique opportunity to participate in democracy by suggesting new laws, but cautions they should not be in a rush to see them enacted. Because their virtually anonymous but stable government is slow in making major policy changes, free-market enterprises are encouraged to grow and prosper without uncertainty about government interference. Bewes discusses Swiss inventions such as Cellophane and Velcro that have made their mark globally. The name Switzerland, he says, brings to mind banks, watches, and grazing cows as well as spectacular Alpine scenery.

Insightful, humorous and enjoyable read. I recently started living in Switzerland and I find it really difficult to describe this country and culture. Diccon does as good a job as is possible. As he mentions in the book, this is not a book about where to go and what to see. Rather it is about understanding the country, its history and the context in which it exists today as a nation.

I would recommend it to everybody wanting to learn more about about Switzerland. It explain the complexe political system and the history of the country without being boring :) Being Swiss and just back from living abroad, it was also a good memory of some good and bad aspect of the county and the population. Of course, their are a few "clichÃ©" and I wouldn't agree with everything written (especially on the author obsession with red shoes....) but globally it's a great approach to Switzerland.

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