

A LITTLE-KNOWN BIJOUX NEAR GRYÈRE,

The countryside in the Canton Fribourg is some of the most rural in Switzerland and takes you back to a slower and more gentler era. We are all familiar with the town of Gruyères but there is a little known jewel of a village 12 kilometres down the road that is called Grandvillard.

It can be reached in many ways. By car it is just a matter of taking the direction of Montbovon and Chateau-d'Oex from the Bulle exit of the motorway. By train, you take the train from Nyon to Palezieux where you change to the train to Montbovon and alight at Grandvillard.



But the best way is to walk as I did. I got off the train to Enney and walked 16 kilometres to Montbovon which is an easy hike with 330m uphill and 250 metres downhill on well-signed walking paths. The walk is called “Le Sentier-Agro-Sylvicole-de-Lintaymon” and there are plenty of interesting things to see on the way. <https://randonnees-pedestres.ch/circuit/34-le-sentier-agro-sylvicole-de-lintaymon/>. However if you do not want to do the whole walk, the train is never far from the walking trail and you can get off the train at many places including at Granvillard and then walk the remaining 10 kilometres from Grandvillars to Montbovon from where you can pick up the train to Montreux or back to Palezieux to connect with the Nyon trains. On the way be sure to visit the restored church in the village Lessoc that has also a pretty fountain.

Grandvillard is a very pretty village that is mentioned in the Swiss itinerary of important cultural sites. It has a rich historic past and was quite prosperous in its heyday. Even today, there is a dairy that sells local produce, a baker, two restaurants, a sawmill and a garage, a school and a big church so quite a self-sufficient village where people are congenial and the atmosphere is friendly.



Its prosperity came from cheese making. The long and destructive 30-years' war from 1618 – 1648 resulted in many fatalities not only from the fighting but also from violence, famine and plague. During this period Central Europe was desperately short of food and the cheeses from the valley of Gryère and Grandvillard were much sought after leading to a golden age for this

valley and many historic houses were constructed between 1620 and 1670. However in the 18th century fires ravaged the region and Grandville was the only village to escape with the result that today there are a dozen or so houses from that period that are still standing and have been restored.

A brochure with a route for an historic walk is available from the town hall in the middle of the village with opening hours as in the attached link. (<https://grandvillard.ch/bureau-communal>). If you miss out on the opening hours, just wonder around the village and you will find explanations on the old houses that are helpfully also translated in English.

Just on the edge of the village is a impressive waterfall complete with a small chapel and pilgrimage. Adjacent to it is a lovely picnic area with benches and tables and a wonderful view over the valley. The baker in the village has excellent sandwiches. However as mentioned earlier, there are also two restaurants and we had lunch at the Pic Vert restaurant which is attached to the Dairy and we had an enjoyable Plat du Jour for a reasonable price.



As an alternative to walking, it would make a pleasant day-trip if you started off in Gruyères for a morning coffee, moved on to Grandvillard for lunch and a walk around the village and then finished in Broc at the Cailler chocolate factory where you can take a tour and taste the goods.