



# CUISINE HELVETICA

SWISS FOOD, DRINK & CULINARY TRAVEL

NOVEMBER 3, 2017 •  2 (#COMMENTS)

Discover the  
Culinary  
Heritage of  
Switzerland's  
Historic Hotels



*The kitchen of the Landvogthaus in Nidfurn, Switzerland. © Nicolas Glauser*

**Ranging from small, charming guesthouses to five-star luxury resorts, Switzerland's historic hotels have a rich culinary history. A new book takes you into the kitchens of these landmark hotels and shares some of favorite recipes.**

To uncover the culinary heritage of Switzerland's historic hotels, author Anita Brechbühl and photographer

Nicolas Glauser traveled to 54 hotels, inns and guesthouses that are members of the national association, [Swiss Historic Hotels](https://swiss-historic-hotels.ch/en/index.php) (<https://swiss-historic-hotels.ch/en/index.php>). Both a cookbook and a travel guide, *Kulinarische Zeitreisen: Genuss in historischen Hotels der Schweiz* (<http://www.mattenbach.ch/bestellung/Kulinarische%20Zeitreisen/5835>) (*Culinary Time Travel: Enjoyment in Switzerland's Historic Hotels*) details their experiences visiting these hotels and meeting with the chefs who provided the recipes featured in its pages. I recently caught up with Anita and Nicolas during a culinary tour hosted by Swiss Historic Hotels.



*Spätzlipfanne at the Hôtel Bella Tola in St. Luc, Switzerland. © Nicolas Glauser*

## Swiss Historic Hotels: Preserving the Past

Swiss Historic Hotels began in 2004 in an effort to establish quality standards for hotels that have historical and architectural significance in Switzerland. Known not only for their history, but also for their hospitality and service, the association's member hotels must meet certain criteria for membership. In particular, the main building should be more than 30 years old, and the

business needs to be well-established. The rooms, lighting and furniture must be primarily based on the historic originals, and any structural changes have to respect the existing character of the building.

*Kulinarische Zeitreisen*, published on behalf of Swiss Historic Hotels, divides the member hotels into groups and presents five seasonal routes: spring, summer, late-summer, fall and winter. The text, written in German by Anita, is accompanied by colorful and inviting photographs taken by Nicolas. You may already be familiar with these two because of their popular travel blog, *Travelita* (<https://www.travelita.ch/>).

Two hotels in Graubünden that were part of our culinary tour – **Hotel Palazzo Salis** (<https://www.palazzo-salis.ch/>) in Soglio, and the **Waldhaus Sils** (<https://waldhaus-sils.ch/en/>) in Sils-Maria – give a flavor for the diversity of these heritage properties and their culinary traditions.

## Hotel Palazzo Salis: A 17th Century Private Home

In the mountain village of Soglio – with fewer than 200 inhabitants and about a 10-minute drive from the Italian border, you will find a palatial home built in 1630 for knight Baptista von Salis. More than two centuries later, this property was converted from a private residence into a hotel, as it remains today. Managed by Christian Speck and Monika Müller, the Hotel Palazzo Salis has 16 guest rooms and a restaurant featuring regional dishes. The dining room contains period artwork and furniture, with vaulted ceilings and a large, cozy fireplace.





*Hotel Palazzo Salis in Soglio, Switzerland. © Christian Speck*

Chef Müller left her café and catering business in Basel two years ago to take over the restaurant at this historic hotel. Her dishes, like risotto with lamb sausage and *pizokel* (a traditional buckwheat pasta from this region) with kale and Swiss chard, embrace the characteristics of the slow food movement. She works directly with local producers to find the ingredients she needs. For example, just up the street from the hotel lies the farm of Marco and Heidi Giovanoli, which supplies the restaurant with meat and cheese.



*Monika Müller, Chef and Co-Owner of Hotel Palazzo Salis.*



*Dining room at the Hotel Palazzo Salis in Soglio, Switzerland.*



*Fresh, local ingredients — Lamb sausage with risotto, kale and roasted squash prepared by Chef Müller.*

For *Kulinarische Zeitreisen*, Chef Müller shared her recipe for *Wildkräuter-Hopfensprossen-Salat mit Mascarpin und Honigvinaigrette* – a salad of wild herbs and hops sprouts with a local goat's milk cheese and honey vinaigrette.

## Waldhaus Sils: A Grand Hotel of the Belle Epoque

The famous Waldhaus Sils, like the Hotel Palazzo Salis, was a founding member of the Swiss Historic Hotels.

Unlike the Palazzo Salis, which was built as a private home, Josef Giger set out to build a grand hotel in the early 20th century. Situated on a forested hillside above the Silsersee (Lake Sils), this grand palace dominates the landscape.



*Waldhaus Sils sits above Lake Sils and the village of Sils-Maria, Switzerland.*

Today, this five-star hotel with 140 rooms has been maintained by the same family since 1908. Its former manager, Felix Dietrich – who retired in 2010 when his two sons, Claudio and Patrick, took over his responsibilities – currently serves as the Vice President of the board of the Swiss Historic Hotels. Each year, Waldhaus Sils spends several million Swiss francs on its renovation and restoration. Dietrich said that with these investments, the hotel strives to respect the past, while being courageous with its future development. He mentioned the addition of an indoor pool in the 1970s as an example.

Dietrich recently hosted a reading of *Kulinarische Zeitreisen* by Brechbühl and Glauser at the Waldhaus Sils, followed by a dinner of regional specialties from Switzerland's Engadine Valley. He opened the event with



a passage from the book – the “Amuse Bouche,” an introduction written by the Swiss philosopher and journalist, Ludwig Hasler. The dinner that followed, hosted in the hotel’s traditional pinewood-paneled Arvenstube, included dishes that highlighted local products, such as chestnuts and dried venison.

For *Kulinarische Zeitreisen*, Chef Dennis Brunner of the Waldhaus Sils provided the hotel’s recipe for *Bergeller Lamm mit Soglio-Mais-Polenta* – lamb from the Bregaglia Valley paired with polenta produced from corn grown in the village of Soglio.



*The Blauer Salon leads to the dining room at the Waldhaus Sils.*





*Breakfast in the historic dining room at the Waldhaus Sils.*

Sitting in the dining room of Switzerland's Hotel Palazzo Salis or Waldhaus Sils, one certainly feels a sense of culinary time travel within these well-preserved architectural gems – with dishes that reflect their history and chefs that continue to draw upon the resources of their local communities.



*Nick Glauser (Photographer) and Anita Brechbühl (author) with a copy of their new book, along with Christian Speck (front right) of the Hotel Palazzo Salis, and Felix Dietrich (back right) of Waldhaus Sils and Swiss Historic Hotels.*

## More information:

- *Kulinarische Zeitreisen: Genuss in historischen Hotels der Schweiz*, published for Swiss Historic Hotels by Mattenbach Verlag Winterthur, Anita Brechbühl (text), Nicolas Glauser (photos), 280 pages, ISBN 978-3-905172-76-8.
- [Hotel Palazzo Salis](#)
- [Waldhaus Sils](#)
- [Travelita](#)

*Please note: I attended this culinary tour and stayed at the Hotel Palazzo Salis and Waldhaus Sils as a guest of Swiss Historic Hotels. The thoughts and opinions expressed in this article are purely my own.*



2 replies »

It's so important to maintain and promote Switzerland's architectural gems, including these stunning hotels, and I love that their menus reflect local cuisine and use local produce. This new book would make a wonderful present at Christmas...or at any time of the year. Thanks for letting us know all about it, Heddi, and for introducing us to these beautiful hotels.

[Reply](#)

Thanks for your thoughtful comment, Elena. I agree! These hotels are important to help preserve for so many reasons — economic, historic, cultural. I also recently stayed at the Klosterhotel

[Reply](#)