

Switzerland in figures : food, glorious food

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Priya Ragu on the lake stage at this year's Montreux Jazz Festival. Her rapid ascent is opening doors for her everywhere. Photo: Keystone

pop and chants from the Indian subcontinent had arrived in Oerlikon. In 2018, "Leaf High", for which the video would be filmed in Paris, was posted online. "Lighthouse" followed, with a video shot in Mumbai. Priya heard her music on the public radio SRF3, where the two musicians had sent their track. The fourth song to appear online was "Good Love 2.0". The track was pushed in 2020 by Irish DJ Annie Mac, a star of the BBC. The sounds of the St. Gallen singer were heard by "New Musical Express" and "Good Love 2.0" was used to accompany players of the video game FIFA 21. In August 2020, the singer signed with Warner UK. She was interviewed by "The Guardian" and quoted in "The New York Times". A fact worth noting: the ten tracks of "Damnshestamil" were almost all recorded in Oerlikon. Ragu's style has something familial and artisan about it.

A discourse on the freedom of women

Priya would like to use her music to break down the stereotypes attached to Sri Lankans, "which essentially limit them to the role of cook, cleaner or seller", she explained to the online journal "Decorated Youth". In "Kamali", a song inspired by a documentary, the artist tells the story of a little girl from Tamil Nadu, brought up by her mother, who supports her passion for skateboarding in a world which does not allow for this possibility. "I want to talk to all the Kamalis in the world, to encourage them to look far ahead of themselves. If we are capable of creating life, imagine what we can create when we break free of our barriers," writes Priya. "My mother, who appears in the track's video, was particularly moved by the life of the mother of Kamali, who had to fight. Her opinion on the place of women in society has changed," explains the singer, who practises Thai boxing. The dream of this Tamil-Swiss citizen, as she sometimes presents herself to preempt questions, is to organise a big music festival in Jaffna one day, with Tamil artists from all over the world.

Switzerland in figures

Food, glorious food

3.3

The hunger pangs arrive, and the fridge beckons. This was a commonplace story throughout 2020, and one with weighty consequences. A study by the University of St. Gallen found that Swiss people put on an average of 3.3 kilogrammes – or as much as 6.7 kilogrammes for those in the 45–64 age bracket.

28,560

It might not be tactful to pursue these calculations further. Nevertheless... if every one of the 8,655,118 people in Switzerland gained 3.3 kilogrammes in a year, how much heavier did the population as a whole become? The answer is 28,560 tonnes. If the Swiss Abroad were equally peckish, that would mean another 2,550 tonnes.

110

Of course, a heavier population is not necessarily a healthier one. The authorities and the food industry are therefore looking for ways to reduce sugar consumption in Switzerland. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends limiting sugar intake to no more than 50 grammes a day. However, daily consumption in Switzerland averages 110 grammes – one of the downsides that comes with the country's love of chocolate.

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Of course, all of the above cannot be understood without the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, which led to a decrease in movement and poorer nutrition. And the pandemic also resulted in a reduction in life expectancy. Figures from the Federal Statistical Office indicate that male life expectancy fell by around one year to 81 years in 2020. Such a fall is without precedent since 1944. The equivalent figure for women shrank by half a year to just over 85.

87.3

However, life expectancy patterns are not uniform across the country: there are some regions where people live longer than elsewhere. So, where might you want to move to? Answer: Appenzell Innerrhoden, especially if you are female, as the women of this canton have the longest life expectancy (87.3) anywhere in Switzerland.