

Foraging in Verbier with my daughter

by Debbie Marshall

Inter-generational travel is quite the mode these days, and in the summer of 2020, when Covid seemed to be under control and borders tentatively reopened, I travelled to the Swiss Alps with my grown-up daughter. Wide-open spaces, nature, healthy living and quality time together after a long lockdown apart. What could be more appealing?



Debbie

Our visit to Verbier began with a foraging expedition, aptly known as the Sentier Des Sens (path of the senses). Our guide, appropriately (and delightfully) named Cherries, was a botanical expert so knew what to pick, and, more importantly, what we could eat.

Wild rhubarb, dandelions, spinach, yarrow, camellia, field pansies, bluebells, nettles; under

Cherries' watchful eye we learned how to identify them, how to pick them, and how to select only the tastiest morsels for lunch. Who knew that dandelions should only be eaten before their flowers go fuzzy or that you can stroke a stinging nettle, caressing the leaves upwards towards the tip, for a pain-free experience? We found hogweed, known as the ginseng of the Alps (plenty of that went in my bag), and edible white thistles too. Eeyore would have been proud.

Our eco-foraging bags filled, we arrived at a chocolate box chalet to separate out the stash, so that Cherries could remove the toxic plants (rookie errors) and we cooked up our lunch, accompanied by supermarket purchases of pasta and bread. The taste of the wild rhubarb dessert eaten hot and "en plein air" is one that has created a forever Proustian memory.



Daughter, Juliette

SILVER FACTS

To read the rest of Debbie's article about her summer visit to the Swiss Alps with her daughter, visit silvertraveladvisor.com/verbier

The Pays de Gex, France, where it's not all about the skiing writes Debbie Marshall

These days my ski trip priorities are a short transfer, a relaxed and friendly resort, quiet pistes, other activities on the snow, and a chance to explore the local region and culture (yes, culture on a ski trip).

Welcome to the Pays de Gex in France to the east of Geneva, and with breathtaking views across to Lake Lemman and Mont Blanc.

Our first taste of action was a snow shoeing adventure - in the dark!

Strapping on our "raquettes" and head torches, we headed for the Jura and started our ascent under a clear night sky.

By day, we skied at Lellex-Crozet with



30km of pistes and some good off-piste too, ideal for a short break and for cautious intermediates. Coasting down the mountain from the peak at just under 1,000m overlooking Lake Geneva was an unforgettable experience.

The region also enjoys extensive cross-country skiing, with over 160km of pistes. It's the perfect cardio-vascular work-out, and at €8 for a daily pass it won't cause any stress on your purse either.

Away from the slopes, Ferney Voltaire is a vibrant municipality named after the French writer and philosopher who arrived aged 60 and enjoyed the most productive years of his life, surrounded by mountains, forests and lakes.

After sampling far too many delicacies at the weekly market, it was just 20 minutes' to the thermal spa town of Divonne les Bains.

An affordable diversity of winter sports, views, culture, literature, an outstanding market... and a nice bath too, all within a short drive of Geneva airport. What a gem!

SILVER FACTS

Read more about Debbie's trip at silvertraveladvisor.com/pays-de-gex