

# Nude Hikers Cause a Stir in the Swiss Alps

Many people tend to make the connection between public nudity and the nudist beach. This is understandable, yet the beach is not the only place where one can find nudists. Indeed, there has been quite a stir in the Swiss Alps recently ever since the Swiss police caught a nude hiker last autumn in the small canton of Appenzell.



The immediate reaction, in accordance with the conservative attitudes of many Alpine village areas, was to take action against this person, until the police realised that there was absolutely nothing they could do. There is no law in Switzerland, which states that public nudity is not allowed as long as it is not of a sexual nature.

However, let's not forget that women were allowed the vote only in 1990 in this part of the world and Swiss villages are known for their conservative attitudes. Furthermore, Switzerland is not a large country. For example, it is possible to hike for weeks in Canada without meeting another human being. This is not the case in central Europe. Groups of nudists are certain to meet other people on their trips. It is unavoidable. It seems that the famous notion of Swiss secrecy applies only to banking and not the body.



The hikers themselves claim that being nude in the Alps is the only way to enjoy the famous mountain range. Wearing just hiking boots and backpacks is for them apparently the most natural way to indulge in some of Europe's most beautiful places. As long as no law is put in place, they will continue to hike in the nude, even in winter.



Despite the local government efforts it seems that Appenzell, the second smallest of Switzerland's 26 cantons, is becoming a nude-hiking mecca. To oppose this trend the local government drafted a new law against public nudity that would give the police power to fine unclad hikers \$160. The proposal will be voted at the end of April when all eligible citizens will express their opinion on naked visitors in their picturesque canton. The authorities want to act quickly, before the hiking season begins to avoid the last year's influx of nude hikers.

### **Fly Naked in Germany?**

FKK (Freikörperkultur – Free Body Culture) has a very long tradition in Germany. There are many nude clubs, societies and groups for singles, couples and even families with children. Especially in the pre-1989 era of split Germany, naked bathing and sunbathing belonged to popular leisure activities and the freedom of nakedness at least partially substituted for the lack of political, social and personal freedom. There were even plans for a “nude airline” to the FKK-Mecca, the island of Usedom, yet there were (of course) objections and so the experiment had to be given up. The official reason was “moral doubts”.

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