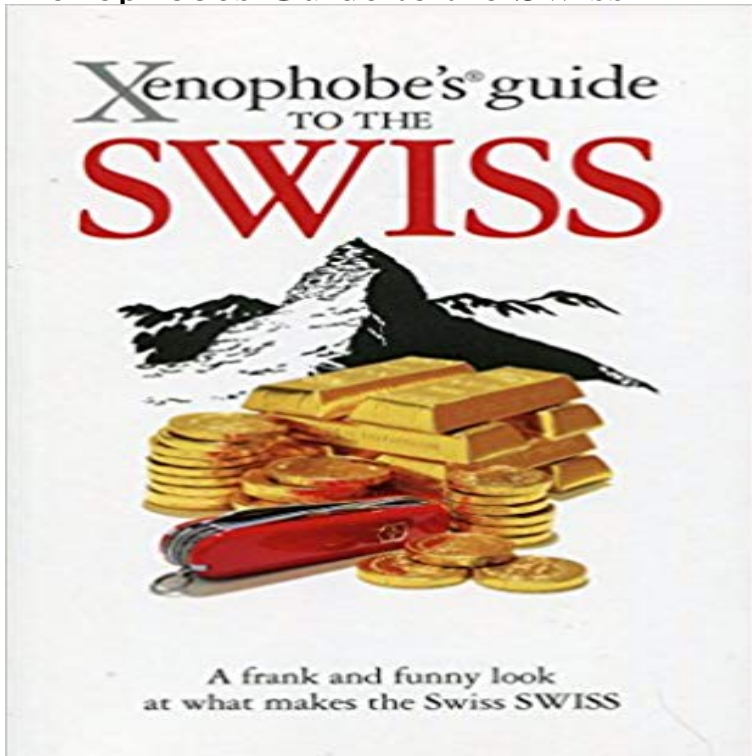


## Xenophobes Guide to the Swiss



Mountain mentality Swiss farmers are tough, independent, hard-working, resilient, well-prepared for every kind of natural disaster, and above all staunchly conservative. These characteristics have been passed on to Swiss town-dwellers, who go about their day as if they too were farming a lonely mountain cliff. We can do better. The Swiss stubbornly refuse to believe they are doing well and will even dispute the figures that prove it. So, like the poor donkey chasing the carrot, they pull their collective cart along ever faster, chasing the goal they passed years ago. Peak performers The perceptions of the Swiss being dull, staid, and boring while at the same time displaying a talent for ruthless efficiency and a limitless capacity for hard work are uncomfortably close to the truth. Likewise the cliched impressions of high mountains, watches, cheese, chocolate bars, and gold bars are genuine. Degrees of unease The diversity of the Swiss is apparent in the degree to which they worry. The German-speakers do little else. The French-speaking Swiss are great visionaries and philosophers with noble thoughts and global dreams. They worry that their Swiss-German compatriots do not share these dreams. The Italian-speaking Swiss are less interested in the solid values of work and have a terrible tendency not to worry nearly enough.

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