

Factsheet Swiss Chalet

Operation dates: 12.12.2024 – 19.01.2025

Location: No. 23, Yangfang Hutong, Xicheng District

Highlights:

- **Chinese octagonal pavilion with Swiss architectural design:** A beautifully crafted wooden chalet on the foundation of a Chinese-style octagonal pavilion, completed with Swiss-inspired interiors, rustic furniture, and festive decorations.
- **Winter sports and ice skating:** Highlighting Switzerland's strong association with winter activities and providing a unique recreational opportunity at Houhai's frozen lake.
- **Swiss cuisine and hospitality:** Offering classic Swiss treats like Älplermagronen, cheese and charcuterie board, mulled wine, and hot chocolate, in collaboration with Swiss brands and local partners.
- **Cultural engagement:** Showcasing Switzerland's art and culture, folklore, and historical ties to China, while engaging visitors in workshops and interactive activities.
- **Swiss Winter Tourism:** Winter is an important season for Swiss tourism industry. With more than 200 world-class ski resorts and more than 7,000 kilometers of slopes; the natural conditions at high altitude ensure good snow conditions and excellent scenery; innovative and advanced infrastructure and a well-connected transportation network provide good travel experiences.
- **Diplomatic milestones:** Celebrating the 75-year diplomatic relationship between Switzerland and China, fostering goodwill and mutual understanding.

1. What is the Swiss Chalet?

Switzerland is world-renowned for its winter sports culture. The Swiss Chalet is a pop-up bar that brings the essence of Swiss alpine winter to Beijing. Initiated by the Embassy of Switzerland in China, in collaboration with Switzerland Tourism and with the support of Xicheng District, the Swiss Chalet serves as a platform for cultural exchange and public diplomacy, kickstarting the 75th anniversary year of diplomatic relations between Switzerland and China in 2025.

Houhai is a sparkling gem nestled in the heart of Beijing, where the past meets the present in a breathtaking display. As the trademark outdoor winter activity in Beijing, ice skating at Houhai carries memories of generations of Beijing natives. The Houhai Lake is one of the most ideal natural ice rinks in Beijing to fill up people's winter with enjoyment.

The Swiss Chalet is built at the shore of Houhai Lake on the foundation of a Chinese-style octagonal pavilion. It combines Swiss architecture and design with Beijing's unique local charm, bridging the two cultures in a harmonious way. The frozen Houhai Lake provides an ideal setting for a public ice-skating experience, reinforcing the theme of Swiss winter adventure and leisure. The Chalet offers a warm, inviting escape reminiscent of a cosy mountain retreat, showcasing Switzerland's rich cultural heritage, culinary traditions, and pioneering spirit in winter sports. It evokes the nostalgia of Swiss après-ski culture, where people gather in or outside chalets after a day on the slopes to enjoy food, drink, and catch-up.

The Swiss Chalet will be open daily from 12:00 to 21:00, 12 December 2024 to 19 January 2025 and welcomes the public to experience the joy of winter through Swiss eyes. It serves as a gateway to Switzerland's alpine culture, tourism, and innovation.

2. What is Swiss après-ski culture?

Deeply rooted in the Swiss Alps, the Swiss après-ski culture is a tradition that has been passed down through generations of Swiss skiers and snowboarders.

In winter in Switzerland, hundreds of slopes scattered around its many mountain ranges provide no shortage of places to sled, snowboard, and ski. After these sports, people usually get together for a drink in a bar before going to dinner. They share stories, discuss the latest skiing news, and meet new friends. The little chalets on the mountain often have a warm and inviting atmosphere, with comfortable seating, soft lighting, and a cosy fireplace. There is a wide range of catering choices available in the chalets, including mulled wine, cheese fondue, hot chocolate, sausage rolls, etc.

The Swiss après-ski culture is a great way to relax after a day spent in the snowy mountains and is an integral part of Swiss winter culture.

3. Architectural design concepts

The Swiss Chalet was renovated on the foundation of a Chinese-style octagonal pavilion. The pavilion has a stable structure and elegant appearance. Its octagonal design and curved roof reflect the charm and beauty of traditional Chinese architecture. The chalet showcases a minimalist and modern style after being added with the Swiss architecture and design elements.

The construction is inspired from the Alpine winter in Switzerland, where the snow covers everything making a whole white world except tree trunks. The Chalet thus adopts three dominant colors: red standing for Switzerland, white for snow and brown for tree trunks in the Alps. It uses wood as the main construction material, as its texture and warmth bring a comfortable and peaceful feeling. The octagonal interior is totally an open space with eight columns. It has a 10-meter-long bar counter which is like a huge tree trunk. The white lighting installation on the ceiling gives the atmosphere of Swiss snow mountains.

The Swiss Chalet is a perfect combination of Chinese and Swiss architecture, reflecting both the charm of traditional Chinese architecture and the simplicity and functionality of Swiss modern architecture.

4. Swiss cuisine in the Swiss Chalet

The Swiss Chalet is brought to life by the visionary Beijing gastro-collective Hide & Seek, in partnership with Hope & Sesame, founded by internationally acclaimed Swiss bartender Bastien Ciocca. Together, they've crafted a menu that showcases modern Swiss cuisine with a traditional twist, paired with a curated selection of exceptional cocktails inspired by Switzerland's flavors and alpine spirit. Guests will enjoy alpine favorites like Älplermagronen and cheese and charcuterie board, along with seasonal drinks such as mulled wine and hot chocolate. Additional enhancements to the menu include rösti toast, grilled sausage on baguette, mulled wine tart, etc. The intimate and spirited setup is ideal for holiday gatherings and celebrations.

5. Uniform of the Swiss Chalet

The uniform of the Swiss Chalet operational team is designed by students of the University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland, which perfectly conveys the Swiss style and tradition, a particular focus on a playful approach to and exploration of cultural codes. The inspiration comes from the realms of skiing and figure skating, particularly ski dresses from the 1960s. Through the cut of the clothing, the pattern construction, and the visuals of the pins and embroideries, the uniform highlights the interplay between Swiss and Chinese cultural elements. The designer Lou Gattlen graduated from the Academy of Arts and Design in Basel, University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland. Specializing in accessory design, she focuses on the traditional craft of leatherwork and the production of small leather goods, rethinking and reshaping these techniques as a method of storytelling.

6. Major activities

The Swiss Chalet provides a range of cultural and sports activities for guests:

- Wine tasting event
- Swiss winter sports and culture salon
- Winter sports livestreams
- Swiss film screenings

- Cocktail-making workshop
- Swiss winter tourism activities
- Christmas themed events
- Musical events: DJ, classical music, pop music

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