

Part 1

Lesen Sie den Text und beantworten Sie die folgenden Fragen.

Switzerland's ingenious cooling caves

By Shikha Shah 30th May 2022

Nothing is more representative of Ticino life than its „grottos“, village taverns whose forerunners were natural caves used to store wine, cheese and meat.

It was a crisp, clear summer's afternoon, and our boat was drifting on the sparkling blue waters of Lake Lugano in Switzerland's Italian-speaking canton of Ticino. Local fisherwoman Gabriella Monfredini Rigiani, who organises boat tours and local meal experiences in Ticino, had offered to take me around the lake and its picturesque mountain-clinging villages, many of which are only reachable by boat. As part of my half-day tour, we stopped at some grottos lining the shore of the glacial lake.



Cooling caves

"Nothing is more typical of Ticino life than the *grotti*," she told me, noting that these natural caverns represent authentic Ticino and define the lifestyle of its people.

We docked at a jetty and followed an uneven path to „**Grotto Descanso**“, a village tavern housed in a simple stone building with a shaded terrace overlooking the lake. As we got closer, I could see a huge wooden door near the main entrance, below the terrace. We were greeted by the grotto's owner, who, on Rigiani's request, unlocked the door to what looked like a cave. I instantly felt a rush of cold air. Inside was a long wooden table covered with an old-fashioned chequered tablecloth and a wall-mounted wine rack loaded with bottles.

This was one of Ticino's famed grottos, traditional storehouses fashioned out of the natural landscape. Mostly dating to the 17th Century, they were originally used as family cellars, preserving wine, salami, cheese, fruit and vegetables. Similar grottos can be found throughout Ticino, and while some remain as private storehouses and others lie unused and abandoned, many, like this one, have been repurposed as cosy watering holes and village taverns.

The Italian word "*grotta*" means a large natural hollow in rock or the earth, and that's how these cellars began. In Ticino, landslides once covered vast areas of the Alpine foothills, often creating caverns between the rocks. Living as they did, in often-isolated villages, the Ticinese took advantage of these natural elements to keep their food fresh for longer.

"Until about 1950, 99.9% of people in Ticino were farmers," Rigiani explained. "The grottos enabled many farmers, especially those residing in remote lakeside settlements, to grow their produce and stock it up."

The reason grottos worked so well as natural fridges is due to their excellent ventilation. Since they usually occurred on rockfall or on an accumulation of scree, they have a porous foundation that guarantees internal air circulation and results in a year-round stable temperature that's ideal for ageing wine. (Some grottos have a mere 1°C temperature difference between summer and winter.)

Legend has it that goats, sensing the cool ground on a hot summer's day, were the first ones to discover these grottos. "Hundreds of years ago, some goats were found poking their heads inside the holes in the cave walls, up in the mountains," explained Patricia Carminati, who organises walking tours and food tastings in Ticino. "Soon, the farmers realised that they were doing so to feel the cold air blowing through the walls' holes. That's when they were struck with the idea of using caves as natural refrigerators to store cheese, meat and even milk awaiting processing."

Whenever supplies dwindled at home, the men went off to the grotto to fetch more. In their leisure time, usually at the height of summer before harvesting started, they would sit in front of the grotto, enjoying the cool air flowing out, eating salami and swapping anecdotes or sharing their troubles over a glass of wine.

Hours would go by before the children were sent to fetch their fathers home. Soon the women started to join them, until the grottos became a place for people to mingle, eat together and sing.

Over time, the Ticinese started expanding the caves, creating simple architectural solutions that skilfully incorporated the natural resources. If there was a large opening to the cave, for example, some people added a door at the entrance or carved out extra rooms. If the cavern was only accessible via a small hole in the rockfall, families might build an entire house over the top, using the airflow from the cavern below to keep the internal temperature of the home constant.

After World War Two, households started to acquire modern refrigerators and the caves' function started to change. "Very few maintained their original function of preserving food and wine," explained Alessandro Rezzonico who formerly arranged grotto-hopping boat tours around Lake Lugano. "In other cases, owners expanded their grottos by installing stone tables, benches and other kinds of seating in the forecourt area. They also began selling their stored produce to passers-by."

Eventually, many of these rustic storehouses, often sitting at the forest limits or on the banks of lakes or rivers, transformed into atmospheric taverns for the public to enjoy regional specialities and conversations in a laid-back, welcoming environment.

Today, grottos are synonymous with Ticino gastronomy and attract both locals and visitors with a warm, family-friendly atmosphere and live music. Despite featuring on the tourist map, most have managed to retain the homely feel of the region's past, serving hearty food made from seasonal produce using recipes passed down through generations.



"Eating at the grotto is like savouring your grandma's cooking. Imagine a Ticinese grandmother wearing a poppy-print apron and bringing you food that's flavourful, comforting and prepared with love. There is nothing very fancy about it, and perhaps that is what makes it so special," Carminati said.

For many locals, snacking on piquant Alpine cheese at a grotto while playing cards or *boccia* (a bowls game traditionally played at grottos), remains an ideal way to spend a Sunday. Favoured by both young and old, these ingenious structures, a blend of natural and human architecture, remain symbols of tradition, culture, conviviality and a sense of home.

Part 2

Lesen Sie den Text und beantworten Sie die folgenden Fragen.

Best Female Vocalists Of All-Time: Top 5 Legendary Singers, According To Experts

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Women have experienced discrimination in the music business for many years, facing lower pay and harsher treatment than their male counterparts. That said, we are fortunate to have a historical catalog rich with exceptional female artists, vocalists, and composers who pushed the boundaries and changed the course of music history, influencing generations to come. Many of the biggest hits have been created, recorded, and performed by the best female singers of all time. So which legendary ladies are considered the consensus greatest?

The List: Best Female Singers of All Time, According to Music Experts

B Aretha Franklin

Aretha Franklin is often credited as one of the greatest female vocalists of all time. Her ability to transcend genres and styles, such as rock, gospel, soul and jazz, has earned her the title of “Queen of Soul” and the number one spot on this list. Her iconic voice, powerful range and soulful lyrics have left an indelible mark on the music industry.

According to Rolling Stone, Franklin is, “A force of nature. A work of genius. A gift from the heavens. Aretha Franklin’s voice is all that and more, which is why she remains the unchallenged Queen, years after her final bow.

Aretha won 18 Grammy Awards, and she was also the first woman to be listed in the Rock and roll Hall of Fame in 1987. Beyond her impressive musical catalog, Franklin was also a civil rights activist and an inspiring role model for many.

Her impact on the world of music was immense and her legacy will live on forever. Smooth Radio adds: “Using her gospel background to her advantage, Aretha had such an incredibly powerful and passionate voice. Even 50 years after her debut, she brought audiences to tears with her performances.” It’s no wonder why she is remembered as one of the most phenomenal female vocalists in history.

C Whitney Houston

Whitney Houston was and will remain one of the greatest. Her voice was powerful, strong and smooth, yet gentle, and her ability to express emotion with her voice was truly remarkable. Her range was incredible. She could hit notes that other vocalists can only dream of.

“Houston is one of pop music’s best-selling music artists of all-time, with an estimated 170–200 million records sold worldwide,” says The Top Tens. “She released seven studio albums and three movie soundtrack albums, all of which have diamond, multi-platinum, platinum or gold certification.”

Houston is the only person to arguably give Aretha Franklin a run for her money! “She could go up and down with different ranges with ease, keep things soft and warm or belt them out like a proper diva,” adds Smooth Radio. “At the height of her powers, no-one could match her effortless ability.”

Her voice is one of the most recognizable in the world, and her legacy will live on forever. Whitney Houston is truly one of the best female vocalists of all time.



Mariah Carey and Whitney Houston

D Adele

Adele's incredible vocal range and raw emotion reverberate through every song she sings and make her performance captivating and unforgettable. She has released several critically acclaimed albums, won numerous awards, and has even performed alongside some of the greatest legends in the music industry.

Her musicality and her ability to convey raw emotion through her voice has made her a household name and an icon in the music industry. Not only is she one of the best female vocalists ever, but she is also one of the most successful and influential female artists of all time.

Dig concludes, "In terms of genre, Adele switches with ease between heavy ballads and soulful power anthems which effortlessly fit her mezzo-soprano voice. In 2021, she released her fourth and most vulnerable album yet, *30*, demand for which was so high it caused a global vinyl shortage.

Adele's success stands as a testament to her incredible talent and artistry, and her impact on the music industry will be felt for years to come.

E Celine Dion

Celine Dion is a name that stands out. Her powerful, multi-octave voice, along with her ability to deliver powerful emotional ballads and upbeat pop numbers, has made her an international superstar. Her success in both the English and French speaking markets, along with her record-breaking releases, has earned her a place as one of the most successful female singers of all time.

As a testament to her influence and success, she is one of only three female artists to have sold over 250 million records worldwide. "This French-Canadian vocal powerhouse made her U.S. debut in 1990 after topping the charts in Canada," adds Yard Barker. "Dion has sold more than 250 million albums globally, won 5 Grammy Awards, and holds multiple Billboard chart records."

"Celine Dion's work encompasses more than 27 albums in both English and French," adds Music Grotto. "Her music career started in childhood. Her parents owned a club in Canada, where she performed. She began work on her first album at 12 and participated in many music competitions as a child, teenager, and young adult. Dion's Las Vegas residency was the top-earning series in 2011."

Aside from her musical career, Dion worked to help with various charitable organizations. She is also an ambassador to the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Her incredible career has set the bar for all female singers that follow.

F Mariah Carey

Mariah Carey's signature whistle register has captivated audiences around the world, and her music has created a legacy that continues to influence today's artists. "She was blessed at a young age to be able to sing in not one but five different octaves, which quickly catapulted her to the top of the charts," says Music in Minnesota. "We are also impressed that many of her top hits, like 'All I Want for Christmas is You,' were written by Mariah Carey herself."

She has sold over 200 million records worldwide, making her one of the best-selling music artists of all time. Her influence on the music industry is undeniable, and she has been recognized with numerous awards, including five Grammy Awards and 19 World Music Awards.