

[How to Receive a Food and Beverage Management Education in Switzerland](#)

If you are an aspiring student in Food and Beverage Management and between 18 and 30 years of age there is a great opportunity for you to work in Switzerland without having to spend thousands of dollars to go to school there.

I am writing this from a Canadian perspective but I am sure the same can be said for other countries as well. The way I did it was quite simple and very cost effective and the training I received was phenomenal.

Back in my early 20's I took a Bartending course that got me introduced to the Hospitality Industry. The money was great and as I was living on my own I passed up the opportunity to go to a university to further my education in this chosen field. I soon realized a few years later that if I wanted to move up it was imperative that I take some course. What I did was do something that would not interfere with my employment so I took a Home Study Course in Hotel Motel Restaurant Management.

I loved it and worked at it from my kitchen table for just over 2 years before finishing it and graduating with flying colors. At the time I was a Bar Manager and even though I was in a comfortable position where I was working I longed for something more exciting.

After a brief stint on a Cruise Ship I came back home to Montreal to rest a bit and figure out what I wanted to do. I took this course so I could proceed along a different path and my attempt at working on a cruise ship had failed at this point.

So to bide my time to mull things over I decided to enrol myself in a full time French Course that would run from January to June. During this time while I was meeting a lot of people at school and working on my French I spoke with a student who was much older than I. When I told him what I did he replied back and asked me why I wouldn't go to Switzerland to work. I was taken aback at his remark and with a quizzical look mumbled how do I do that?

He then mentioned that there were exchanges between Canada and Switzerland and you had to be under 30 to take advantage of them. This was all news to me so I made some phone calls and got some information and sent my qualifications to the government agency. I was accepted for this exchange immediately thereafter.

The agency was not all that hopeful though as they mentioned that all they do is put my name in a hotel newspaper over in Switzerland and that no one really ever calls or hires anyone and that it would be better if I did my own job search.

This was the pre-internet era so what I did was go to the Swiss Travel Bureau and a travel agent and wrote down all the hotels in the French part of Switzerland and send my resume in my adequate French to those establishments.

I remember I sent fifty resumes out and received 26 refusals but I did get 1 positive response. The contract was for 11 months at this beautiful hotel in Montreux. It was great and I even returned for a second season.

During those two years I did everything as one might come to expect if one is Assistant Food and Beverage Manager. From managing the stores , inventory , Maitre'd , typing out Function sheets and then setting up the Banquet or Conference taking place.

Now the reason I say it was not expensive is I did not have to pay any college or university but instead received the on the job experience necessary to become a competent manager. Yes it was long hours but one thing to remember is you are working in the center of Europe so when you have a few days off you can visit France , Germany , Austria and Italy just next door.

So to summarize you first must have taken some course in Hospitality Food and Beverage to be able to qualify to be in the exchange in the first place. If you are doing something like I was in Bartending go and take a course. I did it with a Home Study School called Granton Institute out of Toronto.

Second learn a second language. Maybe now you will have a reason to learn French , German , or another language. Yes everyone speaks English in Switzerland and other countries but if you know a second language you will become much more marketable.

Third is with the internet now available you can have employment opportunities at your fingertips unlike when I did the job hunt by mail which seemed to take forever before I started to get answers back.

Of course while you are doing all the above check out the exchanges your country has with others. I know I could have gone to France as well if I

chose. I also went to England on a Grandparent Visa. If one of your Grandparents were born in England you are eligible to work there as long as you wish. I did that after my Swiss adventure.

Switzerland's hotel work is usually seasonal so they do hire for months in advance. The visa took me 3 months to receive from the day I was hired. Do not expect a huge salary but do expect accommodations and food and plenty of partying along with the work hours to boot.

My Swiss experience was unforgettable and I highly recommend it. It has opened many doors since both personally, professionally, and intellectually.

About the Author

His [motivational speaking](#) engagements are both funny and informative. Find out more about Steve Nicolle at his website which is at <http://www.stevetalks.ca>

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