



Brief Portrait

Canton Bern is one of 26 cantons (member states) in Switzerland. Bern is the canton with the second largest population. Characteristic of Canton Bern is its bridge function between the German and French speaking parts of the country.

Numbers and Facts

Canton Bern has over one million inhabitants, sixteen percent of which are citizens of other countries. The canton covers almost 6000 km², 10 districts, and over 346 communities (Gemeinden|Communes). The capital is Bern. The official languages are German and French. This bilingualism is a unique feature, which is especially valued.

History

The Canton of Bern has a state history of over 800 years. The city of Bern was founded as early as 1191. The city expanded rapidly thereafter. In 1798, Old Bern perished due to the invasion of the armies of the French Revolution. From 1831 democracy began to develop. Unified law was enacted for the first time by the new constitution. In 1848 Bern was established as the capital of Switzerland. In 1979, the Canton Jura was formed from three districts which seceded from the Canton Bern.

Customs and Traditions

The many regions and communities in the canton have different customs and traditions. Due to historical diversity, there is not one "shared" tradition for the all of Bern. The celebrations have hardly changed for centuries. In the Emmental, people celebrate different festivals than in the Seeland, and in the Bernese Oberland, different customs are practiced than in the Bernese Jura or the Mittelland. Each region has its unique traditions. Canton Bern keeps a list of still-practiced traditions. There is a special search engine for this.

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.hallo-bern.ch/en/canton-of-bern/brief-portrait