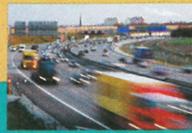


Land und Leute



Die viersprachige Schweiz

Invasions by several ethnic tribes over a period of many hundred years shaped Switzerland's linguistic character. Today there are four national languages, each one spoken in a specific region or regional pocket. About 64% of the population speaks German, 20% speaks French, and 7% is Italian-speaking. The fourth national language, Rhaeto-Romanic (**Rätoromanisch**) is spoken by less than 1% of the population. In a conscious effort to preserve that language, the Swiss voted in a constitutional referendum in 1996 to elevate Rhaeto-Romanic to the status of an official language (**Amtssprache**) of the Swiss Confederation. However, German, French, and Italian are the primary **Amtssprachen** used to conduct business and political affairs. Every Swiss can learn these languages at school and usually



Deutsch, Französisch, Italienisch und Rätoromanisch sind die vier Sprachen der Schweiz.

Zermatt is considered by many to be Switzerland's best all-round ski resort. At 1,620 meters (5,250 ft.), Zermatt is dominated by the Matterhorn (4,478 m. or 14,691 ft.), one of the world's most photographed and recognized mountains. All three of Zermatt's ski areas are above 3,100 m. (10,200 ft.) and are open from late November to early May, giving it the longest winter season in the Alps. Zermatt can be reached only by rail; no cars are allowed.

gains at least a passive understanding of them. Each of the four national languages has many dialects; Rhaeto-Romanic alone has five, while Swiss German has many more. Although High German (**Hochdeutsch**) is taught in the schools, many Swiss resist speaking it. **Hochdeutsch** is referred to as written German (**Schriftdeutsch**), and the primary spoken language of the German-speaking Swiss is called **Schwyzerdütsch** (see p. 336).



Das idyllische Bergdorf Zermatt am Fuß des Matterhorns (4478 m) ist auch im Sommer attraktiv.

From the perspective of its small size—the longest north-south distance is 137 miles (220 km) and the longest east-west distance is 216 miles (348 km)—and its many languages and dialects, Switzerland is linguistically and culturally a highly diversified country. Only in a political sense do the Swiss see themselves as a unit.

Land und Leute



Basel is a small city of 171,000 inhabitants, located on the Rhine, where Switzerland, Germany, and France meet. It is a center of international banking and the home of several very large pharmaceutical companies. Its history goes back 2,000 years to Celtic and Roman times. The Romans called the town Basilia (*royal stronghold*).

Today, Basel is noted for having one of the most famous Mardi Gras celebrations in Europe, the **Basler Fasnacht**, known especially for its unusual masks.

Schwyzerdütsch

Differences between Swiss German (**Schwyzerdütsch**) and High German (**Hochdeutsch**) include vocabulary, grammar endings, pronunciation, and sentence rhythm. Below is an example of Swiss German—a newspaper advertisement. The advertisement is looking for singers for the **Heimet-Chörli Basel** chorus is from the *Baslerstab*, a newspaper in Basel. While the newspaper is written in High German, some advertisements, such as this one, are written in the dialect spoken in Basel.



Heimet-Chörli Basel
Singsch au vo
Härze gärn?
Jodlerchörli suecht
Sängerinne,
probe dien mir
am Donnschtig Zobe
am achti im
Allmändhuus.
Uskunft 061 641 15 48

homeland

heart

Proben ... wir: we rehearse

German house
information

The High German translation of this advertisement is:

Heimat^o-Chor Basel
Singst du auch von
Herzen^o gern?
Jodlerchor sucht
Sängerinnen,
Proben tun wir^o
am Donnerstagabend
um acht im
Allemannenhau^o
Auskunft^o 061 641 15 48

Land und Leute



Zürich

Zurich (**Zürich**), with some 339,000 inhabitants, is Switzerland's largest city and a leading financial center of the world. It is a city with global influence and tremendous wealth. The Zurich stock exchange is the fourth largest in the world, after New York, London, and Tokyo. Zurich is a beautiful city in an attractive setting. **Zürichsee** (Lake Zurich) is at one end; pleasant parks and gardens line the banks of the Limmat River, which bisects the city; and snow-clad peaks of the Alps are visible in the distance. Like many other European cities, Zurich has a very old section, **die Altstadt**, and a newer part built mostly in the nineteenth century. **Die Altstadt** is characterized by narrow streets and many well-preserved old buildings, including the houses of thirteen medieval guilds which were crucial to Zurich's rise to financial importance. Among the city's churches, the **Fraumünster** dates back to 853, but the new part was constructed mainly in the nineteenth century and today contains stained-glass twentieth-century windows by Marc Chagall. Unlike most other important cities, Zurich has only three high-rise buildings of modest size. Also found here is the **Bahnhofstraße**, an elegant world-famous shopping street with expensive fashion, jewelry, and watch shops. The University of Zurich, with 21,000 students, is the largest in Switzerland and occupies a scenic setting on low hills not far from the city center.

In spite of its relatively small size, Zurich has an internationally recognized orchestra, the **Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich**, a widely recognized opera company, and an impressive theater housed in the **Schauspielhaus**.

A survey* comparing the quality of life in 215 world cities ranked Zurich first, just ahead of Geneva. The ranking is based on 39 criteria, including political, social, economic, and environmental conditions, as well as public safety, transportation, education, and health.



Einkaufen auf der Bahnhofstraße, Zürichs teuerster Adresse.

*Survey conducted by Mercer Human Resource Consulting.



Land und Leute

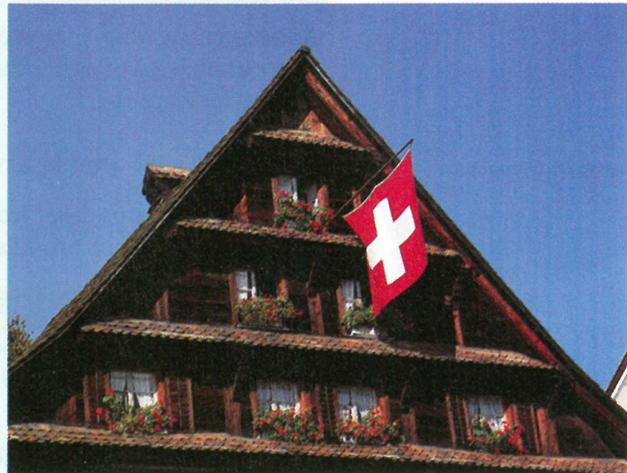
Schweizer Geschichte

Switzerland's roots reach back more than 2,000 years, when a Celtic people called the Helvetians lived in the area that is now Switzerland. Over the course of several hundred years, tribes known as the Alemanni, the Burgundians, and the Franks settled there as well. The Holy Roman Empire came into existence in AD 962, and most of this area became part of the Empire in the year 1033. In the 13th century, the Habsburg family—the ruling house of Austria (1282–1918) and rulers of the Empire—gained control over these regions. The cantons (**Kantone**) Schwyz, Uri, and Unterwalden started the Swiss Confederation (1291) and fought for their independence. The alliance of the three cantons is now celebrated by the August 1 national holiday. Between 1315 and 1388 Switzerland defeated Austria in three different wars and finally gained independence from the Holy Roman Empire in 1499. The period of greatest expansion came to an end in the sixteenth century. From that point on the Swiss Confederation began to embrace a policy of neutrality which was internationally recognized by the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Switzerland's declaration of neutrality during both World Wars exemplifies its continued policy of neutrality.

During the Nazi era in Germany, Switzerland accepted approximately 30,000 refugees, but also turned a similar number away. In 1996 it became known that Swiss banks had not properly maintained the accounts of many German Jews. Consequently a fund was set up to pay some \$1.25 billion to Holocaust survivors and heirs of victims who had deposited their money in Swiss banks.

Switzerland is composed of 26 cantons, three of which are divided into half-cantons. Although the country is exploring the possibility of joining the European Union, it currently remains independent and neutral. Switzerland is very prosperous, as reflected in its gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, the highest of all large Western European nations.

Its success on the world markets is due to the quality of such products as machinery, chemicals, textiles, precision instruments, and of course, watches. Internally the Swiss economy also enjoys the rewards of being a popular tourist destination.



Ein Beispiel für Schweizer Architektur aus dem Kanton Schwyz.

Land und Leute



Die politischen Institutionen der Schweiz

Although political life in Switzerland is essentially based in the cantons (comparable to states in the United States and provinces in Canada), federal affairs are represented by several constitutional bodies.



Der Nationalrat tagt (*convenes*) in Bern.

Swiss citizens must be at least 18 years old to vote for the National Council (**Nationalrat**). Each citizen can vote for a party and a candidate. Elections for the Council of States (**Ständerat**) vary according to cantonal law. The National Council and the Council of States form the Federal Assembly (**Bundesversammlung**), which elects a cabinet of Federal Ministers (**Bundesrat**) and the Federal President (**Bundespräsident/ Bundespräsidentin**). Although the President is the head of state, his/her duties are largely ceremonial and he/she does not hold special power within the government.

The Federal Assembly decides on new or amended laws. However, if within three months of such a decision 50,000 signatures are collected from voters, the law must be put to the Swiss people for a vote. The law then takes effect only if the majority votes in favor of it. Examples of recent referenda results are: (1) 1992: Approval of Switzerland's joining the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. (2) 1993: Approval of an increase in the gasoline tax and the introduction of a value-added tax to replace the sales tax. Rejection of an initiative to ban ads for alcohol and tobacco products. (3) 1994: Approval of a ban in 10 years on all heavy trucks traveling through Switzerland to other European countries. Mandatory hauling of such cargo by rail. Moratorium on the building of new highways. (4) 2001: A third defeat of a referendum to join the European Union. 2002: Passage of a referendum to join the UN. (5) 2000: Defeat of a move to limit the immigrant population to 18%. (6) 2007: Passage of a referendum that withholds welfare benefits from new arrivals unless they present required documents within 24 hours, documents that few foreigners possess. 2008: Rejection of a referendum that would have allowed townspeople to vote by secret ballot on whether to grant citizenship to their neighbors.

Despite Switzerland's long democratic tradition, it was not until 1971 that women gained the right to vote in federal elections and to hold federal office. In 1981 a referendum was passed that bars discrimination against women under canton as well as federal law.