

Welcome to Bern!



«The city is the most beautiful we have ever seen»

- Goethe about Bern in 1779

The city of Bern is the political center of Switzerland. It is well-known for its high quality of life, cultural offerings and tourist attractions. Bern is also home to international organizations and enterprises. It has gained a reputation as a place of research and science. As the capital city and the seat of the parliament, government and administration at all three levels of government, Bern is a unique place in Switzerland.

The partners' and spouses' association ACET-VEEDA has put this guide together to help you find your way and settle in, organized in the following sections:

- Moving to Bern and living in Switzerland
- Children and schools
- Work and volunteering
- Leisure time, events and culture
- Support for partners and spouses of FDFA employees
- Services and getting around
- Emergency information

Please note: This document is intended to provide helpful general information for partners and spouses who are moving to the Bern area. Although we have done our best to provide accurate information in this document, this information may change at any time, and it is the reader's responsibility to do their own research. ACET-VEEDA cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage resulting from the use of this document, and is not responsible for the content on external websites.

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1 MOVING TO BERN AND LIVING IN SWITZERLAND

History

Bern is the seat of the city, cantonal and federal parliaments, governments and public administrations, and therefore plays a central role in the political life of Switzerland. It has also developed into a major tourist attraction thanks to the picturesque old town, which is a UNESCO world heritage site.

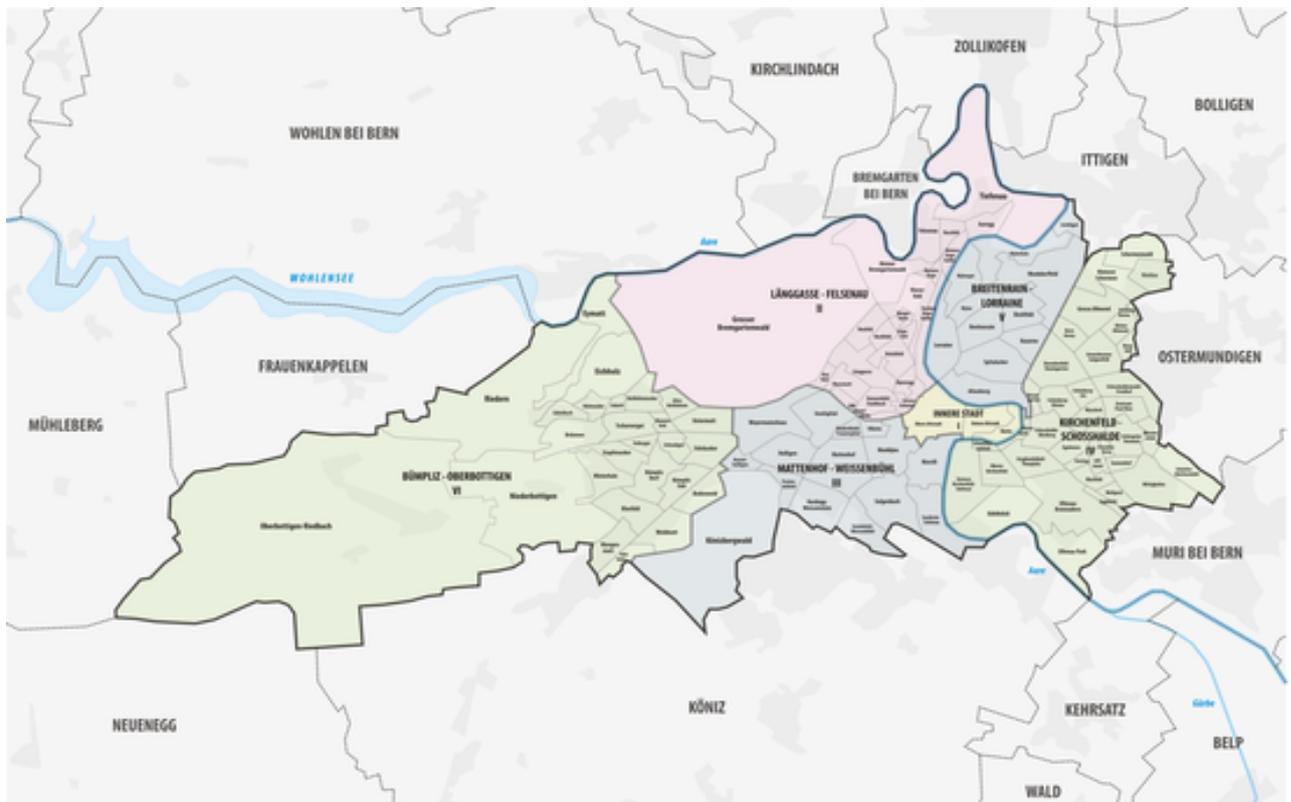
Milestones in Bern's history:

- 1191 founded by the dukes of Zähringen
- 1353 joined the original Swiss Confederacy
- 1848 selected as capital of Switzerland
- In the 20th century, the city developed into a modern service center, the seat of international organisations and companies
- In the early 21st century several major constructions were built by renowned architects (for example, the Paul Klee Centre and Brünnen-Westside).

Finding a place to live

City or suburbs?

Personal preferences, budget, or even the family situation influence the search for housing. Many "new-comers" want to live as close as possible to the center of the city. However, it is worth keeping an open mind and considering other parts of the city or even neighboring communities. Bern is small, and you can reach the city center and the train station from anywhere in a short time by bus and streetcar. If you live close to the city, you can also get to work by bike!



Inner city / Old-town	Historic old town, UNESCO World Heritage Site
Länggasse / Felsenau	Many university buildings are in Länggasse, so it's a very popular quarter for students and lecturers, relatively close to the city center
Mattenhof / Weissenbühl	Quiet neighborhood, relatively close to the center; the river Aare and the Gurten (Bern's local mountain) are not far away
Kirchenfeld / Schosshalde	Many embassies are located in Kirchenfeld; the atmosphere (and the prices) are accordingly upscale
Breitenrain / Lorraine	Popular and very lively residential area, relatively close to the city center
Bümpliz / Oberbottigen	Less expensive residential area; with streetcar and S-Bahn you can quickly reach the center
Around Bern...	Many communities around Bern are so close and easily accessible by public transport that you hardly notice that you don't live "in Bern", e.g. Köniz, Kehrsatz, Bremgarten, Ostermundigen, Wabern, Zollikofen, Ittigen, etc.

The search for an apartment is easier from Bern and if you make appointments to view the apartments yourself, and you will also get a better feel for each neighborhood and its schools, shopping, and public transportation. We encourage you to make a trip to Bern for the housing search if it all possible.

As renters may only give notice of giving up their apartments at a few specific times a year, many of the apartments on offer will not be ready for immediate occupancy, and might only be available in 1-3 months.

It can be a special challenge to find an apartment if you have a dog or cat. In many apartment buildings pets are not allowed. Be sure to clarify this early on when applying for an apartment.

Where to find listings for apartments and houses

For information on current accommodation offers, see the «Anzeiger Region Bern», the daily newspapers and www.bern.ch/accomodationrenting (*in German*). You can also find many online listings at Immoscout (<https://www.immoscout24.ch/en>) and on Homegate (<https://www.homegate.ch/>). Information on the current residential building projects is available at: www.bern.ch/wohnstadt (*in German*).

Authority for real estate issues

Immobilien Stadt Bern (ISB) is the expert authority for real estate issues in the city of Bern. As the representative for all municipal properties, they manage the city's residential buildings, commercial properties, public buildings, sites and building rights.

Property Management (Immobilien Stadt Bern)
Bundesgasse 33
3011 Bern
+41 31 321 60 60
immobilien@bern.ch
www.bern.ch/immobilien (*in German*)

Number of rooms

When specifying the number of rooms in an apartment, only living and dining areas and bedrooms are counted. Kitchen and bathroom are not counted. A 3-room apartment therefore consists of 2 bedrooms, 1 living/dining area plus kitchen and bathroom.

Important: To get a residence permit in Bern you have to prove that you live in a "needs-based" apartment. This is the number of people in the family minus 1, so a family of four needs a 3-room apartment. Couples need at least a 1.5 - 2 room apartment!

Appliances

Most apartments in Bern are rented unfurnished, but kitchen appliances are usually provided (refrigerator, stove, cupboard, sink). Often, several tenants share a washing machine/drier in the same building. The use is regulated by a washing plan. Apartments in newer buildings may have their own washing machines.

Application

After viewing an apartment, interested parties fill out an application or registration form. This form asks for various personal details: age, marital status, employer, salary, residence status, liability and household insurance. An extract from the debt collection register is also requested as proof of one's ability to pay the rent. If you are new in Switzerland, you do not yet have an entry in the debt collection register. It is best to explain the situation to the landlord. (Is there a similar authority in your home country? Maybe you can get a confirmation there).

Rental agreement and deposit (deposit)

Before moving in, the payment of a deposit is required, usually between one and three months' rent.

Liability and household insurance

Liability and household insurance is also advisable for apartments. It can cover damages in the rented apartment. Proof of a liability insurance is often obligatory in rental contracts!

House rules

The house rules regulate, for example, times when occupants should not make too much noise, or the use of common areas. Read your lease agreement and the corresponding house rules carefully.

Handover of the apartment and defects report when moving in

When you move in, a handover or defects report is drawn up together with the landlord. This will show exactly what condition the apartment is in when you move in. Damage that occurs after you move in must be reported to the landlord.

Notice of termination

Be aware that there are specific requirements about giving notice to cancel a rental contract! It is often the case that you may not cancel a rental agreement within the first year. There are specific deadlines by when you must notify your landlord that you intend to move out, and notices of termination as of 31.12. are not permitted. If you want to get out of the lease early, you will have to find suitable new tenants yourself.

Final cleaning and handover protocol when moving out

The apartment must be handed over to the landlord as clean as it was when you moved in - and that means much more than just "broom clean"! If the apartment is not cleaned properly, the landlord will charge you for cleaning.

Tip: If you can afford it and want to, hire a cleaning service. Many providers have specialized in this service segment!

Tenants' Association

The Tenants' Association (Bern Section) provides information about rights and obligations in a tenancy relationship. For special legal advice, however, you must be a member.

SERAFE

In Switzerland, a reception fee of CHF 1 per day is charged for TV and radio. Computers and cell phones also count as possible reception devices. More information can be found on the Serafe website.

Legal advice and arbitration for renters

Regional Conciliation Authority Bern-Mittelland (Regionale Schlichtungsbehörde Bern-Mittelland)
Bern-Mittelland
Effingerstrasse 34
3008 Bern
+41 31 635 47 50

schlichtungsbehoerde.bern@justice.be.ch
www.justice.be.ch (in German and French)

Resources about living in Switzerland and understanding Swiss culture

The internet portal "MySwitzerland" (<https://www.myswitzerland.com/en-ch/>) has helpful information for preparing to live in Switzerland.

The following books might be helpful (in English):

- Diccon Bewes: Swiss Watching. Inside the Land of Milk and Honey. Brealey, London 2010
- David Hampshire: Living and Working in Switzerland. A Survival Handbook. London 2007.
- Gianni Haver, Mix & Remix: Swissness in a nutshell. Bergli Books, Basel 2014.
- Margaret Oertig-Davidson: Beyond Chocolate - understanding Swiss culture. Bergli Books, Basel 2011.

The Swiss government has a brochure about returning to Switzerland for Swiss citizens which may be helpful, and can be found here:

https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/eda/en/documents/publications/AuslandschweizerinnenundAuslandschweizer/Ratgeber/ratgeber-rueckkehr-auslandschweizer_EN.pdf

Learning German or French

Being able to speak German (or French, if you live in the French-speaking part) will make daily life much easier when living in Switzerland. Popular language schools include [Alemania](#), [Inlingua](#), [Migros Klubschule](#), and the [International Language School \(ILS\)](#), among others. The city of Bern has a search machine for German courses in Bern, which you can find at <https://www.bern.ch/en/topics/foreign-nationals/german-courses>.

The FDFA provides some support for partners and spouses to learn a Swiss language; you can find more information on the [Family Office website](#) (please note, you must be registered with the Family Office to see the content on their website).

2 CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS

Childcare

«Kita», «Tagi» or «Ferieninsel» – which childcare offering is right for your child? There are several options for childcare outside of the family; here is a starting point.

Kitas and Tagis (day care centers)

General Information: Familie & Quartier Stadt Bern

Tel. +41 31 321 51 15

familieundquartier@bern.ch

All-day schools and Ferieninseln (offers for day care during school vacations)

Schulamt der Stadt Bern

Tel. +41 31 321 64 60

schulamt@bern.ch

Child Minders

Tageseltern Bern

Tel. +41 31 311 77 16

Mail: tageseltern@leolea.ch

Additional childcare offerings

Soziokultur

Tel. +41 31 321 60 42

Mail: soziokultur@bern.ch

Toy libraries

Toy libraries lend out toys and games, encouraging play and initiating play activities.

Ludothek Breitenrain

Stauffacherstrasse 2

3014 Bern

+41 31 332 47 50

breitenrain@kornhausbibliotheken.ch

www.kornhausbibliotheken.ch/Breitenrain (German)

Ludothek Bern West

Im Tscharnergut

Waldmannstrasse 75

3027 Bern

+41 31 991 03 01

ludobern-west@gmx.ch

Spielbetrieb Lorraine (Ludothek-Lorraine)

Lorrainestrasse 17

3013 Bern

www.spieleninbern.ch (German)

Free gymnastics for toddlers

Every Tuesday and Sunday two sports halls are open for kids between 1 and 4 years old and their parents. Kids can jump, run and spend their energy in a room full of mattresses and fun equipment at:

Turnhalle EWB
Bürklenstrasse 73, Bern

Regionales Leistungszentrum (RLZ)
Nationalen Pferdezentrum (NPZ), Halle 31
Mingerstrasse 3, Bern

<https://btvbern.ch/kinderturnen/krabbel-gym-1-4-jahre/>

Schooling and education

In Switzerland, almost all children attend the public school in the community where they live, which is free of charge. If you have any questions or concerns about schools, the local authority or the school management can provide you with information specific to your municipality.

Information about the public school system in the canton of Bern:

https://www.erz.be.ch/erz/de/index/kindergarten_volksschule/kindergarten_volksschule/informationen_fuereltern/broschueren/english.html

Information on school readiness and how it is decided whether a child is ready for school:

https://www.erz.be.ch/erz/de/index/erziehungsberatung/erziehungsberatung/regionalstellen/bern/downloads_der_erziehungsberatungbern.assetref/dam/documents/ERZ/AKVB/de/Erziehungsberatung/Regionalstellen/Bern/Info%20Fremdsprachige/EB_BE_englisch_%20schulbere

Many municipalities, especially in larger towns and cities, offer a day-school program with different options such as

- Early care before classes start in the morning
- Lunch care
- Afternoon care after school or on school-free afternoons, including homework supervision

Parents can register their children for the individual services according to their needs. It is important to clarify in advance which options are available.

Information about day-school program in the different municipalities in Bern:

https://www.erz.be.ch/erz/de/index/kindergarten_volksschule/kindergarten_volksschule/schulergaenzen_demassnahmen.assetref/dam/documents/ERZ/AKVB/de/10_Tagesschulen/tas_karte_bestehende_ang_ebote_d.pdf

The education authority is responsible for issues related to kindergarten and primary school registrations; for information, advice and integration of children and young people with a different mother tongue or from different cultures; and for extra-curricular childcare measures such as day schools, holiday camp and homework tutoring.

Schulamt (education authority for the city of Bern)

Effingerstrasse 21
3008 Bern
+41 31 321 64 60
schulamt@bern.ch
www.bern.ch/schulamt (German)

Private schools in and around Bern

If you would like to have your child attend private school, for example in French or English, there are several schools in Bern and the surrounding area. Please note that in most cases, the children of transferable FDFA families are expected to attend public school while living in Switzerland. However, in limited situations, the FDFA may however provide financial support for students to attend private school in Switzerland (for example, if your child is returning to Switzerland in late middle school or high school and is not able to attend public school in German). FDFA Families who would like more information about support for private schooling should contact their contact person in HR, or the Family Office.

École Française Internationale de Berne (EFIB)

Sulgenrain 11, Bern

The school has an agreement with AEFÉ (Agence pour l'Enseignement Français à l'Étranger), and is approved by the French Ministry of Education and the Department of Education of the Canton of Bern. The school is under the auspices of the French Embassy. In 2016, the EFB changed its name to the International French School of Bern (EFIB), underlining the international character of the school. The language of instruction is French.

www.efib.ch/

International School of Berne (ISBerne)

Allmendingenweg 9, Muri bei Bern

The International School of Berne (ISBerne) in Switzerland is open for students from kindergarten to grade 12, and offers an IB program. ISBerne has over 50 years of experience delivering high-quality Swiss international education. The language of instruction is English.

www.isberne.ch/

International School of Berne Online

ISBerne Online is an American online school for students in Kindergarten to Grade 12, and offers an American high school diploma upon graduation. ISBerne Online was established as a sister school to the International School of Berne (ISBerne) in Switzerland. The language of instruction is English.

<https://isberneonline.com/>

Montessori Schule Bern

Lentulusstrasse 30

The Montessori School Bern is a small, state-approved private school offering education according to the educational principles of Maria Montessori, from kindergarten from 4 years old to 6th grade. From summer 2021 they will offer an upper school from the 7th to the 9th grade. The language of instruction is German.

www.montessori-bern.ch

Rudolf Steiner Schule

Bern, Ittigen, Langnau

The Rudolf Steiner School Bern Ittigen Langnau has three locations with different offers. In principle, it is open to children and young people from all walks of life. At present, around 740 students aged 4 to 20 are taught, from kindergarten at the elementary level to the Integrative Middle School IMS. For younger children, some as young as 3, there are playgroup offerings. The language of instruction is German.

www.steinerschule-bern.ch

The British School

Sperlisacher 2, Bern

The British School of Bern is an English-speaking, international day school established in 1988. It is for pupils of all nationalities from the ages of three to twelve years.

www.britishschool.ch

John F. Kennedy International School

Chilchgasse 2, Saanen

This small school offers a family-oriented educational environment to motivate students to fully develop their talents and skills in order to prepare them for acceptance into the most demanding secondary schools. They offer preschool, primary and middle school for children age 2.5 to 14 in English.

www.jfk.ch

Campus Muristalden

Muristrasse 8, Bern

The Muristalden campus combines many things under one roof: the entire compulsory schooling period from basic school to the 9th school year (final obligatory year of school); an optional 10th school year for students who are not university bound; a lower secondary school; and an upper secondary school with a cantonal and federally recognized Matura (pre-university high school diploma). The school also offers special education and the KTS (ecclesiastical theological school) round off the wide range of courses on offer. The language of instruction is German.

www.muristalden.ch

Freies Gymnasium Bern

Beaulieustrasse 55, Bern

At Freigymer, children and young people encounter a stimulating learning environment that motivates them to do their best. As early as the 5th grade, they prepare their students to enter Gymnasium. Students may be accepted to the Freigymer at any level if there is space. The language of instruction is German.

www.freigymer.ch

NMS Bern

Waisenhausplatz 29, Bern

NMS Bern offers the entire compulsory schooling period from basic school to the 9th school year, a possible 10th school year, the lower secondary school and the upper secondary school with a cantonal and federally recognized Matura. The language of instruction is German.

www.nmsbern.ch

EduParc Biel-Bienne AG

Zukunftsstrasse 56, Biel

EduParc Biel is a bilingual school (German and French) in Biel with very small classes and a more individualized approach. The school offers the entire compulsory schooling period from basic school to the 9th school year and the 10th school year.

www.eduparc.ch

Special needs and extra support

Information on schooling for children with physical, hearing and intellectual disabilities in Bern is available from the education authority of the city of Bern. You can find some information here about programs for gifted students, extra classroom support, speech therapy, support for foreign students, and psychomotor therapy here (*in German and French*):

<https://www.bern.ch/themen/bildung/schule/foerderangebote>

Assessment and next steps for children with disabilities and learning differences

If you or your child's teacher or doctor are concerned about your child's development and ability to learn in school, an assessment of your child can be requested. The results of the assessment can be used to determine if your child needs extra support in school, or perhaps a different school.

https://www.erz.be.ch/erz/de/index/erziehungsberatung/erziehungsberatung/unser_angebot/schulpsychologie.html

Educational counseling and guidance: Erziehungsberatungsstelle des Kantons Bern

Bern's contact point for parents concerned about their child's development, problems in school, difficulties at home, health and social issues to do with school.

+41 31 633 41 41

<https://www.erz.be.ch/erz/de/index/erziehungsberatung/erziehungsberatung.html> (*in German, French*)

School health and social services (Schulärztlicher Dienst und Schulsozialarbeit)

This is a contact point for social questions, problems and crises. The services can be used by children and adolescents, parents, caregivers, and teachers. Counseling by the school social worker is free of charge. This Website also provides information for parents about children's health issues.

+41 31 321 68 27

www.bern.ch/gesundheitsdienst (*in German*)

Service for parents with a foreign mother tongue

The **Verein für fremdsprachige Eltern und Bildung** (Association for Parents with a Foreign Mother Tongue and Education) provides information about kindergartens, school and the choice of career. It also organises parents' evenings on the subject of the Bernese school system.

+41 31 331 50 63
fremdsprachige_eltern@yahoo.de

Mother-child (“MuKi”) German courses

The city of Bern Schools Office runs mother-and-child (“MuKi”) German courses for mothers and their three- to five-year-olds in some districts. Mothers can learn the basics of the German language and about living in Switzerland. The children can benefit from playing with others and take their first steps in German in a play environment.

<https://www.bern.ch/themen/bildung/vorschule/muki-deutsch>

Optional extra programs for students to support their non-Swiss language and culture

Students with a background, parent or parents from outside of Switzerland may attend extracurricular courses in their native language. These courses help strengthen the child’s first (or second or third) language and promote multilingualism and multiculturalism. Different cities in Switzerland offer different HSK (*Heimatliche Sprache und Kultur*; Native Languages and Cultures) programs.

https://www.ern.be.ch/ern/de/index/kindergarten_volksschule/kindergarten_volksschule/interkulturelle_bildung/hsk-unterricht.html#originRequestUri=www.ern.be.ch/hsk

Universities in the canton of Bern

There are three universities for students wishing to study in the canton of Bern:

University of Bern

Hochschulstrasse 4
3012 Bern
+41 31 631 81 11
www.unibe.ch

Bern University of Applied Sciences (Berner Fachhochschulen)

Falkenplatz 24
3012 Bern
+41 31 848 33 00
office@bfh.ch
www.bfh.ch

University for Teacher Education (Pädagogische Hochschule Bern)**Generalsekretariat**

Fabrikstrasse 2
3012 Bern
+41 31 309 20 11
generalsekretariat@phbern.ch
www.phbern.ch (German)

3 WORK AND VOLUNTEERING

The Swiss job market, CVs, and job application process may all be quite different from where you were previously posted. Be sure to inform yourself well, adjust your CV to a Swiss format (for example, that usually means including a professional picture of yourself, your date of birth, marital status and citizenship on the CV), and be sure you understand what employers expect to receive in a job application. Be sure to keep your profile up-to-date and professional on LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/>). Here are a few links for the job search to get you started.

The Swiss government provides some tips on finding a job for Swiss citizens returning to Switzerland here: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa/living-abroad/returning-to-switzerland/seeking-employment-switzerland.html>

Tips for the job search and a search engine for current vacancies:
<https://www.job-room.ch/home/job-seeker>

Manpower temporary agency: <https://www.manpower.ch/en/>

Kampa jobs focuses on jobs in the non-profit sector: <https://www.kampajobs.ch/>

Jobs within the Swiss government: <https://www.stelle.admin.ch/stelle/de/home.html>

The ACET-VEEDA website has some information and help for members who are looking for a job; see <https://acet-veeda.ch/help/>. You will need to be logged in to the website to see the information there.

The Family Office offers some courses to partners and spouses of FDFA transferable staff who wish to work, including courses on career orientation and self employment. You can check current course offerings on their website (<https://www.shareweb.ch/group/Family-Office--Anlaufstelle-fuer-Begleitpersonen/SitePages/Community%20Home.aspx>); you must be registered with the Family Office to see this information.

Foreign degrees

If you completed your studies outside of Switzerland, you may need to apply to have your degree recognized in Switzerland in order to help your job search. Different authorities are responsible for recognizing degrees. For initial information, please contact:

State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation SERI (Staatssekretariat für Bildung, Forschung und Innovation SBFI)

Einsteinstrasse 2
3003 Bern
+41 58 462 21 29
info@sbf.admin.ch
www.sbf.admin.ch

Voluntary work

BENEVOL Bern is a coordination center for people wishing to work on a volunteer basis, with volunteer job listings all over Switzerland in a wide range of sectors and services.
www.benevolbern.ch/ (*in German*)

4 LEISURE TIME, EVENTS AND CULTURE

Animal parks

BärenPark Bern / BearPark

Bears have been kept in Bern since 1513. Until 1857 they were in the city itself, then in the “Bear Pit” and, from 2009, in the BearPark. This park was specially created to be suitable for the bears, the Bernese heraldic animal. The bears can be observed playing, swimming and eating. Open 365 days per year; entrance is free.

Grosser Muristalden 6
3006 Bern
www.tierpark-bern.ch

Dählhölzli Tierpark Bern

Dählhölzli is the name of Bern’s zoo and of the neighbouring recreation area on the River Aare. Open 365 days a year.

Tierparkweg 1
3005 Bern
+41 31 357 15 15
www.tierpark-bern.ch

Community centers

Community centers offer foreign and Swiss nationals alike many opportunities for participating in local life. A directory of Bern’s organizations and community centers, plus information about the advice on offer, current projects, courses, events and restaurants are available from:

Vereinigung Berner Gemeinwesenarbeit (VBG)
Bollwerk 39
Postfach
3001 Bern
+41 31 312 50 06
info@vbgbern.ch
www.vbgbern.ch (German)

The **Sozialwegweiser** (Social directory) provides a wealth of offers available from social organisations.
<https://www.bern.ch/sozialwegweiser> (in German)

Further information is available at:

Soziokultur - Services for Children, Adolescents and Families

Bahnhofplatz 2
Berner Generationenhaus
3011 Bern
+41 31 321 60 42
soziokultur@bern.ch
www.bern.ch/soziokultur (German)

Events

Some of the larger annual events and festivals are:

Inline Night	www.inlinenightbern.ch/ (German)
Fasnacht (Carnival)	www.fasnacht.be (German)
International Jazz Festival Bern	www.jazzfestivalbern.ch
Night of the Museums	www.museumsnacht-bern.ch (German)
BEA / Horse Exhibition	www.beapferd.ch (German, French)
Bärner Graniummärit	www.bernergraniummärit.ch (German)
Bern GrandPrix Run	www.gpbern.ch (German, French)
Switzerland's Ladies' Run	www.frauenlauf.ch (German, French)
Gurtenfestival	www.gurtenfestival.ch/en
Bundesfeier (National Day)	www.bern.ch/swissnationalday
Busker's Music Festival	www.buskersbern.ch/en
Shnit Kurzfilm-Festival	www.shnit.org
Zibelemärit (Onion Market)	www.bern.ch/zibelemärit (German)

Markets

Bern is also a city of markets. The many regular weekly markets as well as big market events, such as the annual Graniummärit (geranium market) and the Zibelemärit (onion market), draw visitors from near and far.

Weekly Market

On the Waisenhausplatz, every Tuesday and Saturday

Fruit, Vegetable, Meat and Flower Market

On the Bärenplatz, the Bundesplatz and the neighbouring lanes and the Münsterergasse every Tuesday and Saturday morning. On the Bärenplatz, daily between April and October and in December.

Crafts Market

On the Münsterplattform, usually the first Saturday of every month from March to December. During Advent additional dates.

Flea Market

On the Mühleplatz in the Matte, the third Saturday of every month, May to October.

Geranium Market (Granium-Märit)

On the Bundesplatz, end of April.

Market of Wild Plants

On the Federal Square, late April

Pro Specie Rara - Ornamental Plant Market

Elfenau, mid-May

Bern Christmas Markets

On the Waisenhausplatz, daily during Advent

On the Münsterplatz, daily during Advent

Zibelemärit (Onion Market)

The fourth Monday in November

For further information:

www.bern.ch/märkte (in German)

www.marktbern.ch (in German)

www.bern.com

www.bernergraniummärit.ch (in German)

Museums

Kunstmuseum Bern / Bern Art Museum

Hodlerstrasse 8

<https://www.kunstmuseumbern.ch/>



The Kunstmuseum Bern is the oldest art museum in Switzerland with a permanent collection and houses works covering eight centuries. Works by Paul Klee, Pablo Picasso, Ferdinand Hodler and Meret Oppenheim have made the Kunstmuseum Bern an institution with an international reputation. The growing and collection currently consists of over 4,000 paintings and sculptures as well as 50,000 drawings, prints, photographs, videos and films.

Bernisches Historisches Museum / Einstein Museum

Helvetiaplatz 5

<https://www.bhm.ch/en/>



The Bernisches Historisches Museum is one of the most important museums of cultural history in Switzerland. Its collections of archaeology, history and ethnography include approximately 500,000 objects dating from the Stone Age to the present, and represent cultures from all over the world.

Naturhistorisches Museum / Natural History Museum

Bernastrasse 14

<https://www.nmbe.ch/en>



Alongside those in Basel and Geneva, Bern's natural history museum is one of the most important in Switzerland. The museum's collection includes the legendary rescue dog Barry, giant crystals from Planggenstock, and a collection of African animals from big game hunter Bernhard von Wattenwyl.

Museum für Kommunikation / Museum of Communication

Helvetiastrasse 16

<https://www.mfk.ch/home/>



Children and teenagers love it! It's the only museum in Switzerland which addresses the history of communication. It's not the technology, but rather people that are the focus here.

Zentrum Paul Klee

Monument im Fruchtländ

<https://www.zpk.org/>

With around 4000 works, the museum has the world's most significant collection of Klee's paintings, aquarelles and drawings, and includes archive and biographical material from all the periods of Paul Klee's work.



The Zentrum Paul Klee also houses the children's museum **Creaviva**, where everyone can explore their artistic skills and express themselves creatively with the support of professional artists and art educators. Families can explore the «Interactive Exhibition», the «Open Studio» or the «5 Franc Studio». A number of courses for all ages deepen the understanding of techniques and themes of art and inspire the creative mind

More museums and information can be found at <https://www.museen-bern.ch/>

Music lessons

The «Konservatorium Bern Music School» offers a wide range of musical training.

Musikschule Konservatorium Bern

Kramgasse 36

3011 Bern

+41 31 326 53 53

office@konsibern.ch

www.konsibern.ch (German)

Parks and playgrounds

Are you looking for somewhere nearby to rest, relax, take a walk or play? Popular parks in the city center include Rosengarten, Kleine Schanze, Münsterplattform, Grosse Schanze. Information on the extensive choice of parks and playgrounds is available at:

<https://www.bern.ch/themen/freizeit-und-sport> (in German); another list of playgrounds can be found here: <https://www.bern.ch/themen/kinder-jugendliche-und-familie/Kinder/kinderangebote-kindertreffs-und-spielplaetze>

Sporting activities

The Sports and Leisure Department (Sportamt) runs sporting activities for the entire population (gymnastics at school, extra-curricular school sports, popular sports, team sports, sports for everybody, sports for senior citizens) as well as sporting programmes during the holidays, holiday camps and holiday sports camps. You will find a comprehensive list of sports clubs and associations, pools and ice rinks with addresses and links online at:

www.bern.ch/sportamt

sportamt@bern.ch

www.faeager.ch (in German)

Performances – Konzert Theater Bern

www.konzerttheaterber.ch



With over 100 musicians from the Bern Symphony Orchestra and permanent ensembles in the fields of music theater, drama and dance, Konzert Theater Bern is the largest concert theater in the Bern region. For performances, Konzert Theater Bern has three stages in the Vidmarhallen in Bern Liebefeld, in addition to the Municipal Theater on Kornhausplatz. The home venue of the Bern Symphony Orchestra is the Casino on Theaterplatz, and other venues include the Bern Conservatory and the Diaconis Church.

Venues to rent

Soziokultur - Services for Children, Adolescents and Families

Bahnhofplatz 2

Berner Generationenhaus

3011 Bern

+41 31 321 60 42

soziokultur@bern.ch

www.bern.ch/raummieten (German)

5 SUPPORT FOR PARTNERS AND SPOUSES OF TRANSFERABLE FDFA EMPLOYEES

ACET-VEEDA

ACET-VEEDA is the independent membership association of partners and spouses of transferable Swiss government employees. ACET-VEEDA...

- provides practical information for its members (including this guide) on a variety of topics such as employment, taxation, schooling, emergency preparedness, and others;
- organizes courses and workshops;
- offers social events and networking opportunities; and
- advocates for partners' and spouses' issues in regular discussions with the FDFA

<https://acet-veeda.ch/>

The Family Office

The Family Office is a service offered by the FDFA specifically for partners and spouses of transferable FDFA employees. The Family Office provides information, courses, and events for accompanying persons. Partners and spouses may be able to take courses to help them to find a job, learn about self employment, or learn a Swiss language. Please note, you will need to register with the Family Office in order to see the content on their website.

www.familyoffice.eda.admin.ch

familyoffice@eda.admin.ch

Phone +41 584 66 00 00

6 SERVICES AND GETTING AROUND

Banks

If you do not already have a bank account in Switzerland, you may want to open an account at a bank that has experience with expats and transferable staff, which can make keeping your account easier when you move abroad again. Some banks to try include BEKB, Migros Bank, Raiffeisen Bank, UBS, and Valiant Bank. You can find information about the locations and opening hours of banks on the relevant websites on the Internet.

Doctors and specialists

Find the right family doctor or specialist in your area quickly and free of charge: The official and complete directory of doctors in Switzerland (FMH) includes over 30,000 entries and is updated daily.

<https://hp.doctorfmh.ch/ges/bekag/?k=4>

Post offices

Information on post offices and opening hours: www.post.ch
Phone: 0848 888 888

Shop opening hours

Bern's shops are open six days a week. Generally, the following opening times apply:

Monday to Friday	09.00–19.00 (some until 20.00)
Thursday (late-night opening)	09.00–21.00
Saturday	08.00–17.00
Sunday	Closed all day, except shops at the main station

Libraries

Bern's libraries have books, audio books, films, newspapers and periodicals, specialised publications, and public Internet access.

Kornhaus Libraries

Access to a varied, constantly up-dated selection of books, journals, audio-visual media, sound carriers and games. There are nine branches in the districts. Information is available from:
www.kornhausbibliotheken.ch (German)

Kornhausbibliothek Hauptstelle

Kornhausplatz 18
3011 Bern
+41 31 327 10 10

info@kornhausbibliotheken.ch

During the summer: reading and games pavilions on the Münsterplattform and in the Rose Garden.

Bern University Library (Universitätsbibliothek Bern)

Basisbibliothek Unitobler

Länggassstrasse 49a

Postfach

3000 Bern 9

+41 31 631 47 01

bto@ub.unibe.ch

Universitätsbibliothek Bern

Teilbibliothek Münsterergasse / Münsterergasse library

Münsterergasse 61-63

3011 Bern

+41 31 631 92 11
muenstergasse@ub.unibe.ch

Swiss National Library
Schweizerische Nationalbibliothek
Hallwylstrasse 15
3003 Bern
+41 58 462 89 35
info@nb.admin.ch
www.nb.admin.ch/en

Transportation

On foot or by bike

Bern is small and easy to get around by foot or by bike, helping to keep the city environmentally friendly. The city of Bern encourages walking, cycling and the use of public transport within its borders and its surrounding areas.

Bike stations and bike parking

Six bike stations with approximately 2,000 safe stands are located in the city center at the following locations:

Milchgässli bike station
PostParc bike station
Bollwerk bike station
Schanzenbrücke bike station
Waisenhausplatz bike station
Hochschulzentrum vonRoll bike station

For information on charging fees and additional services, please see www.velostationbern.ch (*in German*) or www.bern.ch/velostationen (*in German*).

Bus, train, tram

Public transport in Bern and all of Switzerland is excellent and reliable. Tickets are required on all public transportation; the cost can really add up, especially if you travel by train every day. If you are living in Switzerland, and will regularly use public transportation, you may want to consider getting a pass for half fare ("Halbtax") or an annual pass ("General Abonnement") which covers most of Switzerland's trains, buses, trams and even boats. Reduced price passes are also available for children, students, and others. As there are many passes to cover many different situations, it may be best to go to an SBB office and describe your situation to find the best options for you and your family members. The SBB mobile app for mobile phones has timetables and can suggest the best travel routes for travel by train, bus and tram in all of Switzerland.

The BERNMOBIL Infocenter is the main address for all matters pertaining to public transport in the city and region of Bern (customer service, timetables, demonstration of automatic ticket machines with touch screen) or Schweizerische Bundesbahnen (SBB) for railway all over Switzerland.

BERNMOBIL Infocenter

Bärenplatz 8
3011 Bern
+41 31 321 88 44
kundendienst@bernmobil.ch
www.bernmobil.ch (German)

Schweizerische Bundesbahnen (SBB)

Berne Railway Station
0900 300 300 (RailService / Subject to charge)
www.sbb.ch/en

MOONLINER Night buses for the city and the region

Night buses from Bahnhofplatz / Thursday to Saturday
Nachtliniengesellschaft (NLG)
c/o BERNMOBIL
Eigerplatz 3
Postfach
3000 Bern 14
+41 31 321 88 12
moonliner@bernmobil.ch
www.moonliner.ch (German, French)

Travelling by car**Parking in ticket zones**

A ticket must be purchased to use any of the public car parks. Residents can apply for annual parking permits. Information and application forms are available from the Polizeiinspektorat:

Polizeiinspektorat
Predigergasse 5
Postfach
3001 Bern
+41 31 321 51 51
polizeiinspektorat@bern.ch
www.bern.ch/polizeiinspektorat (German)

Visitors can purchase a short-term parking ticket (4 or 24 hours) at any ticket machine operated by BERNMOBIL, www.parking-bern.ch, 0800 727 536.

Carsharing: Mobility

Mobility offers a range of vehicle categories at 69 locations.
For locations, go to www.mobility.ch or dial 0848 824 812.

Car rental

<https://yellow.local.ch/en/q/Bern/Autovermietung.html>

7 EMERGENCY NUMBERS

You can print this page out and hang it in a handy place in case of an emergency. You can add other emergency contact information at the bottom of the page.

Police

Emergency: 117

International emergency: 112

Information and enquiries (non-emergency), Bern Cantonal Police: **031 638 81 11**

Ambulance

Ambulance, medical emergency only: 144

Information and enquiries, ambulance service of the City of Bern: **031 638 94 00**

Fire

Fire brigade emergency: 118

Enquiries and information (not emergencies) for the fire brigade of the city of Bern: **031 638 98 11**

Lost Property Office (Fundbüro)

Have you lost something? Or found something? Then please contact:

Theatergässchen 2
Postfach
3001 Bern
+41 31 321 50 50
fundbuero@bern.ch
www.bern.ch/fundbüro (German)