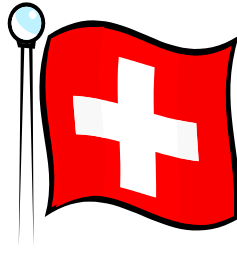


## Switzerland

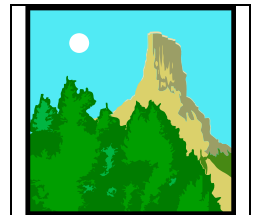


Switzerland is a small, mountainous country located in western Europe. Germany borders the country to the north, France to the west, Italy to the south, and Austria and Liechtenstein to the east.

The capital of Switzerland is Bern.

There are three languages spoken in Switzerland: Swiss German, French and Italian.

There are many high, snow-covered mountains in the Swiss Alps. The most famous mountain peak is the Matterhorn at 14,692 feet. This however, is not the tallest peak. Dufourspitze reaches 15,203 feet.



Switzerland towns celebrate carnival or "Fastnacht" during February and March to celebrate the end of winter.

Since 1824, children have celebrated the beginning of summer with the St. Gallen Children's Festival.

Christmas is celebrated on two days in Switzerland. On December 6, children go to bed to wait for St. Nicholas (Samichlaus in Switzerland), who arrives by donkey to bring them oranges, apples and nuts. On December 24 the Christkind (Christ Child) comes, bringing the Christmas tree and gifts including brightly wrapped candy.

The day before the "Three King's Day" the Swiss bakery shops are full of Three kings'-cakes. This is a sweet bun containing separate pieces of dough baked together. The cake can be pulled apart and one of the pieces has a tiny plastic king in it. Whoever gets the king is allowed to wear a golden crown which comes with the cake. At the same time this lucky person is allowed to boss about the family for the day.

A popular food is Zurich (hash browns and sliced veal with a mushroom and cream sauce). Another popular food is the cheese dish "Fondue" (turn pieces of bread in a soup of melted cheese with white-wine).

Switzerland is known for their watches and clocks.