

## Guidetour Berne FFI Clubs Switzerland

Berne the capital of Sitzerland, is a small to medium sized city with a population of about 136,000 in the city proper and roughly 350,000 in the agglomeration area. It sits on a peninsula formed by the meandering turns of the river Aare. The remarkable design coherence of the Berne's old town has earned it a place on the UNESCO World Heritage List. It features 4 miles of arcaded walkways along streets decked out with fountains and clock-towers. Berne is home to the prestigious University of Berne which currently enrolls approximately 13,000 students. In addition, the city has the University of Applied Science also known as Berner Fachhochschule. There are also many vocational schools and an office of the Goethe Institut.



Wikipedia Cc by and <https://www.openstreetmap.org/#map=14/46.9419/7.4585>

### Views of old-town by train from Solothurn – Start in trainstation Christoffelturm

The **Christoffelturm** was a tower built between the years 1344 and 1346. It was located in the old part of the Swiss city of Bern, in the upper section of Spitalgasse, near Holy Spirit Church.

After a political decision on December 15, 1864, the Christoffelturm was removed by **Gottlieb Ott**, a Swiss building contractor. Ott began the destruction of the tower in spring of the following year.

**Bundeshaus (Federal Palace of Switzerland)**, The Swiss House of Parliaments is a representative building dominating the Square. Constructed by the end of 19th century.

The **Federal Palace** refers to the building in Bern housing the **Swiss Federal Assembly** (legislature) and the **Federal Council** (executive). It consists of a central assembly building and two wings (eastern and western) housing government departments and a library.

The two chambers where the **National Council** and the **Council of States** meet are separated by the *Hall of the Dome*. The dome itself has an external height of 64 m. The mosaic in the center represents the **Federal coat of arms** along with the **Latin motto *Unus pro omnibus, omnes pro uno*** (*One for all, and all for one*), surrounded by the coat of arms of the 22 cantons that existed in 1902. The coat of arms of the **Canton of Jura**, created in 1979, was placed outside of the mosaic.

**Zytglogge** The Clock Tower near the center of the old town, built around the turn of the 13th century, is a great thing to see. On the hour, every hour throughout the day, there is a stunning display of early animatronic technology. The locals are proud to tell you it's "the longest running act in show business". A few minutes before the hour, it begins with a little song and some drumming by a jester on top. On the hour, bears and an old bearded king get into the act. It's great for kids to see. The clock tells time too, as well as the month, day, sign of the zodiac and phase of the moon. There are guided tours inside the tower that will let you have a look at the clockwork while the show is displayed outside. It can be booked at the tourist office and is definitely worth it if you love mechanics.

**Einsteinhaus**, Kramgasse Einsteinhaus is closed on Sundays in March and February. It's completely closed in January. Albert Einstein rented this small flat with his wife during his years working at the Swiss patent office. Their first child, Hans Albert, and the special and general theories of relativity were born here, where Einstein's writing desk overlooked the busy street and its lovely clock-tower. There are numerous photos and original documents from Einstein's life, work, and speeches.

## **The Minster of Bern**

It is a three nave basilica without a transept. The entire cathedral is 84.2 meters (276 ft) long and 33.68 m (110.5 ft) wide. The cathedral has a single tower in the west, which is 100.60 m (330.1 ft) high. The majority of the building is built from local sandstone.

Over the main portal is one of the most complete Late Gothic sculpture collections in Europe. This collection represents the Christian belief in a Last Judgment where the wicked will be separated from the righteous. This sculpture shows the wicked naked on the right, while the righteous stand clothed in white on the left. In the center is Justice, with Saints and the wise and foolish virgins around her. In the centre stands Michael the Archangel with a raised sword.

The sculptures of the Last Judgement were the only statues in the Minster to survive the iconoclasm of the Protestant Reformation. The 47 large free-standing statues are replicas (the originals are in the Bern History Museum), and the 170 smaller figures are all original.

**Bear Park**, Open all day. Berne is inseparably linked with bears. According to legend the city's founder, Duke Berchtold V von Zähringen, named the city after the first animal to be caught here. The saga lives on in the form of the real-live bears in the Bear Park and the heraldic bear in the Bernese coat of arms. Members of the RSPCA have found the former bear pits quite depressing. The site was recently (2009) enlarged into a park, and the bears can now go for a swim in the river. They also have a cave for hibernation, but this is all still far from enough for such large mammals, and is still considered cruel and unnecessary. The Bear Park can be reached by bus number 12 from the railway station in Berne in direction Zentrum Paul Klee and getting off at "Bärengaben" bus stop. Free.

**Rosengarten**, Little park with a splendid view over the old town. Situated close to the bear pits (follow the path that goes up the hill opposite the bear-pit-roundabout. Quite popular (and populated) during lunchtime. The Rosengarten can be easily reached by bus number 10 from the railway station in Berne in direction of Ostermundigen Rütli.

**Tramdepot** Just next to the bear pits you'll find the tram depot, the old final station of Berne's first tramway. The building now houses the town's most popular brewpub, and the tourist office, with free shows on the city's history at regular intervals.

**Gurten** is a lovely hill just outside the city. It features a park and great view over the city on one side and a nice panorama of the Bernese alps on the other. The park is visited heavily by locals to play ball, to barbecue or to just lie in the sun. Tourists are not an unusual sight, though this little attraction is missed by most of the many that visit the city. Hiking paths lead in all directions and you will almost certainly stumble across some cows when walking around. A wooden look-out tower allows an even better panorama than that you would already have. If you get hungry or thirsty, a good budget restaurant service and self-service provides you with all you need. Families with children should not miss the cool playground. The Gurten can be easily reached with tram number 9 from the railway station in Berne in direction Wabern. Exit the tram at station Gurtenbahn and walk a few steps up the hill. Then take the Gurtenbahn, a panorama train that will bring you on top in just 5 minutes.

**SC Bern**. The SCB is Berne's ice-hockey team. The stadium is the second largest in Europe and is regularly sold out, producing an impressive atmosphere in the arena. It is also mentionable that the SC Bern boasts the highest average attendance outside the NHL. To get there, just take Tram Nr. 9 towards Guisanplatz and get off at the terminal stop.

**Swimming in the river Aare**. On hot summer days, let yourself drift for some kilometers in the river Aare. Good (and safe) stretches are between the Kornhausbridge and the public pool of the Lorraine (old fashioned swimming pool just next to the river) and between the Eichholz and the public pool of the Marzili. Other stretches such as swimming the bend around the old town (starting at the "Englische Anlagen" to the Lorraine) or the "Bremgartenschlaufe" are only to be done by good swimmers accompanied by experienced locals. Note: Some sections of the river cannot be passed by swimmers due to barriers of hydraulic power stations (e.g. downstream of Marzili and downstream of Lorraine). An overview is provided by the Aarekarte (a map showing dangerous areas related to water activities along the river Aare).

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