


Topic Page: [Lucerne](#)

Definition: **Lucerne** from *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate(R) Dictionary*

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1canton cen Switzerland area 577 sq mi (1494 sq km), pop 350,600 **2**commune, its , on Lake of Lucerne pop 57,374

Summary Article: **Lucerne**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

(lōsŭrn'), Ger. *Luzern*(lōtsĕrn'), canton (1993 pop. 331,800), 576 sq mi (1,492 sq km), central Switzerland. Drained by the Reuss and Kleine Emme rivers, Lucerne is mainly an agricultural and pastoral region, with orchards and large forested areas. It contains the Lake of Sempach and borders on the Lake of Lucerne. There are several resort areas, notably along the northwest shores of the Lake of Lucerne. The population is mainly German-speaking and Roman Catholic. Manufactures of the canton include machinery, textiles, metallurgic goods, electrical equipment, paper, and wood products. Boatbuilding and automobile assembly are also important. One of the Four Forest Cantons, its history is that of its capital, **Lucerne** (1990 pop. 59,115), which is on both banks of the Reuss where it flows out of the Lake of Lucerne. It is one of the largest resorts (mainly summer) in Switzerland and relies on tourism as the staple of its economy. A narrow-gauge rail line links Lucerne to the winter sports center of Engelberg. The city grew around the monastery of St. Leodegar, founded in the 8th cent. An important trade center on the St. Gotthard route, it became a Hapsburg possession in 1291. Lucerne joined the Swiss Confederation in 1332 and gained full freedom after the battle of Sempach (1386). It became capital of the Helvetic Republic in 1798. Lucerne was one of the chief towns of the Sonderbund (1845–47). The noted monument, the Lion of Lucerne, designed by A. B. Thorvaldsen, was erected (1820–21) in memory of the Swiss Guards killed in Paris in 1792. Other points of interest are a mainly 17th-century church (Hofkirche), the Glacier Garden, the cantonal buildings, and several museums. The city's Chapel Bridge, built in 1333 and purported to be Europe's oldest and longest (219 yards) covered wooden bridge, long stood as a city symbol. In 1993 a fire damaged or destroyed much of it; it reopened in 1994 following reconstruction. Lucerne hosts an annual music festival (est. 1938), which moved into a striking lakeside cultural center in 1997.

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