INTRODUCTION
The Swiss Confederation was founded in 1291 as a defensive alliance among three cantons. In succeeding years, other localities joined the original three. The Swiss Confederation secured its independence from the Holy Roman Empire in 1499. Switzerland’s sovereignty and neutrality have long been honored by the major European powers, and the country was not involved in either of the two world wars.

GOVERNMENT
Chief of State
President of the Swiss Confederation Guy PARMELIN
Head of Government
President of the Swiss Confederation Guy PARMELIN
Government Type
federal republic (formerly a confederation)
Capital
Bern
Legislature
bicameral Federal Assembly consists of the Council of States (46 seats), and the National Council (200 seats)

GEOPGRAPHY
Area
Total: 41,277 sq km
Land: 39,997 sq km
Water: 1,280 sq km
Climate
temperate, but varies with altitude; cold, cloudy, snowy winters; cool to warm, cloudy, summers
Natural Resources
hydropower potential, timber, salt

ECONOMY
Economic Overview
high-income, non-EU European economy; renowned banking and financial hub; extremely low unemployment; highly skilled but aging workforce; key pharmaceutical and precision manufacturing exporter; fairly high public debt
GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) $590.7 billion (2020 est.)
GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) $68,400 (2020 est.)
Industries - machinery, chemicals, watches, textiles, precision instruments, tourism, banking, insurance, pharmaceuticals
Agricultural products - milk, sugar beets, wheat, potatoes, pork, barley, apples, maize, beef, grapes
Exports $470.9 billion (2020 est.)
gold, packaged medicines, medical cultures/vaccines, watches, jewelry (2019)
partners: Germany 16%, US 14%, UK 8%, China 7%, France 6%, India 6%, Italy 5% (2019)
Imports $401.9 billion (2020 est.)
gold, packaged medicines, jewelry, cars, medical cultures/vaccines (2019)
partners: Germany 21%, Italy 8%, US 6%, France 6%, UK 5%, UAE 5% (2019)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY
Population
8.5 million (July 2021 est.)
Population Growth
0.65% (2021 est.)
Ethnicity
Swiss 69.3%, German 4.2%, Italian 3.2%, Portuguese 2.5%, French 2.1%, Kosovo 1.1%, Turkish 1%, other 16.6% (2019 est.)
Language
German (or Swiss German) (official) 62.1%, French (official) 22.8%, Italian (official) 8%, English 5.7%, Portuguese 3.5%, Albanian 3.3%, Serbo-Croatian 2.3%, Spanish 2.3%, Romansh (official) 0.5%, other 7.9% (2019 est.)
Religion
Roman Catholic 34.4%, Protestant 22.5%, other Christian 5.7%, Muslim 5.5%, other 1.6%, none 29.5%, unspecified 0.8% (2019 est.)
as of October 2021