

Rules and customs in Switzerland

Each country has its own rules and customs. In Switzerland there are also some rules that are unwritten. It is important to respect these.

Different cultures

Switzerland is a diverse country with its different regions and four national languages. Attitudes vary from region to region. What is a custom in French-speaking Switzerland may be different in German-speaking or Italian-speaking Switzerland. Differences between cities and the countryside are also important. But there are also some customs that are similar across the whole of Switzerland:

Greetings

In Switzerland, when people greet each other, they shake hands and look each other in the eye, including between men and women. We often use "Bonjour" as the standard greeting, but between friends, we can say "Salut". In the countryside, people usually greet each other, even if they don't know each other.

Saying "merci" ("thank you") and "de rien" ("you're welcome") is also important, including in shops or restaurants.

Punctuality

Punctuality means arriving on time.

In Switzerland, people usually arrive on time.

If you are more than five minutes late, it is considered polite to give a warning by phone or text message. This is especially important at work.

For meetings or appointments, it is best to set the time in advance.

Surprise visits are not common, even with friends.

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/good-to-know/rules-and-customs-in-switzerland