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Lucerne – Luzern

The canton of Lucerne is located in the centre of Switzerland. It has a population of 363,475 (as of 2007) of which 57,268 (or 15.8%) are foreigners. It is drained by the Reuss river and the river Kleine Emme. The lands of the canton lie on the northern foothills of the Swiss Alps. The highest elevation of the canton of Lucerne is at the Brienz Rothorn at 2,350m. The area of the canton is 1,493 km², or 3.6% of the Swiss territory.

monastery, St Leodegar. The name Lucerrun is first mentioned in 1252. At some point, a small village grew up around the monastery. The first signs of a municipal constitution appear in 1252.

The growing power of the Habsburgs in the area weakened the ties that bound Lucerne to Murbach. In 1291 the Habsburgs finally purchased Lucerne from Murbach. The purchase of Lucerne by the Habsburgs drove the



817.7 km², about 55% of the total land area, is used for agriculture. An additional 449.0 km² (about 30%) of the canton is wooded. The remainder of the canton is either developed, 125.3 km² (8.4%), or unproductive (lakes, rivers or mountains), 101.5 km² (6.8%).

Agriculture is the most significant source of income, but industry is also developed. The most important agricultural products are crops, fruit and cattle breeding. Industry concentrates on textiles, machinery, paper, wood and metallurgical goods.

Tourism is of great importance. The canton of Lucerne is a gateway to holiday resorts in the nearby Alps, and much of the transit traffic between Germany and Italy crosses the region.



Lucerne's Kapellbrücke with Pilatus in the background

Lucerne grew up around a Benedictine monastery, founded about 750 on the right bank of the Reuss by Murbach Abbey in Alsace, of which it long remained a "cell". It is first mentioned in a charter of 840 under the name of Luciaría, which is probably derived from the patron saint of the

three cantons Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden to form their Eternal Alliance, which is considered to be the foundation of Switzerland. In 1332 Lucerne became the fourth member of the Eidgenossenschaft or Swiss Confederation, and the first town to join the rural cantons.

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