

## Brief Portrait

Canton Aargau is one of 26 cantons (member states) in Switzerland. Aargau is the canton with the fourth largest population. It is known for its regional variety.

### Numbers and Facts

Canton Aargau has over 700'000 inhabitants, a quarter of which are citizens of other countries. The canton covers 1404 km<sup>2</sup>, 11 districts (Bezirke), and over 200 communities (Gemeinden). The capital is Aarau. The official language is German. The canton includes many decentralised regions with their own central towns. The most important towns are Aarau, Baden, Brugg, Wohlen, Bremgarten, Zofingen and Rheinfelden. The regions differ in landscape, culture, and economy.

### History

Canton Aargau was founded in the year 1803. The areas that the French Emperor Napoléon Bonaparte combined to form Aargau had great political, confessional, and economic differences. This is still true to some extent today. Until approximately 1900 agriculture was very important. Industrialisation brought many changes. Canton Aargau still has rural elements, but it also has an industry comprised of international corporations and many small and medium-sized companies. Since the Second World War many immigrants have moved to the canton. They have contributed significantly to the economy and still do so today.

### Customs and Traditions

The many regions and communities in the canton have different customs and traditions. Due to historical diversity, there is not one "shared" tradition for the entire canton. The bigger towns Aarau, Baden, Brugg, Lenzburg, and Zofingen host youth festivals, the highlight of the cultural calendar, at the beginning of the summer. The celebrations have hardly changed for centuries. The Fasnacht (carnival) that takes place in the winter is important in some regions. Many villages and rural areas have customs surrounding fertility in spring and harvest in autumn. In addition various Christian holidays are celebrated.

### Aargau - "Rüebliand"

Aargau is known as "Rüebliand" (carrot country). How the canton got the nickname is unknown. It is not related to growing or eating carrots. The typical Aargauer carrot cake (Rüebliorte) is known throughout Switzerland. Once a year Aarau hosts a big carrot market (Rüeblimarkt).

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

[www.hola-aargau.ch/en/canton-aargau/brief-portrait](http://www.hola-aargau.ch/en/canton-aargau/brief-portrait)