The **Bernese Mountain Dog** ([German](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_language): *Berner Sennenhund*) is a [large-sized](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giant_dog_breed) [breed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dog_breed) of [dog](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dog), one of the four breeds of [Sennenhund](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sennenhund" \o "Sennenhund)-[type](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dog_type) dogs from the [Swiss Alps](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swiss_Alps). Bred from crosses of Mastiffs and guard-type breeds, Bernese Mountain Dogs were brought to Switzerland by the Romans 2,000 years ago. The name *Sennenhund* is derived from the German *Senne* ("alpine pasture") and *Hund*(hound/dog), as they accompanied the alpine herders and dairymen called *Senn*. *Berner* (or *Bernese* in English) refers to the area of the breed’s origin, in the [canton of Bern](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canton_of_Bern). The breed was used as an all purpose [farm dog](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Working_dog) for guarding property and to drive dairy cattle long distances from the farm to the alpine pastures. The farmers used the Berner to transport their carts of milk and cheese and were known by the locals as "Cheese Dogs."[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernese_Mountain_Dog#cite_note-18) In the early 1900s, [fanciers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal_fancy) exhibited the few examples of the large dogs at [shows](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conformation_show) in Berne, and in 1907 a few breeders from the Burgdorf region founded the first [breed club](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breed_club_(dog)), the *Schweizerische Dürrbach-Klub*, and wrote the first [Standard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breed_standard_(dog)) which defined the dogs as a separate breed. By 1910, there were already 107 registered members of the breed.  In 1937, it was acknowledged by the [American Kennel Club](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Kennel_Club).[4] Today, the club classifies it as a member of the [Working Group](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Working_Group_(dog)).[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernese_Mountain_Dog#cite_note-AKCWorking-5)

The **Bernese mountain dog** is a large, heavy dog with a distinctive tri-colored [coat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coat_(dog)), black with white chest and rust colored markings above eyes, sides of mouth, front of legs, and a small amount around the white chest. However, it is the only breed of [Sennenhund](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swiss_mountain_dog" \o "Swiss mountain dog) dogs with a long coat.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernese_Mountain_Dog#cite_note-AKCWorking-5) The ideal of a perfectly marked individual gives the impression of a white horseshoe shape around the nose, which is always black.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernese_Mountain_Dog#cite_note-Bernese_Mountain_Dog-6) There is a white “Swiss cross” on the chest when viewed from the front. [7][8]Height ranges from 25–27.5 in (64–70 cm) for males, while it is 23–26 in (58–66 cm) for females. Weight is 80–120 lb (35–55 kg) for males, while it is 75–100 lb (35–45 kg) for females.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernese_Mountain_Dog#cite_note-9)

**Bernese Mountain Dogs are overall gentle Giants**..... "good-natured", "self-assured",and "docile", yet protective of family..[8] These dogs are a breed that generally does well with children, as they are very affectionate. They are patient dogs that take well to children climbing over them. Though they have great energy, a Bernese will also be happy with a calm evening.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernese_Mountain_Dog#cite_note-PetWave_Temperament-10) Bernese work well with other pets and around extended family and friends.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernese_Mountain_Dog#cite_note-PetWave_Temperament-10) They are excellent guardians. They tend to bond with one owner or family, and are somewhat aloof and standoffish toward strangers.

Bernese are outdoor dogs at heart, though well-behaved in the house; they need activity and exercise, but do not have a great deal of endurance. They can move with amazing bursts of speed for their size when motivated. If they are sound (no problems with their hips, elbows, or other joints), they enjoy hiking and generally stick close to their people.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernese_Mountain_Dog#cite_note-PetWave_Temperament-10)[11]

All large breed dogs should be well socialized when they are puppies, and given regular training and activities throughout their lives.

The Bernese is one of the short-lived dog breeds, compared both to other breeds of a similar size and to purebred dogs in general.[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernese_Mountain_Dog#cite_note-Cassidy_Data-28)[[29]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernese_Mountain_Dog#cite_note-29)The average life expectancy of a Bernese Mountain Dog is approximately 7 to 8 years.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernese_Mountain_Dog#cite_note-Leroy-2)[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernese_Mountain_Dog#cite_note-Cassidy_Data-28) Most other breeds of a similar size have median longevities of 10–11 years.[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernese_Mountain_Dog#cite_note-Cassidy_Compare-30) In a 2004 UK survey, the longest-lived of 394 deceased Bernese Mountain Dogs died at the age of 15.2 years.[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernese_Mountain_Dog#cite_note-KC_Survey-22)

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The Bernese's calm temperament makes them a natural for pulling small carts or wagons, a task they originally performed in Switzerland. With proper training they enjoy giving children rides in a cart or participating in a parade, such as the [Conway, New Hampshire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conway,_New_Hampshire) holiday parade.[[31]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernese_Mountain_Dog#cite_note-31)Regional Bernese clubs often offer [carting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carting) workshops.[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernese_Mountain_Dog#cite_note-ReferenceA-32) Carting competitions are held for the breed.[[A]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernese_Mountain_Dog#cite_note-33)

On July 1, 2010, the Bernese Mountain Dog became eligible to compete in AKC Herding Events. Herding instincts and trainability can be measured at noncompetitive herding tests. Berners exhibiting basic herding instincts can be trained to compete in herding trials.[33]