

Canton of Valais

The **canton of Valais** (VS, German : *Kanton Wallis*) is one of the 26 cantons of Switzerland . It is made up of 13 districts and its capital is Sion . Its flag bears 13 red and white stars representing the districts of the canton on a white and red background.

Valais is the ninth canton of the country by its population and the third by its area. It is shared between French-speaking Switzerland – the French-speaking part of the west of the country – and German-speaking Switzerland ; it borders the cantons of Bern and Vaud to the north, the cantons of Uri and Ticino to the east, France to the west and Italy to the south. The territory of the canton mainly follows the Rhone Valley to Lake Geneva and is in the Swiss Alps , making Valais one of the three Alpine cantonsof Switzerland with Graubünden and Ticino. It is a major tourist destination, renowned for its many alpine resorts, such as Crans-Montana , Verbier and Zermatt , and its mountains, the Matterhorn having become an emblem of the canton.

The largest town in the canton is Sion, followed by Martigny and Monthey . The canton has a population of 348,503 as of December 31, 2020, and it is one of three cantons for which French and German are the official languages. Traditionally, the canton is divided into three regions, Lower Valais , Central Valais and Upper Valais , the latter being home to the German-speaking population.

Valais definitively entered the Swiss Confederation as a canton in 1815.

Etymology

The Valais historically corresponds to the old “Pennine valley” (*Vallis Pœnina*), the name given to the region by the Romans . Thereafter, in the 6TH century, it will be designated in the form of *pagus Vallensis* (“country of the Valley”) or simply *Vallensis*¹.

This etymology has also left a mark in French: the toponym "Valais", masculine today, behaves like a feminine toponym, so we say "in Valais" and not "in Valais" nor "in Valais". ^[ref. necessary]

In Francoprovençal, the canton is called *lo Valêc*; Francoprovençal has no reference pronunciation, so this word can be pronounced [v a . ' l a i (k)], [v a . ' l ε i (k)], [v a . ' l i : (k)], [v a . w i] or [v a i] ².

Geography

General

The canton of Valais is located in the southwest of Switzerland. It corresponds approximately to the upper Rhone Valley in the Alps , which extends from the Rhone Glacier to Lake Geneva . The Rhône has its source at the foot of the Furka Pass (2,429 metres), in a fork-shaped depression, between the Blauberg and the Furkahorn, on the border of the cantons of Uri and Valais. The Rhône first flows roughly east to west to Martigny . At this level, its course turns abruptly to the north, forming a bend. It flows into Lake Geneva after passing a narrow defile in Saint-Maurice. Valais straddles the Valais Alps (or Pennine Alps), the Lepontine Alps , the Uranian Alps and the Bernese Alps .

Valais is a border canton. It is limited to the north by Lake Geneva, the canton of Vaud and the canton of Bern , to the east by the cantons of Uri and Ticino . To the south, it shares its borders with Italy (the Aosta Valley and Piedmont) and to the west with France (Haute-Savoie). The center of gravity of Valais according to the Federal Office of Topography , is at the Mayens de Gillou at 1,870 meters above sea level, above Saint-Luc , whose Swiss Grid coordinates (Swiss coordinate system) are: E 612.813/N 117.582 ³.

Canton of Valais



Coat of arms



Flag




Location of the canton in Switzerland.

Nouns

<u>german</u> name	<i>Canton Wallis</i>
<u>Italian</u> name	<i>Canton Valley</i>
<u>Romansh</u> name	<i>Chantun Vallais</i>

Administration

<u>Country</u>	 <u>Swiss</u>
Entry into the	
Confederation	<u>August 4 , 1815</u>
<u>ISO 3166-2</u>	CH-VS
chief town	<u>If we</u>
<u>Districts</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>Communes</u>	<u>122</u>
Executive	<u>Council of State (</u> <u>Staatsrat) (5 seats)</u>
Legislative	<u>Grand Council</u> <u>(<i>Grosser Rat</i>) (</u> <u>130 seats)</u>
<u>Council of States</u>	2 seats
National council	8 seats

Demography

<u>Kind</u>	Valaisan
<u>Permanent population</u>	348,503 inhab. (December 31, 2020)
<u>Density</u>	67 inhab./km ²

The canton of Valais culminates at Pointe Dufour , at an altitude of 4,634 m , which is also the highest point in Switzerland ^{4, 5} , and its lowest point is on the shores of Lake Geneva on the territories of the municipalities of Saint-Gingolph and Port-Valais , at an altitude of 372 m ^{6, 7} .

With an area of 5,224.25 km ² , Valais is the third largest canton in Switzerland ⁸ .

Relief

- 46 peaks of the Alps over 4,000 meters in altitude are located on Valais land, including the Matterhorn and Pointe Dufour , the highest peak in Switzerland (4,634 m). The Valais mountains belong to different massifs, the most important of which are the Valais Alps , the Pennine Alps , the Lepontine Alps , the Uranese Alps and the Bernese Alps .
- If the east-west axis is marked by the Rhône valley which extends into the Conches valley , the Valais has many side valleys including the val-d'Illiciez , the Trient valley , the Bagnes valley , the val d'Entremont , val Ferret , val de Nendaz , val d'Hérens , val d'Hérémente , val d'Arolla , vallon de Réchy , val d'Anniviers , val de Zinal , val by Moiry, the Turtmann Valley , the Visp Valley , the Zermatt Valley , the Saas Valley , the Nanz Valley and the Lötschental .
- The richness of the Valais relief allows nature to exhibit some of its riches, such as in Euseigne , where you can discover the pyramids of Euseigne , which are headdressed young ladies .

Hydrography

The Valais is to a very large extent located in the catchment area of the Rhône . Only the northern slopes of the Sanetsch Pass and the Gemmi Pass are beyond the northern ridge of the Alps in the catchment area of the Aare . The municipality of Zwischbergen and a large part of the municipality of Simplon are on the southern slopes of the Alps in the Po watershed .

Bernese Alps (north)	Valais Alps (south)
	[Dam] / Valley / River
<u>fieschertal</u>	<u>Binntal</u>
	<u>Nanztal</u>
<u>Lötschental</u> , the <u>Lonza</u>	<u>Saas Valley</u> , the <u>Vispa</u>
<u>Dalatal</u> , the <u>Dala</u> (<u>Leukerbad</u>)	<u>Mattmark Dam</u> , <u>Zermatt Valley</u> (also called <u>Nikolaital</u>)
	<u>Turtmanntal</u> , <u>Turtmann</u>
<u>Tseuzier dam</u> , the <u>Lienne</u>	<u>Val d'Anniviers</u> (<u>Eifischtal</u>), the <u>Navizence</u>
The <u>Sionne</u>	<u>Grande Dixence Val d'Hérens</u> (<u>Eringertal</u>), la <u>Borgne</u>
	<u>Cleuson Val de Nendaz dam</u> , the <u>Printze</u>
The <u>Lizerne</u>	<u>Dam of Mauvoisin Val de Bagnes</u> (Baniental), <u>Dranse de Bagnes</u>
	<u>Val d'Entremont</u> , the <u>Dranse d'Entremont</u>
	<u>Val d'Illiciez</u>

- Although at the height of Bouveret , Valais borders Lake Geneva , the largest lake in Switzerland and the largest lake in Western Europe , the canton is characterized today above all by its artificial lakes formed by the many dams it has. . Of these, Lac des Dix and Lac d'Émosson are the two largest dam lakes in Switzerland .
- Among the natural lakes, the most important are Lac de Tanay , Lac de Champex and Lac de Derborence .
- The Rhône plain has a few small lakes such as the Lac de Géronde in Sierre or the Gouille des Îles in Sion .
- The Valais is also home to the largest underground lake in Europe : the underground lake of Saint-Léonard .
- Due to its relief and the many glaciers, the Valais is crossed by many waterways (see Swiss list) which flow into the Rhône . Among these, we can mention the Borgne , the Morge, the Dranse , the torrent of Barberine which joins the Eau Noire and which flows into the Trient , the Printze , the Lienne , the Lizerne , the Lonza , the Losentse , the Massa , the Navizence , the Raspille , the Rèche , the Saltina , Turtmäna , Vispa and Vièze .
- The Salanfe leads to the Rhône plain via a waterfall, the Pissevache , which has become timid since the commissioning in 1952 of the Salanfe dam which retains its waters. This waterfall has inspired various writers and artists including Johann Wolfgang von Goethe .
- Many mountain bisses run through the valleys. If historically these bisses made it possible to channel the water flowing from the mountains towards the crops and the vines , today they have more of a tourist function, since they are integrated into most hikes .

Demographic	
rank	9th ⁻
Official languages	<u>French</u> , <u>German</u>
Geography	
Contact details	46° 04' north, 7° 36' east
Altitude	Min. 372 m (<u>Léman</u>) Max. 4,634m (<u>Dufour Point</u>)
Area	5,224.25 km ²
Rank	3rd ⁻
Connections	
Website	<u>www.vs.ch</u> (<u>https://www.vs.ch</u>)



The Rhône at the height of Lake Geneva . On the left the canton of Vaud , on the right the Valais .



The Matterhorn seen from Zermatt .

■ The canton has the largest and longest glacier in Europe : the Aletsch Glacier , which has been recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site . It is about 24 km long and the ice thickness reaches in places 900 m . The main glaciers in Valais are the Arolla glacier , the Corbassière glacier , the Otemma glacier , the Fiesch glacier , the Moiry glacier , the Zmutt glacier , the Allalin glacier , the Giétro glacier , the Gorner glacier and the Rhone glacier .

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- The territory of the canton has 680 glaciers, which represents 52 billion m³ of ice. This represents two-thirds of Swiss ice and one-third of the ice in the Alps, giving it a unique place in the Alpine regions. At present, with the rise in atmospheric temperature announced by all the experts, the melting of glaciers and alpine permafrost is increasing and will most certainly influence the figures quoted in the future.



The Lake of Ten



The Rhône in Lower Valais



Middle part of the Aletsch Glacier in September 2021.



The Stellisee, in the canton of Valais. July 2019.

Climate

The high mountain ranges that surround it on all sides partially protect Valais from depressions coming from the Atlantic or the Mediterranean. The canton has a climate particularly marked by strong sunshine, in winter as in summer. The Valais is the driest region of Switzerland with half the precipitation of the plateau. The reality is however more complex, the west is more humid than the central Valais, the southern and northern slopes are not affected by the same disturbances and the altitude plays an important role in temperatures and precipitation. This alpine type climate varies throughout the Rhone Valley, which allows it to be a fairly important wine and fruit region. The city of Sierre is also known for its sunshine, it had been baptized by the Romans *Sirrum amœnum* , "Sierre l'Agréable", hence its nickname of "City of the Sun".



Sierre .

Valais weather report for the period 1981-2010.

Data	Station	jan.	feb.	March	april	may	June	Jul.	august	sep.	oct.	nov.	dec.	year
Average temperatures max. (°C)	<u>Great-St-Bernard</u> ⁹	−4.4	−4.9	−3.2	−0.9	3.7	8.2	11.5	11.3	7.5	3.6	−1.5	−3.7	2.3
	<u>Zion</u> ¹⁰	4.4	6.9	12.5	16.6	21	24.5	27	26.1	21.7	16.7	9.5	4.7	16
	<u>Visp</u> ¹¹	2.7	6	12.2	16.1	20.8	24.2	26.7	25.9	21.5	16.2	8.2	3.2	15.3
Average temperatures min. (°C)	Great St-Bernard	−9.8	−10.2	−8.5	−5.9	−1.3	2.2	4.8	5	1.9	−1.3	−6.3	−8.9	−3.2
	If we	−3.6	−2.3	1.4	4.5	8.7	11.8	13.8	13.3	9.9	5.6	0.4	−2.6	5.1
	Visp	−5.4	−3.9	0.1	3.1	7.2	10.1	11.9	11.6	8.4	4.2	−0.7	−4.2	3.5
Precipitation (mm)	Great St-Bernard	232	208	215	232	213	158	135	136	143	202	248	246	2,368
	If we	51	47	42	35	49	54	58	57	44	52	52	64	603
	Visp	53	43	50	46	55	44	42	46	41	57	57	62	596
Sunshine (hours)	Great St-Bernard	55	106	151	139	149	183	212	198	160	125	67	25	1,571
	If we	92	124	176	197	218	245	269	244	204	158	98	68	2,093
	Visp	–	114	182	202	220	236	267	247	209	154	–	–	–
Source: MeteoSwiss.														

Ways of communication and transport

Closed on all sides by high mountain ranges with the exception of the mouth of the Rhône at the height of the Saint-Maurice gully , the canton is isolated from its neighbours. However, these natural barriers can be crossed by high altitude passes as well as by rail or road tunnels.

The road network connects the towns and villages of the plain, as well as the many villages which are scattered along the valleys perpendicular to the Rhone valley. The crossing of the mountains is done by several road passes, often of high altitude (more than 2,000 meters): Grimsel pass , Furka pass , Nufenen pass , Simplon pass , Grand-Saint-Bernard pass , the Forclaz and the Morgins pass . These



The road to the Grimsel Pass (Furka Pass in the background).

passes are closed during the winter, except Forclaz, Simplon and Pas de Morgins. The Grand-Saint-Bernard remains passable thanks to the tunnel of the same name . The A9 motorway (Brigue - Lausanne - Vallorbe) linking France to Italy , crosses the valley to Sierre . The last section, between Sierre and Brig, is under construction.

The main rail network crosses the Rhône plain . At Brig , it forks on the one hand in the direction of Bern (via the Lötschberg tunnel), on the other in the direction of Italy (via the Simplon tunnel). The network is mainly operated by CFF and BLS but some foreign trains also run there (pendolino and TGV Lyria). Rail communications were facilitated by the digging of long tunnels (the Lötschberg and Simplon tunnels, already mentioned, and the Furka tunnel) They have also been made easier towards the north, by the commissioning in December 2007 ¹² of the Lötschberg base tunnel , the southern portal of which is located in the plain at Raron and which has saved time substantial in the connection between Valais and the city of Bern. The secondary network is provided by private companies including Transports de Martigny et Régions , Transports publics du Chablais and Matterhorn-Gotthard Bahn .

The Valais also has many cable cars and funiculars which connect certain mountain localities to the Rhône plain (CBV cable car , SMC funicular , etc.), which makes it possible to avoid the many twists and turns of often winding mountain roads, such as laces de Niouc , on the road that connects Sierre to the Val d'Anniviers .

There are also various airfields , built by the Swiss Army which, in the 20TH ^{century} , saw Valais as a strategic place for air defence. The most important is Sion International Airport . Air Glaciers has its headquarters there.

Finally, as Valais also adjoins Lake Geneva , the Compagnie Générale de Navigation connects the villages of Bouveret and Saint-Gingolph , and allows you to take different routes on the lake from there.

History

Prehistory and Antiquity

Occupied since prehistoric times, the territory of Valais saw the development of an original civilization during the Bronze Age .

In the 4TH ^{century} BC . AD , four Celtic tribes share its territory, incorporated by Augustus into the Roman Empire ^[When?] .

The Gallo-Roman Valais, located on the important Grand-Saint-Bernard route , was prosperous. Christianity is attested there from 377 and a bishopric exists in Martigny at the latest in 381 .

Middle Ages

At the fall of the Empire, the region came under the domination of the Burgundians before being integrated into the Carolingian Empire . When this broke up, it became part of the kingdom of Bourgogne transjurane , of which the abbey of Saint-Maurice d'Agaune was the religious centre. in 999 , the County of Valais became the property of the Bishop of Sion, on donation from Rodolphe III of Burgundy .

Follows a period of disorder favorable to the appearance of the feudal system, where the canton is shared ^{century} between the properties of the house of Savoy and those of the bishop of Sion. In the 11TH ^{century} , it was integrated into the Holy Roman Empire and the old properties were replaced by numerous feudal lordships, the Savoyards and the Bishop of Sion being no more than suzerains. You have to wait until 1260-1270 to hear about the *Valais country*. In 1375, the Sire de la Tour and, in 1420, that of Raron, the most illustrious members of the local nobility, were overthrown by the communes allied to the Prince-Bishop of Sion: it was the end of feudalism and the beginning of the patriciate with the formation of an elite within the different communities and greater independence of the latter. This elite soon took the place of the nobles in the General Council, ancestor of the Diet ¹³ . At the same time, the Valais witchcraft trials took place , precursors to the great witch hunts in Europe ¹⁴ , ¹⁵ .

The upstream part of the territory became Germanized by successive waves of immigration between the ^{and} 9TH ^{centuries} 14TH ^{century} ; at the same time the influence of the counts, then dukes, of Savoy increases in Bas-Valais. Valais became an ally of the Swiss cantons at the end of the 14TH ^{century} and its border was fixed at



Entrance to the Lötschberg Base Tunnel , in Raron .



The old bridge of Saint-Maurice and the opening of the Valais through the outlet of the Rhône .



Partition of the Western Alps between the provinces of Gaul and Italy at the time of the Roman Empire . The Canton of Valais in the Roman Italy region of the Graiae and Pininae Alps .



Bond of the canton of Valais dated December 31, 1924

Morge de Conthey . During the Burgundian Wars , and especially after the Battle of La Planta in 1475, Upper Valais invaded the Savoy territories, annexed Lower Valais as far as Massongex and organizes it into subject countries. The Bas-Valaisans then came under the authority of the Bishop of Sion, assisted by a Council of the Country which brought together the deputies of the local communities.

Modern era

In 1536 , Savoy lost the Valais Chablais. Bas-Valais remained subject to Haut, which saw the bishop's power diminish in favor of the Patriotes, representatives of the bishop's subjects, who in 1634 formed a veritable federal republic, the Republic of Seven Ten .

The last pyres for witchcraft burned in Valais in 1730, with the execution of Pétronille du Six and Pierre Terrettaz ¹⁶ .

It was only with the French Revolution that Lower Valais was emancipated. Valais is tossed between the Helvetic Republic (1798-1802), theoretical independence (1802-1810) and incorporation into the French Empire (1810-1813). When Napoleon I fell , the Allies pushed him to join the Swiss Confederation , of which he became the twentieth canton on August 4 ' 1815 .

Contemporary period

Divided between Upper German-speaking and Lower French-speaking (the majority), Valais was close to being divided into two half-cantons around 1840 . Member of the *Sonderbund* (1845-1847), he was defeated.

The second half of the 19th century saw the development of rail and road transport and the beginnings of tourism.

The beginning of the 20th century saw the industrialization of the country: chemistry in Monthey and Viège , aluminum metallurgy in Chippis and exploitation of hydraulic resources. From 1950 , mass tourism developed and many resorts appeared.

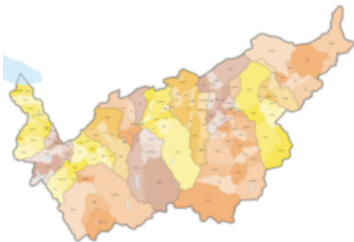
In 2018, the canton carried out the second total revision of its Constitution by electing a Constituent Assembly .

Politics and administration

Organization of the territory

Since January 1 ' 2021, the canton of Valais has 122 municipalities which are divided between twelve districts and two semi-districts: Brig (7 municipalities), Conches (8), Conthey (5), Entremont (5), Hérens (6), Loèche (12) , Martigny (10), Monthey (9), Eastern Raron (6), Western Raron (11), Saint-Maurice (9), Sierre (10), Sion (5) and Visp (19) ^{17, 18} . Among the Valais municipalities, 59 are in the French-speaking part of the canton ¹⁹ .

Sion is the capital of the canton as well as the seat of the Grand Council , the Council of State and the Cantonal Court of the canton of Valais ²⁰ . Six Valais municipalities have city status : Sion (34,978 inhabitants), Martigny (20,276), Monthey (17,820), Sierre (16,819), Brigue-Glis (13,221), Viège (8,060) and Zermatt (5,820). Valais also has five statistical agglomerations : Brigue-Viège (48,446 inhabitants), Martigny (23,520), Monthey (34,147), Sierre (26,572) and Sion (88,769) ^{21, 22} .



Map showing the municipalities and districts of the canton of Valais.

Political organization

The canton of Valais is a republic ²³ . On November 25, 2018, following the vote of March 4 of the same year, the election of the Constituent Assembly took place , which was responsible for drafting a new constitution for the canton.

Communal (or municipal) and cantonal elections take place every four years. The last municipal elections took place in October 2020, while the last cantonal elections took place in March 2021.

Communal

The executive power of the Valais municipalities is represented by a municipal council of which two councilors hold the roles of president and vice-president ^{24, 25} . The latter are elected according to the majority system ²⁶ . The rest of the council can be elected according to proportional or majority systems ²⁷ . The number of councilors is always odd and can vary between 3 and 15 , president and vice-president included ²⁸ . The members of the municipal council are elected every four years, and take office on the 1st of January of the year following their election ^{29, 30} . Since the last municipal elections, in 2020, the Christian Democratic Party has been the most represented among the presidents of Valais municipalities, with around thirty seats in Haut-Valais and 29 in Valais Romand ³¹ .

On the legislative side, the smallest municipalities organize themselves into a primary assembly , which brings together the inhabitants with the right to vote²⁴ . From 700 inhabitants , the municipalities can elect a general council in place of the primary assembly³² . It then consists of 20 to 60 members depending on the population of the municipality³³ .

Cantonal

Executive power is exercised by the Council of State , composed of five²⁴ members elected every four years by a two-round majority vote. An annual rotating presidency takes place, as for the Swiss Federal Council .

Legislative power is exercised by the Grand Council , made up of 130 deputies²⁴ , elected by the proportional system .

Representation at federal level

The canton of Valais is represented in the Federal Parliament by two state councilors and eight national councilors²⁴ . For the 2019-2023 legislature, these representatives are, in the National Council, Mathias Reynard (PSS), Philippe Nantermod (PLR), Sidney Kamerzin (PDC), Benjamin Roduit (PDC), Michael Graber (UDC), Philipp Matthias Bregy (PDC), Jean-Luc Addor (UDC) and Christophe Clivaz (Les Verts), and at the Council of States Beat Rieder (PDC) and Marianne Maret (PDC).

Population and society

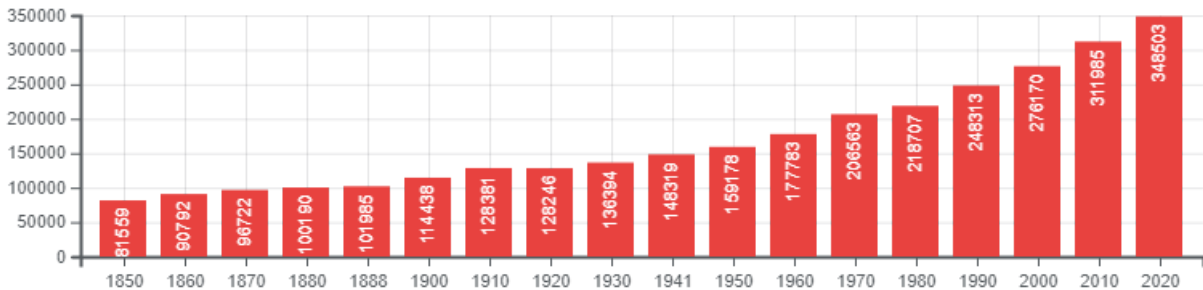
Demographic profile

At the start of the 21st century , the canton of Valais was predominantly rural , and its urban spaces represented only 6% of its territory³⁴ . In 2019, however, 72% of the cantonal population lives in the districts where the Valais towns are located, namely the districts of Sierre , Sion , Martigny , Monthey , Viège and Brig . Between 1991 and 2019, only the population of the district of Goms experienced a decrease (−10%) while the district of Monthey experienced the strongest increase with +58%. Still in 2019, 39.7% of the population lives in central Valais compared to 36.2% in Lower Valais and 24% in Upper Valais³⁵ . Haut-Valais has the lowest demographic growth of the three regions (+13% between 1991 and 2019)³⁵ and its average annual increase is respectively three and four times lower than those of the center and Bas-Valais³⁶ .

As of December 31, 2020, Valais has the fourth lowest population density in Switzerland with 67 inhabitants/km² , a value below the total density of Switzerland (216.8 inhabitants/km²)^{21, 37} .

Demographic evolution

As of December 31, 2020, the canton of Valais is the ninth largest canton in Switzerland, with 348,503 inhabitants, or 4% of the total population of Switzerland. The population density reaches 67 inhabitants/km² ²¹ .



Evolution of the cantonal population between 1850 and 2020^{38, 39} .

Teaching

Primary and secondary education

In Valais, the education system consists of two years of nursery school followed by six years of primary school . This is followed by the orientation cycle , which lasts three years unless the pupil has obtained the necessary grades to enter college at the end of his second year of the cycle. The end of the orientation cycle marks the end of compulsory education .

The student can then choose between three streams of study: the vocational stream (learning), the general culture stream or college . Valais has four colleges which allow students to obtain a cantonal maturity certificate in five years of study (unlike the majority of Swiss cantons where the Swiss maturity can be obtained in three or four years of study): the college of Creusets and the Collège de la Planta in Sion , the Collège de l'Abbaye in Saint-Maurice and the Collège Spiritus Sanctus in Brig .



The HES-SO Valais in Sierre .

Tertiary education

As far as the Hautes Écoles are concerned , there is no university college (HEU) in Valais. We can, however, distinguish between several types of tertiary-level training provision. The HES (Hautes Ecoles Spécialisés) courses provide training that is integrated into the Bologna process (bachelor level courses):

- the Valais branch of the Western Switzerland University of Applied Sciences (HES-SO), the HES-SO Valais-Wallis , based on two sites in Sierre and Sion : management information technology, business economics, tourism, industrial systems, technologies living, energy and environmental techniques, nursing care, physiotherapy, social work, visual arts;
- the Valais teacher training school (HEP-VS) ⁴⁰ provides initial, additional and continuous training for teachers in kindergarten, primary and secondary 1 and 2 (general);
- the cantonal school of art of Valais offers a tertiary training cycle in visual arts , which consists of the Bachelor HES-SO program and the MAPS program - Art in Public Sphere, orientation of the Master HES-SO in visual arts to which is linked the research ;
- the Conservatoire de Lausanne - Site de Sion has brought together the activities of the Haute École de Musique since 2008;
- Fernfachhochschule Schweiz Brig (FFHS) ⁴¹ is a federally recognized distance-learning university of applied sciences. The courses offered are oriented towards computer science, computer management, business economics and applied engineering.

University training and research institutes:

- The Kurt Bösch ⁴² University Institute (IUKB) has the mission of developing teaching and research activities in the innovative perspective of inter- and transdisciplinarity. It focuses its activities on the following two thematic orientations: children's rights and studies in tourism;
- distance university education, Switzerland ⁴³ (FS-CH) offers university study programs and continuing education at a distance;
- in December 2012, EPFL and Valais signed an agreement creating the EPFL Valais Wallis cluster. This center will include eleven chairs in the fields of hydroelectricity, health, green chemistry and nutrition and will open its doors in 2014 ⁴⁴ .

Training through research is also possible in Valais, through the Idiap Research Institute in Martigny , which allows students to obtain a doctorate from EPFL, thanks to the partnership between these two institutions ⁴⁵. In addition to Idiap, Valais has nine other university-level research institutes: the Center for Energy and Municipal Research (CREM), the ICARE Institute, the Center for Technology in Management Computing (TEWI), the Center for Research on medicinal and aromatic plants Médiplant, the Ophthalmology Research Institute (IRO), the Rehabilitation-Reintegration Research Institute (IRR), the Alpine Center for Phytogeography (CAP), the Regional Center for the Study of Alpine Populations (CREPA), the University Center for Research on Plurilingualism (CURP/UFM), the University Institute for Research on the History of the Alpine Arc (FGA).

Sports

In Valais, an organization brings together sports associations under one roof, the Fondation Aide Sportive Valaisane (FASV). Its aim is to provide associations with a reflection on common problems such as psychology in sport, authority and sport, mental training in sport, marketing and sponsorship in sport, sport and the media. and sport and advertising (sponsorship). To encourage cantonal associations and clubs, the FASV has dictated a *Fair Play Charter* and rewards by the payment of a significant sum the most exemplary actions among those which will be submitted and announced by the sports associations. The Association Valaisanne des Journalistes de Sport AVJS nominates candidates for the Valais Sports Merits on the basis of the proposals of the merits committee, it chooses ten individual candidates, five teams, five hopefuls and five leaders.



A Patrouille des Glaciers patrol boat .

Valais has offered to organize the Winter Olympics four times , the first time to organize the 1976 Games (Sion 1976), the second time for the 2002 Games (Sion 2002) and the third time to organize those of 2006 (Sion 2006). However, Valais was not chosen. In 2018, the "Sion 2026" bid project, spanning the whole of Switzerland, was rejected by the people of Valais (53.98%), despite a much smaller budget than previously (following the IOC's 2020 Agenda aimed at reduce the construction of costly infrastructure) and the support thereof.

- Football : all football clubs in Valais belong to the Association valaisanne de football (AVF-WFV). There are approximately 68 clubs, one of which plays in the Super League (FC Sion). It should be noted that according to the statutes of the association, there cannot be more than one club per political commune except for the cities of Sion (FC Sion , FC Bramois and FC Châteauneuf) and Sierre (FC Sierre and FC Granges), as well as for Conthey (FC Conthey and FC Erde) and Nendaz (ES Nendaz and FC Aproz). The largest stadium is that of Tourbillon where FC Sion plays . This team welcomed very good players like Roberto de Assis Moreira (Ronaldinho 's older brother). She won two Swiss championship titles and only lost the final of the Swiss Football Cup once in 14 appearances .
- Ice hockey : if Valais no longer knows the National League these days , it currently has two Swiss League teams (HC Viège and HC Sierre) and a MySports League team (HCV Martigny). Several Valaisans are or have been members of the national team, notably Montheysans Goran Bezina and Dave Sutter , Sierrois Vincent Praplan , l'cognard Jérémie Kamerzin and Martignerain Thibaut Monnet . The Viègeois Nico Hischier evolves in the NHL with the New Jersey Devils , after being the first Swiss to be selected first overall in the draft in 2017.

- **Basketball** : a Valais team plays in the national league A : BBC Monthey .
- **Automobile** : the international rally of Valais (ex. Rallye du Vin) is organized the last week of October, its nerve center is in Martigny. The specialty of the Rally lies in the difficulties of driving and adjusting the mechanics on mountain roads, since the events take place between 400 and 1,800 m in altitude. We can also mention the hill climbs of Ayent-Anzère and Massongex-Verrossaz.
- **Cycling** : Valais usually hosts the Tour de Romandie and the Tour de Suisse . The township has also hosted the Tour de France on several occasions . Valais has several professional cyclists: Johann Tschopp , Steve Morabito , Sébastien Reichenbach , Jonathan Fumeaux , Simon Pellaud , and Kilian Frankiny .
- **Sporting events**: the Patrouille des Glaciers is organized by the Swiss army every two years. It takes place between Zermatt , Arolla and Verbier . There is also the Grand Raid Cristalp , which is a mountain bike race that takes place between Verbier and Grimentz , and the popular Sierre-Zinal foot race , also called the Cinq 4000 race, which takes place every year on the second Sunday of August. Martigny has also hosted World Olympic wrestling championships three times (1989, 1997, 2001) and the “Swiss Grand Prix”, an international Olympic qualification tournament. The Tour des Stations, the toughest one-day cyclosportive in terms of elevation gain per kilometer, takes place every year in August.

Cults

Valais is one of the most Catholic cantons with, in 2019, around 68.9% of the inhabitants aged 15 or over being Catholic; only Uri (74.8%) and Appenzell Innerrhoden (74%) exceed Valais, the share of Catholics in Switzerland being 36.5%^{46, 47} . The other notable religions present in Valais are Protestantism (5.6%), Islam (3.2%) and other Christian communities (2.6%). 18.8% of those aged 15 or over have no religious affiliation⁴⁶ .

Media

Le Nouvelliste is a local daily newspaper published in French which covers all the news in Bas-Valais and central Valais. Founded in 1903 in Saint-Maurice , it was printed in Sion from 1960 to 2019, the year in which its publisher, the Hersant Média group , inaugurated a printing center bringing together its publications in Monthey^{48, 49} . *Le Nouvelliste* has the status of Valais' leading daily, being printed in 34,000 editions and reaching, in 2017, nearly 112,000 readers daily in the paper version and 30,000 people on its website^{50, 51} . Several French-language newspapers also publish regionally, such as the *Journal de Sierre* and *La Gazette* in Martigny^{52, 53} . Official cantonal information is published every Friday in the *Official Bulletin*⁵⁴ . Valais had two political party newspapers: *Le Confédéré* , a weekly supporting the Radical-Democratic Party and published since 1861^{55, 56} , and *Le Peuple valaisan* , an official organ of the Swiss Socialist Party which has been published under this name since 1953 before becoming *the people.us* in 2015^{57, 58} . The Haut-Valais has its own newspaper in German , the *Walliser Bote* , published since 1840 first as a weekly then from 1969 as a daily⁵⁹ . In 2012, the newspaper, which became independent in 1981, printed 24,046 copies per edition for an audience, in 2014, of 51,000 readers^{59, 60} .

Since its creation in Sierre in 1984, the local television channel Canal 9 has offered cultural, economic, historical, political, social and sports programs^{61, 62} . It has been broadcast throughout French-speaking Valais since 2002 and has offered programs in German since 2009. The channel's editorial offices are located in Sierre and Brigue, and it also has regional branches in Monthey, Martigny and Sion⁶² . In 2015, the channel had an important place in the Valais media, with an average of 60,000 viewers per evening⁶¹ .

Three radio channels broadcast from Valais. Rhône FM has programming geared towards the French-speaking part of the canton of Valais, while Radio Chablais covers Chablais , the Vaud Riviera and the Pays d'Enhaut⁶³ . Finally, Radio Rottu is the only radio station in the German-speaking part of Valais and offers entertainment entirely in Upper Valais⁶⁴ .

Personalities

Policies

Valais provided four federal advisers to Switzerland : Josef Escher , Roger Bonvin , Pascal Couchepin and Viola Amherd⁶⁵ . Micheline Calmy-Rey , who made her political career in the canton of Geneva , is from and was born in Chermignon⁶⁶ .



Pascal Couchepin in conference.

Sports

Several sports personalities are from Valais, such as skiers Roland Collombin , Pirmin Zurbriggen , Joël Gaspoz , Steve Locher , Fernande Bochatay , Chantal Bournissen , Didier Défago , skater Stéphane Lambiel , footballers Stéphane Griching , Gelson Fernandes , Edimilson Fernandes and Vincent Sierro , fencer Sophie Lamon and fencer Tiffany Gérardet , cyclists Steve Morabito and Sébastien Reichenbach or the international wrestlers Jimmy Martinetti , Étienne Raphy, David William, Lionel Laurent and Grégory Martinetti who have a rich national and international list of titles, podiums and diplomas (Swiss championships, European championships, World championships and international World Cup tournaments) in all styles of Olympic wrestling (freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling). The members of this Valais family also count 7 Olympic selections as athletes (Jimmy: Mexico 1968, Munich 1972, Montreal 1976 and Moscow 1980//Étienne: Munich 1972//David: Barcelona 1992//Grégory: Sydney 2000, Grégory Martinetti being still in activity on the national and international level) and a rich list of 4 federal crowns in Swiss wrestling (wrestling with panties) and hundreds of cantonal and regional crowns, with the national record of crowns (Swiss wrestling, National Games, gymnastic wrestling) for Étienne Martinetti (219).



Stéphane Lambiel at the 2005 World Championships

In alpine skiing , Pirmin Zurbriggen was a medalist at the 1985, 1987 and 1989 World Championships and a medalist at the 1988 Olympics . He was voted Swiss Sportsman of the Year in 1985. Didier Défago won the gold medal at the 2010 Olympic Games . On the other hand, the canton delivered to FIFA its current president: Gianni Infantino and to the International Federation of Associated Wrestling (FILA: 142 countries) its current president: Raphy Martinetti.

Economy

Tourism

The Valais benefits from a long tourist tradition. Hoteliers were at the base of the development of Valais tourism; many of them, such as César Ritz , have devoted time and money to satisfy customers from all over the world. The township has more than 120 winter and summer destinations, including:

- Goms Valley (Goms in German): Fiesch - Eggishorn , Bellwald , Binn , Ernen , Obergoms, Oberwald ;
- Aletsch (UNESCO World Heritage): Bettmeralp , Fiescheralp, Riederalp ;
- Brig and surroundings: Blatten , Belalp , Mund , Termen , Birgisch ;
- Visp and surroundings: Visperterminen , Bürchen , Eischoll , Stalden , Törbel , Unterbäch ;
- Zermatt with the Matterhorn and the largest summer ski area in Switzerland, on the southern slopes of the Breithorn reachable from the Klein Matterhorn cable car station ;
- Saas Valley : Saas-Fee , Saas-Almagell , Saas-Grund with the Fee Glacier , the second largest summer ski area in Switzerland;
- Leukerbad ;
- Sierre , Salquenen and the Val d'Anniviers : Chandolin , Saint-Luc , Grimentz , Vercorin , Zinal ;
- Crans-Montana ;
- Sion and surroundings: Anzère , Val d'Hérens : Arolla , Euseigne , Evolène , Hérévence , Mase , Saint-Martin , Nax , Vernamiège ;
- Domain of Verbier-4 Vallées: Verbier , Nendaz , Veysonnaz , Thyon-Les Collons, La Tzoumaz ;
- Valais Chablais and Portes du Soleil : Champéry , Champoussin , Morgins , Les Crosets , Torgon , Val-d'Illiez , Le Bouveret , Saint-Maurice , Monthey , Evionnaz , Saint-Gingolph ;
- Saint-Bernard region: Les Marécottes , Bruson, La Fouly , Champex, Vichères-Liddes.

Most resorts are located above 1,500 meters and 9 ski areas are above 3,000 meters.

The canton has many spas which can be found in particular in Saillon , Loèche-les-Bains , Ovronnaz , Val-d'Illiez , Breiten and Brigerbad .

Valais has nine golf courses in total, 5 18-hole courses : Crans-Montana , Loèche-les-Bains , Sierre , Sion , Verbier and 4 9-hole courses Crans - Montana , Obergesteln , Riederalp and Zermatt .

Secondary sector

The industry is very diverse, ranging from aluminum profiles to the manufacture of mechanical movements for the watch industry , from high-precision molds to pharmaceutical and beauty products , from electronic components to plastics , from microtechnology to biotechnology , via synthetic stones (Hrand Djvahirdhjian in Monthey). Multinationals Alcan , Lonza and Novartis occupy half of the workforce industry in the canton, they are located in Visp for Lonza , in Steg-Hohtenn , Sierre and Chippis for Alcan and Novelis and in Monthey for Novartis . For its part Evionnaz is home to BASF Orgamol . Small and medium-sized enterprises are well represented in most regions of the canton, they ensure high-level production in the most diverse fields. 90% of Valais companies employ less than 100 people . Among other banks, the cantonal bank of Valais ensures the economic development of the region.

The Valais is also a very large exporter of electricity : numerous dams (more than 13), in particular that of Grande-Dixence , in the municipality of Hérévence , supply a large quantity of hydroelectric energy . The main hydroelectric complexes in the canton are the Émosson dam , the Mauvoisin dam , the Cleuson dam , the Mattmark dam , the Moiry dam , the Tseuzier dam and the Salanfe dam .

Bas -Valais also has a refinery , in Collombey , linked by an oil pipeline to the port of Genoa in Italy .



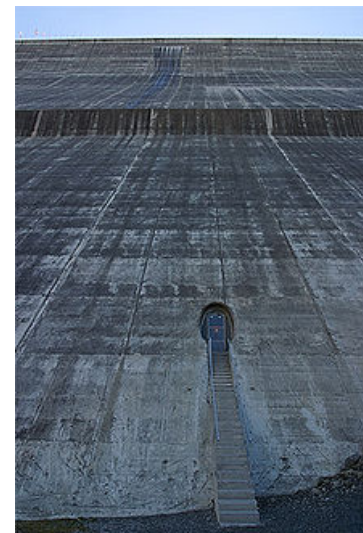
Winter hike between Bettmeralp and Riederalp.



Mountain walk - Verbier.



Thermal baths - Ovronnaz.



The Grande-Dixence and its 285 meters high.

A gas pipeline , called the Rhône gas pipeline and belonging to the Swissgaz company , connects Obergesteln to Bex .

Primary sector



Apricots are very famous in Valais .

Agriculture , which was for a long time the main activity of the canton, has lost its importance , it has long been the basis of the economy . But since the end of the 19th century , ^{agriculture} and animal husbandry have gradually declined, giving way to industry . Field crops (cereals , maize , rapeseed , beetroot and tobacco) are mainly concentrated in Lower Valais and in certain mountain areas (for rye in particular). Recently, a new culture, the soybean , has appeared on a few farms and thus makes it possible to diversify production. Aromatic and medicinal plants are also cultivated .

Vegetable crops (apricots , apples and pears) remain renowned. A brandy is made from apricots (the abricotine) and the Williams pear (Williamine).

The culture of the vine remained important. Valais is the largest wine-growing canton in Switzerland with 5,000 hectares of vines, i.e. one third of total production in Switzerland. The commune of Chamoson, with its 427 hectares of vines, is the largest wine-growing commune in Valais. The Valais vineyard , producing both white and red wines , is very diverse and more than 40 different grape varieties are grown there. Some, of excellent value, are very old and only exist in this region. However, urbanization puts pressure on agricultural land ⁶⁷ .

Livestock is a significant source of income for the canton's agricultural economy. The Valais livestock is made up of cattle , including the famous Hérens ⁶⁸ breed , typical of the region. Most heads are bred for dairy or meat production . There are also goats and sheep whose role in the conservation of the landscape is well demonstrated. Logging is present in Valais, but nevertheless occupies a limited place in the economy of the canton, because of its morphology and its climate .



Vineyards in Sion

A particularity of the village of Mund, located at an altitude of 1,200 m above Naters: the planting of a flower, *Crocus sativus* L (116 producers). From this one draws the saffron . The harvest extends from mid-October to mid-November over 14,000 m ² . Mund saffron was registered as an AOC by the Federal Office for Agriculture on July 2, 2004.

Stone industry

Due to its geological richness, the Valais, since prehistoric times, has used a wide range of minerals for various purposes. The oldest exploitation was discovered on the site of Crettaz-Polet in Sembrancher , dating from the Middle Neolithic , around 3200 BC. The finds from the necropolis of Sion , at the Petit-Chasseur, date back to the final Neolithic period, between 2500 and 2200 BC. The numerous sculpted stelae unearthed show that blocks weighing several hundred kilos were already being transported. The Romans mined several soapstone sites , in particular at Dossen-Gletschergarten, above Zermatt. This production continued until the High Middle Ages and well beyond, since from the 16th ^{century} almost all the houses were equipped with soapstone ⁶⁹ .

Small local quarries, in the valleys on the left bank of the Rhône, provided prasinites and green schists , in Saas- Zermatt , Anniviers , Val d'Hérens or Bagnes . The Martemo quarry near Évolène has produced a beautiful bluish rock, veined with white, often used to decorate buildings and to shape fountains and statues ⁶⁹ .

The Valais Alps offer great opportunities for the exploitation of gneiss . La Massa quarry, in Naters , was opened in 1898 to produce the rubble needed for the construction of the Simplon ⁶⁹ tunnel .

Slate is one of the shales that is easy to cut into sheets that can reach up to one square meter . Many exploitations took place in Valais, in Termen , Ried-Brig , Leytron , Sembrancher , or Dorénaz , among others ⁶⁹ .

Granite is very present in the massifs of Mont-Blanc, Aiguilles-Rouges , Aar and Gotthard. In addition, the glaciers transported, in the form of erratic blocks, blocks of granite to the plain, over a very large area. This very hard and resistant material was widely used, especially in the 19th ^{century} , for colonnades, stairs, fountains, door and window frames, sidewalk curbs and bollards ⁶⁹ .

The Valais is also rich in quartzite quarries . But only that of Saint-Léonard remains sporadically in activity. This rock produces concrete, cement, abrasive and also supplies the glass industry. In the 19th ^{century} , Monthey and Martigny housed a glassworks ⁶⁹ .

The tuff is also used to frame doors and windows, there are illustrations of it in the Protestant church of Martigny , that of Saint-Romain in Savièse , and more generally on many church portals ^{69, 70} .

Saillon marble , of which a vein of cipolin , or banded marble, was discovered in 1873, became very famous during the last quarter of the 19th ^{century} and was exported throughout Europe ⁷¹ .

Local culture

The canton of Valais has rich and varied cultural traditions .

- The Mediatheque Valais , in Sion for the printed heritage, Martigny for the audiovisual heritage, is the documentation center on the Valais. It pursues an active publication policy in order to publicize its holdings and offer the public effective documentary research tools. In Martigny it regularly offers photography exhibitions and film screenings, while the Sion site organizes cycles of conferences and readings on heritage and literature.
- The Valais Romand Historical Society (SHVR).
- The Valais Cantonal Association of Mycology (ACVM).
- The Aletsch Pro Natura Center located at the Villa Cassel, dating from 1902.
- La Murithienne - Valais Society of Natural Sciences.
- The Academic Society of Valais contributes to higher education and scientific research in Valais.
- SAVAR, the astronomy society of French-speaking Valais.
- The Fellini Foundation at the Maison du Diable in Sion which offers exhibitions on cinema, films by Fellini or others
- The Pierre Gianadda Foundation - Permanent exhibitions: Sculpture park, Gallo-Roman museum and automobile museum.
- The Marconi Foundation , which aims to publicize the historic experiments in wireless telegraphy carried out in 1895 in Salvan and to highlight the technical evolution of the means of communication.
- The Valais has several theaters and performance halls with local, regional or Roman influence. Among the main theatres, let us mention (going up the Rhône) : the Théâtre du Crochetan in Monthey , the Théâtre du Martolet in St-Maurice, the Théâtre l'Alambic in Martigny, the Théâtre de Valère in Sion , the Petitthéâtre de Sion or even the TLH in Sierre . In current music, the Port Franc in Sion or the Pont Rouge in Monthey are two places with regular professional programming.
- The Valais has a rich tradition of carnivals , in particular the carnival of Monthey , that of Lötschental , or even the carnival of Evolène .
- The queen fight is also an important cultural event.
- For some years Valais has organized important music festivals , notably the Caprices festival in Crans-Montana and the Open Air Gampel in Gampel , as well as the Festival International de Musique de Sion , which is currently under the artistic direction of Shlomo Mintz and the Verbier Music Festival , which are two major manifestations of the Swiss musical landscape. Other festivals also take place in Sierre , Martigny , Saas-Fee , and Veyras ⁷² .
- Most towns are also home to one or more “fanfares” (an improper term designating here English “Brass Band” type ensembles) or wind orchestra, as well as numerous choirs. Which animate the local life and also organize each year of gatherings in the various regions of the canton, the festivals. The best musicians also come together in regional Brass Band type ensembles, with a more competitive vocation, some of which are among the best ensembles of this type in Europe, such as the Valaisia Brass Band, winner of the European Brass Band Championship in 2018 ⁷³ .
- The construction of a concert hall has been planned since 1985 ^[ref. necessary] , included in the Cour de Gare project in Sion (the construction of which officially began on October 5, 2021 and which should be completed by spring 2024 ⁷⁴).
- Valais is the country of origin of Madeleine Carruzzo , the first female violinist to join the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra ⁷⁵ , then conducted by Karajan , and the adopted country of Tibor Varga who founded his Academy of Music there . its festival and its violin competition ⁷⁶ .
- It is also, in the 15th ^{century} , the region of origin of the Uttini, the maternal family of Giuseppe Verdi , who then settled in Crusinallo in the Val d'Ossola before emigrating in the 17th ^{century} partly to Bologna and partly to Cortemaggiore then Busseto ⁷⁷ .
- In terms of gastronomy, Valais is also renowned for some of its dishes and products, in particular Assiette valaisanne , rye bread , raclette , brisolée , cheese fondue , Valais-style asparagus or the Côte de local double veal, morels and crispy pancetta , alpine serac mousse with a bottle of Cornalin (from the grape variety of the same name). The Valais vineyard also produces a wide variety of quality wines. Fendant , the aperitif wine par excellence, is made from a local grape variety , Chasselas .



Wooden mask of a Tschäggätä in the Lötschental .

Emblems

The canton of Valais has a flag and a coat of arms as emblems . The coat of arms of Valais is emblazoned: *Parti d'argent and gules, with thirteen stars, placed in three blades 4, 5 and 4, one in the other* ⁷⁸ .

It was at the beginning of the 17th ^{century} that the Valais Patriots made use of the seven stars to represent the Seven Tens on the first coins minted by the republic as well as on official seals and printed matter. Paper documents from the first Valais paper factory established in Saint-Gingolph then in Vouvry are watermarked with the seven-star Valais shield. These documents date from 1639 and 1647. The colors are: parti d'argent and parti de gules , which were both those of the country and those of the diocese.

No change is made to the coat of arms of the Sept-dizains from 1600 until the Valais revolution and the Helvetic Republic (1798 - 1802). Reunited with the new Republic, the Valais des dix Dizains is forced to adopt the laws and principles, it is therefore invited to remove the coat of arms of the Canton. The Executive Board invites the canton to also erase the Valais colors. During this period, the canton chooses the emblem of the hat of freedom or hat of Guillaume Tell.



The flag of Valais (on the right), in front of the buildings of the commune of Monthey .

The independent Republic of Valais was formed on August 20, 1802 and on September 4, the forms of the seal and the arms of the State are determined: “The colors of the Republic are white and red. On this background, there will be twelve stars which correspond to the twelve territorial divisions, Goms, Brig, Visp, Raron (half-district), Mörel (half-district), Leuk, Sierre, Sion and the new districts of Lower Valais: Hérens, Martigny, Entremont, St-Maurice and Monthey. »

Under the Department of Simplon (1810 - 1813) everything had to adapt to the organization of the French Empire and the old roundel of Valais was prohibited. At the end of the diet, the December 31, 1813, Were worth recovering its independence and requesting its admission into the Confederation. The new constitution brings an important change. Parts detached from the tens of Sion and Martigny form a thirteenth district, that of Conthey. The new coat of arms therefore includes thirteen stars on a red and white background ⁷⁹.

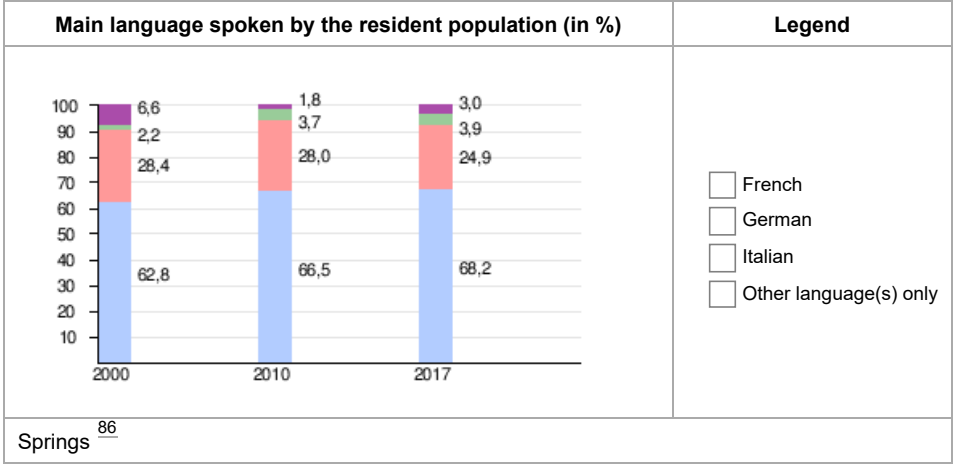
Languages

The two official languages in Valais are French and German . The canton is divided into these two linguistic groups, delimited by the Raspille , a river upstream from the town of Sierre . To the east, the inhabitants speak Upper Valaisan while to the west, the inhabitants speak French or Arpitan (also called "Francoprovençal" or "Patois"). In 2010, the languages spoken were as follows: French and Arpitan , spoken by 66.5% of the inhabitants, German by 28.0%, Italian by 3.7%,English by 2.5%, and other languages by 13.7% ⁸⁰ .

Following the Roman conquest in 25 BC. J.-C. , Valais speaks Latin , which will evolve and will become thereafter the arpitan (and more precisely its varieties valaisannes). Then, from the 8th century , ^{settlers} from the Bernese Oberland , the Walsers , began to settle in Haut-Valais and descend the Rhône . Gradually the villages will convert to the Germanic language; for example Loèche-les-Bains , Arpitanophone in the 13th century , ^{became} German-speaking in the 16th century ^{century} ⁸¹ . The linguistic border will end up stabilizing at the level of Raspille, leaving about two thirds of the French-speaking valley (the Bas-Valais and the central Valais) and a Germanic third (the Haut-Valais).

The vernacular of the inhabitants is not the official language. In Haut-Valais, it is not Haut-Valais but standard German that is used in education, in official business, and more generally in writing. Similarly, in Bas-Valais and central Valais, it is not Arpitan but French that is used in this respect.

Today, this dichotomous situation has changed. While in Haut-Valais the inhabitants continue to speak Haut-Valaisan ⁸² and to write in standard German, in the French-speaking part French has largely supplanted Arpitan ⁸³ , to such an extent that in the villages on the plain it is rare to hear the original idiom, and in most other localities it is in sharp decline. It is still spoken by children in a few villages, particularly in the region of Evolène ⁸⁴ , and many people born before 1950 still speak it daily in Savièse , Nendaz or the Val d'Anniviers ; in the plain (in Fully, among others), or in the Val de Bagnes, where the relative proximity of the canton of Vaud has pushed the natives to emigrate to work, the Arpitan has already been largely abandoned. A "Romande and interregional patois festival" is organized in Martigny every two years in the presence of groups from all regions where the use of the Arpitan is traditional. Initiatives have been launched to try to save this language, in particular by the Patois Foundation ⁸⁵ .



Comparative example of the languages of Valais

Walser (Ernen)	Am Morget, we nu der Maanet schiint, geit der Püür uf d Matta fer ga z määje. Äm säggschi weckt är schiini Fröw, wa nu teif gschlaafe het.
Standard German	Am Morgen, wenn noch der Mond scheint, geht der Bauer auf die Wiese, um zu mähen. Um sechs Uhr weckt er seine Frau aus dem tiefen Schlaf.
Arpitan (Savièse)	Lo morning, when the luna brelye oncor, the peasant gets bored por seyér lo prât. A siéx hores il désome la savua fèna que drome comment des truncs. Ó matèn, can i ona brelé ouncó, i paijan ch'ënmodé pó chéé ó pra. A chi j-our.ei désoune a chavua féna kyé drome cómin dé tron.
Standard French	In the morning, when the moon is still shining, the farmer leaves to mow in the meadow. At six o'clock he wakes his wife from a deep sleep.
Spring ⁸⁷	

Note : The Arpitan text is given twice: the first is in the supradialectal spelling ORB , the second in a local phonetic spelling ⁸⁷.

Linguistic distribution by district

During the census carried out in 2005, the linguistic distribution was as follows:

District	Population 2000	% German	% French	% others	Population 2005
<i>Brig</i>	23,052	91.9	1.4	6.7	23,984
<i>conches</i>	4,743	92.8	0.6	6.6	4,761
<i>Leuk</i>	11,631	91.8	2.4	5.8	12,121
<i>Raron</i>	10,380	96.1	0.8	3.1	10,888
<i>Visp</i>	26,819	87.2	4.5	8.3	27,200
German-speaking Valais	76,625				78,954
<i>Conthey</i>	20,094	2.7	90.6	6.7	21,841
<i>Entremont</i>	12,138	1.7	91.9	6.4	12,990
<i>Herens</i>	9,029	2.2	95.0	2.8	9,919
<i>Martigny</i>	33,693	1.5	88.6	9.9	36,627
<i>Monthey</i>	33,389	2.6	87.7	9.7	37,505
<i>Saint Maurice</i>	10,420	2.0	90.1	7.9	11,252
<i>Sierre</i>	40,018	8.1	80.2	11.7	43,120
<i>If we</i>	36,993	5.1	85.1	9.8	39,367
French-speaking Valais	195,774				212,621

Thus, at the end of 2005, the German-speaking Valais had 27.1% of the population of the canton, against 72.8% for the French-speaking Valais.

There has been a French-speaking push in the canton in recent decades: the population of Haut-Valais , corresponding to German-speaking Valais, only increased over the period 2000-2005 by 2,329 inhabitants, or 3.04%. The French-speaking Valais (Bas-Valais) gains for its part no less than 16,849 residents or 8.61%.

On the other hand, the comparison of the censuses of 1990 and 2000 reveals a clear growth of the French language, of the order of 5 to 6% of the total population, in the districts of Sion and Sierre, and this to the detriment of the German minority which lives there (and which constituted a majority in Sierre until about 1920) ⁸⁸ .

Places and monuments

Many monuments dot the Valais landscape. The best known are certainly the basilica of Valère where we find the oldest organ in the world still playable, and the territorial abbey of Saint-Maurice d'Agaune . The Valais has several castles of historical importance, frequently built at once strategic locations: Château de Tourbillon , Château de Saint-Maurice , Château de Stockalper , Château de la Bâtiaz , Château de la Majorie , Château de la Porte du Scex , the Château Mercier , the Château de Villa , the Episcopal castle of Loèche-Villeetc It is also necessary to mention several churches which present a quality architecture, in particular those due to the architect Ulrich Ruffiner (around 1480 - around 1550) who left many buildings between Sion and the Goms valley: Saint- Théodule church in Sion , church of Raron , church of Ernen ... In the Goms valley, there are also several beautiful baroque or baroque churches. Contemporary religious architecture has also yielded interesting buildings, such as the works of the Genevan architect Jean-Marie Ellenberger (1913 - 1988) in Sierre (Sainte-Croix church) or in Verbier .



The castle of Valère and the top of Cry in the background.

In civil architecture, two hospices, each located at one of the passes leading to Italy, once provided supplies for pilgrims on their way to Rome and travellers: the Grand-Saint-Bernard hospice and the Simplon hospice . There are also interesting Roman remains, such as the amphitheater of Martigny . Sion is also a “major site of European prehistory” ⁸⁹ . One can see there in particular the dolmens of Petit-Chasseur , a set of large collective burials dating back to the 3rd millennium BC. AD Bridges are also an important element of the Valais built landscape. Due to its mountainous relief which requires crossing many natural obstacles, the canton has several bridges, old or modern, often audacious, including the Gueuroz bridge which was once the highest bridge in Europe, and the Ganter , on the Simplon road.

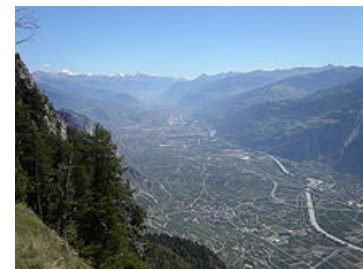
Visible from central Valais, the statue of Christ the King recalls the Catholic tradition of the canton.

Among the most important museums in the canton, the Gianadda Foundation in Martigny attracts many visitors from all over Switzerland and neighboring countries. The canton also has several museums, including the cantonal museum of fine arts, the cantonal history museum, the cantonal museum of natural history , the museum of vine and wine or the museum of Traditions and boats of the Leman .

Natural heritage

Vegetation and flora

The Valais benefits from an extraordinary diversity of landscapes which contrast between the snow-capped summits at over 4,000 m and the dry hillsides and the bottoms of wet valleys. The special climates of the Rhône Valley, the presence of large wild spaces and the extent of natural forests naturally result in an exceptional richness of vegetation. In Valais, it is useful to know how to recognize the different levels of vegetation, hilly, mountainous, subalpine, alpine and nival.



The Rhone valley surrounded by the Alps.

- The hilly floor is the floor of deciduous forests, in reality, the natural vegetation gives way almost everywhere to crops (vines). The Rhône plain has a natural vegetation known as alluvial which consists of willows and alders as well as poplars.
- The mountain level is the area where beech and fir grow in Lower Valais and Scots pine in the driest part of central Valais. There is also the ash which abounds along the paths, hedges and bisses. Certain crops, cereals, potatoes are still possible, as well as hay grass (whose management methods influence biodiversity ⁹⁰ , in particular entomological).
- The subalpine stage is the part that rises to the last trees and stops in the rhododendrons or dwarf junipers. It is in this area that we find the dark coniferous forests. In the Bas-Valais, spruce dominates, but elsewhere in the canton larch accompanies it, as well as Swiss stone pine on the very sunny heights of the Pennine chain. It is in this space that we also find the mayens (temporary residence) with their pastures.
- The alpine level is above the forests. This is where short lawns develop, reflecting the multiple variations in soil and microclimate. These spaces are impressive for their flowering, their fragrance and their diversity. It is in these mountain pastures that the cattle stay in summer. The specialized vegetation is not influenced by the pasture which develops on the scree, the ridges and the dry slopes. In the rocks, one finds a multitude of plants which grow in clumps and which are adapted to the various rustic environments.
- The nival level extends to the highest peaks, there are only mosses, lichens and algae. Sometimes, in rare and favorable conditions, such as in rocky and protected niches, a few flowering plants are found.

Valais flora is so diverse that it cannot be developed in detail on this page. We will limit ourselves to citing a few nature reserves with their areas of interest.

- The Bois de Finges is home to a vast pine forest of national importance where the Rhône flows free and wild through alluvial areas , islands, river arms of lakes and ponds . This biotope is an ideal paradise for all kinds of plants and animals .

- The Vallon de Réchy is a valley which is located between the Val d'Anniviers and the Val d'Hérens . It is a unique site in the center of Valais. It is one of the nature reserves of Valais. It can be broken down into four parts:

- Le Bas-Vallon: there are first birch and Scots pines and with greater humidity, fir , white alder , ash , hazel and larch , the forest is of the mixed type.
- The Middle Valley: an immense barrier of rock bars the valley , we enter another country. The trees have disappeared, there are moors and alpine meadows here . Each flower has chosen its favorite place.
- Le Haut Vallon: it is believed that nothing grows anymore, but it is not true. It is the world of permafrost , and also a water reserve for the inhabitants of the region.
- Le Louché: the lakeside biotope .

- The Derborence nature reserve is located on the border with the canton of Vaud and Valais. In this place one finds one of the last virgin forests of mountain of Switzerland, as well as a lake which was formed following a landslide of the mountain. There is an extremely diversified flora and fauna that have been able to develop sheltered from the depredations of man.
- Poutafontana is a cantonal nature reserve , it is one of the last areas of marshland in the Rhône plain. It is an environment of eutrophic megaphorbia, stagnant water and seepage. There are a large number of rare plants that grow in a humid environment.
- The Follatères and Etangs du Rosel located at the bend of the Rhône mark the limit between the humid climate (Atlantic) of the Alps bordering Lake Geneva and the drier climate (continental) of central Valais. On the Follatères one finds, among others, bulbous plants , orchids , liliaceae and perennials such as the houseleek and the leaning thistle . On bare earth beaches between perennials , liverwort mosses make dichotomous designs.
- The Rosel pond is located in the plain, it is one of the last vestiges of a once very vast wetland.
- The marshes of Saint-Pierre-de-Clages are a site of national importance where you can find many rare plants typical of wetlands.
- The rigoles de Vionnaz are the low-marsh with the poorest nutrients in the entire Rhône plain. With an area of 14 ha , this site represents the largest marsh in the Rhône plain in Lower Valais . It includes humid forests , an extensive reed bed and especially a bog . There are rare and valuable species typical of acidic and poor bogs, including the carnivorous sundew (plant).



Vallon de Réchy , one of the nature reserves of Valais.

The canton was during the last centuries a ground of discovery for many scientists who paid homage to him by allotting to several taxa the epithet vallesiacus .

Fauna



Two Hérens cows in combat.

The Valais is privileged for its abundant and easily observed wildlife . By its surface area, its geographical location and its climate , the Valais offers quality biotopes for wildlife . The richness of the Valais fauna gives the measure of the diversity of the environments which shelter 49 species of terrestrial mammals and 24 of bats , nearly 200 species of birds , 34 of reptiles , amphibians and fish , 57 of dragonflies , finally, nearly 1,400 species of butterflies and more than 70 species of grasshoppers and locusts . These figures increase if one is interested in nocturnal butterflies , hymenoptera or beetles (approximately 4,000 species for the Valais).

The Hérens cow is a characterful cow typical of the Valais. Animals of this breed are endowed with a lively and belligerent temperament which manifests itself in an exacerbated ritual of dominance. The fights in which the cows naturally engage when turning out to pasture,

going up to the mountain pastures or when joining two herds bear witness to this. Nevertheless, the animals remain peaceful and calm the rest of the year. This ability is of course the basis of the organization of the cow fights which take place every spring. These events bring together more than a hundred animals divided into various categories according to age and weight. After many battles, one of the fighters is declared " Queen by the jury. Such demonstrations are also organized in the Aosta Valley with the animals of the Valdostaine breed and, for some years now, a fight has taken place annually in the Chamonix valley . The ability to fight is an integral part of the genetic heritage of the breed and, although no study of heritability has been undertaken, there is no doubt that its transmission is hereditary [ref. necessary] .

During 2016, a wolf pack forms in the Augstbord region upstream from Raron . The canton has long practiced a policy hostile to predators, because of the damage caused to sheep farms ⁹¹ .



A Saint Bernard .

Finding its origin in the history of the Grand-Saint-Bernard hospice , the Saint-Bernard is a breed of dog very appreciated for its character and its hospitality. This race was the star of various films among which *Beethoven* . A museum is dedicated to the history of this breed in Martigny.

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Appendices

On other Wikimedia projects:

Canton of Valais (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Canton_of_Valais?suselang=fr) , at Wikimedia Commons

Canton of Valais , at Wikinews

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- Political Rights Act (LCDP): RS 160.1* , State of Valais, May 13, 2005 (read online (https://lex.vs.ch/app/fr/texts_of_law/160.1/versions/2442)). 📄

Internal links

- Our Valais* , anthem
- List of cantonal popular votes in Valais

External links

- (fr+de) Official website (<https://www.vs.ch>)
- Authority records : VIAF (<http://viaf.org/viaf/123749010>) · ISNI (<http://isni.org/isni/00000000115439866>) · BnF (<http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb11937449m>) (data (<http://data.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb11937449m>)) · Sudoc (<http://www.idref.fr/031843530>) · LCCN (<http://id.loc.gov/authorities/n80104828>) · GND (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/4064466-2>) · Israel (http://uli.nli.org.il/F/?func=find-b&local_base=NLX10&find_code=UID&request=987007555059405171) · Czech Republic (<http://aut.nkp.cz/ge172492>) · WorldCat (<https://www.worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n80104828>)
- Music related resource : MusicBrainz (<https://musicbrainz.org/area/e1384603-3a9e-4427-ac2d-4b8473e8e32c>)

- Records in general dictionaries or encyclopedias : *Britannia* (<https://www.britannica.com/place/Valais>) · *Brockhaus* (<https://brockhaus.de/ecs/enzy/article/wallis-20>) · *Historical Dictionary of Switzerland* (<http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/f/F007396.php>) · *Gran Enciclopèdia Catalana* (<https://www.enciclopedia.cat/EC-GEC-0068831.xml>) · *Store norske leksikon* (<https://snl.no/Valais>) · *Universalis* (<https://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/valais/>)
 - Valais/Wallis Promotion official website (<http://www.valais.ch>)
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