

# The canton of Uri

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## The Canton of Uri

Uri is located in Central Switzerland on the north side of the Alps. The canton's territory covers the valley of the Reuss River and its main tributaries between St. Gotthard Pass and Lake Lucerne. The total area of the canton is 1,077 km<sup>2</sup>. About half of this is considered productive land. Forests cover a significant part of the territory, and glaciers make up 20% of the unproductive land. The highest elevation in the canton is the Dammastock, at 3,630m, north of the Furka Pass.



Urnersee

German is the primary language spoken in Uri. The population is about 35,000, of which 3,046 (or 8.7%) are foreigners. As of 2000, 86% of the population are Roman Catholic while only 6% are Protestant.

Uri is first mentioned in 732 as belonging to the abbot of Reichenau. In 853 it was given to the nunnery at Zürich by Lois the German.

In 1243 the region had a common seal. By 1274 the powerful Rudolf of Habsburg recognized these privileges. Uri was one of the three original Swiss cantons, having signed the Letter of Alliance (Bundesbrief) in 1291. In 1386 Uri participated in the vic-

tory over the Austrians at Sempach. As a result Uri annexed the lands of Urseren in 1410.



Statue of Wilhelm Tell in Altdorf

The region resisted the reformation and remained Roman Catholic. During the Helvetic Republic Uri was part of the canton of Waldstätten. After this, in 1803 as part of the Act of Mediation, Uri re-gained its independence. All attempts to religious or constitutional reform were resisted. In 1815 Uri joined the League of Sarnen for this reason. Later on Uri was one of the members of the Sonderbund. The Sonderbund was a separatist Catholic league, but was defeated by the Swiss Confederation which led to the Swiss Federal Constitution.

The cultivated fields of the canton are located in the valley

of the Reuss River. There are pastures on the lower mountain slopes. Since most of the terrain is extremely hilly, it is not suitable for cultivation. Hydroelectric power generation is of great importance. Forestry is one of the most important sectors of agriculture. At Altdorf there are cable and rubber factories.

Tourism is an important source of income in the canton of Uri. An excellent network of roads facilitates tourism in remote areas in the mountains.

### Government

The current constitution of the canton dates back to 1888. It was revised in 1929 when the open assembly (Landsgemeinde) was abolished. Uri today comprises 20 self-administered territories; the cantonal capital is Altdorf.

*from Wikipedia*



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