

CULTURAL HERITAGE, PAYERNE

PAYERNE ABBEY CHURCH

As it is often the case, the first monastery, built in around 950 AD, was constructed on the walls of Carolingian buildings. Becoming a Cluniac priory (obeying the rule of St. Benedict of the Cluny monastery in Burgundy), it underwent rich development. It was raised to the rank of abbey in the 15th century, under the authority of the House of Savoy.

With the Reformation and the arrival of the Bernese, the monks were driven out and the convent buildings were used for various non-religious purposes: granary, warehouse, workshop, barracks, foundry, archives room and gymnastics room. The abbey, "the most spectacular vaulted religious building in Switzerland", became a historic monument in the late 19th century.

It is a Romanesque building supplemented with numerous late Gothic elements, and houses frescoes from the 11th and 12th centuries. Magnificent capitals adorn the columns. The admirable clarity of the interior, rare for Gothic monuments, derives from the windows in the side aisles and the colour of the stones used. The high pillars give a majestic volume to the ensemble.

The abbey is constantly renovated and maintained. Archaeological digs revealed the presence of a major cemetery (several hundred tombs) under its floor.

Since 1870, some of the convent buildings have been occupied by the Musée de Payerne, dedicated to fine arts. The abbey forms a beautiful architectural ensemble alongside the neighbouring parish church, the 16th century town hall and the Bernese castle.

It has been discovered that the famous "will of queen Berthe", naming her as the founder of Payerne, is in fact a fake, created by monks. These papers allowed the monks to grant themselves more rights than they actually possessed.

OPENING HOURS

From 1 Mar 2025 to 30 Jun 2025 Tuesday - Sunday	10:00 - 17:30
From 1 Jul 2025 to 31 Aug 2025 Monday - Sunday	10:00 - 17:30
From 1 Sep 2025 to 31 Oct 2025 Tuesday - Sunday	10:00 - 17:30
From 1 Nov 2025 to 28 Feb 2026 Tuesday - Sunday	13:30 - 17:30

PRICES

Price	CHF 16.-
Adult	
Concessions (students, apprentices, recipients of old-age survivors', disability and unemployment benefits, military personnel in uniform)	CHF 14.-
Child (aged 6-16)	CHF 10.-
Child (under the age of 6)	Free
Family (2 adults + 1 or 2 children or 1 adult + 3 children)	CHF 40.-
Annual pass	CHF 35.-
Raiffeisen cards, Swiss Museums Passport, ICOM, AMS	Free

GOOD TO KNOW

On Mondays, which are public holidays, the Abbey Church will be open.



CONTACT

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