Discover the Tower of Democracy

The mission of Polit-Forum Bern in the city’s historic Käfigturm is to promote engagement with democracy and provide a space for political dialogue.
Experience democracy

A democracy needs spaces for dialogue and debate. Polit-Forum Bern, the only institution of its kind in Switzerland, offers a programme as well as facilities which promote discussion and strengthen social cohesion. With a view on the Federal Parliament, Polit-Forum Bern tackles the subjects on the current political agenda from its base in the Tower of Democracy.

For more informal and relaxed chats, there is the Democracy Bar, while the team, with help from its ‘rolling table’, takes the discussion beyond the tower’s walls and into the public space.

Throughout the year, Polit-Forum Bern organises, often with partners, discussions on a range of political topics. It uses objects, information and voices to bring democracy to life in a vivid and tangible way. The main rooms are accessible by lift. All Polit-Forum Bern activities and events are free of charge and open to all.
1 INFO + ATELIER
The Atelier is used by young people for assorted civic education activities: debating classes, discussions, democracy games, etc.

2 CONFERENCES
The event room can be hired for political events free of charge.

3 IN THE NEWS
Temporary exhibitions and documentations on the latest democracy-related issues.

4 PODIUM
The home of topical debate and discussion.

4.5 EXPERIENCES
People from different backgrounds and experiences talk about their approach to democracy.

5 SOUNDS OF DEMOCRACY
As the tower’s giant clock dating from 1694 ticks in the background, visitors can listen to a sound collage and short speeches on the future of democracy.

3 DEMOCRACY BAR
The ideal spot for informal, relaxed chats about democracy over a glass of wine or a glass of water. You will find the current bar programme on our website. The bar also features democracy-related objects and artefacts.

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The Atelier is used by young people for assorted civic education activities: debating classes, discussions, democracy games, etc.
Polit-Forum Bern offers guided tours for young people and adults. Using the Käfigturm and its immediate surroundings as examples, guides take visitors on a deep dive into the history and emergence of democracy. Today’s Käfigturm was built in 1643, replacing a tower that had stood on the same site since 1256. Formerly part of the city’s outer walls, the tower served as a prison from 1405 to 1897.

**Democracy in three questions**
Democracy thrives on change. But who participates in the democratic process? How do issues find their way on to the political agenda? How do we make decisions together? The Tower of Democracy addresses these fundamental questions through dialogue and different fun and engaging formats.

**Democracy Mile**
The ‘Democracy Mile’ tour takes visitors down three streets between the Käfigturm, Bundesplatz and Zytglogge that have played a role in the history of democracy. We scratch beneath the surface and explore places that normally go on unnoticed to trace the evolution of democracy, its visions and conflicts.

**From Prison to Tower of Democracy**
The democratic process does not always run smoothly in Switzerland. The Käfigturm, in its earlier iteration as a prison, is a good case in point. This guided tour uses the history of the tower to plot the development of Swiss democracy and contemporary Swiss history.

**The Tower Ledgers**
In the Early Modern period, the Käfigturm served as a remand prison where suspects were detained and questioned. These interrogations were transcribed in the ‘Tower Ledgers’, which still survive today. This tour offers a unique insight into this chapter of history.
Activities for schools and young people

Polit-Forum Bern serves as a civic education facilitator. It wholeheartedly welcomes and encourages the input and involvement of young people in its programme.

**Atelier**
The Atelier is available to schools and youth organisations for discussions, debates and sessions with politically active figures.

**Education kits**
Education kits are available for all Tower of Democracy exhibition content.

**Politics school trips to Bern**
Polit-Forum Bern can also help teachers plan their politics school trip to the Swiss capital. Educators can also choose from various ideas and combinable modules developed by the Polit-Forum Bern team.
Visiting the Tower of Democracy
You can find our current events programme online and in our newsletter (available in German and French).

All Polit-Forum Bern activities are free of charge.

Information and bookings at www.polit-forum-bern.ch or by phone at +41 (0)31 310 20 60.

Opening hours
MON  2 pm – 6 pm
TUES – FRI  10 am – 6 pm
SAT  10 am – 4 pm

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The Polit-Forum Bern is supported by:

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