

The number 11

Switzerland's most beautiful baroque town

Solothurn did not originate in the baroque period but was already a settlement during Roman times. It is also from them that the town received its name, as the Romans named their new settlement "Castrum Salodurum", from which the modern "Solothurn" is derived. From 1530 to 1792 Solothurn was home to the French Ambassadors in Switzerland and with them the baroque building style travelled to the town from France. The town of Solothurn has a special connection to the number 11 and it is really very interesting how many times this number is encountered in Solothurn buildings and customs.

It is quite unique to see in how many places the factor 11 appears in Solothurn

The history of the town of Solothurn is inextricably linked with the number eleven. Solothurn is the 11th canton of the Swiss Confederation to be listed in the canton list. 11 churches and chapels, 11 fountains and 11 towers belong to the landscape of the town. The number 11 is a continuation of earlier times with 11 guilds, prefectures and chaplains.

The St. Ursen Cathedral, Solothurn's landmark, is the masterpiece of the "magical eleven". In 1762, the builder Gaetano Matteo Pisoni from Ascona was so fascinated by the "elevenish atmosphere" that he harmonised the architecture of the church with it. The bell tower measures 6 x 11 metres; the tower contains 11 bells; 11 altars adorn the cathedral, and they can be seen all at once only from a single spot, which is the eleventh black stone at the main entrance. The prayer benches are arranged in rows of eleven. The monumental staircase consists of 3 x 11 stairs. The number of pipes in the large organ can be divided by 11. The construction period was 11 years (1762 – 1773).



After climbing the 249 steps, if the weather is nice between spring and autumn one has a spectacular view from the tower gallery.

Earlier the town had, among other things, 11 guilds, 11 portals, 11 towers, 11 bastions, 11 public fountains, etc. But even today the number 11 is still very much present in Solothurn. For example, there are 11 museums, 11 fountains, 11 chapels, 11 churches, an "11"-beer and even a clock that shows only 11 hours.



The Solothurn clock

With its 11-hour dial the Solothurn clock in an original design not only indicates "Solothurn time", but also plays the "Solothurn song" on 11 bells, usually at 11.00, 12.00, 17.00 and 18.00. A special characteristic of the clock is the harlequin which strikes the hours. This beautiful metal sculpture was designed by the artist Paul Gugelmann of Gretzenbach/SO. The project promoter is the family business Trigona AG, Lengnau. The "Solothurn clock" can be admired on the West wall of the UBS branch at Amthausplatz 1 (Schanzenstrasse side) in Solothurn.