



Terms and conditions for artists

23rd Buskers Bern, Thursday – Saturday, August 6 – 8, 2026

Performance times

- The festival lasts for three days: Thursday, Friday and Saturday, from 18.00h to 24.00h (18.00h – midnight) on THU, until 24.30h on FRI and SAT. The program for kids starts on Friday and Saturday already at 15.00h.
- All artists perform on all three nights Thursday, Friday and Saturday, no exceptions. No artists are booked for only a single night.
- As a rule, all artists do three sets a night (15 – 40 min. each). Shows of fixed lengths will be integrated into the scheduling accordingly. Shorter sets (15 – 20 min.) could even be performed four times a night.
Music: as a rule 35 – 40 min. each set (including encores). „Visual“ acts (street performance, theatre, dance, acrobatics, puppet theatre etc.): as a rule 15 – 30 min. max. each, ideally approx. 20 min.

Venues, Performing Spots

- Buskers Bern takes place in Berne's Lower Old Town (Unesco Cultural World Heritage) between the Clock Tower (Zytglogge) and Nydegg.
- There are about 25 pitches chosen as venues for performances in the streets, under the arcades, on squares and in parks, a third of which are equipped with simple stages, some roofed. There are 2-3 indoor venues too.
- The groups change venue after each set or after 2 sets (rotation system), which is why they should make sure they are highly mobile (hand carts/trolleys) and have their equipment reduced to a minimum. The whole Festival area is car-free. Groups using sophisticated technical gear will still have to change location once a night and thus can perform twice in one spot. Stationary acts will need to make special arrangements with Buskers Bern.

Travel expenses

- Buskers Bern covers travel expenses according to agreement.
- Travel expenses from and to further places outside Europe (overseas) cannot be covered by Buskers Bern alone (possibility of sharing costs with other festival promoters). Buskers Bern does not organize visas.

Fees / Hat Money

- Buskers Bern does not pay any fees. The artists earn their own fees by passing around the hat and by using different cashless systems (QR codes etc.). Experience shows this works well in Berne.

Accommodation

- Buskers Bern will cover accommodation costs for Thursday, Friday and Saturday night and, if necessary, an additional night on Wednesday. Buskers Bern can book further nights at favorable rates if needed and announced before July (to negotiate) – the cost, however, will have to be covered by the groups themselves. Double rooms or rooms with three or more beds (separate beds) in good mid-range hotels will be provided. Special requests such as gender segregated rooms, bringing dogs etc. must be communicated before June. Groups will not be mixed.
- Buskers Bern doesn't book single rooms (except for artists travelling alone or for very special justified reasons).
- Buskers Bern will only cover accommodation for performing members of groups (not managers, friends or family). We are very happy to help organize extra accommodation for the latter, though.

Food

- Buskers Bern provides a substantial three-course dinner on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday night.
- On Thursday there will be a buffet at noon (Quick lunch). On Friday and Saturday, a rich brunch buffet will be provided (12.00h to 14.00h). Breakfast is provided at some (not all) of the hotels as well.
- By prior arrangement with Buskers Bern, persons accompanying the groups may join in these meals at a reduced price.

Technical Equipment / Infrastructure

- Performing groups can play unplugged or amplified. Large-scale amplification is not suitable and is to be avoided. Monitor speakers are to be limited to a minimum (1-2).
- There are no sound technicians at the groups' disposal. In urgent cases our team of technicians can help solve technical problems. All technical equipment and other material are shifted from venue to venue by the groups themselves using hand carts. The whole Festival area is car-free.
- Electricity (220V) is provided at all performing venues (swiss plugs!)
- All performing venues are lit simply.

Merchandising

- The performers can sell their CDs, DVDs and other articles of merchandise (t-shirts etc.) in connection with their show at the Festival. Buskers Bern are happy to make recommendations on pricing.

Further information on the Festival

- There is no OFF-Festival in Berne. Only groups invited and scheduled by Buskers Bern are permitted to perform at the Festival.
- Buskers Bern invites around 40 groups made up of about 150 artists from all over the world – roughly half are musical, and half are 'visual' acts (theatre, puppet theatre, street performance, dance, acrobatics, etc.). The organizing team comprises around 50 staff and 250 volunteers. 60 food stalls sell delicious food to the public. Buskers Bern is a private association.
- Buskers Bern endeavors to ensure very good communication. The Festival is attended by a large and varied segment of the population, in particular many families, as well as elder people (50'000-75'000 visitors over the three days). The existing system of collecting hat money is communicated very clearly every year and works superbly, as all the 22 previous editions of the Festival have shown.
- The whole Festival area is openly accessible to anyone – no entrance fee is charged. All visitors are asked to support the organization by voluntarily buying the Festival bracelet including the program booklet (at CHF 20.– or 30.–, CHF 5.– for kids (for all three days)).
- From midnight until 3.30h on Thursday and until approx. 5.00h on Friday and Saturday the Buskers House opens its doors. It is a party venue with bars and a stage where the artists, festival staff and the public can celebrate. Each night one or two Festival bands are scheduled to play a set of 40 min. The entrance fee is modest, people holding a Festival badge are admitted for free and at any time (even when the house is full).
- Buskers Bern does not hold any competitions or awards (prize-giving, public's favorites, etc.).
- Possible travel expenses are reimbursed in Swiss Francs in cash. Travel expenses can be partly transferred by bank in advance also if wished so.
- Small change from the hat money in Swiss Francs can be changed for bills with Buskers Bern (only for foreign bands). Changing the bills into foreign currencies can be done at the official foreign exchange spots (e.g. at Berne main station, which is open on Sunday as well).
- In case of rain Buskers Bern will not pay compensation. Much of the Festival will take place under the arcades (along most streets) and still works well as experience has shown. Some venues are even covered or are inside a tent; for some venues there are indoor alternatives. Some shows may have to be cancelled in case of rain.

Application

At Buskers Bern nearly all artists are professional and make their living from their art. There is no application form, nor is there an official closing date for applications. Scheduling will usually be completed by the end of May or even earlier.

Please send all application material via e-mail from November 2025 on to the address given below. Short e-mails with a clear subject heading and containing useful direct links (especially to live videos) are preferred. We are particularly interested in clear indications of genre, style, actual line-up, tour plans and release dates, etc.

Please do not call us by phone. Thank you for your understanding.

Buskers Bern
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Christine Wyss, Co-Festival Director and Artistic Manager
Julia Wietlisbach, Co-Festival Director and Artistic Manager
Melinda Burri, Assistance Festival Direction and Artistic Managers

Berne, August 2025