

# Is a Bernese Mountain Dog the right breed for you?

**History of the breed:** The Bernese Mountain Dog is a very old breed originating in the mountains of Switzerland. They were named after the canton of Berne. These were true Swiss farm dogs guarding the farm, pulling carts and driving small herds of cattle with their owner. First brought to the US in 1926, the breed was recognized by the American Kennel Club in 1937.

**Physical characteristics:** The Bernese Mountain Dog is a handsome, sturdy, tri-color dog, jet black in color with rich russet and white markings. They have brown eyes, a thick coat, deep chest and strong loins which show they are suited for hard work. They shed year-round though it is worse in the hot summer months. Average males weigh between 100 and 120 pounds and average females weigh 70 to 90 pounds. The average life span of the breed is between 7 and 10 years but some can live longer.

**Temperament:** Bernese Mountain Dogs are intelligent, self confident, alert and good natured but can be aloof with strangers and protective around the home. They will love you devotedly and are normally good with children and other animals.

**Uses:** Draft work (carting), agility, obedience, therapy work, herding or driving, tracking, and companion dogs.

**Drawbacks:** Shedding (if you don't like hair in your food, this may not be the breed for you), short life span, cancers, hip and elbow problems and eye problems.

**Other:** Bernese Mountain Dogs need to be with people and suffer if abandoned or separated from their human companions. They should be allowed to live indoors, especially in hot climates, and need regular grooming, training and lots of attention. Once trained, these dogs can do any number of tasks and enjoy them all but they also enjoy resting with the family around the house. It cannot be stressed enough that they need companionship. You will get forever attached to them and they will own you before you know it.

**Annual cost of upkeep:** Approximately \$600 but it can be higher.

**Adoption cost:** \$375 with \$50 refunded upon completion of an obedience class with the first 6 months of ownership.