

# UPPER RHINE valley

ALSACE 🇫🇷 REGION BASEL 🇨🇭 BLACK FOREST 🇩🇪 PALATINATE



## Meadows, forests and water: the Basel Region. Where milk and honey flow

The Basel Region can be found in the south-western part of the Upper Rhine Valley and lies between



Schaffhausen's Rhine Falls and the bend of the Rhine in Basel which is locally known as the "Rheinknie". Visitors are welcomed by a very own Swiss "aroma", brilliant light, an original cuisine, a special richness in language and culture.

Baselland, Aargau and Jura are the names of the small cantons that lie amid green hills. The plains of the Swiss midlands are wedged between these hills, forming the chain of the Jura Mountains, and the Alps. The fog-free autumn and winter days are legendary. The leading exporting sectors specialising in the machine and electronics industry as well as *life science* businesses conduct their

work in the Aargau, and the Baselland - together with the city of Basel - is a popular home for the pharmaceutical industry. No wonder that good money is being made here.

Millions of years ago the dinosaurs that can be seen in the Préhisto-Parc in Réclère roamed the dark forests of the Jura. Much later the Celts and Romans settled in the Baselland and Aargau - today all three cantons are a true paradise for outings of all kinds: cross-country skiers, climbers, canoeists, mountain bikers, swimmers, riders and golf players are drawn to the rural nature. Flower-covered meadows, horse pastures, rugged rock faces for climbing, panorama- and high-altitude trails, waterfalls and lakes, the Rhine with its smaller tributaries all form this sundrenched, varied and rather sparsely populated region. The impressive chain of the Alps can be seen from almost all of the higher vantage points of the Jura Mountains.

There is enough room to spare, good air and peace and quiet as well. This is the home of the *Swiss Army Knife* and the *Ricola herb drops*, fine cheeses such as the *Tête de Moine AOC* and the delicate Pinot Noir or Riesling Sylvaner wines which are grown on smaller vineyards. Thermal springs, spas and wellness, state of the art congress centres in ancient castles and palaces, small, carefully preserved towns where time seems to have come to a stand-still - but are yet very



modern. Medieval Saint Ursanne, which lies on the banks of the river Doubs, is the oldest of them all. One also should not simply pass over Porrentruy and the Franches-Montagnes plateau or Liestal and Rheinfelden.



## An almost French canton in Switzerland

The canton of Jura only came into being in 1979: it shares a 121 kilometre-long border with France and its capital Delémont with its beautifully restored historic city centre is home to 12,000 people. This young canton with its 70,000 inhabitants covers an area approximately as large as that of New York City - there is quite enough room for everyone. Contrary to popular notion the Jura is not a mountainous canton. Only the Franches-Montagnes plateau lies at an altitude of about 1,000 metres above sea level, the other parts are of a more plains-like character and have a mild climate. In the



plains and hilly regions green meadows alternate with cornfields and orchards in which the famous Damson or Damascene plums grow especially well. The plateau of the Franches-Montagnes is characterised by free-range horses, majestic fir trees and farms with large, wide roofs that are so typical for this landscape, a landscape which is quite unique in Switzerland. True to its name,

the horse-country is home to the only indigenous Swiss breed of horses, the *Freiberger*.

In the eighteenth century a modest degree of wealth and progress arrived in the region through the textile industry which followed in the footsteps of the intensively practiced art of bobbin lace-making. The peasant outworkers became tool- and watchmakers. Whatever was manufactured by the Swiss in this line of profession henceforward had an international standing. The *Watchmakers Route* between Basel and Geneva presents the history of the watch in unique specimens that are located at 39 different stopover points. Besides such high-quality showcase products as the *La Rennomée* by Longines (which won the grand prize at the World Exhibition in 1900) one can also admire mantelpiece-clocks, sundials and church clocks, flower clocks, pendulum clocks, musical boxes and nickelo-deons. The most important raw material that can be found in the Jura, the intelligence of the people living there, helped make the change to micromechanics and microelectronics when cheap digital watches rang the death knell for the classic wind-up watches.



## The birthplace of anthroposophy

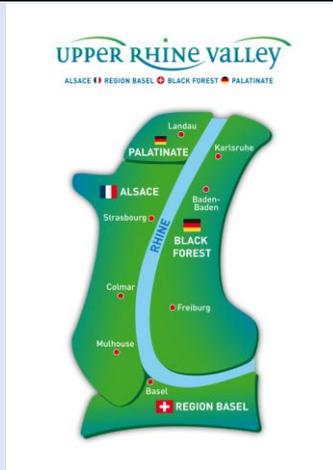
A counter-model to the pedagogical drill and industrial mass-production was developed more than 130 years ago in Dornach, near Basel, by the Austrian philosopher and life reformer Rudolf Steiner. He gave the impulse for a global movement that was to completely change school and the way of teaching, architecture, agriculture, dancing, medicine and fashion. The Goethe fan started off each day with *eurhythmics* - a gentle dance in a group. Right angles were not allowed in his *Goetheanum*, an example followed in all of the Steiner-houses. Anyone observing how relaxed the pupils ride their bicycles past the blossoming cherry trees on a mild spring day with their violin cases strapped to their backs would also like to be a Waldorf student. Anthroposophical medicine is very popular, bio-dynamic agriculture has made its way from Dornach into the world. Everything that is processed into creams and oils by the Arlesheim-based cosmetics firm *Weleda* is grown according to these principles. Roses, pomegranates, mint, rosemary or thyme, all processed without environmental toxins and preservatives, are little depots of wellness and scents that one can take home.



## Rural seclusion and urban spirit of life

Sharks teeth and dinosaurs - the continental plates collided in the region around Basel some 160 million years ago and left unique traces. Other remains - this time from the Roman period - can be found in *Augusta Raurica*, with its market places, theatres, thermal baths and temples for more than 10,000 people. Conflict was common throughout the ages, as in most border and transit areas. More than 100 castles and palaces testify to this heritage. The main reasons for strife were a desire for independence, religious beliefs, trade routes, rights and duties. Nowadays all of that is a thing of the past; peaceful coexistence prevails. Local businessmen and students sit together with tourists in front of the taverns, enjoying the mild climate and the clear air, taking in the views towards the Black Forest, the Vosges Mountains, the Alps, Jura Mountains and the plains of the Swiss Mittelland region, relishing fresh fish, beef from the cattle raised on the local meadows and smoked pork sausages, celebrating events and traditions such as the opulent feast of St. Martin, visiting music and art festivals. And each year the waters of the wide river draw four thousand ships to the moorings of the Baselbiet. This most important of Europe's trade routes brings the world to the Basel Region on a day-by-day basis. With steadily growing numbers!





## The Upper Rhine Valley

The beautiful Upper Rhine Valley is located in the heart of Europe, where the Rhine connects France, Germany and Switzerland. With an area of more than 21.000 km<sup>2</sup> the region is almost as large as Tuscany, and has the same centuries-old tradition of attracting tourists who love art, culture and fine cuisine. The Upper Rhine Valley is a compact region of versatile scenery and culturally of extraordinary diversity with many charming towns and villages on both sides of the Rhine. The economically prosperous region with its six million inhabitants is within easy reach and offers its visitors a lot of everything.

It never takes more than ten minutes to get from one highlight to another. Famous for its short and mild winters and pleasing summer temperatures from April to October, the region is one of the most beautiful and fertile landscapes in Europe: The markets, vineyards and sophisticated restaurants as good as gold for gourmets; the Gothic cathedrals in Freiburg, Basel and Strasbourg, medieval castles and the countless museums with art collections ranging through history make it a MUST for art connoisseurs; the unique landscape is a paradise for golfers, hikers and ramblers, swimmers, bikers and outdoor fans. Some eighteen million overnight stays each year - of which many guests are returning visitors - confirm the region's outstanding appeal to tourism.

*For further detailed information:*

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