

UPPER RHINE valley

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Green City Freiburg

Green City - this city in the Upper Rhine Valley does not carry this title because it is the capital of the Black Forest, but rather because it is internationally recognised as a model city for ecology and sustainability. Close to the fertile, sundrenched range of hills known as the *Kaiserstuhl* with its gently flowing vineyards, and in close proximity to the Markgräfler Land which evokes images of Tuscany when the richly blooming fruit trees are seen in the mellow light, lying at the foot of the Black Forest with its dark forests and lush meadows - it doesn't get much greener than this!

And nowadays delegations from all corners of the globe come to find out how ecology can be integrated into politics, economy and everyday life in a liveable and loveable manner. Of course the more than nine hundred year old city itself with its medieval lanes and the small open canals in the streets which wind their way through the city centre - locally known as *Gässle* and *Bächle* respectively - and its famous cathedral, as well as the abundance of sunshine and the famous hospitality are still a magnet as such. But the aspect of being a modern eco-metropolis has added one more unique characteristic!



From market town to green city



Even back in 1120, when the rulers from the local Zähringer dynasty founded Freiburg, they paid attention to the city's climate: The main axis of the new city allowed the cooling winds from the surrounding Black Forest to pass through it evening after evening - basically a kind of medieval Feng Shui! An ingenious system was also devised with the still preserved *Bächle*, a system of small open canals with a total length of more than nine kilometres,

which supplied the residents and businesses with fresh water from the Black Forest for everyday use and at the same time removed rainwater and sewage from the city in a natural manner. A close relationship with nature is also the basic principle for modern-day Freiburg districts such as the *Rieselfeld* or the *Quartier Vauban*. The *Quartier Vauban* is internationally known as a model project for sustainable urban development: Most houses are nearly self-sufficient; some of them even produce more energy than they consume. A colourful mixture of apartment buildings and individual houses has evolved, car-free and yet very urban. To this very day Freiburg is one of the few areas in Germany with an increasing population: Everyone wants to profit from the high quality of living while at the same time using the minimum of natural resources.



Riding the green economic wave: Nuclear protestors and electric rebels



Freiburg is one of the birthplaces of the environmental movement. Already back in the nineteen-seventies the population of the surrounding countryside and Freiburg's inhabitants together successfully defended themselves against the construction of a nuclear power plant in nearby Wyhl am Kaiserstuhl. The first eco-institute was founded at that time, as well as a solar research institute which is nowadays the largest one in Europe, the *Fraunhofer ISE*.

They gave, and still give, important impulses in the research of renewable energy sources and sustainable urban development. The region around Freiburg combines ecology and economy: An energetic environmental economics industry which ranges from the producers of solar panels to environmental consultants has developed in the city and the surrounding region. And this sustainable economy is flourishing; the last couple of years saw the creation of more than 12.000 jobs in the environmental and solar industry.

History, culture, museums, music and science: the full programme!



Fruit, vegetables, wine and home-baked bread are daily available from the farmers gathered around the city's landmark, the cathedral tower of the *Freiburg Minster*. Freiburg's cathedral is one of the few cathedrals which was already completed in the Middle Ages; the unusual tracery gave the tower the label as the most beautiful tower in the whole of Christianity. When the smells of the traditional *Münsterplatzwurst* sausages or the sounds from the cathedral's organ drift through the medieval lanes one just wants to sit back and enjoy life in the sun with a glass

of Weißburgunder, a Pinot Blanc from the local wine-growing area of Baden. The city also offers museums ranging from A to Z, from traditional to original: From the *Augustinermuseum* - which impressively presents highlights from medieval art to the nineteenth century in a former monastery - to the *Zinnfigurenklause*, the pewter figure museum.

The university has been shaping the cultural life of this city of science since the sixteenth century. Up to this very day it still attracts students from all over the world - which makes Freiburg such a young and lively city in spite of its historical age. Freiburg has also especially gained a reputation as a city of music: The places at the music school and the smaller specialised schools such as the *International Piano Academy* are much sought after. The *SWR radio symphonic orchestra* is at home in here, the Freiburg baroque orchestra and the *Ensemble Recherche* have made international guest appearances. During the summer time the annual *Zeltmusikfestival* opens a little music city of its own at the outskirts of Freiburg with performances ranging from rock, pop, jazz, blues and classical music to dance performances and vaudeville acts.

Green City centre

None of the other larger cities in Germany has so much forest and vineyard acreage within its city limits. Even the centre shows its green side: in the municipal gardens, in little squares with old chestnut trees or in the *Schloßberg* with its observation points and beer gardens. Opportunities abound for experiencing Freiburg's hospitality. On a walk around the city centre one passes Germany's oldest inn "*Zum Roten Bären*" - or one stops for a glass of wine and a bite to eat; connoisseurs languish for the wines from the local wine-growing area of Baden - which are even available in an organic variety! Traditional specialties are, for example, asparagus with *Kratzede* (a minced pancake), *Schäufele* (pig's shoulder) with sauerkraut or sour liver with *Brägele*, a speciality prepared from fried potato slices. And when it comes to festivals green Freiburg can offer those all year around: Large wine festivals, festivals in the city's districts and the even smaller festivals in the streets which are locally known as *Hocks*, as well as a wide range of cultural events or the traditional Christmas market in the advent season - with fir-tree green among the decorative lights.





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 km² 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 varied 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 pleasant 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, Basle 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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