

UPPER RHINE valley

ALSACE  REGION BASEL  BLACK FOREST  PALATINATE



Artistic Basle

Europe's secret culture capital

Basle is considered a pocket size metropolis: Nearly 40 museums, some with worldwide fame, call the city their home. And yet, this city on the Rhine only counts some 190.000 inhabitants. Visitors to Basle can enjoy a maximum of urban life and international culture within a minimum of space - the entire city area of Basle is 37 km² - and are quickly and easily out in the surrounding nature, the Swiss mountains, the French Alsace region or Germany's Black Forest. Because Basle is located in the Upper Rhine Valley, at the bend of the Rhine known as the "Rheinknie", and right in the heart of Europe where Germany and France border on Switzerland.



A unique jewel for art connoisseurs

Basle is in touch with the latest trends, just like Paris, Berlin or London - but life is much more relaxed here. The culmination of the art season is reached in early summer: In June the world's leading gallery owners and their artists gather for a visit of the Art Basel art fair. During this event the whole city changes into a catwalk for VIPs and a market place for art. But the city is a regular course of arts the whole year around: The Fondation Beyeler, the Tinguely Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts and a large number of other collections repeatedly break the record attendances of the previous year. The Museum of Fine Arts is Europe's oldest public municipal museum. Here one can wander through European art history and marvel at the works of Holbein, Rembrandt, Rubens, van Gogh, Kokoschka or Picasso. Enthusiasts of the classical modernists can enjoy the wonderfully arranged works of art in

Renzo Piano's Fondation Beyeler, a museum sensitively integrated into an English park. Its works by Andy Warhol, Neo Rauch, Anselm Kiefer and many more form an impressive ensemble.



Cultural heritage through the centuries

The wealthy citizens have been shaping the city's public life for a long time by generously supporting and financing art and architecture, music and theatre. All this sensitivity and appreciation of art stems from the fact that education is of highest priority in Basle - it is no coincidence that the world's first publishing house was founded here some 500 years ago, as well as Switzerland's first university. But Basle has always been cosmopolitan, wealthy and international due to the trade routes: More than 2500 years ago the Celts controlled this trading hub on the Rhine, from where goods from all parts of the known world were shipped onward by boat. The Romans followed, and after them the Germanic tribes. The Rhine is the city's life-line to this very day, and visitors can still benefit from the traditional generosity of Basle's inhabitants.

A Mecca for architecture enthusiasts



When wandering through the idyllic and carefully tended historic part of the city with its winding alleyways, passing the colourful town houses, the cathedral and the small medieval churches one repeatedly comes across highlights of modern architecture. The eyes of the world are on Basle whenever something new is being built here. The museums, the Messeturm trade fair tower, office buildings, entire streets can be seen as an architectural who's who. Even when Basle's citizens commission a railway

switch tower or the zoo's monkey house the implementation merits the selection of star architects to do the job. Buildings by Herzog & de Meuron, Renzo Piano or Diener & Diener have come to define the city. Right next to Basle, in Weil am Rhein on the German side of the river, the world-renowned Vitra Design Museum stands amongst the cherry trees: A unique collection of design and at the same time an ensemble of world-class architecture. Famous architects such as Frank O. Gehry, Zaha Hadid and Tadao Ando realised their first buildings in Europe on this site. An exhibition pavilion by Basle's own Herzog & de Meuron was just recently added.



Basle attracts the global players

Internationality is taken for granted in Basle. All kinds of languages can be heard on the streets, almost everyone speaks English. This is not only due to the large number of tourists: Qualified

employees from Europe, America and Asia come to Basle to work for one of the global corporations such as Roche, Syngenta or Novartis. The little city can be found amongst the world's most successful economic regions, especially in field of life sciences and healthcare. The foundation for today's pharmaceutical industry was laid some 300 years ago in the production of silk ribbons and dyestuffs. High standards of quality in all areas are now synonymous with Swissness.

Relaxation for the senses

With all its urban charm Basle also has any amount of resting points to offer: Street cafés in the bustling street life invite you to stay for a while, a spectacular view over the city and the Rhine towards the French Vosges mountains and the hills of the Black Forest presents itself from the Münsterberg cathedral hill. A leisurely boat ride on the river or even just the crossing on one of the engineless ferries which is only powered by the current can reawaken the senses. The riverbanks are filled with people taking a stroll, just idling about, businessmen. Bathers let the river carry them on its current: This is one of the favourite pastimes during summer in Basle. At the end of the day the locals and guests come together in the traditional pubs or the restaurants with cuisine ranging from international to hearty home cooking. Basle can offer everything to the discerning palate. By smell or by sight: Nobody can withstand the charm of the city!





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:

Web: www.upperrhinevalley.com; Email: urv@fwtm.freiburg.de; Phone: +49 (0)761 3881 1211

Text: Gisela Graf

Pictures: Hans Kohl

Press Contact regional: Gisela Graf Graf Communications contact@gisela-graf.com

Press Contact national: Margarete Schwind Schwindkommunikation ms@schwindkommunikation.de

Press Contact international: Hans Kohl Reiko PR hans@reiko.org.uk