Welcome to Basel.

Basel is so easy to get to. Only a 10-minute drive from the centre of town, Basel’s EuroAirport is served by a number of international airlines. Together with neighbouring Zurich Airport, it enjoys connections to all European airports and to more than 200 intercontinental destinations. Located in the centre of Europe, Basel is a major transportation hub. Its three railway stations – the Swiss SBB, French SNCF and German Badischer Bahnhof, as they are known – not only offer excellent connections to far and wide but are also all situated in the very heart of the city. And if you stay at one of Basel’s hotels, you will receive a “Mobility Ticket” allowing you free use of the city’s extensive public transport network during your visit. See you soon!
Welcome to Basel.

It’s not easy to describe Basel in one or two words. Sobriquets such as “cultural capital of Switzerland” or “university city” only really scratch the surface in terms of conveying the sheer amount of culture, history, recreation and enjoyment that the city has to offer. From a dip in the Rhine, or an evening at the theatre, to a boat trip back in the time to meet the Romans – the following pages give you a true sense of what Basel is all about. We hope you enjoy reading this brochure.

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The Rhine is Basel’s best-kept “secret”. As an important trade route, the river played a key role in making Basel the city it is today. Even now, the Rhine continues to enhance the quality of life in Basel for residents and visitors alike. Not only does it provide Basel with a natural link to the world beyond, but it also offers space for recreation – and, in doing so, inspires the people, events and architecture of the city. And it’s on the banks of the river – or “Riviera”, as locals call it – where the city comes out to play: strolling couples, sun worshippers, students mingling with office workers, all seeking refuge and relaxation. It all exudes a certain Mediterranean charm. Take the traditional dip in the Rhine down at Birsköpfli, or let the current simply take you downstream past the Old Town, or enjoy a warm summer evening by the river bank – and then you’ll see why.

> Mediterranean flair: the “Breite” swimming platform. (17)
Busy waterway
The “Riviera” is not the only hub of activity; there’s also plenty of action on the river itself. Dozens of barges follow the Rhine upstream every day, passing narrowly under the city’s bridges. The river is also served by four ferries, which have been running since the mid-19th century. Take the short ride to the other side, then enjoy the view as you settle down on the banks of the river or at one of numerous riverside cafes.

Swimming in the Rhine
To truly understand the spirit of Basel, you need to have taken the plunge into the Rhine. Head for one of the city’s dedicated swimming platforms, put on your bathers and walk upstream. Then let yourself drift downstream before emerging on the bank in front of the old Kaserne building to bask in the sun.

Basel port – on the border triangle
Experience a microcosm of the big wide world as you take in the busy scenes at Basel’s river port. This is the border triangle: the point at which barges begin their long journey north and the hub via which raw materials are transported into Switzerland. (D1)

Rhine promenade
Forget your worries on Basel’s waterfront. The Rhine promenade is a favourite haunt of the city’s joggers, and is also a popular place to come for a stroll. (D6/6, E6)

Ferries
Basel’s ferries began taking passengers across the Rhine 150 years ago. Sound the jetty bell, wave to the ferryman, jump aboard, and then just let the river current take you to the other side. (B1, C4, E7, G7)
City on the Rhine
Basel’s Old Town and the Rhine share a mutual bond. Dissecting the Old Town, the river inspires the people, events and architecture of the city. It flows past the cathedral that dominates the Basel skyline with its red sandstone facade, colourful roof and twin spires. This former episcopal seat was built in the Romanesque and Gothic styles between 1019 and 1500. (D7)

Grand Hotel Les Trois Rois
Don’t miss one of the jewels in the crown of Switzerland’s hotel industry, Grand Hotel Les Trois Rois (The Three Kings) – a luxury hotel steeped in history and directly overlooking the Schifflände quay. Where Napoleon, Goethe and even The Rolling Stones once spent the night. The hotel boasts one of the city’s most picturesque riverside terraces. (E7)

Pfalz
Look out from the vantage point behind the cathedral, you really begin to appreciate the beauty of Basel’s location. From this platform high above the Rhine, you enjoy a wonderful view of the city. (E7)

Solitude Park
Recharge your batteries under the ancient trees overlooking the Rhine promenade in Solitude Park. Art lovers come here for peace and quiet – as do white-collar professionals from the surrounding offices of global corporations. (I6)

Mittlere Brücke
Cross the Rhine via the Mittlere Brücke, one of the river’s oldest bridges. Take a look at the Käppelijoch halfway along – the scene of executions during the Middle Ages. (D5)
Thanks to a mild climate, the Romans chose to settle here in 40 BC. Events during the Middle Ages – such as the Church Council, the founding of Switzerland’s oldest university in 1460, and the turbulent Reformation period – marked particularly important milestones for the city. During Erasmus’ era, the city was a seat of humanist learning and a centre for printing and paper production. No matter how old or recent, history is omnipresent and provides an interesting counterpoint to the modernity of present-day Basel. It is to this contrast that the people of Basel owe their incredibly tolerant and cosmopolitan view of life – an open-mindedness reflected in Basel’s wealth of museum artefacts and architectural masterpieces.

Open-mindedness is a Basel tradition.
Urban contrasts
Travel through time as you explore Basel on foot. In few other cities you will find buildings dating back to the 15th century contrasting with and yet complementing the modern works of internationally renowned architects. Basel’s Old Town remains as untouched and beautiful as any other in Europe. Pay a visit to the City Hall in the centre of town – a striking red sandstone building with a prominent tower and colourful murals. (C6)

iGuide
Delve into Basel’s history using an interactive, audio-visual guide. The user-friendly iGuide offers you a selection of five history tours. Available from Basel Tourism. (C11, D8)

Botanical Garden
Enter the “Basel rainforest” in the oldest botanical garden in Northern Europe, close to the University of Basel, famous for its collection of cacti and orchids. The botanical garden in Merian Park in Brüglingen is also worth a visit. (B6)

Spalentor
One of three city gates that remain of Basel’s once substantial fortifications, and one of the most beautiful city gates in Switzerland. The St. Alban and St. Johann city gates are also interesting sites to visit. (B6, G8, B2-3)

St. Alban
Enter a neighbourhood full of romance and historic buildings. Nestling by the Rhine and just off the beaten track, this area is criss-crossed with narrow alleys and streams. A traditional centre for handicrafts, and home to the Basel Paper Mill where paper is produced using both water and man power. (F/G8)
Exhibition Tower
Enjoy the sun setting over Basel from BarRouge, the highest bar in town – located on the top floor of this state-of-the-art, 105-metre-high building by Morger & Degelo. Directly overlooking Basel’s trade fair complex, this eye-catching tower is Switzerland’s highest inhabited building. (G3)

Vitra Design Museum
Bus no. 55 takes you to the Vitra Design Museum and Architecture Park in Weil am Rhein, the site of Frank O. Gehry’s first ever building in Europe and Zaha Hadid’s maiden work. (H2)

BIS
The Bank for International Settlements, situated on Aeschenplatz in an eye-catching building designed by Mario Botta, is an institution that serves the needs of the central banks. (E9)

Central Signal Tower SBB
Herzog & de Meuron are responsible for a number of architectural gems around the city: Central Signal Tower SBB, Schaulager, and St. Jakob-Park football ground. The architects also designed the impressive Allianz Arena in Munich and the Tate Modern in London. (F12/13)

Cutting-edge facades
The people of Basel are receptive to modernity. This is the place to visit if you’re looking for state-of-the-art feats of architecture. Celebrity architects such as Richard Meier, Frank O. Gehry and Zaha Hadid have left their indelible mark here by way of sensational shapes and forms. Herzog & de Meuron – Basel’s very own architectural double act and creators of the Elsässertor complex – could be spotted downtown comparing designs over coffee. (C10)

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Basler Fasnacht

The people of Basel describe their famous carnival as the “three most wonderful days in the year”. Following preparations that stretch all year long, Morgestraich marks the beginning of Fasnacht as the city is suddenly plunged into darkness at 4.00 am in the morning of the Monday after Ash Wednesday. The festivities come to an end 72 hours later.

Christmas time

In the run-up to Christmas, Basel’s Old Town is lit up to reveal its magical charm – with the longest illuminated Christmas street in Europe and the romantic Christmas market.

Trade fair and congress venue

Basel – Switzerland’s leading trade fair and congress venue – hosts two extremely important international trade fairs: Art Basel, and BASELWORLD – The Watch and Jewellery Show – both of which lend the city an exclusive air.

Sporting attractions

Attend one of many sporting events. The stadium of local football team FC Basel has capacity for crowds of up to 40,000, while the Davidoff Swiss Indoors, one of the world’s most prestigious indoor tennis tournaments, takes place every October, captivating thousands of tennis followers.

Events all year round

More and more people around the world are discovering the delights Basel has to offer during all four seasons of the year – from traditional events, sporting occasions to seasonal celebrations. Basel’s annual autumn fair has been a magnet for both young and old for over 500 years. Stretching over seven locations around town, it has something for everyone – with numerous rides, stalls selling a range of tasty snacks such as roasted almonds and grilled sausages, and colourful fairgrounds such as the one on Petersplatz.

Basler Fasnacht

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In Basel you can live and breathe art and culture. The city is rightly referred to as the cultural capital of Switzerland. Not only is this evident as you stroll downtown, but also in the variety of museums containing an inspiring and outstanding array of artefacts – from the Doll’s House Museum on Barfüsserplatz, to Steinenberg and the Swiss Architecture Museum, or to Riehen and the Fondation Beyeler with its unique collection from the era of classical modernity and spectacular selection of special exhibits. There are also countless galleries located in and around the city. And in the evening you can watch opera at Basel Theatre, hang out at jazz sessions or attend live gigs in the old Kaserne building.

> Roy Lichtenstein
“Beach Scene with Starfish”, 1995, oil and magna on canvas, 300×603 cm, Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel. (I–J2)
**Sculpture Hall**
Basel’s Skulpturhalle houses the largest collection of sculpture casts in Switzerland, providing a true representation of ancient Greco-Roman sculptures. The Museum’s collection of plaster casts of nearly every known existing piece of sculpture from the Parthenon Temple in Athens is the only one of its kind. (AS)

**Kunstmuseum Basel**
Visit the oldest public art collection in the world. The Kunstmuseum Basel (Museum of Fine Arts) contains works from Holbein to Picasso as well as special world-class exhibitions. (E8)

**A paradise for museum buffs**
Museum lovers all agree that Basel is not a city to be explored in just a few hours. With around 40 museums covering diverse fields, Basel has something for every taste. Some museums even belong in the history books themselves. The Museum of Contemporary Art, for example, was the first museum of its kind anywhere in the world. And Schaulager is a new kind of art venue: neither a museum nor a traditional warehouse. Why not begin your cultural journey at the Tinguely Museum, home to the best-known works of Swiss artist Jean Tinguely? (J6)

**Museum in a church**
The Barfüsserkirche is both a church and a museum. Formerly a convent church, it is now home to the Historical Museum, which houses the Basel Cathedral Treasury and offers fascinating insights into the city’s history. (D8)

**Pharmaceutical Museum**
Visit the Pharmaceutical Museum to find out about the industry that made Basel rich. Set in a wonderful old house, one of the world’s largest collections about the history of pharmacy awaits you. (C6)

**Sculpture Hall**
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**Open-air art**
Whether you’re strolling down the alleys of the Old Town or sitting on a park bench – art is everywhere. Serra, Borofsky, Rodin and Niki de Saint Phalle are just some of the artists of the modern era who grace Basel through their works. Directly opposite Basel Theatre, the Tinguely Fountain is the ideal starting point for your tour. Take a seat and enjoy the twists and turns of the mechanical objects as they glisten in the summer sun. Or come in the winter when the fountain resembles an ice sculpture. (D8)

**Basel’s fountains**
Refresh yourself at one of over 170 drinking-water fountains around the city. Particularly worth seeing are the Late Gothic Fischmarktbürenn and the Gemsbergbrunnen. (C6/7)

**Burghers of Calais**
Rodin welcomes you at the entrance to Switzerland’s most important art collection with his “Burghers of Calais” sculpture. A modern bistro is also situated within the inner courtyard of the Kunstmuseum. (E8)

**Helvetia**
Meet Helvetia, the allegoric female figure who has symbolised Switzerland for centuries. Suitcase and spear are lying beside her as she sits on the northern side of the Mittlere Brücke and gazes downriver. (D5)

**Hammering Man**
Visit the 13.5-metre tall giant standing on Aeschenplatz and Basel’s hardest-working resident – the “Hammering Man” by American artist Borofsky. Made of 15-centimetre-thick plates and weighing nearly 8 tonnes. (E/F9)
Basel Tattoo
For a few days each year, tartan becomes Basel’s number one fashion accessory. The annual Basel Tattoo music festival features top international formations plus local favourites.

Basel Theatre – Schauspielhaus
Specialising in three different genres – ballet, opera and drama – Switzerland’s largest theatre of its kind boasts a broad repertoire of exceptional quality. (D8/9)

Classical music
Familiar with Basel’s concert orchestras? They may even already have played at a venue near you. Both the Symphony Orchestra and the Chamber Orchestra have received critical acclaim.

The floating stage
Make yourself comfortable at the river’s edge in front of the floating stage. The Kulturfloss (or Culture Raft) captivates audiences in August with an exciting musical line-up. (D5)

When culture comes to life
Art and culture in Basel are regularly brought to life on stage. Basel Theatre is acclaimed for its ballet company directed by Richard Wherlock, while the AVO Session held in late autumn features international stars such as Elton John and is a highlight of the cultural calendar. Art Basel, the showcase event of the global art scene, also attracts thousands of art collectors and aficionados to Basel every year in June.
In Basel, hunger for culture is also satisfied when eating out in style.

Basel whets your appetite in the most varied and delightful ways. What applies to its remarkable cultural heritage also very much applies to its culinary scene. Thanks to the city’s unique location, its cuisine is both excellent and eclectic. Basel prides itself on savoir-vivre but, above all, on hospitality. Discover its specialities for yourself – be it Swiss rösti in the Hasenburg, “menu surprise” at the trendy eo ipso lounge, house-brewed beer at one of the city’s traditional guild rooms, a gourmet meal at Stucki, or simply a cappuccino in one of the many street cafes. Whatever your heart desires, you’ll find it in Basel.

> The Basel Art Hall (Kunsthalle) garden restaurant. (D8)
Night life
Enjoy a hard day’s night. Visits to cosy bars, wild parties or clubbing until dawn – Basel offers the full night-life experience. You should also include a pub crawl in multi-ethnic Kleinbasel on your official itinerary.

Indulge yourself
In Basel the good things in life are in abundance – both night and day. At trendy bars or cosy taverns – all your needs are catered for. Sunday breakfast at the Parkcafé Pavillon, then lunch at Acqua – the place to be seen: serving excellent cuisine and set in the interior of an old pumping station. Reservations are a must. End the day on a quiet note in the Café des Arts, with its piano bar and refined cigar lounge. (A8, B10, D8)

Blind man’s bluff
Close your eyes and enjoy your meal. Experience a unique evening as you dine in pitch-black darkness at the restaurant blindekuh, served by blind professionals. (£13)

Trendy eateries
Stop for a bite at Noohn, where the trendy set hang out – a fashionable meeting place serving sushi and cocktails, with an ultra-cool atmosphere evoking New York and Shanghai. (D9)

Something for every taste
Venture on a culinary journey around the globe: cosy Old Town pubs, fusion eateries, or exquisite gourmet delicacies in beautiful open-air settings. Try Café Merian in Brüglingen, for example.

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For the discerning shopper

If you like to explore a city with shopping bags in hand, Basel is the place for you. It’s easy to combine shopping with sightseeing. And there is plenty to keep you occupied: luxury brands like Hermès, Louis Vuitton or Rolex; shoes, fashion, books and specialities; from small boutiques and old antique shops, to chic department stores. The easiest place to start is on the Freie Strasse shopping street – with more than 150 retailers. (D7)

Basel fashion labels

Basel is no slouch, too, when it comes to sartorial sophistication. Take the fashionable erfolg label that designs clothes for fashion-conscious teenagers, and has been doing so successfully for more than ten years, both internationally and at affordable prices. (C7)

Spalenberg

The boutiques on Spalenberg have their own inimitable charm. Rich in tradition, the Johann Wanner Christmas House supplies products to the Vatican, the White House and the head of the British monarchy. (C7)

Markets

If you’re interested in collector’s items, go to Petersplatz for the flea market on Saturday morning, where you’ll make some intriguing finds. Fresh local produce is sold weekdays at the market on Marktplatz. (B6, C6)

Specialities

“Läckerli” are a Basel speciality. The Läckerli-Huus on Gerbergasse sells an assorted range of these sweet biscuits – a treat for the taste buds and a feast for the eyes. (C7)
Look down from the summits of the Jura, Black Forest and Vosges, and you have a mere foretaste of the treasures this region has to offer. But then take the short cross-border ride out of Basel, and you’ll begin to understand. Swiss cantons Baselland and Solothurn, along with French Alsace and the German Black Forest, form a huge area offering limitless recreational possibilities. Wander through the cherry orchards of Baselbiet, past secluded hamlets with picturesque farms. Experience the culinary delights of Alsace. And forget your daily worries for good as you enjoy traditional Black Forest “Gemütlichkeit”.

> The Jura mountains.

Nature at your doorstep.
**Zoo**
Enjoy a day in the jungle without having to leave Basel. Opened in 1874 and covering 11 hectares, the Basel Zoological Garden – affectionately known as “Zolli” – is home to 600 different species. Recent renovations were made to its “Gamgoas” lion enclosure. (A11)

**Augusta Raurica**
Pay the Romans a visit in Augst, where 20 ancient attractions await you, including the best preserved ancient Roman theatre north of the Alps, a Roman villa replica and a children’s zoo.

**Goetheanum**
Welcome to Rudolf Steiner’s – the centre of anthroposophist learning in Dornach. Admire the architecture and visit the Goetheanum theatre.

**Boat cruise on the Rhine**
Survey Basel and the surrounding area while dining in style on one of the city’s distinctive white passenger boats. Not to be missed!

**Parks**
Relax in one of Basel’s many parks. Try Schützenmatt Park, Merian Park in Brüglingen, Kannenfeld Park or the idyllic Wenken Park in Riehen, the latter being one of the region’s most beautiful parks and just a 15-minute ride from town.
Black Forest

If you’re in Basel, be sure to enjoy some rest and relaxation in the Black Forest. With trees as far as the eye can see, it is a region blessed with unforgettable scenery. You can ski on the slopes of its highest peaks in the winter, and try out water sports on Titisee in the summer.

Golf

Have a relaxing and enjoyable round of golf on one of numerous golf courses within a stone’s throw of Basel – like in Bad Bellingen in Markgräflerland, Germany, where you have two 18-hole courses to choose from.

Wasserfallen cableway

Visit one of the region’s most beautiful destinations, the Wasserfallen near Reigoldswil. Take an ultra-modern cable car up to the top and end the day in style with a thrilling scooter ride back down to the valley.

Stunning scenery

Head out of town into a region of stunning landscapes. Entering the hilly Baselbiet, with its limestone crags and rolling plains, is like stepping into another world. For the hungry and thirsty walker, Alsace awaits with its traditional “Flammekueche” and ubiquitous glass of “Gewürztraminer”. And on clear days, Herrischried in the southern Black Forest is the place to go for views of the Swiss Alps. Take your time to explore these and other destinations all within touching distance of Basel.

Alsace

Make sure you taste the fine wine and culinary specialities that Alsace has to offer. The popular little town of Eguisheim near Colmar is the ideal place to visit a wine producer.

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Information.

Basel Tourism is one of the organizations taking part in the Swiss Tourism “Seal of Quality” programme, and has been awarded the Level III certification.

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Monday to Friday
9.00 am–6.00 pm
Saturday 9.00 am–5.00 pm
Sundays and public holidays
10.00 am–3.00 pm

Tourist & Hotel Information
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CH-4010 Basel

Opening hours:
Monday to Friday
8.30 am–6.00 pm
Saturday 9.00 am–5.00 pm
Sundays and public holidays
9.00 am–3.00 pm

Further information about Basel
www.baselmuseums.ch
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