



Canton of Basel-Stadt

**Basel** 

basel.ch

**WELCOME**

Basel. Business, life, culture.



## **CENTRE OF EUROPE, TRINATIONAL AND COSMOPOLITAN**

There is a point in Basel, in the Swiss Rhine Ports, where the borders of Switzerland, France and Germany meet. Basel works closely together with its neighbours Germany and France in the fields of education, culture, transport and the environment. Residents of Basel enjoy the superb recreational opportunities in French Alsace as well as in Germany's Black Forest. And the binational EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg is a key transport hub, linking the region with Europe and the world. 2,000 years after the area was first settled, and 500 years after it joined the Swiss Confederation, Basel-Stadt is a dynamic, cosmopolitan and highly productive city.

## **MULTIFACETTED CITY OF THE ARTS**

Basel's innumerable historical buildings form a picturesque setting for its vibrant cultural scene, which is surprisingly rich for such a small canton: around 40 museums, some of them world-renowned, such as the Fondation Beyeler and the Kunstmuseum Basel, the Theater Basel, where opera, drama and ballet are performed, as well as 18 smaller theatres, a theatre that stages musicals, and countless galleries and cinemas. The city ranks with the European elite in the field of fine arts, and hosts the world's leading contemporary-art fair, Art Basel. In addition to its prominent classical orchestras and over 1,000 concerts per year, numerous high-profile events make Basel a veritable city of the arts. Basel also has a unique density of modern architectural masterpieces that draw visitors from around the world: Herzog & de Meuron, Renzo Piano, Zaha Hadid, Richard Meier, Frank O. Gehry, Sanaa and many more have left their mark on the city.

## **THRIVING BUSINESS LOCATION**

Basel is Switzerland's most dynamic business centre. The city built its success on the global achievements of its pharmaceutical and chemical companies. Roche, Novartis, Syngenta, Lonza Group, Clariant and others have raised Basel's profile around the world. Thanks to the extensive logistics know-how that has been established over the centuries, a number of leading international logistics service providers are also based here. Basel is a successful exhibition and congress city, profiting from an excellent transport infrastructure and its location at the heart of Europe. Basel is also Switzerland's second-most-important financial and insurance centre, after Zurich. All these factors contribute to Basel's high standard of living.



## **EDUCATION, RESEARCH, INNOVATION**

The public-school system in Basel ensures that education is tailored to the needs of children of all abilities. The international schools provide the children of 'expats' with international certificates and a baccalaureate. Eleven years of obligatory schooling, various institutions of higher education, and the oldest university in Switzerland provide the high level of education that is so important to Basel as a centre of research. Over the past three decades, a veritable research hub has grown out of the substantial investment in research made by the successful pharmaceutical and chemical companies. The close cooperation between industry, the university and the state – in certain areas, a trinational cooperation with France and Germany – has led to much innovation in the Basel area. A number of Nobel Prize winners are testimony to this.

## **QUALITY OF LIFE AND SAVOIR VIVRE**

Switzerland is considered one of the most beautiful, clean and safe countries in the world. In Basel, impressive contemporary architecture sets off the beautiful old town centre to perfection. The numerous gardens and parks are complemented by superb recreational facilities. There is a wide range of leisure opportunities, including a varied and sophisticated restaurant scene, and people shop for bargains both in Basel as well as across the border in France and Germany. Distances are short, public transport is excellent, the city centre caters to the needs of pedestrians, and many residential areas are safe from dangerous road traffic. All these factors contribute to a sense of well-being in the city.

## **OFFICIAL WEBSITE**

The website [www.basel.ch](http://www.basel.ch) offers a wealth of useful information about Basel as a business location, an attractive place to live and a diverse cultural metropolis.

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# SWITZERLAND

Situated in the heart of Europe, Switzerland is a small country marked by diversity. With four official languages, and a cultural identity that varies from canton to canton, Switzerland also offers breathtaking landscapes that take in the Alps, more than 1,500 lakes, lush green valleys and the northern plateau on which the majority of cities, towns and villages are located. Its stable and highly competitive economy has made Switzerland one of the wealthiest countries in the world. Welcome to Switzerland.



The beauty of the Matterhorn in Zermatt in the Canton of Valais (© Roman Babakin / stock.adobe.com)

## SWITZERLAND'S STRENGTHS

### At the heart of Europe

Switzerland borders five important European countries: France, Germany, Italy, Austria and Liechtenstein. For thousands of years, the region has been a busy trade route, both from east to west as well as from north to south. Today, Switzerland is an indispensable part of the European transport network and boasts a superb motorway and railway infrastructure. The international airports in Zurich, Geneva and Basel offer direct links to destinations around the world.

### Political stability

Switzerland is a popular place to do business, a centre of education and a favourite travel destination. At the heart of this success story lies a stable political system. The country has not gone through any major political changes since the foundation of the federal state in 1848. This has created space for economic, social and artistic development. Federalism, the successful integration of different cultures, and the mechanisms of direct democracy are all means to increase the participation of citizens and residents. This process of forming unity out of diversity has often been seen as exemplary. And, of course, the country is small and manageable, which also contributes to the high quality of life in Switzerland.

### Free market economy, good labour relations, high educational standards

Political stability is also expressed in an economic system that manages to balance a free market economy with social responsibility. Strikes are very rare in Switzerland. In combination with a deeply rooted work ethic and high educational standards, this social harmony represents one of Switzerland's key advantages as a place to do business and has made a major contribution to its economic development.

### Strong currency, banking system

Stability, a well-developed sense of service and discretion, and a strong currency have turned Switzerland into a leading financial centre. From a historical perspective, the fact that the country was not involved in the two world wars has contributed to this development. It is a country with few natural resources, so the strength of its export industry has also played a significant part. Not being a member of the EU (Eur-



**“MY FAMILY AND I LOVE IT  
HERE. SO MANY BEAUTIFUL  
PLACES: LUCERNE IS JUST  
AN HOUR AWAY BY TRAIN AND  
WE CAN ENJOY A DAY OUT  
ON THE LAKE SURROUNDED BY  
MOUNTAINS AND BREATH-  
TAKING SCENERY. I WAS  
OFFERED A GREAT JOB IN  
BASEL TWELVE YEARS AGO  
AND NOW WE CAN'T IMAGINE  
BEING ANYWHERE ELSE.”**

Dmytro Kryvko comes from Ternopil in the Ukraine  
and is a system administrator at Genedata



opean Union), Switzerland is also not part of the so-called Eurozone. For this reason, the use of the euro in everyday life is limited to Switzerland's border and tourist regions.

### High salaries, high productivity

In terms of income, assets and per capita gross national product, Switzerland ranks among the top in the world. The resulting excellent standard of living is also based on the high level of education and corresponding work ethic: as a rule, people work 42 hours per week. Taxes are comparatively low, both for businesses and for individuals. Corporate taxation as well as the rate of value added tax are among the lowest in the world.

### Safe, clean and beautiful

All these factors make Switzerland a safe country with a low crime rate. The Swiss value tidiness and cleanliness, which is why recycling is popular. Add to this rich cultural variety and beautiful scenery, and you get quality of life that is hard to beat.

## GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION, CLIMATE, POPULATION, STRUCTURE

### Geographic location

Covering an area of just 41,285 km<sup>2</sup>, Switzerland is one of the smallest countries in Europe. About one quarter of the country is covered by the Alps. Switzerland's border is 1,858 km long: adjoining France to the west, Germany to the north, Liechtenstein and Austria to the east and Italy to the south. Situated between the great European powers, and in control of several major alpine passes, Switzerland has always been a transit country for people, goods and ideas.

### Mountains

In addition to the Alps, which stretch from west to east, the Jura represents a second major mountain range, extending from Basel along the western border of Switzerland to Geneva. Between these two mountain ranges lie the lowlands. To the south of the Alps lies Ticino and some of the valleys of the Canton of Grisons. The highest point, at 4,634 m, is the Dufour Peak, which is part of the Mont Blanc massif; the lowest point, at just 193 m, is Lake Maggiore in Ticino.

### Lakes and rivers

Water is everywhere in Switzerland. Major European rivers, such as the Rhine, the Rhone and a number of tributaries of the Danube start in the Alps. Apart from these big rivers, around 1,500 glaciers of various sizes and some 1,500 lakes make Switzerland one of Europe's major water reservoirs.

### Climatic diversity

Switzerland's climatic diversity is considerable: there are Atlantic winds in the west, a continental climate in the east,

and a distinctly Mediterranean feel in the south. The north, by contrast, is most affected by Arctic air currents. The alpine valleys, in particular, are affected by the Föhn – a dry, warm wind.

### Population

Most of the alpine areas are unpopulated, so the majority of the Swiss population lives in the Mittelland (lowlands), around Basel and around Lake Geneva. The largest cities are Zurich, Geneva, Basel, Bern and Lausanne. Almost 25% of the country's approximately 8.5 million inhabitants are foreigners. More than half of those without a Swiss passport have lived in the country for over 15 years or were actually born in Switzerland.

### Four official languages

There are four official languages in Switzerland. German is most widely spoken, followed by French, Italian and Rhaeto-Romanic, a language closely related to Latin, which is spoken in some parts of the Canton of Grisons.

### Religion

The two main religious denominations are Protestantism and Catholicism. However, the number of people who do not belong to a religious community has increased over the last few decades.

### 26 cantons

Switzerland is a federal state made up of 26 cantons. The federal capital is Bern.



An exuberant leap in front of the Matterhorn  
(© Valais-Wallis Promotion / Thomas Andenmatten)

## ECONOMY

### Economic development

Switzerland was a country of emigration up until the end of the 19th century. During the 20th century, however, Switzerland saw rapid economic development. This was partly due to the fact that the country was not involved in the two world wars. The pillars of growth have always been developments in mechanical engineering, the chemical companies, the watch industry, a strong tertiary sector comprising international banks and insurance companies as well as biotech and information technology. Many products of the Swiss food industry, such as chocolate and cheese, are famous around the world. Tourism remains another key economic factor and an important source of income for the mountain areas. Agriculture and the textile industry used to be among the most productive sectors, though their importance has declined in recent decades.

### Outstanding infrastructure

Switzerland has sophisticated transport and communication networks, with state-of-the-art, mostly water-driven power stations, a reliable public administration as well as excellent education and health systems. These form a superb foundation for the further economic development of the country.

### Wealth and productivity

In terms of per capita income and assets, Switzerland ranks among the richest countries in the world. Gross domestic product amounts to over CHF 668 billion. Average labour productivity comes to more than CHF 147,000. Per capita income lies at about CHF 79,100. Approximately CHF 72 billion are spent by the federal government each year, while all the cantons together account for about CHF 90 billion in spending per annum (Swiss Federal Statistical Office).

### Safe currency, low unemployment rate

The Swiss franc has been a popular and stable currency for decades. Compared to international rates, unemployment in Switzerland has been low for many years. At times, the unemployment rate rose above 5%, which is unusual for Switzerland. Today, unemployment is back at a low 2.5%.

### Swiss stock exchange

In addition to being listed on the Swiss Exchange (SIX), many major Swiss corporations are also listed in London and/or New York or other stock exchanges. The Swiss Market Index (SMI) is Switzerland's blue-chip stock market index.

The Federal Palace in Bern is the seat of the Swiss government © Canton of Basel-Stadt)



### Low taxes

Both individuals and businesses are taxed according to the same principle in Switzerland: The federal government, the cantons and the towns and cities raise direct taxes. The federal tax rate is the same everywhere, while cantonal and municipal taxes vary. Tax is imposed on the income and assets of individuals. Businesses pay a tax on their net profit (at one of the lowest rates world-wide) and capital. The proceeds of capital assets are subject to a withholding tax of 35%. This is reimbursed under certain conditions. The rate of value added tax is currently at 7.7%.

## POLITICAL SYSTEM

### Republic

Switzerland is a republic. The supreme organ of state is the Vereinigte Bundesversammlung (Federal Assembly), which comprises the two chambers of parliament: Nationalrat and Ständerat. The Nationalrat is made up of 200 national councillors who act as representatives of the people. The Ständerat has 46 members, representing the cantons or states. The two parliamentary chambers pass bills and legislation at the federal level. All members of parliament are elected every four years by the people. The Swiss government is the Bundesrat (Federal Council), whose seven members are elected by the Federal Assembly for a four-year term. Each federal councillor heads a department or ministry. The business of state, however, is exercised collegially. Every year, one member of the Federal Council is elected President. However, the presidency is a primarily representative office. The Swiss flag depicts a symmetrical white cross on a red background.

## Democracy

Switzerland is a semi-direct democracy that recognises the popular election of the legislature and a variety of popular rights. For example, citizens are entitled to initiate legislation at the constitutional level (popular initiative with at least 100,000 signatures), there is an obligatory right of referendum in the case of constitutional amendments, and there is a right of referendum at the legislative level. In general, this right of referendum leads to the passing of very balanced laws, as even relatively small groups can influence the process through a referendum (at least 50,000 signatures). Amendments to the Constitution require the consent of a majority of the people and of the cantons (double majority). Votes on revised or new laws are only held if a referendum is demanded. The new law is accepted if a majority of the electorate vote in favour of it (simple majority). Swiss citizens acquire full voting rights when they reach 18 years of age.

## Constitution

The Swiss constitution establishes an extensive catalogue of human rights, and guarantees legal protection for individuals. The constitution requires the state to uphold the principles of a free state and to prevent totalitarian mechanisms.

## Social system

The federal administration and the cantons help to shape society at large. Social security for everybody is a guiding principle. At the same time, personal property is protected, and each member of society must assume responsibility for his or her own life. The state exerts only limited influence on society, and financial support is restricted.

## Subsidiarity

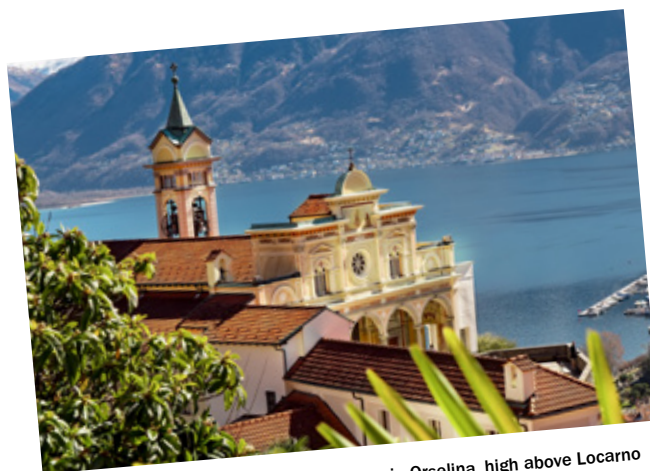
The federal administration imposes a democratic structure on the cantons in the form of a parliament elected by the people as well as through adherence to the basic principle of the separation of powers. Just as at the federal level, constitutional amendments are subject to the approval of the electorate. The electorate also has the right to initiate legislation, and can introduce referenda to oppose draft legislation. The cantons are granted tax sovereignty and autonomy in a variety of fields (e.g. education and culture). Other issues are organised at the federal level, e.g. private and criminal law, the military, environmental protection and foreign policy. The basic unit of the Swiss state is the municipality, which is also the smallest unit of state. The municipalities are guaranteed autonomy vis-à-vis their cantons under federal law. The principle of subsidiarity means that decisions must always be taken at the lowest possible level.

## Neutrality

Neutrality has shaped a large part of Switzerland's recent history. Over the centuries, the general understanding that the alpine passes were under the control of a neutral entity helped to safeguard Swiss independence. The question of neutrality remains a central issue to this day. Permanent neutrality is a constitutional principle and an instrument of foreign policy.

## Army

The Swiss army is organised as a militia system, and has a defensive function.



The pilgrimage church Madonna del Sasso in Orselina, high above Locarno at the Lago Maggiore (© Comofoto/ stock.adobe.com)

## SWITZERLAND IN THE WORLD

### Approved by the people

In Switzerland, membership in international organisations is subject to the approval of the Swiss electorate as well as – in some cases – the approval of a majority of the cantons. These issues are often hotly debated. As a consequence, Switzerland is not part of many international organisations and initiatives.

### EU, EFTA

Switzerland is not a member of the European Union. However, the relationship with the EU has been a central issue in domestic and foreign policy in the last 20 years. The signing of bilateral agreements and the protocol on the Extension of the Free Movement of Persons to the new EU member states in October 2004 have brought Switzerland and Europe closer. In 2004, Switzerland also signed the Schengen agreement. Furthermore, Switzerland remains a member of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

### UN

Since September 2002, Switzerland has been a full member of the UN. For many years, Switzerland has hosted the UN's European headquarters in Geneva.

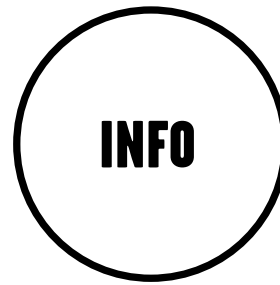
## **NATO, OSCE, UN missions**

A link has been established with NATO through Partnership for Peace (an organisation for non-NATO members). Within the framework of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and various UN missions, military personnel have also been deployed abroad, for example in Kosovo.

## **Miscellaneous organisations**

Switzerland is a member of the European Council and a signatory of the European Human Rights Convention. Switzerland is also a member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Breathtaking views from the "Dragon Ride" cable car on the way up to the Pilatus (© djama / stock.adobe.com)



### **[www.myswitzerland.com](http://www.myswitzerland.com)**

Switzerland Tourism website that provides extensive information about travel and culture in Switzerland

### **[www.s-ge.com](http://www.s-ge.com)**

A website on a variety of topics relating to business in Switzerland and its cantons

### **[www.swissinfo.ch](http://www.swissinfo.ch)**

Comprehensive news and information portal, containing a large number of contributions, including audio and video

### **[www.admin.ch](http://www.admin.ch)**

The Federal Administration

### **[www.parlament.ch](http://www.parlament.ch)**

The Federal Assembly (the Swiss Parliament)

### **[www.bfs.admin.ch](http://www.bfs.admin.ch)**

Federal Statistical Office

### **[www.eda.admin.ch](http://www.eda.admin.ch)**

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, providing a directory of Swiss representative offices abroad and of foreign representative offices in Switzerland

### **[www.europa.admin.ch](http://www.europa.admin.ch)**

Directorate for European Affairs

Switzerland – at the heart of Europe.



SWITZERLAND



Situated at the point where Switzerland, Germany and France meet, Basel is a lively, international city with a thriving economy. Science, research and innovation are key to the ongoing positive development of the city and the surrounding region, which has drawn residents from around 160 countries. Basel's particularly attractive location on the banks of the river Rhine, its mild and sunny climate, excellent schools, rich cultural life and high standard of living are all reasons why so many visitors choose to stay and make their home here.

## **MORE THAN ONE BASEL**

### **Basel-Stadt, Basel-Landschaft**

For hundreds of years, Basel-Stadt was not a city state as it is today. Instead, it possessed extensive tracts of land. This land now makes up the Canton of Basel-Landschaft, with its capital Liestal. The city canton became separated from its rural hinterland only in 1833, following long-standing rivalries. In addition to the city of Basel itself, the Canton of Basel-Stadt retained the two smaller municipalities of Riehen and Bettingen along the German border.

### **Grossbasel and Kleinbasel**

The city of Basel actually consists of two urban districts, Grossbasel and Kleinbasel, which are separated by the river Rhine. Historically, Grossbasel was home to the upper class and rich merchants, while Kleinbasel was populated by farmers, workers and craftsmen. Even today, the two sides of the Rhine have a distinctly different feel and identity.

## **BASEL'S STRENGTHS**

### **Economic powerhouse**

Basel's economic growth is high above the Swiss average, making it one of the most productive and innovative economic regions worldwide. The city is home to two of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies and a first-rate lo-

cation for the life sciences and nanotechnology. This stimulating environment has given rise to a plethora of innovative research firms, for example in medical and biotechnology.

### **Centre for research and education**

Basel is well known for its research and education institutions. The University of Basel, founded in 1460, provides a diverse academic environment and strives for excellence in teaching and research. Its institutes for molecular biology, medicine and many other areas perform research that meets the highest international standards. The Department of Biosystems Science and Engineering of the ETH Zurich is also located in Basel.

### **Culture with a capital C**

The quality and quantity of Basel's cultural offering is staggering: no other European city has a comparable density of outstanding museums. Basel is also a mecca for architecture enthusiasts. Finally, an excellent theatre that includes opera and ballet, a world-class concert hall and a multitude of festivals create a unique and inspiring atmosphere.

### **Quality of life**

The more than 200,000 inhabitants and more than 1.3 million overnight tourists that visit Basel every year appreciate the city's high quality of life. Beyond its rich cultural offering, clean public spaces and security, Basel also emanates a sense of *savoir vivre*. People gather on the banks of the Rhine or in the many bars and cafés for an after-work drink, go for a stroll along the river or enjoy the picturesque old town.

## **GEOGRAPHY, CLIMATE AND POPULATION**

### **Location**

Basel is located in central Europe. At 244 metres above sea level, it has the lowest altitude of any Swiss city north of the Alps. The small cantonal territory straddles the river Rhine; its 37 square kilometres include the city of Basel and the two outlying municipalities of Riehen and Bettingen. Basel nestles between the Swiss Jura mountains, the German Black Forest and the French Vosges. Here, the Rhine takes a 90° turn to the north, and broadens into a majestic river. It is the largest city in Northwestern Switzerland and a major junction on the north-south and east-west transit routes.



**“I LOVE THE WAY THE RHINE IS THERE FOR ME AND FOR MY FAMILY TO ENJOY: SWIMMING, EXERCISING, RELAXING, HAVING FUN. IN HOW MANY CITIES CAN YOU APPRECIATE THE BEAUTY OF THE CITY, ITS BRIDGES, CATHEDRAL, AND ELEGANT VILLAS WHILE SWIMMING THROUGH THE MIDDLE OF IT?”**

Yazmin Lopes comes from Cuba  
and is Head External Partner Management,  
Early Phase Development of Biologics in TRD  
at Novartis





A perfect summer day by the Rhine (© Canton of Basel-Stadt)

### Sunshine city

Due to its location in the Rhine Valley, Basel has an agreeable and remarkably mild climate. The climate is also influenced by the warm Mediterranean air which flows up from the Rhone Valley. In average annual terms, the 24-hour temperature is 10°C (50°F), whereby January is the coldest month at 1°C (34°F), and July is the warmest at 19°C (66°F). The dense fog that covers many parts of central Switzerland in winter only rarely reaches Basel. The average rainfall from 1981-2010 amounted to 842 mm, making it the lowest in Switzerland with the exception of the cantons of Valais and Grisons.

### Colourful population mix

The population of the Canton of Basel-Stadt comprises more than 200,000 people, some 170,000 of whom live in the city itself. This makes Basel Switzerland's third-largest city, after Zurich and Geneva. In the last three decades, the number of inhabitants without a Swiss passport has risen from 22% to 36.5%, which reflects the economic dynamism and cosmopolitan nature of the city. The most frequently found countries of origin are Italy, Turkey, Germany, Spain and countries that were formerly part of Yugoslavia. All in all, Basel is home to people from around 160 countries.

### A city of many languages

The language spoken in and around Basel is an Alemannic dialect of German, enriched by many borrowed French words. Although the boundaries between the different Swiss dialects are becoming blurred, the less throaty Baseldeutsch remains one of the most easily identifiable Swiss vernaculars. The dialect is the main spoken language, while German is used in written communication, at school and in printed media. Italian, French and English are also widely spoken, as are the many other native languages of the people who live in Basel.

### Religion

Basel is a Protestant city by tradition. The Catholic Church, the Old Catholic Church and the Jewish community are also recognised under public law. Apart from these main religions, all other major faiths are practised in Basel. Around 38% of the population do not belong to any denomination.

### Border location

Basel is characterised by its location close to the borders with Germany and France as well as by the small size of its own territory (a city canton of 37 km<sup>2</sup>). As one of the largest cities in a geographically defined region comprising about six million inhabitants (known as the Upper Rhine region), Basel provides important services to its neighbours in Switzerland, Germany and France, including hospitals, educational facilities and cultural institutions.

## POLITICAL SYSTEM

### Two special characteristics

Basel-Stadt has two distinct features that differ from the other 25 Swiss cantons. For one, Basel-Stadt is one of six cantons with only one representative (instead of two), to the second national parliamentary chamber, the Ständerat (cantonal representatives). And secondly, it is virtually a city state, because it comprises just two smaller municipalities apart from the city of Basel.

### Government

The seven members of the government, called the Executive Council, are elected by the people every four years. The government of Basel-Stadt governs both the city of Basel and the Canton of Basel-Stadt.



With its deep red façade, the Basel town hall at Marktplatz is a local landmark (© Canton of Basel-Stadt)



A refreshing moment by the Holbein fountain at Spalenvorstadt  
 (© Canton of Basel-Stadt)

## Parliament

The cantonal parliament is the canton's legislative body and has 100 members. The Canton of Basel-Stadt is divided into five constituencies. In four of them, members of parliament are elected according to proportional representation. In the constituency of Bettingen, the majority system applies, as it is allocated one seat in parliament only. As a rule, the parliament sessions take place on the second and third Wednesdays of the month at the Rathaus (Town Hall) and are open to the public.

## Administration

The cantonal administration is divided into seven departments, each headed by one of the members of the Executive Council. The Department of Presidential Affairs is responsible for crossover issues such as culture, equal opportunities, external affairs, marketing, statistics, and cantonal and urban development. Its head also acts as the official representative of the government. The other departments are the Department of Health, the Department of Education, the Department of Justice and Security, the Department of Public Works and Transport, the Department of Economics, Social Services and Environment, and the Department of Finance.

## Courts of law

Two of the three levels of jurisdiction in Switzerland are based in the cantons: the first instance for disputes under private, criminal and administrative law as well as the social insurance court. The second instance is the court of appeal. The judges are elected by the people.

## Municipal council

In Switzerland, citizenship is not accorded at the national and cantonal level only. Every Swiss citizen is also a citizen of a certain municipality. Therefore, there is a so-called municipal council. In Basel, the municipal council manages municipal assets (property, land and forests), handles applications for naturalisation, and runs several social institutions, such as the orphanage. It also oversees the guilds and the Christoph Merian Foundation, a charity that supports cultural and social projects in the city.

## WHAT'S TYPICAL OF BASEL?

### Reserved, but friendly

Basel is traditionally a city of trade and science. And, of course, it still is an important traffic hub between Europe and the rest of Switzerland. There has always been a lot of exchange with the neighbouring countries. Hence, people in Basel are open and curious about other countries and cultures.

The dialect spoken in Basel is closer to the southern German dialects than to many other Swiss dialects. People in Basel have a dry sense of humour, they tend to be a little reserved at first, but very friendly. Another typical Basel characteristic is the understatement of the old aristocratic families. One does not boast one's riches, but rather discreetly lends support to artists, museums and theatres.

### Sightseeing

Basel may not have a single prominent symbol, such as the Eiffel Tower in Paris or the Ferris wheel in Vienna, and yet the city has many attractions. There are the historic old town, the museums, the river Rhine with the cable ferries that are driven by the current, the trade fairs, Switzerland's first zoo, the Tinguely Fountain, the Dreiländereck, where Switzerland, Germany and France meet, and Fasnacht, the famous carnival at the end of winter. The Mittlere Brücke (middle bridge), which joins Grossbasel and Kleinbasel at the city centre, is the oldest still-standing bridge across the Rhine. People in Basel are also proud of their green trams, a very efficient means of public transport. There is one particularly popular monument: cathedral hill high above the river. The square in front of the cathedral in Romanesque-Gothic style is very beautiful; its origins date back to Celtic and Roman times. It offers splendid views of the old town, the Rhine and the surrounding hills.

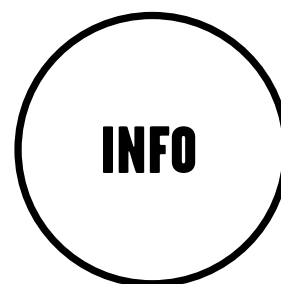


The 1,000-year-old Basel Minster can be seen from all over the city  
 (© Canton of Basel-Stadt)

## Switzerland – at the heart of Europe.



Basel-Stadt is located in the north-western part of Switzerland, on the border to Germany and France.



[www.basel.ch](http://www.basel.ch)

Official website with everything you need to know about Basel, including the administration of the Canton of Basel-Stadt

[www.basel.com](http://www.basel.com)

Official website of Basel Tourism

[www.statistik.bs.ch](http://www.statistik.bs.ch)

Cantonal Office of Statistics

[www.awa.bs.ch](http://www.awa.bs.ch)

Office of Economy and Labour of Basel-Stadt

[www.baselarea.swiss](http://www.baselarea.swiss)

Economic promotion

[www.bettingen.ch](http://www.bettingen.ch)

Municipality of Bettingen

[www.riehen.ch](http://www.riehen.ch)

Municipality of Riehen

# BUSINESS LOCATION

A burgeoning business location in general, and a global premier life sciences hub, Basel and the surrounding area make up Switzerland's most dynamic economy. The region is home to more than ten leading global corporations, countless spin-offs and start-ups as well as myriad well-established small and medium-sized companies. Renowned global players in the life sciences, pharma and agrobusiness such as Novartis, Roche and Syngenta have their headquarters here, as well as leading representatives of the finance, logistics industries and commerce, among many others.

## IMPORTANCE

### Ideal location and transportation hub

Favoured by its strategic geographic location on the traditional north-south route through Europe, the Basel area has always been a major trading centre for goods. As a consequence, it is an ideal base for many international corporations from which to serve the European market. Basel provides the infrastructure needed to forward commercial goods to their final destinations – facilities for transport by air, water, rail and road as well as for container transfers from rail to road, road to ship or ship to rail. Freight trains are processed or reconfigured at the marshalling yards in Weil am Rhein and Muttenz. Ship-borne freight is unloaded or transferred at the Swiss Rhine Ports. Cargo aircraft leave EuroAirport for business centres around the world. A large proportion of the heavy road traffic uses the tunnels through the Alps: In 2016, approximately 0.98 million heavy vehicles passed through these tunnels. To relieve the pressure on the main roads and the environment, commercial trucks can be loaded onto Huckepack trains at the Basel border; these then travel through Switzerland on the so-called rolling highway. Switzerland also promotes unaccompanied, combined freight transport. In 2016, 71% of freight through the Alps was transported by rail.

### Second-most-important economic region in Switzerland

After Zurich, Basel is the second-most-important economic region in Switzerland. In recent years, the Canton of Basel-Stadt has experienced economic growth far beyond the Swiss average. In 2017, 190,966 people were working in 17,093 enterprises in the Canton of Basel-Stadt alone. The workforce in the cantons of Basel-Stadt and Basel-Landschaft numbers over 340,000 employees. As in other parts of Switzerland, the service sector has become the most important part of the economy, accounting for 81% of all jobs. Insurance, banking, logistics and commerce are important sectors in Basel, as is the public sector. The growing life sciences cluster in the Basel region with currently more than 700 start-ups and established companies employs more than 33,000 experts and extends from pharma and biotech to agrochemical.

### High productivity

The exceptionally high level of education among the local population makes it easy for companies to recruit highly qualified employees. This is reflected in the productivity figures, which are impressive even in international comparison. As a border town, Basel also benefits from the availability of German and French employees. Other professionals come from further afield: people from around 160 nations live and work in Basel.

### Exports account for a large share of the economy

A further illustration of successful economic activity: in 2019 total exports for Basel-Stadt achieved a value of CHF 26,567 million, representing approximately 11% of the total exports for Switzerland.

## WORLD-CLASS RESEARCH

### From a city of chemicals to a centre of innovation

The forerunners of the companies on which Basel's international reputation is now based were founded in the 19th century: Sandoz, Ciba, J. R. Geigy AG and Hoffmann-La Roche & Cie. In 1996, Sandoz and Ciba-Geigy merged to form Novartis. In addition to Novartis, the major players today are Roche as well as Syngenta, Clariant, BASF and Lonza Group. Basel is no longer just seen as a major chemicals and industrial centre. Several companies based in Basel have shifted



**“BASEL IS A STRONG AND  
EVER-EXPANDING BUSINESS  
HUB. I CAME HERE TO STUDY  
ECONOMICS AND ENDED UP  
BUILDING MY LIFE AROUND  
BASEL. THE REGION OFFERS  
GREAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
WELL-QUALIFIED PEOPLE, AND  
DIVERSITY IS AN IMPORTANT  
BYWORD HERE, BOTH IN  
SOCIETY AS WELL AS IN ALL  
THE BIG COMPANIES.”**

Hong Heygel comes from Chengdu in Sichuan Province, China,  
and is a senior intercultural consultant at Roche

their production out of town or abroad, focusing activities on research and headquarter functions instead. Today, Basel is a highly attractive location for science-based industries, particularly for companies in the chemicals and life sciences industry and is already positioned at the leading edge of digital healthcare development. The region boasts a unique density of globally active and highly productive corporations.

### Cooperation between the state and the private sector

Year in, year out, the major pharmaceutical and chemical corporations invest several billion Swiss francs in research. This investment is not restricted to the companies themselves, but also helps corporate start-ups and state-run institutions, and supports the establishment of dedicated chairs at the University. Examples of the fruitful cooperation between the public sector and private industry include the Biozentrum (Centre for Molecular Life Sciences) and the Friedrich Miescher Institute, whose scientists have brought several Nobel Prizes to Basel.

Highlighting the importance of close proximity to the large life sciences companies in Basel, the Department of Biosystems Science and Engineering (D-BSSE) was established here in Basel by the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH Zurich) in 2005. In 2018, the University Basel and ETHZ jointly founded the Botnar Research Center for Child Health that aims to promote the health and quality of life of children and young people worldwide. And in 2022, the new ETHZ Life Sciences Campus in Basel is set to open, uniting the offices and laboratories that are currently in four different locations.

### BioValley

Basel is part of the trinational BioValley that stretches from Basel to Strasbourg in France with more than 900 member companies and 40 scientific institutions. Set up jointly by university, research and industry, and involving companies specialised in biomedicine and biotechnology, this project has generated new impulses for the Basel economic area. In Basel, many of the companies involved were originally created as spin-offs from the major chemical and pharmaceutical corporations. The aim is to ensure that small and medium-sized enterprises are also able to benefit from the know-how available in the region through a rapid transfer between research and industry.

## FAST-GROWING SECTORS

### Life sciences and chemical industries

With over 700 firms, Basel has the highest density of successful life sciences companies worldwide. With Roche and Novartis, the headquarters of two of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies are located in Basel. But the life sciences cluster in Basel also comprises many smaller companies (SMEs) and a continually growing number of successful

start-ups. It is not just the local pharmaceutical, bio- and medtech companies that benefit from this dynamic cluster of life sciences enterprises. All other branches of trade take advantage of its innovative potential, too. The agrobusiness, the chemical industry and nanotechnology are also well represented in the Basel area, with companies that include Syngenta, Lonza, BASF, Idemitsu, Clariant and Huntsman. Medical technology is focusing increasingly on the interface between life sciences and medical technology. With Straumann, Medartis and DePuySynthes, three world leaders are already based here in Basel and the surrounding area.

### Logistics, commerce and retail

Its central location served by the EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg, the Swiss Rhine Ports, international railway stations and excellent connections to European motorway networks means that around 40% of all trade in Switzerland passes through the Basel region. As the logistics hub for traffic between northern and southern Europe, the region makes efficient use of all forms of transport to keep freight moving smoothly. The main road and rail routes for Europe all intersect in Basel, and global logistics players like DSV Panalpina make excellent use of this. Trading com-



At 178 metres, the Roche Tower (Building 1) is currently Switzerland's highest building (© Canton of Basel-Stadt)

panies such as leading travel retailer Dufry and the cigar and luxury goods producer Davidoff have also always been well represented in the Basel region.

### **Creative industries**

Art, design, fashion and architecture play a prominent role in Basel, and are closely linked to its economy. Over 50 years, Art Basel has established itself as the leading trade fair for contemporary art worldwide. Architects from Basel enjoy international acclaim – with Herzog & de Meuron as the biggest stars, employing some 500 people in their offices in five different countries.

### **Financial services, insurance and IT**

Basel also is one of the prime financial centres, where UBS, a global leader in wealth management, and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) have their headquarters. In addition to both traditional and innovative financial services, which include insurance, risk capital companies and private banking, leading IT organisations also offer their services here.

### **Trade fairs and exhibitions**

Basel has been a successful trade fair and congress city for many hundreds of years – it was granted the right to hold trade fairs in the year 1471. Today, Basel has the largest exhibition site in Switzerland. The exhibition industry is currently undergoing a structural transformation. Following the merger with the smaller exhibition in Zurich, the former Messe Basel (Basel Exhibition) now operates under the name MCH Group and is the largest operator in the country. Over a million visitors and several thousand exhibitors come together every year at specialist and public trade fairs and congresses. At the international level, MCH Group holds two

events with a worldwide reputation, namely BASELWORLD, for watches and jewellery, and Art Basel, the world's leading art show. Art Basel now has annual shows sited on three continents: Art Basel Miami Beach was established in 2002, and in 2013, the exhibition had its debut in Asia with Art Basel Hong Kong. The most important national events include prominent trade fairs for the construction, life sciences, hospitality and education sectors. Recent major modernisation and expansion work was carried out on the exhibition site in Basel with a new exhibition hall designed by Basel architects Herzog & de Meuron.

## **ECONOMIC POLICY**

### **Strengthening the strengths**

The city government does not actively intervene in the economy, but instead aims at creating and maintaining attractive conditions for businesses. A dynamic economic promotion focusing on the strengths of the area is an essential part of Basel's economic policy. Therefore, the Canton of Basel-Stadt focuses on the important branches of trade and leading companies. By 'strengthening its strengths', Basel aims to become even more attractive to specialised businesses. The Canton of Basel-Stadt expressly recognises Basel's position as a centre of research and production for the life sciences industries. Training and research facilities in this field receive particular encouragement. Other key sectors supported by the Canton include the finance and insurance sector, logistics, the creative industries as well as the pharmaceutical industries.

### **Business promotion**

There are several helpdesks for companies that are already based in Basel or wish to start offices here: the Office of Economy and Labour of Basel-Stadt, and the Basel Chamber of Commerce offer many services for companies that are already based in Basel or that wish to start offices here, from counselling for start-ups, through information for employees and employers, up to and including the promotion of innovation.

BaselArea.swiss is the office for the promotion of innovation and inward investment for Basel-Stadt, Basel-Landschaft and Jura. It supports both Swiss and foreign entrepreneurs and companies in the implementation of their innovation and business projects in the region.



The EuroAirport handles more than 8 million passengers each year  
(© Canton of Basel-Stadt)





The new trade fair building by Herzog & de Meuron (© Canton of Basel-Stadt)

## ATTRACTIVE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### High salaries, high labour productivity

The average annual salary earned by those who work in Basel and its environs is among the highest in Switzerland. The GDP of the Canton of Basel is higher than in any other Swiss canton, and unemployment is low.

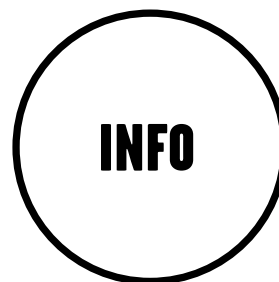
### Excellent working conditions

Job satisfaction tends to be high in Switzerland. Employees who perform well are valued and receive opportunities for further education or promotion. Employment laws are supplemented by an active social partnership, which has resulted in collective bargaining agreements in certain sectors.

### Large number of cross-border commuters

As Basel is able to attract European employees from neighbouring France and Germany, companies in Basel have a large and international pool of highly qualified employees. The importance of these cross-border commuters (who live just over the border in France or Germany, but work in Switzerland) for the service and industrial sectors is underlined by the fact that almost 34,000 people cross the border every day to go to work.

[www.awa.bs.ch](http://www.awa.bs.ch)



Office of Economy and Labour of Basel-Stadt

[www.baselarea.swiss](http://www.baselarea.swiss)

Office for innovation and economic promotion for Basel-Stadt, Basel-Landschaft and Jura

[www.hkbb.ch](http://www.hkbb.ch)

Basel Chamber of Commerce, an association of industrial, trading and service companies

[www.seco-admin.ch](http://www.seco-admin.ch)

The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs provides information on a wide variety of topics relating to the Swiss economy

[www.swissguide.ch](http://www.swissguide.ch)

Comprehensive source of information about Swiss companies, including company directory and topographical maps

[www.kmu-channel.ch](http://www.kmu-channel.ch)

Gewerbeverband Basel-Stadt (Small Trade Association of Basel-Stadt)

[www.bankenbasel.ch](http://www.bankenbasel.ch)

The regional banking association

[www.biozentrum.unibas.ch](http://www.biozentrum.unibas.ch)

Biozentrum of the University of Basel

[www.biovalley.ch](http://www.biovalley.ch)

Basel website of trinational BioValley life sciences cluster

[www.interpharma.ch](http://www.interpharma.ch)

Interpharma is an association of Swiss pharmaceutical research companies

[www.mch-group.com](http://www.mch-group.com)

Switzerland's largest exhibition and congress organiser, based in Basel

[www.lifesciencesbasel.com](http://www.lifesciencesbasel.com)

Basel Life Sciences Cluster overview – showcases institutions and companies in the region involved in research, development, production, and marketing

# WORKING CONDITIONS, SOCIAL SECURITY & TAXES

Basel offers an excellent standard of living and quality of life. High salaries, low deductions, a good social security system and pension funds along with reasonable rates of taxation are among the factors that recommend Basel as a city in which to work and live.

## WORKING IN SWITZERLAND

### Hiring

The attractive working conditions in Switzerland are based on a well-established social partnership between employer and employee. The first month in a new job is considered a trial period. A period of notice during this time is seven days. However, both parties may agree on longer or shorter trial and termination periods, although the maximum period allowed is three months. Once the trial period has ended, the period of notice is one month during the first year of employment, two months during the second to ninth years, and three months thereafter. These periods may also be adjusted if both parties agree. Working hours are between 40 and 42.5 hours per week, with at least 4 weeks of annual leave and 5 weeks for those who are under 20. Many companies offer their employees more annual leave and this is detailed in the employment contract. Pregnant women benefit from job protection, and receive at least 14 weeks maternity leave. Paternity leave is not currently regulated federally although it is under discussion by parliament. Basel-Stadt has no provisions for paternity leave, but companies offer family leave days, the terms of which are set out in the employment contract.

### Salaries

Salaries are generally paid on a monthly basis. Payment of a 13th monthly salary is widespread. Many companies have profit-sharing schemes, and give bonuses when business is good.

### Allowances

In Switzerland, employees with children receive a child allowance for each child, the amount of which varies from canton to canton. In Basel-Stadt, many companies also pay an additional education allowance to employees with children. Other allowances vary from employer to employer.

### Deductions

Employer and employee both pay contributions towards the Alters- und Hinterlassenenversicherung, AHV (mandatory old-age and survivors' insurance), Invaliditätsversicherung, IV (disability insurance) and insurance to compensate for loss of income during military training and maternity leave (Erwerbssersatzordnung, EO). Employees' contributions are deducted directly from the monthly salary and amount to approximately 20% of the monthly salary – half of which is covered by the employer.

## SOCIAL SECURITY

### State pension scheme

The system of retirement pensions in Switzerland is based on three pillars. The 1st pillar is mandatory for all employees while the 2nd is mandatory for those earning CHF 21,330 and more per year. The funds come from salary deductions. The Alters- und Hinterlassenenversicherung, AHV (old-age and survivors' insurance) is based on the principle of solidarity between the generations: those working today and paying into the AHV pay the pensions of the elderly who paid contributions while they were still working. The 2nd pillar consists of a pension fund that is obligatory for employees whose annual income is higher than CHF 21,330. Employees and employers pay the contributions into a personal account, where the pension capital accumulates over the years. The 3rd pillar is voluntary. Contributions to a private retirement account or a private pension insurance can be deducted from tax up to a statutory maximum level.

### Unemployment insurance

Incidental wage costs also finance the national unemployment insurance system. Unemployed individuals qualify for unemployment benefit if they can prove they have paid in contributions over 12 months within the preceding two years. They generally receive 70% and in certain cases up to 80% of their last salary for one to two years, depending on their age and contribution period. Information can be obtained from the Office of Economy and Labour ([www.awa.bs.ch](http://www.awa.bs.ch)).



**“I HAVE BEEN IN BASEL SINCE 2009. I VALUE THE OPPORTUNITY I HAVE HERE TO DEVELOP REALLY GOOD CONNECTIONS TO THE INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH COMMUNITY. I LIVE WITH MY FAMILY JUST OVER THE BORDER IN FRANCE AND TAKE THE NO. 3 TRAM EVERY MORNING, WHICH BRINGS ME DIRECTLY TO WORK. LIFE HERE IS GOOD.”**

Guéladio Cissé comes from Dafort in Mauritania and is Head of the Ecosystem Health Sciences Unit, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute

## TAXES IN THE CANTON OF BASEL-STADT

### Moderate taxes

In Switzerland, taxes are generally low, but rates differ from canton to canton. Basel has an intermediate tax level. The taxing system is similar in all the cantons.

### Income tax

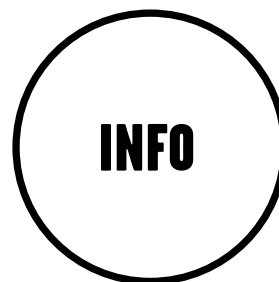
Einkommenssteuer (income tax) is calculated on the basis of the taxable income, which is the sum of all revenues minus various deductions (costs, general allowances, social allowances). In Basel-Stadt, income tax is paid annually. The tax return is sent out to all taxpayers after the end of the tax year (tax period), which runs from January to December. Swiss citizens and residents with a C permit fill out a tax return every year. All foreign workers who do not have a C permit and are not self-employed are taxed at source. This means that taxes of around 20% are automatically deducted from the salary on a monthly basis. Members of the Protestant, Roman Catholic and Old Catholic denominations as well as members of the Jewish community pay an additional church tax on their income, which is calculated as a percentage of the cantonal tax.

### Wealth tax

In addition to income tax, the Canton also imposes a Vermögenssteuer (wealth tax). This is based on the assets of the taxpayer, taking various deductions into account (such as liabilities or allowances).

### Direct federal tax

Along with the cantonal (and municipal) taxes, natural persons domiciled in the Canton are also subject to direct federal tax. It is declared along with the cantonal tax.



[www.awa.bs.ch](http://www.awa.bs.ch)

Office of Economy and Labour of  
Basel-Stadt

[www.steuerverwaltung.bs.ch](http://www.steuerverwaltung.bs.ch)

The official website of the fiscal authorities  
in Basel-Stadt

[www.bsv.admin.ch](http://www.bsv.admin.ch)

The Federal Social Insurance Office



Basel is a growing life sciences hub © Canton of Basel-Stadt

# MOBILITY

Getting around Basel and the surrounding area is not only easy but also a pleasure. Many people walk or rely on bicycles and e-bikes to get to wherever they need to go. It is not really necessary to own a car as the local transport system is reliable and frequent, with an extensive network of buses and trams. While the Swiss railway runs an efficient service that is complemented by buses that cover the more remote regions of the country.

## IDEAL LOCATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

### Connected to the world

Basel is a central traffic junction, connecting northern and central Europe with the south. The city's position at the heart of Europe is central to Basel's economic development: the international corporations headquartered here depend on excellent connections to the rest of the world.

### Excellent public transport

The city and its surroundings offer a very dense public transport network. Buses, trams and trains are convenient and run at frequent intervals. You can get to and around Basel very well without a car.



Basel is bicycle-friendly with dedicated bicycle paths throughout the city and region © Canton of Basel-Stadt

## Investing in the future

The government continues to invest in further improvements to the infrastructure. The EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg is a leading European regional airport and has been expanded considerably in the last few years. The railway system within the region is being systematically upgraded and extended to provide fast and efficient connections throughout the trinational area. Tramlines have also been extended across the borders into France and Germany. And last but not least, Switzerland has been steadily shifting the transport of commercial goods from motorways to freight rail.

## INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS

### EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg

EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg is just seven kilometres from the city centre, offering direct flights to over 90 European cities and beyond, as well as intercontinental connecting flights via Zurich, Frankfurt, Paris or other larger European gateways. Most major European cities are less than two hours away. In addition to numerous business flights, a steadily increasing number of charter operators fly out of Basel to popular holiday destinations. As the airport is relatively small, transit times are short. There is a direct, frequent and regular bus service (No. 50) that connects the SBB railway station to the airport, and short-term as well as long-term parking facilities are available at the airport.

### Rail and road

The railway systems of Switzerland, France, and Germany intersect in Basel, where there are also three railway stations: the Swiss Federal Railways (SBB), the German Deutsche Bahn (DB) and the French Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer (SNCF). The French railway station is located on the same site as the Swiss station. There are connecting trains and trams between the stations, and high-speed trains (TGV and ICE) connect Basel to the major European cities. In the European motorway network, the German A5 and the French A35 connect to the Swiss A2 and A3 in Basel. Frankfurt can be reached from Basel by motorway in three hours, Milan in four hours and Paris in five. Before using the Swiss motorway network, drivers have to buy a motorway "vignette", valid for one calendar year.



**“MY SCHEDULE IS ALWAYS CHANGING SO I NEED TO KNOW I WILL GET TO WORK ON TIME, WHEREVER I AM COMING FROM. PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN BASEL IS WONDERFUL AND IT IS QUITE RARE FOR A BUS OR TRAM TO BE LATE. I ALSO LOVE THE FACT THAT THE AIRPORT IS SO NEAR TO TOWN – LESS THAN 30 MINUTES BY BUS AND TRAM TO GET TO THE CITY CENTRE.”**

Antje Welge-Lüssen Lemcke comes from Germany and is head physician and the director of Otorhinolaryngology and Sensory consulting at the Ear, Nose and Throat Clinic at the University Hospital Basel.



### River traffic

The Swiss Rhine Ports in Basel are one of the most important inland harbours in Europe. Over an area of 1.3 million square metres, an annual volume of more than six million tons of goods are cleared and forwarded on by rail or road. In addition, a variety of river cruises to destinations as far away as Rotterdam and the North Sea start in Basel.

## GETTING AROUND SWITZERLAND

### Everywhere in three hours

The best way to get around the country is by rail: Switzerland has the densest railway network in the world. Even the more remote areas are served by regular bus services. For people who regularly travel by train, the SwissPass offers various public transport travelcards. The GA Travelcard allows unlimited travel on all SBB trains as well as boats, buses and trams, while the Half-Fare Travelcard cuts travel costs in half. Children between 6 and 16 years benefit from free travel on public transport if they are travelling with a parent and have a Junior Travelcard, or travelling with an adult and have a Children's Co-card. The SwissPass also offers access to partner services: it can be used, for example, to unlock cars rented from Mobility or to activate the turnstile in skiing resorts.

Switzerland also has an extremely dense road network. In fact, all major Swiss towns can be reached by road from Basel within three hours.



The regional S-Bahn at Niederholz station in Riehen  
(© Canton of Basel-Stadt)

## GETTING AROUND BASEL

### Public transport

Basel has an excellent public transport network, characterised by punctuality, reliable connections and large capacities. The Umweltschutzabonnement (U-Abo, a monthly/annual travelcard) introduced in 1984 was the first of its kind in Europe. Today, holders of a U-Abo – digital or physical – are entitled to use all public transport in Northwestern Switzerland – buses, trams, and S-Bahn (regional railway) – at an advantageous price. The regional and trinational S-Bahn, which is used in particular by commuters who work in Basel, but live in the surrounding trinational region, is steadily being expanded. Monthly and yearly passes are available for cross-border connections as well.

Tickets for trams and buses can be obtained from the ticket machines at every stop or bought online as well as by mobile app. Monthly cards and multi-trip cards are also available from the official BVB counter on Barfüsserplatz, and timetables can be downloaded from the Internet.

### Cars and parking

New residents in Switzerland must register their private car immediately at the Motorfahrzeugkontrolle (vehicle licensing authority) and ensure they are correctly insured. Foreign driving licences may be used for up to 12 months and must then be exchanged for a Swiss driving licence. It is recommended to start the process early on as after 12 months, residents are deemed to be driving without a licence if they do not have a Swiss licence. To find out about the process, go to the Motorfahrzeugkontrolle website (see below).

The Motorfahrzeugkontrolle issues the registration for new vehicles and periodically checks all registered cars. This office also transfers cars to a new owner or issues parking permits for residents. A motor vehicle tax is obligatory for all cars and all motorcycles.

In most residential areas, the speed limit is 30 km/h. In some streets, however, the speed limit is 20 km/h and pedestrians have priority – these are known as Begegnungszonen (shared spaces).

There is a car park routing system in the city centre that helps drivers find the nearest car park. Parking is allowed in the street in designated blue parking spots. The blue parking spots are free from 7 pm to 8 am. During the day, use of these parking slots is restricted to between 60 and 90 minutes and a parking disk must be displayed. Residents can buy a parking permit valid for a year from the Motorfahrzeugkontrolle, which gives free access to the blue parking areas in their postal code; visitors can buy a parking ticket for half a day or a whole day online or at one of the public transport ticket vending machines.

## Car and bike sharing

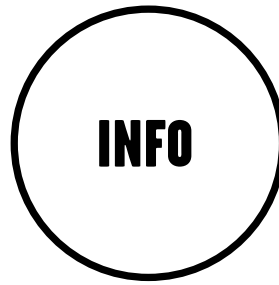
Mobility Carsharing is a Switzerland-wide car club that offers cars of all sizes all over the country for use by its members. Cars can be booked both well in advance or at very short notice, for just an hour or several days. Access to the cars is granted via an electronic chip card. After the defined period, the car has to be returned to its parking spot that is always free. There is no additional cost, and all repairs are handled by Mobility. Since 2014 an even more flexible car sharing system originally known as Catch a Car and now Mobility-Go allows registered users to check on the availability of nearby cars by app and to book them on the fly. In Basel, 150 cars can be reserved and hired by the minute and then deposited anywhere within the city in a public parking space. Private companies also offer shared e-bikes and electric scooters.

## Bicycle city

Basel is a bicycle-friendly city with a clearly marked network of bicycle paths that criss-cross both the city itself and the surrounding region. There is a large underground bicycle parking area at the SBB railway station and numerous parking facilities all over the city. Special route maps are also available for cyclists (for sale in bookshops and kiosks and online).

## On foot

A large proportion of Basel's residents enjoy walking. The city's compact size along with the mix of residential, working, shopping and leisure opportunities in each neighbourhood means that distances are very manageable and encourages this healthy and environmentally friendly way of getting around. Orientation is facilitated by a network of signed footpaths in yellow and white (level, barrier-free footpaths). More than 90 Begegnungszonen – streets in which the speed limit is 20 and pedestrians have priority over cars – as well as extensive Tempo 30 zones make walking around Basel pleasant and safe. Locating interesting places is made easy by the info boards and grey signposts of the pedestrian signage system.



[www.euroairport.com](http://www.euroairport.com)

EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg

[www.sbb.ch](http://www.sbb.ch)

Swiss national railway, including timetables

[www.bvb.ch](http://www.bvb.ch)

Basel public transport network

[www.parkieren.bs.ch](http://www.parkieren.bs.ch)

Information on parking in Basel-Stadt

[www.tnw.ch](http://www.tnw.ch)

Regional transport network

[www.mfk.bs.ch](http://www.mfk.bs.ch)

Motorfahrzeugkontrolle

[www.bahn.de](http://www.bahn.de)

German railway company

[www.sncf.com](http://www.sncf.com)

French railway company

[www.portofbasel.ch](http://www.portofbasel.ch)

Swiss Rhine Ports of the two Basel cantons

[www.mobility.ch](http://www.mobility.ch)

Mobility car-sharing website

[www.pickebike.ch](http://www.pickebike.ch)

E-bike, e-scooter sharing

[www.veloland.ch](http://www.veloland.ch)

This website offers maps with cycling routes for the whole of Switzerland

Destinations that are easily reached within 2 hours from EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg



TRANSPORTATION

# HEALTH & INSURANCE

Insurance plays a key role for life in Switzerland. The information below briefly outlines the Swiss healthcare insurance system, which is private, as well as the most frequently encountered insurance types. In Switzerland health insurance, based on a federally determined basic package of benefits, is mandatory for everyone. To meet the needs of its residents, the Canton of Basel-Stadt has a large number of state-owned and private-sector hospitals as well as retirement homes and nursing homes that provide treatment, healthcare and support for injured, ill and elderly patients.

## HEALTH SYSTEM

### Comprehensive coverage

The Swiss healthcare system meets very high standards. There are many excellent doctors as well as nurses, good infrastructure, many specialists, hospitals and pharmacies. Health insurance is compulsory for everyone staying in Switzerland for any length of time.

### University hospital

The University Hospital Basel is one of Switzerland's leading medical centres. It offers a wide range of world-class medicine, from basic medical services and emergency care to highly specialised treatments for life-threatening diseases and accidents. The University Hospital Basel specialises in cancer treatment, kidney and stem cell transplants, care for cardiovascular and stroke patients, treatment for diabetes and obesity, spinal surgery, chronic and acute lung disease and multiple sclerosis therapy, as well as running a state-of-the-art maternity clinic. Located right next to the University Hospital is the University Children's Hospital Basel (UKBB), a state-owned, university-based centre of competence for paediatric and juvenile medicine, as well as for teaching and research.

### Private hospitals

A number of private hospitals also offer excellent medical services. The largest are Claraspital, Merian Iselin and Bethesda. Doctors from all disciplines and highly qualified nursing staff provide the best possible care.

### Retirement homes and nursing homes

More than 40 retirement homes and nursing homes are located throughout Basel-Stadt, while specialist organisations offer home-care services.

### Medical doctors

Typically in Switzerland, the general practitioner, rather than the accident and emergency department of a hospital, is the first port of call if you fall ill. It is recommended to register with a local doctor as soon after arrival as possible before it actually becomes necessary. This doctor takes on the role of gatekeeper and coordinates all further treatment. The healthcare system offers reductions on monthly premiums if you register for a Hausarztmodell (general practitioner scheme) or a TELMED-Modell (initial consultation always by telephone).



REHAB Basel – a specialist centre for brain and spinal injuries  
(© Canton of Basel-Stadt)



**“BASEL IS A GREAT CENTRE FOR ARCHITECTURE – THAT’S WHY I CAME HERE. ONE OF THE THINGS I LIKE IS THAT IT’S SO EASY TO GET AROUND BY BICYCLE, BUT SADLY NOT WITHOUT RISK. AND THAT’S HOW I DISCOVERED THE HEALTH-CARE SYSTEM AND ACCIDENT INSURANCE AT FIRST HAND – TOTALLY THOROUGH AND VERY EFFICIENT!”**

Roberto Roncoroni comes from Italy  
and is an architect at Scheibler Villard

## Emergency services

For emergencies that are not life threatening, the Medizinische Notrufzentrale MNZ (medical emergency service) that coordinates emergency services for doctors, dentists, psychiatrists and pharmacies throughout Northwestern Switzerland, can be contacted at 061 261 15 15 around the clock.

In life-threatening situations, ambulance staff is on duty day and night and can be called using the emergency telephone number 144.

## Health insurance

Health insurance is compulsory in Switzerland. Every resident chooses an insurance company and pays a monthly premium. The benefits are defined by federal law, so every insurance company must include them in their basic package. Insurance companies are obliged to accept everyone for the basic package, but they can reject applications for private insurance benefits (for example, for 1st or 2nd class hospital accommodation). While the basic benefits are defined by federal law, there are, however, differences in the premiums for this basic package depending on the insurance scheme selected and the insurance company. The Standard scheme allows the greatest freedom as any doctor or specialist may be contacted directly. Except in emergencies, the GP (general practitioner), HMO (health maintenance organisation), and TELMED schemes regulate how patients access their healthcare, and the primary doctor acts as a gatekeeper to the necessary treatment, either directly or via a telephone service.

Monthly premiums vary from company to company and from canton to canton. In order to reduce their premiums, patients can opt to cover a portion of the health costs themselves.

Monthly premiums are not indexed to income, however, individuals and families on a low income can apply to the Amt für Sozialbeiträge (Office of Social Contributions) for state support towards their premium.

## Paying doctors' bills

As a rule, doctors send an invoice directly to the patient. Patients pay the amount due, then forward the invoice to their health insurance company for reimbursement, minus 10% retention and subject to a yearly deductible of currently CHF 300 in the Standard insurance scheme. Pharmacies, hospitals and physiotherapists settle their accounts directly with the health insurance companies. It is possible to combine a Swiss insurance with a foreign insurance policy, for example, to provide medical care in the patient's country of origin.

## Dental care

The compulsory basic health insurance scheme does not cover dental treatment. Special supplementary dental insurance coverage is available and frequently purchased to cover dental expenses for children. The state-owned University Centre for Dental Medicine Basel and almost 200 private dentists in the region provide excellent-quality dental care.

## GENERAL INSURANCE POLICIES

### Insurance in Switzerland

You will find the most common types of insurance below.

### Personal accident insurance

In Switzerland, all employers must provide accident insurance for their employees. Anyone not covered by an employer can add accident coverage to their health insurance. Numerous private insurance companies also offer accident insurance. Possible supplementary benefits include sums payable upon death or invalidity, per diem allowances in the event of being unable to work or during a stay at the hospital, and special convalescence benefits.



The tree-lined Rhine promenade is perfect for jogging  
© Canton of Basel-Stadt



University Children's Hospital Basel – a centre of excellence  
(© Canton of Basel-Stadt)

## INFO

### Personal liability insurance

One can be exposed to a great variety of liability risks in day-to-day life. Damaging someone else's property or injuring another person entails an obligation to pay compensation. Compensation claims can be extremely high when people are involved. The Privathaftpflichtversicherung (personal liability insurance) protects the policyholder against such financial risks.

### Household contents insurance

The Hausratversicherung (household contents insurance) protects the holder against the risks of losses caused to furniture and personal effects by fire, natural disasters, theft, water and broken glass.

### Motor vehicle insurance

The Motorfahrzeug-Versicherungs-Police (motor vehicle insurance policy) can be tailored to meet the particular requirements of any individual. Third-party liability insurance is obligatory, and covers injuries to persons and damage to property. Partial vehicle insurance provides cover against fire, theft, damage caused by natural events, collisions with animals, etc. Fully-comprehensive insurance policies extend cover to include collisions involving the policyholder's own vehicles.

[www.bsv.admin.ch](http://www.bsv.admin.ch)

Bundesamt für Sozialversicherung,  
BSV Federal Social Insurance Office

[www.gesundheitsversorgung.bs.ch](http://www.gesundheitsversorgung.bs.ch)

Department of Health

[www.medizinischdienste.bs.ch](http://www.medizinischdienste.bs.ch)

Cantonal medical services

[www.asb.bs.ch](http://www.asb.bs.ch)

Office of Social Contributions

[www.kvg.org](http://www.kvg.org)

Joint healthcare insurance institute

[www.unispital-basel.ch](http://www.unispital-basel.ch)

University Hospital Basel and the  
university clinics



[www.ukbb.ch](http://www.ukbb.ch)

University Children's Hospital

[www.uzb.ch](http://www.uzb.ch)

University Centre for Dental Medicine Basel

[www.spitex.ch](http://www.spitex.ch)

Home-care services

[www.mnzbasel.ch](http://www.mnzbasel.ch)

The MNZ Foundation's official 24-hour  
response centre for medical emergencies

[www.basel.patientenstelle.ch](http://www.basel.patientenstelle.ch)

Patient interest group for Basel-Stadt and  
Basel-Landschaft



Every summer, the Gsünder Basel association organises free exercise classes  
in parks around the city (© Canton of Basel-Stadt)

# LIVING IN BASEL

Basel is the urban centre of the so-called Trinational Eurodistrict Basel. Almost 900,000 people live in this area that encompasses the border regions of Switzerland, France and Germany – around a quarter of whom live in the city itself. The Canton of Basel-Stadt includes the city of Basel as well as the two outlying municipalities of Riehen and Bettingen. There are many excellent residential areas in the 19 neighbourhoods that make up the city. Around 85% of the people living in Basel rent their accommodation; apartments are usually rented unfurnished, but with fully fitted kitchens and bathrooms. Opening up former industrial and infrastructure areas for housing as well as more compact office space will speed up urban development as Basel strives to become even more family friendly and attractive for those who work here.

## METROPOLITAN BASEL

### Cross-border integration

Looking out of the plane when landing at Euro-Airport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg, it is clear to see: Basel and the surrounding towns have spread out across the borders of France and Germany to form one big metropolitan area. Densely built-up areas extend along the river valleys and main thoroughfares and the international borders are no longer discernible from the air.

### Trinational Eurodistrict Basel

On the Swiss side, the Trinational Eurodistrict Basel includes the Canton of Basel-Stadt, the Canton of Basel-Landschaft, the Fricktal in the Canton of Aargau and the districts of Thierstein and Dorneck in the Canton of Solothurn. In Germany, it includes the district of Lörrach and the towns of Wehr and Bad Säckingen. Finally, in France, the Trinational Eurodistrict encompasses the Saint-Louis Agglomération.

Around 900,000 people currently live in this area. About one quarter of all the agglomeration's inhabitants live in the city of Basel itself.

## CANTON OF BASEL-STADT AND ITS OUTLYING MUNICIPALITIES

### Basel's suburbs on the border

Apart from the city of Basel, the two smaller towns of Riehen and Bettingen also belong to the Canton of Basel-Stadt. Both are north of the city, right on the German border. And both have their own distinct qualities.

### Riehen – a small town between the city and the border

Riehen has around 21,000 residents and is thus a small town. It has successfully retained its village character and has its own rich cultural and social life. Like Switzerland's other 2,700 municipalities, it acts independently: Riehen collects its own taxes, has its own parliament and executive council. It is very green and a popular choice for families when looking for a home. The Fondation Beyeler, home of the Beyeler art collection (20th-century art), attracts much international attention. Riehen's other sights include the medieval Kirch- enburg (the late Gothic village church), the Gemeindemu- seum (municipal museum) and the splendid country estates of Wenkenhof and Bäumlhof.

### Bettingen – a village high above Basel

Chrischona church is located at the highest point of the Canton of Basel-Stadt, 522 metres above sea level. Right beside the church, the radio tower is the tallest structure in Switzerland (250 m). Both belong to the village of Bettingen, the second – very small – rural municipality of the Canton of Basel-Stadt, with around 1200 inhabitants. It is often fondly called Basel's mountain village. On a fine day, you can see the Alps from here. The woods stretching around the village are beautiful, and along with the rich farmland make for a popular recreational area just a stone's throw from the city.



**“SCHOOLS, DAYCARE, WORK,  
EVERYTHING IS CLOSE AT  
HAND, AND I DON’T NEED A  
CAR TO GET AROUND.**

**I LIVE IN A BEAUTIFUL 19TH  
CENTURY HOUSE AND THERE  
IS A REAL SENSE OF COM-  
MUNITY IN MY NEIGHBOUR-  
HOOD: PEOPLE TALK TO EACH  
OTHER, OUR KIDS HAVE  
FOUND GOOD FRIENDS AND  
WE EVEN HAVE STREET  
PARTIES IN THE SUMMER.”**

Christine Gould comes from Florida in the United States  
and is the founder and CEO of Thought For Food



The cobblestone streets and historical buildings of the Old Town  
(© Canton of Basel-Stadt)

## BASEL AND ITS URBAN NEIGHBOURHOODS

### Overview

The city of Basel is divided into 19 neighbourhoods, each with its own distinct character. At the heart of the city lies the medieval old town. When the city first expanded outside the city walls in the 19th century, beautiful residential streets were built. Every neighbourhood has at least one park and numerous playgrounds. To the east and south of the city centre, there are predominantly residential areas, with a large number of detached family properties, gardens and green spaces. Some parts of the north and the west are more urban-industrial, and major cross-border transit routes cut through these districts.

### Old town and old residential areas

The beautiful medieval old town around the Münsterhügel (cathedral hill), Spalenberg and on the Kleinbasel side of the Rhine remains largely intact and unspoiled. The area still boasts a large number of churches, former monasteries and narrow alleyways. The present old town, which roughly corresponds to the town centre, was once surrounded by a fortified town wall. Beyond this wall lay the old suburbs. Today, these areas are all very different: major thoroughfares pass by modern office blocks and commercial and retail enterprises, while quiet side streets wind their way around and between them. There was a second and larger fortified town wall that was demolished in 1860. The expansion the city experienced beyond this boundary in the 19th century remains visible today: The majority of the buildings from this period are three- or four-storey terraced houses with balconies, courtyards and gardens. They are typical for Basel and are still very popular and attractive residences.

### The most popular residential areas

The most popular places to live in Basel are along the banks of the river Rhine, the St. Alban district in Grossbasel, Wettstein in Kleinbasel, Gellert with its many old and grand estates, and Bachletten near the zoo. On the southern edge of the city, up on the hill, there is Bruderholz. Accommodation of all sizes and prices is available. Successful efforts have been made to preserve quiet and leafy residential areas in every neighbourhood. The quality of life in these areas is being further enhanced by reducing the speed limit to 30 km/h and in some streets to 20 km/h.

### Choosing where to live

When choosing where to live, important factors include proximity to the workplace, the location of schools for children, as well as the convenience of local public transport (bus, tram, Regio-S-Bahn). Most newcomers appreciate the short distances and the excellent public transport in Basel – you really can leave your car at home most of the time. Finally, the atmosphere in the neighbourhood or the mix of residents in your building (English-speaking, families with children, diverse ages and backgrounds) can make all the difference.

## BUY OR RENT?

### Renting

Around 85% of the local population in the Canton of Basel-Stadt rent their houses and apartments. Tenants' rights are closely protected. Flats and houses are generally rented unfurnished, though with fully equipped kitchens and bathrooms. There is a communal washing machine and drying room in every apartment block. A three-month period of notice is usual for apartments, while houses are often rented on a long-term lease. Depending on its location, a rented room or small flat costs between CHF 700 and CHF 1,400 per month; larger flats of three to five rooms cost from CHF 1,500 to more than CHF 3,000. Rental charges comprise not just the rent, but also ancillary charges (heating, electricity, water, and sometimes gas and cable TV connections). Landlords normally request at least one month's rent as a deposit, and require their tenants to take out liability and household contents insurance. A statement from the Betreibungsamt (Debt Enforcement Office) is also often required. This can be ordered by email or picked up directly. There are a number of accommodation search engines, all of which are free of charge to the prospective renter. A rule of thumb when calculating a budget for accommodation: rental costs should not exceed 25% of the total household income. Any changes of address must be registered with the Einwohneramt (Residents' Registration Office).

## Buying

Those who plan to stay in the city for a longer period of time may consider buying a house or an apartment. Almost all banks offer mortgages; buyers need to put up at least 20% of the purchase price themselves. In order to be valid, the purchase agreement needs to be attested by a notary, and must be entered in the Land Registry. Foreigners wishing to acquire land in Switzerland are subject to special rules and regulations: prospective buyers who do not have permanent residency status first need to have the deal sanctioned by the relevant authorities.

## Pets

Tenants need to enquire whether pets are allowed.

## SAFE AND CLEAN

### Safe ...

Basel has a very low crime rate compared on an international level, and residents feel safe in their city. Police stations are located throughout the city, and police patrols pass regularly through all neighbourhoods. Officers take part in crime prevention work in schools and teach traffic courses for schoolchildren.

### ... and clean

Public refuse bins and collection points for waste are available throughout the city. For household waste, you need to use special refuse bags that include a charge for disposal. These blue Bebbisäcke are available in all larger supermarkets. Household waste is collected twice weekly. Full bags are put out on the street the evening before.

For larger items of waste, a special sticker is needed, the so-called Abfallvignette (domestic refuse vignette), available in the supermarket. People in Basel are encouraged to recycle waste: paper and metals must be disposed of separately. Both are collected from households free of charge. Glass, tins, batteries and PET bottles must be disposed of at the free collection points. For organic kitchen waste, there are community compost sites in each neighbourhood. Larger objects (e.g. electronic equipment) can be returned to retailers for disposal. Additional information about proper waste disposal can be found on the website of the Environment and Energy Office.

## HOUSEHOLD HELP

Should you decide to employ someone to help out with the household or children, it is important to ensure that their AHV contributions are paid, accident insurance has been taken out and, if applicable, that their permit is in order.

Idyllic lifestyle with a country feel up on the Bruderholz  
(© Canton of Basel-Stadt)



## INITIATIVES FOR THE FUTURE OF BASEL-STADT

### Urban development

Over the past two decades, major efforts have been made to further improve the quality of life and the standard of residential accommodation in Basel, especially in the less wealthy areas of town. The numerous projects are designed to improve the recreational and social zones along the Rhine, as well as to keep traffic out of residential areas.

### New residential areas

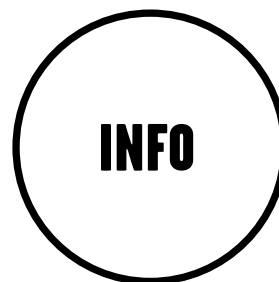
Many new areas have been designed and are being built primarily for families. Streets have been closed off to traffic, new parks have been built where there were parking lots. Over the next few years, all public playgrounds will be modernised, expanded and made safer for children. Near the German railway station, a whole new neighbourhood, the Erlenmatt, continues to grow, complete with family homes, a large park, an exceptional playground, a shopping area, schools and restaurants. Near the French border, the area around Voltaplatz has become a bustling neighbourhood with striking modern buildings, new cafés, and a new adventure playground. And there is more to come: residential blocks along the Rhine are being built, and the former warehouses at Dreispitz have given way to a new campus for the College of Art and Design, along with museums, apartment blocks and restaurants.

## Building for the future

A number of major construction projects have recently been completed: a completely new business centre has been set up around the main railway station. A new tunnel connecting the French and Swiss motorway systems took traffic away from a residential area and created space for improvements. Other examples include the new Exhibition Centre by architects Herzog & de Meuron next to the older trade fair tower, a master plan for the abandoned docks on the Rhine, new international tram and train connections, and the Novartis Campus that has been newly constructed and includes buildings by many internationally renowned architects. The first of the four new buildings being built by Roche – the Roche Tower – was inaugurated in 2015. At 178 m it is the tallest building in the country. Construction of the second Roche building, which is to have 50 storeys and will reach 205 m, is now underway.



Contemporary living at the Rhine (© Canton of Basel-Stadt)



[www.eurodistrictbasel.eu](http://www.eurodistrictbasel.eu)

Trinational Eurodistrict Basel

[www.riehen.ch](http://www.riehen.ch)

The website of the municipality of Riehen

[www.bettingen.ch](http://www.bettingen.ch)

The website of the municipality of Bettingen

[www.bdm.bs.ch](http://www.bdm.bs.ch)

Einwohneramt – Residents' Registration Office to register arrival in the country and any changes of address

[www.aue.bs.ch/abfaelle](http://www.aue.bs.ch/abfaelle)

Website of the Environment and Energy Office provides information about proper waste disposal

## SEARCH ENGINES FOR HOUSING AND APARTMENTS

[www.alle-immobilien.ch](http://www.alle-immobilien.ch)

[www.immobilienbs.ch](http://www.immobilienbs.ch)

[www.homegate.ch](http://www.homegate.ch)

[www.immoscout24.ch](http://www.immoscout24.ch)

[www.planetproperty.ch](http://www.planetproperty.ch)

[www.immostreet.ch](http://www.immostreet.ch)

## RELOCATION AGENCIES

[www.crownrelo.com](http://www.crownrelo.com)

Crown Relocation

[www.packimpex.ch](http://www.packimpex.ch)

Relocation Services

[www.bsws.ch](http://www.bsws.ch)

Regio Basel WS Relocation

[www.kellerswissgroup.com](http://www.kellerswissgroup.com)

Keller Swissgroup

# EDUCATION

The standard of education in Swiss schools is very high, and the educational opportunities in Basel are rich and diverse, allowing students the possibility to amend or change direction and specialisation. In addition to the city's range of excellent state schools at every level from kindergarten to advanced secondary school, Basel also offers many private schools that meet the needs of a mobile and international population. Basel's university is the oldest in Switzerland, and along with the University of Applied Sciences of Northwestern Switzerland, the Department of Biosystems Science and Engineering run by the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH), as well as the other polytechnics and leading vocational training programmes in the area, they contribute towards providing the major corporations in the region with a highly qualified workforce.

## STATE SCHOOL

### Education in Switzerland

There is no national school system in Switzerland, instead schools are run by the cantons. They are free of charge. Schools maintain a good relationship with parents, businesses, and the professional colleges within the area. Similarly they play an important role in the ongoing integration of non-mother tongue students into the community. The vocational training system in Switzerland is very successful and enjoys a high priority. Around 41% of young people start an apprenticeship after leaving school – a figure that has remained constant for the last two decades.

## PUBLIC SECTOR SCHOOLS

### The school system in Basel

Compulsory schooling lasts for 11 years, which also includes two years of kindergarten, starting at the age of 4 or 5 years. Schools in Basel aim to ensure that all children receive equal educational opportunities. Children in need of support or special education will receive professional help on all levels. The principal language is German. A variety of special language courses are provided for children who have recently arrived in Basel and do not speak German. In secondary school, children start choosing their optional curricula – which can influence their career decisions later.

### School holidays

There are 14 weeks of school holidays spread throughout the year: 6 weeks in the summer, from July to mid-August, 2 in the first half of October, 2 at Christmas, 2 in February/March, as well as 2 weeks around Easter. Also, depending on the school year, 1-week summer camps and ski camps are organised during the school year.

### School day

In Basel-Stadt, kindergarten and primary school hours are from 8 am to 12 pm, Monday to Friday, and on one afternoon from 2 pm to 4 pm (more afternoon lessons for primary school children and older). However, parents can book school lunches and after-school childcare if needed. During the school holidays, there are a number of day camps. Fees apply for school lunches, after-school day care and day camps.

### Kindergarten: 2 years

Children start their mandatory 2 years of kindergarten at the age of 4 or 5, depending on their date of birth. The reference date is 31 July: a child who has turned 4 by that date will start kindergarten the following August. In all state kindergartens, teaching times are Monday to Friday from 8 am to 12 pm, plus one afternoon from 2 pm to 4 pm. All children are entitled to a place in a kindergarten in easy walking distance of their home or day care centre. After-school day care is available in every neighbourhood.





**“THE UNIVERSITY OF BASEL IS IN TUNE WITH THE LATEST SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS AND STRONGLY SUPPORTS INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH. BEING A PART OF THE ACADEMIC PROCESS HERE HAS GIVEN ME INSIGHT INTO THE POTENTIAL OF SCIENCE AND THE HUMAN MIND TO MAKE LIFE A LITTLE BIT BETTER.”**

Ali-Ashraf Rajabli comes from Baku in Azerbaijan and is a master's student in European Global Studies at the Europainstitut of the University of Basel

### Primary school: 6 years

After kindergarten, children start their six years of primary school. Class hours are from Monday to Friday, 8 am to 12 pm as well as on up to three afternoons, depending on the grade. Reading, writing and arithmetic are at the core of the syllabus, but physical education (PE), music, drawing and handicrafts are also primary school subjects. French is taught from 3rd grade, English from 5th grade. A number of primary schools specialise in teaching German as a second language (Deutsch als Fremdsprache, DAZ), where regular teachers work together with DAZ teachers to integrate children into the full timetable as their language skills develop. Class size is limited to 25 children. For the majority of lessons, the class is split in two groups, which gives the teachers more time for individual children. All children are entitled to a place in a primary school in easy walking distance of home. After-school childcare is available in every neighbourhood.

### Secondary school: 3 years

Secondary school covers the remaining three years of compulsory education. At this point, students are split along three different pathways: A (general), E (intermediate) or P (advanced). The inbuilt flexibility of the system allows students to switch pathway according to their grades. Grades are awarded on a scale from 1 to 6, with 6 as the highest grade. Class size varies from 16 students in group A, 23 students in group E and 25 students in group P. The subjects include German, French, English, mathematics, history, geography, science, art and design, music and PE. At the end of secondary school, all students receive a graduation certificate. An A certificate prepares students for shorter vocational training programmes. An E certificate entitles students to a 3- or 4-year vocational training programme or to a place at a professional college. P certificate students can choose between continuing their studies at one of five Gymnasien (grammar schools) in Basel or taking up vocational training.



University Basel. Switzerland's oldest university is among the 100 best universities worldwide (© Universität Basel)



The welcoming and airy University Library reading room  
(© Canton of Basel-Stadt)

### Professional college

Students who have achieved the necessary grade average and points at secondary school can continue on to one of the professional colleges: Fachmaturitätsschule (FMS), Informatikmittelschule (IMS, College of Computer Science), Wirtschaftsmittelschule (WMS, Commercial College). FMS prepares students for further training in the fields of health/natural sciences, education/science/social services, design/art, music/theatre/dance or communications/media. WMS provides students with a solid general commercial education, and ends with the Swiss federal commercial vocational diploma. IMS offers three years of full-time studies in the field of application development, followed by one year of practical training. All the colleges offer students the chance to acquire a vocational baccalaureate, entitling students to a place at the University of Applied Sciences.



Bläsi primary school – one of six in Kleinbasel  
(© Canton of Basel-Stadt)

### Vocational training

Vocational training programmes – or apprenticeships – entail a mix of schoolwork and practical experience. Any young person with a secondary school certificate can apply for a place in a vocational training programme of two to four years. Apprentices are employed by businesses that provide the practical training. State professional colleges provide the schooling. The subjects taught include languages, mathematics and further subjects specific to the trade. The latter are usually taught by specialists. At the end of the apprenticeship, students are awarded either an eidgenössisches Berufsattest (after 2 years) or an eidgenössisches Fähigkeitszeugnis (after 3 or 4 years). Both certificates are recognised throughout Switzerland. There are a number of specialised colleges for all trades that provide further education on all levels. Also, students can complete a vocational baccalaureate course if they want to continue their studies at a University of Applied Sciences.

### Grammar school – Gymnasium

Gymnasium is for students with a strong academic bent who have a P or E certificate and would like to go on to study at university. Selection for a Gymnasium takes place during the final year of secondary school at age 15 and is based on academic grades. Students can also qualify for Gymnasium by taking a voluntary entrance examination. During their four years at Gymnasium, students are prepared for the Matura (A levels/baccalaureate), their ticket to university. Basel has five Gymnasien and while the same basic education is followed in all five schools, which includes languages, mathematics, science, history and geography, each school also offers a different specialisation. Students can specialise in subjects that range from business and law, to ancient languages and science, to modern languages and art and de-

sign. Four of the five schools offer a bilingual Matura for which, in addition to their English classes, certain subjects are studied in English. The IB (International Baccalaureate) Diploma is available at two of the five schools and can be studied in parallel to the Swiss Matura. While German is required to go to a Gymnasium, students with non-native levels of German will receive support if their intellectual ability is strong enough to follow the curriculum. Upon successful completion, pupils are awarded a Swiss baccalaureate certificate, which entitles them to a place at any Swiss university.

## PRIVATE AND INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

A broad range of private schools complement Basel's state school system, among others the international schools and the Rudolf Steiner schools. Tuition fees apply. The private schools cover all stages, from kindergarten to grammar school level. However, not all schools cover all the school years, so it is worth talking to the director of the school you are interested in. The Matura or baccalaureate is taken according to federal regulations. A PDF list of all private schools that are approved by the Canton of Basel-Stadt is available from the schools page of the Canton of Basel-Stadt website at [www.volksschulen.bs.ch/schulen/privatschulen](http://www.volksschulen.bs.ch/schulen/privatschulen).

### International schools

The international schools fulfil the important task of providing internationally recognised school curricula for the children of international families. These schools are very important for a city with so many multinational corporations and such an international workforce. As well as internationally recognised curricula such as the International Baccalaure-

ate (IB), schools may also offer a national curriculum. The latter allows pupils to rejoin the school system once they are back in their home country and normally also integrates many aspects of the host country culture in the school programme.

### **International School Basel**

The International School Basel (ISB) in Reinach offers comprehensive schooling in English. The school also has a crèche. From the age of 3, children can join the pre-school, followed by kindergarten. Students can complete their entire school career at ISB, and take the International Baccalaureate at the age of 18, which opens up access to international universities.

### **Swiss International School**

The Swiss International School (SIS) started in 1999 to cater to the needs of the international community in Basel. The special feature of SIS is the bilingual curriculum from kindergarten to grammar school. Established international curricula are adapted to Switzerland, and children are taught by qualified native English and German speakers. Students are guided towards gaining a Swiss Matura and/or an International Baccalaureate. The curriculum allows children to find their place in a group and to make the transition to education systems in other countries.

### **academia International School**

academia international school offers bilingual German and English education from pre-school to grammar school.

### **Early Learning Association**

ELA is a private primary school based on the English school system. The main teaching language is English. However, German and French are additional languages.

### **Ecole Française**

The roots of the Ecole Française (French School) in Basel date back to the 19th century. Today, it offers a primary school education in French. The school is recognised by the French government and works closely with the Department of Education in Strasbourg. There are secondary schools in Saint-Louis just over the French border, as well as in nearby Village-Neuf and Hegenheim. The nearest French university is situated just 40 km away in Mulhouse.

### **Ecole primaire Les Coquelicots**

A relatively young private school offering bilingual French and German education at pre-school and primary school level. School lunches and after-school care are available. Les Coquelicots also organises day camps during school holidays.

### **SEIS – Schweizerisch-Italienische Primarschule Sandro Pertini**

An Italian all-day primary school recognised by the government of Italy that offers bilingual education at primary school level.

## **UNIVERSITY AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

### **University of Basel**

The University of Basel, founded in 1460, is the oldest university in Switzerland and is consistently ranked among the top 100 universities in the world. Today, around 13,000 students are enrolled at undergraduate level in one of the seven faculties: science, economics, medicine, humanities, law, theology and psychology. The academic focus is on life sciences and cultural studies. As a modern public institution, the university has enjoyed autonomy since 1996 – within the framework of its public service mandate – in the fields of teaching, research and related services. International students are advised to take a German course before enrolling, as most exams and academic papers are written in German.

### **International University Association**

Since 1989, the University of Basel has been part of the University Association Eucor (comprising the five universities along the Upper Rhine at Freiburg in Breisgau, Karlsruhe, Haute-Alsace, Strasbourg and Basel). This enables students to move freely between the different universities. It has also facilitated joint courses, the reciprocal recognition of credits and certificates, the exchange of lecturers, and shared research programmes.

### **University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland**

With 12,000 students and colleges located in Basel, Muttenz, Olten, Brugg-Windisch and Solothurn, the Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz FHNW (University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland) comprises nine departments that cover music, design and art, education, life sciences, technology, architecture, social work, applied psychology and economics. The FHNW, like the University of Basel, is an intercantonal institution subject to public law and with the right to autonomy. Its practice-oriented approach makes it an important partner to society, the economy and culture.

### **A highly qualified workforce**

As providers of well-qualified graduates for local businesses, the University and the FHNW (as well as similar institutions in the surrounding area, such as the Department of Biosystems Science and Engineering run by the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich and the ETH Studio Basel) play a key role in the local economy. Successful companies need highly qualified junior staff. This is particularly the case at

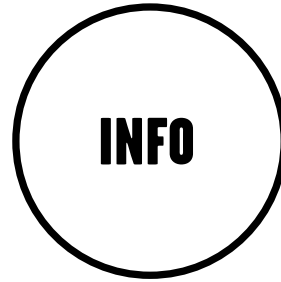
the present time, as many companies are relocating their research activities and headquarters to Basel, and have invested substantial sums in new facilities.

### Higher vocational training

In addition to basic vocational training, various attractive opportunities for continuing education are available to those who have already started working. A tertiary level of continuing education leading to a nationally recognised qualification allows for more in-depth specialisation preparatory to taking up a leadership role. Numerous courses are offered both by state and private vocational schools.



University Basel – a multicultural environment  
(© Universität Basel)



[www.ed.bs.ch/dossiers/neu-in-basel/english](http://www.ed.bs.ch/dossiers/neu-in-basel/english)

Information on the Basel school system for each age group

[www.mb.bs.ch/schulen.html](http://www.mb.bs.ch/schulen.html)

Department of Education Basel-Stadt, information in German on secondary schools, requirements and features

[www.volksschulen.bs.ch/schulen/privatschulen](http://www.volksschulen.bs.ch/schulen/privatschulen)

A list of approved private schools in Basel-Stadt

[www.unibas.ch](http://www.unibas.ch)

University of Basel

[www.fhnw.ch](http://www.fhnw.ch)

University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland

[www.isbasel.ch](http://www.isbasel.ch)

International School Basel

[www.swissinternationalschool.ch](http://www.swissinternationalschool.ch)

Swiss International School Basel

[www.academia-international.ch](http://www.academia-international.ch)

academia International School

[www.earlylearning.ch](http://www.earlylearning.ch)

Early Learning Association

[www.efdb.ch](http://www.efdb.ch)

Ecole Française de Bâle

[www.ecolecoquelicots.ch](http://www.ecolecoquelicots.ch)

Ecole primaire Les Coquelicots



FHNW Campus in Muttenz © FHNW

**[seisbasel.ch](http://seisbasel.ch)**

Schweizerisch-italienische Primarschule  
Sandro Pertini

**[www.swiss-schools.ch](http://www.swiss-schools.ch)**

Swiss Federation of Private Schools

**[www.privatschulenbeiderbasel.ch](http://www.privatschulenbeiderbasel.ch)**

Federation of Private Schools in Basel

**[www.bsse.ethz.ch](http://www.bsse.ethz.ch)**

Department of Biosystems Science  
and Engineering

# CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Children represent the future and, in acknowledgement of their importance, Basel promotes an extensive range of local services for children and families. Under a UNICEF initiative, Basel has been officially recognised as a child-friendly city. The city has invested a great deal into creating care facilities for children of every age and in particular for pre-school age children. Local authorities and employers work together to create family-friendly working conditions.

## THE LITTLE ONES COME OUT ON TOP

### Family-friendly environment

Basel's social policy is child- and family-friendly: the city invests a great deal in day care and is continuously extending its services for families. Basel has an official children's representative and a family representative. Every neighbourhood has a park and several playgrounds, and playing outdoors is made safer through reduced speed limits on certain neighbourhood streets. The Kinderbüro Basel (children's bureau) is an advocate for children's rights. Children and young people benefit from excellent medical and nursing care in the University Children's Hospital. The above are just a few examples of the measures, amenities and facilities available for families, teenagers and children.

### Childcare

New day care centres are continually being added to the existing broad offering, and the Fachstelle Tagesbetreuung provides advice on issues around day care as well as lists of day care facilities and day care families. Basel has day care facilities for children of all ages, starting at 3 months, some of which are bilingual. As schooling is not a full-time activity in Basel, day care facilities offer Tagesstrukturen that provide care for children while their parents are at work. These Tagesstrukturen are available in a variety of modules and cover, among others, lunch and supervised afternoon activities that ensure children have time to do their homework, relax and play. There is also a network of day care families. Parents pay an income-related contribution for part of full-time day care. A number of public institutions, such as the University and some of the big companies in Basel, have also set up their own day care facilities.

### Children and health

The University Children's Hospital, located in the city centre, provides children and teenagers with state-of-the-art medical care. In addition, the Elternberatung Basel-Stadt, a network of advisors for young families that is located in the community centres, answers questions and provides assistance for concerns relating to babies and small children.

### Short and safe routes

In order to give children the freedom to play and move about on their own within their own neighbourhood, there are several playgrounds and at least one park in every neighbourhood. Traffic-calming measures are being introduced on an increasing number of roads to make them safer for children. And there is a Quartiertreffpunkt (community centre) in every neighbourhood that always welcomes families and children.

### Kinderbüro

The Kinderbüro Basel (children's bureau) provides a central contact point for children, adults, authorities and institutions on topics or issues related to children. The aim of the Kinderbüro is to make sure that children are involved in the planning and design of residential districts, to defend their rights and to build a powerful lobby for children.

### Parental education

There is a broad range of courses for parents and families offered by the city. This comprises information evenings, courses, discussions, lectures and seminars given by specialists drawn from a variety of different institutions. The programme is available from the Bereich Jugend, Familie und Sport (Department of Youth, Family and Sport).

### Family counselling

When parents argue or separate, or if parents fail to give their children the necessary support, the Familien- und Erziehungsberatung (Families and Educational Advice Office) arranges psychological support and therapy as well as advice on who to contact next. The office also runs a crisis hotline for children.

### Services for children and young people

Der Kinder- und Jugenddienst (Child and Adolescent Services) provides information, advice and support to children and young people as well as those involved in their care. The wellbeing of the children and young people is central to





**“WHEN I WAS GROWING UP,  
IT WAS NORMAL TO BE DRIVEN  
TO SCHOOL EACH DAY. I LOVE  
THAT MY CHILDREN LIVE IN  
A CITY WHERE IT IS SAFE FOR  
THEM TO WALK TO SCHOOL  
WITH THEIR FRIENDS!  
I SEE HOW THIS IMPORTANT  
FREEDOM CONTRIBUTES  
TO BUILDING UP THEIR CON-  
FIDENCE AND THEIR SENSE  
OF INDEPENDENCE. A TRUE  
LUXURY.”**

Rebecca Hubert Scherler was born in Sri Lanka but lived mostly in the Sultanate of Oman and the UK and works as legal counsel for the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture

the services provided by this office. For parents with very young children who need assistance, there is a centre for early intervention.

## LEISURE ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

### Robi Spielplätze

The four Robi playgrounds offer a special adventure environment for children. The playground has no fixed equipment: the children and educators build their own equipment. The children also help to design the activity programmes organised on the playground. During the summer and autumn vacations the Robi-Spiel-Aktionen association organises day camps and special adventure weeks in Basel and the surrounding area.

### Sport

Basel has a number of indoor and outdoor public swimming pools, two ice-skating rinks in winter, many football pitches and some fifty basketball courts as well as a large number of other sports facilities that are open to children and their parents. Many of the more than 100 sports associations in the region have junior sections. Facilities for particularly popular sports, such as inline skating and skateboarding, are available indoors and outdoors throughout the year. The city's online Sportkalender lists all current activities.

### Youth Organisations

There are several youth organisations providing group activities outdoors: The traditional Boy and Girl Scouts ("Pfadi"), Jubla or Cevi, the equivalent of YMCA/YWCA are all about team spirit and empowerment.

### Culture

Several of the major museums have special programmes with (multilingual) guided tours, theme afternoons and workshops. The following museums are fun for children: the Spielzeug Welten Museum that houses one of the world's largest collection of teddy bears, the Naturhistorisches Museum (natural history museum), the Papiermühle (paper mill), the Antikenmuseum (Museum of Ancient Civilisations), the Museum der Kulturen (Museum of Cultures) and the Museum Tinguely with its moving sculptures as well as the Fondation Beyeler and the Spielzeugmuseum (toy museum) in Riehen.

### Music and the arts

The Musikschule Basel (music school) offers classes where children can learn to play an instrument, sing in a choir or join an ensemble. The K'werk is a school for arts, crafts and design for children and teenagers from 6 to 16. It offers courses and workshops throughout the year as well as during school holidays.

### Theatre and circus

Both the Theater Basel and other playhouses in the region perform plays that are suitable for children – and not only during the Christmas season. The Basler Kindertheater and the Vorstadttheater put on plays for children all year round. In addition, there are a variety of youth circuses in the region, which put on shows mostly during the summer months and in which children can play an active part.

### Cinema

A special film club called Zauberlaterne (magic lantern) invites children aged between 6 and 11 to discover the magical world of cinema. The children watch a film together and discuss it with educators and their peers. Parents are not allowed. Teenagers up to 18 are entitled to a special discount in certain cinemas ("Sackgeld-Kino"). For young adults up to 26, another special rate applies ("Brainstream-Kino").

### Books and games

Libraries run by the non-profit organisation GGG with their multi-media departments for children and teenagers are found throughout the city. Two Ludotheken lend out games and toys. The Interkulturelle Kinder- und Jugendbibliothek (Library for Children and Young People) offers the widest possible variety of children's literature in many languages.



One of Basel's many playgrounds for children  
(© Canton of Basel-Stadt)

## Holiday fun

The Basler Ferienpass (holiday pass) for 6- to 16-year-olds offers a variety of fun, sport and games during the summer holidays in July and August for a flat fee.

## Kinderferienstadt

During the school holidays, fun and discovery are the key words at the Kinderferienstadt (children's holiday city). Organised at various locations in Basel (Schützenmattpark at Easter, Claramatte park in autumn, and in a variety of locations during the 6-week summer holidays starting at the Breitematte), the Kinderferienstadt is an adult-free zone – with the exception of the supervisors. These holiday events offer workshops, circus experience, an introduction to traditional craftsmanship and plenty of sport and fun.

## Colour Key

The Colour Key offers young people between 15 and 25 years a wide variety of leisure opportunities. Members benefit from some 50 free offers – including the zoo, museums and many sporting facilities – and around 200 reduced-entry tickets to parties and concerts.

## JuAr Basel

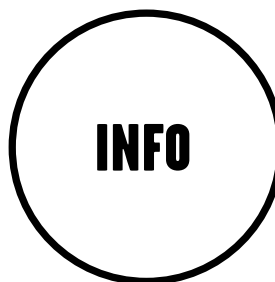
JuAr (JugendArbeit) is a state-subsidised association for adolescents and young people. This association, which also supports the Colour Key, operates several youth centres and local club houses for young people, offering a wide range of fun and craft activities.

## Youth centres

Basel has a well-developed network of youth centres, known as Jugendtreffpunkte. Young people can use the excellent infrastructure and services (games, libraries, Internet, courses, music rooms, parties, etc.) and hang out with friends.

## Familienpass

The Familienpass Region Basel costs CHF 30 per year and provides families with a package of vouchers for reduced entry to museums, the zoo, public swimming pools, ice rinks and the cinema, among others. A regular magazine keeps families up to date on upcoming events. A number of shops also have special offers for members.



### [www.ed.bs.ch](http://www.ed.bs.ch)

Department of Education

### [www.kinder.bs.ch](http://www.kinder.bs.ch)

Information for children provided by the Canton

### [www.jugend.bs.ch](http://www.jugend.bs.ch)

Information for young people provided by the Canton

### [www.familien.bs.ch](http://www.familien.bs.ch)

Information for families provided by the Canton

### [www.sport.bs.ch](http://www.sport.bs.ch)

Information about sport provided by the Canton

### [www.volksschulen.bs.ch/schulen/tagesstrukturen](http://www.volksschulen.bs.ch/schulen/tagesstrukturen)

Information on organised school lunches and afternoon programmes provided by the Department of Education

### [www.tagesbetreuung.bs.ch](http://www.tagesbetreuung.bs.ch)

Information about daycare provided by the Canton

### [www.profawo.ch](http://www.profawo.ch)

Information and advice on child day care for working parents

### [www.familea.ch](http://www.familea.ch)

Website with a listing of pre-school childcare in Basel

### [www.tagesfamilien.org](http://www.tagesfamilien.org)

This organisation helps parents find a day care family for their child

### [www.vereinfuerkinderbetreuung.ch](http://www.vereinfuerkinderbetreuung.ch)

Elternberatung Basel-Stadt – advice and counselling for parents



The Christmas market: children absorbed in decorating gingerbread in the fairytale forest run by the Robi-Spiel-Aktionen association  
(© Canton of Basel-Stadt)

**[www.fabe.ch](http://www.fabe.ch)**

Familien- und Erziehungsberatung  
(Families and Educational Advice Office)

**[www.ukbb.ch](http://www.ukbb.ch)**

University Children's Hospital

**[www.kinderbuero-basel.ch](http://www.kinderbuero-basel.ch)**

The children's bureau – children's rights advocates

**[www.quartiertreffpunktebasel.ch](http://www.quartiertreffpunktebasel.ch)**

Community centres in different neighbourhoods

**[www.kwerk.ch](http://www.kwerk.ch)**

The K'werk offers arts, crafts, and design courses for children and teenagers

**[www.musikschule-basel.ch](http://www.musikschule-basel.ch)**

Basel music school

**[www.familienpass.ch](http://www.familienpass.ch)**

Things to do for families, vouchers for reduced entry, etc.

**[www.basler-ferienpass.ch](http://www.basler-ferienpass.ch)**

Summer fun for 6- to 16-year-olds for a flat fee

**[www.colourkey.ch](http://www.colourkey.ch)**

Colour Key is a card that gives young people access to a vast variety of leisure activities

**[www.baleidoskop.ch](http://www.baleidoskop.ch)**

This website offers ideas for themed walks so that children can explore and experience Basel in a variety of ways

**[www.robi-spiel-aktionen.ch](http://www.robi-spiel-aktionen.ch)**

Robi adventure playgrounds – there are four in the Canton of Basel-Stadt

**[www.baslerkindertheater.ch](http://www.baslerkindertheater.ch)**

Theatre by and for children

**[www.zirkusschulebasel.ch](http://www.zirkusschulebasel.ch)**

Children learn to dance, juggle, or do acrobatics at the circus school

**[www.stadtbibliothekbasel.ch](http://www.stadtbibliothekbasel.ch)**

GGG city library

**[www.jukibu.ch](http://www.jukibu.ch)**

International Library for Children and Young People

# COMMUNITY & CONTACT

As a border city, a centre of commerce and industry and a university town, Basel has always attracted people from other parts of the globe. Basel has a fascinating mix of different cultures and languages, and the city authorities make every effort to ensure that newcomers are welcomed and integrated into the community.

## **GATEWAY TO THE WORLD, GATEWAY TO SWITZERLAND**

### **A cosmopolitan city**

A walk through town is all it takes to see how international Basel is. People from a multitude of different nations live peacefully side by side. Whether they come from just across the border or from further afield, new residents are welcomed with a wide range of support and counselling services as well as practical help.

### **Integration**

The residential and commercial city of Basel-Stadt is shaped by its international character and the effects of immigration. People from around 160 countries live and work here; almost every second marriage is binational. Newcomers and local people alike should be able to enjoy a sense of well-being and attain success in this urban diversity. That is why Basel-Stadt runs an active integration and anti-discrimination policy, which covers all aspects of life.

Newcomers to Basel have a comprehensive network of advisory services and contact points at their fingertips. It goes without saying that anyone committed to achieving personal success and contributing to the development of the canton whilst respecting the constitution and democracy is welcome in Basel-Stadt.

### **Links around the world**

Exchange and business with other parts of the world has always brought new knowledge and technologies into the cities. The university has also contributed to Basel's international reputation over the past several centuries. Today, Basel has links to the whole world due to its role as a transport hub, as a European centre of research and culture, as the headquarters of major international corporations, and as a trade-fair city hosting world-class fairs.

### **Exchange with Massachusetts, Shanghai and Miami Beach**

In 2002 Basel entered a formal partnership with the American State of Massachusetts. Five years later it began a cities partnership with Shanghai. Both relationships focus on cooperation in the realm of life sciences and finance as well as exchanges in education, research and culture. Finally, Basel has worked closely with Miami Beach in connection with the art fair Art Basel Miami Beach since 2002. In 2011, the two cities signed an agreement to further common interests in culture, tourism, business development, and education.

## **FINDING YOUR FEET IN BASEL**

Switzerland has four official languages, and multilingual skills are actively promoted. Children learn French and English at school, and many even choose a third language. About half the people in Basel speak English, almost all younger people do. Despite this linguistic diversity, a basic knowledge of German makes day-to-day life much easier for newcomers.

### **Learning German**

While most Swiss speak English, they also appreciate every effort that newcomers make to speak German or even Swiss German. There is no shortage of language schools in Basel that cater to every age, level and need in either group or individual lessons. Many newcomers who have been issued with a B permit also receive a voucher for free German lessons. This is provided by the Einwohneramt (Residents' Registration Office) when newcomers register in Basel. The voucher covers a total of 80 lessons that must be used during the first 12 months after arriving.



**“WITH PUPILS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, THE RANGE OF EXPERIENCE IN TERMS OF BACKGROUND AND CULTURE IS VERY BROAD. IT LEADS TO BOTH CHALLENGING DISCUSSIONS AND TRULY MAGIC MOMENTS WHEN THEY GET TALKING TO EACH OTHER.”**

Roman Schuler comes from Germany  
and is a teacher at Theobald Baerwart Secondary School in Basel





Basel clubs and associations, like the carnival cliques, help expats to meet people and make friends (© Canton of Basel-Stadt)

### Getting to know people

An important aspect of integration at the personal level is getting to know people and making friends. Understanding how the culture works in Switzerland is invaluable towards getting to know Swiss people on their own terms. The GGG, a Basel non-profit association, offers regular “Typically Swiss” evenings to help foreigners understand how the Swiss tick and Swiss values in general.

The Swiss are fans of clubs and associations and much of their leisure time is enjoyed through group activities. There are groups for virtually every activity from neighbourhood or political groups, through mountain biking and pipes and drums, to flamenco and paintballing. A quick look at the [my.basel.ch](http://my.basel.ch) entry for Vereine (associations) brings up well over 400 entries. The easiest way to start getting to know Swiss people is most likely through a shared interest that can be enjoyed together.

### Neighbourhood Associations

Neighbourhood associations are a good place to start if you are looking to meet the locals. There are 16 of them, in virtually every neighbourhood of the canton. Over 5,000 members help organise events in their neighbourhood – from farmers’ or christmas markets to flea markets, public bookshelves or workshops on any topic of interest to the people in the neighbourhood. The associations are also an important link to the government and authorities. They actively participate in hearings and other forms of participation. Neighbourhood associations are politically neutral and open to everybody.

## THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY

### In good company

At present, there are thousands of people with English as their native language living in the Basel area. Thousands more speak English at work every day, especially in the international corporations such as Novartis, Roche, Syngenta, Lonza Group, BASF, Bank for International Settlements, UBS and Credit Suisse. Every year, more newcomers from English-speaking countries arrive in Basel.

### English-speaking organisations

Centrepoint is a popular helpdesk for English-speaking newcomers and plays a key role in the social life of the international community. A library, an information centre and several other initiatives help newcomers to get settled in Basel and meet new friends. As Centrepoint is run by volunteers who have for the most part spent many years in Basel, it is an excellent source of support. Other English-speaking clubs in Basel include BaselConnect, which promotes collaboration between expats and locals, the Anglo-Swiss Club, the Professional Women’s Group of Basel, the Semi-Circle Theatre Group, Toastmasters, the Open Door, the Basel Children’s Trust and the American Women’s Club. These associations not only provide a forum for English speakers, but also promote a wide variety of social activities and cultural traditions.

### English-speaking denominations

There are three English-speaking parishes in Basel: the Anglican Church, the Crossroads International Church of Basel, and the English-speaking Roman Catholic Community of Basel. They have an active parish life and hold their services each Sunday in various partner chapels and churches. The Liberal Jewish Congregation, Migwan, has many English-speaking members. Services are often held in English, and Migwan offers religious education for English-speaking children. The Basler Muslim Kommission is the umbrella association for Muslim communities in the Basel area.

## ENGLISH LIFE IN BASEL

### English-language theatre

The large Musical Theatre regularly stages major productions from London and Broadway – mostly with the original score. There are also English-language amateur theatre groups, which include both expatriates and Swiss actors in their casts: the Semi-Circle Theatre, the Gay Beggars, Upstart Entertainment, and the English Panto Group.

## Film and video

At cinemas in Switzerland, most international films are shown in the original language, generally with German and French subtitles. Films can be borrowed from most public libraries. In addition, Centrepoint has a large English DVD library.

## Radio, TV and newspapers

CNN and CNBC, BBC World, BBC Entertainment and Eurosport, NBC Europe and TCM & Cartoon Network are all broadcast on cable TV. Additional channels can be received via digital networks. Basel-based Radio X has a special weekly programme in English for the international community, and Local.ch and Swissinfo.ch provide Swiss news in English online. A variety of English newspapers and magazines are available at kiosks throughout the city. The various English organisations provide their members with information via their own newsletters and websites.

## Libraries

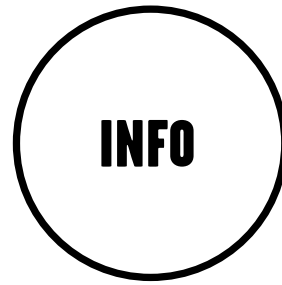
English books are available in a number of libraries – including the University library, which is free of charge, as well as the American Women's Club library on the premises of Centrepoint, the GGG libraries, and the Allgemeine Lesegesellschaft (Public Reading Society) on Münsterplatz. The intercultural library for children and young people – JUKIBU – provides books in more than 50 languages, one of which is English. Many specialist bookstores also have departments for English books and literature.

## Pubs

In addition to a rich variety of international restaurants, there are also many pubs in which a cool Guinness, Bud or Foster's can be enjoyed or where a round of darts can be played.



Young expats walking by the Basel town hall  
(© Canton of Basel-Stadt)



### [www.basel.ch](http://www.basel.ch)

Official website with everything you need to know about Basel

### [www.swissinfo.ch](http://www.swissinfo.ch)

Comprehensive news and information portal, containing a large number of contributions, including audio and video

### [www.thelocal.ch](http://www.thelocal.ch)

Swiss news in English

### [www.ggg-migration.ch](http://www.ggg-migration.ch)

Consultations for foreigners offered in 14 languages

### [www.inforel.ch](http://www.inforel.ch)

Information on religious communities in the Basel area

### [ch.usembassy.gov](http://ch.usembassy.gov)

The U.S. embassy in Switzerland provides extensive information about life in the USA and in Switzerland

### [www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-berne](http://www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-berne)

The British embassy in Switzerland provides extensive information about life in Great Britain and Switzerland

### [www.konferenz-nqv.ch](http://www.konferenz-nqv.ch)

List of all neighbourhood associations in Basel

### [www.jukibu.ch](http://www.jukibu.ch)

Intercultural library for children and young people



Basel pubs are great for enjoying some downtime (© Canton of Basel-Stadt)

## ENGLISH-SPEAKING ASSOCIATIONS

### [www.centrepoin.ch](http://www.centrepoin.ch)

Centrepoin – the largest organisation for the international community in Basel, with many links to other English-language organisations in the Basel region

### [www.baselconnect.ch](http://www.baselconnect.ch)

BaselConnect brings locals and expats together to learn from each other

### [www.pwg-basel.ch](http://www.pwg-basel.ch)

The Professional Women's Group is an English-speaking networking group for women from all cultural and professional backgrounds

# VIBRANT BASEL

Carnival in the spring, the Basel Tattoo, Rhine swimming and open-air concerts in the summer, the Basler Herbstmesse (Autumn Fair) and Swiss Indoors Basel in autumn, the Christmas markets and New Year's Eve fireworks at the end of the year: Basel offers great cultural moments and sporting highlights, year in, year out.

## THE START OF THE YEAR

### World-class showjumping

Along with up to 6,000 spectators, the world's best showjumpers gather in Basel to compete for world rankings and impressive prize money at the Longines CSI in St. Jakobshalle.

### Museumsnacht

A tradition of recent origin is the Museumsnacht (Museum Night), which is held in January. On this special occasion, the majority of the city's 40 museums keep their doors open well into the night. It is a hugely popular event, where visitors are treated to special shows, performances, concerts and culinary delights until the early hours of the morning.

### Vogel Gryff

This Kleinbasel festival that takes place in January on the north side of the Rhine marks the start of the carnival season. The so-called Vogel Gryff (Eagle), the Lion and the Wild Man are the heraldic symbols of the three Honorary Societies of Kleinbasel. At about 11 am, the Wild Man boards a raft. Floating down the Rhine, he pays homage to Kleinbasel with a special dance. Below the Mittlere Brücke he is met by the Vogel Gryff and the Lion. The three heraldic symbols then parade through the streets of Kleinbasel, pausing now and then to perform their dances. The ritual originates from military inspections and has been tradition since 1838.

## CARNIVAL

### Highlight of the year

Fasnacht or carnival arrives between mid-February and the beginning of March to drive out the winter. Etymologically, the word derives from the days of fasting just before Lent. For many people in Basel, carnival is the absolute highlight of the year; for three whole days, the town is turned upside down. In December 2017, Basel's Fasnacht was added to the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO.

### The run-up to the carnival season

Several weeks before the actual Fasnacht, pre-carnival events – such as Drummeli and Charivari – start getting people in the mood, combining theatre and performance with the traditional music of Fasnacht. The familiar tunes, masks and costumes contribute to the growing sense of excitement and anticipation.

### The three wild days

It all begins on a Monday at four o'clock in the morning: all the lights in the city centre go out, only the big lanterns of the carnival groups penetrate the darkness. The city vibrates with the sound of drums and pipes, thousands of spectators fill the streets, dozens of cellars in the old city centre are turned into cosy bars.

For three days, the city abandons itself to revelry – accompanied by the sound of thousands of piccolos and drums. The carnival groups, known as cliques, march through the streets of Basel. Their masks, costumes and lanterns express a satirical take on themes that were hotly debated in Basel during the preceding year. It is a time of irony and humour, many renowned artists and writers contribute to the images and characters on display. On Monday and Wednesday, Schnitzelbank singers play their satirical songs in the restaurants and bars. In addition to the cliques (carnival groups), Guggemusiken (boisterous brass bands) parade the streets. Tuesday afternoon belongs to the children, and in the evening, the big concert of all the Guggemusiken takes place on Marktplatz. During these three days, it seems that Basel might burst at its seams.



**“THERE’S ALWAYS SO MUCH GOING ON, LIKE THE HERBST-MESSE WITH ITS FAIRGROUND RIDES AND ATTRACTIONS. AND I LOVE HOW FASNACHT TAKES OVER THE CITY, AND THE STREETS ARE AWASH WITH PROCESSIONS, MUSIC, CONFETTI AND POLITICAL SATIRE. OR ART BASEL, WHEN THE PLACE FEELS LIKE THE EPICENTRE OF THE GLOBAL ART WORLD. PLENTY TO KEEP YOU OCCUPIED – AND AMUSED!”**

Ryan Banerjee comes from Lewes in the United Kingdom and is a senior economist at the Bank for International Settlements



Art Basel, the most significant fair for contemporary and modern art worldwide (© Art Basel)

### Culinary delights

Whatever your feelings about Fasnacht, you should enjoy the seasonal specialties: Fastenwähen, a kind of soft pretzel with cumin, the tender and sweet fried Fasnachtskiechli, flour soup and onion pie.

## SPRING DELIGHTS

### City life

As spring arrives, the pulse of the city quickens. The restaurants put out their chairs and tables on the pavements and patios. In May, the open-air swimming pools open their doors, and in June, the Swiss circus Knie sets up its massive marquee on the grounds of the exhibition area. The last theatre, opera and ballet premieres of the season are staged.

### Yonex Swiss Open

Held in Basel since 1991, this international tournament takes place each year in March and attracts the world's best badminton players.

### BASELWORLD – the watch and jewellery show

Glitter, sparkle, dazzle: One of the world's most important specialist trade fairs for the international watch and jewellery industry is staged in early spring. Swiss and international prestige brands display their glamorous collections in the trade fair halls, and tens of thousands of visitors ensure that all hotels within a radius of 250 kilometres are fully booked.

### Jazzfestival Basel

Celebrated international jazz musicians perform at a variety of locations throughout Basel in April or May. In recent years, the festival programme has been steadily expanded.

### Fantasy Basel – The Swiss Comic Con

Switzerland's biggest convention for pop culture provides three days of pure fantasy in the world of cinema films, TV shows, games, eSports, comics, cosplay, contemporary urban art, game design, anime, sci-fi, fantasy, virtual reality, manga, steampunk, tattoo art, board games, tabletop games, the latest consumer electronics and more.

### European Festival of Youth Choirs Basel

The European Festival of Youth Choirs Basel takes place every two years during the Ascension holidays. First held in 1992, it has now become firmly established and, with more than 22,000 visitors, has become an integral part of the cultural life of Basel and the region. The festival focuses on interaction. Choirs representing a broad musical and cultural spectrum of European choir singing can be seen in more than 25 large and smaller concerts in Basel and the region.

### Young Stage – International Circus Festival

Both a festival and a competition, where young professional artists from all over the world present their work in the field of contemporary circus and audiences get to enjoy the next generation of circus acts.

### Dreiländerlauf

An immensely popular trilateral running event in May that starts at Marktplatz in Switzerland and takes participants on a circuit through France and Germany.

### Art Basel – the world's leading art fair

Art Basel, the international art show for 20th- and 21st-century art, is universally acknowledged to be the world's most important art fair. Over 300 carefully selected exhibitors turn the exhibition into an exceptional temporary museum. Art

Basel is a colourful and confident statement in favour of artists, dealers and collectors. Many smaller exhibitions including Scope and Rhy Art for emerging contemporary art, along with special shows and parties are held during the week of the fair. The Art Parcours takes visitors on an artistic exploration of the city.

### **LISTE – the young art fair**

Art Basel is for established art; 'LISTE – the young art fair' aims to show newer and bolder art to a younger audience. It has grown to be just as international as its big sister and is an integral part of the whole Art week. This also goes for several other fairs and shows, where local artists can exhibit their work, too.

## **SUMMERTIME – HOLIDAY SEASON**

### **Basel at its most attractive**

At the end of June, schoolchildren pack away their books and rucksacks because the six-week school vacation has arrived. It is quieter in the city, but there are many tourists now. Basel reveals its charms – and lives up to its reputation as the southernmost city north of the Alps. Social life gravitates towards the parks, the many restaurants with gardens and the banks of the river Rhine. Now there is time for cycle rides out to the canals in Alsace, the cool Black Forest or the wilder plains of the Jura.

### **Summerblues festival**

This open-air festival in various locations in Kleinbasel attracts thousands of blues fans from far and wide every year, just before the start of the summer holidays.

### **Stimmen-Festival**

Another top event every summer is the Stimmenfestival (Festival of Voices), staged just over the border in the German town of Lörrach as well as in several other locations on both sides of the border. The widest possible variety of bands, orchestras, and international stars perform with the most versatile of all instruments – the human voice. The open-air concerts have featured stars such as Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen, Pink and Juanes. However, up-and-coming talent as well as established stars on the world music scene appear regularly.

### **Basel Tattoo**

The Basel Tattoo is unique in Switzerland, and it is the second-largest event of its kind in the world. Every summer, the best bands from around the world present music of every genre from marching music through rock and folk to classical. This is combined with elaborately choreographed march sequences and a marvellous colour and light show that takes place against the magnificent backdrop of the Kaserne Basel.



Fireworks at the Swiss national day festivities on the Rhine  
(© Canton of Basel-Stadt)

### **IMFLUSS Festival on the Rhine**

In recent years the city has invented a new forum to take advantage of the long summer days: the IMFLUSS Festival on the Rhine. For two weeks, Swiss bands play on a floating stage on the river, while the audience enjoys a drink on the banks of the Rhine. All the concerts are free.

### **Swiss national day celebrations on the Rhine**

The Swiss national day also falls within the holiday period on 1st August. In Basel, celebrations actually begin the day before: over 100,000 people come to watch the water sports events on the Rhine, visit the festival stands along the banks of the river and on the Mittlere Brücke, and admire the magnificent fireworks display at night. On August 1st, the official celebration is held on Bruderholz.

### **The annual Rhine swim**

People swim in the Rhine all summer long but once a year, in August, the official Basler Rheinschwimmen takes place. Thousands of swimmers float downstream at a leisurely pace while holding on to colourful swimming bags that they use as floats.

### **Polyfon Festival Basel**

The Kasernenhof turns into an impressive concert arena for three whole days, welcoming top acts from Switzerland and abroad. Free afternoon concerts and a lively programme of side events ensure a great festival atmosphere for young and old alike.



### Em Bebbi sy Jazz

The end of the school vacation is marked by the traditional jazz festival Em Bebbi sy Jazz. The festival is staged at a variety of open-air venues in the heart of the city. The fabulous atmosphere is enjoyed by tens of thousands of visitors.

### Theaterfestival Basel

Theatre, dance, nouveau cirque and everything in between is offered at this two-week festival that is held every two years. Guest companies range from the established and highly regarded to the new and upcoming.

### Youth Culture Festival Basel (Jugendkulturfestival Basel)

At the Jugendkulturfestival (JKF) the very young take over the city for a whole weekend every second year. On a number of stages, young bands and dance groups show what they have learned in weeks of practice. The JKF offers young people a platform to show off their creative energy.

### slowUp Basel-Dreiland

On one day in the year, between 10 am and 5 pm, a network of around 70 km of roads in Basel and neighbouring France and Germany are closed to cars. Cyclists, inline skaters and people using non-motorised transport come out in droves to enjoy the freedom of the road.

## LATE SUMMER – FESTIVAL SEASON

### Open-air cinemas

In the summer, there are open-air screens everywhere – in parks, on castle grounds and by the swimming pool. The main event is Allianz Open-Air Cinema, which shows blockbuster movies on the Münsterplatz over three weeks in July and August. There are also special nights, premieres and previews. The Neues Kino screens older films on the roof terrace of an old corn silo in the Swiss Rhine Ports (Kino auf der Siloterrasse).



Basel Autumn Fair, Switzerland's oldest and biggest funfair and market (© Canton of Basel-Stadt)

### City, street and neighbourhood festivals

From mid-August to the end of September, Basel hosts a whole series of festivals in quick succession: the Klosterbergfest near the train station, big events on Barfüsserplatz or on the banks of the Rhine – there is something going on almost every weekend. Finally, community events in the neighbourhoods and parishes draw people outdoors to enjoy the last of the warm season. Residential streets are blocked to traffic, so that neighbours and friends can meet, and children play on the streets.

### Start of the football season

From July to December, the top clubs of the Swiss Super League play the first half of the season. The second half starts in January and is played through to May. As Basel's football (soccer) team, FCB, is one of the country's top teams, its home matches are major local events, attended by over 30,000 spectators. The atmosphere in St. Jakob-Park is quite unique. Even international clubs are impressed when they play against FCB on an international level.

### Major concerts and international sporting events

Open-air concerts are regularly staged at the multipurpose St. Jakob-Park football stadium. Over the years, many international rock bands and pop groups have played in Basel. Apart from concerts, Basel also regularly hosts many international sporting championships.

## AN AUTUMN FULL OF CULTURE AND SPORT

### Herbstmesse

The Basler Herbstmesse (autumn fair) is a very old tradition that goes back to 1471. It is the biggest event in Switzerland for market traders and fairground operators. Over a period of two weeks in late October, bright lights and enticing aromas infuse the city's various funfair sites.

### Swiss Indoors Basel

In October, the attention of tennis fans around the world turns to the St. Jakobshalle in Basel, when the international Swiss Indoors Basel tennis competition is staged for the top players on the men's circuit.

### Baloise Session – pop, blues and soul

Late autumn provides a highlight for fans of smooth music in a club setting: 'The Baloise Session' is staged at the Exhibition Centre. Whether it be the Supremes or the Temptations, Lo & Leduc or Amy Macdonald, George Ezra or Reamonn – the great names of the blues, jazz and soul world are joined by singer-songwriters and hip-hop stars in Basel.



Enjoy the festive ambiance, food and gift ideas of Basel's Christmas market © Canton of Basel-Stadt

## Christmas in Basel

At the end of November, a unique and festive atmosphere takes over the city. Thousands of fairy lights and beautifully decorated Christmas trees are an invitation to enjoy an evening of Christmas shopping and strolling. The Christmas markets on Barfüsserplatz and Münsterplatz, where arts and crafts and many culinary delicacies are offered for sale, are a veritable feast for the senses.

## New Year's Eve on the Münsterplatz

To the festive sound of trumpets and trombones and before a spectacular display of fireworks on the Rhine, people gather on the Münsterplatz (cathedral square) to see out the old year and welcome in the new. Bring your own glasses and champagne to raise a toast with everybody else.

## Start of the theatre and concert season

In September, the Theater Basel (with theatre, ballet and opera), the Musical Theatre, concert organisers and numerous small theatres open for a new season. New productions are staged on a weekly basis, as well as regular guest performances. At the same time, the museums and the city's galleries start their new exhibitions. The theatre season runs until June.

## Culturescapes

Held every two years, through concerts, discussions, readings and theatre this festival gives audiences deeper insight into the current cultural and creative activities of a selected country, city or region.

## WINTER – SPORTS EVENTS AND CHRISTMAS CHEER

### International literature festival

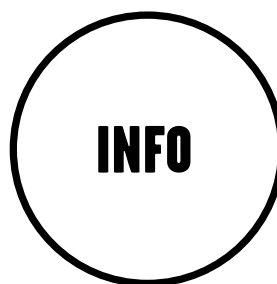
As winter approaches and the days become shorter, curling up with a book in the evening becomes a very welcome option. The Literaturfestival BuchBasel provides food for thought with readings in different languages on a broad range of themes and literature from all over the world at many different locations throughout the city.

### Mirabaud BaselHead Regatta

Mirabaud BaselHead Regatta is Switzerland's biggest eights rowing event and the largest international sporting competition held on the Rhine.

### Basel City Run

The traditional Basler Stadtlauf (Basel City Run) is held on the last weekend of November. Young and old alike compete along a route that takes them through the attractively decorated and often chilly city centre.



### [www.basel.ch](http://www.basel.ch)

Official Basel website with everything you need to know about the city

### [www.basel.com](http://www.basel.com)

Website of Basel Tourism

### [www.programmzeitung.ch](http://www.programmzeitung.ch)

Calendar of events

### [www.museenbasel.ch](http://www.museenbasel.ch)

Official website of Basel's museums

### [www.csi-basel.ch](http://www.csi-basel.ch)

World-class showjumping

### [www.museumsnacht.ch](http://www.museumsnacht.ch)

For one night a year, all the museums are open and offer a special programme

### [www.fasnacht.ch](http://www.fasnacht.ch)

All about the Basel carnival

### [www.swissopen.com](http://www.swissopen.com)

Badminton Swiss Open

**[www.baselworld.com](http://www.baselworld.com)**

Watch and jewellery show in Basel

**[www.offbeat-concert.ch](http://www.offbeat-concert.ch)**

Offbeat jazz festival Basel

**[www.fantasybasel.ch](http://www.fantasybasel.ch)**

The festival for movie, games, cosplay and comic fans

**[www.young-stage.com](http://www.young-stage.com)**

Annual circus festival and competition for young performers

**[www.3laenderlauf.org](http://www.3laenderlauf.org)**

Running event with a route that goes through Switzerland, France and Germany

**[www.artbasel.ch](http://www.artbasel.ch)**

Art Basel, the world's leading art show

**[scope-art.com](http://scope-art.com)**

Show for contemporary and multidisciplinary art held during Art Basel

**[www.rhy-art.com](http://www.rhy-art.com)**

Contemporary-art show

**[www.voltashow.com](http://www.voltashow.com)**

Platform for contemporary-art galleries held during Art Basel

**[www.liste.ch](http://www.liste.ch)**

Exposition for young artists

**[www.summerblues.ch](http://www.summerblues.ch)**

Open-air blues festival in Kleinbasel

**[www.stimmen.com](http://www.stimmen.com)**

Stimmenfestival in Lörrach

**[www.baseltattoo.ch](http://www.baseltattoo.ch)**

Basel Tattoo

**[www.embebbisyjazz.ch](http://www.embebbisyjazz.ch)**

Open-air jazz festival

**[www.imfluss.ch](http://www.imfluss.ch)**

Concerts on a floating stage on the Rhine

**[www.theaterfestival.ch](http://www.theaterfestival.ch)**

Biennial Theaterfestival Basel

**[www.jkf.ch](http://www.jkf.ch)**

Jugendkulturfestival (Youth Culture Festival)

**[slowup.basel-dreiland.ch](http://slowup.basel-dreiland.ch)**

Car-free Sunday

**[www.allianzcinema.ch](http://www.allianzcinema.ch)**

Open-air cinema on Basel's Münsterplatz

**[www.bscene.ch](http://www.bscene.ch)**

Local music scene

**[www.polyfon.ch](http://www.polyfon.ch)**

Three-day music festival

**[www.wildwuchs.ch](http://www.wildwuchs.ch)**

Theatre projects for and by people with disabilities

**[www.fcb.ch](http://www.fcb.ch)**

Official website of Basel's football club

**[www.swissindoorsbasel.ch](http://www.swissindoorsbasel.ch)**

ATP Tennis tournament

**[www.baloisesession.ch](http://www.baloisesession.ch)**

Baloise Session Basel, pop, blues and soul festival

**[www.musical.ch](http://www.musical.ch)**

Musical and concert house

**[www.theater-basel.ch](http://www.theater-basel.ch)**

Basel's theatre and opera house

**[www.culturescapes.ch](http://www.culturescapes.ch)**

A biennial festival dedicated to a city, region or country

**[www.buchbasel.ch](http://www.buchbasel.ch)**

Festival of books and literature in Basel

**[www.stadtlauf.ch](http://www.stadtlauf.ch)**

Basel City Run, the biggest running event of the region

**[www.baselhead.org](http://www.baselhead.org)**

International eights regatta on the Rhine

**[www.baslerweihnacht.ch](http://www.baslerweihnacht.ch)**

All about the Christmas markets and the special events of the season

**[www.herbstmesse.ch](http://www.herbstmesse.ch)**

Basler Herbstmesse – the largest and oldest amusement fair in Switzerland

# ARTS & CULTURE

Known widely as the ‘cultural capital of Switzerland’, Basel lives and breathes culture, promoting and celebrating the arts. Despite its small size, Basel has an exceptional cultural offering with more museums per square kilometre than any other European city. Many of its institutions and events enjoy an international reputation, such as the Fondation Beyeler, Kunstmuseum Basel (Museum of Fine Arts) and Art Basel, the world’s leading fair for contemporary art.

## CITY OF THE ARTS

### A centuries-long tradition

Basel’s tradition as a city of culture extends back many centuries. In 1661 the city acquired the art collection of the celebrated scholar Basilius Amerbach. It became the first city in Europe to open its collections to the public. To this day, these works form the core of the Kunstmuseum Basel (Museum of Fine Arts). In addition to old masters, the museum also boasts many important contemporary works. In 1919 Basel was the first canton to set up a special annual fund to acquire further works of art. Today, the sum spent on culture in Basel per capita is the highest in Switzerland. This official appreciation of the arts has shaped the people’s understanding of art. For example, in a referendum in 1967, the people agreed to buy works by Picasso. The painter was so impressed with this vote that he donated more of his works to the city.

### Patronage of the arts

Private patronage also has a long tradition in Basel. Over the years, many private foundations have been set up, making possible top international venues such as the Fondation Beyeler, Schaulager and the new Schauspielhaus of the Theater Basel. The Christoph Merian Foundation, for example, plays a major role in the cultural life of the city, providing several million Swiss francs every year for cultural and social projects.

### The beginnings

A number of developments have made Basel the city of culture that it is today. As a diocesan city, religious life played a key role. As the city of the great Church Council in the 15th century, Basel was the intellectual centre of Europe for a while. As a university city, it has produced mathematicians such as Leonhard Euler and the Bernoulli family, and attracted great thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Jaspers and Karl Barth. As a city of printing and publishing, it became an important platform for humanism, and was for many years the home of Erasmus of Rotterdam.



“Woyzeck”, staged by Ulrich Rasche, at the award-winning Theater Basel (© Sandra Then)



**“WHAT I LOVE IS THE DIVERSITY OF BASEL’S CULTURAL OFFERING. I EXPERIENCE IT IN MY WORK, WHERE I PLAY EVERYTHING FROM OPERA THROUGH TRADITIONAL CONCERTS AND CHAMBER MUSIC TO CONCERTS FOR CHILDREN, PICNICS AND POPULAR MUSIC. I ENJOY THE SAME DIVERSITY AS A ‘CONSUMER’ IN THE ABUNDANCE OF MUSIC, THEATRE, DANCE, CINEMA, AND FAIRS ON OFFER.”**

Ofir Shner-Alon comes from the Galilee in Israel  
and is a violinist in the Basel Symphony Orchestra

## MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

### 40 museums on 37 km<sup>2</sup>

Basel is very proud of its many museums. No other European city has so many top museums in such a small space. 37 square kilometres for about 40 museums! The collections cover a wide range of interests, but are mainly focused on fine art.

### Art lover's paradise

The Kunstmuseum Basel (Museum of Fine Arts) has an outstanding collection that includes works by the Holbein family, paintings by Basel-born Arnold Böcklin as well as modern classics. In 2013, the London-based newspaper *The Times* ranked the Kunstmuseum Basel as the fifth-best museum worldwide. Next to the Kunstmuseum Basel, four other state-run museums set the standard for many international museums with regard to research and education: the Historisches Museum Basel (History Museum), the Museum der Kulturen (Museum of Cultures), the Antikenmuseum Basel (Museum of Ancient Civilisations) and the Naturhistorisches Museum Basel (Museum of Natural History). Over the last two decades, some private institutions such as the Fondation Beyeler (1997), the Tinguely Museum (1996) and the Schaulager (2003) have made Basel even more attractive to the general public. The Fondation Beyeler in particular, which is located in Riehen, attracts international attention with special exhibitions and its unique collection of modern art. Another pioneering museum is the Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein, just across the border in Germany.

## ART IS EVERYWHERE

### The quaint and the curious

Basel's many smaller, quirky and often quite humorous museums that harbour real treasures and intriguing little bits and pieces should not be forgotten. The Pharmazie-Historisches Museum (Museum of Pharmaceutical History) hosts a large collection of items – often mysterious and sometimes bizarre. The oldest exhibit of the Anatomisches Museum Basel (Museum of Anatomy) is a skeleton dating from 1543. The Cartoon Museum shows collections of satirical drawings and cartoons, and the Spielzeug Welten Museum (Toy Worlds Museum) is home to the world's largest collection of teddy bears.

### Art fairs

Art is traditionally held in high regard in Basel. And not only museums, artist-run spaces and galleries show a wide range of art; artists from Basel display their work at the annual *Regionale*. The highlight of the art scene is, of course, Art Basel, the most significant fair for modern and contemporary art worldwide. In 1996, it was joined by the *Liste* for the upcoming generation of artists, which in turn has spawned many additional shows, smaller fairs and parties that turn Basel into an exclusive city of art over four days every year in June.

### Public art

Art is also displayed in public places: Jonathan Borofsky's 'Hammering Man', a steel and aluminium giant of 13.4 metres, works tirelessly on Aeschenplatz, right in front of the UBS building. The sculpture stands for all those who work towards creating a safe environment that is worth living in. Another notable work is Richard Serra's massive sculpture 'Intersection' on Theaterplatz and, just next to it, is the fountain by Jean Tinguely with its playful, provocative and melancholy water-spraying sculptures. Sculptures and murals are part of Basel's urban space, and are well looked after.



The striking new wing of the Kunstmuseum Basel  
(© Canton of Basel-Stadt)



The Schauspielhaus – part of Theater Basel's extensive cultural offering  
 (© Canton of Basel-Stadt)

## THEATRE

### Theater Basel

The Theater Basel is the centrepiece of theatre life in Basel with some 30 productions each year. It is the largest theatre in Switzerland to stage opera, drama and ballet. It has been distinguished with various international awards, and was most recently named Theatre of the Year 2018 by the magazine Theater Heute. It was joined in 2002 by the new Schauspielhaus, which was financed in great part by the donations raised by a group of women with a great love of theatre: 'Ladies First'.

### Fringe theatres

There are around 25 other theatres of various sizes in Basel. Among them several children's and young people's theatres, such as the Junges Theater Basel, the dialect theatres of the Fauteuil and Hübse theatres, the Basler Marionetten-Theater (puppet theatre), the Vorstadt-Theater and a whole range of basement and itinerant theatre groups. Large events are regularly staged at the Musical Theater Basel.

### Guest performances

In addition to its own productions, the Theater Basel regularly invites foreign theatre companies for guest performances. This is also the case for the Kaserne Basel that hosts leading independent international companies from Europe and beyond, the Musical Theater Basel, where large shows ranging from classical through Beatles tributes to Japanese drumming are presented on the 900 m<sup>2</sup> stage.

## MUSIC

### Classical music

The Stadtcasino is at the heart of the classical music scene in Basel. It was built in 1876 and has excellent acoustics for all kinds of music. In addition to top local orchestras and chamber groups, including the Basel Symphony Orchestra, the Sinfonietta and the Basel Chamber Orchestra, international orchestras and soloists also regularly perform here. Having undergone extensive rebuilding and upgrading by star architects Herzog & de Meuron, the Stadtcasino is scheduled to reopen in 2020. The Musikakademie (College of Music) has an excellent reputation and runs its own concert hall in which prestigious orchestras as well as smaller ensembles appear. The Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel is home to one of the largest collections of historic autographs, including works by Stravinsky.

### Jazz, rock and pop

There are several jazz clubs in Basel, such as 'the bird's eye jazz club', and there is also a series of festivals featuring all styles, from Dixie to swing and avant-garde jazz. Concerts by local artists and international guests are also on the menu at the Jazzcampus Basel, a part of the city's Musikakademie, at its new location in Kleinbasel. For lovers of rock and pop music, concerts are organised at several venues in the inner city, for example at the Kaserne (the former military barracks in Kleinbasel), the Volkshaus and the Sommerca-



sino. DJs and bands also appear in clubs, such as the Schiff in the Swiss Rhine Ports. Large events with up to 50,000 people are hosted at the St. Jakob-Park stadium or the recently renovated St. Jakobshalle.

### Music festivals

Festivals in Basel offer opportunities for encounters with stars and up-and-coming artists from every musical genre. While classical and jazz festivals are held mainly indoors, rock and pop bands like to play outdoors, and the city becomes their stage. One of the highlights is the international crossover Stimmenfestival in Lörrach, Germany: the top acts perform on the central Marktplatz, while choirs and folk bands from all over the world play in a more intimate setting in the parks and smaller clubs of the region. During one weekend every spring, the festival Bscene celebrates the local and national music scene, turning restaurants and bars into music clubs. The Baloise Session (formerly AVO Session) has been going strong for three decades, and brings international stars like Sir Elton John, Zucchero or Pink to Basel. At the biennial Jugendkulturfestival, young bands and dance groups show what they have achieved in weeks of practice. The European Festival of Youth Choirs Basel takes place every other year in May.

The Basel Tattoo is unique in Switzerland, and is the second-largest event of its kind in the world. Every summer, the best bands from around the world present music of every genre from marching music through rock and folk to classical. This is combined with elaborately choreographed march sequences and a marvellous colour and light show that takes place against the magnificent backdrop of the Kaserne Basel.

Novartis Campus administrative offices in Basel  
by Frank O. Gehry (© Novartis)



The best of live music at the unique open-air event "Im Fluss"  
(© Im Fluss)

## ART EDUCATION AND NEW MEDIA

### Collected, traded, taught, researched

Art is not just collected, traded and produced in Basel, it is also taught, applied and researched. The Schule für Gestaltung Basel (School of Design) and the Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst (College of Art and Design) position themselves at the forefront of graphic design. With HyperWerk, the department for electronic media, the college has gained an international reputation. There is also a gallery for electronic art and media, the Haus der Elektronischen Künste HeK (House of Electronic Arts) that is dedicated to digital culture and the new art forms of the information age. HeK shows contemporary art that explores and configures new technologies.

## ARCHITECTURE

### Highlights

Contemporary architecture is one of Basel's trademarks. The city's unique density of architectural works of art by Zaha Hadid, Renzo Piano, Frank O. Gehry, and many more draws visitors from around the world. Visitors arriving by rail can glimpse the first highlights in and around the main station: the copper signal tower, the locomotive depot, and the glass palace known as the Alsace Gate, all by Basel's own star architects Herzog & de Meuron. Reflected in the glass façade of the Alsace Gate is the gleaming white Euregio office building by the American architect Richard Meier. Not far from here is Peter Merian House by Zwimpfer Partners with its spectacular, emerald green façade executed by the artist Donald Judd. A few steps along is Jakob Burckhardt House by Zwimpfer Partners and Jakob Steib. Finally, a brief five-minute walk from the main train station brings you to the bank building by Mario Botta in the shape of a round stone sculpture.

## Spectacular large-scale projects

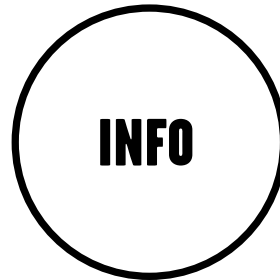
Among Basel's architectural highlights are the 105-metre-high Messe tower by architects Morger Degelo Marques and, right next to it, the new Exhibition Centre by Herzog & de Meuron that was finished in 2013. The Roche tower, which, at 175 metres, is the highest building in Switzerland, is also designed by Herzog & de Meuron. A second Roche tower is currently under construction by the same architects that will reach 205 metres and is scheduled to be opened in 2021. The St. Jakob-Park football stadium is another showpiece by the same architects. The Novartis Campus next to the French border has been under construction since 2001. The illustrious list of architects who have given shape to this centre of innovation includes David Chipperfield, Tadao Ando, Diener & Diener, Frank O. Gehry, Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, Adolf Krischanitz, Peter Märkli, Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa (SAANA office), Alvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura. The area around the Novartis Campus was also modernised and developed during the construction of the large motorway tunnel that diverted traffic away from the neighbourhood. New buildings by Christ & Gantenbein and Buchner Bründler Architects are recent urban landmarks. Last but not least, an extension to the Kunstmuseum Basel, designed by Christ & Gantenbein Architects, opened in 2016.

## Swiss Architecture Museum

Basel is a favourite destination for architects, architecture lovers and art historians, who all appreciate the diversity of modern architecture the city has to offer. It comes as no surprise, then, that Basel is home to the Swiss Architecture Museum devoted to public exhibitions about contemporary architecture. The focus is local as well as international.



Internationally acclaimed Fondation Beyeler  
(© Canton of Basel-Stadt)



### [www.basel.ch](http://www.basel.ch)

Official website with everything you need to know about Basel, including cultural life

### [www.programmzeitung.ch](http://www.programmzeitung.ch)

Calendar of events

### [www.museenbasel.ch](http://www.museenbasel.ch)

This website contains a comprehensive range of information about museums in Basel

### [www.museumspass.com](http://www.museumspass.com)

Pass for 320 museums in the Basel region as well as in France and Germany

### [www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch](http://www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch)

Museum of art and museum of contemporary art Basel

### [www.beyeler.com](http://www.beyeler.com)

Fondation Beyeler in Riehen

### [www.schaulager.org](http://www.schaulager.org)

Repository and showroom of the Emanuel Hoffmann collection

### [www.design-museum.de](http://www.design-museum.de)

Vitra Design Museum

### [www.sam-basel.org](http://www.sam-basel.org)

Swiss architecture museum Basel

### [www.kunstinbasel.ch](http://www.kunstinbasel.ch)

Galleries in Basel

**[www.artbasel.ch](http://www.artbasel.ch)**

Information about Art Basel, the world's leading art fair

**[www.regionale.org](http://www.regionale.org)**

Annual exhibition of work by local artists

**[www.theater-basel.ch](http://www.theater-basel.ch)**

Basel's theatre and opera house

**[www.sinfonieorchesterbasel.ch](http://www.sinfonieorchesterbasel.ch)**

Basel's symphony orchestra

**[www.baselsinfonietta.ch](http://www.baselsinfonietta.ch)**

Basel's experimental symphony orchestra

**[www.kammerorchesterbasel.ch](http://www.kammerorchesterbasel.ch)**

Basel's chamber orchestra

**[www.konzerte-basel.ch](http://www.konzerte-basel.ch)**

Website of the Allgemeine Musikgesellschaft

**[www.musicaltheaterbasel.ch](http://www.musicaltheaterbasel.ch)**

Modern theatre and concert house

**[www.baloisesession.ch](http://www.baloisesession.ch)**

Baloise Session – pop and blues festival

**[www.stimmen.com](http://www.stimmen.com)**

Stimmenfestival in Lörrach

**[www.offbeat-concert.ch](http://www.offbeat-concert.ch)**

Offbeat jazz festival Basel

**[www.ejcf.ch](http://www.ejcf.ch)**

European Youth Choir Festival

**[www.jkf.ch](http://www.jkf.ch)**

Jugendkulturfestival, festival for youth culture

**[www.baseltattoo.ch](http://www.baseltattoo.ch)**

Basel Tattoo



The Tinguely Museum – a celebration of machine-sculptures  
(© Museum Tinguely, Bettina Matthiessen)

# SPORT & LEISURE

Basel offers many opportunities and ways to make the most of your leisure time. Sport is big in Basel, whether you enjoy it as a fan or an active participant. Watch Roger Federer play or let him inspire you to become a better tennis player. Whatever your sport, you are bound to find the facilities, course or club to enjoy it to the full. But sport is not for everyone and what better alternative than to settle comfortably into a plush cinema seat, take a slow walk around a beautiful exhibition or raise your heartbeat at one of Basel's dance venues.

## PROFESSIONAL SPORT

### Clubs

The quality of locally based spectator sports in Basel is high and they enjoy a strong national and often international following.

### Tennis

Comprising 50 European member nations, Tennis Europe is the largest regional association of the sport's governing body, the International Tennis Federation (ITF). Based in Basel, Tennis Europe organises, among other things, competitions and events for serious players in every age group.

### Football

The city's best football club, FC Basel, was founded in 1893. It is one of the most successful clubs in Switzerland and known for its large and loyal fan base. Home games regularly draw some 30,000 spectators and are played at the St. Jakob-Park stadium, designed by local star architects Herzog & de Meuron. FC Basel has qualified for the European Champions League more times than any other Swiss club.

### Ice hockey

Ice hockey is another extremely popular spectator sport in Switzerland. The EHC Basel has been playing its home games in the St. Jakob-Arena since 2002. The arena seats 6,600 spectators and is one of the largest and most modern in the MySports league.

### Fencing

The 130-year-old Basler Fechtclub 1877 (Basel Fencing Club) is one of the oldest sports clubs in the Swiss stronghold of fencing. The Fechtgesellschaft Basel (Fencing Association Basel) is a little younger – and has been the most successful fencing club in Switzerland for decades. It has achieved countless top results in national and international tournaments and also organises international competitions every year. In 2004, one of its members won an Olympic gold medal in épée individual, while in 2018, club members won the men's team world title in épée.

### Handball

Another great tradition enjoyed in Basel is handball. The RTV 1879 Basel club was founded over 130 years ago. The two-time Swiss champions have played successfully in the Nationalliga A (Swiss first division) for many years. The venue for home games is the Rankhof sports centre.

### Rowing

With the Rhine flowing through the city, it is clear that rowing is a serious sport in Basel. Within the trinational region, there are five rowing clubs, while in Basel both the Basler Ruder-Club and Ruderclub Blauweiss Basel compete at a national and international level.

### Events

Various international sporting events and tournaments take place in Basel throughout the year. The UEFA EURO 2008 football championships were hosted in Switzerland and Austria, and six games were played in Basel. In 2018 Basel hosted the European Skateboard Championships. The international football matches played at St. Jakob-Park also draw crowds and the world men's curling championship 2016 was held here.

### Showjumping

At the beginning of each year, along with up to 6,000 spectators, the world's best showjumpers gather in Basel to compete for world rankings and impressive prize money at the Longines CSI in St. Jakobshalle.



**“WE TRAIN ON THE RHINE AND ARE OUT IN ALL WEATHERS, BUT THESE ARE NEVER TOO EXTREME. WE ARE A MIXED BUNCH WITH MEMBERS FROM ALL OVER AND AT EVERY SKILL LEVEL FROM FUN TO SERIOUS SPORT. PARTIES AND BARBECUES ARE ALSO PART OF THE PROGRAMME AND ARE GREAT IN GETTING PEOPLE TALKING TO EACH OTHER.”**

Dominik Junker comes from Riehen in Switzerland and is a lawyer and academic assistant at Immobilien Basel-Stadt, Department of Finance of Basel-Stadt



Top-class badminton at the Swiss Open (© Badminton SwissOpen)

### Badminton

Held in Basel since 1991, the Swiss Open – an international badminton tournament – takes place each year in March at St. Jakobshalle and attracts the world's best badminton players.

### Tennis

Swiss Indoors Basel is one of Switzerland's top sporting events and the third-largest indoor tennis tournament in the world. Many of the world's best tennis players come to Basel every year. Some 70,000 spectators watch the matches live in the St. Jakobshalle, while millions of viewers watch them on television.

### Rowing

Switzerland's largest international eights regatta, Basel-Head, is held on the Rhine. Rowing has a long history in the Basel region. BaselHead combines this tradition with the city's love of major sporting events.

## SPORT FOR EVERYONE

### Excellent infrastructure

Basel is a city that loves sports. No wonder, because the opportunities for recreational sport are limitless and the facilities excellent. In addition to the largest football stadium in Switzerland, a large, multipurpose sports hall and a state-of-the-art ice hockey stadium, the St. Jakob sports centre also offers a multi-sport swimming pool complex, an athletics stadium and numerous sports and grass courts.

Numerous public swimming pools, two ice rinks, golf courses, fitness centres and tennis clubs complement the well-developed infrastructure, and the Gsünder Basel organisation holds free exercise classes in the public parks every summer.

### Trekking, jogging, fitness and cycling

Northwestern Switzerland is connected to the large network of public hiking paths in Switzerland. They provide ideal terrain for joggers, families, aspiring alpine mountaineers and free-climbers. The Jura, in particular, is ideal. There are a number of clubs and outdoor-oriented websites that offer group hiking tours as well as a Facebook page for the Basel Walkers. Jogging in the city is popular as well, especially along the Rhine and its tributaries, through the parks and green-belt areas such as Park im Grünen or Lange Erlen. Fitness clubs and health centres, some of which have spas – like the salt water baths in Rheinfelden – are also popular. In such a compact city, the bicycle is an ideal means of transport. Children ride to school and employees cycle to work. On weekends, people take out their racing or mountain bikes to explore the countryside. For a more challenging and longer trip, the EuroVelo website offers a network of cycle routes through Europe. Three of EuroVelo's routes (EV 5, 6, and 15) actually run through Basel.

### Golf, skiing, and flying

From mid-September to mid-May, the Bachgraben outdoor pool is turned into a 12 x 3 par golf course. City Golf requires no membership, equipment can be rented and the green fee is modest. A number of golf courses in Alsace and the Black Forest are also extremely popular and just a short distance from the city. The Black Forest offers opportunities for winter sports and the hills around Basel sometimes also get a generous dusting of snow. Major winter sports destinations in Switzerland can be reached in just 90 minutes by train or car. Private aircraft can be flown either at the EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg or at other airfields in the region. The adjacent mountain ranges offer ideal conditions for hang-gliding. For those who prefer water sports, there are five rowing clubs in the trinational Basel area that offer ample training opportunities on the Rhine.

### Clubs

Sport tends to be structured in regional and national associations that organise league tables and championships, lay down the rules of the game, and establish links to national and international organisations. Great efforts are made to encourage young talent, and many of these associations also run junior sections for children. The government supports many of these sports associations and initiatives, and also manages most of the sports facilities. In addition, two special sports classes were started at a school in Basel to help talented athletes combine education and training.



Basel Zoo - affectionately known as the Zooli by Baslers  
(© Canton of Basel-Stadt)

### Public Sporting Events

Held in May, the Basler Frauenlauf draws well over 1,400 women of all ages to run the 5 or 10 km course through the city centre. Also taking place in May, the Dreiländerlauf is an immensely popular trinational run that starts at Markt-platz in Switzerland and takes running enthusiasts on a circuit through France and Germany.

In the summer, the Rhine turns into an outdoor swimming pool. On the day of the official Basler Rheinschwimmen, thousands of people plunge into the cool water to float downstream at a leisurely pace.

Once a year, motor vehicles are banned from the roads for 'slowUp', when cyclists, inline skaters and walkers take over the tarmac.

In the weeks before Christmas, the historic old town of Basel is regularly turned into a sports arena for the general public, when thousands of men, women and children take part in the traditional Stadtlauf (city run).

## TIME OUT IN AND AROUND BASEL

### Relaxing in the city

Basel is a city with many green areas and parks. The Rhine promenade in Kleinbasel, with its view of the cathedral and the narrow, medieval façades on the Grossbasel side, is popular throughout the year. You can sit on the steps by the water or relax on the outdoor terrace of one of the small restaurants that line the promenade. The zoo is another busy

and attractive place to spend an enjoyable day. The Lange Erlen recreational area in Kleinbasel is home to a smaller zoo that focuses on domestic fauna. There are pleasant walks along the banks of the rivers Wiese and Birs. The university's botanical garden, which is open to the public, lies within the city limits. On the edge of the city is the Park im Grünen – with its botanical gardens, ponds and play areas, this is the perfect place to spend a sunny afternoon. Impressive views across Basel and the surrounding districts can be enjoyed from the towers of the Münster, as well as from the water tower located on Bruderholz and from St. Christophona in Bettingen.

### The busy river Rhine

No visit to Basel would be complete without a trip on one of the four Rhine ferries, powered solely by the river's strong current. The Swiss Rhine Ports with the Dreiländereck, where Germany, France and Switzerland meet, are also worth a visit. Passenger boats ply the Rhine throughout the year, and also provide trips with a special theme. And last but not least, the Rhine is Basel's most popular public swimming pool in the summer.

### Basel-Landschaft and Solothurn (Switzerland)

Basel-Landschaft offers a wealth of attractive landscapes within easy reach of Basel. Country walks wind their way up to castles or across beautiful hilltops. The hills of the Jura, for example, offer splendid views of the city and the Rhine valley, with the Jura, Black Forest and Vosges mountain ranges on the horizon. Further up the Rhine, in Augst or Augusta Raurica, lie the remains of the oldest Roman colony



on the Rhine (44 BC). About 20 buildings have now been restored; including an amphitheatre, a temple and the forum. Open-air shows are staged at the amphitheatre every summer. The Mariastein monastery, high up on a hill in the Canton of Solothurn, is a place of pilgrimage and a popular destination for weekend walks. Nearby, the town of Dornach is the centre of the anthroposophical movement: the unmistakable Goetheanum building serves as college, theatre and international meeting place.

### The Black Forest (Germany)

The Black Forest, whose highest peak, Feldberg, has an altitude of 1493 metres, lies to the north of Basel in Germany. Ski resorts and recreational areas in the Black Forest are extremely popular, as are a number of health resorts with a reputation that goes back centuries. Most of them can be reached by car from Basel in less than one hour. Other popular destinations are the numerous castles and castle ruins scattered throughout the region. The local fish and game specialities and the fine wines of the Baden region are greatly appreciated by gourmets and wine lovers. Even closer to Basel, the town of Lörrach attracts visitors with its Saturday morning farmer's market, and Weil am Rhein boasts the Vitra Design Museum with buildings by world-famous architects.

### Vosges and Sundgau (France)

The French Alsace plain begins to the west of Basel. The Vosges mountains on the city's northern edge can be seen clearly from Basel on a fine day, and the area is dominated by the 1247-metre-high Ballon d'Alsace. The Petite Camargue Alsacienne along the canals of the Rhine is a paradise for bird watchers and nature lovers. It can easily be explored from Basel by bicycle.



A little light refreshment at the Hotel Krafft  
(© Canton of Basel-Stadt)

Another part of the Département du Haut-Rhin is Sundgau, a hilly landscape with picturesque old villages, castles and forests. Sundgau includes Mulhouse, the nearest large French city. The famous Alsatian town of Colmar is less than an hour away from Basel by road or rail. Its fascinating buildings, particularly those dating from the Renaissance, and its priceless treasures, such as the 'Isenheim Altar' in the Unterlinden Museum, attract many visitors.

### Green belt around Basel

The website [gruenguertel.ch](http://gruenguertel.ch) describes 50 extraordinary natural areas in the trinational region of Basel. Besides information on the natural environment, details of how to get there, info on the time required for walking tours, and on where you can get food and drink are also given for every site.

## RESTAURANTS

### Three countries, many cuisines

Gault&Millau or Guide Michelin? There is a real choice of good food for gourmets in and around Basel. Local taverns, high-end restaurants, the charming inns of Alsace and Baden with their regional cuisine all serve excellent food. The population mix is also reflected in the food offered in Basel, in restaurants, speciality shops and takeaways.

### Regional specialities

In Basel, Mehlsuppe (flour soup) and Zwiebelwähe (onion quiche) are traditional dishes served during the carnival season. There is also the Fasnachtsküchlein, a wafer-thin, crispy fried pancake dusted with powdered sugar. A sweet speciality and a popular export are the Läckerli, a small biscuit similar to Lebkuchen, made with honey, almonds, hazelnuts and cinnamon. Baden and Alsace traditionally favour a rich country cuisine: Spätzle (a type of soft egg noodle), sauerkraut, asparagus in the spring, venison in autumn and carp from the many Sundgau lakes are only some of the local specialities. The mild climate in the Upper Rhine region also produces excellent wines, such as Riesling, Gewürztraminer and Crémant.

## NIGHTLIFE

### Clubs and dancing

Salsa, tango, swing, disco, rock, house, soul – clubs come and go, and play all kinds of music. Among the most popular clubs in the city centre are Sommercasino, Parterre One, Volkshaus, Atlantis and Kaserne. More unconventional dance halls are Elisabethenkirche, the old Warteck brewery or Nordstern.

## Bars and pubs

There are countless bars in Basel, from industrial (Werk 8) or elegant (Teufelhof and Trois Rois) to urban (Noohn), from creative (Alpenblick) to cool (Acqua, Cargo Bar). Also very popular are the English and Irish pubs in the city, with darts, football screens and draught Guinness, as well as Volta Bräu near Voltaplatz that brews its own beer and serves delicious snacks.

## LGBT

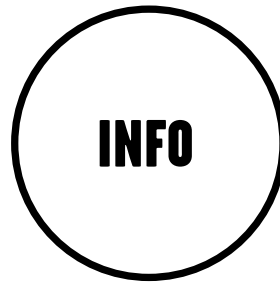
There is a lively LGBT scene in Basel with clubs, parties, events and meetings. [gaybasel.org](http://gaybasel.org) is one of several websites that provide information on what's going on and it's also a doorway to a much broader network of information and services.

## Cinemas

There are almost 40 cinema screens in Basel, showing all the great Hollywood movies as well as many European and foreign films. Many films are shown in their original language, with German and French sub-titles – a Swiss specialty that makes the movies all the more enjoyable. In summer, there are open-air screens everywhere – at Münsterplatz, in parks, on castle grounds and near swimming pools.



International music greats at the Baloise Session  
(© Baloise Session)



## SPORT

[www.sport.bs.ch](http://www.sport.bs.ch)

Information published by the canton about sport

[www.sportbasel.ch](http://www.sportbasel.ch)

Umbrella organisation for 62 sports associations

[www.unisport.ch](http://www.unisport.ch)

Basel University website for sport

[www.tenniseurope.org](http://www.tenniseurope.org)

Tennis Europe association

[www.fcb.ch](http://www.fcb.ch)

Official website of Basel's football club

[www.ehcbasel.ch](http://www.ehcbasel.ch)

Official website of Basel's ice hockey club

[www.bfc1877.ch](http://www.bfc1877.ch)

Basel's oldest fencing club

[www.fechtgesellschaftbasel.ch](http://www.fechtgesellschaftbasel.ch)

One of Switzerland's most successful fencing clubs

[www.rtv1879basel.ch](http://www.rtv1879basel.ch)

Basel handball club

[www.basler-ruder-club.ch](http://www.basler-ruder-club.ch)

Basel rowing club

[www.rcblauweiss.ch](http://www.rcblauweiss.ch)

Blauweiss rowing club

[www.csi-basel.ch](http://www.csi-basel.ch)

World class showjumping

**[www.swissopen.com](http://www.swissopen.com)**

Badminton Swiss Open

**[www.swissindoorsbasel.ch](http://www.swissindoorsbasel.ch)**

ATP Tennis tournament

**[www.baselhead.org](http://www.baselhead.org)**

Eights regatta on the Rhine

**[www.stadtlauf.ch](http://www.stadtlauf.ch)**

Basel City Run, the biggest running event of the region

**[slowup.basel-dreiland.ch](http://slowup.basel-dreiland.ch)**

Website for slowUp, the annual car-free day

**[www.basler-frauenlauf.ch](http://www.basler-frauenlauf.ch)**

Basel running event for women

**[www.3laenderlauf.org](http://www.3laenderlauf.org)**

Running event with a route that goes through Switzerland, France and Germany

**[www.wanderwege-beider-basel.ch](http://www.wanderwege-beider-basel.ch)**

Hiking club

**[www.meetup.com/topics/hiking/ch/basel](http://www.meetup.com/topics/hiking/ch/basel)**

Website offering opportunities to hike in a group

**[www.facebook.com/BaselWalkers](http://www.facebook.com/BaselWalkers)**

Basel Walkers facebook page – informal walking group

**[www.gsuenderbasel.ch](http://www.gsuenderbasel.ch)**

Gsünder Basel promotes healthy living by offering inexpensive exercise classes

**LEISURE****[www.basel.com](http://www.basel.com)**

Official website of Basel Tourism, information on sights, cultural events, restaurants and more

**[www.programmzeitung.ch](http://www.programmzeitung.ch)**

Calendar of events

**[www.baselland-tourismus.ch](http://www.baselland-tourismus.ch)**

Information on hotels, restaurants and excursions in Basel-Landschaft

**[www.schwarzwald-tourismus.de](http://www.schwarzwald-tourismus.de)**

Official tourism website of the Black Forest

**[www.tourisme-alsace.com](http://www.tourisme-alsace.com)**

Official tourism website of Alsace

**[www.kulturundgastro.ch](http://www.kulturundgastro.ch)**

Information on bars, restaurants, clubs and music

**[www.basel-restaurants.ch](http://www.basel-restaurants.ch)**

A restaurant guide with search engine, includes hotels

**[www.gaybasel.org](http://www.gaybasel.org)**

News and information for the LGBT community in Basel and the surrounding area

**[www.zoobasel.ch](http://www.zoobasel.ch)**

Basel's zoo

**[www.bpg.ch](http://www.bpg.ch)**

Boat trips on the Rhine

**[www.augustaurica.ch](http://www.augustaurica.ch)**

Ancient Roman settlement in Augst, Basel-Landschaft

**[www.goetheanum.org](http://www.goetheanum.org)**

The anthroposophical centre in Dornach

**[www.gruenguertel.ch](http://www.gruenguertel.ch)**

Website of Regio Green Belt with information on 50 nature spots in the trinational area around Basel

# SHOPPING

Shopping in Basel is a pleasure. There are department stores, speciality shops, boutiques and brands on both sides of the Rhine in the city centres in Grossbasel and Kleinbasel. While the well-known international brands can be found around Freie Strasse, smaller independent brands and local designers are offered in the nearby side streets and alleyways. Shopping centres on the outskirts of the city offer a wide range of food, mainstream fashion items and all kinds of consumer goods under one roof for a convenient shopping experience.

## SHOPPING BY LOCATION

### Freie Strasse

Freie Strasse is the top address in Basel and well known even outside Switzerland for its great shopping. You'll find one international brand after another here, including Apple, Gucci, Lacoste, Michael Kors, Cos, H&M, Zara, Massimo Dutti etc., giving the street the international flair that makes it so popular.

### Spalenberg / Old Town

The area around the Spalenberg oozes with traditional charm – thanks not only to the beautiful old buildings and idyllic alleyways but also, of course, to its many shops. If you enjoy hunting out tiny shops with a unique or quirky offering away from the main shopping area, make sure to take a stroll around the Spalenberg district. You will like what you find!

### Kleinbasel

If you want to be able to say that you have explored all of Basel's shopping areas, Kleinbasel is a must. It's a part of Basel that is bursting with creativity and character. With Riviera, Claudia Güdel, Ahoi Ahoi, Aisso X, Oh you pretty things and Marinsel all here, you'll find new and exciting shops that perfectly reflect the zeitgeist of Kleinbasel.

### Department stores and shopping centres

In addition to the two big shopping centres, St. Jakob-Park and Stücki-Park, both of which can be reached in no more than 15 minutes from the city centre by public transport, Basel also has a number of big department stores right in the heart of the town. For example, at Globus, Manor Basel, Pfauen or Coop City, shoppers can find practically anything the heart desires, all under one roof.

## TOP DESTINATION FOR LUXURY BRANDS

### Fashion and accessories

Basel is a great place to shop for quality and elegance. The big labels can be found in tiny boutiques and large department stores: Chanel, Gucci, Louis Vuitton and Max Mara, among others. Shoppers looking for something a bit more individual will find a thriving and diverse creative scene in Basel. Claudia Güdel, Kleinbasel, Matrix, Issue and SüdWind are just a few of the labels that inspire with their exquisite collections of exceptional quality.

### Watches and jewellery

For many years, the entire city used to fall under the spell of BASELWORLD with its luxury watches and elegant jewellery. The fair shapes the taste of an entire region. Established local jewellers like Bucherer, Seiler, Mezger, Gübelin and Kurz carry the full range of international luxury brands. Those who prefer a more personal choice will find what they are looking for at one of the many goldsmiths – the art of goldsmithing has a long tradition in Basel – where one-of-a-kind pieces are designed and crafted by hand.

### Beauty treatments and perfume

There are several places in Basel where lovers of spas and cosmetic treatments can go to be pampered: Dominique M. offers a range of beauty treatments at a central location with views of the Rhine. The perfume shop Hyazinth also provides numerous cosmetic products and treatments. Finally, Aveda treats its customers to a full sensory experience in a relaxing atmosphere.



JOHANN WANNER

CUPCAKE  
AFFAIR

SWISS  
DELICIOUS

JOHANN  
WANNER

**“AS A DANCER, I AM FASCINATED BY MOVEMENT AND IT IS CLEAR TO ME THAT THE CLOTHES WE WEAR UNDERLINE THE WAY WE MOVE. SO SHOPPING FOR CLOTHES IS ALMOST AN INSTINCT AND CERTAINLY A PLEASURE. BASEL HAS MANY SMALL BOUTIQUES AND I ALWAYS FIND WHAT I’M LOOKING FOR WHEN THE MOOD TAKES ME!”**

Ádila Melper comes from Brazil  
and runs the You Dance dance school in Basel

## ATTRACTIVE FAIRS AND MARKETS

### Trade fairs

With over 25 trade and consumer fairs, Basel is the most important exhibition centre in Switzerland and one of the most important in Europe. Art Basel, the world's most important trade fair for modern and contemporary art, takes centre stage here. Basel is also home to Swissbau, the key meeting place for the construction and real-estate industry in Switzerland and one of the biggest trade fairs for the construction industry in Europe.

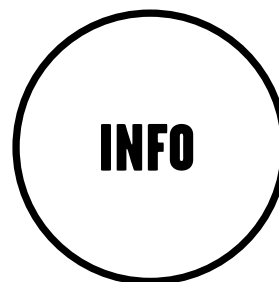
### Autumn fair and Christmas market

There are also lots of attractive fairs and markets in Basel that the city plans, organises and hosts on public land. The Basel Autumn Fair is by far the most famous and oldest event of its kind; it has been going since 1471. This inner-city trade fair is one of the largest events of its kind in Europe with eight venues and around 500 annually approved stalls and rides.

In the run-up to Christmas, Basel is transformed into a festively decorated and illuminated fairy-tale town. The Basel Christmas Market is now one of Switzerland's biggest Christmas markets with approximately 180 stalls. It is held from late November until the 23rd of December.

### City and district markets

The City Market on Marktplatz offers fresh produce from Tuesday to Saturday, while on Mondays, the Streetfood Market draws visitors and residents alike to enjoy a variety of dishes on the go. Neighbourhood markets on both sides of the Rhine offer fresh produce and specialty articles. The character of each market is different and all of them are well worth visiting. Markthalle is particularly inviting on Saturdays when the weekly market for fresh produce and delicacies takes place. Once the shopping is done, lunch can be had at one of the many international food stalls. The New Goods Market on Barfüsserplatz, the flea markets on Petersplatz and Barfüsserplatz plus the weekly farmers' markets in the region are all popular meeting places and make for a fun shopping experience in a lively and bustling atmosphere.



[www.basel.ch/shopping](http://www.basel.ch/shopping)

[www.proinnerstadtbasel.ch](http://www.proinnerstadtbasel.ch)

Information on shopping in Basel from the Pro Innerstadt association

[www.st-jakob-park.com/shopping](http://www.st-jakob-park.com/shopping)

Shopping centre

[stueckipark.ch](http://stueckipark.ch)

Shopping, companies, health, dining, hotel and beauty

[www.basel.ch/märkte](http://www.basel.ch/märkte)

Information on Basel markets

Basel City Market – a rich experience for all the senses  
(© Canton of Basel-Stadt)



# MOVING TO SWITZERLAND

Moving to another country is exciting but, with the many formalities involved, can also seem daunting. This chapter explains what to expect when you come to Basel to visit, work, or live long-term.

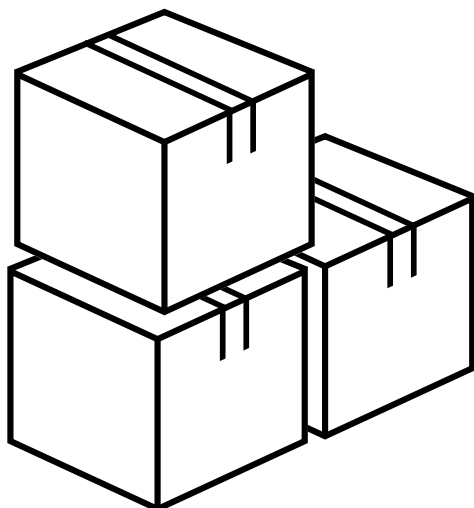
## BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

### Formalities

The local Swiss consulate or embassy in your country will be pleased to provide information about the terms and conditions of entry to Switzerland, as well as details about visas, passports or ID requirements. For longer stays in Switzerland, newcomers are recommended to bring with them the most important original documents, such as birth and marriage certificates, insurance policies, employment references and entry permits, academic certificates, medical prescriptions, etc.

### Visa, passport, ID card

A valid travel document (ID or passport) is required to enter Switzerland. Citizens of EU/EFTA countries can enter Switzerland upon presentation of a valid ID. For entry from all other countries, a valid passport is required. Tourist visas or working visas are issued by Swiss consulates.



## ENTERING SWITZERLAND

### Border controls

Anyone entering Switzerland may be subject to an inspection by customs.

### Registration

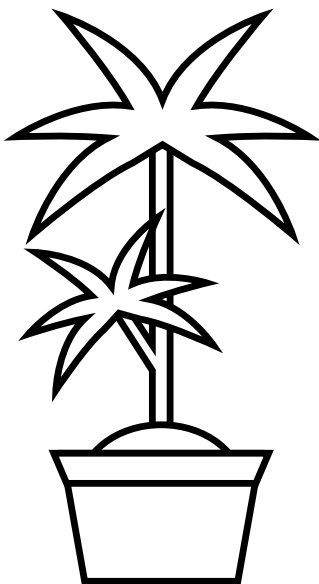
After entering the country, newcomers must report to the Population Services and Migration Office within 14 days, with their passport, a passport photo (non-EU/EFTA citizens do not require a photo) and their entry permit/visa. We recommend that persons from non-EU/EFTA countries who require a visa also report to their embassy or consulate. Newcomers to Basel will receive a comprehensive information package from the Canton of Basel-Stadt upon registration. Some neighbourhoods organise special welcoming parties for newcomers.

## MOVING TO BASEL

### Importing household goods

Once you have obtained a Swiss entry permit, you can bring furniture and other household items into the country either by airfreight through EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg or by road. It is advisable to report major shipments in advance. As a rule, offices at the major customs crossings are open from 7 am to 5.30 pm. In general, no duty is charged on used goods. A complete list of the articles being imported must be provided and any goods less than six months old will be subject to duty. Personal ID documents as well as an entry permit, lease for a flat or house, employment contract, or confirmation of notice of departure from the country of departure must also be provided.





### Importing private vehicles

Private cars must be declared at the border and then registered with the Motorfahrzeugkontrolle (vehicle licensing authority) within 12 months of arrival. Owners are automatically called to register their car before the deadline. In the case of older or more exotic vehicles, please check the terms of registration in advance. If the car is less than six months old, customs duty must be paid. Further information is provided by the Swiss Federal Customs Administration.

All car papers and insurance documents as well as the driver's driving licence should be kept in the car at all times. Foreign driving licences may be used for up to 12 months and must then be exchanged for a Swiss driving licence.

### Importing problematic goods

The import of problematic goods, such as exotic plants, is subject to special regulations. You will find more details in the leaflets issued by the Swiss Federal Customs Administration. For information about importing pets, please consult the Veterinäramt (Veterinary Office).

### A longer-term stay

If you plan to stay in Basel-Stadt longer term and definitely for more than three months, you need to submit an application at the Einwohneramt (Residents' Registration Office) within 14 days of arriving in the country.

### Work permits

As a rule, companies submit work permit applications directly to the cantonal authorities on behalf of their foreign employees. In the case of employees from non-EU/EFTA countries, the application has to be passed on to the federal Staatssekretariat für Migration SEM (State Secretariat for Migration).

### Residence permits

Newcomers must report to Bevölkerungsdienste und Migration (Population Services and Migration Office) within 14 days of entering Switzerland. Employees are then issued an Aufenthaltsbewilligung B (B permit). EU citizens with employment contracts for more than one year have to renew their residence permit every five years. Non-EU citizens need to renew it every year. L permits are granted to persons who reside in Switzerland for less than one year and for a specific purpose (usually gainful employment). Cross-border commuters are foreigners who live in the Schengen area (EU/EFTA nationals) or the foreign border zone (third-country nationals). They receive a cross-border commuter permit. Cross-border commuters must return to their main residence abroad at least once a week.

### Bringing family members or a partner to Switzerland

Foreign nationals who wish to bring close family members to Switzerland must submit an application to Bevölkerungsdienste und Migration (Population Services and Migration Office) well in advance of the planned date of arrival. As a rule, the family members in question are then issued a B permit. Entering Switzerland for the purpose of preparing a wedding can also be approved; during this period, however, the partner is not permitted to work. Unmarried partners of EU/EFTA citizens can be granted residency under certain conditions. Unmarried partners of non-EU/EFTA citizens cannot be granted residency; the partner would need to find employment in Switzerland first and then submit a separate application for residency.

The spouses and children of Swiss nationals, as well as those of persons with a residence or work permit, may take up self-employed or employed work anywhere in Switzerland without additional authorisation.

### Permanent residence permits

Depending upon a person's country of origin, a Niederlassungsbewilligung C (type C permanent residence permit) may be issued after five or ten years. It is not subject to special conditions, is not issued for a fixed duration, and is renewed at five-year intervals.

### Naturalisation

In order to obtain Swiss citizenship, a total of 10 years residence in Switzerland are required, 3 of which must be in the last 5 years before submitting the application and 2 years in the municipality (Basel, Riehen or Bettingen) within the Canton of Basel-Stadt from which the application is being made. A permanent residence permit (C permit) is required. The naturalisation process usually takes about two years. The process is less demanding for applicants who are married to a Swiss citizen: they must have lived in Switzerland for a total of 5 years, and have been married for 3 years.

### Nannies, au pairs, babysitters

Nannies who have been working with a family for a long time can apply for a B permit. Special rules apply to au pairs: only applications for au pairs from EU/EFTA countries, the U.S., Canada, New Zealand or Australia are accepted. The focus is on learning the German language and the local culture. The au pair may carry out normal household chores and take care of the children for a maximum of 30 hours per week. Au pairs must not be left alone at home all day; therefore, at least one parent has to work less than 22 hours per week. Babysitters or household help can be found through job advertisements. Domestic staff must be hired following the usual procedures, make contributions to the AHV and be insured against accidents.



## BOOKS ABOUT LIVING AND WORKING IN SWITZERLAND

The following English publications provide information and advice about living in Basel and in Switzerland.

**Living and Working in Switzerland**, Survival Books, London 2013 (14th edition). David Hampshire. ISBN: 978-1909282636

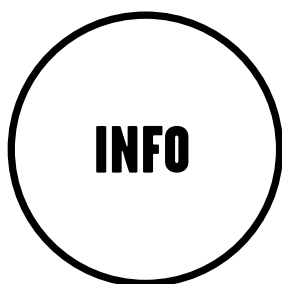
**Beyond Chocolate**, Understanding Swiss Culture, Bergli Books, Basel 2011 (2nd revised edition). Margaret Oertig-Davidson. ISBN: 978-3905252217

**Mix & Remix: Swiss History in a Nutshell**, Bergli Books, Basel 2010. Grégoire Nappey. ISBN: 978-3905252194

**Basel City Guide**, Friedrich Reinhardt Verlag, Basel 2007 (2nd revised edition). Hannes Bertschi. ISBN: 978-3724512073

In German:

**Basler Stadtführer: Basel erfassen, erleben, geniessen**, Friedrich Reinhardt Verlag, Basel 2001. Hannes Bertschi. ISBN: 3-7245-1131-0



**[www.basel.ch](http://www.basel.ch)**

Official website with everything you need to know about Basel

**[www.basel.com](http://www.basel.com)**

Official website of Basel Tourism

**[www.bdm.bs.ch](http://www.bdm.bs.ch)**

Einwohneramt – Residents' Registration Office to register arrival in the country and any changes of address

**[www.programmzeitung.ch](http://www.programmzeitung.ch)**

Calendar of events

**[www.awa.bs.ch](http://www.awa.bs.ch)**

Office of Economy and Labour of Basel-Stadt

**[www.spousecareercentre.com](http://www.spousecareercentre.com)**

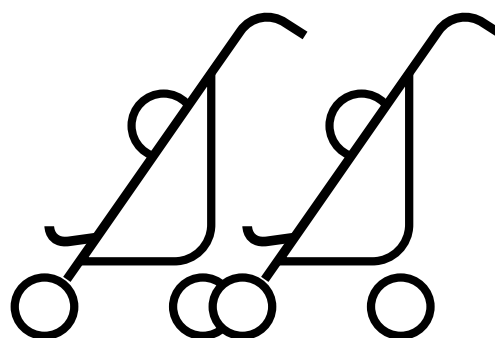
The Spouse Career Centre offers advice for partners of people who have moved to Basel for a new job

**[www.sem.admin.ch](http://www.sem.admin.ch)**

State Secretariat for Migration

**[www.eda.admin.ch](http://www.eda.admin.ch)**

Foreign representation in Switzerland and Swiss representation worldwide



# PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Basel is a beautiful place to live and work. Understandably, it takes time to get accustomed to a new language, a different currency, and the local way of life. Moving to another country always raises many questions. Below, you will find answers to some of the most pressing among them.

## INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION OFFICES IN BASEL-STADT

### Customer centre

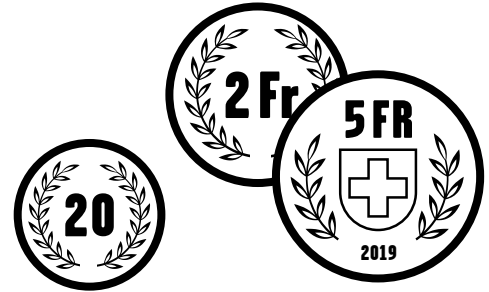
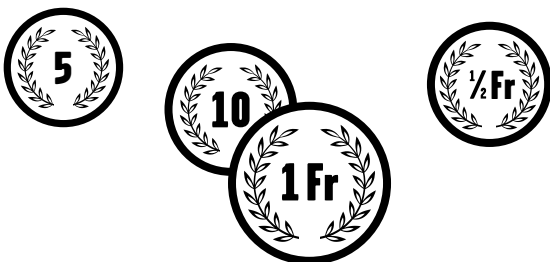
The Kundenzentrum (Customer Centre) located in Spiegelgasse is the first address for everything you need to know about living in Basel. Here, you will also find the most important forms and applications concerning all dealings with the authorities (school registration, passports, papers for your car, etc.), all brochures and official leaflets published by Basel-Stadt as well as important contacts and addresses.

### Change of address

Changes of address must be reported to the Einwohneramt (Residents' Registration Office) within 14 days. If you move to another canton, you need to register in the new municipality in addition to cancelling your registration at the Residents' Registration Office of Basel-Stadt.

### Basel Tourism

Basel Tourism is the main tourist office in Basel. It provides extensive information about the city and the area, offers packages and guided tours, and runs several information centres and a souvenir shop in the city centre.



## PAYMENT TRANSACTIONS AND SHOPPING

### Currency

The national currency is the Swiss franc (1 CHF = 1 franc = 100 rappen). Banknotes come in the denominations **1000, 200, 100, 50, 20** and **10**, while the coins in circulation are **5, 2, and 1 franc, and 50, 20, 10 and 5 rappen**.

### Banks

Several banks have branches throughout the city in which all transactions are possible. The opening hours are usually **Monday to Friday, 8.30 am to 5 or 5.30 pm**. Outside Basel, some banks may close for lunch. Identification documents must be presented when opening an account.

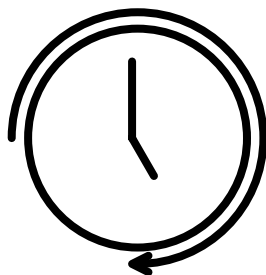
### Means of payment

With rare exceptions, credit/debit cards are accepted everywhere. In addition to the Swiss franc, stores in Basel frequently also accept the euro. Cashpoints are available throughout the city at banks and post offices.

### Opening hours

The shop opening times in Basel are somewhat liberally regulated. The shops can vary their opening times from Monday to Friday between 6 am and 8 pm and between 6 am and 6 pm on Saturdays. Shopping centres, even those on the outskirts of the city, M-Parc, St. Jakob-Park and Stückerli, are open until 8 pm during the week. Smaller supermarkets usually open at 8 am and close at 6.30 pm. Only a few shops are open on Sundays, except on the official shopping Sundays before Christmas.

Family businesses and shops in the train station can remain open until 10 pm, seven days a week.



## MISCELLANEOUS

### Time zone

Basel lies in the Central European Time Zone (CET), which is one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). Twice a year, between 2 am and 3 am on a Sunday morning at the end of March and at the end of October, all the clocks in Europe go forward or back by one hour to allow for daylight saving time.

### Postal services

There are post offices in almost every neighbourhood. Current opening times are usually from 7.30 am to noon and from 1.30 pm to 6 pm. In some districts, the opening times have been shortened, and cash transactions cannot be performed. The main post office in the city centre is also open all day on Saturdays, and the one at the main railway station is open all day on Saturdays and Sundays as well. Postboxes in Switzerland are yellow. A-Post letters delivered within Switzerland arrive the next working day, whereas the cheaper B-Post letters arrive within 2–3 days.

### Media

The largest daily newspaper in the region is the Basler Zeitung. The online web service Onlinereports has also secured its place in the regional media landscape. The bz – Zeitung für die Region Basel is issued in Basel and Liestal. The main paper in neighbouring Germany is the Badische Zeitung, while in France there is Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace and L'Alsace. The free Swiss commuter paper 20 Minuten enjoys a wide readership. This daily newspaper, with the highest circulation in Switzerland, has a local editorial team and a special edition for Basel. In addition to various national radio and TV stations (Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen SRF), there are the German-speaking local radio stations Radio Basilisk, Radio Energy Basel, Radio X and the local television station Telebasel. Radio X broadcasts 'The English Show' every week for the international community.

### Facilities for the disabled

Basel-Stadt takes great care to provide satisfactory facilities for the disabled. The city works closely with disabled people and their organisations. Equal opportunities is the guiding principle of all policies in Basel.

### Tipping

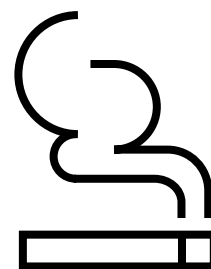
As a rule, all the prices in restaurants, bars, taxis and other services include a service charge. However, if the service is good, it is customary to give a small tip (10–15% with meals).

### Smoking

Smoking is not allowed in most public buildings in Switzerland. In the Canton of Basel-Stadt, smoking is also not permitted in restaurants and bars. However, some restaurants offer separate rooms for smokers.

### Speed limits, alcohol limit

Standard speed limits are 50 km/h in built-up areas, 80 km/h on country roads and 120 km/h on motorways. A special speed limit of 30 km/h is being introduced in an increasing number of residential districts. The alcohol limit for drivers is 0.5‰.



## Importing foodstuffs

As Switzerland is not a member of the European Union, foodstuffs imported into Switzerland are essentially subject to customs duties. However, a customs-free allowance is permitted for small quantities.

## International system of units of measurement

The following provides an overview of the international system of units of measurement. Selected conversions of imperial or US units into standard international units are shown.

### Length

- 1 kilometre = 1000 metres
- 1 metre = 100 centimetres
- 1 centimetre = 10 millimetres
- 1 inch = 2.54 cm
- 1 foot = 12 inches = 30.48 cm
- 1 yard = 3 feet = 91.44 cm
- 1 mile = 1760 yards = 1.609 km

### Liquid measurements

- 1 hectolitre = 100 litres
- 1 litre = 10 decilitres
- 1 pint = 0.47 litres
- 1 quart = 2 pints = 0.95 litres
- 1 gallon = 4 quarts = 3.78 litres

### Weights

- 1 ton = 1000 kilograms
- 1 kilogram = 1000 grams
- 1 grain = 0.065 grams
- 1 ounce = 28.35 grams
- 1 pound = 16 ounces = 453.59 grams
- 1 short ton = 907.18 kilograms

### Temperatures

- 32°F = 0°C
- 50°F = 10°C
- 68°F = 20°C
- 86°F = 30°C
- 104°F = 40°C



## IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

**Kantonale Verwaltung Basel-Stadt**  
Cantonal Administration Basel-Stadt  
+41 61 267 81 81

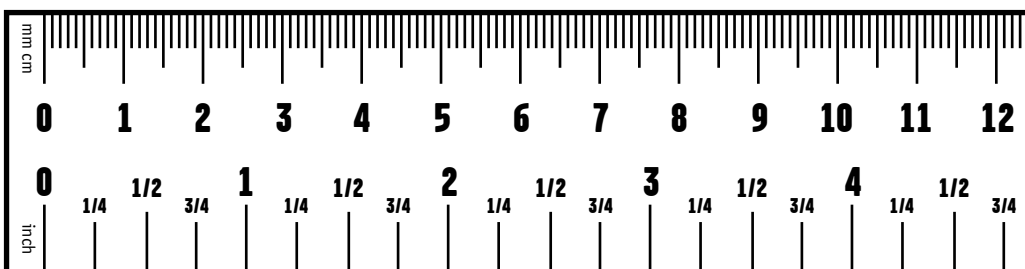
**Kundenzentrum des Kantons BS**  
Customer Centre, Residents' Registration Office  
+41 61 267 70 60

**Eidg. Zollverwaltung für Basel-Stadt**  
Swiss Customs Authority Basel-Stadt  
+41 58 469 11 11

**Kantonales Veterinäramt**  
Cantonal Veterinary Office  
+41 61 267 58 58

**Basel Tourism**  
Basel Tourist Office  
+41 61 268 68 68

**Emergency telephone numbers**  
Emergency: 112  
Police: 117  
Fire brigade: 118  
Ambulance: 144  
Automobile breakdown service: 140



## ADDRESSES OF EMBASSIES AND CONSULATES

The following section shows the addresses of the embassies and consulates of selected English-speaking countries.

### Australia (consulate)

Chemin des Fins 2 CH-1211 Geneva  
+41 22 799 91 00  
geneva.mission.gov.au

### Great Britain (embassy)

Thunstrasse 50  
CH-3005 Bern  
+41 31 359 77 00  
www.gov.uk/world/switzerland

### Ireland (embassy)

Kirchenfeldstrasse 68 CH-3005 Bern  
+41 31 350 03 80  
www.embassyofireland.ch

### Canada (embassy)

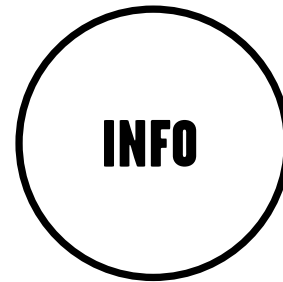
Kirchenfeldstrasse 88 CH-3005 Bern  
+41 31 357 32 00  
www.canadainternational.gc.ca/switzerland-suisse

### New Zealand (consulate)

Chemin des Fins 2  
CH-1218 Le Grand-Saconnex  
+41 22 929 03 50  
www.nzembassy.com/switzerland

### USA (embassy)

Sulgeneckstrasse 19  
CH-3007 Bern  
+41 31 357 70 11  
ch.usembassy.gov



[www.basel.ch](http://www.basel.ch)

Comprehensive information on Basel

[www.bfm.admin.ch](http://www.bfm.admin.ch)

The Federal Office for Migration

[www.awa.bs.ch](http://www.awa.bs.ch)

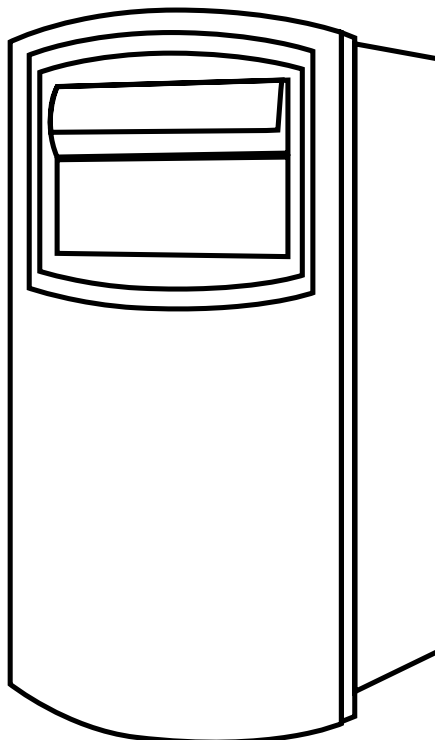
Office of Economy and Labour  
of Basel-Stadt

[www.programmzeitung.ch](http://www.programmzeitung.ch)

Calendar of events

[www.eda.admin.ch](http://www.eda.admin.ch)

Swiss representations worldwide



# HISTORY OF BASEL

## HAND AXES, RAURICI AND ROMANS

The first traces of a settlement in Basel are from the middle Paleolithic period (about 130,000 years ago). In the Bronze and Iron Ages, the banks of the Rhine, the area of the old gas works (now Novartis Campus) and Münsterhügel (cathedral hill) stood out as the main settlement areas. The latter area was fortified by the Celts (Raurici) in the first century BC with the Murus Gallicus (Gallic Wall), whose remains can still be seen near the Münster (cathedral). The Romans founded the Colonia Raurica at the same location, which they extended into a castle in the 3rd century. The Romanisation of the region only began with the Augusta Raurica colony (Roman town in Augst BL) under emperor Augustus Caesar. After the withdrawal of Roman troops, the Roman population settled in the fort, while the Alemanni spread out to the north of the Rhine and also in Augst. The first mention of the name 'Basel' appeared in writing in the year 374, when emperor Valentinian I stayed in the city on the Rhine.

## CATHEDRAL, RHINE BRIDGE AND GUILDS

A bishop of Augst/Kaiseraugst and 'Basileae' is mentioned in the 7th century. Tribes of Hungarian horsemen attacked the city in 917, destroying the Carolingian cathedral and killing the bishop. At the end of the 10th century, the power of the Bishop State was based on donations, and the city became part of the Holy Roman Empire soon afterwards.

The bishops of Basel won favour with the emperor, as can be seen by the foundation of today's Münster (consecrated in 1019) by Heinrich II. The city government – judicial rights, taxation authority, control over markets, coinage, weights and measures, etc. – was exercised by the prince-bishop of Basel through officials drawn from the nobility. In the 13th century, he had a bridge built over the Rhine, and then extended his authority over Kleinbasel, which was combined with Grossbasel in 1392. At the same time, the local communities secured a considerable amount of autonomy through clashes, sometimes violent, with the prince-bishop. The mayor, the senior guild masters and the Council now formed the city government, which ruled the whole of public life. By largely removing the rule of the bishop, the city also succeeded in repelling the political claims of the Habsburgs. The visible expression of this political and economic



Basel began to grow dramatically from 1850 onwards

advancement could be seen in the important buildings that were built: the new town hall (in 1340), the arsenal, the hospital and the guild halls.

## COUNCIL, UNIVERSITY AND CONFEDERATES

Basel was not spared when the plague swept through Europe: the epidemic broke out in 1349 and claimed many victims. The population blamed the Jews for this disaster, and burned them. A strong earthquake then occurred seven years later. The outbreak of fires in particular caused massive damage in the city. Soon afterwards, the city was enclosed by outer city walls, which also integrated the newly constructed suburbs: the St. Johann Gate, the Spalen Gate and the St. Alban Gate as well as the city walls in the Dalbeloch can still be seen today. In the late Middle Ages, many high dignitaries and foreigners came to Basel as a result of the Church Council (1431–1448). One of these later established the first university of Switzerland in Basel in 1460, when he became Pope Pius II. In economic terms, two annual fairs or trade shows promoted foreign trade, which was recognised by the Emperor in 1471 in the form of market privileges. In terms of foreign policy, independence from the bishop permitted the city to practise an active alliance and territorial policy, which – as in Schaffhausen – led to membership of the Swiss Confederation in 1501.



## HUMANISM, PRINTING AND THE REFORMATION

Around the time of the transition to modern times, scholars such as Erasmus of Rotterdam and artists such as Hans Holbein and Albrecht Dürer came to the city. Erasmus had his main works published by the innovative printer Johannes Froben. A prerequisite for this was created in Basel in 1433 with the local paper industry, which flourished under the Gallizian family around 1500. The Regiment of the Fifteen Guilds was established between 1521 and 1529. The old ruling class of the aristocratic families and the *Achtburger*, who lived on their rents, lost its political influence. The new faith, which the guilds were highly instrumental in helping to achieve a breakthrough in 1529, was spread in Basel mainly by the reformer Johannes Oekolampad. The government closed the monasteries and confiscated their property, while the converted population destroyed the symbols of the Roman Catholic faith in the *Bildersturm* (iconoclasm).

## IMMIGRANTS, SILK RIBBON AND SOVEREIGNTY

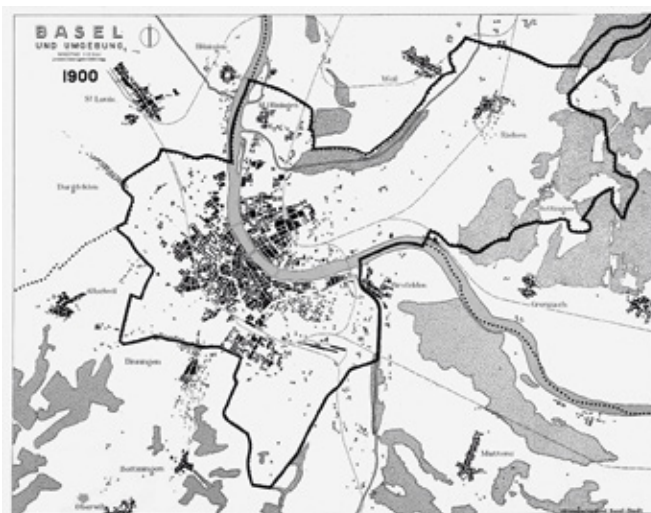
From the mid-16th century, immigrants arrived from northern Italy and France, in particular religious refugees, including well-known representatives of the silk trade. In addition to commerce, they also operated the spinning, dyeing and weaving shops, used rural homeworkers to produce silk ribbons, and exported them. As a result, Basel developed into an international centre of the silk ribbon industry. This dominated the city until well into the 19th century, complemented by a variety of wholesale commerce with cloth, cotton, iron and colonial produce. Extensive commission and bank transactions secured Basel an increasingly important position in

international trade. Thanks to the city's success, some religious refugees had already risen into the upper classes by the 17th century. At the peace congress following the Thirty Years' War, the mayor of Basel, Johann Rudolf Wettstein, represented the Swiss Confederation and, in 1648, was able to achieve the Confederation's independence from the German Empire and recognition of its sovereignty under international law – the origin of Swiss neutrality.

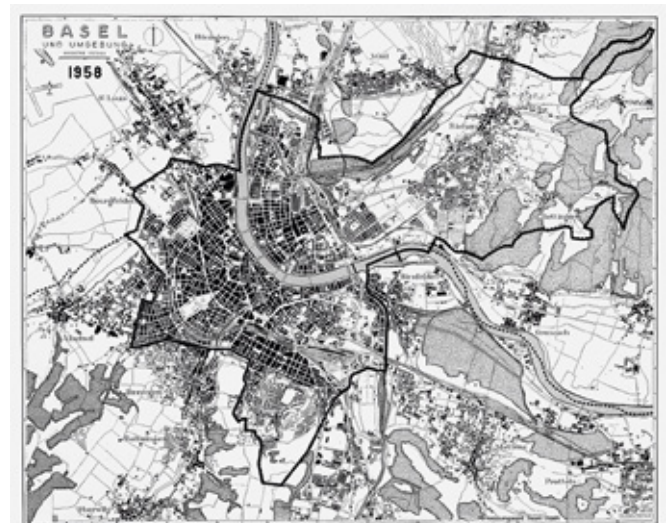
## OLIGARCHY, ENLIGHTENMENT AND THE COMMON GOOD

At the time of the 'Ancien Régime', the elite of Basel also adopted the French lifestyle and language. Basel merchants opened trading offices in Lyon, Nantes or Bordeaux. The leading families built themselves palaces based on the French model (see the White and Blue Houses) and dressed according to French fashion. The city's policy also aligned itself with the absolute state power of the Sun King: the republic of Basel began to approach the status of an oligarchy ('rule of the few') with absolutist tendencies.

In Europe, thought and science began to change fundamentally in the late 17th century. Knowledge gradually began to prevail over religious dogma. A decisive factor in the new, rational world of the Enlightenment was mathematics, in which the Basel academic family Bernoulli excelled – they brought forth a total of nine outstanding mathematicians and physicists. In addition, another genius from Basel, Leonhard Euler, taught mathematics in St. Petersburg and Berlin. On the publishing side, the activities of Isaak Iselin stand out in particular in the Basel of the 18th century. His philanthropic ideas are behind the 'Gesellschaft zur Aufmunterung und Beförderung des Guten und Gemeinnützigen' GGG (Society for the encouragement and promotion of the good and charitable) that was founded in 1777. Also initiated by Iselin, 'the Basler Lesegesellschaft' (Basel Readers' Association) opened up the debate with the ideas of the time to a small circle of people in 1787.



Industrialisation in the 19th century played a key role in the expansion of the city



By the mid-20th century, Basel's population had increased to almost 184,000



The old, partly wooden 'Mittlere Brücke' around 1900  
Picture: Staatsarchiv Basel-Stadt. BILD 1, 64

## REVOLUTION, MISSION AND DIVISION OF THE CANTON

The 18th century strengthened the dominant position of the merchants, bankers and ribbon manufacturers in politics and society. A group of rich merchants governed the city with success until the political overthrow that led to the Helvetic Republic. When the Helvetic Revolution spread out from Basel and Vaud in 1798, the Old Confederation with its urban authorities and subject territories was defeated in the fight against the French revolutionary troops (French Invasion). While the Basel statesman Peter Ochs drew up a constitution for the Confederation in Paris, the French started to plunder and politically reorganise the occupied areas. As a result, the population of the 'Landschaft Basel' became the legal equals of the city population. At the start of the 19th century, Napoleon's economic war against England had a negative effect in Basel, above all on the silk ribbon industry. But there were also businessmen who made a profit from the inflationary impact of the 'Continental System' – such as

Christoph Merian-Hoffmann, who acquired an enormous fortune. His fortune was later bequeathed to the city of Basel and resulted in the Christoph Merian Foundation, still one of the largest charitable organisations in Basel today. Another influential institution that is still in operation is the Basler Mission, which was founded in 1815 and works together with churches in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. The division of the canton produced political and financial difficulties: After some violent clashes, the Canton of Basel was split into the two half-cantons Basel-Stadt and Basel-Landschaft in 1833.

## INDUSTRIALISATION, FINANCIAL CENTRE AND ZIONISM

Traffic and industrialisation changed the face of Basel in the 19th century: a steamboat moored here for the first time in 1832. Eight years later, the first train in Switzerland ran on the route between Saint-Louis and Basel, for which a station was opened within the city walls in 1845. Trains were soon travelling to Paris and Frankfurt every day. In economic life, guild barriers continued to apply for most trades until 1871. Only industry was able to produce without them. Decisive steps towards industrial production in factories were the connection of weaving looms to a waterwheel, and the first steam engine in the spinning mill. Basel finally became the largest industrial city in Switzerland in the second half of the

19th century. As a modern financial centre, the city gained international importance with the founding of the Schweizerischer Bankverein SBV (Swiss Bank Corporation), the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) and the stock exchange, which remained active until 1996. World history was written with the First Zionist World Congress in Basel in 1897, which started the process for the founding of the State of Israel.

## RHINE NAVIGATION, CHEMICAL INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE

Between the separation of the cantons and the outbreak of the First World War, Basel developed from a small fortified town to a medium-sized industrial city. Modern goods transport started at the Upper Rhine (up to Schweizerhalle) in 1904, and culminated in the building of the St. Johann Rhine port and the two docks in Kleinhüningen. For decades, trade and commerce provided the most jobs, above all the retail trade (Coop). In order to promote sales of Swiss products, the Mustermesse (Sample Fair) was held in Basel for the first time in 1917. From this early event, the Messe Basel with its many trade fairs evolved. Meanwhile, the chemical-pharmaceutical industry had become the most important industry. It began with the J. R. Geigy pharmacy (1758) and the aniline dye production of Alexander Clavel (from 1859). A concentration process has since been under way, culminating in the global groups Ciba and Sandoz – that merged to form Novartis in 1996 – and Roche (founded in 1896).

## AIRPORT, LIFE SCIENCES AND ARCHITECTURE

Due to the geographically limited reach of its policy decisions, cooperation within the Regio Basiliensis became increasingly important for the Canton of Basel-Stadt in the 20th century. Biotechnology (life sciences) became established in the region towards the end of the century. The bi-national airport Basel-Mulhouse (known as the EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg) guaranteed connections all over the world from 1946. In addition to aviation and the Rhine navigation, road haulage with Danzas (now DHL) and Panalpina achieved economic importance in 1991 as the largest private group in the transport sector. When the Schweizerische Bankgesellschaft SBG (Union Bank of Switzerland UBS) and the Schweizerischer Bankverein SBV (Swiss Bank Corporation) merged to form UBS in 1998, Basel – together with Zurich – became the headquarters of a leading global financial institution. At the political level, membership of the European Economic Area (EEA/EWR) was rejected by the people and the cantons in 1992. Basel-Stadt voted in favour, however, together with French-speaking Switzerland.

The cultural milestones of the last century include the founding of the Basler Orchester-Gesellschaft (1921) and the Schola Cantorum (1933) for early music, as well as the rebuilding of the Kunstmuseum Basel (1936) and the development of its collection into one of the most important international museums of its kind. Other recently established collections of world renown are the Fondation Beyeler in Riehen (1997) and the Schaulager in Münchenstein (2003). In terms of sport, Basel stands out for its world famous Swiss Indoors tennis tournament (since 1970) and the FC Basel (founded in 1893). Its multifunctional stadium St. Jakob-Park was designed by Herzog & de Meuron, who won the Pritzker Prize, the most prestigious award for architects, for this piece of work in 2001. Thus, the turn of the millennium saw Basel establish its reputation as an architectural hotspot. In 2001, Novartis started to build an extensive research and business campus, with buildings by illustrious architects such as Tadao Ando, Frank O. Gehry, Adolf Krischanitz, and Alvaro Siza, among others. The area around the Novartis Campus was modernised and developed with new buildings by Christ & Gantenbein Architects and Buchner-Bründler Architects. Christ & Gantenbein are also responsible for the extension to the Kunstmuseum Basel that was finished in 2016. The 105-metre-high Messe tower by architects Morger Degelo and Marques stands at Exhibition Square and right next to it the new Exhibition Centre by Herzog & de Meuron that was finished in 2013. Herzog & de Meuron also designed the Roche tower, which was completed in 2015 and, at 178 metres, is the highest commercial or residential building in Switzerland.

## THE BASEL COAT OF ARMS

The Basel Staff is a stylised reproduction of the bishop's crosier (crook). In 1512, Pope Julius II rewarded the federal towns for their assistance in his war against France. Basel was awarded the privilege of displaying a golden bishop's crosier in its coat of arms, as can still be seen today in the choir of the Leonhardskirche. After the Reformation in 1529, however, Basel returned to the plain, black bishop's crosier.

Source: adapted from the Historical Dictionary of Switzerland

# BASEL IN FIGURES

A centre of industrial innovation, business is burgeoning in the Basel region. A strong tradition in finance, logistics and the pharma industry serves the region well and ensures continuing growth and expansion. With 700 life sciences companies and 33,000 employees in the life sciences sector, the region is a magnet for new companies and highly qualified talent alike.

**246 m**  
Height above sea level

**36%**  
Foreigners as proportion of total population

**65**  
Hotels

**160**  
Nationalities represented

**190,700**  
Persons in employment

**20**  
Theatre stages

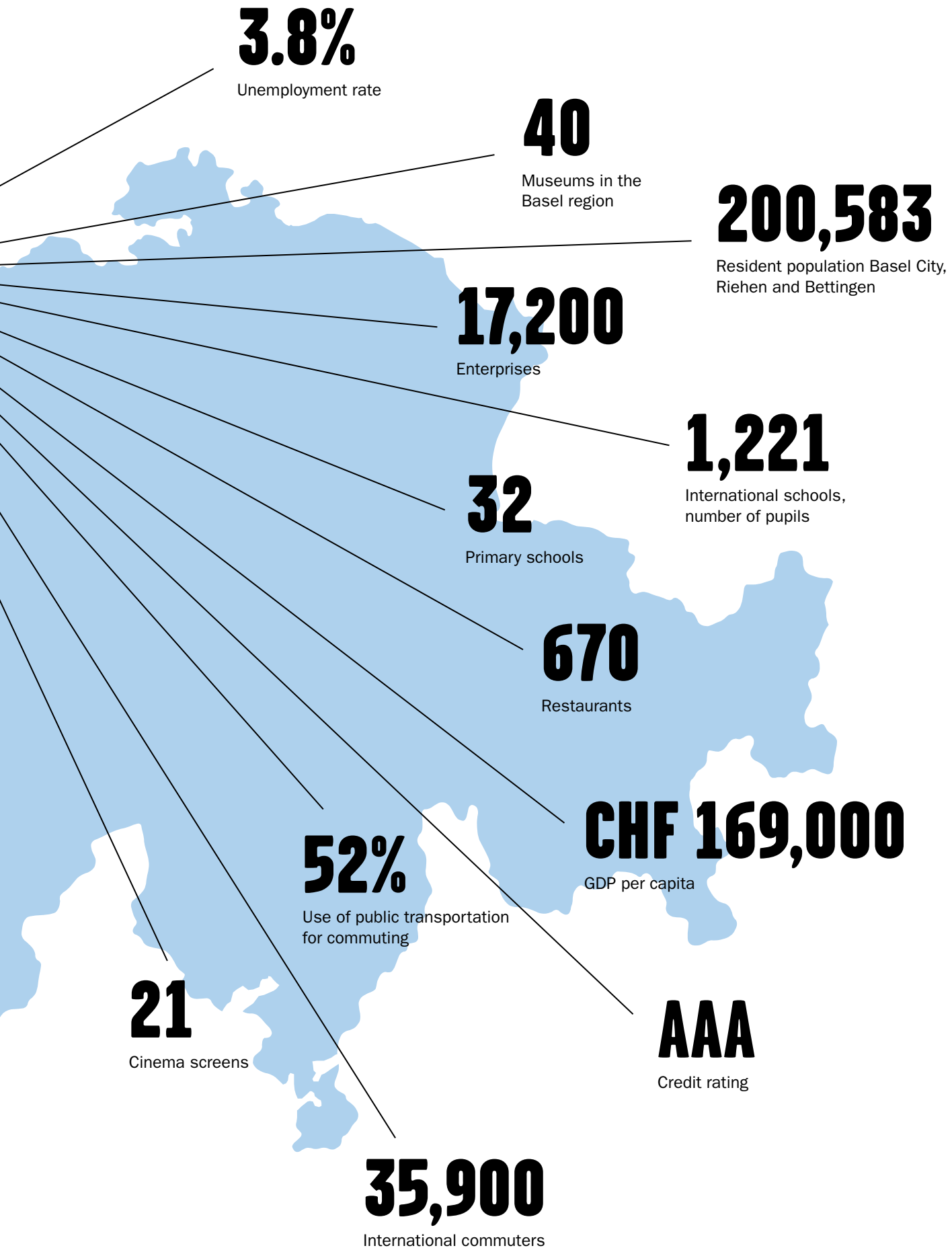
**141**  
Kindergartens

**13,458**  
University, number of students

**37 km<sup>2</sup>**  
Total area

**177,932**  
Resident population  
Basel City

Statistical Office of the Canton of Basel-Stadt:  
the figures are from October 2018 and apply to the  
Canton of Basel-Stadt except where otherwise noted





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