Welcome.
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 trinational EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg is a key transport hub, linking the region with Europe and the world. 2000 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.

VARIED 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 25 smaller theatres, a musical stage, 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 1000 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 and many more have made 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. Finally, Basel has become 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, several institutions of higher education, and the oldest university in Switzerland provide the high level of education so important to Basel as a centre of research. Over the past three decades, a veritable research hub has grown out of the substantial investments 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, a beautiful old town centre stands in contrast to impressive contemporary architecture. 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 in Basel and 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 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

At the heart of Europe, between the river Rhine and the Alps, lies the landlocked country of Switzerland. With its German, French, Italian and Rhaeto-Romanic speaking population, the country is a microcosm of Europe’s cultural diversity. Welcome to Europe. Welcome to Switzerland.

Switzerland’s Strengths

At the heart of Europe
Switzerland is surrounded by three of Europe’s major — and most populous — countries: France, Germany and Italy. 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. Five international airports in Zurich, Geneva, Basel, Bern and Lugano 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 (European 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 anywhere in the world.

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

< The world-famous Matterhorn in Zermatt.

Switzerland – at the heart of Europe.
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 the developments in mechanical engineering, the chemical companies, the watch industry, a strong tertiary sector comprising international banks and insurances, 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 600 billion. Average labour productivity amounts to about CHF 130,000. Per capita income lies at about CHF 74,500. Total pre-tax national income amounts to about CHF 590 billion. Approximately CHF 60 billion are spent by the federal government each year, while all the cantons together account for about CHF 75.5 billion in spending per annum (Swiss Federal Statistical Office, 2010).

Safe currency, low unemployment rate
The Swiss franc has been a popular and stable currency for decades. The year 2000 marked the end of Switzerland's longest period (8 years) of economic stagnation in the 20th century. At times, the unemployment rate rose above 5%, which is unusual for Switzerland. Today, unemployment is back at a low 3%.

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.

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 worldwide) 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 8%.
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. Usually, some ten parties win enough seats to enter the Assembly. The Swiss government is the 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 collectively. Every year, one member of the Federal Council is elected President. However, the President is a purely 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). In order to be passed, referenda require a double majority: not only the majority of the population, but also the majority of the cantons have to give their approval. 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 every member of society must assume responsibility for their 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. However, unlike subsidiarity, neutrality is not a constitutional principle, but an instrument of foreign policy that is supported and protected by international agreements.

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

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 2008, Switzerland also signed the Schengen agreement. Furthermore, Switzerland remains a member of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

UN
Since September 2003, 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).
Geographic location
Covering an area of just 41,293 km², 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, Rhone and a number of tributaries of the Danube start in the Alps. Apart from these big rivers, 140 glaciers 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. 23% of the country's approximately 8.1 million inhabitants are foreigners. Half of them have lived in the country for over 15 years, about 30% were actually born in Switzerland or have lived here for over 30 years.

Four official languages
There are four official languages in Switzerland. German is most widely spoken, followed by French, Italian and Rhaeto-Romance, 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 parliamentary republic divided into 26 cantons. Three of these are subdivided into subcantons: Obwalden and Nidwalden, Appenzell Innerrhoden and Appenzell Ausserrhoden, Basel-Stadt and Basel-Landschaft. The federal capital is Bern.
Further Information

www.myswitzerland.com
The website of Switzerland Tourism provides extensive information about travel and culture in Switzerland

www.s-ge.com/usa/invest/en
A website on a variety of topics relating to business in Switzerland and its cantons

www.swissinfo.ch
Comprehensive news and information portal, containing a large number of contributions, including audio and video

www.admin.ch
The Federal Administration

www.parlament.ch
The Federal Assembly (the Swiss Parliament)

www.bfs.admin.ch
Federal Statistical Office

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
Directorate for European Affairs

As a border city, Basel is a link between Switzerland and Europe.
Where Switzerland, France and Germany meet lies Basel, at the heart of a trinational metropolitan area. In this unique location, the city has much to offer: an international flair, good schools, innovative research, a thriving economy, an excellent regional and international transport infrastructure, a rich cultural life and a high standard of living. As a border city with inhabitants from more than 160 countries, Basel is cosmopolitan despite its small size. Last but not least, Basel is the second-sunniest place in Switzerland.

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 Grossbasel has the reputation of being posh and snobbish among the Kleinbasel population.

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 location 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.

Quality of life
The nearly 200,000 inhabitants and more than a million 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 one of the many bars and cafés for an after-work drink, go for a stroll along the river or enjoy the picturesque old town.

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 Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH) is also located in Basel.

Culture with a capital C
The quality and quantity of Basel’s cultural offering is mind-boggling: 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.

< View of the Münster, the cathedral of Basel on the banks of the Rhine.
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 is nestled 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 North-western Switzerland and a major junction on the North–South and East–West transit routes.

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). Basel is the second-sunniest place in Switzerland, after sun-drenched Ticino. The dense fog that covers many parts of central Switzerland in winter only rarely reaches Basel. The average rainfall of 750 mm is the lowest in Switzerland north of the Rhone Valley.

Colourful population mix
The population of the Canton of Basel-Stadt comprises approximately 193,000 people, some 170,200 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 20% to over 30%, which reflects the economic dynamism and cosmopolitan nature of the city. The most important 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 pointed, 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. 34% of the population claim they are agnostic.

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 km²). As the largest city in a geographically defined region comprising about two million inhabitants (the so-called Upper Rhine region), Basel provides important services to its neighbours in the Canton of Basel-Landschaft, 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 half-cantons, and as such is entitled to 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. As at the federal level, the largest political parties are accorded government responsibility in Basel. The government of Basel-Stadt governs both the city of Basel and the Canton of Basel-Stadt.

Parliament
The Great Council is the canton’s legislative body and has 100 members. They are elected by the people in four constituencies within the city and Riehen, as well as in an individual election in Bettingen. The parliament sessions take place once a 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. The President also acts as 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 level only. Every Swiss citizen is also a citizen of a certain municipality. Therefore, there is a so-called municipal council in larger towns. 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.
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, outstanding 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 quaint little ferries, the trade fairs, the first zoo in Switzerland, the Tinguely Fountain, the Dreiländereck, where Switzerland, Germany and France meet, and 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 very popular monument, though: cathedral hill high above the river. The square in front of the cathedral in romanesque-gothic style is a beautiful example of a typical medieval square, offering splendid views of the old town, the Rhine and the surrounding hills.
Further Information

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

www.statistik.bs.ch
Cantonal Office of Statistics

www.awa.bs.ch
Office of Economy and Labour of Basel-Stadt

www.baselarea.ch
Economic promotion

www.bettingen.ch
Website of the municipality of Bettingen

www.riehen.ch
Website of the municipality of Riehen
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

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

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), Lion and Wild Man are the heraldic symbols of the three Honorary Societies of Kleinbasel. At about 11 a.m., 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.

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.

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.

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 Monday morning at four o’clock: All the lights in the city centre go out, only the big lanterns of the carnival groups illuminate the dark. 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 cozy bars.

For three days, the city abandons itself to wild revelry – accompanied by the sound of thousands of piccolos and drums. The so-called cliques march through the streets of Basel. Their masks, costumes and lanterns satirically express themes that were hotly debated in Basel the year before. It is a time of irony and humour, many renowned artists and writers contribute to the images and characters acted out. On Monday and Wednesday, Schnitzelbank singers play their satirical songs in the restaurants and bars. In addition to the cliques, 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.

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

< Fireworks in Basel on the Rhine during the Swiss national holiday.
Baselworld – the watch and jewellery show
Glitter, sparkle, dazzle: The world’s most important specialist trade fair for the international watch and jewellery industry is staged in April. 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 booked up.

Badminton Swiss Open
In March, the world’s best badminton players come to Basel to compete in this international tournament.

European Festival of Youth Choirs Basel
The European Festival of Youth Choirs Basel takes place every second year 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.

Jazz by Off Beat/JSB Festival
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.

‘muba’ – Switzerland’s biggest consumer goods fair
Another major spring trade fair is a part of Basel’s history: The ‘muba’ (‘Mustermesse Basel’) was held for the first time during the 1st World War in order to present the products of Swiss industry and agriculture. In recent decades, the ‘muba’ has developed more and more into a national consumer goods and theme show.

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. There are many smaller exhibitions (LISTE, Volta, Scope), special shows and parties 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’ wants to show newer and bolder art to a younger audience. It has grown to become 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.

Theatre and music
For one weekend in spring, everything revolves around the local music scene at the Bscene festival. Dozens of bars and clubs set up stages, and over 300 local bands show their energy and talent. Every two years, the festival Wildwuchs stages theatre projects for and by people with disabilities.

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 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.

Spring Approaches

Spring Delights

Art Basel is the world's leading art fair which attracts thousands of people every year.
**Summertime – Holiday Season**

**Basel at its most attractive**
At the end of June, schoolchildren pack away their books and satchels 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 most southern city north of the Alps. Social life gravitates towards the parks, the many garden restaurants and the banks of the river Rhine. Now there is time for bicycle excursions to the canals in Alsace, the cool Black Forest or the wilder Jura plains.

**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.

**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.

**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.

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

**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 for their creative energy.

**Stimmenfestival**
Another top event every summer is the Stimmenfestival (Festival of the Voices), staged just over the border in the German town of Lörrach – and 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 the established stars of the world music scene also appear regularly.

**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 Orange Open-Air Cinema, which shows blockbuster movies on the Münsterplattz during two weeks in July and August. There are also special nights, premieres and previews. The Neues Kino screens older films on the roof of an old corn tower in the Swiss Rhine Ports (Kino auf der Siloterrasse).

**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 Barrüsserplatz 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 mid-July to the end of November, the top clubs of the Swiss Super League compete in the qualifying rounds for the championship, which is then played out from March onwards. 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 top clubs are impressed when they play against FCB in the Champions League.

**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 and pop groups have played in Basel. Apart from concerts, Basel also regularly hosts many international sporting championships.
An Autumn Full of Culture and Sports

IWB Basel Marathon
Cooler weather in September means it’s time for the IWB Basel marathon ‘Run to the Beat’. The routes lead the runners through Basel’s picturesque city centre and beyond to the outer edges of the city.

Baloise Session – pop, blues & soul
November is a highlight for the fans of sophisticated music: ‘The Baloise Session’ is staged at the Exhibition Centre. Whether it be the Supremes or the Temptations, Zucchero or Amy Macdonald, Suzanne Vega or Reamonn – the great names of the blues, jazz and soul world all come to Basel to present their shows.

Herbstmesse
The Basler Herbstmesse (autumn fair) is a very old tradition that reaches 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 pleasant aromas infuse the city’s various fun-fair sites. Held at the same time, the Herbstwarenmesse (consumer goods fair) and the Weihnmesse (wine fair) are also an absolute must for many visitors.

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

Winter – Sports Events and Christmas Cheer

Christmas in Basel
At the end of November, a unique and festive atmosphere takes over the city. Thousands of fairy lights and tastefully decorated Christmas trees are an invitation to enjoy an evening of Christmas shopping. 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.

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.

BaselHead
BaselHead is Switzerland’s biggest eights event and the largest international sporting competition held on the Rhine.

Women’s top volleyball
The Top Women’s Volley International Competition is staged at the St. Jakobshalle between Christmas and New Year. This international sporting event offers extremely attractive ladies’ volleyball for a large audience.

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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.

Shift – Electronic Arts Festival
Basel is not only a city for traditional art. In the last decade or so, ‘Shift’, the festival of electronic art has attracted an international audience for film, electronic media and video. The festival includes performances, discussions and talks.

Culturescapes
This festival gives audiences a deeper insight into the current cultural and creative activities of a selected country, city or region.

The Ferris wheel on cathedral hill during Basler Herbstmesse.
Further Information

www.basel.ch
Official website with everything you need to know about Basel

www.basel.com
Website of Basel Tourism

www.mybasel.ch
News and practical information about Basel and events in Basel

www.fasnacht.ch
All about the Basel carnival

www.baslerweihnacht.ch
All about the Christmas markets and the special events of the season

www.museenbasel.ch
Official website of Basel's museums

www.museumsnacht.ch
For one night a year, all the museums are open and offer a special programme

www.baselworld.com
Watch and jewellery show in Basel

www.muba.ch
The biggest public trade fair in Switzerland

www.artbasel.ch
Art Basel, the world's leading art show

www.liste.ch
Exposition for young artists

www.scope-art.com
Show for contemporary and multidisciplinary art held during Art Basel

www.volttashow.com
Platform for contemporary art galleries held during Art Basel

www.shiftfestival.ch
Festival of electronic art

www.jazzfestivalbasel.ch
Offbeat Jazzfestival Basel

www.embebbysjazz.ch
Open-air jazz festival

www.summerblues.ch
Open-air blues festival in Kleinbasel

www.baloisesession.ch
Baloise Session Basel, pop, blues and soul festival

www.stimmen.com
Stimmenfestival in Lörrach

www.imfluss.ch
Concerts on a floating stage on the Rhine

www.baselworld.com
Watch and jewellery show in Basel

www.jkf.ch
Jugendkulturfestival (Youth Culture Festival)
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

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 over 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 Massachussetts, Shanghai and Miami Beach
In 2002 Basel entered a formal partnership with the American State of Massachussetts. 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.

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, there are more newcomers from English-speaking countries.

‘We speak English’
Switzerland has four official languages, and multilingual skills are actively promoted. All 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.

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. 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.

< People from some 160 nations live in Basel.
English Life in Basel

English-speaking churches
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-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, and the English Panto Group.

Film and video
At movie theatres in Switzerland, most international films are shown in the original language, generally with German and French subtitles. Videos and DVDs can be borrowed in most public libraries. In addition, Centrepoint has a large English video/DVD library.

Radio, TV and newspapers
CNN and CNBC, BBC World, BBC Prime and Eurosport, NBC Europe and TCM & Cartoon Network are all broadcast on cable TV. Additional channels can be received via digital networks. The local TV channel Telebasel broadcasts its programme ‘In dubio pro regio’ in English as well as in Swiss German. Basel-based Radio X has a special weekly programme in English for the international community. A variety of English newspapers and magazines are available at kiosks throughout the city. Local news in English is also available on the website of the Basler Zeitung (www.baz.ch, English Corner). 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. 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.
Further Information

**www.basel.ch**
Official website with everything you need to know about Basel

**www.swissinfo.ch**
Comprehensive news and information portal, containing a large number of contributions, including audio and video

**www.welcome-to-basel.bs.ch**
People who move to Basel are invited to a Welcome Event by the Department of Presidential Affairs. This website also provides valuable information and support for new residents.

**www.auslaenderberatung-basel.ch**
Consultations for foreigners offered in 15 languages

**www.integration-bsbl.ch**
This comprehensive website is the place to look for services and associations by or for foreigners.

**www.inforel.ch**
Information on religious communities in the Basel area

**bern.usembassy.gov**
The U.S. embassy in Switzerland provides extensive information about life in the USA and in Switzerland.

**www.britain-in-switzerland.ch**
The British embassy in Switzerland provides extensive information about life in Great Britain and Switzerland.

**www.baselconnect.ch**
BaselConnect brings locals and expats together to learn from each other.

**www.spousecareercentre.com**
The Spouse Career Centre offers advice for partners of people who have moved to Basel for a new job.

**www.crescenda.ch**
Advice for women who want to start their own business

**www.pwg-basel.ch**
The Professional Women’s Group is an English-speaking networking group for women from all cultural and professional backgrounds.

There is a lively pub scene, where expats and locals meet.
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. The Canton of Basel-Stadt includes the city of Basel itself 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. 85% of the people living in Basel rent their accommodation; apartments are usually rented unfurnished, but with fully fitted kitchens and bathrooms. A long-term programme has been established to build new quality flats in the city and to speed up urban development as Basel strives to become even more attractive and family friendly.

Metropolitan Basel

Cross-border integration
Looking out of the plane landing at Euro-Airport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg makes it perfectly clear: Basel and the surrounding towns have spread out across the borders of France and Germany to form one big metropolitan area (TAB – Trinational Agglomeration Basel). Densely built-up areas extend along the river valleys and main thoroughfares; 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 Wehr and Bad Säckingen. Finally, in France, the Trinational Eurodistrict encompasses the three Communautés de communes du Pays de Saint-Louis.

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.

Regio TriRhena
Regio TriRhena is the name given to the large economic area of the Upper Rhine. Besides Northwestern Switzerland, it also includes the cities of Mulhouse and Colmar in France as well as Freiburg in Germany. About 2.3 million people live in this region.

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
Although Riehen counts 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 2700 municipalities, it acts independently: Riehen collects its own taxes, has its own parliament and executive council. Because of its proximity to Germany, Riehen’s situation is slightly unusual: Cross-border life is governed by a large number of international agreements. Riehen is a very green town and a popular home for families. The Fondation Beyeler, home of the Beyeler art collection (20th-century art), attracts much international attention. Riehen’s other sights include the medieval Kirchenburg (the late Gothic village church), the Gemeindemuseum (municipal museum) and the splendid country estates of Wenkenhof and Bäumlihof.

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 building in Switzerland (250 m). Both belong to the village of Bettingen, the second – very small – rural municipality of the Canton of Basel-Stadt, with just 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.

< A picturesque corner in the historic old town.
Basel-Stadt 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, 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 prices and sizes is available. Successful efforts have been made to preserve quiet and leafy residential areas in all neighbourhoods. The quality of life in these areas is being further enhanced by reducing the speed limit to 30 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). Many 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.
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. A rented room or small flat costs between CHF 700 and CHF 1400 per month; larger flats of three to five bedrooms cost between CHF 1500 and CHF 2900. Rental charges comprise not just the rent itself, but also ancillary charges (heating, electricity, water, and sometimes gas and cable TV connections). Landlords normally demand at least one month’s rent as a deposit, and require their tenants to take out liability and household contents insurance. A rule of thumb when calculating a budget for accommodation: Rental costs should not exceed 25% of the total household income.

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 one of the lowest crime rates amongst Swiss cities. Residents accordingly feel very 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 buy a special waste bag that includes the 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 brought to 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.
initiatives for the future of Basel-Stadt

Urban development
In the past fifteen years, 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, is growing, 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, a centre for design, 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 are giving way to a new campus for the College of Art and Design, along with museums, apartment blocks and restaurants.

Building for the future
To improve the infrastructure, 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 is under way and includes buildings by many internationally renowned architects. A new office tower for Roche, designed by Herzog & de Meuron, is being built – to be inaugurated in 2015. When it is finished, it will be the highest building in Switzerland.
Some things never change: The Munster is still one of the city’s landmarks.

Further Information

www.eurodistrictbasel.eu
Trinational Eurodistrict Basel

www.riehen.ch
The website of the municipality of Riehen

www.bettingen.ch
The website of the municipality of Bettingen

Search engines for housing and apartments
www.alle-immobilien.ch
www.immobilen.bs.ch
www.homegate.ch
www.immoscout24.ch
www.planetproperty.ch
www.immostreet.com

Relocation agencies
www.crownrelo.com
Crown Relocation

www.network-relocation.com
Network Relocation

www.bsws.ch
Regio Basel WS Relocation

www.kellerbasel.ch
Keller Swissgroup
Basel is nicknamed the ‘cultural capital of Switzerland’. The city lives and breathes culture, and promotes and celebrates the arts. Despite its small size, Basel has an exceptional cultural offering. Many of its institutions and events enjoy an international reputation, such as the 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 one of the first collections in the world to be opened 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 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 of 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 philosophers such as Friedrich Nietzsche and Karl Barth. As a city of book printing and publishing, it became an important platform for humanism, and was for many years the home of Erasmus of Rotterdam.

< The Fondation Beyeler in Riehen.
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 Civilizations) 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 for 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.

**The quaint and the curious**
Let’s not forget the many smaller, quaint and often quite humorous museums that harbour real treasures and intriguing little bits and pieces. 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 it is not only the museums, art rooms and galleries that show a wide range of art. The artists from Basel themselves display their work at the annual Regionale. The highlight of the art scene is, of course, Art Basel, the largest art fair in the world. On four days in June, the whole city revolves around art. Many extra shows, smaller fairs and parties turn Basel into an exclusive city of art.

**Public art**
Art is also displayed in public places: Jonathan Borofsky’s ‘Hammering Man’, a steel and aluminium giant of 13.4 metres, works without pause on the Aeschenplatz, right in front of the UBS building. It symbolises all those who work towards a safe environment that is worth living in. Another notable work is Richard Serra’s massive sculpture ‘Intersection’ on the Theaterplatz and, just next to it, there is the fountain by Jean Tinguely with its playful, coquettish and melancholy water-spraying sculptures. Sculptures and murals are part of Basel’s urban space, and are well taken care of.
Theater Basel
The Theater Basel is the centrepiece of theatre life in Basel. It is run as a three-fold stage, with some thirty opera, drama, and ballet productions a year. In order to build a new central stage, a private group of theatre-loving ladies collected the funds needed. In 2002, the new Schauspielhaus was opened, so that Theater Basel now has three stages to perform on.

Fringe theatres
There are around 25 other theatres of various sizes in Basel. Among them the Kaserne, several children’s and young people’s theatres, such as the Junges Theater Basel, the dialect theatres of the Fauteuil and Hässe theatres, the Basler Marionette-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 Musical Theater Basel, where large shows are staged and the festival ‘basel tanzt’ is held every year.

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 high-class local orchestras and chamber groups, including the Basel symphony orchestra, the Sinfonietta and the Basel chamber orchestra, international orchestras and soloists also regularly perform there. The Musikakademie (College of Music) has an excellent reputation and runs its own concert hall. A large part of the classical music scene is funded by the Allgemeine Musikgesellschaft (AMG), founded in 1876. The Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel is home to one of the largest collections of 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 avantgarde jazz. The Basel Jazz School is part of the well-known Musikakademie. For lovers of rock and pop music, concerts are organised at several smaller venues in the inner city, for example at the Kaserne (the former military barracks in Kleinbasel), in the Volkshaus and in the Sommercasino. 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.

Music festivals
Festivals in Basel: encounters with stars and hidden gems, in all musical genres. 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 Lörach, Germany: The top acts perform on 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 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 biannual 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 one of the largest open-air festivals of its kind in Europe. Every summer, the best military bands and other musical formations from around the world present catchy tunes combined with elaborately choreographed marching sequences, and deliver a marvellous spectacle of colour and light in front of the fitting backdrop of the Kaserne Basel.

One highlight in Basel’s summer culture programme are concerts on a floating stage.
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 the Peter Merian House by Zwimpfer Partners with its spectacular, emerald green façade executed by the artist Donald Judd. A few steps along is the 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, finished in 2013. The Roche tower, which will be the highest building in Switzerland at 175 metres when completed in 2015, is also designed by Herzog & de Meuron. The St. Jakob-Park football stadium is another showpiece by the same architects. The new Novartis Campus next to the French border has been under way since 2001. The illustrious list of architects giving shape to this centre of innovation includes David Chipperfield, Tadao Ando, Diener & Diener, Frank O. Gehry, Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, Adolf Krischanitz, Peter Märkl, 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 took traffic out of the neighbourhood. New buildings by Christ & Gantenbein and Buchner Bründler Architects are recent urban landmarks. Last but not least, the construction of an extension to the Kunstmuseum Basel, designed by Christ & Gantenbein Architects, commenced in 2013.

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.

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), the Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst (College of Art and Design) position themselves at the forefront of graphic design. With Hyperwerk, the new department for electronic media, the college has gained an international reputation. In recent years, Basel has hosted the electronic arts festival Shift. There is also a gallery for electronic art and media, the House of Electronic Arts.

The 105-metre-high Messe tower by Morger Degelo.
Further Information

www.basel.ch
Official website with everything you need to know about Basel, including cultural life

www.mybasel.ch
News and practical information about Basel and events in Basel

www.museenbasel.ch
This website contains a comprehensive range of information about museums in Basel.

www.museumspass.com
Pass for all the museums in the Basel region, including museums in France and Germany

www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch
Museum of art and museum of contemporary art Basel

www.beyeler.com
Fondation Beyeler in Riehen

www.schaulager.org
Repository and showroom of the Emanuel Hoffmann collection

www.design-museum.de
Vitra Design Museum

www.sam-basel.org
Swiss architecture museum Basel

www.kunstinbasel.ch
Galleries in Basel

www.artbasel.ch
Information about Art Basel, the world’s leading art fair

www.regionale.org
Annual exhibition of work by local artists

www.theater-basel.ch
Basel’s theatre and opera house

www.baselantzt.ch
Festival for dance

www.konzerte-basel.ch
Basel’s symphony orchestra

www.sinfonieorchesterbasel.ch
Basel’s symphony orchestra

www.baselsinfonietta.ch
Basel’s experimental symphony orchestra

www.kammerorchesterbasel.ch
Basel’s chamber orchestra

www.konzerte-basel.ch
Website of the Allgemeine Musikgesellschaft

www.musicaltheaterbasel.ch
Modern theatre and concert house

www.baloisesession.ch
Baloise Session – pop and blues festival

www.stimmen.com
Stimmenfestival in Lörrach

www.jazzfestivalbasel.ch
Basel’s annual jazz festival offbeat

www.ejcf.ch
European Youth Choir Festival

www.jkf.ch
Jugendkulturfestival, festival for youth culture

www.baselattoo.ch
Basel Tattoo

www.shiftfestival.ch
Basel’s festival of the electronic arts

The copper railway signal tower by Herzog & de Meuron Architects.
LEISURE

The leisure opportunities in Basel and the surrounding areas are limitless: beautiful landscapes around the city, many active associations, a varied restaurant scene and exciting nightlife. Barbecue evenings on the banks of the Rhine or the smaller river Birs, a quiet stroll through the local forests, or a visit to Switzerland’s largest botanical garden – variety is the spice of life in Basel.

Excursions 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 a pleasurable day. The recreational area Lange Erlen 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. Chrischona 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 currents. The Swiss Rhine Ports with the Dreiländereck, where Germany, France and Switzerland meet, are also worth a visit. Das Schiff, a floating club with bars and restaurants on three levels, anchors nearby. 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 to castles or across beautiful hills. 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 the black forest, where Germany, France and Switzerland meet, are the numerous castles and castle ruins that 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 well loved 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.

Another part of the Département du Haut-Rhin is Sundgau, a varied, 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 www.gruenguertel.ch (green belt) describes fifty 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 food and drink establishments are also given for every site.

< Relaxing with family and friends on the banks of the Rhine.
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, specialty shops and take-aways.

Regional specialties
In Basel, Mehlsuppe (flour soup) and Zwiebelwähe (onion pie) are traditional dishes served during the carnival season. There is also the Fasnachtsküchlein, a crispy fried pancake dusted with powdered sugar. A sweet speciality and a popular export are the so-called 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
Basel offers a most varied culinary scene.

Clubs and dancing
Salsa, tango, swing, disco, rock, house, soul – 40 clubs in the area play all kinds of music. Among the most popular clubs in the city centre are Kuppel, Acqua, Atlantis and Kaserne. More unconventional dance halls are Elisabethenkirche, Das Schiff (an actual boat) in the Swiss Rhine Ports, the old Warteck brewery or Nordstern in an old industrial tower near Dreirosenbrücke.

Bars and pubs
There are countless bars in Basel, from industrial (eo ipso) or elegant (Teufelhof and Trois Rois) to urban (Noohn), from creative (Alpenblick) to cool (Cargo Bar). Also very popular are the English and Irish pubs in the city, with darts, soccer screens and draught Guinness.

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

www.basel.com
Official website of Basel Tourism, information on sights, cultural events, restaurants and more

www.mybasel.ch
News and practical information about Basel and events in Basel

www.baselland-tourismus.ch
Information on hotels, restaurants and excursions in Basel-Landschaft

www.schwarzwald-tourismus.de
Official tourism website of the Black Forest

www.tourisme-alsace.com
Official tourism website of Alsace

www.basel-restaurants.ch
A restaurant guide with search engine. Includes hotels

www.zoobasel.ch
Basel’s zoo

www.bpg.ch
Boat trips on the Rhine

www.augustaraurica.ch
Ancient Roman settlement in Augst, Basel-Landschaft

www.goetheanum.org
The anthroposophical centre in Dornach

www.gruenguertel.ch
Website Regio Green Belt, with information on fifty nature spots in the trinational area around Basel

Eye to eye with an ape – all possible at the Basel zoo.
People in Basel are great sports fans. Top tennis player Roger Federer, who grew up in the area, started a real tennis craze in Basel. And the city is very proud of its football club, FC Basel. For some years now, the club has been amongst the top teams in the Swiss football scene. Basel also has an excellent public sports infrastructure.

Professional Sports

**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. Jakobs-halle, while millions of viewers watch them on television.

**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 Sharks have been playing their home games in the St. Jakob-Arena since 2002. The arena seats 6600 spectators and is one of the largest and most modern in the National League B.

**Fencing**
The 130-year-old Basler Fechtclub (Basel Fencing Club) is one of the oldest sports clubs in the Swiss stronghold of fencing. The ‘Fechtgessellschaft’ 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.

**Handball**
Another great tradition enjoyed in Basel is handball. The club RTV 1879 Basel 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**
Switzerland’s largest international eights regatta, BaselHead, is held on the Rhine. Rowing has a long history in the region around Basel. BaselHead combines this tradition with the city’s love of major sporting events.

**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. Annual competitions include the men’s Badminton Swiss Open, the World Inline Cup, the European Skate-board Championships and the women’s top volleyball competition. The international football matches played at St. Jakob-Park also draw crowds. The world men’s curling championship 2012 was held here. Finally, Basel has been chosen as the venue for the European team championships and under-15 championships in Badminton in 2014.

Mainstream Sports

**Excellent infrastructure**
Basel is a city that loves sports. No wonder, because the opportunities for recreational sports are limitless and the facilities excellent. In addition to the largest football stadium in Switzerland, a large, multi-purpose 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.

**Rowing**
Numerous public swimming pools, two ice rinks, golf courses, fitness centres and tennis clubs complement the well-developed infrastructure, and the Gsünder Basel organisation organises free exercise courses 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 mountain-eers and free-climbers. The Jura, in particular, is ideal. 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 (e.g. 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.

< St. Jakob-Park, the football stadium by Herzog & de Meuron Architects.
Golf, skiing, flying and rowing
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 country-side 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 itself are sometimes snow-covered, too. Major winter sport 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.

Popular sporting events
The historic old town of Basel is regularly turned into a sports arena in the weeks before Christmas, when thousands of men, women and children take part in the traditional Stadtlauf.

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

The IWB Basel Marathon ‘Run to the Beat’ also takes place annually. The start and finish are at Barfüsserplatz in the town centre.

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 and leisurely float downstream.

Clubs
Sport tends to be organised by regional and national associations that organise league tables and championships, lay down the rules of the game, and establish links to national and international structures. 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.

Museum of sport
A city of museums would not be complete without a museum dedicated to sport. The Sportmuseum hosts a collection of about 40,000 exhibits.
Every summer, thousands of people enjoy swimming in the Rhine.

Further Information

www.ed-bs.ch
Department of Education, which includes the Office for Sports

www.fcb.ch
Official website of Basel’s football club

www.swissindoorsbasel.ch
Swiss Indoors Basel tennis tournament

www.ehcbasel.ch
Official website of Basel’s ice hockey club

www.swissopen.com
Men’s Badminton Swiss Open

www.topvolley.ch
Women’s Top Volley International

www.basel-dreiland.ch
Website for slowUp, the annual car-free day

www.gsuenderbasel.ch
Gsünder Basel promotes healthy living by offering inexpensive exercise classes.

www.iwbbaselmarathon.ch
Website of the Basel marathon

www.sportmuseum.ch
Museum of sport

www.baselhead.org
Eights regatta on the Rhine
Basel is a shopper’s paradise. There are speciality shops for everything in the city centres of Grossbasel and Kleinbasel, as well as modern shopping centres on the outskirts of the city and across the border in France and Germany, offering a wide range of food, fashion items and all kinds of consumer goods.

Browsing the Shops

From exquisite to ordinary

Shopping in Basel is a pleasure. In the small city centre, lots of great brands such as Bally, Burberry, Fogal and Swarovski offer their products for sale, many of them in the pedestrian zone, where shopping and sightseeing are pleasantly combined. In the alleys leading off from the main shopping streets, little boutiques invite visitors to enter and explore. For shoppers who prefer to find everything in one place, several shopping centres offer their services: MParc at Dreispitz, St. Jakob-Park by the football stadium, and Stücki in Kleinhüningen.

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, Hermès, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Max Mara, Miu Miu, Jil Sander, Wolford and Bally. Shoppers looking for something a bit more unique will find a thriving and diverse creative scene in Basel. Claudia Gudel, kleinbasel, Matrix, Bernadette Koch, Spillmann or DIE ZWEI are some of the boutiques that inspire with exquisite collections of exceptional quality.

Watches and jewellery

During BASELWORLD, the whole city is under the spell of luxury watches and expensive jewellery. The fair shapes the taste of an entire region. Established local jewelers like Bucherer, Seiler, Metzger, Gubelin and Kurz carry the full range of international luxury brands – Chopard, Piaget and Patek Philippe. 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.

Cosmetics and perfume

There are several places in Basel where lovers of wellness and luxury cosmetics can go to be pampered: Dominique M. offers a range of beauty treatments at a central location with view 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.

Top Destination for Luxury Brands

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. BASELWORLD, the leading international trade fair for watches and jewellery, and Art Basel, the world’s most important trade fair for modern and contemporary art, are simply outstanding. Basel is also home to the largest Swiss consumer goods fair, ‘muba’, as well as Swissbau, the most important meeting place for the construction and real estate industry in Switzerland and one of the biggest trade fairs in Europe.

Autumn fair and Christmas market

There are also lots of attractive fairs and markets in Basel, which the city plans, organises and hosts itself 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 every day except Sunday. The New Goods Market on Barfüsserplatz, the Saturday and Sunday markets in the various districts of Basel, the flea markets on Petersplatz and Barfüsserplatz plus the weekly farmers’ markets in the region are all popular meeting places and create a real shopping experience in a pleasant atmosphere.
Basel has recognised how important children and families are for the city's future. Therefore, the government promotes an extensive range of local services. The city has invested a lot of money into creating more childcare facilities for children of pre-school age. Local authorities and employers work together to create family-friendly working conditions.

**The Little Ones**  
**Come Out on Top**

**Family-friendly environment**  
Basel operates a child- and family-friendly social policy: The city invests a great deal in family day care and is expanding its services for families even further. Children and young people benefit from excellent medical and nursing care in the University Children’s Hospital. There is a park and several playgrounds in every district. Neighbourhood streets with reduced speed limits make outdoor playing and exercise safer. The Kinderbüro (children’s bureau) is committed to making sure the needs of children are considered in the planning of the living environment, and is an advocate for children’s rights. Finally, the Familienpass (family pass) grants children and their parents reduced-price entry to swimming pools, skating rinks, the zoo and the cinema. And there is much more. The above are only a few examples of the measures, amenities and facilities available for families, teenagers and children.

**Childcare**  
Many new day care centres have been founded in the past 10 years. The Fachstelle Tagesbetreuung gives advice on all issues concerning child day care. There is also a network of day care families. 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. Over 60 paediatric physicians and about 30 child psychiatrists work here. In addition, the Mütterberatung Basel, a network of advisors for young families located in the community centres, answers questions concerning babies and small children.

**Short and safe routes**  
Children should be able to move around on their own as much as possible. Therefore, 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. There is a Quartiertreffpunkt (community centre) in every neighbourhood that always welcomes families and children.

**Kinderbüro**  
The Kinderbüro (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 at the Department of Youth and Family.

**Familienpass**  
The Familienpass Region Basel costs CHF 30 per year. In return, families receive a pack of vouchers for reduced entry to museums, the zoo, public pools, ice rinks and the cinema. A number of shops also have special offers for members.

**Familien- und Erziehungsberatung**  
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.
Leisure Activities for Children

Robi adventure playgrounds
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.

Music and 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 suitable for children – and not only during the Christmas season. The Basler Kindertheater and the Vorstadththeater stage 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.

Books and games
Libraries run by the GGG with their multimedia departments for children and teenagers are found throughout the city. Three Ludotheken lend out games and toys. The Interkulturelle Kinder- und Jugendbibliothek (Intercultural Children’s and Youth Library) offers the widest possible variety of children’s literature in many languages.

Kinderferienstadt (children's holiday city)
The spacious and leafy Schützenmattpark, the old town wall in St. Alban, or the Clara-matte park in Kleinbasel – these are the sites of the Kinderferienstadt (children’s holiday city). Here, with the exception of the supervisors, Basel belongs completely to children. Workshops, circus experience, an introduction to traditional craftsmanship and plenty of sport and fun are offered.

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

Basler Freizeitaktion (Basel leisure initiative)
The Colour Key is supported by the Basler Freizeitaktion, a state-subsidised association for children and adolescents. This association operates several youth centres and local club houses for the young, offering a wide range of fun and craft activities.

Youth centres
The city of 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.

Holiday fun
The Dreiland-Ferienpass (three countries’ holiday pass) for 6- to 17-year-olds offers a boundless variety of fun, sport and games during the summer holidays in July and August. All activities are free or cost only a small fee.
Further Information

- [www.ukbb.ch](http://www.ukbb.ch)  
  University Children's Hospital

- [www.ed-bs.ch](http://www.ed-bs.ch)  
  Department of Education, which includes the Department for Youth and Family and the Office for Sports. The Fachstelle Tagesbetreuung offers advice on child day care. The Office for Sports has a calendar listing upcoming events.

- [www.profawo.ch](http://www.profawo.ch)  
  Information and advice on child day care for working parents

- [www.familea.ch](http://www.familea.ch)  
  Webpage with a listing of places for 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.mutterberatung-basel.ch](http://www.mutterberatung-basel.ch)  
  Advice and counselling for mothers and young families

- [www.familienberatungbasel.ch](http://www.familienberatungbasel.ch)  
  Familien- und Erziehungsberatung (Families and Educational Advice Office)

- [www.kinderbuero-basel.ch](http://www.kinderbuero-basel.ch)  
  The children’s bureau

- [www.quartiertreffpunktebasel.ch](http://www.quartiertreffpunktebasel.ch)  
  Community centres in different neighbourhoods

- [www.kwerk.ch](http://www.kwerk.ch)  
  The K’werk offers arts, craft, and design courses for children and teenagers.

- [www.musikschule-basel.ch](http://www.musikschule-basel.ch)  
  Music school Basel

- [www.familienpass.ch](http://www.familienpass.ch)  
  Things to do for families, vouchers for reduced entry, etc.

- [www.colour-key.ch](http://www.colour-key.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 Children’s and Youth Library

Encouraging young talent.
BUSINESS LOCATION

The Basel area has the most dynamic economy in Switzerland and is one of the most productive and innovative in the world. By far the greatest economic value added is created by the life sciences sector, represented by renowned global players such as Novartis, Roche, and Syngenta. Other important branches of trade are finance and insurance, logistics and the creative industry.

Importance

Ideal location
Favoured by its 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, Basel is an ideal base for many international corporations from which to serve the European market.

Second most-important economic region in Switzerland
After Zurich, Basel is the second most-important economic region in Switzerland. In 2008, 108,000 full-time and 51,300 part-time employees worked in 10,700 enterprises in the Canton of Basel-Stadt alone. There are about 563,000 jobs within the surrounding region. As in other parts of Switzerland, the service sector has become the most important part of the economy, accounting for 71% of all jobs. Insurance, banking and commerce are important sectors in Basel, as is the public sector. On the industrial side, the major pharmaceutical and (agro-)chemical companies play a prominent role, employing about 27,000 people.

In recent years, the Canton of Basel-Stadt has experienced economic growth far beyond the Swiss average.

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 over 160 nations live and work in Basel.

Exports account for large share of the economy
A further illustration of successful economic activity: 45% of all the goods manufactured in Basel are exported, and 33% of Switzerland’s entire export volume leaves the country via Basel.

< It all depends on the viewpoint ...
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 back in the mid-19th century: Sandoz, Ciba, Geigy and Roche. In 1996, Sandoz and Ciba 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 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 pharmaceutical and chemical industry. As such, the city 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. The project SystemsX.ch further strengthens the ties between public and private research: It is a partnership between the Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology in Zurich (ETHZ) and Lausanne (EPFL), the Universities of Basel, Bern, Fribourg, Geneva, Lausanne, Neuchâtel and Zurich, the Friedrich Miescher Institute, the Paul Scherrer Institute and the Swiss Institute of Bioinformatics. In 2005 the ETHZ opened the Centre of Biosystems Science and Engineering (C-Bsse) in Basel, emphasizing the importance of close proximity to the large life sciences companies in Basel.

BioValley

A project set up jointly by the University, research and industry, involving companies specialised in biomedicine and biotechnology, has generated new impulses for the Basel economic area: Over 300 companies and research institutions have come together to form the BioValley network. In Basel, many of these companies 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

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. Basel is part of the transnational BioValley stretching from Basel to Strasbourg in France. 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 agro-business, the chemical industry and nanotechnology are also well represented in the Basel area, with companies that include Syngenta, Lonza, BASF, Clariant and Huntsman. Medical technology is focusing increasingly on the interface between life sciences and medical technology. With Straumann and Synthes, two world leaders are already based here in Basel.

Logistics and commerce

Its optimal location and public transportation system, with the EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg, the Swiss Rhine Ports, the international railway stations and excellent connections to European motorway networks make Basel the logistics centre of Switzerland. The main road and rail routes for Europe all intersect in Basel, and global logistics players like Panalpina make excellent use of this. Trading companies have also always been well represented in the Basel region.

Creative industries (art, fashion, design, architecture)

Art, design and architecture play an outstanding role in Basel, and are closely linked to its economy. The annual BASELWORLD trade fair has turned Basel into one of the most significant commercial centres for the watch and jewellery business. Over almost 40 years, Art Basel has established itself as the leading trade fair for contemporary art worldwide. Architects from Basel are internationally acclaimed – with Herzog & de Meuron as the biggest stars: They run one of the largest architecture firms in the world, employing some 400 people.
Financial services, insurances and IT
Basel also is one of the prime financial centres, where UBS, the world’s second-largest asset manager, and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) have their headquarters. In addition to financial services, which include insurance, risk capital companies, private banking and 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, it has the largest exhibition site in Switzerland (about 350,000 m²). Following the merger with the smaller exhibition in Zurich, the former Messe Basel (Basel Exhibition) now operates under the name MCH Group – and is indisputably 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 of the world’s leading events, 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. Worlddidac Basel, a global fair for educational resources, is held at the Exhibition Centre every two years. The leading national events include the country’s biggest construction trade fair and the biggest IT fair. Leading up to 2013, major modernisation and expansion work was carried out on the exhibition site in Basel. A new exhibition hall was built based on a design 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 the 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 who are already based in Basel or who wish to start offices here: BaselArea, the Office of Economy and Labour of Basel-Stadt, and the Basel Chamber of Commerce offer many services for companies who are already based in Basel or who wish to start offices here, from counselling for start-ups, through information for employees and employers, up to and including the promotion of innovation.

i-net innovation networks is part of the Basel cantonal economic development programme which aims, among other things, to offer companies from selected technology sectors above-average conditions compared with competitor locations in Switzerland and abroad. i-net innovation networks supports and accelerates innovations in future technologies for example nanotechnology, greentech and communications technologies.

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. In return, employees are amongst the most productive in the world. For employers, this means their effective labour costs are more than competitive. The low level of unemployment is a case in point.

**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 acquire European employees from neighbouring France and Germany, companies in Basel have a large and international reservoir of highly qualified employees. The importance of these cross-border commuters (who live just over the border in France or Germany, but who work in Switzerland) for the service and industrial sectors is demonstrated by the fact that more than 34,000 people cross the border every day to go to work.
The pharmaceutical industry boasts the highest level of research and technology.

Picture: © Roche, Basel

Further Information

- www.awa.bs.ch
  Office of Economy and Labour of Basel-Stadt

- www.baselarea.ch
  BaselArea, economic promotion

- www.hkbb.ch
  Basel Chamber of Commerce, an association of industrial, trading and service companies

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

- www.kmu-channel.ch
  Gewerbeverband Basel-Stadt (Small Trade Association of Basel-Stadt)

- www.bankenbasel.ch
  Website of the region’s life science network BioValley

- www.biozentrum.unibas.ch
  Biozentrum of the University of Basel

- www.interpharma.ch
  Interpharma is an association of Swiss pharmaceutical research companies

- www.inet-basel.ch
  Website of the ICT initiative i-net BASEL, which focuses on innovation and economic growth based on information and communication technologies

- www.mch-group.com
  Switzerland’s largest exhibition and congress organiser, based in Basel
Free state schools have a very high standard in Switzerland. The Canton of Basel-Stadt invests heavily in the education of children and young people, and in teacher training. The schools meet the particular requirements of the city’s mobile and international population. In addition, a number of private and international schools cover a broad spectrum of teaching and further training opportunities. The University of Basel, 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, are of crucial importance for the future of major corporations based in the region, as they ensure the promotion of academics and researchers, as well as a highly qualified workforce.

State School

Public-Sector Schools

Education in Switzerland

In Switzerland, there is no national school system, as the schools are run by the cantons. The Canton of Basel-Stadt is in the process of reorganising the school system so as to match the neighbouring cantons. In this brochure, you will find information on the new system, which applies to children born after 30 April, 2002.

The schools maintain a good relationship with the parents, businesses, and the professional colleges of the area. In fact, half of all young people start an apprenticeship after leaving school. The vocational training system in Switzerland is very successful and enjoys a high priority.

The school system in Basel

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 decision later.

School holidays

Twelve weeks of school holidays are spread throughout the year: six weeks in the summer, from July to mid-August, two in the first half of October, one to two at Christmas, two in February/March, as well as ten days around Easter. Also, depending on the school year, one-week summer camps and ski camps are organised during the school year.

Day care

There are no regular all-day schools in Switzerland. In Basel-Stadt, kindergarten and primary school hours are from 8 to 12, Monday to Friday, and on one afternoon from 2 to 4 (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 two years of kindergarten at the age of four or five, depending on their date of birth. The date of reference is 31 July: A child who has turned four by that date will start kindergarten the following August. In all state kindergartens, teaching times are from Monday to Friday from 8 to 12, plus one afternoon from 2 to 4. 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.

Primary school: 6 years

After kindergarten, the children start their six years of primary school. Class hours are from Monday to Friday, 8 to 12, and on up to three afternoons, depending on the grade. Reading, writing and arithmetic are at the core of the syllabus, but PE, music, drawing and handicraft are also primary school subjects. French is taught from 3rd grade, English from 5th grade. Class size is limited to 25 children. All children are entitled to a place in a primary school in easy walking distance from 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 stage, students are split into three different levels: A (general), E (intermediate) or P (advanced). Classes of all levels are in the same building, so that students can switch levels according to their assessments. Class size varies from 16 students in level A, 23 students in level E and 25 students in level 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 will receive a graduation certificate. With an A level certificate, students are fit for shorter vocational training programmes. An E level certificate entitles students to a three- or four-year vocational training programme or to a place at a professional college. P level students can continue their studies at one of five grammar schools (Gymnasium) in Basel.

Professional college
For students with an E level certificate, a number of professional colleges are available after secondary school: Fachmaturitätsschule (FMS), Informatikmittelschule (IMS, College of Computer Science), Handelsmittelschule (HMS, Commercial College), as well as the School of Design. 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. HMS provides students with a solid general commercial education, and ends with the Swiss federal commercial vocational diploma. Informatikmittelschule offers three years of full-time studies in the field of application development, followed by one year of practical training. The School of Design offers a three-year course preparing students for a career in visual communications. All colleges offer students the chance to acquire a vocational baccalauréate, entitling students to a place at the University of Applied Sciences.

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 Berufsfertigkeitszeugnis (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 baccalauréate course, if they want to continue their studies at a University of Applied Sciences.

The main building of the University of Basel lies in a beautiful park in the centre of town.
International Schools

Grammar school
Students with a P level certificate from secondary school can continue at one of five grammar schools, or Gymnasiums, in Basel. During four years, students are prepared for the Maturität (A-levels or baccalaureate), their ticket to university. The subjects include languages, mathematics and science, history and geography. However, the five grammar schools in Basel offer a wide range of additional subjects, which students can specialize in: from business and law, to ancient languages and science, to modern languages (above all English) and art and design. Upon successful completion of grammar school, pupils are awarded a Swiss baccalaureate certificate, which entitles them to a place at any Swiss university.

Internationally recognised curricula
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. One state school, Gymnasium am Münsterplatz, offers a bilingual baccalaureate course. However, not all international schools cover all school years, so it is worth talking in person with the director of the school you are interested in.

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 preschool, followed by kindergarten. Students can complete their entire school career at ISB, and take the international baccalaureate at the age of 18, which opens access to international universities. ISB is an all-day school, offering school lunches for all students. Many employers make substantial contributions towards school fees on behalf of their employees.

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 the children are taught by qualified native English and German speakers. The curriculum allows children to find their place in a group and to make the transition from Switzerland to the education systems in other countries. SIS is an all-day school, providing school lunches for all students.

academia international school
academia international school offers bilingual German and English education from pre-school to grammar school. School lunches and after-school care are optional.

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. School lunches are provided.

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.

FOPRAS – Schweizerisch-italienische Primarschule Sandro Pertini
An Italian all-day primary school recognised by the government of Italy, offering bilingual education at primary school level.
**Private Schools**

**The whole world in a single school: International School Basel.**

**A comprehensive choice**
Several private schools complement the system of state schools in Basel, among others the international schools and the Rudolf Steiner schools. The private schools cover all stages, from kindergarten to grammar school level. However, not all schools cover all school years, so it is worth talking to the director of the school you are interested in. The Maturität or baccalaureate is passed according to federal regulations. A list of all private schools in Basel-Stadt is available at the Department of Education (www.ed.bs.ch, enter the search term ’Privatschule’).

**University of Basel**
The University of Basel, founded in 1460, is the oldest university in Switzerland. Today, about 12,000 students are enrolled in one of the six faculties: science, economics, medicine, humanities, law and theology. 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. The programme Mensch – Gesellschaft – Umwelt (Man – Society – Environment) has made a name for itself with interdisciplinary studies. 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 EU-COR (comprising the six universities along the Upper Rhine at Freiburg i. Br., Karlsruhe, Mulhouse, Strasbourg, Colmar and Basel). This enables students to move freely between the different universities. It has also made possible joint courses, the reciprocal recognition of credits and certificates, the exchange of lecturers, and shared research programmes.

**University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland**
Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz FHNW (University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland) with departments in Basel, Muttenz, Olten, Aarau, Solothurn and Brugg is a research partner for private industry in a wide variety of fields. Its 18 colleges and departments teach, among others, business studies, teaching, mechanical engineering, chemistry, IT and electrical engineering. The renowned Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst HGK (College of Art and Design) and the Hochschule für Soziale Arbeit (College of Social Work) are part of the larger University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland.

**A highly qualified workforce**
As providers of well-qualified graduates for local businesses, the University and the University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland (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.

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The University of Basel, founded in 1460, is the oldest university in Switzerland. Today, about 12,000 students are enrolled in one of the six faculties: science, economics, medicine, humanities, law and theology. 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. The programme Mensch – Gesellschaft – Umwelt (Man – Society – Environment) has made a name for itself with interdisciplinary studies. 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 EU-COR (comprising the six universities along the Upper Rhine at Freiburg i. Br., Karlsruhe, Mulhouse, Strasbourg, Colmar and Basel). This enables students to move freely between the different universities. It has also made possible joint courses, the reciprocal recognition of credits and certificates, the exchange of lecturers, and shared research programmes.
Further Information

www.ed.bs.ch
Department of Education Basel-Stadt, information on the school system. For a list of private schools, enter the search term ‘Privatschulen’.

www.unibas.ch
University of Basel

www.fhnw.ch
University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland

www.gmbasel.ch
Gymnasium am Münsterplatz

www.isbasel.ch
International School Basel

www.swissinternationalschool.ch
Swiss International School Basel

www.academia-international.ch
academia international school

www.earlylearning.ch
Early Learning Association

www.efdeb.ch
Ecole Française Basel

www.maternelle.ch
Ecole primaire Les Coquelicots

www.fopras.ch
Schweizerisch-italienische Primarschule Sandro Pertini

www.swiss-schools.ch
Swiss Federation of Private Schools

www.baslerprivatschulen.ch
Federation of Private Schools in Basel

www.bsse.ethz.ch
Department of Biosystems Science and Engineering

www.studio-basel.com/eth-studio-basel.html
Institute of urban research that is part of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH) – Department of Architecture, Network City and Landscape
HEALTH AND INSURANCE

The health system in the Canton of Basel-Stadt provides a very high standard of care in every respect: A large number of state-run and private-sector hospitals as well as old people’s homes and nursing homes provide treatment, health care and support for injured, ill and elderly patients. Private doctors’ surgeries and pharmacies leave no gaps in the system. And because the mandatory health insurance ensures a basic level of health care for all, everyone benefits equally from these services. Apart from a good health insurance, the Swiss like to be insured against every risk, and everything can be insured.

Health System

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

University hospital
The University Hospital Basel is one of Switzerland’s leading university medical centres. It offers treatment in all medical fields, but specialises in transplantations, care for cardiovascular patients, multiple sclerosis and HIV therapy, as well as running a state-of-the-art maternity clinic. As in other medical disciplines, specialists for oncology offer surgical and non-surgical treatments for all types of tumours. The University hospital has one of the largest urological clinics in Switzerland. Located right next to the University hospital is the University Children’s hospital Basel (UKBB), an independent, 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 medical services. The largest are Claraspital, Merian Iselin hospital and Bethesda hospital. Doctors from all disciplines and highly qualified nursing staff provide the best possible care.

Old people’s homes and nursing homes
More than 40 old people’s homes and nursing homes are located throughout Basel-Stadt, while specialist organisations offer home-care services. Ambulance staff are on duty around the clock and can be called using the emergency telephone number 144.

Health insurance
Health insurance is mandatory in Switzerland. People choose and pay it privately, however. The basic 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, although they can reject applications for extra benefits (for example, for 1st or 2nd class hospital accommodation). The monthly premiums vary from company to company and from canton to canton. In order to reduce the premiums, patients can opt to pay some of the health costs themselves, or to see a doctor approved by the insurance company.

Paying doctor’s bills
As a rule, doctors send an invoice directly to the patients. Patients pay the amount due, then forward the invoice to the responsible health insurance company for reimbursement, minus 10% retention. 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, for example to provide medical care in the patient’s country of origin. Under certain circumstances, it is also possible to remain insured in Switzerland with a foreign health insurance company.

Dental care
The obligatory health insurance does not cover dental treatment. Special supplementary dental insurance can be taken out to cover this. The Zentrum für Zahnmedizin (Centre for Dental Medicine) is an institute of the University of Basel. Additionally, there are over 200 dentists in the region that secure a very high quality of dental care.
General Insurance Policies

Insurance in Switzerland
The Swiss like to be insured against every risk, and, in principle, everything can be insured. You will find the most common types of insurance below.

Personal accident insurance
In Switzerland, all employers must take out 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 incapacity for work or during a stay at the hospital, and special convalescence benefits.

Personal liability insurance
One can be exposed to a great variety of liability risks in one's day-to-day life. Damaging third-party property or injuring another person entails an obligation to pay compensation. Compensation claims can be extremely high when individuals are involved. The Privathaftpflichtversicherung (personal liability insurance) protects the policy holder 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 policy holder's own vehicles.

Legal-expenses insurance
Non-lawyers often find it difficult to safeguard their legal rights. In the event of disputes with neighbours, employers, tour operators or in the event of road accidents, the Rechtsschutzversicherung (legal-expenses insurance) acts as a partner in the interests of policy holders.
Relaxing in the city: Birskopf, where the river Birs joins the Rhine.

Further Information

www.bsv.admin.ch
Bundesamt für Sozialversicherung, BSV (Federal Office for Social Security)

www.unispital-basel.ch
Universitätsspital Basel (University Hospital Basel) and the university clinics

www.ukbb.ch
University Children’s Hospital

www.gesundheitsdienste.bs.ch
Department of Health

www.spitex.ch
Home-care services

www.mnzbasel.ch
The MNZ Foundation’s official 24-hour response centre for medical emergencies
TRANSPORTATION

By air, water, rail or road – its central location and well-developed infrastructure provide Basel with excellent transport links to the rest of the world, which is of particular importance for the businesses in Basel. The government continues to invest in the improvement of infrastructure and services. The public transport system is excellent. And as the northern gateway to the European Union, Basel ensures that trucks and their freight safely reach their destination.

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 also have a very dense public transport network. Buses, trams and trains are convenient and run at short intervals. You can get to and around Basel very well without a car.

Investing in the future
The government continues to invest money to further improve the infrastructure. The EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg is one of the leading European regional airports. It has been expanded considerably in the last few years. Another major project recently completed connects the French and Swiss motorway systems. Tramlines are being built 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.

EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg
EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg is just three kilometres from the city centre, offering direct flights to about 50 European cities, and connecting to intercontinental flights from Zurich, Frankfurt, Paris or other larger European gateways. A total of about 80 destinations can be reached from Basel on direct or connecting flights. 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.

Rail and road
The railway systems of Switzerland, France, and Germany intersect in Basel. Each national railway company operates its own station on the territory of the Canton: the Swiss Federal Railways (SBB), the German Deutsche Bahn (DB) and the French Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer (SNCF). There are connecting trains and trams between the stations, and international and intercity trains 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 so-called motorway vignette, valid for a year.

River traffic
The Swiss Rhine Ports in Basel are one of the most important inland harbours in Europe. On an area of 1.3 million square metres, an annual volume of approximately 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.

From cargo ships to freight trains: unloading coal at the Rhine Ports.
The main railway station is an important hub in the public transport network.

Everywhere in three hours
The best way to get around the country is by rail: Switzerland has the densest railway network in the world. The more remote areas are served by buses operated by the Swiss Post. Switzerland also has an extremely dense road network. In fact, all major Swiss towns can be reached by road from Basel within three hours.

Public transport
Basel has an excellent public transport network, characterised by punctuality, fast connections and large capacities. The so-called Umweltschutzabonnement (U-Abo, a monthly travel card) introduced in 1984 was the first of its kind in Europe. Today, holders of a U-Abo are entitled to use all public transport in the Northwest of Switzerland – buses, trams, and Regio-S-Bahn (regional urban railway) – at an advantageous price. The regional, international Regio-S-Bahn, which is used in particular by commuters who work in Basel, but who live in the surrounding trinational region, is steadily being expanded.

Tickets for trams and buses can be obtained from the ticket machines at every stop. Monthly cards and multi-trip cards are also available from the official BVB counter on Barfüsserplatz, and timetables can be downloaded from the Internet. The regional and international Regio-S-Bahn connects Basel with its hinterland, as well as with France and Germany. The network is steadily expanding.

Cars and parking
The local Motorfahrzeugkontrolle issues the registration for new vehicles and periodically checks all registered cars (similar to the English MOT test). 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, so-called meeting zones have been defined, where the speed limit is only 20 km/h. Pedestrians have priority on these roads.

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. Residents can buy a parking permit valid for a year; visitors can buy a parking ticket for half a day or a whole day. The blue parking spots are free from 7 p.m. to 8 a.m. Starting in 2013, the white parking spots that used to allow unlimited free parking are being abolished. The process will be completed in 2016.

Car-sharing
Mobility Carsharing offers a whole new system of driving: All over the country, red cars of all sizes are ready to be used by Mobility members. Cars can be booked 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.

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. Special route maps are also available for cyclists (for sale in bookshops and kiosks).
Destinations that are easily reached within 3 to 4 hours from EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg, 2013.

Further Information

www.euroairport.com
EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg

www.sbb.ch/en/
Swiss national railway, including timetables

www.bahn.de
Website of the German railway company

www.sncf.com
Website of the French railway company

www.bvb-basel.ch
Website of Basel’s public transport

www.portofbasel.ch
Website of the Swiss Rhine Ports of the two Basel cantons

www.mfk.bs.ch
Motorfahrzeugkontrolle: This is where vehicle owners register their car.

www.mobility.ch
Car-sharing website

www.sbbcargo.ch
Swiss cargo rail

www.veloland.ch
This website offers maps with cycling routes for the whole of Switzerland.
WorKinG conditions, SoCial seCuritY and taXes

Employment conditions in the Canton of Basel-Stadt are excellent: High wages, low deductions, good social security and pension funds, and modest rates of taxation make a high quality of life possible.

Working in Switzerland

Hiring
The attractive working conditions in Switzerland are based on a well-established social partnership between employer and employee. The first two or three months in a new job are usually seen as a trial period, with a period of notice of between a few days and a maximum of two weeks. Once employees have reached permanent status, the period of notice is generally one to six months. Working hours are between 40 and 42.5 hours per week, with at least 4 weeks of annual leave. Pregnant women benefit from job protection, and receive at least 14 weeks maternity leave, while men are entitled to five days of paid paternity leave.

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

Allowances
In Switzerland, employees with children receive a child’s 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 mandatory Alters- and Hinterlassenenversicherung, AHV (old age and survivors’ insurance), Invaliditätsversicherung, IV (invalidity insurance) and the Erwerbsersatzordnung, EO (compensation for loss of income) unemployment insurance. Employees’ contributions are deducted directly from the monthly salary. Taxes are paid separately.

Social Security

Old age pension scheme
The system of retirement pensions in Switzerland is based on three pillars. The 1st and the 2nd pillars are mandatory for employees, and are managed by the state. 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 pension money for the elderly, who paid their contributions while still working. The 2nd pillar consists of a pension fund that is obligatory for all employees. 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 are paid 70% of their last salary for one to two years, depending on their age and contribution period.

< Tireless effort: the ‘Hammering Man’ on Aeschenplatz.
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.

Moderate tax burden
In Switzerland, taxes are generally low, but different in each canton. Basel has an intermediate tax level. The taxing system is similar in all cantons.

Income tax
The Einkommenssteuer (income tax) is imposed 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 imposed at annual intervals. The tax return is sent out to all taxpayers after the end of the tax year (tax period). Foreign workers who do not have permanent residency status, but who live in the Canton of Basel-Stadt, are taxed at source for income derived from non-self-employed work. Members of the Protestant, the Roman Catholic and the 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.

In the heart of the city lies the bustling of Barfüsserplatz.
Banks are a driving force in Basel’s economy: Mario Botta’s building for BIS.

Further Information

www.awa.bs.ch
Office of Economy and Labour of Basel-Stadt

www.steuerverwaltung.bs.ch
The official website of the fiscal authorities in Basel-Stadt

www.bsv.admin.ch
The Federal Social Insurance Office
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
Citizens of Western European countries can enter Switzerland upon presentation of a valid ID card. For entry from Eastern European countries and overseas, a valid passport is required. Tourist visas or working visas are issued by the Swiss consulates.

Entering Switzerland

Border controls
Switzerland signed the Schengen agreement, which reduces border controls between the member states. Citizens of all other countries must adhere to the usual formalities.

Registration
After entering the country, the newly arrived person must report to the Population Services and Migration office within 14 days, with 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 respective 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 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. In general, the import of used goods is duty free. Necessary documents include all personal papers as well as the notice of departure from the country of origin, the entry permit, leases of flats or houses, and a complete list of the articles imported.

Importing private vehicles
Private cars must be declared at the border. 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. All car papers and insurance documents, as well as the driving licence of the drivers, should be kept in the car at all times. Vehicles can be registered with the Motorfahrzeugkontrolle directly after entering Switzerland. Alternatively, it is possible to drive with foreign number plates, driving license and vehicle documents for up to one year. Owners are automatically called to register their car before the deadline. Further information is provided by the Swiss Federal Customs Administration.

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).
Longer than three months

If you intend to stay in Basel-Stadt longer than three months, you need to submit an application at the Residents Registration Office (Einwohneramt) in the Customer Centre (Kundenzentrum). A permit can be issued on the basis of self-employment (for EU/EFTA nationals only), a position of employment, or enrolment at a university or an accredited language school in Switzerland.

**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 Bundesamt für Migration, BFM (Federal Office 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 a so-called Aufenthaltsbewilligung B (residence permit type B). EU citizens with employment contracts exceeding one year have to renew their residence permit every five years. Non-EU citizens need to renew it every year.

**Bringing family members or a partner to Switzerland, marriage**

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 an Aufenthaltsbewilligung B (residence permit type B). 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 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 who have entered the country in the context of family reunification, may take up self-employed or employed work anywhere in Switzerland without additional approval.

**Permanent residence permits**

Depending upon a person’s country of origin, Niederlassungsbewilligung C (permanent residence permit type C) 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**

To apply for naturalisation, you must have lived in Switzerland for at least 12 years. You need to have lived the last two years in the municipality in which you are applying for citizenship (city of Basel, Riehen, Bettingen). 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 five years, been married for three years and have lived for at least one year in the municipality in which the application is submitted.

**Nannies, au pair positions, babysitters**

Nannies who have been working with a family for a long time can apply for a residence permit B. 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 be engaged in normal household chores and 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.


Further Information

www.basel.ch
Official website with everything you need to know about Basel

www.basel.com
Official website of Basel Tourism

www.mybasel.ch
News and practical information about Basel and events in Basel

www.awa.bs.ch
Office of Economy and Labour of Basel-Stadt

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

www.bfm.admin.ch
The Federal Office for Migration

www.eda.admin.ch/eda/de/home/reps/forrep.html
Foreign representations in Switzerland

www.eda.admin.ch/eda/de/home/reps.html
Swiss representations worldwide
Practical Information

Basel is a beautiful place to live and work. Of course, it takes some 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 the most important ones.

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
A change of address must also be reported to the Einwohneramt (Residents Registration Office) of Basel-Stadt within 14 days. If you move to another canton, registration in the new municipality is necessary in addition to cancelling your registration with 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.–, 1.–, .50, .20, .10 as well as .05.

Banks
Several banks have branches throughout the city in which all transactions are possible. The opening hours are usually Monday to Friday, 8.30 a.m. to noon and 1.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. Identification documents must be presented when opening an account.

Means of payment
Everyday consumer goods and minor purchases are usually paid for in cash. In addition to the Swiss franc, stores in Basel frequently also accept the euro. Other means of payment such as credit cards, EC cards or post-office cards are also widely used. Cash can be withdrawn from automatic tellers at banks or post-office branches.

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 a.m. and 8 p.m. and between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Saturdays. Shopping centres, even those on the outskirts of the city, M-Parc, St. Jakob-Park and Stücki, are open until 8 p.m. during the week. Smaller supermarkets usually open at 8 a.m. and close at 6.30 p.m. Family businesses and shops in the train station can remain open until 10 p.m., seven days a week.

Only a few shops are open on Sundays, except on the official shopping Sundays before Christmas.

< The wonderful fountain in front of Theater Basel.
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 a.m. and 3 a.m. on a Sunday morning at the end of March and at the end of October, all the clocks in Europe are moved forward or back by one hour to allow for daylight saving time.

Postal services
There are post offices in every neighbourhood. Current opening times are usually from 7.30 a.m. to noon and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. In some districts, the opening times have been reduced, and cash transactions cannot be performed. The main post office in the city centre and the one at the railway station are open all day, and they also offer evening and weekend services for a fee. Letters that have already been franked can be placed in the yellow letterboxes. 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. Since October 2011, the TagesWoche comes out in print on Fridays and online every day. The online web service Onlinereports has also secured its place in the regional media landscape. The Basellandschaftliche Zeitung is issued in Liestal. The main paper in neighbouring Germany is the Badische Zeitung, while in France there is Dernières Nouvelles d’Alsace and the 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. The free evening newspaper Blick am Abend also has an editorial team in Basel.

In addition to various national radio and TV stations (Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen SRF), there is the German-speaking local radio station 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. Tele-basel has a programme called ‘In Dubio pro Regio’ that is televised in English and Swiss German.

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.

Lengths
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°

Flags flying outside of Basel's main train station.
Important Telephone Numbers

Kantonale Verwaltung Basel-Stadt
(Cantonal Administration Basel-Stadt):
+41 61 267 81 81

Kundenzentrum des Kantons BS
(Customer Centre, Resident Registration Office):
+41 61 267 70 60

Eidg. Zollverwaltung für Basel-Stadt
(Swiss Customs Authority Basel-Stadt):
+41 61 287 11 11

Kantonales Veterinäramt (Cantonal Veterinary Office):
+41 61 385 32 28

Basel Tourism (Basel Tourist Office):
+41 61 268 68 68

Emergency telephone numbers

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
www.australia.ch

Great Britain (embassy)
Thunstrasse 50
CH-3005 Bern
+41 31 359 77 00
ukinswitzerland.fco.gov.uk

Ireland (embassy)
Kirchenfeldstrasse 68
CH-3005 Bern
+41 31 352 14 42
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
bern.usembassy.gov
Destination anywhere: EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg.

**Further Information**

- [www.basel.ch](http://www.basel.ch)
  Comprehensive information on Basel
- [www.awa.bs.ch](http://www.awa.bs.ch)
  Office of Economy and Labour of Basel-Stadt
- [www.mybasel.ch](http://www.mybasel.ch)
  News and practical information about Basel and events in Basel
- [www.eda.admin.ch/eda/de/home/reps.html](http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/de/home/reps.html)
  Swiss representations worldwide
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 factory (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 begins 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.

The bishops of Basel won favour with the Emperor, as can be seen by the foundation of today’s Münster (consecrated in 1018) 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 expanded 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 advancement could be seen in the representative buildings that were built: the new Town Hall (in 1340), the Arsenal, the Lohnhof (prison), the hospital and the guild halls.

Bildersturm (iconoclasm).

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 became 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 had significantly helped the guilds to achieve their 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 class 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 the recognition of its sovereignty under international law – the origin of Swiss neutrality.

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, destroyed the Carolingian cathedral and killed the bishop. The power of the Bishop State was based on donations at the end of the 10th century, and the city became part of the Holy Roman Empire soon afterwards.

The government closed the monastery, secured itself against the bishops, and confiscated their property, while the converted population destroyed the symbols of the Roman Catholic faith in the Bildersturm (iconoclasm).

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 surrounded by the outer city walls, which also enclosed 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 donated the first university of Switzerland to Basel in 1460, when he had become Pope Pius II. In economic terms, two annual fairs or trade shows promoted foreign trade, and were recognised by the award of a market privilege by the Emperor (1471). In terms of foreign policy, the independence from the bishop permitted the city to practice an active alliance and territorial policy, which as in Schaffhausen – led to membership in the Swiss Confederation in 1501.
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 House) 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.

Thought and science in Europe began to change fundamentally in the late 17th century. Knowledge began to gradually 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). The GGG 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.

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 Missionsgesellschaft’ (now called mission 21), which was founded in 1815 and works together with partner churches and the two docks in Kleinhüningen.

Industrialisation, financial centre and Zionism

Traffic and industrialisation changed 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 Kleinüningen. For decades, trade and commerce provided the most jobs, above all the retail trade (Coop). In order to promote the 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, which created the global groups Ciba and Sandoz – who 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 binational 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 the UBS in 1998, Basel – together with Zurich – became the headquarters of a leading global financial institute. 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 re-building 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 (2003) and the Schaulager in Münthenstein (2005). Basel stands out in particular in sporting terms through the world famous Swiss Indoors tennis tournament (since 1970) and the FC Basel (founded in 1893). Its multi-functional 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 Krischnitz, Alvaro Siza, among others. The area around the Novartis Campus was modernised and developed with new buildings by Christ & Gantenbein Architects and BuchnerBrüdler Architects. On Exhibition Square stands the 105-metre-high Messe tower by architects Morger Degelo and Marques and, right next to it, the new Exhibition Centre by Herzog & de Meuron, finished in 2013. Herzog & de Meuron also designed the Roche tower which, when completed in 2015, will be the highest building in Switzerland at 175 metres. Last but not least, the construction of an extension to the Kunstmuseum Basel, designed by Christ & Gantenbein Architects, commenced in 2013.

The Basel coat of arms

The Basel Staff is a stylised reproduction of the bishop's crozier (crook). In 1512, Pope Julius II rewarded the federal towns for their assistance in his war against France. Basel received the privilege of displaying a golden bishop's crozier 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 crozier.

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