



Kanton Basel-Stadt

komm takt

**Welcome
to Basel-Stadt**



Welcome to Basel-Stadt

People who move to a new place must first reorient themselves, because nothing is the way it used to be. This begins with the most mundane, everyday considerations: where does the rubbish go? But soon somewhat more difficult questions emerge. Where do I have to register my car? Where will my child go to school? And what am I going to do in my free time when I hardly know anyone in my new home?

This brochure is meant to help you to settle down in your new place of residence. But we not only want you to know what forms you have to fill out; we want you to have a sense of well-being in Basel and soon no longer feel like a newcomer, but rather as a part of this city canton. On the following pages you will find some information that are intended to help you settle into Basel and the QR codes lead you to useful addresses on the various topics.

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Everyday life

The canton of Basel-Stadt has a modern administration at its disposal which fosters uncomplicated dealings with the inhabitants. The central institution for this contact is the Customer Centre of the Residential Registration Office, with a broad range of services on offer.

Residential Registration Office

The Residential Registration Office is also specifically the first contact point for people who are moving to Basel and must deal with their residency status in the canton. It records the data concerning all Swiss and foreign inhabitants. This includes, for example, changes in marital status, address changes, name changes, births and deaths.

The Residential Registration Office gives advice to newcomers and issues certificates and confirmations. In addition information and forms from other cantonal departments can be obtained here. Passports and identity cards for Swiss citizens are issued by the passport office. It also handles lost property and issues certifications and apostilles.

Permits

Personal advice is offered at the contact points in the Residential Registration Office, at the motor vehicle inspection department and at the building and traffic department. In some cases permits from other offices can also be applied for there.

Keeping animals

As a rule keeping pets does not require a permit in the canton of Basel-Stadt (exception: potentially dangerous dogs). However, when crossing the border, vaccination rules and /or special import regulations apply to many animals. Various regulations concerning keeping them must also be complied with. And all animals must be accommodated and cared for in a manner appropriate to their species. In addition dogs must be registered or re-registered for taxation with the veterinary office and also with AMICUS, and must carry a microchip.

Waste disposal

Daily tasks include, for example, the disposal of waste materials. In the canton of Basel-Stadt household rubbish – which by the way is called “Hauskehricht” in Switzerland – is collected twice a week. What districts are served on what days of the week is noted on the waste disposal calendar, which is supplied once a year or can be obtained in the Customer Centre of the Residential Registration Office and at police stations. For your “Hauskehricht” you must use the official rubbish bags of the canton, so-called “Bebbi-Säcke”. You can buy them at the till in most grocery shops.

Radio and TV

Radio and TV are subject to licence fees in Switzerland. It does not matter whether radio, television, computer, tablet or mobile phone are present or in use. Serafe has been tasked by the Confederation with collecting the licensing fees. The licensing fees are paid per household, not per device. Families, flat-sharing communities or couples who live in the same household pay the fees only once.



Energy and drinking water

The canton of Basel-Stadt is supplied with energy and drinking water by the Industrielle Werke (IWB). So that your energy and water consumption can be paid for correctly, please notify the IWB of any move by one week beforehand at the latest.

Rented housing

If you live in a rental house or apartment, your landlord is the contact person for most matters. In contrast with many other countries, in Switzerland the kitchens in rental accommodations are part of the basic equipment, and a common laundry is available to the tenants.

Shopping

In Basel there are countless possibilities for shopping. Most businesses are open in the evening during the week until 6.30pm, some until 8pm. In the inner city most businesses close on Saturday at 5pm or 6pm, and in some outer districts somewhat earlier. On Sundays and public holidays you can shop in the railway stations, at many petrol stations and in a few selected grocery shops located over the whole city. If you want to shop across the border in the neighbouring countries, you must comply with the appropriate customs regulations, since Switzerland does not belong to the European Union and certain goods are subject to customs duties when imported.

Eating out

Restaurants in Basel and its surroundings enjoy a good reputation. They are varied and offer something for every taste: the choice ranges from the cosy neighbourhood pub to the gourmet temple with stars and an award-winning chef. And as far as the type of cuisine is concerned, the Basel region knows no borders: you can choose between regional dishes and gastronomic delicacies from all over the world.





Children, Youth and Families

The future plays a central role in Basel, where child- and family-friendly policies are a matter of course in all sectors.

Since 2013, Basel has held the Unicef “Child Friendly Community” award. With respect to daycare for pre-school children, Basel also plays a leading role based on the citizens’ right to daycare which is encoded in the constitution.

Child care

In terms of childcare by non-family members, parents have the choice between a number of options, including daycare centres or day families. Facilities are available in all residential neighbourhoods.

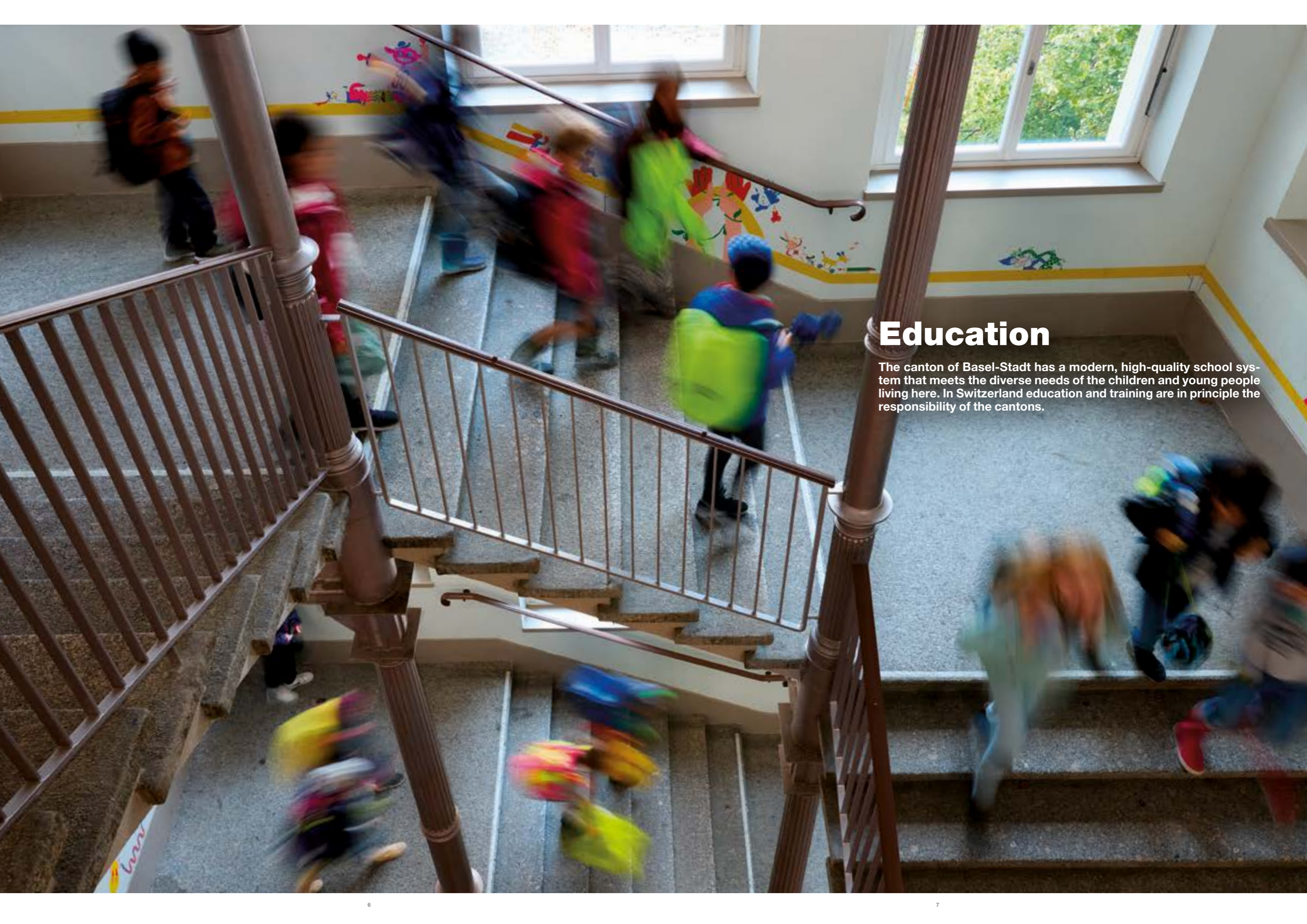
Leisure

In Basel, families, youth and children are also well catered for when it comes to leisure activities, with numerous local recreation areas offering attractive locations to linger. In summer, open-air swimming pools are very popular, while in winter, two ice rinks invite the population to turn a few rounds. Libraries, museums, children’s and youth theatres, local meeting points and children’s and youth centres offer a wide range of leisure activities. On top of this, Basel boasts numerous public playgrounds, parks and sports facilities.

Advice / counselling

A network of private and public institutions supports and helps families, parents, adolescents and children tackle problems or emergencies. Among them are the children and youth service, the centre for early intervention, parent counselling, the family, couple and educational counselling and the youth counselling.





Education

The canton of Basel-Stadt has a modern, high-quality school system that meets the diverse needs of the children and young people living here. In Switzerland education and training are in principle the responsibility of the cantons.

Early promotion of German

Children who do not speak any or hardly any German attend a playgroup with German language support or a German-speaking nursery school for at least three half days per week in the year before they start kindergarten to learn German in a playful way. This early promotion of German has been mandatory in Basel since 2013.

Kindergarten, primary and secondary school

Compulsory schooling comprises eleven years and is divided into the kindergarten, primary and secondary levels. Children attend kindergarten for two years, usually between the ages of five and seven. After that they attend primary school for six years. Here children learn French starting in the third year and English starting in the fifth year. After primary school all pupils attend the three-year secondary school. Depending upon their performance in school the children are divided into three levels: A (general requirements), E (expanded requirements) and P (high requirements). Kindergarten and primary school offer day-care structures beyond the instruction: in exchange for a fee paid by the parents, children are looked after in day-care facilities at schools or for midday meals. During the school holidays there are supervision at school, day holidays, and sports camps for children. In secondary schools, the children also have the option of a lunchtime meal. In the afternoons, the children can attend supervised learning centres or recreational courses. In all schools core times are applied.

Apprenticeships, vocational and technical school certificates, academic secondary school

Depending upon their performance in school and personal abilities and interests, after the eleven years of compulsory schooling young people have several possibilities. One of them is the two- to four-year apprenticeship. A vocational school certificate during or after the apprenticeship opens the way to studies at a college of higher education. Further possibilities are the four-year Fachmaturitätsschule (vocational matriculation school) and the four-year secondary school. A diploma from a matriculation school entitles the holder to study at a college of advanced education, and the certificate from a secondary school leads to a university.

University of Basel

The University of Basel is the oldest university in Switzerland. It was founded in 1460 and today it is a modern university located in the city centre with an attractive range of research, teaching and services. As a traditional comprehensive university it covers almost all fields of study and includes seven faculties. By European standards the University of Basel is a rather small university. It counts 13,000 students, nearly 3000 of them are doctoral candidates. The proportion of female students amounts around 55 per cent and a fifth of the students is from abroad. The University of Basel is held by the cantons of Basel-Stadt and Basel-Landschaft. In Switzerland all university students pay student fees; in Basel these amount to 850 francs per semester. The University of Basel offers a rich and diversified student life. In addition to the range of university sports, there are



numerous associations and student bodies. The official representation of the students at the University of Basel is the "scuba". This works not only for student participation, but also promotes student initiatives and organises its own cultural offerings.

University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW)

In addition to the university, in the field of university-level education the FHNW provides a high-quality range of educational programmes. The FHNW is a regionally anchored educational institution with an international reputation. It includes ten schools, which cover the subjects of Computer Science, Engineering and Environment, Architecture and Civil Engineering, Business, Life Sciences, Art and Design, Social Work, Teacher Education, Psychology and Music in teaching and applied research. The FHNW has almost 14,000 students. 1,000 of them come from abroad. Female students make up just above 50 percent. Fees are 700 francs per semester for Swiss students and 1,000 Swiss francs for students from the EU/EFTA.

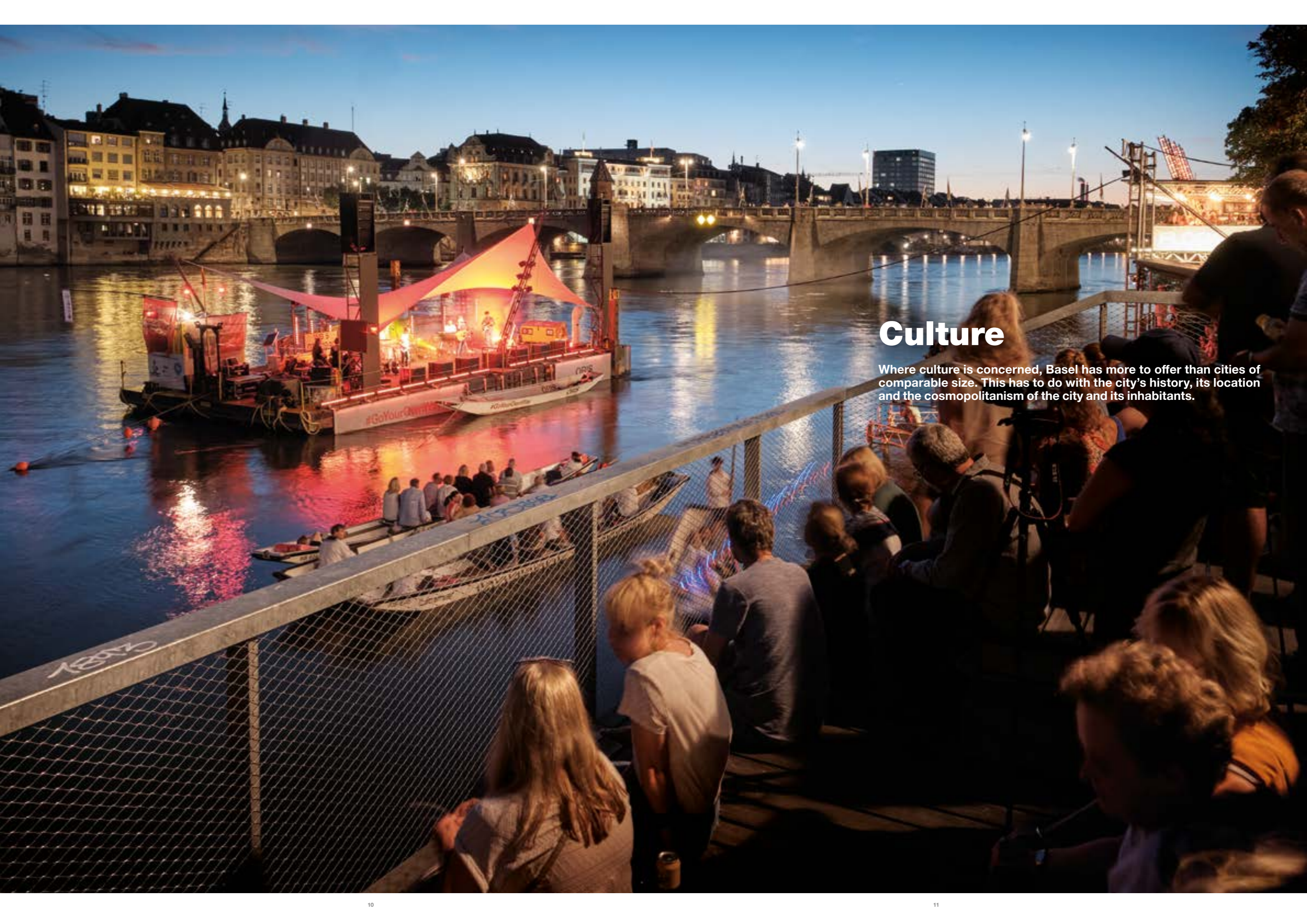
Private schools

Those who don't want to make use of the free public schools can make use of the services of a private educational institution in the Basel region. These include the English-, French- or Italian-speaking international schools in Basel and the surrounding area. At individual private schools a leaving certificate recognised throughout Switzerland can also be provided.

Further education

Basel also offers a wide choice in the area of further education: The FHNW offers a diversified range of further education possibilities in all its subject areas. Under the "Advanced Studies" the University of Basel for example organises academic further education courses to be completed while working. Federal qualifications in the field of higher vocational training can be obtained from public vocational colleges as well as private schools. The adult education centre of both Basel cantons offers numerous events in general further education, language courses and post-literacy courses for adults. And for all people who have reached the age of 58, the "SeniorenUni" organises events in various fields of knowledge of the University of Basel. Adults who had no opportunity in their youth to attend a secondary school can obtain a canton school-leaving certificate in the matriculation courses for working people (Maturitätskurse für Erwachsene [MfE]), which enables access to the University of Basel. In addition, adult education facilities offer vocational qualification courses for adults.





Culture

Where culture is concerned, Basel has more to offer than cities of comparable size. This has to do with the city's history, its location and the cosmopolitanism of the city and its inhabitants.

Museums

The reputation of the Basel museums has made the city known worldwide. The Basel Art Museum exhibits treasures by old masters, among them Hans Holbein, as well as modern classics. The integrated Haus für Gegenwartskunst houses an extensive contemporary art collection. But this is not the only museum known far beyond the borders of the country. Other magnets for the public are the Foundation Beyeler in Riehen with its spectacular rotating exhibitions, the Museum of Antiquities, the Tinguely Museum and the Museum of Cultures. One of Basel's specialities is that the five public museums cooperate closely with the numerous private museums, and have issued a common Upper Rhine Museum Pass for the museums of the three-countries area. With this pass you have unlimited entry to the permanent and special exhibitions of around 345 museums, castles and gardens in Germany, France (Alsace) and north-western Switzerland, and can take up to five children under the age of 18 free of charge.

Theatre

In addition to the numerous museums, the Basel Theatre is a pillar of the cultural city of Basel. It is run as a three-section operation with three stages at two sites, and offers numerous operas, plays and ballet productions annually. The Basel Theatre has been honoured several times as one of the best stages in the German-speaking area. Numerous small and tiny stages complete the theatre and dance offerings in Basel.

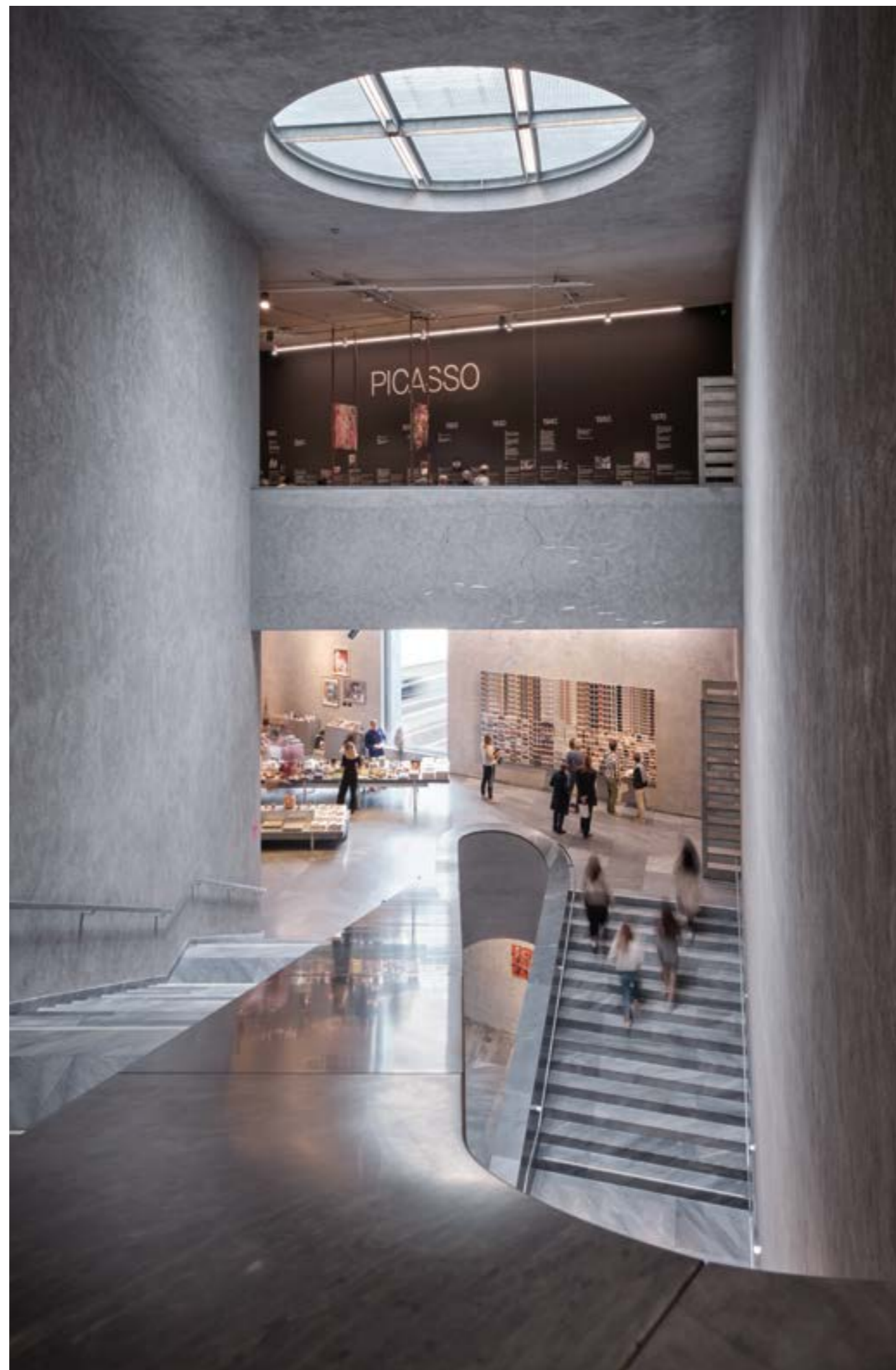
Among the many small theatres of the region there are several that specialise in theatre productions for children and youth. English-speaking performances take place regularly in Basel, and in the French Saint-Louis, the Théâtre La Coupole Saint-Louis is situated directly in front of the city gates.

A central municipal location for the free contemporary theatre, dance and performance scene as well as for concerts in the area of popular music is the Basel Kaserne (the old barracks). With its broad range the Kaserne promotes exchanges between the artists, the public and other art centres.

Music

The musical offering in Basel is extensive. For classical concerts the city casino on Barfüsserplatz in the middle of the inner city is the most important venue. This features not only outstanding local ensembles like the Basel Symphony Orchestra, the Basel Sinfonietta and the Basel Chamber Orchestra, but also world-famous international orchestras and soloists hold guest performances. In addition numerous classical concerts such as those performed by the baroque orchestra and vocal ensemble La Cetra are being staged in churches throughout the city.

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. In the areas of Rock, Hip-Hop, Techno and other contemporary musical trends, several pubs in Basel and in the local area provide a varied and lively programme. The



cultural festival "Floss", which is performed on a raft in the Rhine in the summer, represents a special feature. When world-famous stars such as Rod Stewart, Seal or Alicia Keys come to Basel, they are probably attending the BALOISE SESSION. Every autumn, top international stars perform at the popular Swiss boutique music festival, leaving the audience with memorable experiences. Furthermore, at the Musical Theatre Basel, one of the most modern stages in Europe, major musical events regularly take place.

Cinema

In Basel film fans also get their money's worth. The fact that films in the cinema are shown in the original but with subtitles is considered a special feature of Switzerland. Films for children and young people can, however, also be seen in a dubbed version. The choice ranges from the great multiplex cinema to the small city cinema.

Architecture

The cityscape of Basel with its numerous contrasts and sights also belongs to the culture of the city. On the one hand, Basel has very well preserved old city parts with buildings from the 13th and 14th centuries. Above all the cathedral hill, the suburb of St. Alban and the streets between the market square and Petersplatz deserve a mention. Besides that Basel offers first-class modern architecture in a density offered by hardly any other European city. Among Basel's architectural highlights are the 105-metre-high Messe tower by architects Morger Degelo Marques and the St. Jakob-Park football stadium by Herzog & de Meuron. The new Novartis Campus next to the French border was realised with the participation of renowned architects. The 205 meter high Roche office tower in Kleinfelsen is the tallest office building in Switzerland. The first Roche Tower, already completed in 2015, is 178 metres high. It is hardly astonishing, therefore, that the Swiss Museum of Architecture is also located in Basel.





Carnival

For three days once a year there's a very special atmosphere in Basel: it's the three days of the Basel Fasnacht (Carnival), always in the week following Ash Wednesday.

“Morgestraich”

The prelude to the “drey scheenschte Dääg” (“the three best days”) comes in the form of the so-called “Morgestraich” at 4 in the morning on the Monday. Then all the city centre lights go out and Queen Fasnacht picks up the torch in the city till Thursday. A traditional and archaic-seeming tapestry of sound from innumerable piccolos and drums pervades the town. With their wild and brightly coloured costumes the merry Fasnacht crowd roams through the narrow lanes of the old town until dusk begins to fall. The only sources of light are powerful hand-painted lanterns.

“Cortège”

On the Monday afternoon (and on Wednesday too) there is the great procession, the “Cortège”, when hundreds of cliques, “Guggemusiken” and decorated floats pass through the streets of outer and inner Basel. In Basel “Guggemusiken” mean wind and percussion groups, which can be described as a mix between Big Bands and strange noise machines.

Fasnacht Tuesday

Tuesday traditionally belongs to the children, who make their way through the town and suburbs in small groups (“Schissdrägzygli”). In the evening on Münsterplatz the over two hundred lanterns that had made their grand entrance at the Morgestraich can be admired in peace. At the same time the Guggemusiken take over the inner city acoustically with their concerts.

“Schnitzelbängg”

There is intense activity in the pubs over these three days. In so-called “Schnitzelbängg” – humorous, and sometimes sarcastic mocking verses – in which the political and social events of the past months are scoffed at and commented on.

Origin

Etymologically the Basel Fasnacht can be traced back to the Lent fasting period, and the date is determined by the Christian feast days: The Basel Fasnacht always takes place six weeks before Easter, thus a week later than in the Catholic German-speaking area, and the afternoons of the Monday and Wednesday are declared official public holidays in Basel.



Green areas

The canton of Basel-Stadt is indeed a city canton, but it offers in and around the town a large number of green spaces, ranging from pocket parks in empty lots to the extensive city park on former graveyard grounds.

Leisure gardens

Those who don't have a garden can rent a leisure garden. The canton rents out leisure gardens around the city.

Recreation zones

One can also find recreation at the "Birköpfli" on the edge of the city, where the little river Birs flows into the Rhine. Or a walk along the Wiese, another tributary of the Rhine. In the surrounding woods there are numerous open hearths for evening barbecues. In the vicinity of the Spalentor in the city centre the University of Basel has a botanical garden with a Sukkulentehaus (succulents greenhouse) and the Viktoriahaus dating from 1898. In the "Merian Gärten" in front of the city gates, visitors can enjoy an English landscape park, a medicinal plant garden and the rhododendron valley. The Regio-Grüngürtel (regional green belt) around Basel is the main green artery for leisure and recreation. It is also the habitat of several thousand animal and plant types, including some very rare and threatened species.

Zoo and animal park

Basel's zoological garden – "dr Zolli", as it is called here – is Switzerland's oldest animal park. It was founded in 1874, and today the "Zolli" displays a blend of modern, animal-friendly facilities with magnificent old buildings in a green oasis in the immediate proximity of the train station. In the recreation area of the same name is the Lange Erlen animal park. This is smaller than the zoo and features primarily domestic animals.

Ship and ferry

Boat trips on the Rhine are also very popular. The Basel passenger boat company offers regular and special passenger trips throughout the year both near and beyond the city.

And if you just wish to cross the Rhine to the other bank, then you should try one of the four ferries in Basel. These noiseless craft use the currents of the Rhine to reach the other bank without additional power. And besides, when one doesn't quite believe something, then one says in Basel: "Verzell doch das em Fäärimaa!" – Just tell that to the ferryman!



Sport

Sport has its place in all forms and facets of city life. Enthusiasts can choose from a very wide range of individual and team sports, as there are excellent facilities for both popular and competitive sporting activities. A multitude of fitness offerings complete the traditional sports opportunities in Basel.

Popular sport

The possibilities for popular sport are virtually unlimited. More than 200 sports clubs are active in Basel, the list of sports on offer is long and includes numerous water, ball, combat and track sports. And every year there is also the car-free movement and experience day "slowUp" in the Basel region.

Those who prefer to keep fit on an individual basis can enjoy the city and its surroundings by cycling, skating, inline skating, playing golf, riding or paragliding. There's also a wide choice indoors, from aquajogging to yoga. The public sports facilities in Basel are popular public and family meeting points.

Youth development

Youth encouragement and development takes pride of place in sport. Many clubs run their own junior sections. The canton, the municipalities and the Confederation support the sporting activities of young people.

Basel as a sports city

Basel's reputation as a sporting city is based on clubs such as the Basel Football Club (FCB). The home games draw crowds averaging over 25,000 in the St. Jakob-Park ("Joggeli"). Basel also hosts on an annual basis top-class sporting events such as the international tennis tournament Swiss Indoors, the Badminton Swiss Open or the Longines CHI.



Health insurance

Compulsory health insurance covers the costs of treatment in the event of illness, whereby the health insurance funds are organised within the private sector and there is no state health insurance fund in Switzerland. Basic insurance is compulsory for all inhabitants – including for foreigners with residence permits – and various additional insurances can be taken out on a voluntary basis. However, in the case of these additional services the health insurance funds are free to decide whom they accept or do not accept in the insurance plans. In the basic insurances, on the other hand, the funds may not reject any application.

Hospitals

The University Hospital of Basel is one of the largest medical centres in Switzerland with highly recognised international standards. The doctors and nurses work on the basis of the latest scientific knowledge for the well-being, safety and recovery of the patients. Other independent public and private hospitals also offer high-quality medical care in all disciplines.

Children

In the field of healthcare children also have an important place in Basel. The University Children's Hospital of both Basels (UKBB) is an autonomous university skills centre offering high-quality medicine in an environment designed for children. The School Dental Clinic is a public institution that was founded in 1921 for the benefit of the dental health of Basel children and young people. Already at that time the idea was to open a dental clinic where all children of the Canton of Basel-Stadt could be treated – irrespective of their family's financial situation.

Old age

Basel-Stadt has an extensive range of support services for the elderly. The Long-term Care Division of the Department of Health, as the canton's central information and specialist unit, is familiar with and coordinates all the services on offer.



Health

The canton of Basel-Stadt guarantees the highest quality of medical care for all its inhabitants due to a differentiated health system. The basis for this is an insurance system that functions in a uniform manner throughout Switzerland.



Integration

The residential and economic location of Basel-Stadt is characterised by its internationality and immigration. People from 160 countries live and work here, and practically every other marriage is between two nationalities. Everyone should feel comfortable and be able to shape their lives independently and autonomously in this urban diversity. To this end Basel-Stadt pursues an active integration and anti-discrimination policy that covers all aspects of life.

Advice and contact points

Immigrants in Basel have at their disposal a comprehensive network of advice and contact points. GGG Migration is the competence centre for integration in Basel-Stadt. Its employees advise private individuals in over 17 languages on topics such as employment, residence, German courses, family, finances, health, social insurance, or taxes. They mediate interactions with employers, authorities, and institutions and offer guidance on matters related to integration and migration. The Residential Registration Office is the contact point for questions regarding residency and housing (registrations, notices of departure, relocations, changes of tenancy, address information, etc.) and permits and ID cards (passports, residence permits and cross-border commuter permits, family residence permits, attestations, certificates).

Offerings

Among the many offerings is, for example, the event "Welcome to Basel". The executive council welcomes all new residents personally. Various authorities and associations provide information on topics such as employment, residence, education, health, or finances. Additionally, new residents have the opportunity to get to know each other and network among themselves. At the "Welcome to the neighbourhood" event held every year, the district organisations inform the residents from the various districts about life and offerings in their neighbourhood. The web platform "Hallo Basel-Stadt" also provides initial information on the most important areas of life in 20 languages.

Languages and integration courses

An essential factor for integration is language. A broad range of language and integration courses is available in the canton so that all those interested can find a suitable language course. During the welcome meeting at the Residential Registration Office, new residents entitled to a residence permit B receive a voucher for a free German course of 80 lessons. The voucher is valid for one year. All residents of the canton of Basel-Stadt are also entitled to a reduced course fee even after one year.



Economy and employment

The Basel economic region is among the most productive and innovative in the world. Within Switzerland Basel is the region with the greatest economic momentum.

About 200,000 people from Switzerland and the surrounding areas work here. Behind this success lie the knowledge-based industries. These include in particular the life sciences sector with large pharmaceutical companies and biomedical research that have traditionally been very strong in Basel.

Employment conditions

The first two or three months of employment are usually considered as a trial with a notice period varying from a few days to a maximum of two weeks. After attaining permanent employment status the notice period is increased to between one and six months. Working hours are between 40 and 42.5 hours per week with at least 4 weeks paid vacation per year. Salaries are generally paid on a monthly basis. A 13th month salary is common and often established by law. In many companies it is usual to award a discretionary bonus when business is good.

Work permits

People from the EU and EFTA countries benefit from the free movement of people agreements: short-term working visits only have to be reported. A work or residence permit is required for visits lasting more than three months; these can be applied for at the Customer service centre for Migration and Population Services.

Special rules for admission to the labour market apply to individuals from countries that are not members of the EU or EFTA. The employer has to submit their application for a work permit to the cantonal authorities. The approval of the State Secretariat for Migration in Bern is also required.

Social security

Whoever works in Switzerland is subject to the Swiss system of social security. This applies both to Swiss and foreigners. Even those who are not working are subject to the same system of social security in many areas. Basically every person is insured individually in Switzerland. For this, contributions must be made that entitle the person to corresponding benefits. Switzerland has a close-knit network of social insurances which includes unemployment insurance, family allowances, protection against the consequences of illness and accident, and loss of income due to maternity.

Old age/retirement provisions

Retirement provisions are based on three pillars: the first pillar, old-age, survivors' and disability insurance (AHV/IV) is a general public insurance, serving to secure subsistence. The second pillar refers in Switzerland to occupational pensions (BV). Together with the first pillar, it is intended to safeguard the continuation of one's habitual standard of living. Finally the third pillar consists of individual voluntary pension provisions.



Autumn fair

The high point of Basel's fair calendar is the Autumn Fair. "D'Mäss", as the Baslers call this event, begins two weeks before Martinstag (Martin's day) and is heralded on the opening Saturday at noon precisely by the fair bells of St Martin's Church. It ends on the third following Sunday. Breathtaking rides, traditional stalls and nostalgic attractions excite visitors at seven locations.

City and weekly markets

The city market on the Marktplatz (market square) is a highly colourful event where an abundance of delicacies and specialities are on offer. These include vegetables and fruits, flowers, meat products, mushrooms, honey, wine, coffee, dry goods, breads and handmade products, tea and much more. The city market takes place from Tuesday through Wednesday until 2pm and Friday and Saturday until 6pm. The "Schlemmer-Markt" is a gourmet market held at Marktplatz every Monday and offers a wide variety of delicious foods and beverages. Numerous other markets are held in the districts, creating a friendly atmosphere with quality, freshness and customer proximity. Market stalls selling fresh produce and delicious menus lure shoppers in under the great dome of the old market hall at the railway station. The market hall is open every day, but what is on offer varies depending on the time of day and which day of the week it is.

The new goods market on Barfüsserplatz in the city centre offers every Thursday all kinds of ware: jewellery, arts and crafts from around the world, decorations, gourmet food and clothes are just a few examples. There's also plenty of choice of food and drink.

Flea markets

The flea market on Petersplatz is a popular meeting place on Saturdays for everyone who likes second-hand goods. From fine antiques to overalls, here one can find everything one needs for daily life – at very attractive prices. In the middle of the square children can sell their toys free of charge. And twice a month during the week there's the Wednesday flea market on Barfüsserplatz with a wide variety of rare objects and treasures. And a number of flea markets set up by individuals for individuals take place throughout the year in different districts of Basel.

Christmas market

In December Basel turns into a Christmas city: the great Christmas market is set up on Barfüsserplatz and Münsterplatz. From mulled wine to ice trees, arts and crafts to Christmas tree decorations, children's toys to seasonal delicacies, there's something for everyone. In addition there's a children's programme with handicraft workshops and candle-making.



Fairs and markets

In the year 1471 the city of Basel was granted the right to hold fairs. The city thus has a centuries-old tradition, and today Basel is a popular fair and congress venue with its top-class cultural and hotel offerings.

Mobility

The Canton of Basel-Stadt has an excellent infrastructure for all modes of transport. Basel places a great deal of importance on road users being able to travel in harmony. In Basel, it is easy to travel in an environmentally friendly way thanks to dense and well-developed networks of walking and cycling paths, as well as a comprehensive and comfortable public transport system.

On foot

There are about 100 strolling zones – where pedestrians have right of way over all road vehicles – and far-reaching 30 km/h zones, which make walking in Basel a pleasant and safe experience. Pedestrian zones in the city centre also make an important contribution to an attractive network of walking paths.

By bicycle

Basel is a cycle-friendly town with a bicycle network that runs through the whole region (red signs). Thanks to the bike rental systems Velospot and Pick-e-Bike, bicycles and e-bikes can be easily rented. Cargo bikes and e-scooters can be rented from other providers.

Public Transport

Basel has an extensive, cross-border public transport network that boasts numerous connections and reliable punctuality. The train stations of Basel SBB and the Badischer Bahnhof connect Basel with the national and international long-distance and regional lines. The inexpensive "Umweltabonnement", a monthly environmentally friendly travel card, covers all means of public transport as bus, tram or train in the area of the Tarifverbund Nordwestschweiz TNW. The travel card is available from all TNW transport companies. Tickets ("Billette") must be purchased before the start of your journey or validated. They can be obtained on the Internet, smartphone app or from the ticket machines at almost every bus, train or tram stop. With the Halbtax-Abo (half-fare card) you can purchase public transport tickets in Switzerland at reduced prices. The general season ticket (GA) allows unlimited travel on almost the entire public transport network in Switzerland. Timetables are available on the respective transport company's website or via a smartphone app.

By car

You must buy a parking ticket if you want to park on public property in the town. Local residents can obtain a parking card, which allows them to park on blue marked parking areas in their neighbourhood without any time restrictions. Visitors arriving by car can obtain half-day or day parking tickets from public transport ticket machines or on the Internet. Before travelling on a motorway, you must purchase a toll sticker, which is valid for one calendar year. Thanks to the large, nationwide car-sharing company Mobility, it is possible to do without owning a car.



City and communes

With its 37 square kilometres and about 200,000 inhabitants the canton of Basel-Stadt is the smallest canton in Switzerland. It consists of the city of Basel and the rural communes of Riehen and Bettingen, which possess autonomy as communes and are thus entitled to manage their own affairs.

Cantonal Parliament

As a Swiss rarity the Great Council, the Basel Cantonal Parliament, is also responsible for the communal affairs of the city of Basel. The Great Council consists of 100 members and is re-elected every four years. It sits twice a month in the Basel Town Hall in public sessions.

Executive Council

The executive council consists of seven members with equal rights, who are elected for four-year terms. The President of the Executive Council has representative duties and presides over the Department of Presidential Affairs, the other six government members each head up one of the specialised departments. On the cantonal level a department can be compared to a "Dezernat"; the departments on Federal level correspond to ministries.

States councillors and national councillors

On the Federal level Switzerland has a Parliament, consisting of two chambers: the Council of States represents the cantons, the National Council the whole population. In the States Council each canton has two representatives, in the National Council each canton is represented in function of its population. As a half-canton Basel-Stadt has one States Councillor. In the National Council Basel-Stadt is represented by four delegates.

People's rights

Swiss citizens over 18 years of age have the right to vote: they can elect representatives to Parliament on the communal, cantonal and national level and can also stand for election themselves. The governments of the Canton and the communes of Riehen and Bettingen are also elected by the population. The right to vote also gives the Swiss the possibility of expressing themselves on whether or not they agree with new laws. Furthermore they can themselves propose changes to the law through the right to initiate legislation and bring it to a vote. Through the right to a referendum a popular vote can be required on parliamentary decisions after they have been taken. By means of a petition, people can file a request, suggestion or complaint in writing to any regulatory or enforcing authority, irrespective of their voting right status – i.e. this includes foreigners and children.



Politics

Switzerland has a federal structure and so the cantons have a relatively great freedom of action. Each canton has its own constitution, own laws and courts, and it is the cantons that raise direct taxes. In addition there is the principle: what is not expressly stated in the Federal constitution as a Federal competence falls under the competence of the cantons. However, the autonomy of the cantons has limits. Where a Federal law exists it takes precedence over cantonal law.

As in every democratic system the political system of the Canton of Basel-Stadt is characterised by the interplay and opposing forces of parliament and government. A central element is also the participation of the population and of parties and associations in the political and legislative process.

Executive council



Dr. Conradin Cramer
President of the Executive Council
Head of Department of Presidential Affairs



Dr. Lukas Engelberger
Vice-President of the Executive Council
Head of Department of Public Health



Dr. Tanja Soland
Head of Department of Finance



Dr. Stephanie Eymann
Head of Department of Justice and Security



Kaspar Sutter
Head of Department of Economic, Social and
Environmental Affairs



Esther Keller
Head of Department of Public Works and
Transport



Mustafa Atici
Head of Department of Education





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