



No other European city offers a cultural density comparable to that of Basel. Within an area of just 37 square kilometres the "cultural capital of Switzerland" is home to almost 40 museums, some of them world-famous, as well as Art Basel, the world's most important trade fair for modern and contemporary art. The multi-award-winning Theater Basel, the Stadtcasino Basel with one of the best music halls in the world, internationally renowned orchestras, numerous festivals and buildings by international star architects create a unique, inspiring atmosphere in Basel.

There are around 40 museums to visit within an area of just 37 square kilometres in Basel. Collecting has a long tradition in the city: Basel was the first city in Europe to make an art collection accessible to the public in 1661. The "Amerbach Cabinet" with its treasures from the 15th and 16th centuries still forms the core of the world-famous collection of the Kunstmuseum Basel, which comprises 300,000 works from eight centuries. While the main building of the Kunstmuseum Basel displays treasures of old masters such as Hans Holbein and modern classics, large special exhibitions and works from the collection from 1950 onwards are presented in the new building.

The Fondation Beyeler in Riehen is also internationally renowned and is one of the most visited art museums in Switzerland. From 22 September 2024 to 26 January 2025, the museum will present the first Henri Matisse retrospective in German-speaking countries for almost 20 years. Other outstanding art institutions include the Museum Tinguely Basel, which houses the world's largest collection of kinetic works by the famous Swiss artist Jean Tinguely, and Schaulager, which combines the storage and displaying of contemporary art. The highlight every year is Art Basel, the world's biggest trade fair for modern and contemporary art: For four days in June, everything revolves around art – and not only in the exhibition halls at Messe Basel. Numerous supporting events, education fairs and exhibitions turn Basel into an exclusive art city.

Award-winning theatre and stronghold of classical music

Basel is home to the largest multi-purpose theatre in Switzerland: At the multi-award-winning Theater Basel, operas, ballets and plays are performed in two venues and on three stages. In 2023, Theater Basel was the only Swiss theatre to be invited to take part in the Berliner Theatertreffen.

Basel is also a stronghold of classical music. The centrepiece is the Stadtcasino Basel, which officially opened an extension by star architects Herzog & de Meuron in 2020. Built in 1876, the concert hall has excellent acoustics and is one of the best concert halls in the world. In addition to high-ranking local ensembles such as the Sinfonieorchester Basel, the Basel Sinfonietta and the Basel Chamber Orchestra, international orchestras and soloists also perform here on a regular basis.

Music festivals for every taste

From global stars to hidden gems – there is plenty to see and hear in all genres at the festivals in Basel: while classical music and jazz festivals tend to take place in concert halls, Basel becomes an open-air stage for pop and rock bands in summer. The BScene music festival opens the Basel festival season in April every year. This is followed by Imagine, a festival for diversity and against discrimination on Barfüsserplatz every June, Summerstage in the Park im Grünen near Basel and the FLOSS Festival Basel with free concerts on a raft stage on the Rhine. For one weekend every two years, the city belongs to the young people at the Youth Culture Festival. The Festtage Alte Musik Festival also takes place every two years. In addition, there are festivals that cover many genres, such as the trinational Stimmen Festival, which takes place close to the border in Lörrach and at other locations on both sides of the border.

Every autumn since 1986, top international stars such as Alicia Keys, Eric Clapton, Herbert Grönemeyer, Rod Stewart, John Legend, Pink and Zucchero have performed at the Baloise Session, providing visitors, sitting comfortably at club tables, with an exceptional and intimate concert experience. The Basel Tattoo is unique in Switzerland and the second largest open-air festival of its kind in the world: Every summer, the best high-profile orchestras from all over the world present catchy tunes, combined with skilfully choreographed marching sequences and a stunning spectacle of colour and light before the grandiose backdrop of the Kaserne Basel. The European Youth Choir Festival Basel takes place every two years over the Ascension weekend. It has been firmly established since 1992 and, with more than 30,000 visitors, has become an integral part of the cultural life of Basel and the region.

Architectural metropolis

Contemporary architecture is a hallmark of Basel. Thirteen bearers of the Pritzker Architecture Prize, the most prestigious international award for architects, have built in Basel or the surrounding area. The numerous architectural works of art attract architecture enthusiasts from all over the world. The first highlights can already be seen at the railway station: The Meret Oppenheim Tower by Basel architects Herzog & de Meuron draws all eyes to its façade. Herzog & de Meuron also designed the copper signal box, the railway engine depot and the Elsässertor glass palace, the front of which reflects the dazzling white Euregio office building designed by the American Richard Meier. The Peter Merian House by Zwimpfer Partner with its spectacular emerald green façade by the artist Donald Judd and the Jakob Burckhardt House by Zwimpfer Partner and Jakob Steib are located in the immediate vicinity. Less than five minutes' walk from the railway station is the bank building designed by Mario Botta as a round sculpture.

In the last three decades, pioneering museum buildings have been realised thanks to private donors: the monumental Schaulager by Herzog & de Meuron in Münchenstein, the Fondation Beyeler by Renzo Piano in Riehen and the Museum Tinguely by Mario Botta. The Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein includes buildings by Frank O. Gehry, Zaha Hadid, Nicolas Grimshaw, Alvaro Siza and Tadao Ando. Under the direction of Herzog & de Meuron, the Museum der Kulturen was given a striking extension and the Kunstmuseum Basel was expanded with a new building by Christ & Gantenbein.

Basel's architectural highlights also include the 105-metre-high exhibition tower designed by architects Morger Degelo Marques and the St. Jakob-Park football stadium by Herzog & de Meuron. The Novartis Campus on the French border was realised with the participation of renowned architects: buildings by Tadao Ando, David Chipperfield, Diener & Diener, Frank O. Gehry, Adolf Krischanitz, Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, Peter Märkli, Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa (SAANA), Alvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura grace this centre of innovation. The two Roche Towers in Kleinbasel designed by Herzog & de Meuron are the tallest office buildings in Switzerland. Basel is also home to the Swiss Architecture Museum, which presents high-calibre exhibitions focusing on national and international architecture.

More about the cultural metropolis of Basel: www.bs.ch/kultur