

# Welcome to Basel and Northwest Switzerland



# General Information on Switzerland and the cantons of Basel-Stadt and Baselland

Switzerland is located in the heart of Europe, has a surface area of 41,000 square kilometers and over 8.5 million inhabitants. This landlocked country borders Germany to the north, France to the west, Italy to the south and Austria and Liechtenstein to the east.

There are three main geographic regions in Switzerland. The Swiss Plateau stretches from Lake Geneva in the southwest to Lake Constance in the northeast. The Jura lies on the northwestern edge of Switzerland. The western end of the Jura forms a natural border with France. The Swiss Alps lie in the south of the country, from the Austrian

border in the east to Lake Geneva in the west. The Swiss Alps have 48 peaks that are more than 4,000 metres above sea level. The Dufour Peak, 4634 m, is the highest summit in Switzerland.

The Swiss Confederation consists of 26 cantons, three of them are divided in half: Basel-City and Basel-Country, Obwalden and Nidwalden, Appenzell Ausserrhoden and Innerrhoden.

Switzerland has four official languages: German in the north, French in the southwest, Italian in the south and Romansch, which is only spoken in the southeastern canton of Grisons. English is also gaining importance as an unofficial but frequently spoken business language, particularly in main and tourist cities.

Basel is the third largest city in Switzerland with over 201.000 inhabitants. It is famous for its so-called 'tri-national' location – next to Germany and France.

Basel is home to a great number of historical sites including the town hall, the Münster of Basel and the charming old town. The city by the river Rhein features several traditional and international events such as Fasnacht, the annual swim in the Rhein and fairs like Art Basel and Basel World. Basel counts as one of the most important cultural cities in Switzerland and its famous museums, such as the Fondation Beyeler, the Tinguely and the Museum of Arts, attract visitors from all over the world. Concerts, festivals and sporting events fill the year with interesting cultural highlights.

Due to its small size everything in Basel is close and long commutes are not necessary. English is widely spoken and understood by shop owners and restaurant staff alike, but it is of course beneficial to learn some German, so that you can order your drinks in the local language. The Swiss appreciate every small effort you make.

Basel has a very good public transport system with a wide variety of trams, bus routes and local trains. At peak periods the roads can become blocked with traffic, so it is advisable to use local transport where possible.

What is Basel famous for? Basler Lækkerli, the delicious hard spice biscuit made of honey, hazelnuts, almonds, candied peel, and the liqueur Kirsch.

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

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

## Facts & Figures: Canton Basel-Stadt

Basel is located in the northwest of Switzerland. The river Rhein flows through Basel's cantonal territory. At only 37 square kilometers Basel-Stadt is the smallest canton in Switzerland and includes the city of Basel and the two outlying municipalities of Riehen and Bettingen.

From Basel by train...

Zurich: 50-70 minutes

Zurich Airport: 70-90 minutes

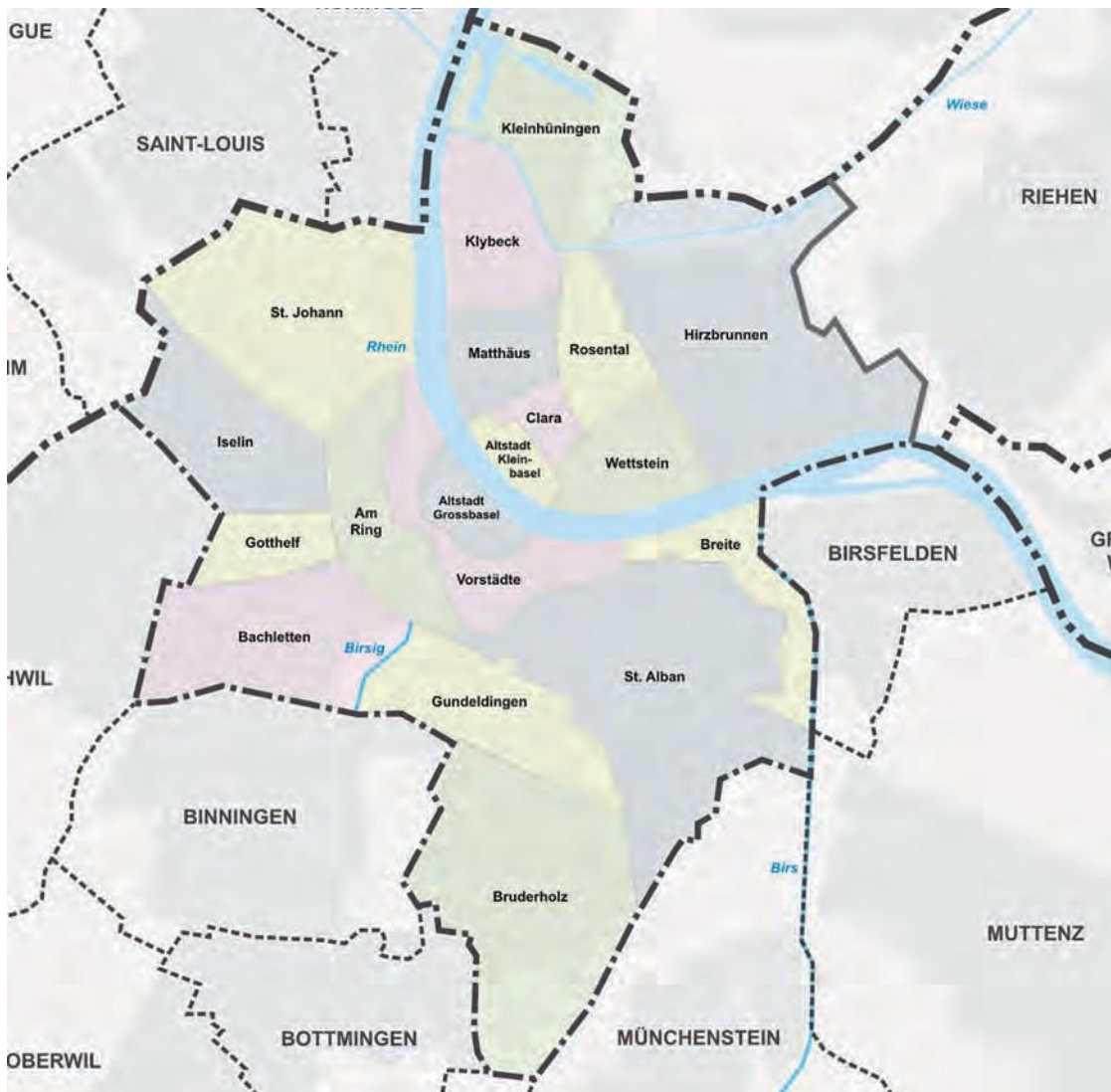
Lucerne: 50-75 minutes

Bern: 60 minutes

Geneva: 2.5 hours

Geneva Airport: 3 hours

Basel-Stadt provides important services to the surrounding areas in Baseland, France and Germany such as hospitals, educational facilities and cultural institutions.

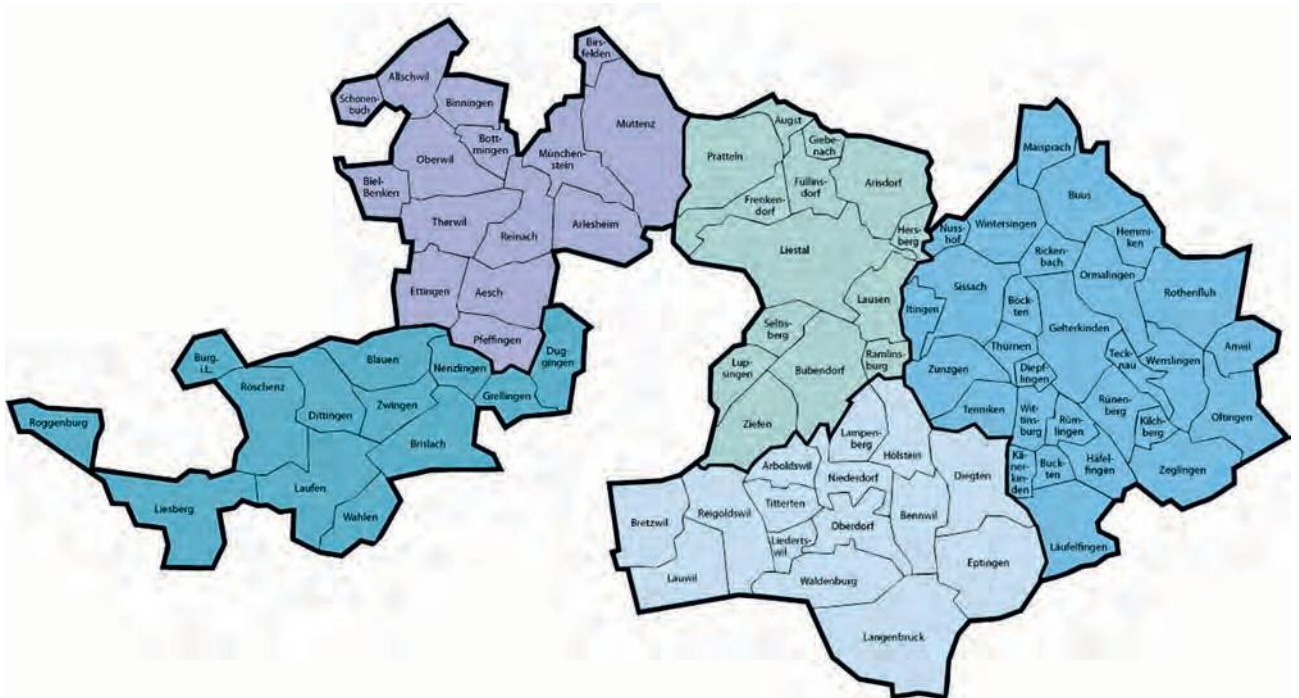


## Facts & Figures: Canton Baselland

With an area of 518 square kilometers, Baselland is considerably larger than Basel-Stadt. It has about 291.000 inhabitants, of which 20 % are foreigners. The half-canton of Baselland consists of 86 municipalities which are divided into five regions: Arlesheim, Laufen, Liestal, Sissach and Waldenburg.

## Economy

Basel is the most dynamic economic region in Switzerland and one of the most productive and innovative worldwide. Global companies in the pharmaceutical and chemical industry – Roche, Novartis, Syngenta and many others – have chosen Basel as their headquarters. Basel is the top location for life science and nanotechnology in Europe. In these sectors, as well as in biotech and medtech, many innovative research companies have been founded. Other important industries in Basel are finance and insurance, IT, architecture and design. In addition, the port of Basel contributes to economic growth, as it is the most important transport hub in the country. 10-12 % of Swiss imports reach the country through this port.



## Best of Basel

Basel boasts many impressive buildings with historical and modern structures alike. Here is an overview of some of the landmarks in Basel.

### Münster

The Basel Cathedral (Münster) was built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and rebuilt after an earthquake in 1356. The Pfalz viewing platform behind the cathedral overlooks the Rhein and the Mittlere Brücke (Middle Bridge), the oldest bridge across the Rhein in Basel. This bridge dates to the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

### Town Hall (Rathaus)

Built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Town Hall is painted red and ornately decorated. During the day the public has access to the courtyard to admire the frescoes on the wall.

### Tinguely Fountain

Its real name is Fasnacht Brunnen (carnival fountain) but is better known as Tinguely Fountain. The fountain, designed by the artist Jean Tinguely, is located in front of the City Theatre. Mechanical figures spout water and turn into beautiful ice sculptures in winter.

### City gates

The three remaining city gates Spalentor, St. Johansstor and St. Albanstor date back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. In 1860 the city wall was torn down to make way for the expansion of the city.

### Dreiländereck

The tri-nation meeting point is the spot where Switzerland, Germany and France come together. The actual spot would be in the river Rhein, but a symbolic marker on a wharf has been erected.

### Fähre (ferries)

Between the five bridges crossing the Rhein four small ferryboats transfer passengers from one side of the river to the other. The ferries are named after typical Basel figures: Wilder Maa, Leu, Vogel Gryff and Ueli. The boats are not motorised and use the current to move across the river.

### Fasnacht/Carnival

Recognized by UNESCO as "Intangible Heritage", Basel is very proud of its carnival celebration, which brings everyday life to a standstill for three whole days in February/March. At 4 am on the Monday morning after Ash Wednesday, the "Morgenstrai" heralds the start of Carnival. Masked and costumed fife players and drummers march through the city and huge lanterns displaying parodies of events from the past year are paraded through the streets. The merrymaking lasts until Thursday 4 am, when the last carnival stragglers head home and a brigade of city cleaners comes to clear the streets of Basel from the thick carpet of confetti and other carnival remnants.



## Fairs

### Art Basel

Apart from Basel World, Art Basel is one of the biggest international fairs that takes place in Basel. Art Basel is the most important modern art fair worldwide and attracts artists, galleries and collectors from all over the world. Around 300 carefully selected exhibitors display their artworks during the fair. [www.artbasel.com](http://www.artbasel.com)

### Herbstmesse

The Basel Autumn Fair is the largest and oldest amusement fair in Switzerland. For two weeks Basel's city centre is turned into a large fairground. At seven locations around the city, rides, games and market and food stalls attract thousands of visitors from Switzerland and across the borders. [www.herbstmesse.ch/en](http://www.herbstmesse.ch/en)

## Highlights

### Basel Jazz Festival

The Basel Jazz Festival journeys through the young and current jazz music scene, ethnic music, soul, crossover projects and new electric jazz, and brings jazz stars and legends to the city. [www.offbeat-concert.ch/en](http://www.offbeat-concert.ch/en)

### Basel Tattoo

Basel Tattoo features world-famous, catchy tunes, original choreography and light shows against the backdrop of the historic Basel Casino. Top musicians, show bands and top representative orchestras from all continents take the audience on a musical and visual journey around the world. [www.baseltattoo.ch](http://www.baseltattoo.ch)

### Baloise Session

Baloise Session is a boutique music festival. The small capacity of 1,550 seats provides guests with a unique and intimate concert experience, sitting comfortably at candlelit club tables. The music repertoire ranges from pop, rock, funk and soul to Latin music and jazz. [www.baloisesession.ch/en](http://www.baloisesession.ch/en)

## Swiss Indoors

As the largest national sporting event and one of the most important indoor tournaments in the world, the Swiss Indoors traditionally takes place in Basel and is always marked by the final sprint for the World Championships. Every year, the world's tennis elite gathers in the magnificent St. Jakobshalle.

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

## Museums

Here is a small selection of museums in Basel. There are many more to discover and enjoy.

Museum of Art (Kunstmuseum)  
[www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch/en](http://www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch/en)

Fondation Beyeler  
[www.fondationbeyeler.ch/en](http://www.fondationbeyeler.ch/en)

Tinguely Museum  
[www.tinguely.ch/en](http://www.tinguely.ch/en)

Vitra Design Museum/Weil am Rhein, Germany  
[www.design-museum.de/en/information](http://www.design-museum.de/en/information)

Museum of Natural History  
<http://www.nmbs.ch/en>

Pharmaceutical Museum  
[www.pharmaziemuseum.ch/en](http://www.pharmaziemuseum.ch/en)

Dreiländermuseum/Lörrach, Germany  
[www.dreilaendermuseum.eu](http://www.dreilaendermuseum.eu)

More museums on  
[www.museenbasel.ch/museen/en](http://www.museenbasel.ch/museen/en)

# Things To Do in and Around Basel

Basel offers a wide variety of leisure activities for beautiful sunny days as well as rainy days. When the sun is shining there is an endless abundance of things to do and places to go. Nevertheless, there are countless indoor activities too. For a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities in Basel and the border triangle visit the Basel Tourist Information at Bahnhof SBB or at Barfüsserplatz or visit [www.basel.com/en](http://www.basel.com/en) online.



## Leisure Activities & Excursions

### Cycling and hiking

Swiss hiking trails are very well signposted. This makes them easy to follow, even without a map. There are plenty of hiking trails around Basel you can choose from. They have different levels of difficulty and lengths. Cycling and mountain biking are popular sporting activities in Switzerland. There are some beautiful bike tours which lead you through the surrounding countryside.

The Veloland website shows you a selection of cycling and mountain biking routes around Basel and throughout Switzerland. You can also find hiking trails and inline skating routes on the website. <http://www.schweizmobil.ch/en/summer>

### Swimming in The Rhein/"Rheinschwimmen"

On hot summer days you will see hundreds of people drifting down the Rhein. Once a year, the city organizes a big swim, inviting people of all ages to jump into the Rhein together. [www.slrg-basel.ch](http://www.slrg-basel.ch)

### Wasserfallen

A short drive away from Basel, the Wasserfallen region makes for a great excursion for the whole family. Set in the Jura Mountain chain, Wasserfallen offers many fun activities. A cable car brings you up the mountain to where there are many hiking trails to explore. For those who prefer more of an adrenaline rush, scooters (the no engine variety) can be rented to speed down the mountain or take a climb through the forest high wire park. In winter, you can go sledding or walking in snowshoes. [www.region-wasserfallen.ch/en](http://www.region-wasserfallen.ch/en)

### Rhein river cruises

From April to October the company Basler Personenschiffahrt offers regular cruises on the Rhein. Enjoy the Rhein on a trip through the locks at Birsfelden on the way to Rheinfelden or discover the city and region from the water on a river cruise as far as the border triangle. A varied programme of on-board entertainment ensures a fun evening! [www.bpg.ch/en](http://www.bpg.ch/en)

### FC Basel 1893

Football Club Basel 1893, widely known as FC Basel or FCB, is one of the most successful clubs in Swiss and European football. Upcoming football events at St. Jakob Park Basel: [www.fcb.ch](http://www.fcb.ch)

### Foxtrail

Foxtrail is an entertaining way to get to know a city better. In Basel you can choose from four different trails that take about 2.5 - 4 hours to complete. In small groups you must solve puzzles and follow clues to bring you from one hiding place to another. [www.foxtrail.ch](http://www.foxtrail.ch)

### Guided Tours – Basel for newcomers

On this tour especially designed for new residents of the city, you can get to know the city and gain valuable information for day-to-day life. In addition, you will also learn about the many cultural institutions, where to shop and the possibilities for spending your leisure time. [www.basel.com/en](http://www.basel.com/en)

### **Room Escape**

Great as a team building exercise or just a fun experience with friends, Room Escape has the goal of finding your way out of a locked room within an hour. You need to solve various puzzles, crack locks and unlock doors by using logic, general knowledge and clues to help you escape.

[www.roomescape.ch/home-en](http://www.roomescape.ch/home-en)

## Activities for Children

### **Familienpass**

The Familienpass is a family card that grants you and your children free access to over 150 participating venues in the region and offers plenty of discounts. The family card is valid for children up to the age of 14.

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

### **Aquabasilea, Pratteln**

Indoor water world, spa, fitness. Experience a day of fun and relaxation you will never forget at the most diverse water-world paradise in Switzerland. Kids who love water slides will love it here.

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

### **Minigolf**

Minigolf is a fun and competitive activity for both old and young. The minigolf course in Münchenstein's Park im Grünen is located in the children's fun park area, which has a big playground for the little ones.

Park im Grünen/Restaurant Seegarten

[www.parkimgruenen.ch/gruenen80.html](http://www.parkimgruenen.ch/gruenen80.html)

### **Swiss Mega Park**

Only 20 minutes away from Basel, Swiss Mega Park in Frenkendorf offers you an indoor funpark with playgrounds, laser-tag, mega jump, indoor tree-climbing park as well as a sport park with squash. [www.swissmegapark.ch](http://www.swissmegapark.ch)

### **Gymboree Basel**

Big play area for children up to 6 years old. Gymboree offers classes (art, music, ballet) for young children as well as parent-child activities in English and German.

[www.gymboreeclases-dach.com](http://www.gymboreeclases-dach.com)

### **Tierpark Lange Erlen**

The Lange Erlen Animal Park is set in the recreational area along the Wiese River. Most of its animals are native to western Europe. The park is free of charge and open daily.

[www.erlen-verein.ch](http://www.erlen-verein.ch)

### **Zoo Basel**

Basel Zoo is a popular destination and well worth a visit at any time of year. When the temperature drops below 10° Celsius in winter, the penguins come out for a walk around the zoo at 11am.

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

### **Beeriland Bottmingen**

Just outside Basel you can spend time picking all sorts of berries on your own. A fun experience for the whole family. [www.beeriland.ch](http://www.beeriland.ch)

### **Augusta Raurica**

Visit the ancient Roman settlement in Augst. Different activities and workshops in connection with the Romans are offered for children.

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

### **Vogelpark Steinen**

A short drive across the border to Germany, the bird park in Steinen is a fun outdoor attraction for children. A bird of prey show is held a few times a day and the park also keep macaques and kangaroos.

[www.vogelpark-steinen.de](http://www.vogelpark-steinen.de)

### **Europa-Park Rust/Germany**

A small Disneyland approx. one hour from Basel Europa-Park in Rust, near Freiburg, is the most spectacular theme park in the region. With its numerous rides and attractions, it has something for everyone – young and old alike!

[www.europapark.de/en](http://www.europapark.de/en)



## Skiing

There is no shortage of ski stations in Switzerland. Winter is one of the most beautiful times of the year, when the mountains come alive with skiers, snowboarders and sledgers. Fun can be had by all ages.

It is advisable to invest in some decent skiing clothing, which is relatively cheap here as it is readily available. It can be very cold in the mountains so buy some proper thermal skiing underwear (e.g. ODLO) and feel the difference. It is important to be warm. Don't forget protection for your eyes too; always take your sunglasses or goggles for the kids with UV protection and sunscreen.

The nearest place to go skiing from Basel is at Feldberg in Germany's Black Forest region. <http://www.feldberg-erlebnis.de/en>

The Jura Mountains also have a few smaller skiing resorts, the nearest being Langenbruck, Baselland. [www.bergfex.ch/langenbruck](http://www.bergfex.ch/langenbruck)

The larger ski resorts are all at least a 1.5-hour drive from Basel.

Stoos – a family ski resort in Central Switzerland. [www.stoos.ch/en](http://www.stoos.ch/en)

Engelberg – for the more advanced skiers. [www.titlis.ch](http://www.titlis.ch)

Flims/Laax/Falera – there is a glacier here so you can ski all year round. A large variety of pistes for all abilities. <http://www.flimslaax.com/en>

Gstaad/Saanen – located in the Bernese Alps. The glacier at 3,000 metres enables year-round skiing. <http://www.gstaad.ch/en/winter>

Melchseefrutt – a family ski-resort; one of the longest sledge runs too. [www.melchseefrutt.ch](http://www.melchseefrutt.ch)

## International Clubs & Societies

### **American Women's Club of Basel**

The American Women's Club (AWC) of Basel is a non-profit social and philanthropic organization that was founded in 1947 and currently has about 160 members. It is a group of women of very diverse backgrounds, interests, and ages – but all with a connection to the USA. [www.awcbasel.org](http://www.awcbasel.org)

### **Basel Connect**

Contact between global employees and locals in the Basel region. [www.baselconnect.ch](http://www.baselconnect.ch)

### **Centrepoint**

The purpose of Centrepoint is to provide an English-speaking meeting point in Basel where members of any nationality can meet for a coffee and interact. Centrepoint has a library to borrow books and offers language discussion groups and a wide range of events, services and programmes. [www.centrepoint.ch](http://www.centrepoint.ch)

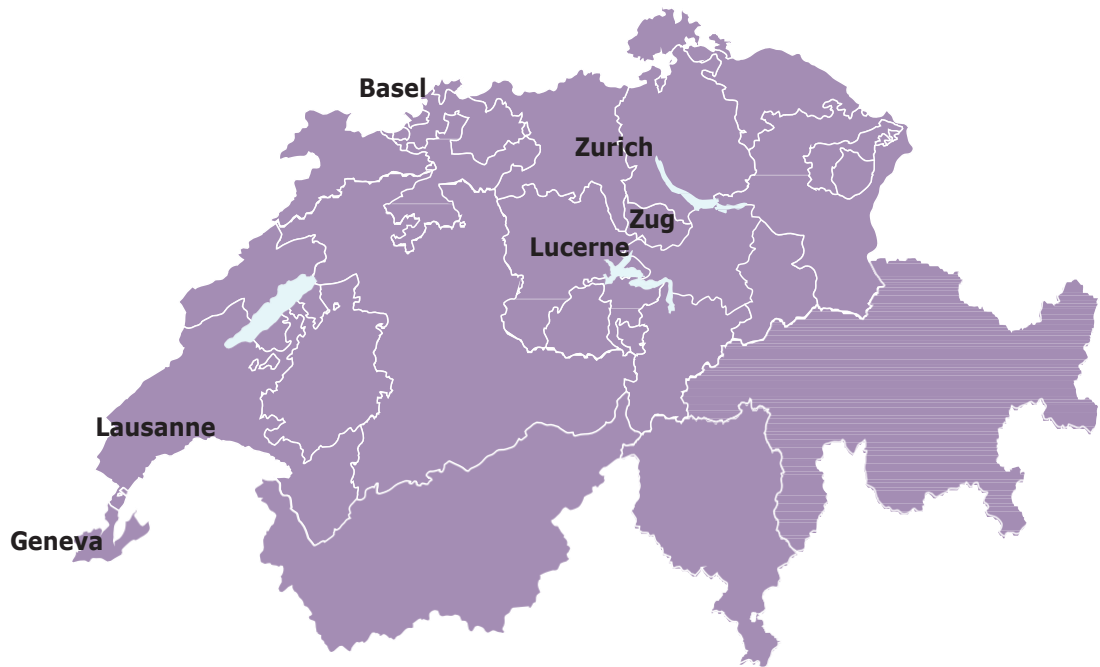
### **Professional Women's Group of Basel**

The Professional Women's Group of Basel exists to offer women of diverse professional and cultural backgrounds a platform to gain new insights, exchange information and share experiences whilst building friendships and professional relationships in a welcoming and social environment. [www.pwg-basel.ch](http://www.pwg-basel.ch)

### **Basel Hausmen**

The first contact point for English-speaking housemen living in or moving to the Basel area. They organize a number of activities, e.g. lunches, excursions, sport events, etc. [www.hausmen.com](http://www.hausmen.com)

Are you moving to Switzerland and need more information about living in Basel and professional guidance?  
Contact Connectiv Relocation – your local experts.



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