

Baden-Württemberg



Baden-Württemberg is one of Germany's most popular holiday regions, rivalled only by Bavaria in its natural landscapes and range of outdoor activities. Most of the state is covered by the fabled Black Forest (Schwarzwald), a vast nature playground whose peaks, lakes and cuckoo clocks are irresistible to hikers, cyclists, bathers, boaters and punctual people who find quarter-hourly mechanical bird calls charming rather than annoying.

One of the country's most prosperous states, Baden-Württemberg was created in 1951 out of three historic regions: Baden, Württemberg and Hohenzollern. Further back in history, much of its southern reaches were part of Swabia (Schwaben) and many people here still speak Swabian (Schwäbisch), a melodic dialect that other Germans find largely incomprehensible.

In the centre, the capital Stuttgart is the home of Mercedes-Benz and Porsche, and a wealth of urban pleasures. A bit to the east are Schwäbisch Hall, a medieval gem, and, on the banks of the Danube, the architecturally audacious city of Ulm. The spas of Baden-Baden have been soothing the stresses of modern and ancient life since Roman times.

The state is also home to three famous and ancient university cities. In Heidelberg, students still gather in ancient beer halls while Tübingen, with its narrow lanes and hilltop fortress, positively oozes charm. Flowery Freiburg, not far from the Swiss border, makes an ideal base for exploring the Black Forest and the rolling vineyards of Breisach, on the French frontier.

Lake Constance (Bodensee), whose southern shore – overlooked by the Alps – is in Switzerland and Austria, is a huge draw, especially in summer.

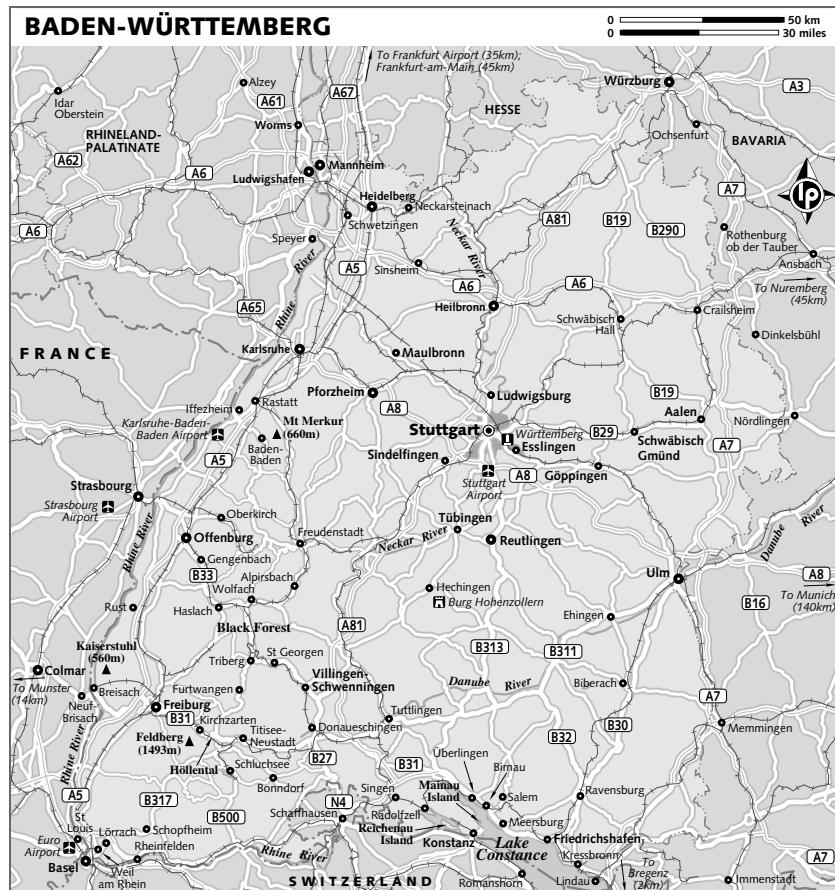
HIGHLIGHTS

- **Art and Automobiles** Explore outstanding museums and classy shops in Stuttgart (p393)
- **Snow and Eis** Admire the snow-capped Alps and savour ice cream (*Eis*) with strudel at a lakefront café on Lake Constance (p452)
- **Warm Watery Indulgence** Soak in an ornate 19th-century Baden-Baden spa (p434)
- **Back to the Middle Ages** Explore the medieval old town and ancient castle in the university city of Tübingen (p423)
- **Hell's Valley** Hoof it, train it or floor it through the Höllental (Hell's Valley, p449) in the Southern Black Forest



■ POPULATION: 10.7 MILLION

■ AREA:



Activities

HIKING

Baden-Württemberg is crisscrossed by walking and hiking trails too numerous to count, many of them through forests, along rivers or around lakes. Local tourist offices sell maps and can suggest suitable day hikes.

CYCLING

Baden-Württemberg is a cyclists' paradise, with thousands of kilometres of paved bike paths. Those with plenty of watery views include the following:

Bodensee-Weg Goes all the way around Lake Constance.
Donautal-Radweg (www.donau-radweg.info, in German) Follows the mighty Danube from the unexciting town of Donaueschingen (65km east of Freiburg) to Ulm (190km northeast of Donaueschingen), Vienna, Budapest and beyond.

Neckartal-Radweg (www.neckartal-radweg.de, in German) Follows the Neckar River for 357km from Villingen-Schwenningen northward (more or less) to Tübingen, Stuttgart and Heidelberg.

Rheintal-Weg Goes along the Rhine from Konstanz westward to Basel and then northward via Freiburg (or Breisach) to Baden-Baden, Heidelberg, Mannheim and beyond.

Veloroute Rhein Follows the Rhine along all of its left bank (in France and then Germany) and most of the right bank from Basel northward to Mannheim (415km).

Getting There & Around

Stuttgart airport (www.stuttgart-airport.com), Baden-Württemberg's largest, is a major hub for the discount airline **German Wings** (www.germanwings.com). Frankfurt airport is about 75km north of Mannheim. Other useful airports include

the **EuroAirport** (www.euroairport.com), which serves Freiburg as well as the Swiss city of Basel and the French city of Mulhouse; **Karlsruhe-Baden-Baden airport** (Baden Airpark; www.badenairpark.de); **Friedrichshafen airport** (www.fly-away.de); and **Strasbourg airport** (www.strasbourg.aeroport.fr) in France, across the Rhine from the Northern Black Forest.

Trains, trams and/or buses serve almost every city, town and mountain village in this chapter. Public transport across the Black Forest can be pretty slow, and long-distance trips (such as from Freiburg to Tübingen or Konstanz) may require several changes.

STUTTGART

☎ 0711 / pop 589,000

Perhaps best known as the headquarters of Mercedes-Benz and Porsche, Stuttgart has a number of first-rate art collections and two museums that are sure to set the pulse of the motor-minded racing. Blessed with an air of relaxed prosperity and a keen sense of style, the city is one of the greenest in Europe – not only is it well-endowed with parks, but it even has its own vineyards! The shopping, restaurant, cultural and nightlife scenes are all vibrant, if upmarket.

Stuttgart began as a stud farm ('*Stuotgarten*', hence the name) on the Nesenbach Stream around AD 950. By 1160 it was a booming trade centre, and in the early 14th century it became the royal seat of the Württemberg family. After WWII, the city's architectural treasures were painstakingly reconstructed.

ORIENTATION

The main pedestrian shopping street, Königstrasse, stretches southwest from the well-tended Hauptbahnhof (train station). Public

squares on or near Königstrasse include Schlossplatz and Schillerplatz. The three sections of the Schlossgarten (a grassy park) stretch northeastward from Schlossplatz almost 4km to the Neckar River. The district of Bad Cannstatt straddles the Neckar River about 3km northeast of the Hauptbahnhof.

Steep grades are common on Stuttgart's hillsides – more than 500 city streets end in *Stäffele* (staircases).

INFORMATION

Bookshops

Wittwer (☎ 250 70; Königstrasse 30) A bookshop with foreign-language and travel sections.

Cultural Centres

Deutsch-Amerikanisches Zentrum (German-American Center; ☎ 228 180; www.daz.org; Charlottenplatz 17; ☎ 2-6pm Tue-Thu) Promotes German-American relations.

Internet Access

Café Naser (in the Hauptbahnhof; per hr €5; ☎ 6am-10pm) Up the stairs behind track 4.

City Call & Internet Center (Eberhardstrasse 14; per hr €2; ☎ 9am-midnight Mon-Sat, 11am-midnight Sun & holidays)

Cyber Café (Klett Passage; per hr €2; ☎ 9am-11pm)

Level One Cyber Bar (Königstrasse 22; per hr €4.50; ☎ 9am-midnight Mon-Sat, noon-midnight Sun) A stylish internet café in the basement of a cinema.

Laundry

SB-Waschsalon Trieb (☎ 5am-midnight) Self-service laundry in the arcade behind (just south of) the tourist office.

Medical Services

Ärztliche Bereitschaft (☎ 262 8012; Böheimstrasse 37; ☎ 7pm-7am, 7am-7pm Sat, Sun & holidays) A doctor's office inside Marien-Hospital, which is 3km southwest of

DISCOUNT TICKETS

The three-day **Stuttcard** (€12) gets you free entry to most public museums as well as discounts on cultural events and leisure activities, including the tourist office's guided tours. The **Stuttcard Plus** (€17.50) also affords unlimited bus, tram and metro travel within the city, including to and from the airport.

If you have a hotel reservation, for €9 you can get a three-day ticket good for unlimited public transport usage within the city limits (valid for an adult and two children up to age 17). A version good for public transport throughout the entire metropolitan area costs €12.30. They are generally available at hotel reception desks.

All four passes can be purchased at the tourist office, including the airport branch.



the Hauptbahnhof. Staffed when regular medical practices are closed.

Katharinen Hospital (☎ 2780; Kriegsbergstrasse 60) The city's largest.

Money

American Express exchange bureau (Arnulf-Klett-Platz 1; ☎ 9.30am-noon & 1-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat)

ATMs There are lots along Königstrasse.

Reisebank & Western Union (in the Hauptbahnhof behind track 11; ☎ 8am-8.30pm, Western Union to 8pm) Currency exchange.

Post

Post office (inside Königsbau Passagen) A bit northwest of the Schlossplatz. There's also a branch in the Hauptbahnhof, up the stairs behind track 4.

Tourist Information

State Tourist Board (www.tourismus-bw.de)

Tourist office (☎ 222 80; www.stuttgart-tourist.de; Königstrasse 1a; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat, 11am-6pm Sun & holidays) The staff can help with room bookings. Has a public transport information desk.

Welcome Information Center (☎ 0711 2228-0; ☎ 8am-8pm) The tourist office branch at Stuttgart International Airport. Situated in Terminal 3, Level 2 (Arrivals).

SIGHTS City Centre

High above the huge Hauptbahnhof, the 10-storey **Aussichtsplattform** (Viewing Platform; admission free; ☎ 10am-9pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep, 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, to 9pm Thu Oct-Mar) affords a close-up view of the giant Mercedes logo and, through netting,

| INFORMATION | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|----------|
| American Express Exchange | Königsbau..... | 21 B2 | Markthalle..... | 41 B3 |
| Bureau..... | Landtag..... | 22 C2 | Nirvan..... | 42 B4 |
| Café Naser..... | Neues Schloss..... | 23 C3 | Weinhaus Stetter..... | 43 C4 |
| City Call & Internet Center..... | Olgabau..... | 24 B2 | | |
| Cyber Café..... | Rathaus..... | 25 B3 | DRINKING ☑ | |
| Deutsch-Amerikanisches | Staatsgalerie..... | 26 D2 | Beer Garden..... | 44 D1 |
| Zentrum..... | Staatstheater..... | (see 53) | Deli..... | 45 B4 |
| Hauptbahnhof Post Office..... | Stiftskirche..... | 27 B3 | Palast der Republik..... | 46 B2 |
| Kartenvorverkauf Desk..... | Württembergischer Kunstverein..... | 28 B2 | ENTERTAINMENT ☑ | |
| Katharinen Hospital..... | Württembergisches Landesmuseum..... | (see 14) | Ambo Cinema..... | 47 C1 |
| Level One Cyber Bar..... | | | Die Röhre..... | 48 D2 |
| Post Office..... | | | Dilaya..... | 49 B4 |
| Reisebank & Western Union..... | | | King's Club..... | 50 A3 |
| Union..... | | | Kommunales Kino..... | 51 B2 |
| SB-Waschsalon Trieb..... | | | Romeo's Kiste..... | 52 B4 |
| Tourist Office..... | | | Staatstheater..... | 53 C2 |
| Wittwer..... | | | Variété im Friedrichsbau..... | 54 B2 |
| | | | Zap Club..... | 55 B4 |
| SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES | | | | |
| Alexander Calder's Mobile..... | Der Zauberklehring..... | 29 C4 | | |
| Alte Kanzlei..... | DJH Hostel..... | 30 D2 | | |
| Altes Schloss..... | Hostel Alex 30..... | 31 D4 | | |
| Aussichtsplattform..... | Hotel Centro..... | 32 A3 | | |
| Freidrich Schiller Statue..... | Hotel Unger..... | 33 B1 | | |
| Hans im Glück Statue..... | InterCity Hotel..... | 34 B1 | | |
| Instrumenten Museum..... | Museumstube..... | 35 A3 | | |
| Kunstmuseum Stuttgart..... | Steigenberger Graf Zeppelin..... | 36 B1 | | |
| König Wilhelm Jubilee Column..... | Wirt am Berg..... | 37 D3 | | |
| | | | SHOPPING ☑ | |
| | | | Flea Market..... | 56 C3 |
| | | | Flower Market..... | 57 B3 |
| | | | Königsbau Passagen..... | (see 21) |
| EATING | | | | |
| Amadeus..... | | (see 5) | | |
| Calwer-Eck-Bräu..... | | 38 A3 | | |
| Food Market..... | | 39 B3 | | |
| Imbiss zum Brunnenwirt..... | | 40 B4 | | |
| | | | TRANSPORT | |
| | | | Avis..... | 58 C1 |
| | | | Bus Station..... | 59 C1 |
| | | | Europcar..... | (see 58) |
| | | | Hertz..... | (see 58) |

a wonderful panorama of the surrounding hillsides. It's accessible by lift from the Hauptbahnhof's eastern entrance.

Just east of the train station is the **Mittlerer Schlossgarten** (Middle Palace Garden). Here you'll find meandering walkways, fountains, an excellent **beer garden** and, weather permitting, sunbathing folk watching the world – and the inline skaters – go by. The **Unterer Schlossgarten** (Lower Palace Garden) stretches several kilometres northeast to the Neckar River, where it links up with the **Rosensteinpark**, home of the zoo (see p397). To the south is the **Oberer Schlossgarten** (Upper Palace Garden), ringed by landmark buildings such as the **Staatstheater** (State Theatre) and the **Landtag** (State Parliament).

To the east of the Staatstheater, just across Konrad-Adenauer-Strasse, is the world-renowned **Staatsgalerie** (State Gallery; ☎ 470 400; www.staatsgalerie-stuttgart.de; Konrad-Adenauer-Strasse 30-32; adult/concession €4.50/3, incl special exhibition €8/6; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, to 9pm Thu, 10am-midnight 1st Sat of every month), whose collection of 14th- to 20th-century art includes works by masters such as Fra Angelico, Tiepolo, Rembrandt, Rubens, Manet, Monet, Renoir and Cézanne. It occupies two adjacent (and connected) buildings: the neoclassical Alte Staatsgalerie (1843) and the Neue Staatsgalerie (1984), whose pink

tubes and green window frames were designed by James Stirling.

The focus of Stuttgart's commercial life is the pedestrians-only **Königstrasse**, a spotlessly clean and conspicuously well-heeled shopping precinct that stretches for a bit over 1km southwestward from the Hauptbahnhof. Halfway down (and contiguous with the Oberer Schlossgarten) is the **Schlossplatz**, Stuttgart's main public square and a showcase for its cultural riches. In the middle stands the **König Wilhelm Jubilee Column**, flanked by fountains representing the eight rivers of Baden-Württemberg.

Dominating the west side of the square is the new **Kunstmuseum Stuttgart** (☎ 216 2188; www.kunstmuseum-stuttgart.de; Kleiner Schlossplatz 1; adult/student & senior €5/3.50, during special exhibitions around €8/6.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue, Thu, Sat & Sun, to 9pm Wed & Fri), by day a semireflective glass cube, by night impressively illuminated from within. Opened in 2005, this municipal art museum features 20th-century and contemporary art; highlights include works by Otto Dix, Dieter Roth and Willi Baumeister.

Out front stands **Alexander Calder's mobile**, bought by the city in 1981 for the equivalent of about €500,000. Stuttgarters, known for what other Germans might call 'miserliness' but which they themselves see as 'thrill',

PEDAL TO THE METAL

When Herman the German eases behind the wheel of his jet-black Mercedes, he's revving up for a pleasure as Teutonic as beer and bratwurst: fast driving. In a society famous for its adherence to rules and regulations, and for its passionate environmentalism, the autobahn is one of the few realms where Germans throw all caution to the wind. Where else can you travel at more than 200km (125 miles) per hour with no threat of a fine?

Germans argue vehemently to uphold their command of the autobahn. The magazine *Firmen Auto* has claimed that 'the danger of being overtaken drops sharply at 200km per hour, allowing the driver to concentrate fully on the traffic in front of the vehicle'. The AvD car club argues that 95% of all auto accidents in Germany involve drivers travelling less than 100km per hour.

Ironically, however, all but one-quarter of Germany's 11,000km of autobahns – the second-biggest such network after the USA – have restrictions of 130km per hour or less due to endless construction work, noise pollution regulations for built-up areas and traffic jams. But long stretches remain where the only limits are warp drive and a motorist's own nerve. Here, unwitting foreigners are given a rough lesson in autobahn etiquette every time a Mercedes, BMW or Porsche appears out of nowhere in the rear-view mirror, angrily flashing its lights to press its urgent demand: MOVE OVER!

initially went ballistic over the cost but are now quite satisfied as the work's value has gone up considerably.

Just to the north is the classical, colonnaded **Königsbau**, which in 2006 was reborn as an up-market shopping mall, the **Königsbau Passagen**. On the top two floors of the complex's western **Stilwerk** section are more than a dozen of Germany's most stylish interior-design shops.

On the north side of the Schlossplatz, adjacent to Königstrasse, is the **Olgabau**, a fine example of 1950s architecture that's home to Dresdner Bank. A bit to the east, topped by a copper cupola, is the **Württembergischer Kunstverein** (☎ 223 370; www.wkv-stuttgart.de; Schlossplatz 2; adult/student from €5/3; ☎ 11am-6pm Tue-Sun, to 8pm Wed, longer hours for some exhibitions), which puts on temporary exhibitions of contemporary art.

Dominating the east side of Schlossplatz is the late-baroque/neoclassical **Neues Schloss**, once the residence of kings Friedrich I and Wilhelm I and now the home of state government ministries. Just south across the Planie is **Karlsplatz**, where you'll find a statue of Wilhelm looking noble and serious on a bronze steed.

A short block south of Schlossplatz, on the other side of the Renaissance **Alte Kanzlei** (Old Chancellery), is Schillerplatz, named after the poet-dramatist Friedrich Schiller, whose statue stands in the centre. Through the archway just east of the Alte Kanzlei is the **Altes Schloss**, adorned with a large statue of Eberhard, Württemberg's first duke and founder of Tübingen University. Now the old

palace holds the excellent **Württembergisches Landesmuseum** (☎ 279 3400; Schillerplatz 6; adult/student incl audio guide €3/2; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun), with well-presented exhibitions on themes ranging from the material culture of the ancient Celts to the Württemberg crown jewels. A new section displays colourful glass objects. In the ornate arched courtyard, rebuilt after the war, the rams above the clock on the tower lock horns on the hour.

In Schillerplatz' southwestern corner – in the **Stiftsfruchtkasten**, a former wine depot topped by a Bacchus statue – is the **Instrumenten Museum** (Schillerplatz 1; admission free with Landesmuseum ticket; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun), which displays all sorts of historic musical instruments. Next to it stands the reconstructed **Stiftskirche**, with its twin 61m-high late-Gothic towers (by law, no Stuttgart building can be built taller).

Motorcar Museums

Housed in a fantastic futuristic structure that seems destined to become a landmark, the new **Mercedes-Benz Museum** (☎ 173 0000; www.mercedes-benz.com/museum; Mercedesstrasse 100; adult/concession €8/4; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun & holidays), opened in 2006, gets rave reviews from locals and visitors alike. A visit begins on the top level and takes you past 180 gleaming vehicles, including various 'firsts' on display in the Legend Rooms. The museum is on the right bank of the Neckar about 4km northeast of the city centre; to get there without wheels take the S1 S-Bahn line to Gottlieb-Daimler-Stadion (€2.20).

The **Porsche Museum** (☎ 911 5685; Porscheplatz 1; admission free; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat, Sun & holidays), 6km northwest of the centre in the district of Zuffenhausen, will also soon be transformed by some bold architecture. With its inauguration set for early 2008 (until which time the old premises will remain open), the new museum – designed to showcase the company's flagship qualities of 'power and passion' – will display 80 vehicles (four times as many as the current exhibition) produced since the company first began making sports cars in 1948. Call ☎ 911 5384 to arrange a factory tour (minimum age: 18). To get to the museum, take the S6 S-Bahn line to Neuwirtshaus (€2.20).

Parks

Animals and plants from around the world feature at the enormously popular **Wilhelma Zoologisch-botanischer Garten** (Zoo & Botanical Gardens; ☎ 540 20; www.wilhelma.de; Rosensteinpark; adult/student under 28yr €10.80/5.40, after 4pm & in winter €7.40/3.70; ☎ 8.15am-nightfall), which is in the **Rosensteinpark** (contiguous with the Unterer Schlossgarten) about 3km northeast of the centre. Founded in 1839, its kid-friendly attractions include bathing elephants and feeding sea lions and penguins. To get there, take the U14 to Wilhelma or the U13 or buses 52, 55 or 56 to Rosensteinbrücke.

On warm summer days, Stuttgart's young and old – including Turkish families with portable barbecue equipment – flock to the **Max-Eyth-See**, a lake and park right on the Neckar (and on the U14 line) about 7km northeast of the Hauptbahnhof (Eyth rhymes with height). The water is hardly pristine, so swimming is out, but there's a great **bike path** here – in fact it's part of the Neckartal-Radweg (see p392). Along the river, the steep hills still have some older terraced-style vineyards;

STUTTGART'S VINEYARD TRAILS

The **Stuttgarter Weinwanderweg** (www.stuttgarter-weinwanderweg.de, in German) is the name given to two walking trails that head through vineyards so lush and pastoral you'll hardly believe that some of the world's most advanced motorcar factories are just over the hill. One begins 3km due north of the Hauptbahnhof at the Pragsattel light rail station (on the U5 or U6 line) and goes northeast to the Max-Eyth-See (above). The other is a circuit that takes you from the Obertürkheim train station (on the S1), 6km east of the Hauptbahnhof, via Uhlbach (served by buses 62 and 65 from Obertürkheim) to Untertürkheim (also on the S1) and, if you like, back to Obertürkheim.

See Besenwirtschaft on p399 for details on dining options.

many of the little **Wengert Häschen** (tool sheds) that dot the hillsides are more than 200 years old and are protected landmarks.

TOURS Boat

From late April to late October, **Neckar-Käpt'n** (☎ 5499 7060; www.neckar-kaeptn.de) operates a variety of boat excursions on the Neckar River (from €7.40; free on your birthday) departing from its dock at Wilhelma in Bad Cannstatt (on the U14).

Walking & Bus

The tourist office runs a variety of tours, including the 1½-hour **Stadt-Spaziergang** (City Walk; €7; ☎ 11am, also 5pm Fri Apr-Oct) and the 2½-hour **Stadt-Rundfahrt** (City Coach Tour; adult/concession incl admission to TV Tower €17/13.50; ☎ 1.30pm daily Apr-Oct, Sat & Sun Nov-Mar). Both are in English and German and begin at the tourist office (p394).

Taxi

Many people highly recommend taking a 2½-hour taxi tour (in English, French, Spanish or German) with **Anselm Vogt-Moykopf** (☎ 0172-740 1138; www.stadtrundfahrt-stuttgart.de; for 4 people Mon-Fri €100, Sat, Sun & holidays €125), a knowledgeable and easy-going fellow who really loves the city, its architecture and taking people to beautiful, out-of-the-way spots.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Stuttgart plays host to a number of notable annual events.

Sommerfest An open-air festival with live music and food that's held on Schlossplatz, Thursday to Sunday during the second week of August.

Weindorf A 10-day event where wine-makers sell the year's vintages from hundreds of booths on Schlossplatz and the Oberer Schlossgarten. Begins on the last weekend in August.

Cannstatter Volkfest Stuttgart's version of Oktoberfest, this huge event is held over three consecutive weekends in Bad Cannstatt from late September to mid-October.

Weihnachtsmarkt Germany's largest Christmas market is held in the city centre on Marktplatz, Schillerplatz and Schlossplatz from late November to 23 December.

SLEEPING Budget

Campingplatz Stuttgart (☎ 556 696; www.campingplatz-stuttgart.de; Mercedesstrasse 40, Bad Cannstatt; per person/ tent/car €6/4/2.50; ☹ year-round) A riverside camping ground about 4km northeast of the city centre on the right bank of the Neckar. It's about 1km southeast of the Bad Cannstatt S-Bahn station.

DJH hostel (☎ 6647470; www.jugendherberge-stuttgart.de; Haussmannstrasse 27; dm 1st/subsequent night €20.30/17.10; ☹ 24hr; ☒ ☒) Totally renovated in 2006, this luxurious, 309-bed hostel is 800m southeast (up the hill) from the Hauptbahnhof. Amenities here include two- or four-bed rooms, all with bathroom, and bicycle parking. Reached via a glass-and-steel column with a lift running down the middle, reception is on level 5.

Hostel Alex 30 (☎ 838 8950; www.alex30-hostel.de; Alexanderstrasse 30; dm €19, s €20-29, d €50, with toilet & shower €70, breakfast €6; ☒ ☒) This privately-run hostel, opened in 2004, has colourful and creatively decorated public areas and 32 rooms outfitted with basic furnishings and high school-style lockers for your stuff. Kitchen facilities are available. Bike rental costs €6 per day. From the Hauptbahnhof, take U5, U6 or U7 to the Olgaeck stop.

Museumstube (☎ 296 810; fax 120 4359; www.museumstube.de; Hospitalstrasse 9; d €65, s/d without bathroom €30/45, not incl breakfast; ☹ reception 10am-3pm & 5.30-10pm or 11pm, closed Sun & holidays) A modest, family-run place with 14 spiffy, superclean rooms.

Hotel Centro (☎ 585 3315; www.hotelcentro.de in German; Büchsenstrasse 24; s/d from €55/85, without bathroom €35/65) A very central hotel whose 11 rooms are practical and compact, with nature-themed prints on the wall.

Midrange

Wirt am Berg (☎ 241 865; fax 236 1348; Gaisburgstrasse 12a; s/d from €60/85, s without bathroom €50; ☒ ☒) A statue of a vintner greets you at this family-run hotel, whose 12 rooms are nicely furnished. Situated on a quiet backstreet. The nearest U-Bahn stop is Olgaeck.

InterCity Hotel (☎ 225 00; www.intercityhotel.com; Arnulf-Klett-Platz 2; s €77-136, d €77-151, breakfast €12) Hugely convenient if you're arriving by train (it's in the southwest corner of the Hauptbahnhof), this place has 112 hotel-ish but comfortable rooms. Rates are cheapest on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights.

Hotel Unger (☎ 209 90; www.hotel-unger.de; Kronenstrasse 17; s/d from €102/125, Fri, Sat & Sun from €79/99; ☒ ☒) A very central 116-room hotel popular with business travellers. It's known for its generous breakfast buffet featuring smoked fish, served in your room for no extra charge. Two additional floors, including a fitness studio, are being added in 2007.

Top End

Der Zauberlehrling (☎ 237 7770; www.zauberlehrling.de; Rosenstrasse 38; d €140-280) This ultrachic 'design hotel' has 17 named rooms, each unique and each a feast for the eyes. It has some pretty far-out bathtubs. The name means 'sorcerer's apprentice'.

Steigenberger Graf Zeppelin (☎ 204 80; www.stuttgart.steigenberger.de; Arnulf-Klett-Platz 7; s/d from €195/220; ☒ ☒ ☒) Facing the Hauptbahnhof, this superluxurious, five-star hotel has 189 rooms in a variety of styles: classical, elegant or avant-garde. Amenities include a pool, sauna, fitness studio, bistro, bar and cigar lounge. The restaurant has one Michelin star.

EATING & DRINKING

There are lots of eateries and pubs – many of them very chic and quite a few with outdoor tables – a few blocks east of the southern end of Königstrasse, along and near Eberhardstrasse. Further east across Hauptstätter Strasse, in the old labourers' quarter Bohnenviertel (between Rosenstrasse and Pfarrstrasse), traditional places with regional specialities predominate. Tiny Geissstrasse, two short blocks west of Eberhardstrasse, has several little café-pubs that spill out onto what's unofficially called Hans-im-Glück Platz – a little square with a fountain depicting the caged German fairytale character 'Lucky Hans'. Theodor-Heuss-Strasse, three blocks west of Königstrasse, has lots of trendy *Szenekeipen* (clubs and bars that cater to style-conscious yuppies). The city's best beer garden is in the Mittlerer Schlossgarten.

Imbiss zum Brunnenwirt (☎ 245 021; Leonhardsplatz 25; ☹ 11am-2am Mon-Thu, 11am-3am Fri & Sat, 4pm-2am

BESENIWIRTSCHAFT

From about October to March, wine growers throughout the region attach a broom (*Besen*) to the front of their homes to indicate that they're open for business as a *Besenwirtschaft*, a small restaurant where people can drink and purchase the new vintage. They also serve lunch and dinner, usually featuring typical Swabian dishes like *Kartoffelsuppe* (potato soup), *Gaiburger Marsch* (a stew of sliced potatoes, noodles and beef) and the evil-sounding *Schlachtplatte* (sauerkraut with pork belly, liver, lard, sausage and smoked meat, served with peas and other vegetables).

Some *Besenwirtschaften* open every year, but most don't. Check *Lift Stuttgart* or *S-Trip*, published in the *Stuttgarter Zeitung* on the last Wednesday of the month during vintage times.

Stuttgart-area *Besenwirtschaften* that operate every year include **Weingut Ruoff** (☎ 321 224; Uhlbacher Strasse 31, Obertürkheim; ☹ 11am-midnight except Sun & holidays mid-Nov–mid- or late Feb), in a fabulous house built in 1550 (take the S1 to Obertürkheim), and **D'Besa am Kelterplätze** (☎ 331 149; Strümpfelbacher Strasse 40, Untertürkheim; ☹ 11am-midnight Tue-Sat mid-Oct–early Dec & late Jan–mid-Mar), which has a romantic vaulted wine cellar (take the S1 to Untertürkheim).

Sun & holidays) This quirky little Bohnenviertel sausage stand, next door to Gaststätte Brunnenwirt, sells Stuttgart's most famous Currywurst (€2.40 to €3.20). Half-grungy, half-chic, this local institution draws an eclectic crowd – from passing vagrants to Mercedes coupé drivers.

Calwer-Eck-Bräu (☎ 2224 9440; Calwer Strasse 31; 9am or 10am-1am, to 2am Fri & Sat, from 5pm holidays) This *Gemütlich* (cosy) brewery-pub, up on the 1st floor, serves Swabian-Bavarian fare, including *Maultaschensuppe* (€3.50; ravioli soup), a Stuttgart speciality. On Sunday there's an all-you-can-eat menu for €9.99 until 5pm.

Amadeus (☎ 292 678; Charlottenplatz 17; mains €7.80-14.90, salads €4.50-8.80; ☹ noon-midnight Mon-Fri, 10am-midnight Sat & Sun) In the courtyard of a one-time orphanage, this place serves great Swabian-style food and has Dinkel Acker on tap. Sunday brunch, available till 3pm, costs €13.50.

Nirvan (☎ 240 561; Eberhardstrasse 73; mains €3.50-13.80; ☹ 11am-11pm) Dine to the sounds of mellow Persian music at this basement restaurant, where you'll find delicious Persian dishes (lamb, fish and vegetarian). The lunch menu (€5 to €8.50) is served till 3pm.

Weinhaus Stetter (☎ 240 163; Rosenstrasse 32; ☹ 3-11pm Mon-Fri, 11am-3pm Sat) This Bohnenviertel place has solid, good-value regional specialities such as *Linsen* and *Saiten* (lentils with sausage) and a great wine selection. The attached *Weinhandlung* (wine shop) sells 650 different vintages.

Palast der Republik (☎ 226 4887; Friedrichstrasse 27; ☹ 11am-2am, to 3am Fri & Sat) This grandly named beer bar is actually a kiosk – once a public toilet – with signs reading 'Schwabens Bräu'

and 'Palast' outside. A real Stuttgart institution, it is hugely popular with young locals, especially students and counter-culture types, who sit at tables or on the ground sipping their brew.

Deli (☎ 236 0200; Geissstrasse 7; mains €6.10-12.90; ☹ 10am-4pm, to 2am Thu, to 3am Fri & Sat) A chic café-bar with food.

Self-caterers can try the **food market** (Marktplatz; ☹ 7.30am-1pm Tue, Thu & Saturday) and the **Markthalle** (market hall; Dorotheenstrasse 4; ☹ 7am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 7am-4pm Sat), which sells picnic fixin's and has Italian and Swabian restaurants.

ENTERTAINMENT

Details on Stuttgart's exceptionally lively cultural scene can be found in *Lift Stuttgart* (€1.80), an easy-to-use German-language monthly available at the tourist office or news kiosks. **Prinz** (www.prinz.de/stuttgart.html) is another listings magazine (€1.30). Events tickets can be purchased at the **Kartenvorverkauf desk** (☎ 222 8243; inside the tourist office; ☹ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat, phone staffed till 6pm Mon-Fri).

Cinemas

Cinemas that screen undubbed (*OmU*) films:

Ambo (☎ 225 7712; www.kinostar.com, in German; Arnulf-Klett-Platz 3) Facing the Hauptbahnhof. Screens first-run films in four halls.

Kommunales Kino (☎ 3058 9160; www.koki-stuttgart.de, in German; Friedrichstrasse 23a) An art cinema in the old Amerika Haus building.

Clubs

Details on the nightlife and club scene can be found at www.subculture.de (in German).

Dilayla (☎ 236 9527; Eberhardstrasse 49; admission free; 🕒 9pm-4am, to 6am Fri & Sat nights, from 11pm late May-Sep) A laid-back basement music bar with dancing, this dimly lit place has bright orange walls, cosy tables and lots of soft couches for lounging. The soundtrack is mainly from the '70s and '80s. Things get going between midnight and 1am. Attracts a mixed crowd.

Die Röhre (☎ 299 1499; www.die-roehre.com; Willy-Brandt-Strasse 2/1) A hugely popular, industrial-style concert and party venue under the curved ceiling of an aborted vehicle tunnel – a few metres away an identical *Röhre* (tube) takes cars through the hill. Linked to Willy-Brandt-Strasse by a path through the trees.

Zap Club (☎ 235 227; www.zap-club.de, in German; Hauptstätterstrasse 40; admission €4-10; 🕒 8pm or 9pm-2am Wed, 9pm-2am Thu, 10pm-4am Fri, 10pm-6am or later Sat) In the cellar of the Schwabenzentrum (around the corner from Josef-Hirn-Platz), this sprawling disco has very modern décor and a cocktail bar. Attracts mainly a younger, 18-to-26 crowd. Over-30s get a discount on Wednesday. Hosts live music about once a week.

Gay & Lesbian venues

King's Club (☎ 226 4558; www.kingsclub-stuttgart.de, in German; Calwer Strasse 21; admission Fri & Sat €10; 🕒 10pm-6am Wed-Sun, to 7am Fri & Sat nights) This gay and lesbian disco has red-carpeted walls, banquettes around the sides and a DJ positioned right in the middle. Heteros are welcome. Gets going after midnight. Enter from Gymnasiumstrasse.

Rock & Jazz

Romeo's Kiste (☎ 553 2805; Hauptstätter Strasse 35; 🕒 4pm-2am Mon-Thu, to 3am Fri & Sat) This hole-in-the-wall bar, often jam-packed, is the city's leading jazz venue, with concerts nightly except Sunday, starting at 9.30pm or 10pm.

Theaterhaus (☎ 402 0720; www.theaterhaus.com, in German; Siemensstrasse 11) This place, 3km north of the Hauptbahnhof, hosts live rock, jazz and other music genres virtually nightly. Also has theatre and comedy performances. To get there take the U6 to Maybachstrasse.

Theatre & Classical Music

Staatstheater (☎ 203 2220; www.staatstheater-stuttgart.de; Oberer Schlossgarten 6) The city's premier venue for ballet, opera, theatre and Western classical music. Tickets start at just €8. The Stuttgart Ballet (www.stuttgart-ballet.de) is renowned as one of the best companies in Europe.

Variété im Friedrichsbau (☎ 225 7070; www.friedrichsbau.de, in German; Friedrichstrasse 24; tickets €19-40) Famous for its excellent variety shows and cabaret productions. To get there take the U9 or U14 to Friedrichsbau/Börse.

SHOPPING

For outdoor action, there's a **flower market** (Schillerplatz; 🕒 7.30am-1pm Tue, Thu & Sat) and a **lea market** (Karlsplatz; 🕒 to 4pm Sat).

Many varieties of wine are produced in the Stuttgart region; most are whites, but locals also go for Trollinger, a full-bodied red made from a variety of grape originally from the South Tirol in Austria. Stuttgarters consume wine at a rate twice the national average, so while Trollinger is readily available here, they're not really exporting a lot. The tourist office has lists of vineyards open for tastings.

Stuttgart isn't renowned for bargain shopping. Indeed, upmarket stores predominate in the city centre, where options can be found all along Königstrasse. The new Königsbau Passagen (see p396) has some classy design shops.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

Stuttgart International Airport (STR; ☎ 01805-948 444; www.stuttgart-airport.com), a major hub for **German Wings** (www.germanwings.com), is 13km south of the city. There are four terminals, all within easy walking distance of each other.

Car & Motorcycle

The A8 from Munich to Karlsruhe passes by Stuttgart, as does the A81 from Singen (near Lake Constance) to Heilbronn and Mannheim. Stuttgart is often abbreviated to 'S' on highway signs.

Train

IC and ICE destinations include Berlin (€112, 5½ hours), Frankfurt (€44.60, 1¼ hours) and Munich (€39 to €46, 2¼ hours). There are frequent regional services to Tübingen (€10, one hour), Schwäbisch Hall's Hesselental station (€11.70, 69 minutes) and Ulm (€14.70, one hour).

GETTING AROUND To/From the Airport

S2 and S3 trains take about 30 minutes to get from the airport to the Hauptbahnhof (€2.90).

Bicycle

Rent a Bike (☎ 4207 0833; www.rentabike-stuttgart.de, in German; adult 6hr/full day €9.50/13, student €6/8) delivers and picks up bikes. Word has it that by 2007 a Hauptbahnhof-based rental service, Call-a-Bike, will begin operating.

You can take along your bike free of charge on Stadtbahn lines, except from 6am to 8.30am and 4pm to 6.30pm Monday to Friday. Bikes are allowed on S-Bahn trains (S1 to S6) but you have to buy a Kinderfahrtschein (child's ticket) from 6am to 8.30am Monday to Friday. Bikes cannot be taken on buses or the Strassenbahn (tramway).

Car & Motorcycle

Underground parking in the city centre costs about €2 for the first hour and €1.50 for each subsequent hour. Park-and-ride (P+R) options, available in many Stuttgart suburbs, afford cheap parking plus free transport into the city centre for the driver and all passengers; convenient lots include Degerloch Alsbstrasse (on the B27; take the U5 or U6 into town), which is 4km south of the centre; and Österfeld (on the A81; take the S1, S2 or S3 into the centre).

Avis, Budget, Europcar, Hertz, National and Sixt have offices at the airport (Terminal 2, Level 2). Europcar, Hertz and Avis have offices at the Hauptbahnhof (next to track 16).

Public Transport

From slowest to fastest, Stuttgart's **public transport network** (www.ssb-ag.de and www.vvs.de, both in German) consists of a Zahnradbahn (rack railway), buses, the Strassenbahn (tramway), Stadtbahn lines (light rail lines whose names begin with U; underground in the city centre), S-Bahn lines (suburban rail lines named S1 through to S6) and Regionalbahn lines (regional trains whose names begin with R). On Friday and Saturday there are night buses (their names begin with N) with departures from Schlossplatz at 1.11am, 2.22am and 3.33am.

For travel within the city, single tickets are €1.80, and four-ride tickets (*Mehr-fahrtenkarte*) cost €6.30. A day pass, good for two zones (including, for instance, the Mercedes-Benz and Porsche Museums), is better value at €5.10 for one person and €8.50 for a group two to five.

Taxi

To order a taxi call ☎ 194 10 or ☎ 566 061.

AROUND STUTTGART

The region around Stuttgart is easily accessible by public transport or, better still, by bicycle.

Württemberg

When Conrad von Württemberg established the Württemberg family dynasty, he built the family castle on this absolutely breathtaking hill southeast of Stuttgart. Covered with vines, it affords sweeping views down into a gorgeous valley.

Katherina Pavlovna, daughter of a Russian tsar and wife of King Wilhelm I of Württemberg (1781–1864), reputedly told her husband that she'd never seen such a beautiful place and hoped to be buried here. When she died, aged just 30, Wilhelm tore down the Württemberg family castle and in its place built a domed, classical-style Russian Orthodox chapel. The **Grabkapelle** (burial chapel; www.schloesser-und-gaerten.de; adult/concession €1.50/0.70; 🕒 10am-noon Wed, 10am-noon & 1-5pm Fri & Sat, 10am-noon & 1-6pm Sun & holidays Mar-1 Nov) is where he was also buried decades later.

The grounds outside afford lovely views of the countryside and are a perfect place for a picnic. To get to Württemberg, 10km east of Stuttgart's city centre, take bus 61 from the Obertürkheim station, served by the S1.

Ludwigsburg

☎ 07141 / pop 88,000

This neat and cultured little place, the childhood home of the dramatist Friedrich Schiller, is named for Duke Eberhard Ludwig, who built the vast, Versailles-inspired Residenzschloss (chateau) in the early 1700s. Just a 20-minute train ride north of Stuttgart, Ludwigsburg – home to Baden-Württemberg's only film academy – is the perfect place to come if you want to 'go for baroque'.

ORIENTATION & INFORMATION

The Bahnhof, served by S-Bahn trains from Stuttgart, is at the southwestern edge of the town centre. The Residenzschloss, on Schlossstrasse (the B27), is at the northeastern edge of the centre. The broad Marktplatz is more or less in the middle, about 750m north-east of the train station and 400m southwest of the chateau entrance.

Ludwigsburg's **tourist office** (☎ 910 2252; www.ludwigsburg.de; Marktplatz 6; 🕒 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat) has excellent material in English

BAROQUE IN BLOOM

The Residenzschloss gardens are transformed into an immaculately trimmed festival of flowers during the annual **Blühendes Barock** (www.blueba.de, in German; adult/student €7/3.30; ☎ tickets sold 9am-6pm, to 7pm Sat & Sun mid-Mar-early Nov). Included in the ticket price is the kids-oriented **Märchengarten** (Fairy Tale Garden), a small Japanese garden and an **aviary** filled with exotic birds. It's a fabulous setting for a picnic!

There's an entrance to the gardens on Schorndorfer Strasse (the eastern continuation of Wilhelmstrasse). Blühendes Barock tickets are *not* sold at the main entrance to the Residenzschloss on Schlossstrasse (the B27). However, combo tickets that include the chateau *are* on sale at the entrances to the gardens.

and can provide details on performing arts festivals, jazz performances, cinema-related events and the baroque Weihnachtsmarkt (Christmas market).

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Known as the 'Swabian Versailles', the magnificent, early 18th-century **Residenzschloss** (☎ 182 004; www.schloss-ludwigsburg.de, in German, www.schloesser-und-gaerten.de; Schlossstrasse; tours adult/student to 28yr/family €5/2.50/12.50; ☎ 10am-6pm, last tour at 5pm), with its 18 buildings and 452 rooms, is a symphony of baroque, rococo and Empire decoration. The 90-minute tours (in German with an English text) of the chateau's furnished interior begin every 30 minutes. English-language tours begin at 1.30pm daily; from mid-March to early November there are additional tours held at 11am and 3.15pm on Saturday, Sunday and holidays.

The chateau, refurbished in 2004 in honour of the complex's 300th anniversary, is also home to the **Carl Eugen Appartement**, an impossibly ornate, generously gilded rococo gem, and three new **museums** (adult/student incl audio guide €5/2.50; ☎ 10am-5pm): the **Barockgalerie** (Baroque Gallery), which showcases baroque paintings from the collections of the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart; the **Modemuseum** (Fashion Museum), which has a fine collection of original clothing and accessories created between 1750 and 1970; and the **Keramikmuseum** (Ceramics Museum), with some pretty spectacular porcelain, faïence and majolica.

Duke Karl Eugen (*oy-gen*), a businessman and *bon vivant*, established a porcelain factory in the castle in 1758. Historic pieces can be seen in the Keramikmuseum, and you can purchase the fine stuff it makes today – by hand, as always – at the **Porzellan-Manufaktur** (www.porzellan-manufaktur-ludwigsburg.de).

A 10-minute walk north of the Residenzschloss, surrounded by a park, is another early 18th-century Württemberg family palace, the baroque **Schloss Favorite** (☎ 182 004; 30min tour adult/concession €2.50/1.20; ☎ 10am-12.30pm & 1.30-5pm mid-Mar-1 Nov, 10am-12.30pm & 1.30-4pm Tue-Sun 2 Nov-mid-Mar). The scene of Duke Eugen's glittering parties, its furnishings date from the Napoleonic period.

About 2km to the northwest on the Schlosspark lake is yet another Württemberg chateau, the rococo **Seeschloss Monrepos** (☎ 221 060; ☎ wine tasting & sales 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat). Once used as a summer residence, it's still owned by the Württemberg family, which sells the wines it makes – and lets you taste them – on the premises. From mid-March to mid-October you can hire **boats** (from €8 to €10 per hour) to sail on the adjacent lake. Open-air concerts, just a small part of Ludwigsburg's rich cultural offerings, are held here in the summer.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

Stuttgart's S4 and S5 S-Bahn lines go directly to Ludwigsburg's Bahnhof (€2.90), frequently linked to the chateau by buses 421 and 427; buses 422 and 425 go to the Blühendes Barock entrance. On foot, the chateau is about 1km from the train station.

If you come by car, there are two large parking lots 500m south of the Residenzschloss, just off the B27.

From mid-May to late September (and on some days in early May and October), a more relaxing option is to take a boat run by **Neckar-Käpt'n** (☎ 5499 7060; www.neckar-kaeptn.de) from Bad Cannstatt (Stuttgart, see p397) to Ludwigsburg-Hoheneck (one-way/return €14.60/19.60, two hours). From there, the chateau is either a 20- to 30-minute walk or a short ride on bus 427 (every 10 minutes).

NORTHERN BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG

The northern third of the state has a number of unique and enticing cities. Heidelberg is famed for its mile-long pedestrian precinct, Mannheim for its chessboard street grid, Karlsruhe for its fanlike street layout and Schwäbisch Hall for its narrow medieval alleyways. All have fine museums and a wealth of cultural activities.

HEIDELBERG

☎ 06221 / pop 143,000

Heidelberg's baroque old town, lively university atmosphere, excellent pubs and evocative half-ruined castle make it hugely popular with visitors, 3.5 million of whom flock here each year. They are following in the footsteps of the 19th-century romantics, most notably the poet Goethe. Britain's William Turner also loved the city, which inspired him to paint some of his greatest landscapes.

Less starry eyed was Mark Twain (www.mark-twain-in-heidelberg.de), who in 1878 began his European travels with a three-month stay in Heidelberg, recounting his bemused observations in *A Tramp Abroad*. There is speculation that the writer's attraction to the city may have something to do with the fact that the name Heidelberg is derived from Heidelbeerenberg (Huckleberry Hill).

Heidelberg, Germany's oldest and most famous university town, has a red-roofed townscape of remarkable architectural unity. It was created in the 18th century after it had been devastated during the Thirty Years' War and then all but destroyed by invading French troops under Louis XIV. Today the city has a student population of 32,000 (including lots of foreign students), heaps of tradition and nightlife that makes it outstanding for a pub crawl. The city also serves as an important **NATO headquarters** (www.nato.int/lahd).

Orientation

Heidelberg's Altstadt stretches along the Neckar River from Bismarckplatz east to the Schloss. Europe's longest pedestrian zone, the 1600m-long Hauptstrasse – the so-called Royal Mile – runs east-to-west through the middle of the Altstadt, about 200m south of the Neckar.

Two bridges link the Altstadt with the Neckar's northern bank: at the western end, north of Bismarckplatz, is Theodor-Heuss-Brücke, while north of the Marktplatz is the Alte Brücke (also known as Karl-Theodor-Brücke).

Information

There are a number of internet cafés on or near Hauptstrasse, such as in the vicinity of the Jesuitenkirche.

Ärztlicher Bereitschaftsdienst (☎ 192 92; Alte Eppenheimer Strasse 35; ☎ 8pm-7am, 7am-8pm Sat, Sun & holidays, from 1pm on Wed) For medical care when most doctors' offices are closed. Situated one block north of the Hauptbahnhof. A house call is possible if necessary but for less serious cases just drop by. Costs the same as a regular doctor.

Deutsch-Amerikanisches Institut (☎ 607 30; www.dai-heidelberg.de; Sofienstrasse 12; ☎ library 1-6pm Mon-Fri) Has concerts, films, lectures and occasional exhibits.

Heidelberg Card (2/4 days €14/26, 2-day family card €26) Entitles you to unlimited public transport use and free or discounted admission to museums and some cultural events. Available at the tourist office.

Internet Lounge (per 5min/hr €0.50/6; ☎ 7am-midnight) In the Hauptbahnhof on the way to the tracks, with pricey train station internet access.

Main post office (Hugo-Stotz-Strasse 14) To the right as you exit the Hauptbahnhof.

Post Office (Sofienstrasse 8-10)

Reisebank (☎ 7.30am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat, 9am-1pm Sun & holidays) In the Hauptbahnhof building; exchanges currency.

Tourist office (☎ 194 33; www.cvb-heidelberg.de, www.heidelberg.de; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun & holidays Apr-Oct, 9am-6pm Mon-Sat Nov-Mar) Right outside the Hauptbahnhof. Out front is a hotel reservation board with a free telephone. Sells the Heidelberg Card.

Waschsalon (Kettengasse 17; per 7kg €8.50; ☎ 10am-1pm & 2-6pm Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri, 10am-2pm & 3-6pm Wed, 10am-3pm Sat) A laundry where you can DIY or leave your dirty duds and pick them up two hours later.

Wetzlar (☎ 241 65; Plöck 79-81) Specialises in foreign-language books.

Sights

SCHLOSS

Dominating the Altstadt from on high, the partly ruined, red-sandstone **Schloss** (☎ 538 431; adult/student under 28yr admission to courtyard till 5.30pm or 6pm, Deutsches Apothekenmuseum & Grosses Fass €5/1.50, courtyard free from 5.30pm or 6pm till dusk, gardens

MARK TWAIN ON THE SCHLOSS

Heidelberg Castle must have been very beautiful before the French battered and bruised and scorched it two hundred years ago. The stone is brown, with a pinkish tint, and does not seem to stain easily. The dainty and elaborate ornamentation upon its two chief fronts is as delicately carved as if it had been intended for the interior of a drawing-room rather than for the outside of a house. Many fruit and flower clusters, human heads and grim projecting lions' heads are still as perfect in every detail as if they were new. But the statues which are ranked between the windows have suffered. These are life-size statues of old-time emperors, electors, and similar grandees, clad in mail and bearing ponderous swords. Some have lost an arm, some a head, and one poor fellow is chopped off at the middle.

Mark Twain, A Tramp Abroad (1880)

€1/0.50; ☎ 11am-5pm Mon-Sat, 12.30-5pm Sun & holidays mid-Mar-Oct, 11am-3pm Fri & Sat, 12.30-3pm Sun & holidays Nov-mid-Mar.

In the centre of Marktplatz is the **Hercules fountain**; in medieval times petty criminals were chained to it and left to face the populace. On the south side of the Markt, the lavishly decorated former royal **pharmacy** has been reborn as a McDonald's.

ALTE BRÜCKE

On the Altstadt, at the entrance to the bridge side, is a statue of a **brass monkey** holding a mirror and surrounded by mice: touch the mirror for wealth, the outstretched fingers to ensure you return to Heidelberg and the mice to ensure you have many children. Up on the bridge, through the tower, is the **Karl-Theodor-Statue**, being renovated as we go to press, which makes reference to the local legend that the prince fathered almost 200 illegitimate children. The bridge's foundation bears some pretty hairy high-water marks.

KURPFÄLZISCHES MUSEUM

Tucked in behind a courtyard, the excellent **Kurpfälzisches Museum** (Palatinate Museum; ☎ 583 400; Hauptstrasse 97; adult/concession €3/1.80, on Sun €1.80/1.20; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun) focuses on 15th- to 20th-century paintings and sculptures, and Heidelberg and regional history. Displays include lots of Roman and Merovingian items and a copy of the jawbone of a 600,000-year-old Heidelberg Man (the original is stored across the river at the palaeontology centre).

PHILOSOPHENWEG

A stroll along the **Philosophenweg** (Philosophers' Walk), on the hillside north of the Neckar River, provides a welcome respite from the tourist hordes. Leading through steep vineyards and orchards, the path offers

those great views of the Altstadt and the castle that were such an inspiration to the German philosopher Hegel. It's a well-known lovers' haunt, and many a young local is said to have lost their heart (and virginity) along the walkway.

Atop the Heiligenberg is the **Thingstätte**, a Nazi-era amphitheatre. There are several ruins and countless other hiking options in the surrounding hills.

Tours

The tourist office runs English-language **guided tours** (adult/student €7/5; ☎ 10.30am Fri & Sat Apr-Dec) that depart from the Löwenbrunnen (Lions Fountain) at Universitätsplatz.

Paddle boats can be hired at **Bootsverleih Simon** (☎ 411 925; 3-/4-person paddle boat per 30min €6/7; ☎ 11am-sundown Apr-Sep), on the north shore of the Neckar by the Theodor-Heuss-Brücke.

The following two companies run cruises on the Neckar.

Rhein-Neckar Fahrgastschiffahrt (☎ 201 81; www.nmf-schiffahrt.de, in German; adult/child 4-12yr to Neckarsteinach return €10/6; ☎ up to 7 times a day mid-Apr-late Nov) Boats dock on the south bank of the Neckar about midway between the two bridges. It's a nice day trip upriver to Neckarsteinach and its four castles, built by four brothers between 1100 and 1250 as a result of a family feud. Also offers other excursions to towns on the Neckar and Rhine.

Solarschiff (☎ 409 284; www.hdsolarschiff.com; adult/child 3-14yr/student €6/3/4; ☎ Tue-Sun Mar-Oct) An ultramodern, glass-topped sightseeing boat whose 50-minute excursions begin next to the Alte Brücke.

Festivals & Events

Heidelberg's most popular annual events include **Heidelberger Herbst** (on the last Saturday in September), a huge autumn festival during which the entire pedestrian zone is closed off for a wild party; and the thrice-yearly **fireworks**

festivals (usually on the first Saturday in June, first Saturday in September and second Saturday in July). For the latter, the best views are from the northern bank of the Neckar, the Philosophenweg and boats floating in the river.

The **Christmas market** (late November to late December), held at five public squares around town (including Universitätsplatz), is a real treat.

Sleeping BUDGET

Bargains are thin on the ground in Heidelberg. In the high season finding a place to stay can be difficult, so arrive early in the day or book ahead, especially for the hostel. The tourist office charges €3 for a hotel booking.

DJH hostel (☎ 412 066; www.jugendherberge.de; Tiergartenstrasse 5; dm 1st/subsequent night €20.30/17.10; ☎) Situated near the zoo about 2.5km northwest of the Hauptbahnhof, this lively, noisy establishment has 487 beds, most in rooms with toilet and shower. From the Hauptbahnhof or Bismarckplatz take bus 33.

Pension Jeske (☎ 237 33; www.pension-jeske-heidelberg.de; Mittelbadgasse 2; dm not incl breakfast €20-35; ☎ check-in 11am-1pm & 5-7pm; ☎) Large, colourful and decorated with flair, the rooms in this 250-year-old house are the antithesis of cookie-cutter, chain-hotel blandness.

Dubliner (☎ 873 0751; www.dublinerheidelberg.com; Hauptstrasse 93; d €69-85; ☎) In the heart of Heidelberg's nightlife district, this Irish-style pub has eight basic, newly renovated rooms that are both quiet and clean; three have views of the Schloss. Reception is at the bar.

MIDRANGE

Hotel Zum Pfalzgrafen (☎ 204 89; www.hotel-zum-pfalzgrafen.de; Kettengasse 21; s €69-77, d €89-103; ☎) Polished pine floors are a nice touch at this family-run place, which has 24 well-appointed rooms.

Hotel Central (☎ 206 41; www.hotel-central-heidelberg.de, in German; Kaiserstrasse 75; s €75-90, d €90-125; ☎) A decent but unexciting 48-room hotel in a rather dull area near the Hauptbahnhof – very convenient if you're arriving by train. The cheery, well-lit rooms have solid pine furniture and dazzling white bathrooms. There's also a nice fitness room.

Hotel Goldener Hecht (☎ 536 80; www.hotel-goldener-hecht.de; Steingasse 2; s/d from €66.50/91) Goethe's most slept here: the hotel would have kept

the famous author had the clerk on duty not been quite so uppity. Ever since, guests at this family-run place have received a warm welcome. Some of the 13 rooms, each unique, have views of the Neckar.

Hotel Am Kornmarkt (☎ 905 830; hotelamkornmarkt@web.de; Kornmarkt 7; s/d/q from €75/95/140, s/d without bathroom €45/75) Discreet and understated, this Altstadt favourite has 20 pleasant, well-kept rooms. The pricier rooms have great views of the Kornmarkt, while the cheaper ones afford easy access to the spotless hall showers.

Denner Hotel (☎ 604 510; www.denner-hotel.de; Berghheimer Strasse 8; s/d from €82/97, €10 less on Fri, Sat & Sun; ☎ reception 6am-9pm; ☎) An almost-boutique hotel where the 19 sleek rooms are decked out in modern wooden furniture and have creatively painted walls; some come with neoclassical balconies overlooking bustling Bismarckplatz.

Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten (☎ 241 64; www.4-jahreszeiten.de; Haspelgasse 2; s/d/t/q €69/99/114/155; ☎) You can hardly get more central than Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten. On the riverfront, the hotel has 22 rooms have blue or red carpets, colourful curtains and white walls.

KulturBrauerei Hotel (☎ 502 980; www.heidelberg-kulturbrauerei.de; Leyergasse 6; s/d from €106/116; ☎) This 34-room boutique-style hotel greets you with harmonious designer styling and modern art. The rooms are very bright and have pastel walls, wood floors and cheerful décor.

TOP END

Romantik Hotel Zum Ritter St Georg (☎ 1350; www.ritter-heidelberg.de; Hauptstrasse 178; s €90-130, low season €70, d €140-200; ☎) In an ornate, late Renaissance-style building (1592), this place, right near the Marktplatz, is one of the town's few buildings to have survived the French attacks of 1693. The 37 rooms, dark and Germanic, are very comfortable but are inevitably a bit of a let-down after the fantastic façade and luxurious lobby.

Eating & Drinking

The Altstadt is crammed with eateries, including quite a number on Steingasse (between the Heiliggeistkirche and the Alte Brücke). Quiet a few of Heidelberg's most popular drinking establishments are clustered along Untere Strasse (perpendicular to Steingasse), where bar-hopping is just a matter of walking next door.

Raja Rani (☎ 653 0893; Friedrichstrasse 15; mains from €2) Fast, cheap Indian food. On weekdays students get a free lassi with any order over €2.50.

Mensa Marstall (Neckarstaden) This well-liked student cafeteria is located two blocks north of Universitätsplatz.

Vetter im Schöneck (☎ 165 850; Steingasse 9; ☎ 11.30am-1am, to 2am Fri & Sat) This place serves its own microbrewed beer, made in huge copper vats, and hearty German dishes, including various kinds of sausages (from €5.80). It has a comfy atmosphere and lovely service.

Café Gekco (☎ 604 510; Berghheimer Strasse 8; mains €7.40-13.50; ☎ 7am or 8am-1am, to 3am Fri & Sat) An informal café-restaurant, half a block west of Bismarckplatz and thus a bit away from the tourists, with wicker chairs, off-beat décor and a palmlike canopy of halogen lights. Has a big selection of breakfasts as well as salads, meat, fish and vegetarian dishes.

Kulturbrauerei (☎ 502 980; Leyergasse 6; mains €9.50-19.50; ☎ 11am-1am) With rough plank floors, chandeliers and high ceilings, this microbrewery has the feel of an old-time beer hall. It serves regional German cuisine and has a beer garden when it's warm.

Zur Herrenmühle (☎ 602 909; Hauptstrasse 239; mains €8.50-22.50; ☎ 6-11pm Mon-Sat) Serves traditional, classic south German food and international cuisine under the ancient wood beams of a 17th-century mill. Rustically elegant.

MaxBar (☎ 244 19; Marktplatz 5; ☎ 8am-1am, to 2am Fri & Sat) A French-style café with classic views of the Marktplatz. Perfect for a beer or a pastis, it's especially popular on weekend nights.

Zum Sepp'l (☎ 230 85; Hauptstrasse 213; ☎ noon-midnight) One of Heidelberg's most historical student pubs, with frat photos on the dark wood-panelled walls, pilfered signs hanging from the ceiling and heavy wooden tables with names carved into them. Retains the ambience of yesteryear, although these days students are outnumbered by tourists.

Destille (☎ 228 08; Untere Strasse 16; ☎ noon-2am, to 3am Fri & Sat) Known for the tree trunk behind the bar, this mellow and hugely popular pub (no food is served) specialises in drinks such as melon-flavoured schnapps and something called a *Warmer Engel* (schnapps with Tabasco sauce). In the afternoon, patrons can avail themselves of chessboards, playing cards and other games.

Self-caterers could try **Handelshof super-market** (Kurfürstenanlage 61; ☎ 7am-8pm Mon-Sat), two blocks northeast of the Hauptbahnhof,

or there's an **outdoor food market** (6am-1pm Wed & Sat) on Marktplatz, as there has been for centuries.

Entertainment

Heidelberg has a lively cultural scene, with plenty of concerts and theatre performances. *Meier* (€1.80), a monthly events calendar featuring clubs, pubs, restaurants and gay and lesbian venues, can be found at the tourist office and newsagents. Tickets and details for concerts and other cultural events are available at **Heidelberg Ticket** (☎ 582 0000; Theaterstrasse 4; ☎ 11am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat).

Heiligegeistkirche (Marktplatz) Puts on hour-long concerts (adult/student/senior €10/6/8) of sacred organ music every Saturday at 6.15pm. In the warmer months there are 30-minute organ concerts (adult/student €3/2) daily except Saturday at 5.15pm.

Gloria und Gloriette (☎ 253 19; www.cinevent.de, in German; Hauptstrasse 146) A cinema that screens undubbed films three times a week.

Nachtschicht (☎ 438 550, 438 552; www.nachtschicht.com, in German; Alte Eppelheimer Strasse 5; ☎ 10pm-5am, usually Wed-Sat) Near the Hauptbahnhof, in a warehouse area between Berghheimer Strasse and Alte Eppelheimer Strasse, this is one of the city's largest and most popular discos. It attracts lots of students and admission is often €4.50.

Cave54 (☎ 221 58; www.cave54.de, in German; Krämergasse 2; admission from €5) Opened in 1954, this place is said to be the oldest student jazz club in Germany. Its claim to fame is that Louis Armstrong once played here. It functions as a pub-disco on most nights (10pm to 3am), has concerts (8.30pm to midnight) at least once a week, and has jam sessions every Sunday from 8.30pm.

Getting There & Away

Heidelberg is 21km southeast of Mannheim and 120km northwest of Stuttgart.

Lufthansa's Airport Shuttle (☎ 0621-651 620; www.lufthansa-airportbus.de) links the Crown Plaza Hotel (Kurfürstenanlage 1-3), three blocks southwest of Bismarckplatz, with Frankfurt airport (€18, 1¼ hours, almost hourly).

The north-south A5 links Heidelberg with both Frankfurt and Karlsruhe.

There are at least hourly train services to/from Baden-Baden (€17, one hour), Frankfurt (€13.40, one hour) and Stuttgart (€21, 40 minutes).

(Continued on page 417)

(Continued from page 408)

Getting Around

Bicycles can be hired from **Eldorado** (☎ 654 4460; www.eldorado-hd.de, in German; Neckarstaden 52; per day €15; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-6pm Tue-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat, 2-6pm Sun), three short blocks west of the Alte Brücke.

Parking in Heidelberg is an expensive proposition. The city's well-marked underground car parks charge around €1.50 per hour and €16 for the whole day.

Tram 5 links the Hauptbahnhof with Bismarckplatz, the main hub for **public transport** (www.vrn.de, in German). Single tickets cost €2; a 24-hour pass (also valid on Sunday if stamped Saturday) for one/five people costs €5/8. Tickets are sold by bus and tram drivers (except on tram line 5) and at ticket machines.

Buses 11, 21, 33, 34, 41 and 42, as well as tram 1, run between Bismarckplatz and the Hauptbahnhof. Buses 11 and 33 go directly from the Hauptbahnhof to Neckarmuntzplatz.

Taxis (☎ 302 030) line up outside the Hauptbahnhof. It costs about €12 from the Hauptbahnhof to the Alte Brücke.

AROUND HEIDELBERG

The apex of German baroque landscaping can be admired at the magnificent **Schloss Schwetzingen** (☎ 06202-128 828; www.schloesser-und-gaerten.de; adult/concession/family €7/3.50/17.50 Apr-Oct, €2.50/1.20/6.20 Nov-Mar; ☎ chateau tours 10am-4pm Tue-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat, Sun & holidays Apr-Oct, 2pm Fri, 11am, 2pm & 3pm Sat, Sun & holidays Nov-Mar, garden 8am-8pm Apr-Sep, to 6pm Oct & Mar, to 5pm Nov-Feb).

When Prince-Elector Carl Theodor (1724-99) inherited the Kurpfalz (Electoral Palatinate) region in the mid-18th century, he made Schwetzingen his summer residence, creating whimsical gardens – inspired by Versailles – that are a jewel. The grounds radiate from a formal French garden and include follies such as **Temple Apollon**, an auditorium built in the columned style of a Greek shrine, and the **Moschee** (Mosque), which sports minarets and a dome above a rather Germanic baroque entrance. One of the paths crosses the **Chinesische Brücke**, an arched Chinese bridge.

Inside the **Jagdschloss** (Hunting Palace) is the **Rokokothater** (1752), with a deep-set stage that draws on light and a tunnel illusion to enhance its dimensions. The big and little hands of the **clock** on the façade (1700) were

reversed so that horsemen could read the time more easily from a distance.

Schloss Schwetzingen is just off the A6 autobahn, 10km west of Heidelberg and 8km south of Mannheim. It's linked to Heidelberg's Hauptbahnhof by bus 717 (€3.30, 30 minutes, twice an hour) and to Mannheim's Hauptbahnhof by bus 710 (€3.30; 35 minutes, twice an hour).

MANNHEIM

☎ 0621 / pop 308,300

Just 21km northwest of Heidelberg, the sprawling industrial centre of Mannheim isn't likely to appear on anyone's list of the Top 10 (or even Top 100) German tourist destinations. It offers visitors few specific attractions or things to do but compensates with its big-city sense of fun, lively cultural scene (it's proud of playing host to Germany's only pop music academy) and decent shopping. Mannheim is famous for its quirky – indeed, unique – street layout.

Orientation

Mannheim's city centre, surrounded by a ring road, is almost round except for a flat stretch along its southwest side. It's sandwiched between the Rhine (to the southwest) and the Neckar (to the northeast), which meet about 5km to the northwest. The Hauptbahnhof is at the southern edge of the centre, near the intersection of Bismarckstrasse and Kaiserring.

The 1.5km-by-1.5km city centre is divided into four quadrants by two perpendicular, largely pedestrianised shopping streets, the more-or-less north-south Breite Strasse and the east-west Planken. Paradeplatz is situated at their intersection.

The city centre's chessboard layout is a trip. The streets, laid out on a grid, have no names; instead, each rectilinear city block has an alphanumeric designation. Starting at the Schloss (at the southern end of Breite Strasse), as you move north the letters go from A up to K west of this artery, and from L to U east of it. The numbers rise from 1 to 7 as you move outwards – either east or west – from Breite Strasse. The result is addresses such as 'Q3, 16' or 'L14, 5' (the latter numeral is the building number) that sound a bit like galactic sectors.

Information

Chat-Corner Internet café (L14, 16-17; ☎ 8am-3am; per hr €3) On the corner of Bismarckstrasse and Kaiserring, a block northeast of the Hauptbahnhof.

Main post office (02) Next to Paradeplatz.

Post office (Willy Brandt Platz) To the right as you exit the Hauptbahnhof.

Tourist office (☎ 101 012, tickets 101 011; www.tourist-mannheim.de; Willy-Brandt-Platz 3; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat, to 6pm Sat in Dec) Just outside the Hauptbahnhof. Sells tickets for cultural events.

Wäsche Insel (Seckenheimer Strasse 8; laundry per 6kg €6.60; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat) Wash your stuff yourself or leave it and pick it up two hours later. Situated four blocks northeast of the Hauptbahnhof behind the Kunsthalle.

Sights & Activities

The pastel yellow and dark red sandstone **Schloss**, at the southern end of Breite Strasse, is Germany's largest baroque palace and the focal point of the whole city centre. Soon after its completion in 1777, Elector Carl Theodor moved his court to Munich, rendering the complex a bit pointless. Today, most of it serves as a university campus, with hundreds of rather ordinary classrooms and offices. As we go to press, parts of the palace are under renovation, but from 2007 it will again be possible to see the **Rittersaal** and other sumptuously decorated bits of the interior. Elector Carl Philip is splendidly buried in the crypt of the baroque **Schlosskirche**, rebuilt after the war, which is on the west side of the **Ehrenhof** (the courtyard at the base of Breite Strasse).

A block north of the northwestern tip of the Schloss is Mannheim's most dazzling piece of architecture, the **Jesuitenkirche** (A4, 2; www.jesuitenkirchemannheim.de, in German; ☎ 9am-6pm), an 18th-century baroque church with a spectacular and recently renovated interior.

Five blocks northeast of the Hauptbahnhof, on the busy Kaiserring at the western end of the Planken, is the elegant, 60m-high **Wasserturm** (Water Tower), the city's most recognisable landmark. Built in the 1880s, it sits in the middle of pretty **Friedrichsplatz**, surrounded by manicured lawns, flower beds and two Art Nouveau fountains. A handsome ensemble of red-sandstone buildings, many with arcades, lines the perimeter.

On Friedrichsplatz' southern side is the highly acclaimed **Kunsthalle** (☎ 293 6430; Friedrichsplatz 4; www.kunsthalle-mannheim.de, in German; adult/student/family €7/5/5; ☎ 11am-6pm Tue-Sun), which features modern and contemporary art by masters such as Cézanne, Manet, Klee, Leger, Kandinsky, Max Ernst and Schlemmer.

Also worth a look is the Protestant **Christuskirche** (Werderplatz), a long block northeast of Friedrichsplatz. Topped by a green dome, this neobaroque church has a distinctive outline and is exactly 5m higher than the Wasserturm.

Three blocks further to the northeast, along the Neckar, is the lovely **Luisenpark** (adult/student €4/3; ☎ 9am-dusk), a sprawling green belt with hothouses, gardens, a butterfly hall, an aquarium and even a Chinese teahouse. The 212m-high **Fernmeldeturm** (telecommunications tower; ☎ 419 290; Hans Reschke Ufer; adult/student €3.50/2.50; ☎ 10am-midnight), built in 1975, has a rotating restaurant midway up. To get there take tram 5.

Sleeping

Mannheim is primarily a business town, a fact reflected in its hotel scene.

DJH hostel (☎ 822 718; Rheinpromenade 21; www.jugendherberge-mannheim.de; dm 1st/subsequent night €16.80/13.70; (P) ☎) This 109-bed hostel, for which renovations are planned, is only a 15-minute walk south of the Hauptbahnhof towards the Rhine. It's served by bus 7 to Lindenhofplatz.

Arabella Pension Garni (☎ 230 50; www.pension-arabella-mannheim.de, in German; M2 12; s €28-35, d €45-55 not incl breakfast; ☎ reception noon-8pm; ☎) Supercentrally located two blocks north of the Schloss, the 18 rooms here are simply furnished but practical and bright. Call ahead if you'll be arriving when reception is closed.

Central Hotel (☎ 123 000; www.centralhotelmannheim.de, in German; Kaiserring 26-28; s/d Mon-Fri €86/96, Sat & Sun €65/75; (P) ☎) Two blocks north of the Hauptbahnhof, this 34-room hotel has bright, cheery rooms of a decent size; those in back are quietest. Reception is at the stylish café-bar.

Maritim Parkhotel (☎ 158 80; www.maritim.de; Friedrichsplatz 2; s/d Mon-Thu & during conventions €146/186, Fri, Sat & Sun €100/133; ☎ ☎ ☎) This luxurious, 173-room hotel, built in 1901, offers all the traditional 1st-class creature comforts plus pool, sauna, steam bath, fitness gadgets and live lobby music in the evenings. It faces the Wasserturm.

Eating & Drinking

Gasthaus Zentrale (☎ 202 43; N4, 15; daily specials €4.50-7, meat mains €6.30-16.40; ☎ 9.30am-1am) This pub-restaurant, three short blocks east of Paradeplatz, is a favourite student hang-out thanks to its reasonably priced food and warm-weather beer garden.

Café Klatsch (☎ 156 1033; Hebelstrasse 3; ☎ 6pm-3am Mon-Sat, 4pm-3am Sun & holidays) Facing the Nationaltheater just off Friedrichsring, this sleek bar is Mannheim's best-known gay and lesbian venue. Hetero-friendly, it holds a 'cake and coffee' event every Sunday afternoon. The soundtrack is mellow until 10pm, after which house sets the tone.

Self-caterers could try the **food market** (Marktplatz, block G1; ☎ till 2pm Tue, Thu & Sat) and the **Lidl supermarket** (Tattersall 6; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat) two blocks northeast of the Hauptbahnhof.

There's a Mensa student cafeteria at the northwestern tip of the Schloss.

Getting There & Around

Mannheim, on the Hamburg-Basel line, is a major rail hub. Destinations include Frankfurt (by RE: €13.40, 70 minutes, hourly; by ICE: €23, 36 minutes, several times an hour), Frankfurt airport (€20, 31 minutes, hourly) and Freiburg (€33 by RE, €39 by ICE, 1½ hours, twice hourly). Various S-Bahn and RE trains link the Hauptbahnhof with Heidelberg (€4.50, 15 minutes).

Mannheim is near the junction of the east-west A6 (here oriented north-south), the A67 north to Frankfurt, and the A656 east to Heidelberg. There's free parking about 1km east of the Wasserturm around the Fernmeldeturm (such as along Hans Reschke Ufer and Ludwig Ratzel Strasse).

KARLSRUHE

☎ 0721 / pop 283,000

Karlsruhe (literally 'Carl's Rest'), just 15km from the northeasternmost tip of France, was dreamt up in 1715 by Margrave Karl Wilhelm of Baden-Durlach as a residential retreat. The city came out of the postwar reconstruction process fairly well, all things considered, and today it's a creative university city with a lively cultural scene. Highlights of a visit include the Schloss, set in a lovely park, and some stellar museums.

Karlsruhe is the seat of the Bundesverfassungsgericht, the Federal Constitutional Court, which is heavily guarded in a harmonious modern building just southwest of the Schloss.

Orientation

From the Schloss and its gardens, 32 streets radiate like the spokes of a wheel. Nine of them, forming a quarter-circle, head south and southwest, delineating the fan-shaped

city centre. Karlsruhe's focal point is the Marktplatz, which is two blocks south of the Schloss gardens at the intersection of the main east-west shopping street, tram-clogged Kaiserstrasse, and the Karl-Friedrich-Strasse, which goes north-south and links the Schloss with the Hauptbahnhof, 2.5km due south (and then a bit west).

The university campus, which extends northward from Kaiserstrasse, begins 500m east of the Marktplatz.

Information

ATMs There are several along Kaiserstrasse near the Marktplatz.

Hauptbahnhof tourist office (Stadt-information; ☎ 3720 5383; www.karlsruhe-tourism.de; Bahnhofplatz 6; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat). Right across the street from the Hauptbahnhof. The City Tour (€8) is a self-guided audio-visual (PDA) walking tour of the city centre lasting up to four hours. Also sells the Karlsruher Welcome-Card and carries *Karlsruhe Extra*, a free trilingual listing of concerts, museum exhibitions, cultural events, etc issued twice a year.

Internet Café (Kronenplatz 28; per hr €1.50; ☎ 9am-midnight Mon-Sat, 10am-midnight Sun) Down the block from Kaiserstrasse 95.

Karlsruher WelcomeCard (€9.50) Good for two days (three days including a weekend), entitling you to public transport use and reduced-price entry to museums.

Marktplatz tourist office (Tourist-information; ☎ 3720 5376; Karl-Friedrich-Strasse 9, ☎ 9.30am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat) Offers the same services as the Hauptbahnhof tourist office. Sells events tickets and has a public transport information desk.

Post office (Poststrasse) Just east of the Hauptbahnhof.

Sights

SCHLOSS & BADISCHES LANDESMUSEUM Karlsruhe's **palace** was destroyed in the war but city custodians had enough sense – and money – to rebuild it in the original style, which reflects the transition from baroque to neoclassical. Its dual function as a residence and a retreat is apparent in the layout of the gardens: while the **Schlossplatz** (to the south towards the Marktplatz) is formal, the huge **Schlossgarten** north of the palace has a more relaxed English design. In fine weather, the latter – which has a **Botanischer Garten** and its own miniature train line, the **Schlossgartenbahn** – is a popular hangout for students from the nearby university (the campus, shaped more or less like two slices of pizza, is just to the southeast).

The Schloss houses the superb collections of the **Badisches Landesmuseum** (Baden State Museum; ☎ 926 6520; www.landmuseum.de, in German; adult/student €4/3, free after 2pm Fri; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Thu, 10am-6pm Fri-Sun), which include the dazzling gem-encrusted crown, sceptre and sword of Baden's grand-ducal ruling family; altars, statues and paintings from the Middle Ages (both on the 1st floor), and 'spoils of war' brought back by Margrave Ludwig Wilhelm from his 17th-century campaigns against the Turks. Climbing the **tower** is the best way to appreciate the town's circular layout.

The **Museum in der Majolika** (☎ 926 6583; www.majolika-karlsruhe.com; Ahaweg 6; adult/concession €2/1; ☎ 10am-1pm & 2-5pm Tue-Sun, free after 2pm Fri), which displays 1000 ceramic objects made since 1901 by Karlsruhe's Majolika-Manufaktur, is linked to the Schloss by the **Blaue Linie**, a line of 1645 blue majolica tiles that lead across the Schlossgarten lawn.

At the northern end of the Marktplatz is the **Museum am Markt** (☎ 926 6578; Karl-Friedrich-Strasse 6; adult/concession €2/1; ☎ 11am-5pm Tue-Thu, 10am-6pm Fri-Sun, free after 2pm Fri), a branch of the Badisches Landesmuseum that focuses on post-1900 applied arts, including the delicious objects produced by the Art Nouveau and Art Deco movements.

STAATLICHE KUNSTHALLE

Southwest across the garden from the Schloss, and past the Federal Constitutional Court, is the outstanding **State Art Gallery** (☎ 926 3370; www.kunsthalle-karlsruhe.de, in German; Hans-Thoma-Strasse 2-6; adult/student €6/4; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun). Highlights include works by German masters of the late Gothic period such as Matthias Grünewald and Lucas Cranach the Elder; and canvases by French innovators such as Degas, Manet, Monet, Pissarro, Sisley and Renoir. The modern art section, in the Orangerie, was reopened in 2006 after renovations.

ZENTRUM FÜR KUNST UND MEDIENTECHNOLOGIE

Locals are immensely proud of the **ZKM** (Centre for Art and Media; ☎ 8100 1200; www.zkm.de; Lorenzstrasse 19; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Fri, 11am-6pm Sat & Sun), a huge exhibition, research and documentation complex that brings together art and emerging electronic media technologies. Housed in the vast halls of a historic munitions factory, it includes several cafés and restaurants. The

website has details on special exhibitions, concerts and other events.

The **Medienmuseum** (Media Museum; adult/child 7-18yr/student & senior €5/2/3, free after 2pm Fri) focuses on interactive media art, while the **Museum für Neue Kunst** (Museum for Contemporary Art; adult/child 7-18yr/student & senior €5/2/3, incl the Medienmuseum €8/3/5, free after 2pm Fri) hosts first-rate temporary exhibitions of art created after 1960.

Next to the ZKM is the **Städtische Galerie** (☎ 133 4401; www.staedtische-galerie.de, in German; Lorenzstrasse 27; permanent collection adult/student & senior €2.60/1.80), which showcases local art as well as postwar German art.

The ZKM is located in the southwest corner of the city centre, a bit over 2km southwest of the Schloss and a similar distance northwest of the Hauptbahnhof; it's served by tram 2.

Sleeping

DJH hostel (☎ 282 48; www.jugendherberge.de; Moltke-strasse 24; dm 1st/subsequent night €17.90/14.70; ☎) A few blocks due west of the Schloss, this hostel has 167 beds, most in rooms with shower and toilet. From the train station, take tram 2, 4 or 6 to Europaplatz and then walk five blocks north along Karlstrasse and its continuation.

Hotel Avisa (☎ 349 77; www.hotel-avisa.de; Am Stadtgarten 5; s/d from €67/97; ☎ ☎) Two blocks northeast of the Hauptbahnhof at the southern edge of the Stadtgarten-Zoo, this place has 27 hotel-ish but perfectly decent rooms. A solid choice.

Eating

Karlsruhe has a wide selection of beer gardens and eateries.

Café Salomon (☎ 921 2080; Hans-Thoma-Strasse 3; ☎ 8.30am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun) Facing the Staatliche Kunsthalle, this is the best place in town for bagels (€1.40 to €4.20).

Krokodil (☎ 1208 4790; Waldstrasse 63; mains €5.90-12.50; ☎ 7.30am-1am, to 3am Fri & Sat) A popular café-restaurant, right at Ludwigsplatz, with soaring ceilings and walls covered with wood panelling, tiles, mirrors and yellow smoke-stained paint. There's a brunch buffet (€10) on Sunday and holidays from 10am to 2pm.

Alte Bank (☎ 183 2818; Herrenstrasse 30-32; salads €4.80-8.90, mains around €8.50; ☎ 10am-1am) A block south of Kaiserstrasse, this cultured but informal café-restaurant has two rows of columns and chandeliers overhead.

Entertainment

Club le Carambolage (☎ 373 227; www.club-carambolage.de, in German; Kaiserstrasse 21; ☎ 9pm-4am or later) A hugely popular *Musikkclub* facing the university campus. It has free billiards from 9pm to 11pm.

Getting There & Away

Destinations well-served by rail include Baden-Baden (€5, more by IC or ICE, 15 to 30 minutes) and Freiburg (€24 to €29, one hour).

Karlsruhe is on the A5 (Frankfurt-Basel) and is the starting point of the A8 to Munich.

Getting Around

The Hauptbahnhof is linked to the Marktplatz (just two blocks south of the Schloss gardens) by tram and light rail lines 2, 3, S1, S11, S4 and S41. Single tickets cost €2 for an adult and €1 per child between six and 14 years of age; a 24-Stunden-Karte, good for 24 hours, costs €4.20 (€6.50 for up to five people).

There are park-and-ride options outside of the city centre; look for 'P+R' signs.

KLOSTER MAULBRONN

This one-time **Cistercian monastery** (☎ 07043-926 610; www.schloesser-und-gaerten.de; adult/concession/family €5/2.50/12.50; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mar-Oct, 9.30am-5pm Tue-Sun Nov-Feb), a Unesco World Heritage Site since 1993, is one of the best-preserved medieval monasteries anywhere north of the Alps. Founded by monks from Alsace around 1140, it became a Protestant school in 1556. Famous graduates include the astronomer Johannes Kepler.

Features of architectural interest include the **monastery church**, but it's the insights into the spirit of monastic life, with its mixture of contemplation and labour, that make this place so culturally important and interesting.

Maulbronn, in the Salzach Valley, is 30km east of Karlsruhe and 33km northwest of Stuttgart, not far from the Pforzheim Ost exit on the A8. To get there by public transport from Karlsruhe, take the S4 light rail line to Bretten Bahnhof and from there the hourly bus 700 (€4, one hour); from Stuttgart, take the train to Mühlacker and then bus 700.

SCHWÄBISCH HALL

☎ 0791 / pop 36,000

Home of the Schwäbisch Hall banking and insurance company, this easy-to-like, picture-perfect Swabian river town – which celebrated

its 850th anniversary in 2006 – is known for its ancient riverside cityscape, innovative museums and open-air theatre performances. An aimless amble will take you along narrow stone alleys, among half-timbered hillside houses, over covered bridges and up slopes overlooking the tranquil Kocher River. The islands and grassy riverbank parks are perfect for picnics.

Orientation & Information

The Kocher River runs south-to-north through Schwäbisch Hall, separating the Altstadt, on the right (east) bank, from the Neustadt (New Town), on the left (west) bank. The Altstadt's main commercial street, Neue Strasse, links Am Markt (the Marktplatz) with the river.

PTT-Tele-Cafe (Marktstrasse 15; per hr €1.50; ☎ 10am-10pm Tue-Sat, noon-10pm Sun & Mon) Internet access a block north of Am Markt.

Tourist office (☎ 751 246; www.schwaebischhall.de; Am Markt 9; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat & Sun May-Sep, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri Oct-Apr) On the Altstadt's main square.

Sights

ALTSTADT

Am Markt, which still hosts markets on Wednesday and Saturday mornings, boasts the **Rathaus** (town hall), reconstructed in baroque style after a town fire in 1728 and again after WWII. The centrepiece of the Markt, however, is the late-Gothic **Kirche St Michael**, begun in 1156 but mainly constructed during the 15th and 16th centuries. Note the classical net vaulting on the ceiling of the choir.

The majestic staircase out the front has been used to stage **Freilichtspiele** (open-air theatre performances; www.freilichtspiele-hall.de, in German) every summer since 1925.

Next to the tourist office is the **Gotischer Fischbrunnen** (1509), a large iron tub once used for storing river fish before sale.

Two short blocks south of the church, at the end of Pfarrgasse, is the massive **Neubau**, a steep-roofed 16th-century structure built as an arsenal and granary and now used as a theatre; walk up the stone staircase on its south side for a wonderful view of the city's red-roofed houses. Looking down toward the river, you can see the former **city fortifications**, the covered **Roter Steg** bridge and, at the western end of Neue Strasse, the **Henkerbrücke** (Hangman's Bridge).

Housed in seven old buildings down by the river, the outstanding **Hällisch-Fränkisches Museum** (☎ 751 289; Im Keckenhof 6; adult/student €2.50/1.50; 🕒 10am–5pm Tue–Sun year-round, until 8pm Fri early Jun–mid-Aug) has well-presented collections covering the history of Schwäbisch Hall and nearby areas. Exhibits include artwork and crafts from the 17th century, painted wooden targets shot through with holes and an extremely rare hand-painted wooden **synagogue interior** from 1738.

KUNSTHALLE WÜRTH

Founded in 2001 by the industrialist Reinhold Würth, this **art museum** (☎ 946 720; www.kunst.wuerth.com; Lange Strasse 35; adult/student & senior €5/3; 🕒 10am–6pm), a block up the hill from the Roter Steg bridge, puts on intriguing temporary exhibitions that change every four or five months (it closes for two weeks between exhibits). An audioguide may be available for €4. It is housed in a striking ultramodern building, faced with rough-hewn local stone that preserves part of a century-old brewery, the **Sudhaus**, where you'll find a brasserie that often hosts live music in the evenings.

Sleeping

Campingplatz Am Steinbacher See (☎ 2984; www.camping-schwaebisch-hall.de; Mühlsteige 26; tent/adult €5.10/4.80; 🕒 year-round) An idyllic lakeside camping ground with a washer-dryer and communal kitchen. Take bus 4 to Steinbach Mitte.

DJH hostel (☎ 410 50; www.jugendherberge.de; Langenfelder Weg 5; dm 1st/subsequent night €17.90/14.70; 🕒) This friendly 133-bed hostel, just 10 minutes on foot east from Am Markt, has bathrooms in some rooms.

Hotel Garni Sölich (☎ 518 07; www.hotel-soelch.de, in German; Hauffstrasse 14; s/d €43/63, extra for stays of 1 night €5; 🕒) This hotel, about 20 minutes on foot from the centre, is modern with a rustic-themed interior.

Hotel Garni Scholl (☎ 975 50; www.hotel-scholl.de; Klosterstrasse 2–4; s €64–74, d €88–104; 🕒) Behind Kirche St Michael, this family-run hotel has homely, well-designed and fastidiously kept rooms with hardwood floors and marble bathrooms.

Hotel Hohenlohe (☎ 758 70; www.hotel-hohenlohe.de, in German; Weilertor 14; s €101–132, d €126–184; 🕒) This extremely comfortable hotel, where many of the 114 rooms afford superb river views, has four saltwater pools, a sauna, a large wellness centre and politically incorrect statuary in the lobby. The rooms

have sleek wooden furniture and are decorated in warm Mediterranean tones of yellow, orange and pastel green.

Eating

Eateries can be found on or near Haalstrasse, a bit southwest of Am Markt. There's a brasserie at Kunsthalle Würth (left).

Hespelt (☎ 930 220; Am Spitalbach 17; lunch plate from €3.60; 🕒 8.30am–6pm Mon–Fri, 8am–12.30pm Sat) This butcher-deli, two blocks northwest of Am Markt, puts together great hot lunches.

Weinstube Würth (☎ 6636; Im Weiler 8; mains €5–13; 🕒 11pm–midnight Tue–Sun) Across the river from the Altstadt, this veteran serves delicious Swabian and vegetarian specialties, including *Maultaschen*, and has a lovely beer garden.

Gasthaus Sonne (☎ 970 840; Gelbinger Gasse 2; 🕒 closed 2–5.30pm & Mon) This historic restaurant has been serving local specialties since 1903.

Getting There & Around

The town is served by two train stations: trains from Stuttgart (€11.70, 1¼ hours, hourly) arrive at Hesselental, on the right bank about 7km south of the centre and linked to the Altstadt by bus 1; trains from Heilbronn go to the left-bank Bahnhof Schwäbisch Hall, a short walk along Bahnhofstrasse from the centre. Trains and buses run regularly between the two.

Outfits hiring out bikes include **2-Rad Zügel** (☎ 971 400; Johanniterstrasse 55; per day €10; 🕒 9am–12.30pm & 2–7pm Mon–Fri, 9am–2pm Sat), north of the centre on the B19.

AROUND SCHWÄBISCH HALL

The open-air **Hohenloher Freilandmuseum** (Farming Museum; ☎ 971 010; adult/student €5.50/3.50; 🕒 9am–6pm Tue–Sun May–Sep, 10am–5pm Tue–Sun Mar, Apr, Oct & Nov) in Wackershofen, 6km northwest of Schwäbisch Hall, has ancient farmhouses hosting demonstrations of pre-20th-century farming methods and equipment – we nearly got blisters just watching. From Schwäbisch Hall, it's an easy ride out here on bus 7.

SCHWÄBISCHE ALB

The hilly area south of Stuttgart and east of the Black Forest, sometimes known in English as the Swabian Alp, is crossed by two major rivers that rise in the Black Forest. The mighty Danube moseys through Ulm, with its daring

modern architecture, before heading to Buda-pest and beyond. The Neckar flows through the university city of Tübingen on its way to Stuttgart and Heidelberg, eventually joining the Rhine at Mannheim.

TÜBINGEN

☎ 07071 / pop 83,000

Tübingen, 40km south of Stuttgart, mixes all the charms of a late-medieval city – such as a hilltop fortress, cobbled alleys and lots of half-timbered houses – with the erudition and mischief of a real college town. A seat of higher learning since the university was founded in 1477 by Count Eberhard VI of Württemberg, Tübingen was a favoured haunt of Goethe, who published his first works here; famous graduates include the philosopher Hegel, the lyric poet Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843) and the astronomer Johannes Kepler.

Today, Tübingen is a lovely place to relax for a few days, hit some pubs and paddle your way down the Neckar River. If you'd like to hang out in a German university town but are wary of Heidelberg's mass tourism, Tübingen is an excellent choice.

Orientation

The Neckar River flows through Tübingen from east to west. From Eberhardsbrücke (Neckarbrücke), the city centre's only bridge, Karlstrasse leads south to the Hauptbahnhof (500m). Going north up the hill is Mühlstrasse, to the left (west) of which lies the Altstadt. The main university area is further north (about 1km from the river) along Wilhelmstrasse, the northern continuation of Mühlstrasse.

TÜBINGEN AND THE POPE

In the late 1960s Tübingen, like university towns around the globe, was swept by a wave of student radicalism. Among those who experienced those tumultuous times was a forty-ish Catholic theology lecturer, known as a church reformer for his role in the Second Vatican Council (1962–65), named Father Joseph Ratzinger.

The students were revolting – about that, and perhaps that alone, Ratzinger was in full agreement with his liberal rivals within the Church, who saw in the spirit of the times the glowing idealism of youth. Ratzinger, on the other hand, detected in the Marxist-influenced radicals a tendency towards totalitarianism that reminded him of what he had seen growing up in Nazi-era Bavaria. His conclusion was that only unswerving adherence to Church doctrine could save humanity from barbarism.

That clear-cut view of Catholicism has been pursued by Ratzinger ever since his time in Tübingen: as a theologian, as Archbishop of Munich, as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and now as Pope Benedict XVI.

Most of Tübingen's sights are in the Altstadt. The northern bank of the Neckar leads steeply up to a ridge, at (or near) the top of which you'll find (from east to west) the Stiftskirche, the pedestrianised Kirchgasse, Am Markt (the Altstadt's main public square) and the Schloss. The northern half of the Altstadt, including most of the shopping (such as on Hirschgasse), is on the slope leading down to the tiny Ammer River.

Information

ATMs There's one in the Hauptbahnhof, another at the southern end of Eberhardsbrücke and yet another at Am Markt.

Frauenbuchladen Thalestris (☎ 265 90; www.frauenbuchladen.net, in German; Bursagasse 2; 🕒 10am–7pm Mon–Fri, 10am–2pm Sat) Stocks books related to women. It's a women's information centre, too, and men aren't allowed inside. Situated right behind the Hölderlinturm, half a block up from the river.

N-Telecenter (Wilhelmstrasse 3/1; per hr €2; 🕒 8.30am–10.30pm Mon–Sat, 11am–10.30pm Sun) Internet access.

Osiander (☎ 920 10; Wilhelmstrasse 12–14) A purveyor of books since 1596.

Post office (nr Hafengasse & Neue Strasse) In the Altstadt.

Tourist office (☎ 913 60; www.tuebingen.de; An der Neckarbrücke 1; 🕒 9am–7pm Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm Sat) At the south end of Eberhardsbrücke. Has a board with hotel details outside and can provide details on hiking options (for example to Bebenhausen or Wurmlingerkapelle).

Vu-Tel (Mühlstrasse 14; per hr €2.50; 🕒 10am–10pm Mon–Sat, noon–10pm Sun) Two other internet cafés are located on the same block.

Waschsalon (Mühlstrasse 18; 🕒 7am–10pm Mon–Sat) Self-service laundry.

Sights & Activities

Entered through an ornate Renaissance gate (1606), **Schloss Hohentübingen** (Burgsteige 11), at the western edge of the Altstadt, affords fine views over the steep, red-tiled rooftops of the Altstadt. This mostly 16th-century castle houses various university institutes, including the **museum of archaeology & Egyptology** (☎ 297 7384; adult/student & senior €4/2; 🕒 10am-6pm Wed-Sun, to 5pm Oct-Apr). The gardens around the Schloss afford ample options for romantic strolling.

Surrounded by towering half-timbered houses, **Am Markt**, the Altstadt's main public space, is a much-loved student hang-out; in summer it overflows with geraniums and café tables. Presiding over the hullabaloo is the **Rathaus** (1433), with a riotous 19th-century baroque façade and, way up top, an astronomical clock (1511). The four women of the **Neptune Fountain** represent the seasons; note that the city council members who approved funds for the fountain modestly placed themselves in the decorative ironwork.

On the northern side of the Markt is the **Lammhofpassage**, an erstwhile watering hole for many of Tübingen's leading figures; today it's owned by the Protestant church. Walk through the little passageway to see the beer garden and a very original **bronze statue**, the meaning of which you may end up arguing with your friends about.

Walking two blocks east along Kirchgasse will take you to the late-Gothic, late-15th-century **Stiftskirche** (Am Holzmarkt), which houses tombs of the Württemberg dukes and has excellent original medieval stained-glass windows. It hosts concerts every Saturday evening.

Facing the church's west façade is the **Cottahaus**, one-time home of Johann Friedrich Cotta, who first published the works of both Schiller and Goethe. Goethe, who was known to find inspiration at the local pubs, stayed here for a week in September 1797. One night he apparently staggered home, missed the front door and wrote a technicolour poem on the wall next door. If you look up at the 1st-floor window of the building – now a grungy student dorm – you'll see a little sign: 'Hier kotzte Goethe' (Goethe puked here).

In centuries past, delinquent students as young as 14 were given the choice of losing their wine ration or being sent to the city's **Karzer** (student jail; Münzgasse 20), just up the block.

From the east end of Holzmarkt, Neckargasse leads down to the Neckar where – right next to **Eberhardsbrücke** – you'll find **Neckarmüller** (p426), Tübingen's best beer garden.

From the middle of the bridge, stairs lead down to the **Platanenallee**, a long sliver of an island that's perfect for a plane tree–shaded stroll. On the Thursday of the Feast of Corpus Christi (late May or early June), the **Burschenschaften** (fraternities) – who own many of the mansions along the river and high up on the hill – hold their wildly popular **Stocherkahn races** (punt races) here, drawing thousands of spectators. A two-week festival takes over the island every August.

Facing the Platanenallee about 150m west of Eberhardsbrücke is the **Hölderlinturm**, a riverside tower in which the poet Friedrich Hölderlin lived from 1807 until his death in 1843. Right nearby, on the banks of the Neckar, you can hire a **Stocherkahn** (per hr up to 16 people €60-65; 🕒 mid-Apr–Oct). Students often bring along a case of beer, which weighs down the boat and, by contributing to various phenomena often associated with the consumption of brewed liquids, occasionally causes a **Stocherkahn** to sink amid much beery merriment.

Across the river just east of the bridge (behind and below the tourist office), **Bootsvermietung Märkle** (☎ 315 29; www.bootsvermietung-tuebingen.de in German; Eberhardsbrücke 1; 🕒 11am-7pm Apr-Oct, to 9pm in summer) hires out rowboats, canoes, pedal-boats and 12-person **Stocherkähne** for €7.50, €7.50, €10 and €48 per hour respectively.

Just northeast of the Altstadt is the **Alter Botanischer Garten** (Old Botanical Garden), a grassy park that's hugely popular with students because it's sandwiched between the eateries of the Altstadt, where they nourish their stomachs, and the **Universität district**, where they nourish their minds (or at least jump through the hoops to get that all-important piece of paper). The neoclassical **Neue Aula** (nr Wilhelmstrasse & Gmelinstrasse), built in 1832, is the main university administration building.

The university's absolutely delightful **Botanischer Garten** (Botanical Garden; ☎ 297 8822; www.botgarten.uni-tuebingen.de, in German; Hartmeyerstrasse 123; 🕒 8am-4.45pm, till 7pm Sat & Sun in summer) has hothouses, a Tropicarium and some lovely outdoor gardens. Situated 2km northwest up the hill from the centre, it's served by buses 5, 13, 15 and 17.

MAULTASCHEN

Sometimes referred to as 'Swabian pockets' or 'German ravioli', *Maultaschen* are pasta pillows that are traditionally filled with ground meat or sausage, preboiled spinach, bits of damp bread and eggs. Once an efficiency food for the poor, who could wring one more meal out of leftovers by chopping them up and concealing them in a boiled noodle-dough pocket, they are now acknowledged as one of the glories of Swabian cuisine. *Maultaschen*, if prepared properly (fiendishly difficult to do, according to true connoisseurs), can hold their own in any competition with dim sum, pirogi and ravioli.

The origins of *Maultaschen* are shrouded in steaming broth. According to one legend, they were invented by the Cistercian monks of Maulbronn Monastery – thus the name. Another story making the rounds is that some Swabians figured they could get away with eating meat during Lent by hiding it inside pasta and further camouflaging it with spinach, thus keeping their culinary misdemeanours from the prying eyes of the parish priest (if not from higher authorities). What is clear is that at sporting events, fans wishing to insult their Swabian rivals sometimes call them *Maultaschfresser* – uncouth devourers of *Maultaschen*.

An excellent place to sample first-rate *Maultaschen* – 60 to 70 varieties, some of them seasonal, are available over the course of the year – is Tübingen's Hotel am Schloss restaurant (see p426).

Sleeping

Neckar Camping Tübingen (☎ 431 45; www.neckarcamp.de; Rappenberghalde 61; adult/tent/car €5.30/4.10/2.60; 🕒 Apr-Oct) A grassy and nicely shaded camping ground on the north bank of the Neckar about 2km west of the Hauptbahnhof. Bus 9 has a stop nearby.

DJH hostel (☎ 230 02; www.jugendherberge.de; Gartenstrasse 22/2; dm 1st/subsequent night €20.30/17.10; 🕒) This 159-bed hostel has a pretty location on the north bank of the Neckar about 300m east of Eberhardbrücke. It's linked to the Hauptbahnhof by bus 22.

Viktor-Renner-Haus (☎ 559 020; viktor-renner-haus-tuebingen@internationaler-bund.de; Frondsbergstrasse 55; s/d €40/52, s without bathroom €30) A young people's hostel that rents out basic rooms to travellers. It has cooking facilities and you get fridge space. Situated 800m northwest of the city centre up Schnarrenbergstrasse; it's served by buses 5, 13, 14 and 18 to Breiter Weg or Frondsbergstrasse.

Hotel Hospiz Tübingen (☎ 9240; www.hotel-hospiz.de; Neckarhalde 2; s €59-76, d €92-110, s/d without bathroom €30.45/72; 🕒) Just a block up the hill from Am Markt, this friendly hotel – painted a shocking ochre-pink colour – has 50 attractive medium-sized rooms, some with rather odd colour schemes. By car, take Neckarhalde from the B28.

Hotel am Schloss (☎ 929 40; www.hotelamshloss.de; Burgsteige 18; s €55-82, d €98-118; 🕒) Just 50m down the hill from the Schloss, this superbly situated hotel is ensconced in a 16th-century building where Kepler used to drop by for

wine. The 33 comfortable rooms have bright, shiny bathrooms, pillows arranged to look like swans and, in many cases (such as room 30), great views. By car, take Neckarhalde from the B28.

Hotel Krone Tübingen (☎ 13310; www.krone-tuebingen.de; Uhlandstrasse 1; s €87-107, d €125-155; 🕒) A very swish place at the southern end of Eberhardsbrücke and just two blocks northeast of the Hauptbahnhof. Run by the same family since 1885, it has 43 elegant, understated rooms, all with superb soundproofing.

Eating & Drinking

In the northeast corner of the Altstadt, several cafés and ice-cream places cluster along the tiny Ammer River on Beim Nonnenhaus, linked to the Alter Botanischer Garten by a tunnel under Am Stadtgraben.

Locals disagree as to which of the two Turkish takeaways – at opposite ends of Eberhardsbrücke – is better, Kalender (on the north side) or Istanbul (on the south side).

A number of popular student bars can be found west of Am Markt along Haaggasse.

X (☎ 249 02; Kornhausstrasse 6; snacks under €3; 11am-1am) The region's best chips/French fries are right here, along with good-value bratwurst and burgers (both from €2.20).

Hades (☎ 228 18; Hafengasse 8; 🕒 5pm-2am, to 3am Fri & Sat) A **Bierlokal** (bar-restaurant) whose edible specialities include *Flammkuche* (€3.60 to €7.50), homemade soups and, each Tuesday, pasta (first/subsequent portions cost just €2/1). It's pronounced *ha-dess*.

Neckarmüller (☎ 278 48; Gartenstrasse 4; mains €6.50-13.50; ☎ 10am-1am) Tübingen's best-loved beer garden, overlooking the Neckar at the northern end of Eberhardsbrücke, is also a microbrewery. Shaded by giant chestnut trees (there's also an inside section), it serves Swabian dishes, including *Maultaschen*, at all hours.

Collegium (☎ 252 223; Lange Gasse 8; mains €8-14.50; ☎ 11am-2.30pm & 4.30pm-midnight, closed Sun evening) A cosy restaurant whose good-sized Swabian and vegetarian dishes, prepared with fresh local products, can be washed down with reasonably priced beer and local wine.

Restaurant Museum (☎ 228 28; Wilhelmstrasse 3; mains €10-22; ☎ 11am-2pm & 6pm-midnight) An elegant, very modern restaurant that specialises in fresh, light Swabian and French cuisine.

Hanseatica (☎ 269 84; Hafengasse 2; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, to 4.30pm Sat) Come here for super sip-it-standing coffee.

Tangente Jour (☎ 245 72; Münzgasse 17; 9am or 10am-1am) A sleek, modern café-bar near the Stiftskirche. It has six local beers on tap and serves breakfast (€4.60 to €9.90) as well as light meals, including quiche and bagels.

Tangente (☎ 230 07; Pflieghofstrasse 10; ☎ 10am-3am) Popularly known as Tangente Night (to avoid confusion), this laid-back bar, two blocks northeast of the Stiftskirche, has karaoke on Monday from 9pm. Popular with students.

Jazzkeller (☎ 550 906; www.jazzkeller.eu, in German; Haagasse 15/2; concert admission €3-15; ☎ 7pm-2am, to 3am Fri & Sat) This Tübingen institution (it's been around since 1958), three blocks west of Am Markt, has a mellow bar upstairs and hosts DJs and live music (there's jazz every Wednesday from 9pm) in the cellar.

Getting There & Around

By train, Tübingen is an easy day trip from Stuttgart (€10, 45 to 60 minutes, two or more an hour).

Central Tübingen is a maze of one-way streets with little parking. There's a taxi stand at Wilhelmstrasse 3 or call ☎ 243 01.

Radlager (☎ 551 651; Lazarettgasse 19-21; ☎ 9.30am-6.30pm Mon, Wed & Fri, 2-6.30pm Tue & Thu, 9.30am-2.30pm Sat, to 1pm Sat in winter) has a few bikes for rent.

BURG HOHENZOLLERN

Hohenzollern Castle (☎ 07471-2428; www.preussen.de), about 25km south of Tübingen, is the ancestral seat of the Hohenzollern family, the first and last monarchical rulers of the short-lived second German Empire (1871-1918). The neo-Gothic castle you see now (built 1850-67) is impressive from a distance – rising dramatically from an exposed crag, its vast medieval battlements often veiled in mist – but up close it looks more contrived.

The interior, with its artwork, stained glass and fabulous **Schatzkammer** (treasury), can be seen on a 35-minute **tour** (in German; adult/child 6-18yr/student/senior €5/2.50/3.50/4.50; ☎ 9am-5.30pm, to 4.30pm Nov-mid-Mar). You can view the **grounds** (without tour €2.50) at your leisure. On clear days you can see the Swiss Alps.

Frequent trains link Tübingen with Hechingen (€4, 20 minutes, one or two an hour), about 4km northwest of the castle.

ULM

☎ 0731 / pop 120,000

On the Danube (Donau) River, Ulm is one of the region's most audacious and creative-thinking cities. How many other municipalities would dare to erect a startling piece of modern architecture next to their most famous medieval landmark? It's somehow fitting, then, that the founder of modern physics, Albert Einstein, was born here.

In 1811, a highly sceptical public watched as Albrecht Berblinger, a tailor who had invented a flying machine similar to a hang-glider,

attempted to fly across the Danube after leaping (some say he was kicked) from the city wall. The 'Tailor of Ulm', as the locals called him, made an embarrassing splash landing but his design was later shown to be workable.

Orientation

Ulm's Altstadt, on the north bank of the Danube, is inside a 1300m-by-700m oval delineated by the river (to the south), the Hauptbahnhof (to the west) and Olgastrasse (to the north). In the centre of the oval lies the Münster, surrounded by a pedestrian shopping precinct. The tiny Blau River's two channels, lined with quaint houses, meet the Danube about 300m south of the Münster.

On the south side of the Danube, in Bavaria, is the city of Neu-Ulm, a rather bland, modern city. The two cities share transport systems and important municipal facilities.

Information

Eco-Express SB-Waschsalon (Wielandstrasse 29; 6am-11pm Mon-Sat) A self-service laundry four blocks northeast of Willy-Brandt-Platz, in the northeast corner of the city-centre oval.

Global Internetcafé (Neue Strasse 86; per hr €2;

☎ 10am-11pm Mon-Sat, 11am-10pm Sun & holidays)

Herwig (☎ 962 170; Münsterplatz 18) A bookshop with a good selection of travel guides and maps.

Intercall (Neue Strasse 101; per hr €2; ☎ 9.30am-11pm Mon-Sat, 10am-10pm Sun & holidays) Internet access.

Post office (Bahnhofplatz 2) To the left as you exit the Hauptbahnhof.

Tourist office (☎ 161 2830; www.tourismus.ulm.de; Stadthaus bldg, Münsterplatz 50; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat, 11am-3pm Sun Apr-Oct, 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat Nov-Mar) Sells the Ulm Card.

Ulm Card (1/2 days €8/12) Offers discounted museum admission and public transport.

Sights

MÜNSTER

Ulm's outstanding architectural landmark is the towering **Münster** (Cathedral; Münsterplatz; admission free; ☎ 9am-4.45pm Jan & Feb, to 5.45pm Mar & Oct, to 6.45pm Apr-Jun & Sep, to 7.45pm Jul & Aug), celebrated for its 161.53m-high steeple – the tallest in the world. Though the first stone was laid in 1377, it took over 500 years for the structure to be completed. A **bronze plaque** embedded in the pavement out front shows directions and distances to cities around Europe. Note the **hallmarks** on each stone, inscribed by cutters who were paid by the block.

Only by climbing the **tower** (adult/student €4/2.50; ☎ last admission 1hr before closing) – up 768 spiral steps to the 143m-high viewing platform – can you fully appreciate the tower's dizzying height. As they climb up, romantically minded local couples have a tradition of kissing at each landing. Up top there are unparalleled views of the Black Forest and the Schwäbische Alb, and on clear days you can even see the Alps.

As you enter the church, note the **Israelfenster**, a stained-glass window above the west door that serves as a memorial to Jews killed during the Holocaust. The Gothic-style wooden **pulpit canopy**, as detailed as fine lace, eliminates echoes during sermons; a tiny spiral staircase leads to a mini-pulpit for the Holy Spirit. On the 15th-century oak **choir stalls**, the top row depicts figures from the Old Testament, the middle from the New Testament, and the bottom and sides show historical characters, such as the Roman playwright Lucius Seneca and Pythagoras, who strums a lute. The impressive **stained-glass windows** in the choir, dating from the 14th and 15th centuries, were removed during WWII.

The Münster's regular **organ concerts** (Sat/Sun €2.50/4.50; ☎ noon-12.30pm Sat Easter-Christmas, 11.30am most Sun year-round) are a real treat.

STADTHAUS

The other highlight of Münsterplatz – from a completely different era – is the white-and-glass **Stadthaus** (1993), designed by the American architect Richard Meier. He caused an uproar by erecting a postmodern building next to the city's Gothic gem but the result is both gorgeous and functional. The structure stages art exhibitions and special events, and also houses the tourist office and a café.

RATHAUS

The 14th-century **Rathaus** (Town Hall) has an ornately painted Renaissance façade and a gilded **astrological dock** (1520); bells count off every quarter-hour. Inside you can see a replica of **Berblinger's flying machine**.

In the Marktplatz to the south is the **Fischkastenbrunnen**, a fountain where fishmongers kept their river fish alive on market days. That striking all-glass pyramid behind the Rathaus (28m by 28m at its base and 36m high) is the city's main library, the **Zentralbibliothek** (2004), designed by Gottfried Böhm.

THE AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Hotel am Schloss restaurant (☎ 929 40; www.hotelamshloss.de; Burgsteige 18; Maultaschen €7.40-9.50; ☎ 11.30am-2.30pm & 5.30-10.30pm) This place is renowned among locals for making Tübingen's finest *Maultaschen* (see p425). Indeed, the owner, Herbert Rösch Sr, literally wrote the book on this Swabian delicacy – look for the *Schwäbisches Maultaschenbuch* around town.

About 23 types of *Maultaschen*, many of them seasonal (eg asparagus or trout), are available here at any one time. The menu, partly in Swabian (English version available), promises that 'alle Maultasche geits au mit vegetarischer Gmüsfüllung' (all *Maultaschen* are also available with vegetarian filling). Also on offer are *Spätzle* (type of pasta) and light meals for those with merely a *gloina Honger* (small appetite). The terrace has great views.

Eating & Drinking

There are quite a few pubs and restaurants along the two channels of the Blau River, south across Neue Strasse from the Münster.

Tagblatt (☎ 746 78; Insel 1, Neu Ulm; ☎ 7am-2am Mon-Fri, 5am-2am Sat, Sun & holidays) A bright, cheerful place on the banks of the Danube with a beer garden and a wide selection of salads. Weekend breakfasts begin at 5am, perfect after a late-late club crawl. Just across the river from central Ulm.

Drei Kannen (☎ 677 17; Hafenedbad 31/1; Mon-Sat lunch special €5.50, mains from €8.50; ☎ 11am-midnight) A German and Swabian restaurant whose courtyard beer garden is overlooked by an Italian-style loggia. Serves a strong malty beer – not to everyone's taste – available only here. The Friday speciality is fresh trout; extra Swabian dishes are featured on Thursday.

Café im Stadthaus (☎ 600 93; Münsterplatz 50; salads €5.60-8.80; mains €7.50-15.40; ☎ 8am-10pm Mon-Sat, 10am-10pm Sun) A modern, airy café-restaurant with great views of the Münster through the bay windows and from the terrace.

Barfüßler (☎ 602 1110; Lautenberg 1; mains €6.50-12.80; ☎ 10am-1am, to 2am Thu-Sat) This restaurant-bar is very popular thanks in part to its three kinds of prize-winning beer (microbrewed at its second location in New Ulm). Tuesday is karaoke night (from 10pm). Edible options include salads and vegetarian dishes.

Weinkrüger (☎ 649 76; Weinhofberg 7; mains €7.50-14.90; ☎ 11am-midnight, to 1am Fri & Sat) A rustic wine tavern in a five-century-old bathhouse and tannery between the two channels of the Blau River. It has a good selection of traditional Swabian dishes and offers 90 different wines, 16 of them by the glass.

Hotel Bäumle (☎ 622 87; www.hotel-baeumle.de, in German; Kohlgasse 6; mains from €8.60; ☎ 4pm-midnight Mon-Fri) A rustic *Weinstube* (wine bar) with loads of 19th-century wood panelling, a ceramic stove, good wines and creative Swabian fare. One especially tasty option is the *Ulmer Laubfrösche*, filled with spinach or *Mangold* (a kind of beet).

Zur Forelle (☎ 639 24; Fischergasse 25; mains €9.50-21.50; ☎ 11am-2.30pm & 5.30pm-midnight) A rustic restaurant, awash with flowers in the spring, whose speciality is trout, kept fresh in a cage under the bridge. In a 15th-century building with low ceilings and a Napoleon-era cannonball lodged in the wall outside. It also serves Swabian dishes. Einstein ate here and is said to have gone home relatively satisfied.

Entertainment

Details on cultural events appear in the free monthly *Spazz*, available at the tourist office and some cafés. Events tickets are sold by the tourist office.

Roxy (☎ 968 620; www.roxy.ulm.de in German; Schillerstrasse 1) A huge cultural venue, housed in a former industrial plant 1km south of the Hauptbahnhof, with a concert hall, cinema, disco, bar and special-event forum. Take tram line 1 to Ehinger Tor.

Wiley Club (☎ 867 04; www.wiley-club.de, in German; Wileystrasse 4, Neu Ulm; ☎ 11am-1am, to 2am Fri & Sat) On a former US military base, this one-time canteen has a restaurant, café-bar and stage, and hosts live music and disco events. Situated 2.5km south of the Altstadt; to get there take bus 6 to the Wiley Club stop.

Getting There & Away

Ulm, about 90km southeast of Stuttgart and 140km west of Munich, is near the intersection of the north-south A7 and the east-west A8.

Ulm is well-served by ICE trains; major destinations include Stuttgart (€14.70 to €22, one hour, several hourly) and Munich (€22.10 to €30, 1½ hours, several hourly).

Getting Around

There's a local **transport information counter** (☎ 166 2120; www.swu-verkehr.de, in German) in the tourist office.

Except in parking garages (per half-hour €0.60), the whole city centre is metered; many areas are limited to one hour. There's a park-and-ride lot at Donaustadion, a stadium 1.5km northeast of the Münster that's on tram line 1.

You can hire bikes, including tandems, from **Radstation** (☎ 150 0231; Friedrich-Ebert-Strasse; ☎ 6am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-7pm Sat, Sun & holidays), between the Hauptbahnhof and the bus station. Bike paths go along the Danube.

It's easy to order a **taxi** (☎ 660 66).

NORTHERN BLACK FOREST

The hills, valleys, rivers and forests of Germany's famed Schwarzwald (Black Forest) stretch from the swish spa town of Baden-Baden south to the Swiss border, and from the Rhine – the west bank of which is in the

VISITORS PASSES

In most Schwarzwald localities your hotel or B&B host will issue you with a Schwarzwald-Gästekarte (Guest Card; formerly known as a Kurkarte) that gets you discounts – or even freebies – on museums, ski lifts, cultural events and attractions. Versions of the card with the Konus symbol (showing a bus, a train and a tram), known as the Konus-Gästekarte, entitle you to free use of trains, trams and buses throughout the Black Forest region, and are intended to encourage holidaymakers to use environmentally friendly public transport even if they arrive in the area by private car.

Almost all tourist offices in the Black Forest sell the three-day **SchwarzwaldCard** (adult/child 4-11yr/family €37/27/113 incl 1 day at Europa-Park €47/37/153), which gets you free admission to about 150 attractions in the Black Forest, including museums, ski lifts, boat trips, spas and swimming pools.

Details on both cards are available at www.blackforest-tourism.com.

French region of Alsace – east almost to Lake Constance. The northern section, with its hilly but relatively gentle terrain, includes the Kinzig Valley, home to several charming towns. Freudenstadt makes a good base for exploring the area.

BADEN-BADEN

☎ 07221 / pop 54,000

From Queen Victoria to the Vanderbilts, from Bismarck to Brahms and Berlioz, they all came to Baden-Baden – the royal, the rich, the renowned and the moneyed wannabees – to take the waters or lose their fortunes in the casino.

Today Baden-Baden, at the foot of the Black Forest, is the grande dame of German spas, ageing but still elegant. Sophisticated yet relaxed, it offers a *belle époque* townscape of palatial villas, stately hotels, tree-lined avenues, groomed parks and chic boutiques. Many of the most delightful activities, such as strolling, are free, and even the famous spas don't necessarily require deep pockets to enjoy (at one of them, deep pockets are banned entirely).

Orientation

The heart of Baden-Baden is Leopoldsplatz, which is surrounded by pedestrianised shopping streets. Most sights – including Lichtenalter Allee, on the west bank of the gurgling Oosbach – are within easy walking distance.

The Bahnhof is in the suburb of Oos, about 4km northwest of the town centre, with the central bus station right out the front.

Information

Branch tourist office (Kaiserallee 3; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 2-5pm Sun) In the Trinkhalle. Sells events tickets.

Internet Café (Lange Strasse 54; per hr €2; ☎ 10am-10pm) Internet access at the northern edge of the pedestrianised town centre.

Main tourist office (☎ 275 200; www.baden-baden.com; Schwarzwaldstrasse 52; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, 9am-1pm Sun) Situated 2km northwest of the town centre. If you're driving from the northwest (from the A5) this place is on the way into town. Sells events tickets.

Post office (Lange Strasse 44) Inside Kaufhaus Wagener.

Waschsalon SB (☎ 248 19; Scheibenstrasse 14; ☎ 7.30am-10pm Mon-Sat) A self-service laundry, three blocks east (up the hill) from Leopoldsplatz.

Weblounge (Eichstrasse 3; per hr €2.40; ☎ 10am-midnight Mon-Thu, 10am-10pm Fri-Sun) Internet access in a mellow atmosphere.

Sights

KURHAUS & CASINO

In the heart of Baden-Baden, two blocks southwest of Leopoldsplatz and just west of the Oos River, looms the palatial **Kurhaus** (☎ 3530; www.kurhaus-baden-baden.de, in German; Kaiserallee 1), set in an impeccably groomed garden. Corinthian columns and a frieze of mythical griffins grace the august exterior of the structure, designed by Friedrich Weinbrenner in 1824. An alley of chestnut trees – flanked by two rows of elegant mini-shops – links the Kurhaus with Kaiserallee.

Inside – besides lavish festival halls used for balls, conventions, concerts, dance competitions and weddings – is the opulent **casino** (☎ 302 40; www.casino-baden-baden.de; admission €3; ☎ 2pm-2am Sun-Thu, 2pm-3am Fri & Sat, baccarat tables open 8pm-5am Fri & Sat), opened in 1838 and remnant of the 19th century or a 1970s James Bond film, depending on your proclivities. Its décor, which seeks to emulate – indeed, outdo – the splendour of France's famed chateaux, such as Versailles, led Marlene Dietrich to

well-preserved remains, you can get a sense of how the Romans relaxed.

For another panoramic vista of Baden-Baden, head to the **Rosenneuheitengarten** (Rose Novelty Garden; Moltkestrasse; ☎ 9am-sundown mid-Apr-early Oct), on the Beutig hilltop 800m southwest of the Kurhaus.

Activities

SPAS

The famed **Friedrichsbad** (☎ 275 920; www.roemisch-irisches-bad.de; Römerplatz 1; ☎ 9am-10pm, last admission 7pm), its focal point an ornate circular pool ringed by columns, looks more like a neo-Renaissance palace than a bathhouse. Built in 1877, it has lots of small pools with water temperatures ranging from 18°C to 36°C. The **Roman-Irish Bath** (admission €21, incl a soap-and-brush massage €29), three hours of humid bliss, consists of a timed series of hot and cold showers, saunas, steam rooms and baths that leave you feeling scrubbed, lubed and loose as a goose.

No clothing is allowed inside so leave your modesty at the reception desk. Most pools and baths are mixed except on Monday and Thursday, when men and women are separate except in the big pool. A towel, shoes, skin creme etc are provided so you can walk in off the street with no special preparation. Children under 14 are not admitted; children over 14 are admitted with their parents.

Owned by the same company, the modern **Caracalla-Therme** (☎ 275 940; www.caracalla.de; Römerplatz 11; 2/3/4hr €12/14/16; ☎ 8am-10pm, last admission 8pm), which opened in 1985 and is named for a Roman emperor, has more than 900 square metres of outdoor and indoor pools, hot and cold water grottoes, various whirlpools, therapeutic water massages, a surge channel and a range of saunas, including a new log-cabin sauna. Bathing suits (available for purchase) must be worn everywhere except in the upstairs sauna; towels can be rented. Children are admitted from age three.

HIKING

Popular hiking destinations include the **Altes Schloss**, 2.5km north of the centre; **Geroldsauer waterfalls**, 6km south of Leopoldsplatz; and the **Yburg castle ruin**, in the wine country southwest of the centre.

A **Standseilbahn** (cable car; ☎ 2770; www.stadtwerke-baden-baden.de, in German; adult/child 6-15yr one-way €2/1.30, return €4/2; ☎ 10am-10pm Apr-Dec), opened in 1913, whisks you up to the 668m-high summit

of **Mt Merkur**, east of the centre. To get there take bus 204 or 205 from Leopoldsplatz.

Sleeping

Baden-Baden is choc-a-bloc with hotels but there aren't many bargains. The tourist office has a room-reservation service; the 10% fee is deducted from the cost of the room.

DJH hostel (☎ 522 23; www.jugendherberge-baden-baden.de; Hardbergstrasse 34; dm 1st/subsequent night €17.80/14.70; ☎) The local hostel, 2.5km northwest of the branch tourist office, has rather outdated facilities. To get there from the Bahnhof or the town centre, take bus 201 to Grosse Dollenstrasse and walk 750m up the hill from the church with the big green dome.

Hôtel-Gästehaus Löhr (☎ 3060; bcs@brandau-catering.de; Lichtentalerstrasse 19; d €55-75, s without bathroom €25-40) This centrally located, 28-room guesthouse (two blocks south of Leopoldsplatz) is one of the cheapest options in town. Passable if you're on a tight budget.

Hotel am Markt (☎ 270 40; www.hotel-am-markt-baden.de; Marktplatz 18; s/d €47/80, without bathroom €30/62; ☎) A family-run hotel right next to the Stiftskirche that's got 23 lovingly kept, comfortable rooms with minimalist décor. Overall, excellent value.

Rathausglöckel (☎ 906 10; www.rathausgloeckel.de; Steinstrasse 7; d €70-90) Half a block down the hill from the Stiftskirche, this family-run hotel has 11 bright, cheerful rooms, some with rooftop views that are half *belle époque*, half Mary Poppins.

Am Friedrichsbad (☎ 396 340; www.hotel-am-friedrichsbad.de; Gernsbacher Strasse 31; s/d from €89/119; ☎) Right across the street from the Friedrichsbad complex, this comfortable place, in a classic 1920s building, has 22 large quiet rooms, many decorated with prints and paintings of the Jewish ghetto in Prague, the owner's hometown.

Steigenberger Badischer Hof (☎ 9340; www.badischer-hof.steigenberger.com; Lange Strasse 47; s €120-154, d €180-248; ☎) A great place for splashing out, with plush, spacious quarters, attentive staff, its own spa and droves of bathrobed guests shuffling to and from the indoor and outdoor thermal baths. In some rooms you can choose between mineral water and tap water in your bathtub.

Eating

There are a number of restaurants in the pedestrianised zone around Leopoldsplatz.

Leo's (☎ 380 81; Luisenstrasse 10; mains €9.50-21.50; ☎ 8am-3am) Near Leopoldsplatz, Leo's is a trendy and hugely popular bistro and wine bar that serves up large salads, creative pasta dishes, meat and fish.

Rathausglöckel (☎ 906 10; www.rathausgloeckel.de; Steinstrasse 7; mains €15-18; ☎ 6-9pm Wed, 11.30am-2pm & 6-9pm Thu-Sun) This rustic restaurant, in a 16th-century building, is a good place to sample local Baden cuisine, including vegetarian options, to the accompaniment of relaxing West-ern classical music. Has salads in summer.

La Provence (☎ 216 515; Schlossstrasse 20; mains €13.50-21.50; ☎ noon-11pm, to 1am Fri & Sat) In the Neues Schloss' one-time wine cellar, the vaulted ceilings, Art Nouveau mirrors and French sense of humour go well with the French and German cuisine (including vegetarian options).

Kaiser Früchte (Langestrasse; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat) Self-caterers can buy fresh fruits and veggies at this place at the northern end of the pedestrianised zone, facing Lange Strasse 44 (the post office).

Entertainment

Ensclosed in an historic train station, the **Festspielhaus** (☎ 301 3101; www.festspielhaus.de; Beim Alten Bahnhof 2, Robert-Schumann-Platz) hosts concerts, opera and ballet.

The **Baden-Badener Philharmonie** (☎ 932 791; www.philharmonie.baden-baden.de) often performs in the Kurhaus.

Getting There & Away

Karlsruhe-Baden-Baden airport (Baden Airpark; www.badenairpark.de), 15km west of town, is linked to London and Dublin by Ryanair.

Buses to a variety of Black Forest destinations depart from the bus station, situated next to the Bahnhof.

Baden-Baden is close to the A5 (Frankfurt-Basel autobahn) and is the northern starting point of the scenic Schwarzwald-Hochstrasse (see p436), also known as the B500.

Baden-Baden is on a major north-south rail corridor. Twice-hourly destinations include Freiburg (€15.70 to €24, 45 to 80 minutes) and Karlsruhe (€5, more by IC or ICE, 15 to 30 minutes).

Getting Around

BUS

Local buses, run by **Stadtwerke Baden-Baden** (☎ 2771; www.stadtwerke-baden-baden.de), cost €1.50 for a one-zone single ticket, and €2 for a two-

zone ticket, but the 24-hour pass, valid for three zones, is a better deal at €4.20 (€6.50 for two to five people).

Bus 201 (every 10 minutes) and other lines link the Bahnhof with Leopoldsplatz. Bus 205 links the Bahnhof with the airport from Monday to Friday.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Much of the centre is either pedestrianised or blocked off to traffic, so it's best to park and walk.

Michaelstunnel, a 2.5km tunnel on the D500, routes traffic away from the town centre, ducking underground just west of the Festspielhaus (at the northern entrance to town) and popping to the surface just south of the Russische Kirche.

FREUDENSTADT

☎ 07441 / pop 23,000

A good base for exploring the northern Black Forest, this spa town was the brainchild of Duke Friedrich I of Württemberg, who in 1599 decided to build a new capital. Together with his favourite architect, Heinrich Schickardt, he scoured Bologna and Rome for inspiration and came back with the idea for a town laid out like a spider web.

At Freudenstadt's centre is a gigantic market square, Germany's largest, measuring 216m by 219m. Friedrich hoped to adorn the square with a palace but this grandiose plan was never realised. The town fell into obscurity after the duke's death in 1610, not rising again until the mid-19th century, when a rail link brought the first waves of tourists. The French wreaked havoc here at the end of WWII, but thanks to postwar restoration Freudenstadt retains some of its unique, quasi-urban charm.

Orientation & Information

Freudenstadt's focal point is the Marktplatz, which is on the B28. The town has two train stations: the Stadtbahnhof, centrally located about five minutes' walk north of the Marktplatz, and the Hauptbahnhof, about 2km southeast of the Marktplatz at the end of Bahnhofstrasse. The central bus station is right outside the Stadtbahnhof.

ATMs There are several on the Marktplatz.

Post office (Marktplatz 64)

Tourist office (☎ 864 730, hotel reservations 864 733; www.freudenstadt.de; Marktplatz 64; ☎ 9am-6pm

TOP FIVE SCENIC DRIVES IN THE BLACK FOREST

More than just pretty drives, many of these routes focus on a theme, such as Franco-German friendship, wine growing, clock-making and spas. Details and brochures are available at local tourist offices.

- Schwarzwald-Hochstrasse (Black Forest Hwy): officially known as the B500, this connects Baden-Baden with Freudenstadt, 60km to the south. The oldest tourist road in the Black Forest, it affords expansive views of the Upper Rhine Valley and, further west, the Vosges Mountains in Alsace (France) and skirts a number of lakes, of which the Mummelsee is the best known. There are plenty of hotels en route and a **DJH hostel** (☎ 07804-611; www.jugendherberge.de; dm 1st/subsequent night €17.90/14.70; ☒) in Zuflucht, about 19km north of Freudenstadt. From May to October you can get there by bus twice a day.
- Schwarzwald-Bäder-Strasse (Black Forest Spa Road): a loop connecting all of the region's spa towns including, of course, Baden-Baden and Freudenstadt.
- Badische Weinstrasse (Baden Wine Road): an oenologists delight. From Baden-Baden south to Lörrach, this 160km route winds through the red-wine vineyards of Ortenau, the Pinot Noir of Kaiserstuhl and Tuniberg, and the white-wine vines of Markgräflerland.
- Deutsche Uhrenstrasse (German Clock Road): a 320km-long loop starting in Villingen-Schwenningen that revolves around the story of clock-making in the Black Forest. Stops include Triberg and Furtwangen.
- Grüne Strasse (Green Road): links the Black Forest with the Rhine Valley and the Vosges Mountains in France. It was developed to highlight and strengthen the cultural links between the two countries. Popular with hikers and cyclists, this 160km route takes you through Kirchzarten, Freiburg, Breisach, Neuf-Brisach, Colmar and Munster.

Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat, Sun & holidays May-Oct; 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat, 11am-1pm Sun & holidays Nov-Apr) Has an internet terminal (per 5/60min €0.50/6) Hotel reservations are free.

Sights & Activities

The Marktplatz is too huge to really feel like a square, especially since it's chopped into three parts by a T-junction of heavily trafficked roads. Along the perimeter are Italianate arcades providing weatherproof access to dozens of shops.

In its southwestern corner, the Marktplatz is anchored by the Protestant **Stadtkirche** (☎ 10am-5pm), built in 1608, whose two naves are at right angles to each other – yes, another unusual design by the geometrically minded duke. It's a potpourri of styles, with Gothic windows, Renaissance portals and baroque towers. Of note inside is a stone Cluniac-style **baptismal font** (early 12th century) with intricate animal ornamentations, a wall-mounted Ulm-school Gothic **crucifix** (c 1470) and a painted wooden **lectern** (from 1140) that looks like it's being carried on the shoulders of the four Evangelists.

Near the church is a **children's playground**. Kids may also enjoy the **Panorama-Bad** (☎ 921

300; www.panorama-bad.de, in German; Ludwig-Jahn-Strasse 60; adult/child 6-17yr all day €8/6.50, incl sauna €13/10; ☎ 9am-10pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8pm Sun & holidays), a huge complex of indoor and outdoor swimming pools at the northern edge of town.

Biking options include cycling down the Kinzigtal or the Murgtal – both valleys have bike paths – and returning to Freudenstadt by train. Maps with details on the area's myriad **hiking options** are available at the tourist office.

Sleeping & Eating

Outside the tourist office there's a hotel board with a free phone.

Camping Langenwald (☎ 2862; www.camping-langenwald.de; Strasburger Strasse 167; person/tent/car €5.50/4/3; ☎ Easter-1 Nov) This excellent camping ground, about 3km west of town along the B28, even has a heated outdoor swimming pool. It's served by bus 12 to Kniebis.

DJH hostel (☎ 7720; www.jugendherberge.de; Eugen-Nägele-Strasse 69; dm 1st/subsequent nights €18.30/15.10; ☒) Freudenstadt's 130-bed hostel is located about 1km northeast of the Stadtbahnhof at the end of Gottlieb-Daimler-Strasse. The nearest bus stop is Berufsschule, served by lines that include bus 15 from the Hauptbahnhof.

Hotel Adler (☎ 915 20; www.adler-fds.de; Forststrasse 15-17; s/d from €40/66, without bathroom from €33/52; ☎ ☒) Located midway between the Stadtbahnhof and Markt, this no-nonsense family-run hotel has 16 cheery and spotless rooms. The restaurant, open from 11.30am to 2pm and 5pm to 10pm daily except Wednesday, has tasty international, German and regional (Badisch and Swabian) cuisine; mains cost €7 to €18.

Hotel Schwanen (☎ 915 50; www.schwanen-freudenstadt.de, in German; Forststrasse 6; s/d from €38/78; ☎) Family-run and friendly, this hotel has 17 rooms that are tidily outfitted with wooden furniture. The daily three-course lunch special costs €8 to €11.

Turmbräu (☎ 905 121; www.turmbräu.de, in German; Marktplatz 64; mains €5.20-14.80; ☎ 10am-1am, to 3am Fri & Sat) Right next to the tourist office, this rustic-style microbrewery does double duty as a beer garden and restaurant, and is probably the most happening place in town. Details on events (such as concerts, guest DJs and disco parties, held on Friday and Saturday from 9pm and Sunday from 5pm) appear on the website.

Self-caterers could check out the **food market** (Marktplatz; ☎ Fri mornings year-round, Tue morning in warm season).

Getting There & Away

Trains on the Kinzigtal rail line, which goes to Offenburg, leave hourly from the Hauptbahnhof. The hourly Murgtalbahn (the S41 suburban rail line) goes to Karlsruhe (€13.40, 1½ hours) from both the Stadtbahnhof and the Hauptbahnhof.

Bus 178 makes two trips a day east to Tübingen and west to the train station in Strasbourg, France.

Freudenstadt marks the southern end of the Schwarzwald-Hochstrasse (see opposite). It's also a terminus of the Schwarzwald-Tälerstrasse (Black Forest Valley Road, ie the B462), which runs from Rastatt via Alpirsbach.

Getting Around

Freudenstadt's **bus network** (☎ 07443-247 340; www.vgf-info.de, in German) consists of five local routes (A, B, C, D and 15); a ticket for travel anywhere within town costs €1.30. Some trains and lots of local and regional buses link the two train stations. The Hauptbahnhof is linked to the Marktplatz by various local and regional buses.

There's a **bike rental station** (☎ 864 732; Lauterbadstrasse 5) in the Kurhaus, 400m south of the tourist office.

KINZIG VALLEY

The horseshoe-shaped Kinzig Valley begins south of Freudenstadt and follows the little Kinzig River south to Schiltach, then west to Haslach and north to Offenburg. Near Strasbourg, 95km downriver, the Kinzig is eventually swallowed up by the mighty Rhine.

A 2000-year-old trade route through the valley links Strasbourg with Rottweil, where that feared canine breed, the Rottweiler, evolved from Roman cattle dogs. The valley's inhabitants survived for centuries on mining and shipping goods by raft.

Getting There & Away

BUS

Bus 7160 traverses the valley on its route between Offenburg and Triberg. From Monday to Friday, bus 7161 links Freudenstadt with Alpirsbach, Schiltach, Wolfach, Gutach and Hausach.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

The B294 follows the Kinzig from Freudenstadt to Haslach, from where the B33 leads north to Offenburg. If you're going south, you can pick up the B33 to Triberg and beyond in Hausach.

TRAIN

The hourly Kinzigtal rail line links Freudenstadt's Hauptbahnhof with Offenburg (on the Karlsruhe-Freiburg line), stopping in the Kinzig Valley villages of Alpirsbach, Schiltach, Wolfach, Hausach, Haslach and Gengenbach.

From Hausach, trains go southeast to Triberg, Villingen and Donaueschingen, where you can change for Konstanz.

Alpirsbach

☎ 07444 / pop 7000

Alpirsbach, 18km or so south of Freudenstadt, has a small medieval centre, but the main attraction is the 11th-century **Klosterkirche St Benedict** (☎ 951 6281; www.schloesser-und-gaerten.de; Freudenstädterstrasse; adult/student €3/2.30; ☎ 10am-5.30pm mid-Apr-1 Nov, 10am-4.30pm mid-Mar-mid-Apr, 1.30-3.30pm Wed, Sat & Sun 2 Nov-mid-Mar), once the centrepiece of a Benedictine monastery. Romanesque in style, it has a red-sandstone

façade and an almost unadorned interior with a flat, wood-beam ceiling. The Gothic **cloister** dates from 1480, and the **museum** showcases bits and bobs from the 16th century, accidentally discovered in 1958, that illustrate everyday monastic life. The complex plays host to concerts on Saturday at either 5pm or 8.30pm.

The town is best known around the Schwarzwald area for the locally brewed Alpirsbacher Klosterbräu. Guided tours of the **brewery museum** (€6; ☎ tours at 2.30pm), next to the Klosterkirche, are in German, though guides may speak English.

The **tourist office** (☎ 951 6281; www.alpirsbach.de; Hauptstrasse 20) is next to the train station, inside Haus des Gastes, a multipurpose events venue. It can supply maps detailing the area's many hiking options and, for cyclists, information on the **Kinzigalradweg** from Offenburg to Lossburg.

The 122-bed **DJH hostel** (☎ 2477; www.jugendherberge.de; Reinerzauer Steige 80; dm 1st/subsequent night €18.30/15.10; ☒) is located above the town, about 1.5km north (up the hill) from the train station.

Schiltach

☎ 07836 / pop 4100

If you like half-timbered houses, you'll love Schiltach, about 18km south of Alpirsbach at the confluence of the Kinzig and Schiltach Rivers. Set amid forests, this picture-perfect village is at its most scenic along the Schiltach River and around the triangular **Marktplatz**, built on a pretty steep slope. Take a closer look at the step-gabled **Rathaus**, built in the late 1500s; the murals, painted in 1942, illustrate the town's history.

The **tourist office** (☎ 5850; www.schiltach.de; Hauptstrasse 5; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon Sat May-Sep, 9am-noon & 2-5pm Mon-Thu & Fri morning Oct-Apr), across the Schiltach River from the Marktplatz, can help find accommodation. Various hiking options appear on an enamel sign across the street from the tourist office. There's an ATM just below the Marktplatz.

Gutach

pop 4500

A 4km detour south of the Kinzig Valley along the B33 (which follows the Gutach River) is one of the Black Forest's biggest tourist draws, the **Schwarzwald Freilicht Museum** (Black Forest Open-Air Museum; ☎ 07831-935 60;

www.vogtsbauernhof.org, in German; adult/child 6-17yr/student/family €5/2.50/3/11; ☎ 9am-6pm early Apr-early Nov, to 8pm Aug). It's centred on the **Vogtsbauernhof**, a traditional farming hamlet that has stood in the valley since 1570. Other farmhouses – along with a bakery, sawmill, chapel and granary – have been moved here from their original locations around the region. The complex is not entirely kitsch-free but the houses are authentically furnished and the craftspeople inside know what they're doing.

Haslach

☎ 07832 / pop 6900

Back in the Kinzig Valley, Haslach prospered from silver mines in the Middle Ages but when these shut down it became a simple market town. These days it has a pretty Altstadt with some half-timbered houses, but the most interesting building is the 17th-century former Capuchin monastery, which now houses the **Schwarzwälder Trachtenmuseum** (Museum of Black Forest Costumes; ☎ 706 172; www.trachtenmuseum-haslach.de.vu, in German; Im Alten Kapuzinerkloster; admission €2; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sat, 10am-5pm Sun & holidays Apr-mid-Oct, 9am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Fri mid-Oct-Dec & Feb-Mar). Among the featured traditional women's headdresses is the Bollenhut, a straw bonnet festooned with woollen pompons – red for unmarried women, black for married. Originally from Gutach, it's now a symbol of the entire Black Forest. And there's the Schäppel, a fragile-looking crown made from hundreds of beads that can weigh as much as 5kg. Around the Schwarzwald, traditional costumes are still worn on important holidays, during religious processions and, occasionally, at wedding ceremonies.

The **tourist office** (☎ 706 170; www.haslach.de, in German; ☎ 8am-noon & 1.30-5pm Mon, 9am-5pm Tue-Sat, 10am-5pm Sun & holidays Apr-mid-Oct, 8am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri mid-Oct-Mar) is in the same building as the museum.

Gengenbach

☎ 07803 / pop 11,000

This romantic village, about 11km south of Offenburg, has remained relatively unspoiled by mass tourism. You can stroll through its narrow lanes, past handsome patrician townhouses with crimson geraniums spilling out of flower boxes, and wander down to the **Stadtkirche**, with its lovely baroque tower, or to the **Rathaus** (1780s), about midway between the town's two tower-topped gates. On the

triangular **Marktplatz** you'll find a fountain with a statue of a knight, a symbol of the village's medieval status as a Free Imperial City. Masks and costumes worn during **Fasend** (the local version of Carnival, held over six days about seven weeks before Easter) can be admired on the seven floors of the **Narrenmuseum** (☎ 5749; Niggelturm, Hauptstrasse; admission €2; ☎ 2-5pm Wed & Sat, 10am-noon & 2-5pm Sun Apr-Oct).

The **tourist office** (☎ 930 143; www.stadt-gegenbach.de, in German; Im Winzerhof; ☎ 9am-12.30pm & 1.30-5pm Mon-Fri Sep-Jun, no midday closure Jul & Aug, also open 10am-noon Sat May-Oct), in the courtyard across from Hauptstrasse 21, rents out bicycles – three-speed bikes cost €5.50 a day; mountain bikes are €9.50 a day.

There are several places to eat and drink in the courtyard around the tourist office.

SOUTHERN BLACK FOREST

Many of the Schwarzwald's most impressive sights are in the triangle delimited by the lively university city of Freiburg, 15km east of the Rhine in the southwest; Triberg, cuckoo-clock capital, in the north; and the charming river-valley city of St Blasien in the southeast.

Getting Around

Various public-transport groupings offer extensive, reasonably priced bus and rail links to towns and villages throughout the southern Black Forest. See p444 for details. You can plan your journey with the help of www.efa-bw.de.

FREIBURG

☎ 0761 / pop 213,000

Freiburg, western gateway to the Southern Black Forest, has the happy-go-lucky attitude of a thriving university community. Framed by the velvety hills of the Black Forest, it is endowed with a wealth of historical attractions, led by the superb Münster. Add to this a lively cultural scene and an excellent range of restaurants, bars and clubs, and it's easy to understand why Freiburg is such a terrific place to visit and to base yourself while exploring the Schwarzwald.

Orientation

The Altstadt's focal point, situated two blocks southwest of the Münster, is the intersection of

Kaiser-Joseph-Strasse, the centre's main north-south artery, with east-west Bertoldstrasse. About 600m west is the Hauptbahnhof and the adjacent bus station, which define the western edge of the Altstadt. The Dreisam River runs along the Altstadt's southern edge.

Information

Buchhandlung Rombach (☎ 4500 2400;

Bertoldstrasse 10) A huge bookshop with English titles.

Herder (☎ 282 820; Kaiser-Joseph-Strasse 180;

☎ 9.30am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-6pm Sat) Stocks a good assortment of foreign-language books and maps.

Police station (Rotteckring)

Post office (Eisenbahnstrasse 58-62)

Shake-n-Surf (Bismarckallee 5; per hr €3; ☎ 10am-

10pm) Cheery internet access and fruit shakes next to the Hauptbahnhof, on the ground floor of the InterCity Hotel.

Tea-Online (Grünwälderstrasse 19; per hr €3.50;

☎ 11am-9pm Mon-Thu, 11am-8pm Fri & Sat,

11am-7pm Sun) Internet access.

Tourist office (☎ 388 1885/6; www.freiburg.de, www.

baden24.de; Rotteckring 14; ☎ 9.30am-8pm Mon-Fri,

9.30am-5pm Sat & 10am-noon Sun & holidays Jun-Sep,

9.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-2.30pm Sat, 10am-noon

Sun & holidays Oct-May) Friendly and well stocked, this

place sells 1:50,000-scale cycling maps (€4.50 to €10)

and the useful booklet *Freiburg – Official Guide* (€4). The

Hotelinformation kiosk out front indicates room availability.

Wash & Fun Laundry (Egonstrasse 25; ☎ 9am-10pm

Mon-Sat)

Wash & Tours (Salzstrasse 22; per hr €3, laundry per

machine €4; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat) Why

didn't someone think of this before – a self-service laundry

that's also an internet café?! Duds hit suds in the cellar

while upstairs electrons zip to the far corners of the globe.

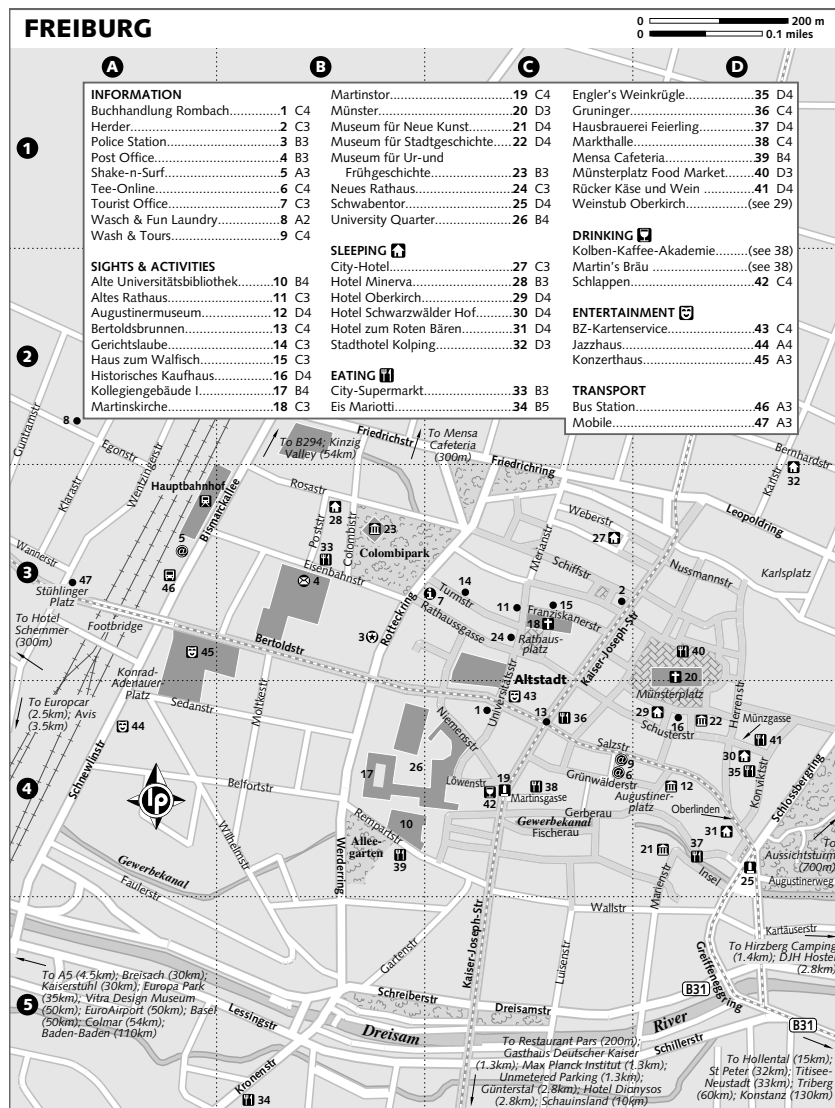
Laundry customers get 10 free online minutes.

Sights

MÜNSTER

Freiburg's townscape is dominated by its marvellous Münster, begun in 1200 and now (as then) surrounded by the city's bustling market square. Its **main portal** is adorned with a wealth of sculptures depicting scenes from the Old and New Testaments – look for allegorical figures such as Voluptuousness (the one with snakes on her back) and Satan himself. Nearby are medieval wall markings used to make sure that merchandise (eg loaves of bread) were of the requisite size.

The sturdy **tower**, square at the base, becomes an octagon higher up and is crowned by a filigreed 116m-high spire. An **ascent of the tower** (adult/student €1.50/1; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Mon-Sat,



a merchants' hall built in 1530. The coats of arms on the oriels and the four figures above the balcony represent members of the House of Habsburg and indicate Freiburg's allegiance.

The sculptor Christian Wentzinger built himself a **baroque townhouse** a bit east of the Kaufhaus in 1761. Inside is a wonderful staircase with a wrought-iron railing which guides the eye to the elaborate ceiling fresco. Nowadays, the building is occupied by the **Museum für Stadtgeschichte** (Municipal History Museum; ☎ 201 2515; Münsterplatz 30; adult/concession €2/1; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sun), where you can learn all about Freiburg's eventful past.

Admission to this museum also covers entrance to the **Augustinermuseum** (☎ 201 2531; Augustinerplatz 1; adult/concession €2/1; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sun). Housed in a former monastery, its extensive collection of medieval art includes paintings by Baldung, Matthias Grünewald and Cranach, while its collection of stained glass from the Middle Ages to the present ranks as one of the most important in Germany.

The **Museum für Neue Kunst** (Museum of Modern Art; ☎ 201 2581; Marienstrasse 10; adult/concession €2/1, incl special exhibition €7/5; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sun, special exhibitions to 8pm Thu), about 200m further south in a century-old school building, leaps into the 20th century with its collection of expressionist and abstract art.

Following the little canal west through the **Fischerau**, the former fishing quarter, will soon get you to the landmark **Martinstor** (Kaiser-Joseph-Strasse), one of Freiburg's two surviving town gates. Heading north along Kaiser-Joseph-Strasse leads you to the **Bertoldsbrunnen**, a statue-fountain marking the spot where the city's two main thoroughfares have crossed since the city's founding in 1091.

A long block east of the Museum für Neue Kunst, at the southeastern end of Salzstrasse, is the walled, 13th-century **Schwabentor**, a massive city gate with tram tracks running under its two arches. From just east of here, trails lead up the forested **Schlossberg**, which dominates the town (that's why the French built a fort there in the late 1600s) and is topped by the ice cream-cone-shaped **Aussichtsturm** (lookout tower); the views are fantastic!

WESTERN ALTSTADT

The **university quarter**, in the area west of Martinstor, consists of an eclectic mix of old and

The **Museumsticket** (€4), valid for one day, gets you into all five of Freiburg's municipal museums (www.museen.freiburg.de, in German).

new buildings. The **Kollegiengebäude I** has Art Nouveau elements, while the **Alte Universitätsbibliothek** (Old University Library) is resolutely neo-Gothic.

A bit north is the chestnut-shaded Rathausplatz, with another fountain that's a popular gathering place. On its western side stands the red sandstone **Neues Rathaus** (New City Hall), a symmetrical structure composed of two Renaissance town houses flanking a newer, arcaded section that leads to a cobblestone courtyard. The little tower contains a carillon, played at noon daily.

Linked to the Neues Rathaus by an over-the-street pedestrian bridge is the **Altes Rathaus** (Old City Hall; 1559), also the result of merging several smaller buildings and a good example of successful postwar reconstruction. Freiburg's oldest town hall, the **Gerichtslaube** (13th century), is a bit west along Turmstrasse.

The northern side of Rathausplatz is taken up by the medieval **Martinskirche**, once part of a Franciscan monastery. Severely damaged in WWII, it was rebuilt in the ascetic style typical of this mendicant order. Virtually across the street on Franziskanergasse stands its architectural antithesis, the extravagant **Haus zum Walfisch** (House of the Whale), whose gilded late-Gothic oriel is garnished with two gargoyles. This building served as a temporary refuge for the philosopher Erasmus von Rotterdam after his expulsion from Basel in 1529.

Further west, in a delightful little park across the street from the tourist office, is the neo-Gothic **Colombischlössle**, a villa housing the **Museum für Ur- und Frühgeschichte** (Museum of Pre- & Early History; ☎ 201 2571; www.museen.freiburg.de, in German; Rotteckring 5; adult/concession €2/1; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sun). Via the cast-iron staircase, you'll reach an eclectic bunch of archaeological exhibits stretching from the Stone Age up through the Celtic and Roman periods.

Tours

Freiburg Kultour (☎ 290 7447; www.freiburg-kultour.com, in German; Rotteckring 14), based in the tourist office (where tours start), offers 1½- to two-hour

1-5pm Sun & holidays), for which you pay at the top, provides an excellent view of the church's intricate construction; on a clear day you can see the Vosges Mountains in France.

Inside the Münster, the kaleidoscopic **stained-glass windows** are dazzling. Many were financed by various guilds – in the bottom panels look for a pretzel, scissors and other

symbols of various medieval trades. The **high altar** features a masterful triptych of the coronation of the Virgin Mary by Hans Baldung, best viewed on a **guided tour** (€2; 🕒 at 2pm).

SOUTH OF THE MÜNSTER

Facing the Münster's south side is the arcaded brick-red **Historisches Kaufhaus** (Münsterplatz),

FREIBURG BENEATH YOUR FEET

As you stroll around Freiburg's mostly pedestrianised Altstadt, be sure to look down at the pavement for the cheerful mosaics found in front of many shops. A diamond marks a jewellery shop, a cow is for a butcher, a pretzel for a baker, and so on.

Be careful not to step into the Bächle, the permanently flowing rivulets that run along many footpaths. Originally part of an elaborate system to deliver nonpotable water, these literal 'tourist traps' now provide welcome relief for hot feet on sweltering summer days. It's said that if you fall into one you'll marry a Freiburger or a Freiburgerin.

All around Freiburg (as in many other German cities and towns), square brass plaques bearing names and dates, embedded in the sidewalk, indicate houses where Jews lived before being deported to concentration camps.

walking tours (adult/child 12-18yr €7/6; ☎ 10.30am Mon-Fri & 10am Sat Apr-Oct, 10am Sat & 10.30am Sun Nov-Mar) of the Altstadt and the Münster in German and English.

Velotaxi (☎ 0172-768 4370; ☎ mid-Apr-Oct) charges €6.50 for a 20-minute, two-person tour of the Altstadt in a rain-protected pedicab. Order by phone or look for one at Rathausplatz or Münsterplatz.

Sleeping

The tourist office can help with a hotel booking for €3.

Hirzberg Camping (☎ 350 54; www.freiburg-camping.de; Kartäuserstrasse 99; adult/site €5.50/3; ☎ year-round; ☎) A lovely camping ground at the base of a forested slope 1.5km east of the Schwabentor. Has cooking and laundry facilities and rents out tents, caravans and bikes. Take tram 1 to Stadthalle, walk north and cross the river.

DJH hostel (☎ 67656; www.jugendherberge-freiburg.de; Kartäuserstrasse 151; dm 1st/ subsequent night €20.30/17.10; ☎ ☎) Freiburg's 394-bed hostel, often brimming with German students, is 3km east of the Schwabentor along the Dreisam. It's a good idea to phone ahead for reservations. To get there take tram 1 to Römerhof and follow the signs down Fritz-Geiges-Strasse and across the river – it's an 800m walk.

Hotel Dionysos (☎ 293 53; www.hotelidionysos.de, in German; Hirschstrasse 2, Günterstal; d with shower €45, s/d with washbasin €28/40) Situated 3km south of the Altstadt, in the idyllic streamside village of Günterstal, this friendly family-run hotel has a guesthouse atmosphere, basic spotless rooms and a Greek restaurant. It's an easy ride from town on tram line 4.

Hotel Schemmer (☎ 207 490; www.hotel-schemmer.de, in German; Eschholzstrasse 63; s/d from €39/62, without bathroom €34/51) On a nondescript street 800m southwest of the Hauptbahnhof, this 18-room

pension-style place is a good budget option. There's free parking across the street. By car, get off the B31 at Eschholzstrasse.

Gasthaus Deutscher Kaiser (☎ 749 10; www.hotel-deutscher-kaiser.com in German; Günterstalstrasse 38; s/d €50/70, without bathroom €45/60; ☎) This old-time family-run hotel, a 1.5km walk south of Martinstor and across the street from the Max Planck Institut, has 15 simple but spacious rooms.

Hotel Schwarzwälder Hof (☎ 380 30; www.schwarzwaelder-hof.eu; Herrenstrasse 43; s/d/5-person ste from €55/89/150, s/d without bathroom from €38/65) A circular staircase with a wrought-iron railing leads from the lobby, entered via tiny Münzgasse, to the 45 rooms, which are simply furnished and very white; some have charming views of the old town.

Hotel Minerva (☎ 386 490; www.minerva-freiburg.de, in German; Poststrasse 8; s €75-90, d €105-115; ☎ ☎) In an Art Nouveau-influenced building just a five-minute walk from the train station and the city centre. The 26 comfortable rooms are sleek and modern, with a different colour scheme on each floor. Amenities include a sauna.

City-Hotel (☎ 388 070; www.cityhotel-freiburg.de; Weberstrasse 3; s/d from €85/114; ☎ ☎) This sleek place is a good showcase for the charms of practical, modern German design. The 42 rooms are large, clean and orderly.

Stadthotel Kolping (☎ 319 30; www.stadthotel-kolping.de; Karlstrasse 7; s €72-82, d €114-124; ☎ ☎) Just north of the Altstadt, this four-star place has 94 comfortable rooms furnished in a business-like style. Extras include a spacious lobby and two different massage studios; a fitness room is planned.

Hotel Oberkirch (☎ 202 6868; www.hotel-oberkirch.de; Münsterplatz 22 & Schusterstrasse 11; s €92-115, d €115-156; ☎) Facing the Münster – you can't get

any more central than this. The tasteful rooms have flowery wallpaper and the latest mod-cons; some also come with half-canopies over the beds. Single singles start at €62.

Hotel zum Roten Bären (☎ 387 870; www.rotar-baeren.de; Oberlinden 12; s/d from €105/145; ☎) Just inside the Schwabentor, this place dates back to 1120 and claims to be the oldest guesthouse in Germany. But though the cellar is medieval, the 25 rooms have sleek wooden furnishings. The back rooms look out on a quiet garden.

Eating & Drinking

As a university town, Freiburg has all sorts of cheap eats options, quite a few of them around Martinstor (for example on Universitätstrasse and Gartenstrasse) and, several blocks east, along Konviktstrasse.

Mensa cafeterias (☎ 11.30am-2pm & 5.20-7.30pm Mon-Fri) Stefan-Meier-Strasse 28 (on the campus at the northern end of Hebelstrasse; ☎) may be closed for dinner during holiday periods; Rempartstrasse 18 (☎) also 11.30am-1.30pm Sat) If you can produce student ID, a world of salad buffets and other filling fodder will open before you at these locations.

Markthalle (Martinsgasse 235 & Grünwalderstrasse 4; ☎ 8am-7pm) A food court whose Mexican, Italian, Indian, Korean and French counters offer fast, tasty lunches.

Martin's Bräu (☎ 387 0018; Kaiser-Joseph-Strasse 237; mains €5.10-15.10; ☎ 11am-midnight, to 2am Fri & Sat) Down the alley from Martinstor, this rustic cellar microbrewery has a good selection of home-brewed beers, some of them seasonal, and serves up hearty Baden-style specialties – some porcine, others bovine and yet others with *Spätzle*. Warm dishes are available until 11.30pm.

Restaurant Pars (☎ 712 21; cnr Turnseestrasse & Talstrasse; mains €5.35-11.30; ☎ 11am-10pm) A favourite with locals who live and work nearby, this place serves delicious and reasonably priced Persian dishes, including lots of vegetarian options, to the accompaniment of mellow Persian music. It's situated across the Dreisam from the Altstadt, 600m south of Martinstor.

Hausbrauerei Feierling (☎ 243 480; Gerberau 46; mains €6-12; ☎ 11am-midnight, to 1am Fri & Sat) A stylish microbrewery with Freiburg's best beer garden. Serves up some good vegetarian options and absolutely enormous schnitzels with salad and *Brätele* (chipped potatoes). If you drink one too many, be extra careful not to fall in the adjacent stream or you may become dinner for the open-jawed *Krokodil*.

Englers Weinkrüge (☎ 383 115; Konviktstrasse 12; mains €7.60-13.50; ☎ 11am-2pm & 5.30-9.30pm Tue-Sun) A warm, woody Baden-style *Weinstube* with wisteria growing out front and traditional regional specialties on the menu.

Weinstub Oberkirch (☎ 202 6868; Münsterplatz 22; ☎ main meals served noon-2pm & 6.30-10pm Mon-Sat) Facing the Münster, this traditional restaurant, with its dark wood-paneled walls, is known among locals for its highly professional service and excellent Black Forest trout (€17). Serves light meals all day long (8am to 12.30am).

Kolben-Kaffee-Akademie (☎ 387 0013; Kaiser-Joseph-Strasse 233; large coffee €1.60; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Sat & 10am-5pm Sun) An old-fashioned stand-up coffee house with fresh pastries and sandwiches.

Schlappen (☎ 334 94; Löwenstrasse 2; ☎ 11am-1am Mon-Thu, 11am-3am Fri & Sat, 3pm-1am Sun & holidays) With its jazz-themed back room, its poster-plastered walls and its mirrored urinal, this is one of Freiburg's most popular and relaxed pubs. Light meals (such as Flammkuche) are on offer and you can try 10 different types of absinthe (€3).

Eis Mariotti (☎ 707 5061; Kronenstrasse 9; ☎ 10am-11pm late Feb-mid-Oct) An unpretentious, reasonably priced place considered by many to be Freiburg's best homemade ice-cream parlour. Situated 600m southwest of Martinstor.

Self-caterers can pick up picnic fixin's at the following places:

City-Supermarkt (Eisenbahnstrasse 39; ☎ 7.30am-8pm Mon-Sat)

Grüninger (Kaiser-Joseph-Strasse 201; ☎ 8.30am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Sat) An award-winning meat shop with lots of Black Forest specialties available in a bun.

Münsterplatz food market (☎ until 1pm Mon-Fri, to 1.30pm Sat) Local farmers come to sell local produce. Stalls are particularly numerous and varied on Saturday. On a per-calorie basis, the least expensive meals in town are the various versions of wurst-in-a-bun (€2), topped with fried onions (a Freiburg tradition), sold here.

Rücker Käse und Wein (Münzgasse 1; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat) For wine and cheese.

Entertainment

Get the free listings monthly, *Freiburg Aktuell*, at hotels and the tourist office.

BZ-Kartenservice (☎ 01805-55 66 56; www.badsche-zeitung.de, in German; Bertoldstrasse 7; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat) Click on 'Termine' for events tickets.

Jazzhaus (☎ 349 73; www.jazzhaus.de; Schneulinstrasse 1) Under the arches of an old brick wine

cellar, this first-rate venue hosts jazz rock, pop, blues, hip-hop and world music concerts (€10 to €30) at 8pm at least three nights a week (less frequently from June to August; see the website for details). It becomes a disco (admission about €6) from 11pm to 3am or 4am on Friday and Saturday nights, and is popular with people of all ages.

Konzerthaus (☎ 388 1552; www.konzerthaus.freiburg.de, in German; Konrad-Adenauer-Platz 1) A hulking modern concert hall that doubles as a convention and cultural events centre. Don't miss the tornado sculptures out front.

Getting There & Around

AIR

Freiburg shares an airport, **EuroAirport** (www.euroairport.com), with Basel (Switzerland) and Mulhouse (France). Destinations include London and Luton with EasyJet.

BUS

The **Airport Bus** (☎ 500 500; www.freiburger-reisedienst.de, in German) goes from Freiburg's bus station to EuroAirport (€16, 55 minutes, every hour or two).

SüdbadenBus and **RVF** (☎ 01805-77 99 66; www.suedbadenbus.de, www.rvf.de, both in German) offer extensive, reasonably priced bus and rail links to towns and villages throughout the southern Black Forest. Single tickets for one/two/three zones cost €2/3.40/4.80 (half that for children age six to 14); a Regio24 ticket, good for 24 hours, costs €4.80/9.60/9.60 for one person and €7.20/14.40/14.40 for two to five people. If you'll be using lots of public transport it's worth picking up one of the detailed *Fahrplan* timetables (€1).

From Freiburg, bus 1066 travels once a day Monday to Friday to Haslach, Hausach and Schiltach (2¼ hours) in the Kinzig Valley. See the various town listings in the Southern Black Forest section for other bus options to/from Freiburg.

Bus and tram travel within Freiburg (www.vag-freiburg.de) is charged at the one-zone rate. Buy tickets from the red vending machines or from the driver and be sure to validate upon boarding.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

The Frankfurt–Basel A5 passes just west of Freiburg. The scenic B31 leads east through the Höllental to Lake Constance. The B294 goes north into the Black Forest.

Car-hire agencies include **Europcar** (☎ 515 100; Lörracherstrasse 10) and **Avis** (☎ 197 19; St-Georgener-Strasse 7).

About 1.5km south of Martinstor, around the **Max Planck Institut** (Günterstalstrasse 73), there's unmetered parking on some of the side streets (eg Türkenlouisstrasse) – to get there from the Altstadt drive south on Günterstalstrasse (the southern continuation of Kaiser-Joseph-Strasse).

TRAIN

Freiburg is on a major north–south rail corridor so there are frequent departures for destinations such as Basel (€12.80 to €19.80, 50 to 80 minutes) and Baden-Baden (€15.70 to €24, 45 to 80 minutes). Freiburg is also the western terminus of the Höllentalbahn to Donaueschingen via Titisee-Neustadt (€4.80, 38 minutes, twice an hour). There's a local connection to Breisach (€4.80, 27 minutes, at least hourly).

BICYCLE

Bike paths run along both banks of the Dreisam River, leading westward to Breisach and then into France.

Mobile (☎ 292 7998; www.mobile-freiburg.com, in German; Wenzingerstrasse 15; 3hr/day/week €5/12.50/50, under 17yr half price; ☎ 24hr), in a round, glass-enclosed pavilion just over the bridge from the Hauptbahnhof, rents bikes and sells cycling maps (€6.80).

AROUND FREIBURG Schauinsland

Year-round, a ride on the 3.6km **Shauinslandbahn** (cabin ski lift; adult/child 6–14yr/student & senior return €10.70/6.50/9.50, one-way €7.50/4.50/6.50; ☎ 9am–5pm, to 6pm Jul–Sep) to the 1286m **Schauinsland peak** (www.bergwelt-schauinsland.de, in German), topped by a striking lookout tower, is an easy and very popular way to get from Freiburg to the Black Forest highlands. Numerous well-marked trails make the Schauinsland area ideal for walks. To get to the lift from town, take tram 4 south to Günterstal and then bus 21 to Talstation. Ring ☎ 0180-5019 703 to check weather conditions.

WEST OF FREIBURG Breisach

☎ 07667 / pop 14,000

About 27km west of Freiburg, Breisach is separated from France by the Rhine, and nothing else. It is an ancient town that has often been

caught in the crossfire of conflict, including during WWII, when it was 85% destroyed. The star-shaped French fortress-town of **Neuf Brisach** (New Breisach), designed by Vauban, is 4km west of Breisach – both towns are candidates for Unesco World Heritage status.

On the hilltop, the Romanesque and Gothic **St Stephansmünster**, built between the 12th and the 15th centuries, towers over the commercial centre on the flats below. Inside there's a faded fresco cycle, *The Last Judgment* (1491) by Martin Schongauer (at the west end), a delicate Flamboyant Gothic rood loft from around the same period, and a magnificent **high altar triptych** (1526) made of linden wood. The Schänzletreppe (stairs) lead from the church down to Münsterbergstrasse, at the bottom of which is the **Gutgesellentor**, a town gate built in 1402 and rebuilt in the 1950s. This is where the scandalous Pope John XXIII was caught in 1415 while fleeing the Council of Constance.

Breisach's main commercial area is between the Gutgesellentor and the Markplatz. The **tourist office** (☎ 940 155; www.breisach.de; Markplatz 16; ☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Fri & 10am–1pm Sat Apr–Dec, also 1–4pm Sun May–Oct, 9am–12.30pm & 1.30–5pm Mon–Fri Jan–Mar) has accommodation options posted out the front and can provide details on visiting local wine growers.

DJH hostel (☎ 7665; www.jugendherberge-breisach.de; Rheinferstrasse 12; dm 1st/subsequent night €20.30/17.10; ☎) Situated on the Rhine just south of a bridge over the tiny Möhlin River, this 164-bed hostel is 1.1km south and then west from the train station. A camping ground and swimming pool are right next door.

You'll find a number of restaurants and some food shops between the Gutgesellentor and the tourist office. There's a **Minimal supermarket** (Bahnhofstrasse; ☎ 8am–8pm Mon–Sat) across the street from the train station.

Breisach is an excellent base for **cycling**; the many options include an international bike ride across the Rhine, perhaps taking advantage of the new bridge 9km south of Breisach (near Hartheim) opened to French and German fanfare in 2006. Bikes can be hired from **Funbike** (☎ 7733; Metzgergasse 1; 1/3 days €10/25; ☎ 9am–noon & 6–7pm Apr–Oct), across the street from the tourist office.

Boat excursions along the Rhine (eg to Colmar) are run by **BFS** (☎ 924 010; www.bfs-info.de in German; Rheinferstrasse; ☎ Apr–Sep); the dock is 500m southwest of the tourist office.

Local trains link Breisach's train station (Bahnhofstrasse), 500m southeast of the Markplatz, with Freiburg (€4.80, 27 minutes, at least hourly) and towns around the periphery of the Kaisterstuhl. Buses go to the delightful French town of Colmar, 22km to the west.

Kaiserstuhl

The Kaiserstuhl, a 560m-high mountain that, somewhat unexpectedly, is volcanic in origin, begins a few kilometres northeast of Breisach. Its inelegantly terraced slopes constitute one of Germany's finest wine-growing areas, noted especially for its production of *Spätburgunder* (Pinot Noir); another locally popular variety is *Grauburgunder* (Pinot Gris). The wines owe their quality to an ideal microclimate (said to be the warmest and sunniest in Germany) and the fertile loess (clay and silt) soil that retains heat during the night. The area of **fruit orchards** between Breisach and the Kaiserstuhl is a riot of blossoms in the spring.

The Breisach tourist office has details on cellar tours, wine tastings, bike paths such as the 55km **Kaisterstuhltour** circuit, and walking trails such as the 15km **Winzerweg** (Wine Growers' Trail) from Achkarren (5km northeast of Breisach) to Riegel. Bikes can be hired in Breisach.

The **Kaisterstuhlbahn** rail loop goes all the way around the Kaisterstuhl; stops (where you may have to change trains) include Sasbach, Endingen, Riegel and Gottenheim (on the Freiburg–Breisach line).

Europa Park

Germany's largest **theme park** (☎ 01805-776 688; www.europapark.de; adult/child 4–14yr & senior €28.50/25.50; ☎ 9am–6pm early Apr–early Nov & early Dec–early Jan, later in peak season) is about 35km north of Freiburg near the village of Rust. It brings together thrilling rides, including nine roller coasters, with 'villages' designed to look – and be shopped – like they're typically Italian, Swiss, Dutch and so on. A short stroll is like a quick trip around Europe – if we left the half-scale model of Rome's Colosseum at 2pm and now it's 2.05pm this must be Mykonos! Keen to brush up on German architectural styles? Just head to 'Germany', where you'll find it all, from Gothic red brick and cute half-timber to curvaceous baroque. This place even has a big mouse walking around – sound familiar? OK, so he's got small ears and is called Euro-maus, but still...

Shuttle buses (hourly in the morning) link the Ringsheim train station, on the Freiburg–Offenburg line, with the park. By car, take the A5 to Herbolzheim (exit 58).

Vitra Design Museum

The **Vitra Design Museum** (☎ 07621-702 3200; www.design-museum.de; Charles-Eames-Strasse 1; adult/concession €7.50/6; ☎ 10am–6pm, to 8pm Wed), 50km south of Freiburg in Weil am Rhein (just across the Rhine from Basel, Switzerland, and St-Louis, France), hosts thought-provoking temporary exhibitions of contemporary design. The museum's striking modern building – all angles and curves – was designed by Frank Gehry. Nearby buildings – on the campus of the Swiss furniture manufacturer Vitra – by architects such as Tadao Ando, Nicholas Grimshaw, Zaha Hadid and Alvaro Siza, can be visited on a two-hour **architectural tour** (admission €9, incl the museum €13; ☎ noon & 2pm). Taking the tour is the only way to see 100 chairs from Vitra's collection.

To get there by car, get off the A5 at Weil am Rhein (exit 69). By public transport, take bus 55 from Basel's Badischer Bahnhof, linked to Freiburg (€10 or €17, 35 or 63 minutes, hourly in each price category). You can also walk (it takes about 15 minutes) from the Weil am Rhein train station, an easy trip from Freiburg (€9.10, 50 minutes, hourly).

NORTHEAST OF FREIBURG

St Peter

☎ 07660 / pop 2500

The folk of the bucolic village of St Peter, on the southern slopes of Mt Kandel (1243m), are deeply committed to their ancient traditions and customs. On religious holidays and Sunday mornings you can see the villagers, from young boys and girls to grey-haired pensioners, proudly sporting their colourful, handmade *Trachten* (folkloric costumes).

The most outstanding local landmark is the **former Benedictine abbey**, a rococo jewel designed in the 1720s by the masterful Peter Thumb of Vorarlberg. Many of the period's top artists collaborated on the sumptuous interior decoration of the twin-towered red-sandstone **church** (☎ open daily), including Joseph Anton Feuchtmayer, who carved the gilded statues of various Zähringer dukes affixed to the pillars. Guided tours (€4; in German) take you inside the monastery complex, including the rococo library. Secularised in

1806, the complex served as a Catholic seminary from 1842 to 2006 and is now a Catholic-run spiritual centre.

The **tourist office** (☎ 910 224; www.st-peter-schwarzwald.de, in German; Klosterhof 11; ☎ 9am–noon & 2–5pm Mon–Fri Easter–Oct, 10am–noon Sat Jul & Aug, 9am–noon Mon–Fri, 2–5pm during school holidays Nov–Easter) is under the archway leading to the **Klosterhof** (the abbey courtyard) and the church. A nearby information panel shows room availability.

By public transport, the best way to get from Freiburg to St Peter is to take the train to Kirchgarten (13 minutes, two or three an hour) and then bus 7216 (24 minutes, two or three an hour); a few buses on the 7216 run begin at Freiburg's bus station.

St Peter is on the **Schwarzwald Panoramastrasse** (Black Forest Panorama Road; www.schwarzwald-panoramastrasse.de), a 50km-long scenic route from Waldkirch (26km northeast of Freiburg) to Hinterzarten (5km west of Titisee) with dreamy mountain views.

Triberg

☎ 07722 / pop 5400

Wedged into a narrow valley and framed by three mountains (hence the name), Triberg is the undisputed capital of cuckoo-clock country. Numerous shops sell the rustic but annoying timepieces – one place (at Hauptstrasse 79) is proud of having over a thousand cuckoo clocks on hand, all locally made except for a few from Switzerland. The latest commercial quartz models are equipped with a sensor that puts the cuckoo to sleep when the lights in the room are off.

Two local structures claim the title of the *weltgrößte Kuckucksuhr* (world's largest cuckoo clock), giving rise to the 'War of the Cuckoos', with Triberg in one corner and Schonach in the other. In fact, both places look pretty much like the same village, except perhaps to those who live there.

Attractions unconnected to timekeeping include Germany's highest waterfall and an excellent museum of local culture.

ORIENTATION & INFORMATION

Triberg's main drag is the B500 – known in town as Hauptstrasse and Wallfahrtsstrasse – which runs more-or-less parallel to the Gutach River except around the waterfall, where it does some fancy switchbacks. The town's focal point is the Marktplatz, a steep 1.2km uphill from the Bahnhof, which is at Hauptstrasse's

northeastern (lower) end, not far from where the B500 meets the B33.

The Triberg area markets itself as **Ferienland** (Holidayland; www.dasferienland.de) to visitors.

Post office On Marktplatz next to the Rathaus.

Tourist office (☎ 866 490; www.triberg.de, in German; Wallfahrtsstrasse 4; ☎ 10am–5pm) On the B500, 50m uphill from the river, inside the Schwarzwald-Museum.

SIGHTS

For a well-presented overview of the Triberg region's history and customs, head for the **Schwarzwald-Museum** (☎ 4434; www.schwarzwald-museum.de; Wallfahrtsstrasse 4; adult/child 5–13yr/child 14–17yr/family €4.50/2.50/3/10; ☎ 10am–5pm). Exhibits include a clockmaker's shop, a mock mineral mine, mechanical musical instruments and some outrageous hats, must-have accessories for the well-dressed local *Fraulein* of the 1850s.

Yosemite Falls they ain't but Germany's tallest **Wasserfälle** (waterfalls) do exude their own wild romanticism. Fed by the Gutach River, they plunge 163m in seven cascades bordered by mossy rocks. Energy has been generated here since 1884, when the elevation differential was first harnessed to power the town's electric street lamps. There are five access points to the lushly wooded **gorge** (☎ 2724; adult/child 8–16yr/family €2/0.70/4.50), and one of them is just down the hill from the Schwarzwald-Museum. It's annoying to have to pay to experience nature but in this case the fee is worth it. The gorge is officially open (depending on the weather) from March or April to October or early November, and from 25 to 30 December. The rest of the time there's no fee but you enter at your own risk because of the snow and ice.

The **Naturerlebnispark** (admission free), almost across the street from the Schwarzwald-Museum, is a children's playground with imaginative, mostly wooden constructions.

Triberg's underdog **World's Biggest Cuckoo Clock**, complete with oversized gear-driven innards, can be found about 1km further up the hill in Schonach, inside a snug little **house** (☎ 4689; www.dold-urlaub.de; Untertalstrasse 28; admission €1, ☎ 9am–noon & 1–6pm). Its commercially savvy **rival** (☎ 962 20; www.uhren-park.de; Schonachbach 27; admission €1.50; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Sat, 10am–6pm Sun Easter–Oct), listed in *Guinness*, is at the other end of town, integrated into a large clock shop on the B33 between Triberg and Hornberg.

SLEEPING & EATING

DJH hostel (☎ 4110; www.jugendherberge-triberg.de; Rohrbacher Strasse 35; dm 1st/subsequent night €17.90/14.70; ☎) Triberg's 125-bed hostel is on a scenic ridge on the southeastern edge of town. It's a steep 45-minute (3km) walk from the Hauptbahnhof but you can take any bus to the Marktplatz, from where it's just 1200m uphill.

Hotel Central (☎ 4360; hotel-central-triberg@online.de; Hauptstrasse 64; s/d/tr from €30/55/70; ☎) Facing the Rathaus, this 14-room hotel has a late-'70s vibe and smallish rooms with all the amenities tightly packed in. There's an elevator from the bank's fore-lobby.

Parkhotel Wehrle (☎ 860 20; www.parkhotel-wehrle.de; Hauptstrasse 51; s €74–84, d €109–129; ☎) A haven of style in Triberg's sea of exuberant kitsch – even well-travelled Ernest Hemingway, in Triberg to check out the local trout streams, was enchanted by his stay here. The 50 rooms have classic décor, including touches such as bevelled glass, and sexy transparent shower stalls. The main building, just down the hill from the Rathaus, will turn 400 in 2008. A new pool and 'wellness clinic' are set to open in 2007. In the kitchen, the chef works his magic with creativity and panache; mains cost €16 to €22.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

The Schwarzwaldbahn railway line goes southeast to Villingen (25 minutes) and Konstanz (€19.10, 1½ hours) to the northwest Offenburg (€9.10, 45 minutes, hourly) is on the Frankfurt–Freiburg line.

DEMOCRACY, PEACE & CUCKOO CLOCKS

In Italy for 30 years under the Borgias they had warfare, terror, murder and bloodshed, but they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and the Renaissance. In Switzerland they had brotherly love, they had 500 years of democracy and peace, and what did that produce? The cuckoo clock.

*Harry Lime (played by Orson Welles)
in The Third Man*

Welles apparently ad-libbed the scene that produced this famous quote in the classic 1949 film. In fact, cuckoo clocks, as we know them, originated in Germany's Black Forest sometime in the 1700s.

Bus 7160 travels north through the Gutach and Kinzig valleys to Offenburg; bus 7265 heads south to Villingen via St Georgen (one hour).

GETTING AROUND

There's a bus service between the Bahnhof and the Marktplatz, and on to the nearby town of Schonach, about once an hour (€1.65).

Villingen-Schwenningen

☎ Villingen 07721, Schwenningen 07720 / pop 82,000
When Villingen and Schwenningen (VS for short) were joined in 1972, the union couldn't have been more unlikely. Villingen is a spa town with a medieval layout; Schwenningen is a clock-making centre less than a century old. What's worse, Villingen used to belong to the Grand Duchy of Baden, while Schwenningen – more or less where the Neckar River begins – was part of the duchy of Württemberg, conflicting allegiances that apparently can't be reconciled.

From the tourist's point of view, Villingen definitely has more to offer, though Schwenningen has a couple of museums devoted to clock-making.

ORIENTATION & INFORMATION

Villingen's Altstadt, surrounded by a ring road, is crisscrossed by two wide and mostly pedestrianised main streets: north–south Obere Strasse and its continuation, Niedere Strasse, and east–west Bickenstrasse and its continuation, Rietstrasse. The Bahnhof and the regional bus station are just east of the ring on Bahnhofstrasse. Schwenningen's centre is about 5km east of Villingen's Altstadt.

Post office (Bahnhofstrasse 6, Villingen)

Schwenningen tourist office (in the Bahnhof;

☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Fri, 9am–noon Sat)

Villingen tourist office (☎ 822 340; www.tourismus-vs.de, www.villingen-schwenningen.de, in German; Rietgasse 2, ie Rietstrasse 35; ☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Sat, 11am–5pm Sat) In the Franziskaner Museum.

SIGHTS

The focal point of Villingen's Altstadt, still protected by ramparts and three towers, is the mostly Gothic **Münster** (Münsterplatz). Situated a block north of Rietstrasse, it has a striking pair of disparate spires, one overlaid with coloured tiles, the other thin and spiky. The west and south portals are Romanesque and both have modern bronze *haut-relief* doors showing

dramatic Biblical scenes. Inside, the nave is baroque. Old-style buildings around **Münsterplatz** include the **Altes Rathaus** (old town hall).

The **Franziskaner Museum** (☎ 822 351; Rietgasse 2; adult/concession €3/2; ☎ 1–5pm Tue–Sat, 11am–5pm Sun & holidays), just inside the Riettor (a city gate), is housed in a former Franciscan monastery. The collections illuminate the town's art and culture through the centuries. Tickets to cultural events are sold at the desk next to the café. Enter via Rietstrasse 35.

Also run by the museum is **Magdalenenberg** (☎ 822 351; Rietgasse 2; adult/concession €3/2; ☎ 1–5pm Tue–Sat, 11am–5pm Sun & holidays), an *in situ* Celtic burial chamber in Villingen's southwestern outskirts, 30 minutes on foot from the centre.

Schwenningen's main draw is the extremely well-presented **Uhrenindustriemuseum** (Clock Industry Museum; ☎ 380 44; www.uhrenindustriemuseum.de; Bürkstrasse 39, Schwenningen; adult/concession €3/2; ☎ 10am–noon & 2–6pm Tue–Sun), situated in an old clock factory four blocks northwest of Schwenningen's Bahnhof.

At the eastern edge of Schwenningen, the **Internationales Luftfahrt-Museum** (☎ 663 02; Spittelbronner Weg 78, Schwenningen; ☎ 9am–7pm Mar–Oct, 9am–5pm Nov–Feb), at the airfield, displays 50 old aircraft ranging from biplanes to MiGs. It's served by buses 8 and 8a.

Villingen-Schwenningen is the southern terminus of the **Neckartal-Radweg** (see p392), one of Baden-Württemberg's premier bike trails.

SLEEPING & EATING

There are several food shops and inexpensive eateries along Niedere Strasse and Obere Strasse.

DJH hostel (☎ 541 49; www.jugendherberge.de; St-Georgener Strasse 36; dm 1st/ subsequent night €18.30/15.10; ☎) This 128-bed hostel is at the northwestern edge of town. Take bus 3 or 4 to Triberger Strasse.

Hotel Bären (☎ 206 9690; www.hotel-baeren.biz; Bärengasse 2, Villingen; s/d from €52/80; ☎) This friendly and central Villingen hotel, recently renovated, has 16 spacious rooms with high-quality modern furnishings.

Vitala (Obere Strasse 11; ☎ 9am–6.30pm Mon–Fri, 8am–2pm or 6pm Sat) is an organic grocery, and there's also a **Plus supermarket** (Obere Strasse 16) for picnic supplies.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

Villingen's Bahnhof is on the scenic Schwarzwaldbahn railway line from Konstanz and

Donauschingen to Triberg (25 minutes) and Offenburg. Schwenningen's Bahnhof is on the secondary line to Rottweil, where you can change for Stuttgart. To get to Freiburg change in Donauschingen.

From Villingen, bus 7265 makes regular trips north to Triberg via St Georgen.

Villingen-Schwenningen is just west of the Stuttgart–Singen A81 and is also crossed by the B33 to Triberg and the B27 to Rottweil.

Frequent buses (for example lines 1 and 1S) link Villingen with Schwenningen.

Bikes can be hired from **Hermann Fleig** (☎ 24 687; Rietgasse 5, Villingen), near the tourist office.

SOUTHEAST OF FREIBURG Höllental

Jagged, near-vertical rock faces, alternating with tree-covered hillsides, dwarf everything beneath them along the wildly romantic Höllental (Hell's Valley). It begins about 15km east of Freiburg and stretches along (and above) the serpentine B31 and the tracks of the Höllentalbahn, which passes through nine tunnels on its way from Freiburg to Donauschingen. The best way to experience the gorge is on foot – a trail goes all the way from Freiburg to Titisee.

Fans of wordplay will note that the Höllental's western gateway is the village of **Himmelreich** (Kingdom of Heaven), from where the valley continues east to Hinterzarten, 5km west of Titisee. Somewhere in the middle, not far from a death-defying hairpin curve, is a rest stop called **Teufelsschwänzli** ('devil's tail' in the local dialect).

At the **Hirschsprung** (Stag's Leap), the narrowest point of the valley, a male deer being pursued by hunters is said to have saved itself by leaping across the abyss. The stag there now – a statue – looks a bit hesitant, as if he's having second thoughts about trying anything fancy. The canyon is so deep here that the bottom is in deep shade until mid-morning – if you've recently been told to go somewhere 'where the sun don't shine', this might be a good choice.

Titisee-Neustadt

☎ 07651 / pop 12,000

Named for the glacial lake on the northern tip on which the town sits, Titisee is a cheerful and hugely popular resort with souvenir shops, cafés and restaurants lining its flowery waterfront promenade, the **Seestrasse**.

The lake itself (2km long and 750m wide) is reasonably scenic and is perhaps best appreciated from the relative quiet of a rowing boat or pedal boat.

Heading off on foot is one way to escape the crowds. Walking all the way around the lake is an easy 6km trek. Scenic destinations include the 1192m **Hochfirst**, which overlooks Titisee from the east and is topped by an outlook tower.

The Titisee area is a popular centre for **Nordic walking**, which – for the uninitiated – is like cross-country skiing without the skis or the snow. In other words, it's walking with ski poles, whose sole purpose is to exercise the upper body.

The town bills itself as a **Bikerparadies** (that's a paradise for cyclists, not for the Hell's Angels) and indeed, paths and routes head – literally – in every direction.

The **tourist office** (☎ 980 40; www.titisee-neustadt.de; Strandbadstrasse 4; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Fri, 10am–1pm Sat, Sun & holidays May–Oct, 9am–noon & 1.30–5pm Mon–Fri Nov–Apr) is in the Kurhaus building, 500m southwest of the train station.

SLEEPING & EATING

Titisee-Neustadt and its surrounds have tonnes of hotels, *pensions* and camping grounds to choose from.

DJH hostel (☎ 238; www.jugendherberge-titisee-veltishof.de; Bruderhalde 27; dm 1st/ subsequent night €18.30/15.10; ☎) The fabulous Titisee-Veltishof hostel is at the lake's western tip, 2km southwest of the tourist office. To get there from the train station take bus 7300, or it's 30 minutes on foot.

Hotel Sonneneck (☎ 8246; fax 881 74; Parkstrasse 2; s/d €45/72, low season €39/64) A modest, family-run hotel that's just 250m from the train station and a three-minute walk from the beach. The 18 rooms have furniture made of local spruce.

Self-caterers should try **Gutscher** (cnr Strandbadstrasse & Seestrasse; ☎ daily) for local food specialities including meats, cheeses, schnapps and bread loaves the size of car tires, or **Edeka supermarket** (Jägerstrasse).

GETTING THERE & AROUND

Rail routes include the Höllentalbahn to Freiburg and Donauschingen (twice an hour; stops at both Titisee and Neustadt), the Dreiseenbahn to Feldberg and Schluchsee (hourly; stops at Titisee) and the Donautalbahn to Ulm (stops at Neustadt).

From both the Neustadt and Titisee train stations, bus 7257 goes to Schluchsee (three or four times a day). Bus 7300 links the Titisee train station with Feldberg-Bärental (15 minutes; at least seven Monday to Saturday, three on Sunday and holidays).

In its local version, bus 7257 connects Titisee with Neustadt every hour.

Bikes (and in winter, ski equipment) can be hired from **Ski-Hirt** (☎ 922 80; Titiseestrasse 26, Neustadt), which can also supply details on local cycling options.

Feldberg

☎ 07655 / pop 1800

At 1493m the Feldberg is the highest mountain in the Black Forest – no surprise, then, that it's the region's premier downhill skiing area. The actual mountaintop is treeless and not particularly attractive, looking very much like a monk's tonsured skull, but on clear days the view southward towards the Alps is stunning.

Feldberg is also the name given to a cluster of five villages, of which **Altglashütten**, a one-time glass-blowing centre, is the administrative centre. Its Rathaus plays host to the **tourist office** (☎ 8019; www.feldberg-gipfeltreffen.de, in German; Kirchgasse 1; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, also 10am-noon Sat in the warmer months, 10am-noon Sun Jul & Aug), which has a wealth of information about outdoor activities.

About 2km north is **Bärental**, site of Germany's highest train station (967m), where traditional Black Forest farmhouses snuggle against the hillsides. East of Bärental in the Haslach Valley is **Falkau**, a family-friendly resort with a cute waterfall. **Windgfallweiher**, a good lake for swimming or rowing, is 1km southeast of Altglashütten.

About 9km west of Altglashütten is **Feldberg-Ort**, right in the heart of the 42-sq-km nature preserve that covers much of the mountain. Almost all the ski lifts are here, as is the popular **Feldbergbahn chairlift** (one-way/return €5.40/6.90) to the **Bismarckdenkmal** (Bismarck monument), where there are wonderful panoramic views. The **tourist office** (☎ 07676-933 666) is in the **Haus der Natur**, where you'll find exhibits on local flora and fauna.

ACTIVITIES

The Feldberg area is great for **hiking**. The most strenuous route takes you to the top of the Feldberg. The **Westweg** trail, which links

Pforzheim with Basel, crosses the area. Since much of the Feldberg is part of a nature preserve, you may very well come across rare wildflowers or animal species such as mountain hens and chamois.

The **Feldberg ski area** (adult/child under 15yr per day €23/12, from 1pm €16/8) has a network of 28 lifts, all accessible with the same ticket. Four groomed cross-country trails are also available. For the latest snow conditions, ring ☎ 07676-1214. Eight ski schools offer a variety of packages. If you want to hire skis, look for signs reading 'Skiverleih' – one reliable option is **Skiverleih Schubnell** (☎ 560; www.skiverleih-feldberg.de, in German; Bärentaler Strasse 1, Altglashütten).

SLEEPING

DJH hostel (☎ 07676-221; www.jugendherberge.de; Passhöhe 14; dm 1st/subsequent night €19.70/16.50; ☒) The 267-bed Hebelhof Hostel, perched at 1234m in Feldberg-Ort, is served by bus 7300 from the Bärental train station to Hebelhof (15 minutes, hourly).

Sonneck Hotel (☎ 211; www.sonneck-feldberg.de; Schwarzenbachweg 5, Altglashütten; s/d from €30/58) Facing the tourist office, this modest place has 11 modern rooms with chalet-style wooden balconies and a rustic restaurant.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Bärental and Altglashütten are stops on the Dreiseenbahn (named for three lakes), which links Titisee with Seeburg (on the Schluchsee). From the train station in Bärental, bus 7300 makes direct trips at least hourly to Feldberg-Ort.

From late December until the end of the season shuttle buses, run by Liftverbund Feldberg (look for red-on-yellow signs), link all the Feldberg communities and Titisee and with the ski lifts (free with a lift ticket or Gästekarte).

If you're driving, take the B31 (Freiburg-Donaueschingen) to Titisee, then the B317. To get to Altglashütten, head down the B500 from Bärental.

Schluchsee

☎ 07656 / pop 2600

The town of Schluchsee (930m), named after the nearby lake, is about 10km south of Titisee. Less commercial than its bigger neighbour, it's also a popular summer holiday-resort area and a centre for outdoor activities of all kinds, especially swimming, windsurfing, sailing and

scuba diving. Thanks to its location at the foot of the Feldberg, the forests around Schluchsee offer some wonderful hiking.

Bathing options include **Aqua Fun Strandbad** (☎ 7732; Strandbadstrasse; adult/student €3.80/2.20; ☎ 9am-7pm late May-mid-Sep), a seaside swimming-pool complex with lots of grass and a narrow sandy beach.

T Toth (☎ 9230; www.seerundfahrten.de, in German) offers a boat service around the Schluchsee, with stops in Aha, at the dam (Staumauer), in Seeburg and in Schluchsee town (hourly from 10am or 11am to 5pm May to late October). You can get on and off as you please; the whole round trip takes one hour and costs €6 (less for single stops).

ORIENTATION & INFORMATION

The railway tracks and the B500 run along the lake's eastern shore between the lakefront and the Schluchsee's hillside town centre. The community of Aha caps the northwestern end of the lake; Seeburg is at the lake's southeastern tip. The western shore of the lake is accessible only by bike or on foot (the lake's circumference is 18.5km).

ATMs At Kirchplatz and on nearby Fischbacherstrass.

Tourist office (☎ 7732; www.schluchsee.de; Haus des Gastes, Fischbacher Strasse 7; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Thu, 9am-6pm Fri, also 10am-noon Sat Jul, 10am-noon Sat & Sun Aug & holiday weekends) Situated 150m uphill from the church, next to the Rathaus. Maps and room availability details are posted out front.

SLEEPING & EATING

DJH hostel (☎ 329; www.jugendherberge-schluchsee-wolfsgrund.de; im Wolfsgrund 28; dm 1st/subsequent night €18.30/15.10; ☒) On a peninsula jutting into the lake, this 117-bed hostel is about a 10-minute walk west along the lakefront from the Schluchsee train station.

Hotel Schiff (☎ 975 70; www.hotel-schiff-schluchsee.de; Kirchplatz 7; s from €35, d €54-104; mains €9.60-22.50; ☐ ☒) Next to the church. The 27 rooms here are cosy but a bit out of date. The restaurant serves local, Austrian and vegetarian dishes; the best seats are on the terrace overlooking the lake.

Hotel Sternen (☎ 251; Dresselbacher Strasse 1; s/d from €40/72) The hall wallpaper is a crime against good taste but the 34 rooms are spacious. The restaurant serves solid regional fare (mains €12 to €20.50; closed Thursday); specialities include venison (in season) and Black Forest fish. The rustic Rumpelfass bar (open 8pm to 3am) dispenses good beer and cheer.

There's a supermarket, **Isele Markt** (Kirchplatz 2; ☎ 8am-12.30pm & 2.30-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat), across the square from the church.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

The hourly Dreiseenbahn train goes to Feldberg and Titisee. Bus 7257 links Schluchsee with the Neustadt and Titisee train stations (three or four times a day).

Hotel Schiff hires out **bicycles** (per day €7.70) year-round. The tourist office sells a good cycling map (€3.10).

St Blasien

☎ 07672 / pop 4100

St Blasien, a bucolic but substantial settlement in a lush river valley about 8km south of Schluchsee town, has long been a political and cultural heavyweight thanks to its Benedictine monastery, founded in the 9th century. This august institution reached its zenith in the 18th century under the prince-abbot Martin Gerbert, who built the town's most outstanding landmark, the magnificent Dom. The monastery was turned into a boarding school by the Jesuits in 1933, and today **Kolleg St Blasien** ranks as one of Germany's top **Gymnasiums** (private schools), perhaps because parents feel that high school kids couldn't possibly get into too much trouble in such a remote, healthy little town – yeah, right!

Thanks to its healthy, fogless climate, St Blasien has been a popular spa resort since the late 19th century and today its radon-laced waters continue to attract visitors who come to take the waters. **Menzenschwand**, about 8km northwest of St Blasien, has three ski lifts.

St Blasien's public spaces are adorned with lots of **modern wood sculptures**, a legacy of the town's annual **Holzskulpturen** (wood sculpture) competition, established in 1995.

ORIENTATION & INFORMATION

St Blasien's small centre, bisected by the Alb River, is dominated by the Dom and the adjacent former monastery complex.

The **tourist office** (☎ 414 30; www.st-blasien.de; Haus des Gastes, Am Kurgarten 1-3; ☎ 10am-noon & 3-5pm Mon-Fri, also 10am-noon Sat May-Sep) is between the arch at the entrance to the town centre and the Dom.

SIGHTS

Crowned by an enormous greenish-copper cupola, **Dom St Blasien** (☎ 8am-6.30pm May-Sep,

8.30am-5.30pm Oct-Apr) has a light-flooded rotunda of dazzling symmetry, harmony and whiteness. A giant sphere 36m in diameter would fit neatly under the cupola, whose interior is as high as it is wide (as measured just above the 20 Corinthian columns). The rectangular choir, adorned with some very convincing fake marble (in fact expertly painted stucco), is the same length as the cupola's diameter. The patterns in the marble floor mirror the cupola's interior features, including its 18 windows. In July and August, the Dom hosts free concerts of Western classical music.

The adjacent former **Kloster** (monastery), now home to the town's famous boarding school, is of equally generous proportions, measuring 105m by 195m. Free guided tours (in German) of the Kloster's historic baroque rooms are held at 10.15am on Tuesday, except during school holiday periods. The best views of the Dom are from across the river.

Museum St Blasien (adult/student €1.60/0.50; ☎ 2.30-5pm Tue-Sun), above the tourist office, takes a charmingly eclectic look at local history and culture, and includes scale models of locally-made Schmidt snow-clearing equipment.

SLEEPING & EATING

St Blasien and its affiliated towns, Menzenschwand and Albtal, have a wide variety of accommodation options.

DJH hostel (☎ 07675-326; www.jugendherberge-menzenschwand.de; Vorderdorfstrasse 10, Menzenschwand; dm 1st/subsequent night €18.30/15.10; ☒) A 104-bed hostel ensconced in a gorgeous Black Forest-style, all-wood farmhouse.

Hotel Klostermeisterhaus (☎ 848; www.klostermeisterhaus.de, in German; Im Süßen Winkel 2; s/d €65/95; ☒) Smack in the centre of town, this riverside place – built in 1826 – has eight spacious rooms with wicker and bare wood furnishings. The cosy, wood-pannelled restaurant serves excellent cuisine made with all-fresh ingredients (mains €9.50 to €25.50); the delightful terrace affords great Dom views.

Lidl supermarket (Friedhofstrasse; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat) From the tourist office, go through the arch and then another 200m.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

St Blasien is linked to the train station in Seerugg, on the Schluchsee, by bus 7319 (20 minutes, hourly). Bus 7321 shuttles between St Blasien and Menzenschwand (almost hourly). If you need a taxi, ring ☎ 907 090.

Bikes (and ski equipment too) can be rented from **Sport Gfrörer** (☎ 07675-923 810; Hinterdorfstrasse 8, Menzenschwand).

St Blasien is about 4km west of the B500.

Wutachschlucht

Wutach Gorge, sometimes billed as the 'Grand Canyon of the Black Forest', is a lovely ravine whose craggy rocks rise almost vertically. Below, along the **Wutach** ('angry river' in loose translation), which rises almost at the summit of the Feldberg, lies a fertile habitat harbouring a huge variety of wildflowers, including orchids, as well as rare birds and countless species of butterflies, beetles and lizards. The Wutach flows into the Rhine near Waldshut, on the Swiss frontier.

To appreciate the Wutachschlucht in all its splendour, you can take a 13km hike from **Schattenmühle to Wutachmühle** (or vice versa). If you have the energy, you can add the romantic, 2.5km-long **Lotenbach-Klamm** (Lotenbach Glen) to your tour.

In Bonndorf, 15km east of Schluchsee town, the **tourist office** (☎ 07703-7607; www.bonndorf.de, in German; Schlossstrasse 1; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon Sat May-Oct, 9am-noon & 2-5pm Mon-Fri except Wed afternoon Nov-Apr) has hiking information and maps.

To get to Bonndorf from the train station in Neustadt, take bus 7258 (40 minutes, hourly Monday to Saturday, every two hours Sunday and holidays). To get to Schattenmühle or Wutachmühle, take bus 7344 from Bonndorf (runs every hour or two Monday to Friday when school is in session but may stop at Schattenmühle and Wutachmühle only a few times a day).

LAKE CONSTANCE

The watery expanses of Lake Constance (Bodensee), framed – if you're on the German shore – by a row of breathtaking snow-capped Swiss peaks, is the perfect tonic if you're feeling a bit landlocked. Sometimes called the 'Swabian Sea', this giant bulge in the sinewy course of the Rhine offers a choice of relaxation, cultural pursuits, hiking, cycling and water sports.

Lake Constance has a circumference of some 273km, of which the southern 72km belong to Switzerland, the eastern 28km to Austria and the remaining northern and western

173km to Germany (including a little strip in Bavaria). It measures 14km at its widest point and is up to 250m deep. The distance from Konstanz to Bregenz (Austria) is 46km. During stormy weather, Lake Constance can get quite dangerous, with huge waves crashing onto the shoreline. Visibility is especially good when the Föhn – a warm dry wind that's common in March, April and October – is blowing northward from the Alps.

April and May are among the best times to visit Lake Constance because that's when the fruit trees are flowering. Summers are humid but at least the lake is warm enough for swimming (around 20° to 23°C). The autumn wine harvest is also a pleasant time to come. Winters are often foggy, or misty at best. The area gets extremely crowded in July and August, when it may be hard to find a room for the night and the roads are constantly choked.

Cycling

An international bike track, the 268km **Bodensee-Radweg** (www.bodensee-radweg.com, in German), circumnavigates Lake Constance, tracing the shoreline between vineyards and beaches. The route is well signposted but RegioCart's 1:50,000 *Rund um den Bodensee* cycling-hiking map is useful, and is available in bookshops and some tourist offices. In general, bikes can be taken on both ferries and trains, making it possible to cycle one way and take public transport the other.

Getting There & Around

Ryanair flies from London Stansted and Dublin to **Friedrichshafen** (www.fly-away.de).

By far the most enjoyable way to get around, or to cross the lake for a quick peak at Switzerland, is by ferry. Konstanz is the main hub; Meersburg and Friedrichshafen also have a good variety of ferry options.

The public transport system is well-organised and is a good alternative to driving. Although most of the towns on Lake Constance have a train station (Meersburg is an exception), in some cases buses provide the only land connections. **Euregio Bodensee** (www.euregiokarte.com, in German), which groups all Lake Constance-area public transport providers, publishes a free *Fahrplan* book with schedules for all train, bus and ferry services in tiny type.

The **Euregio Bodensee Tageskarte** (1 land zone plus lake €24, all 7 zones plus lake €27, half-price for children

6-15yr) gets you all-day access to all land and sea transport on and around Lake Constance, including areas deep in Austria, Switzerland and even Liechtenstein. It is sold at tourist offices, train stations and ferry docks.

PASSENGER FERRIES

The **Weisse Flotte** (☎ 281 389), a grouping of six German, Swiss and Austrian companies with a total of 31 passenger ferries and three car ferries, runs a variety of ferry lines that hop from town to town along the Lake Constance coastline, and link towns on opposite shores. Holders of rail passes get a 50% discount on certain services.

The most useful line, run by **BSB** (☎ 07531-364 0389; www.bsb-online.com, in German) and **ÖBB** (www.bodenseeschiffahrt.at in German) – the former is German, the latter Austrian – links Konstanz with ports such as Meersburg (€4.20, 30 minutes), Friedrichshafen (€8.80, 2¾ hours), Lindau (€11.20, three hours) and Bregenz (€12, 3¾ hours); children age six to 15 pay half price. There are seven daily runs from early July to early September, five from late May to early July and early September to early October, and three from early April to late May, making it possible to visit several places in a single day.

Other ferry runs, mostly operated by BSB, link Konstanz with Reichenau Island, and both Konstanz and Meersburg with Mainau Island and Überlingen.

Der Katamaran (☎ 07541-971 0900; www.der-katamaran.de; adult/child 6-14yr & dogs €8.50/4.30) is a sleek new passenger service that takes 50 minutes to make the Konstanz–Friedrichshafen crossing (hourly from 5am or 6am to 8pm or 9pm).

CAR FERRIES

The roll-on roll-off **Konstanz–Meersburg car ferry** (☎ 07531-8030; www.sw.konstanz.de; car up to 4m incl driver/bicycle/pedestrian €7.20/1.50/2) runs 24 hours a day (except when the lake's water level is especially high, in which case it can't dock properly). The frequency is every 15 minutes from 5.30am or 6am to 9pm, every 30 minutes from 9pm to midnight and every hour from midnight to 5.30am or 6am. The new **Mini-Maxi Ticket** (one-way/return €3.60/7.20) gets pedestrians a ferry ride plus bus transport on either end (to and from the centres of Meersburg and Konstanz). The crossing, which affords superb views (especially from the top deck), takes 15 minutes.

The dock in Konstanz, served by local bus 1, is about 4km northeast of the city centre along Mainaustrasse. In Meersburg, car ferries leave from a dock 400m northwest of the old town.

KONSTANZ

☎ 07531 / pop 81,000

Konstanz (Constance), right on the Swiss border, is the cultural and economic centre of the Bodensee. Its picturesque Altstadt has never suffered fire or war damage, making it a rarity among Germany's oft-ravaged cities. During WWII it was too close to neutral Switzerland to be bombed by the Allies.

Konstanz was settled by the Romans and played a leading role in the area during the Middle Ages, when it was a Free Imperial City and grew rich from trade. The town reached its historical apex when the Council of Constance convened here from 1414 to 1418, choosing a single pope (replacing three others) and healing the 'Great Schism' in the Catholic Church.

Today, Konstanz is a liberal university town with little industry, though its shops attract hordes of Swiss shoppers drawn by 'bargain' German prices. About one in seven inhabitants – affectionately known as *Seehas* (sea hares) – is a student at the local university, founded in 1966. The student presence is palpable in the lively pub and restaurant scene, unique in the otherwise rather staid Lake Constance region.

Orientation

Konstanz is bisected by the Rhine, from the left (south) bank of which the Altstadt stretches southward. The imposing imperial-style Deutscher Bahnhof (German train station) and the ugly Schweizer Bahnhof (Swiss train station) – little more than a shed – are adjacent to each other on Bahnhofplatz, at the eastern edge of the Altstadt across the tracks from the harbour. Delineating the southern edge of the Altstadt is Bodanstrasse; a few blocks farther south is the Swiss frontier, complete with the kind of border crossings with uniformed guards that have almost disappeared elsewhere in Europe.

Information

Clixworx (Bodanstrasse 21; per 15min €1; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat) Internet access.

English Bookshop (☎ 150 63; Münzgasse 10) Stocks a good selection.

BODENSEE ERLEBNISKARTE

The three-day **Bodensee Erlebniskarte** (adult/child 6-15yr €69/35, not incl ferries €39/19), available at area tourist and ferry offices from early April to October, allows free travel on almost all boats and mountain cableways on and around Lake Constance (including its Austrian and Swiss shores) and gets you free entry to around 170 tourist attractions and museums. There are also seven-day (adult/child €89/45) and 14-day (adult/child €119/59) versions.

Reisebank (Hauptbahnhof; ☎ 8am-12.30pm & 1.30-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-3pm Sat) Currency exchange, including Swiss francs.

Schweizer Bahnhof (Swiss train station; ☎ 6.50am-7pm Mon-Sat, 8.50am-12.10pm & 1.40-6pm Sun & holidays) The ticket counter changes currency at good rates.

Tel Center (per hr €4.20) Bahnhofplatz 6 (☎ 9am-10pm); Marktstätte 30 (☎ 9am-10pm Mon-Sat, noon-10pm Sun) Internet access.

Tourist office (☎ 133 030; www.konstanz.de/tourismus; Bahnhofplatz 13; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat & 10am-1pm Sun & holidays Apr-Oct, 9am-12.30pm & 2-6pm Mon-Fri Nov-Mar) Just north of the train stations. Inside you can pick up a walking-tour brochure (€1), outside there's a hotel reservation board and free hotel telephone.

Waschsalon und Mehr (Hofhalde 3; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat) A self- or full-service laundry.

Sights

WATERFRONT

Konstanz' delightful **seafront promenade**, between the train tracks and the lake, is lined with gardens, statues, ferry docks and old warehouses, some housing restaurants. It's linked to the Altstadt by a passageway under the train tracks at the eastern end of Marktstätte.

Just past the passageway, the white domed **Konzilgebäude** (Council Building), built in 1388, served as a granary and warehouse before making its mark in history as the place where Pope Martin V was elected in 1417. Today it's a conference and concert hall.

At the end of the pier facing the Konzilgebäude – welcoming incoming ferry passengers on a perpetually turning pedestal – stands **Imperia**, a 9m-high sculpture of a very voluptuous woman, a prostitute who is said to have plied her trade in the days of the Council of

Constance; she was immortalised in a novel by Honoré de Balzac.

A few steps from here is the **Zeppelin Monument**, honouring the airship inventor Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin. He was born in 1838 on the **Insel**, a tiny island a short stroll north through the **Stadtgarten** park. The Stadtgarten has a **children's playground**.

Practically across the street from the Insel is the **Stadttheater** (Inselgasse 2), whose façade sports a comical scene depicting the Fool's banishment from the theatre.

Just north of the Insel, the **Rheinbrücke** links the Altstadt with newer quarters across the Rhine. On the opposite bank, Seestrasse has a row of handsome **Art Nouveau villas** just east of the bridge. Further east, at No 21, is the **Casino**.

MÜNSTER

At the Altstadt's highest point stands the **Münster** (☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun). The crypt, built in 1000, is Carolingian, but the core of today's structure is Romanesque. Between the 12th and 15th centuries, the Gothic vaulted side aisles were added, as was the masterfully carved oak main portal and the choir stalls. The Renaissance brought the organ, perched on an elaborate stone balcony above the west entrance; the high altar dates from the baroque era. The neo-Gothic spires were added in the 19th century. Made of soft sandstone from the nearby Swiss town of Rorschach, the Münster has not been without scaffolding since 1961 and is likely to be under repair forever.

The **Schnegg** (literally 'snail'; 1438), in the northern transept, is a vividly decorated spiral staircase, to the left of which a door leads down to the **crypt**, adorned with gilded copper medallions. From the crypt's polychrome chapel, a door leads to the Gothic cloister and, in one corner, the **Mauritius Rotunda**, with its 13th-century **Heiliges Grab** (Holy Sepulchre), inspired by Christ's tomb in Jerusalem.

You can climb the recently restored **tower** (adult/child €2/1; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, noon or 12.30-5pm Sun & church holidays).

NIEDERBURG

Stretching north from the Münster to the Rhine, the Niederburg is Konstanz' oldest quarter. The site of a Roman settlement, it later housed craftspeople and small merchants. An almost medieval atmosphere still permeates this maze of alleyways (such as Niederburg-

gasse), which are lined with centuries-old houses. Some contain lovely antiques shops, snug wine bars and lively restaurants.

Kloster Zoffingen (Brückengasse 15), founded in 1257, is the only convent left in Konstanz. It is still in the hands of Dominican nuns, whose predecessors founded the city's first girls' school in 1775.

On the Rheinsteig, which runs along the Rhine west of the bridge, stands the 15th-century **Rheintorturm** (Rhine Gate Tower), a defensive tower with a wooden upper section and a pyramid-shaped red-tile roof. About 200m to the west, also on the river bank, is the squatter **Pulverturm** (Gunpowder Tower; 1321), with 2m-thick walls.

Almost across the street is the bright orange-red **Domprobstei** (Rheingasse 20), a baroque structure that was built in 1609 and was once the residence of the cathedral provosts.

MUSEUMS

The former guildhall of the town's butchers is now occupied by the **Rosgartenmuseum** (☎ 900 246; www.rosgartenmuseum-konstanz.de in German; Rosgartenstrasse 3-5; adult/student €3/1.50, free 1st Sun of the month & after 2pm Wed; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, 10am-5pm Sat, Sun & holidays), founded in 1871 and dedicated to regional art and history.

The **Archäologisches Landesmuseum** (Archaeological State Museum; ☎ 980 40; www.konstanz.alm-bw.de, in German; Benediktinerplatz 5; adult/concession €3/2, free 1st Sat of month; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun), located inside a former monastery just north of the Rheinbrücke, has three floors of exhibits that go from the Stone Age through the Middle Ages.

Sea Life (☎ 128 270; www.sealifeurope.com; Hafenstrasse 9; adult/child €11.75/8.50; ☎ 10am-7pm Jul-mid-Sep, 10am-6pm May, Jun & mid-Sep-Oct, 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun Nov-Apr) is a privately run aquarium. Ecologically educational but verging on the kitsch, it runs a drag net through your wallet but presents a realistic portrait of the underwater life of the Rhine, which means that the fish are mostly grey and silver and there's lots of 'authentic' human detritus decorating the aquariums. Greenpeace has a permanent exhibition space.

Sleeping

There are several so-so hotels west of the train stations along Bodanstrasse.

Campingplatz Bruderhofer (☎ 31 388; www.campingplatz-konstanz.de; Föhrenbühlweg 45; adult/car/tent €3.50/2.60/3.10) This modern camping ground,



in Konstanz' northeastern suburb of Staad, is 3km northeast of the Altstadt and 800m south of the Meersburg car-ferry dock.

DJH hostel (☎ 322 60; www.jugendherberge-konstanz.de; Zur Allmannshöhe 18; dm 1st/subsequent night €20.80/17.60; ☒) This newly renovated, 178-bed hostel, in a white cylindrical one-time water tower, is in Allmannsdorf, 4km north-east of the Altstadt and 1.2km northwest of the Meersburg car-ferry dock. It's served by bus 4 (to Jugendherberge) and bus 1 (to Allmannsdorf).

Gästehaus Holzer (☎ 315 46; www.gaestehaus-holzer.de; in German; Fischerstrasse 6; s/d from €43/78; ☒) This 13-room pension, near the Meersburg car-ferry landing, has simple but well-outfitted rooms. It's served by bus 1.

Sonnenhof (☎ 222 57; www.hotel-sonnenhof-konstanz.de; in German; Otto-Raggenbass-Strasse 3; s/d €53/78, s with shower €44) This comfortable family-run guesthouse is on a quiet residential street midway between Bodanstrasse and the Swiss border.

Hotel Barbarossa (☎ 128 990; www.barbarossa-hotel.com; in German; Obermarkt 8-12; s €50-68, d €95-125; ☐ ☒) Beautifully located on a central square, this place has 55 rooms that mix class with whimsy. Some of the bathrooms are a tight fit.

Eating & Drinking

There are quite a few places to eat and drink in the pedestrians-only area south of the Münster, such as along narrow Salmannweiler Gasse.

Pan (☎ 254 78; cnr Salmannweiler & Hohenhausgasse; mains €6.50-14.50; ☒) noon-2.30pm & 5.30pm-midnight Mon-Fri, noon-midnight Sat, 5.30pm-midnight Sun, noon-midnight Mon-Fri Jun-mid-Sep) This place looks like a beer hall but the good-value menu is decidedly Greek. It's deservedly popular.

Brauhaus Johann Albrecht (☎ 250 45; Konradigasse 2; mains €7.50-13.50) A rambling beer hall with a rustic menu featuring daily specials. The food here offers good value and the beer, brewed on the premises in copper vats, gets excellent reviews.

Rambagh Palace (☎ 254 58; Brückengasse 1, 1st fl; veggie/meat mains €8/13; ☒) noon-2pm & 6-11pm Tue-Sun; ☒) Exotic spices tickle the nostrils at this colourful north Indian place, named after a palace in Jaipur.

Niederburg-Weinstube (☎ 213 67; Niederburggasse 7; ☒) 5pm-midnight except Sun & holidays, also open 10am-2pm Wed) This rustic, hole-in-the-wall wine tavern has 400 regional wines on offer.

Wessenberg (☎ 919 664; Wessenbergstrasse 41; ☒) 9am-1am Mon-Thu, 9am-2am Fri, 9am-3am Sat, 10am-1am Sun) This chichi bar, decked out with modern art, attracts an 'in' crowd with its sleek bar, spacious inner courtyard and good food – its specialities include ravioli (€9) and tiramisù (€5).

Shamrock (☎ 246 22; Bahnhofstrasse 4; ☒) 7pm-1am Sun-Fri, 2pm-3am Sat) An Irish pub that's very popular with English speakers and serves as a sort of home base for the local rugby team. On Monday there's bingo and student discounts on food and beer, Tuesday is quiz night and on Thursday there's karaoke.

Feinkost am See (Bahnhofplatz 25; ☒) 7am-6pm) This little grocery is right next door to the tourist office.

Entertainment

For details on the local nightlife scene see www.party-news.de (in German).

K9 (☎ 167 13; www.k9-kulturzentrum.de; in German; Obere Laube 71) A happening cultural-events venue with concerts of every imaginable sort, from klezmer to traditional Mongolian, as well as disco nights and salsa parties.

Cuba Libre (☎ 567 03; www.cuba-libre-kn.de; in German; Hussenstrasse 4; ☒) from 9pm Wed-Sun) A popular salsa club and cocktail bar that sometimes has concerts.

Steg 4 (☎ 174 28; Hafenstrasse 8; ☒) closed Jan) This restaurant, in a revamped warehouse facing the ferry harbour, becomes a disco on Friday and Saturday nights.

Das Boot (☎ 0172-724 2031; www.dasboot.de; in German; Am Hafen) A docked BSB ferry transmogrifies into a disco on many Saturday and some Friday nights from 11pm to 4am.

Getting There & Away

Konstanz is Lake Constance's main ferry hub – for details on ferry options see p453.

By car, Konstanz can be reached via the B33, which links up with the A81 to and from Stuttgart near Singen. To get to Konstanz you can also take the B31 to Meersburg and then catch a car ferry.

Konstanz' Hauptbahnhof is the southern terminus of the scenic Schwarzwaldbahn, which travels hourly through the Black Forest, linking Offenburg with towns such as Triberg and Villingen. To get to towns on the northern shore of Lake Constance by rail, you generally have to change in Radolfzell. The Schweizer Bahnhof (Swiss train station) offers connections to destinations all over Switzerland.

Getting Around

The city centre is a traffic nightmare, especially on Saturday and Sunday. Your best bet may be to park in the free Park & Ride lot 3km northwest of the Altstadt, near the Flugplatz (airfield) at the northwestern end of Max-Stromeyer-Strasse, where your only outlay will be for a bus day pass.

Local buses (www.sw.konstanz.de) cost €1.80 for a single ticket (€3 for night buses); day passes are €3.50 for one person and €5.80 for a family. Bus 1 links the Meersburg car-ferry dock with the Altstadt. If you stay in Konstanz for at least two nights, your hotelier will give you a Gästekarte entitling you to free local bus travel.

For a taxi, ring ☎ 222 22.

Bicycles can be hired from **Kultur-Rädle** (☎ 273 10; Bahnhofplatz 29; per day €10; ☒) 9am-12.30pm & 2.30-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat year-round, also 10am-12.30pm Sun & holidays Easter-Sep), 50m south of the tourist office.

AROUND KONSTANZ Mainau Island

Perennially one of the most popular attractions in the Lake Constance region, delightful **Mainau** (☎ 07531-3030; www.mainau.de; adult/child 6-15yr/student/family €11.90/3.90/5.90/23.90, winter adult/child 6-15yr/student €6/free/3; ☒) 7am-8pm late Mar-late Oct, 9am-6pm late Nov-late Mar) has been transformed

into a vast Mediterranean garden complex by the Bernadotte family, who are related to the royal house of Sweden.

More than two million visitors a year make their way over a narrow causeway to stroll around 45 hectares of splendid gardens, hothouses and fountains, visit the baroque church and castle, and attend special events and concerts. Highlights include the **Butterfly House**, where butterflies flit and dart around your head; a **petting zoo**; and the **Italian Cascade**, which integrates bursting patterns of flowers with waterfalls. In the warm season you can stay on the island straight through till dusk.

To get to Mainau, you can drive (the causeway is about 6km north of Konstanz), take bus 4 from Konstanz train station or, in the warm season, hop aboard a passenger ferry on the line linking Meersburg and Konstanz with Überlingen.

Reichenau Island

☎ 07534 / pop 5100

In AD 724 a hard-working missionary named Pirmin founded a Benedictine monastery on **Reichenau**, (www.reichenau.de), a 4.5km-by-1.5km island (Lake Constance's largest) located in the Untersee about 10km west of Konstanz. During its heyday, from around 820 to 1050, it had one of the largest libraries anywhere. The so-called Reichenauer School produced stunning illuminated manuscripts and vivid frescoes.

Today, three surviving churches provide silent testimony to the Golden Age of Reichenau, and it is thanks to them that the island was declared a Unesco World Heritage Site in 2000. About two-thirds of the island is taken up by vegetable cultivation.

A 2km-long tree-lined causeway connects the mainland with the island, which is served by bus 7372 from Konstanz (most runs begin at Wollmatingen-Urisberg). The Konstanz-Schaffhausen and Konstanz-Radolfzell ferries stop off at Reichenau.

MEERSBURG

☎ 07532 / pop 5500

Meersburg is a postcard-perfect romantic village, scenically perched on a rocky outcrop overlooking Lake Constance and surrounded by vineyards and orchards. Its historic **Oberstadt** (Upper Town) has a labyrinth of narrow, pedestrian-only lanes that are lined with half-timbered houses and stately baroque

buildings; some have their construction dates carved into their lintels. Two castles lord over the bustling **Unterstadt** (Lower Town) and its seafront promenade, where the touristic overload is even more pronounced than up top.

Orientation & Information

Walking downhill from the church, across the street from the tourist office, will take you to the Marktplatz, the heart of the Oberstadt. Go through the Rathaus arch and you're at the castles. Steigstrasse will take you down to the Unterstadt and the harbour.

Post office (Am Bleicheplatz) Across the intersection from the church.

Schickeria (☎ 6887; Stettener Strasse 3; per hr €4; ☹ noon-midnight) Internet access.

Tourist office (☎ 431 110; Kirchstrasse 4; www.meersburg.de; ☹ 9am-12.30pm & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat May-Sep, 9am-noon & 2-4.30pm Mon-Fri Oct-Apr) Housed in a one-time Dominican monastery. Internet access costs €3 per hour.

Sights

ALTES SCHLOSS

Overlooking Lake Constance from its lofty Oberstadt perch, the **Altes Schloss** (Burg; ☎ 800 00; adult/child 6-13yr/youth 14-18yr/student €8/5/6/6.80, without tour €6/3/4/5.10; ☹ 9am-6.30pm Mar-Oct, 10am-6pm Nov-Feb) is a quintessential medieval castle, complete with defensive walkways, a knights' hall, moats, dungeons and a pretty grim vibe. Its origins supposedly go back to the 7th-century Merovingian king Dagobert I, after whom the massive central keep is named (the oldest extant sections date from the 1200s). Between 1268 and 1803, the bishops of Konstanz used the castle as a summer residence.

Purchased in 1838 by Baron Joseph von Lassberg, the castle became something of an artists' colony. For many years it was home to his sister-in-law, the celebrated German poet Annette von Droste-Hülshoff (1797-1848), whose portrait, along with several Meersburg landmarks, once graced the DM20 note (her prim, Biedermeier quarters can be visited). Visitors included the Brothers Grimm and Ludwig Uhland. Today the castle remains a private residence.

NEUES SCHLOSS

In 1710, Prince-Bishop Johann Franz Schenk von Stauffenberg decided that the Altes Schloss was no longer suitable as a residence (you'll see why if you visit) and

began building the pink baroque **Neues Schloss** (☎ 440 4900; www.schloesser-und-gaerten.de; adult/child/family €4/1/8; ☹ 10am-1pm & 2-6pm Apr-Oct) just east of the old castle. The elegant staircase is the work of Bathasar Neumann. The back garden, a favourite site for weddings, affords a superb sea panorama.

Now state-owned, the castle houses the **Städtische Galerie**, which hosts temporary exhibits. On the 1st floor, the interesting **Dornier Museum** is dedicated to Claude Dornier, the inventor of the seaplane.

Sleeping

Gasthaus zum Letzten Heller (☎ 6149; www.zum-letzten-heller.de, in German; Daisendorfer Strasse 41; s/d from €35/55; ☹) This simple and welcoming place, 800m north of the old town, has plenty of parking. An excellent choice if you're on a budget; payment is in cash only.

Haus Sântisblick (☎ 9277; info@tp-meersburg.de; Von-Lassberg-Strasse 1; s/d from €42/56, off-season €30/48; ☹ closed winter to mid-Feb; ☹ ☹ ☹) This pension, named after an Alpine peak you can see across the lake, has five cheery rooms and is also home base for the local scuba school (www.tauchschule-meersburg.de, in German). It's situated off Daisendorfer Strasse, 400m north of the old town.

Gasthof zum Bären (☎ 432 20; www.baeren-meersburg.de, in German; Marktplatz 11; s/d from €48/79; ☹ closed Jan; ☹) Housed in three 13th- to early-17th-century buildings, this historic hotel has 20 classic but cheery rooms. The two huge corner rooms, 13 and 23, are particularly romantic. It's situated in the Altstadt just inside the Obertor (the burnt-orange clock tower). The same family also rents out Unterstadt holiday apartments for two to five adults (€48 to €105; minimum three-day stay).

Eating & Drinking

Felchen (whitefish) is a local speciality.

Gasthaus zum Letzten Heller (☎ 6149; www.zum-letzten-heller.de, in German; Daisendorfer Strasse 41; mains €8.20-12.50; ☹ closed Wed & Nov) An unpretentious restaurant where the good-value regional dishes have long been favourites with locals.

Gasthof zum Bären (☎ 432 20; www.baeren-meersburg.de, in German; Marktplatz 11; mains €8.95-17.50 ☹ closed Dec-Feb & Mon) The south German specialities here include lots of fish options, including whitefish in grapefruit sauce.

Alemannen-Torkel (☎ 1067; Steigstrasse 16-18; meals €9.50-17.50) This 300-year-old, barrel-vaulted

A ROLL IN THE HAY

For a unique (and inexpensive) accommodation experience around Lake Constance, you can overnight at about a dozen **Heuhotels** (straw hotels; www.strohtour.de, in German) where, as the name implies, you sleep in a barn on clean, fragrant hay. Sheets are available, or you can bring your own sleeping bag. One option is **Schorsch's Heuhotel** (☎ 07543-6153; www.schorsch-heuhotel.de, in German; Kirchstrasse 9/1, Kressbronn; per person incl breakfast €15), about midway between Friedrichshafen and Lindau.

wine tavern has lots of local vintages. You'll feast like Prince von Stauffenberg in the restaurant upstairs.

Winzerstube zum Becher (☎ 9009; Höllgasse 4; mains €10.50-25.80; ☹ closed Mon) This wood-pannelled restaurant, run by the same family since the late 1800s, has a classy chef who infuses traditional Bodensee fish dishes with an international flavour. Situated half a block from the Neues Schloss.

Café im Barockschloss (☎ 800 00; inside Altes Schloss; ☹ 10am-6.30pm, closed Nov-Mar & Mon Oct & Apr) Savour your coffee, ice cream, or apple strudel with whipped cream (€3.60) on the Neues Schloss' panoramic terrace.

Edeka City Markt (Daisendorfer Strasse) Self-caterers can stock up on supplies at this supermarket 100m north of the old town.

Getting There & Away

For details on the many ferry options from here, see p453.

Meersburg, which lacks a train station, is 17km west of Friedrichshafen.

From Monday to Friday, seven times a day, express bus 7394 makes the trip to Konstanz (45 minutes) and Friedrichshafen; the latter city is also served almost hourly, including weekends, by bus 7395. Bus 7373 connects Meersburg with Ravensburg (45 minutes, four daily Monday to Friday, two Saturday). Meersburg's main bus stop is next to the church.

Getting Around

The best – in fact the only – way to get around Meersburg is on foot. Even the large pay parking lot near the car-ferry port is often full in the high season. Free parking might be

findable north of the old town along Daisen-dorfer Strasse.

Bikes can be hired at **Hermann Dreher** (☎ 5176; Stadtgraben 5; per day €4.50; ☎ rental 8am-noon Mon-Sat, 9-11am Sun & holidays), down the alley next to the tourist office; you can return them anytime before 8pm.

AROUND MEERSBURG Birnau

The exuberantly rococo **Birnau church** (admission free), a favourite for weddings, is one of the true architectural highlights of the Lake Constance region. Sitting majestically on a bluff overlooking the lake and surrounded by lush vineyards, it was built by the rococo master Peter Thumb of Vorarlberg.

When you walk in, the décor is so intricate and profuse you don't know where to look first. At some point your gaze will be drawn to the ceiling, where Gottfried Bernhard Göz worked his usual magic – look for whimsical details such as the tiny mirror in the cupola fresco.

Birnau is just off the B31, about 8km northwest of Meersburg and 5km southeast of **Überlingen**, which has one of the region's loveliest seafront promenades. Twice-hourly bus 7395 from Friedrichshafen (50 minutes) and Meersburg (20 minutes) stops near the church. You can also take a ferry (p453) to Überlingen and then walk to Birnau and back (10km return).

Schloss Salem

The **Prälatenweg** (Prelates' Path) connects the church at Birnau with the former Cistercian abbey of Salem, 7km to the northeast. Once the largest and richest monastery in southern Germany, the huge complex (founded in 1137) is now known as **Schloss Salem** (☎ 07553-814 37; www.salem.de in German; adult/child 6-16yr/student/senior €5.50/3/3.50/4.50; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10.30am-6pm Sun & holidays Apr-1 Nov). It became the property of the Grand Duchy of Baden after secularisation and is still the main residence of the family's descendants. The west wing is occupied by an elite boarding school that was briefly attended by Prince Philip (Duke of Edinburgh and husband of Queen Elizabeth II).

The focal point is the 14th-century **Münster**, whose Gothic purity is somewhat marred by the 26 early neoclassical-style alabaster altars. Certain parts of the complex (such as some of the rococo rooms) can only be seen

on two different guided tours in German (€3 or €4 extra each, free for children aged six to 16). The complex, which often hosts music festivals, also has a fire-fighting museum, old-time artisans' workshops, gardens and various restaurants.

Bus 7397 links Salem with Meersburg (20 or 30 minutes; via Oberuhldingen) every hour or two. The Bodensee-Gürtelbahn train goes to Friedrichshafen hourly.

FRIEDRICHSHAFEN

☎ 07541 / pop 58,000

Founded in 1811, Friedrichshafen stretches for 11km along the placid shore of Lake Constance and is surely one of Germany's nicer industrial towns. Its name will forever be associated with the Zeppelin airships, first built here under the stewardship of Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin (1838-1917) at the turn of the 20th century and now the focus of a fine museum.

Orientation & Information

There are two train stations, the main-line Stadtbahnhof, 200m north of the waterfront, and, 800m southeast, the Hafenbahnhof, next to the Zeppelin Museum and the ferry port. Going east to west, the seafront promenade is called Seestrasse and then Uferstrasse. Friedrichstrasse runs between the train tracks and the lakefront, linking the Stadtbahnhof with the commercial zone just inland from Seestrasse.

ATMs Near the seafront on Schanzstrasse.

City Wash laundrette (Schwabstrasse 16; ☎ 8am-10pm Mon-Sat) About 1km north of the Zeppelin Museum.

Internet & Tele Cafe (Schanzstrasse 16; per hr €2;

☎ 10am-10pm Mon-Sat, 11am-10pm Sun & holidays, to 9pm Nov-Apr) Two blocks inland from the Gondelhafen.

Post office (Bahnhofplatz) To the right as you exit the Stadtbahnhof.

Tourist office (☎ 300 10; www.friedrichshafen.ws; Bahnhofplatz 2; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat May-Sep, 9am-noon & 2-5pm Mon-Thu, 9am-noon Fri Apr & Oct, 9am-noon & 2-4pm Mon-Thu, 9am-noon Fri Nov-Mar) On the square right outside the Stadtbahnhof, in the corner of the SeeHotel.

Sights

Near the eastern end of Friedrichshafen's pleasant promenade, Seestrasse, lined with cafés and ice creameries, is the **Zeppelin Museum** (☎ 380 10; www.zeppelin-museum.de; Seestrasse 22; adult/student/senior/family €7.50/3/6.50/13; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Oct, 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Nov-Apr, also Mon Jul & Aug),

housed in the sleek, Bauhaus-style former Hafenbahnhof, built in 1932. Just for the record: the Nazis hated Bauhaus architecture.

The museum's centrepiece is a full-scale mock-up of a 33m section of the **Hindenburg** (see the boxed text, p462), made of the lightest materials available in the 1930s. Exhibits (including an original motor gondola from the **Graf Zeppelin**), models, touch-screen information terminals (in German and English) and a series of four short movies (in German) provide technical and historical insights. An audioguide (€3) gives 1½ hours of English commentary (most of the signage is in German). The eclectic art collection on the top floor includes works by Otto Dix.

Children will have fun playing on the stainless-steel **Zeppelin sculpture** outside the museum on Buchhornplatz. Lots more creative modern sculptures are sprinkled around town, including in the grassy lakefront **Stadtgarten** along Uferstrasse. **Boats** (row, pedal, motor and electric) can be rented at the Gondelhafen, at the park's eastern end (€5 to €17 per hour).

The western end of Friedrichshafen's seafront promenade is anchored by the twin onion-towered, baroque **Schlosskirche** (Klosterstrasse; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon, Tue, Thu & Sat, 9am-2.30pm Wed, 11am-6pm Fri, about noon-6pm Sun mid-Apr-Oct), built between 1695 and 1701 by Christian Thumb. It's the only accessible part of the Schloss, and is still inhabited by the ducal family of Württemberg. Note the lavish ceiling and the vividly carved choir stalls. For details on concerts see www.kirchenmusik-freundeskreis-fn.de (in German).

Sleeping & Eating

The tourist office has a free booking terminal outside. Numerous eateries, including pizzerias, line the Seestrasse promenade.

DJH hostel (☎ 724 04; www.jugendherberge.de; Lindauer Strasse 3; dm 1st/subsequent night €20.80/17.60; ☎) Named (like seemingly everything else here) after Graf Zeppelin, this 235-bed hostel is on the Rotach River near the lakefront 2km east of the Hafenbahnhof and 3km east of the Stadtbahnhof. Bus 7587 comes here from both train stations almost hourly from Monday to Friday, and on Saturday morning; you can also take local bus 7 to Eberhardstrasse.

Gasthof Rebstock (☎ 216 94; www.gasthof-rebstock-fn.de, in German; Werastrasse 35; s/d €50/70; ☎) One of Friedrichshafen's better deals, with wooden furnishings inside and a beer garden outside,

this is situated 750m northwest of the Stadtbahnhof (take Eugenstrasse).

Hotel Schwanen (☎ 385 50; www.hotel-schwanen-fn.de; Friedrichstrasse 32; s €50-65, d €80-100; ☎) An unpretentious, family-run hotel with 20 modern rooms at the edge of the pedestrianised city centre. The restaurant (mains €8.80 to €14.80) serves traditional German and Swabian dishes, including Maultaschen.

Buchhormer Hof (☎ 2050; www.buchhorn.de, in German; Friedrichstrasse 33; summer/s/d from €85/140, winter from €75/85; ☎ ☎ ☎) This old-time, four-star place has a very Germanic lobby, 98 cleverly decorated rooms, and a sauna, steam bath and whirlpool. The restaurant (mains €18.50 to €23.50) serves regional and international dishes.

Fehl supermarket (Karlstrasse 36; ☎ 8am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-4pm Sat) There's an entrance from Seestrasse opposite the skeletal steel lookout tower.

Getting There & Around

Ryanair flies from London Stansted and Dublin to **Friedrichshafen's airport** (www.fly-away.de), which is frequently linked to the city centre by buses 7586 and 7394. **InterSky** (www.intersky.biz) flies mainly to cities in Germany and Italy.

For details on ferry options, including the catamaran to Konstanz, see p453. Sailing times are posted on the waterfront just outside the Zeppelin Museum.

From Monday to Friday, seven times a day, express bus 7394 makes the trip to Konstanz (1¼ hours) via Meersburg (30 minutes). The latter city and Birnau are also served almost hourly, including on weekends, by bus 7395.

Friedrichshafen is on the Bodensee-Gürtelbahn rail line, which runs along or near the lake's northern shore from Radolfzell to Lindau. It's also served by the Südbahn, which goes to Ravensburg (15 minutes) and Ulm (€15.70, 1¼ hours).

RAVENSBURG

☎ 0751 / pop 48,500

Ravensburg, situated 18km inland from Friedrichshafen, was a Free Imperial City in medieval times and became exceedingly rich from the linen trade. It was also one of the first German cities to mass-produce paper, an industry that would later spawn the Ravensburger publishing house, famed for its games and children's books. Today, Ravensburg is a cosy town with an attractive Altstadt centre that serves as something of a shopping hub.

OH THE HUMANITY!

Unlike today's nonrigid airships (such as the Goodyear blimp), Zeppelins had an aluminium framework covered by a cotton-linen fairing. The cigar-shaped behemoths, the first of which flew in 1900, were soon used for passenger flights, outfitted as luxuriously and comfortably as ocean liners but made of superlightweight materials. The most famous of them all, the *Graf Zeppelin* (LZ 127), made 590 trips, including 114 across the Atlantic, and in 1929 she travelled around the world in just 21 days. By the mid-1930s Zeppelins, bearing swastikas on their fins, had become instantly recognisable symbols of Nazi power.

The *Hindenburg* (LZ 129), the largest airship ever built, was a whopping 245m long, more than three times the length of Airbus' new A380. In 1937, while landing in Lakehurst, New Jersey, the hydrogen-filled craft burst into flames, killing 36 passengers and crew (61 others survived). Horror-struck, the radio journalist Herbert Morrison – in a segment broadcast the next day – wailed 'Oh the humanity!', three of the most famous words in the history of broadcast journalism. The first album released by Led Zeppelin (in 1969) featured a photo of the disaster on the cover.

These days the **Zeppelin company** (www.zeppelin.de) is still around, though its Friedrichshafen-built airships are now filled with the inert gas helium. During certain periods of the year, you too can float over Lake Constance on a 12-passenger **Zeppelin NT** (☎ 0700-9377 2001; www.zeppelinflug.de). Trips of 30/40/60/120 minutes cost €190/250/335/675. NT, in case you were wondering, stands for *neue Technologie* (new technology). Take-off and landing are in Friedrichshafen.

Orientation & Information

The heart of Altstadt is the pedestrianised Marienplatz, which is more a long, wide street than a proper public square; almost all of Ravensburg's sights are right nearby. The train station is six blocks to the west along Eisenbahnstrasse.

Ravensburg (☎ 163 88; Marienplatz 34) Has a bookshelf of English-language books.

Stadtbücherei (city library; Marienplatz 12; per hr €2; ☎ 10am-7pm Tue-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat) Internet access for all is upstairs. On the ground floor people under 27 can go online for free for a half-hour.

Tourist office (☎ 828 00; www.ravensburg.de; Kirchstrasse 16; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat) A block northeast of Marienplatz. The entrance is on Herrenstrasse.

Sights & Activities

A number of imposing monuments from centuries past are arrayed along the central section of lively **Marienplatz**. The white, 51m-high **Blaserturm** (adult/child €1/0.50; ☎ 2-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-4pm Sat Apr-Oct), part of the original city fortifications, affords superb views of the Altstadt and the Alps from up top. Adjacent is the late-Gothic **Waaghaus**, with its stepped gable. Across Marktstrasse is the burnt-orange **Rathaus**, with some lovely stained glass. On the other side of Marienplatz, the 16th-century **Lederhaus**, once the domain of tanners and shoemakers (the ground floor is now a post office), has an elaborate Renaissance façade.

Three blocks east of Marienplatz stand seven exceptional late-medieval houses set around a courtyard. These are being transformed into **Museum Humpis** (Marktstrasse 45), set to open in 2010, and are worth a look for the architecture in the meantime.

At the far northern end of Marienplatz is the round **Grüner Turm** (Green Tower), with its intricate tiled roof, and the weighty, late-Gothic **Liebfrauenkirche**.

At the Altstadt's southern edge stands the **Mehlsack** (Flower Sack), a white, round tower the same height as the Blaserturm. From there a steep staircase leads up to the **Veitsburg**, a hillside castle founded in the 11th century that offers a fine panorama.

Sleeping

DJH hostel (☎ 253 63; www.jugendherberge-ravensburg.de; Veitsburg Castle; dm 1st/subsequent night €18.10/15.10; ☎) This quaint little hostel, recently renovated, is perched on the hillside above the Mehlsack tower, southeast of the Altstadt. It's about 25 minutes on foot from the train station.

Hotel Garni Baur (☎ 256 16; fax 132 29; Marienplatz 1; s/d €38/70; ☎) This place, in an undersized building on the site of a medieval city gate, is at the far southern end of Marienplatz. The very reasonable rooms are decorated in a modern style. The entrance is around back and up the stairs.

Hotel Residenz (☎ 369 80; www.residenz-ravensburg.de; Herrenstrasse 16; s/d from €75/99; ☎) In a

modern building 100m east of the tourist office, just behind the Liebfrauenkirche. The 33 light-yellow rooms, reached via creaky stairs, are dull but spacious.

Eating & Drinking

There are lots of eateries along Marienplatz.

Humpisgaststätte (☎ 256 98; Marktstrasse 47; mains €6.60-15; ☎ 9am-1am, meals till 11pm) A down-to-earth pub-eatery whose edibles include schnitzel and Swabian dishes such as *Maultaschen*.

Central (☎ 325 33; Marienplatz 48; ☎ 9-1am) This trendy café-restaurant offers reasonably priced Italian and local fusion dishes in chic bistro surroundings.

Food market (Marktstrasse & Gespinstmarkt; ☎ 8am-1pm Sat) This superlively outdoor market stretches eastwards from Marienplatz. It has everything from local asparagus to Ghanaian pineapples.

Bauern Markt (Marktstrasse 6; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat) An indoor food market.

Balthes (Marktstrasse 31) A very modern café-bar that's perfect for a coffee, beer or glass of wine.

Getting There & Away

Ravensburg is on the rail line linking Friedrichshafen (15 minutes, twice an hour) with Ulm (€13.40, 50 minutes, at least hourly) and Stuttgart (€25.20 to €33, two hours, at least hourly).

LINDAU

☎ 08382 / pop 24,300

Lindau, on a snippet of coastline that belongs to Bavaria, occupies a flowery little island in the northeastern corner of Lake Constance. In the Middle Ages, as a Free Imperial City, it enjoyed a heady prosperity thanks to its location on a major north-south trading route.

Today Lindau, whose views of the Alps are worth a thousand postcards, exudes old-world wealth and romance. Since 1951, Nobel Prize winners have gathered here for a week at the end of June to rub elbows and minds and meet with students from around the world.

Orientation

The *Insel* (island), where the town centre and harbour are to be found, is connected to the mainland by the Seebrücke, a road bridge at its northeastern tip, and by the Eisenbahndamm, a rail bridge open to cyclists

and pedestrians. The Hauptbahnhof is in the eastern part of the island, a block south of the western end of the main east-west thoroughfare, the pedestrianised, shop-lined Maximilianstrasse.

Information

ATMs There are several along the western section of Maximilianstrasse.

Lindauer Telecenter (Bahnhofplatz 8; per hr €4;

☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun) Internet access; 100m to the left as you exit the Hauptbahnhof.

Post office (cnr Maximilianstrasse & Bahnhofplatz)
Tourist office (☎ 260 030; www.prolindau.de, in German; Ludwigstrasse 68; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat & Sun mid-Jun-mid-Sep, 9am-6pm Mon-Fri & 9.30am-4pm Sat Apr-mid-Jun & mid-Sep-mid-Oct, 9am-noon & 3-5pm Mon-Fri mid-Oct-Mar)

Wash-Center Lindau (Holderegenstrasse 21) A self-service laundry on the mainland, about 1km north of the Seebrücke.

Sights

In the warm season the **Seepromenade** along the harbour offers an almost Mediterranean scene, with a sky bluer than blue, bobbing white boats, upmarket hotels and lots of well-heeled tourists soaking up the sun. Sipping something here is the consummate Lake Constance summer experience.

Out at the harbour gates is Lindau's signature 33m-high **Neuer Leuchtturm** (New Lighthouse) and, just in case you forget which state you're in, a statue of the Bavarian lion. The square tile-roofed, 13th-century **Alter Leuchtturm** (Old Lighthouse), also known as the Mangturm, is on the northern edge of the sheltered port.

The Marktplatz, at the eastern edge of the pedestrianised town centre, is dominated by **Haus zum Cavazzen**, a baroque construction of 1729, decorated with a riot of trompe l'oeil lions and voluptuous human forms. Inside, the attractive **Stadtmuseum** (☎ 944 073; Marktplatz 6; adult/child €2.50/1; ☎ 11am-5pm Sun & Tue-Fri, 2-5pm Sat) has a fine collection of furniture, weapons and paintings. The section dedicated to **mechanical musical instruments** (adult/child incl museum €4/2; ☎) tours at 2.15pm & 3pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct) can only be visited on a tour.

The 15th-century **Altes Rathaus** (Bismarckplatz), with its stepped gable, is adorned with murals based on 19th-century designs, which were added only in 1975. Alongside stands the **Diebsturm** (Brigand's Tower), once a tiny jail.

Three blocks north of the tourist office, the former **Peterskirche** (Schrannenplatz; ☎ daily), a millennium-old church that's now a war memorial, is decorated with frescoes of the Passion of Christ by Hans Holbein the Elder.

Sleeping

DJH hostel (☎ 967 10; www.lindau.jugendherberge.de; Herbergsweg 11; dm 1st/2nd/4th night €20.50/19.90/19.35, a bit less in low season; ☎ closed early Dec-early Feb except Christmas school holidays; ☎) An attractive 240-bed hostel 2km northeast of the Hauptbahnhof, on the mainland near the Lindau-Park shopping mall. To get there by bus, take line 1 or 2 from the Hauptbahnhof and then transfer to bus 3 at ZUP.

Gasthof Inselgraben (☎ 5481; www.inselgraben.de, in German; Hintere Metzgergasse 4-6; s/d without bathroom from €40/60; ☎ closed Nov-late Mar) A no-frills guesthouse a block and a half from the Seepromenade, with 17 cheaply furnished rooms. A reasonable choice if you're on a tight budget.

Gasthof Engel (☎ 5240; fax 5644; Schafgasse 4; s/d €47/84, s without bathroom €28; ☎ closed Jan) This guesthouse, in a centuries-old half-timbered house, offers modern, stylish rooms with smallish bathrooms. It's a block north of Maximilienstrasse.

Alte Post (☎ 934 60; www.alte-post-lindau.de, in German; Fischergasse 3; s €44-52, d €88-108; ☎ closed late Dec-late Mar) In a 300-year-old coaching inn that was once a stop on the Frankfurt-Milan mail run, this delightful place has 11 spacious and lovingly kept rooms with antique touches. Situated midway between the port and the Seebrücke.

Eating

Seepromenade is lined with cafés that have views.

Il Cappuccino (☎ 946 484; Maximilienstrasse 16) Known for its excellent Italian ice cream, it also has lasagna (€7.50), pasta (€5.60 to €8.40), pizza and meat dishes.

Kederer's Leuchtturm (☎ 942 167; Vordere Metzgergasse 18; mains €6.80-13.30; ☎ 9.30am-midnight, food till

10pm, closed Wed in winter) A decent place for an inexpensive, hearty meal under an ancient wooden ceiling.

Alte Post (☎ 934 60; www.alte-post-lindau.de, in German; Fischergasse 3; mains €7.50-16.50) This welcoming and highly civilised restaurant, whose specialities include local whitefish, *Maultaschen* and Austrian dishes, has had the same chef since 1985. It offers excellent value.

Gasthaus zum Sünfzen (☎ 5865; Maximilianstrasse 1; mains €9.90-18.90) An island institution whose Swabian-Bavarian fare includes homemade wurst (including *Schübling*), locally caught whitefish and lots of dishes made with fresh seasonal veggies.

Getting There & Away

For details on ferry services, see p453.

Lindau is on the B31 and is connected to Munich by the A96. The scenic **Deutsche Alpenstrasse** (German Alpine Road), which winds eastward to Berchtesgaden, begins in Lindau.

Lindau is located at the eastern terminus of the Bodensee-Gürtelbahn rail line, which goes along the lake's north shore via Friedrichshafen (€4.60, 15 minutes) westward to Radolfzell; and the southern terminus of the Südbahn to Ulm (€19.30, 1¼ hours) via Ravensburg (€7.60, 45 minutes).

Getting Around

The island is tiny and ideal for walking.

Buses 1 and 2 link the Hauptbahnhof to the main bus hub, known as ZUP. A single ticket costs €1.50, a 24-hour pass is €3.50.

To get to the island by car follow the signs to 'Lindau-Insel'. There's a large metered car park at the western end of the island, beyond the train tracks, but your best bet may be to park on the mainland and either walk or catch a bus over.

Bikes can be rented inside the Hauptbahnhof at **Fahrrad Station** (☎ 212 61; ☎ 9am-1pm & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-12.30pm Sat), which also opens 9am until noon Sunday and holidays May to September in good weather.