

Northeastern Switzerland



This is Switzerland's forgotten hinterland – at least, if such a well-explored country can be said to have one. While most tourists arrive in search of show-stopping natural scenery, this neat little corner tends more towards picture-book pretty. It offers more cultural delights, like the perfectly preserved medieval town of Stein am Rhein, the ostentatious bay windows of Schaffhausen or the magnificently ornate library of St Gallen's cathedral. Appenzell's contribution to this mix is a long line in rural tradition and a fine line in stinky cheeses.

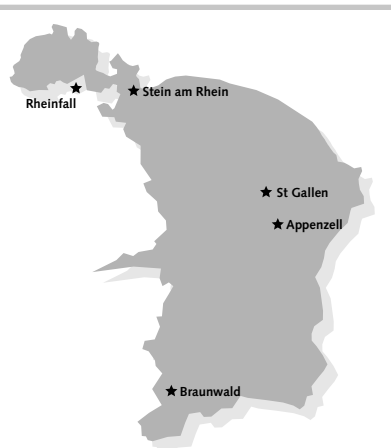
On the northern border where Switzerland segues into Germany, the two can seem indistinguishable. The relatively flat landscape attracts cyclists from all directions, while castles line both the German and Swiss shores of Lake Constance and the Rhine River. Even as you head further south, a series of rolling hills, carefully tended pastures and manicured apple orchards continue to make this feel like one of Switzerland's physically tamest regions.

But Mother Nature didn't entirely leave here without true spectacle. Outside Schaffhausen, brave souls stand on a rock in the middle of the Rhine Falls – Europe's largest waterfall – as 600 cubic metres of water per second pound by. The stretch of the Rhine between Schaffhausen and Lake Constance is among the river's most beautiful cruises, and the snaggle-tooth shapes of the Churfürsten Mountains invite comparison with the Matterhorn.

Perhaps the car-free resort of Braunwald sums up the region's symbolic position within the country. Braunwald doesn't enjoy the same in-your-face views as resorts in the Bernese Oberland. But it's amazing in its own right and as undiscovered as Switzerland gets.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Marvelling at the perfectly preserved medieval town centre of **Stein am Rhein** (p250)
- Standing in the middle of the **Rheinfall** (p250), Europe's largest waterfall
- Letting every Swiss stereotype come to life in mouth-watering **Appenzell** (p255)
- Hitting the books in **St Gallen's Stiftsbibliothek** (p252), a superb rococo masterpiece
- Discovering car-free **Braunwald** (p260) in one of the country's least-visited regions



■ POPULATION: 865,855

■ AREA: 4418 SQ KM

■ LANGUAGE: GERMAN

Orientation & Information

The tourist region of Ostschweiz (Eastern Switzerland) unites several easterly Swiss cantons with Liechtenstein (p305). Information can be found on the pages of Switzerland Tourism (www.myswitzerland.com) or the official website of Ostschweiz Tourismus (www.ostschweiz-i.ch in German). Otherwise, enquire at the St Gallen tourist office (p252).

Getting There & Around

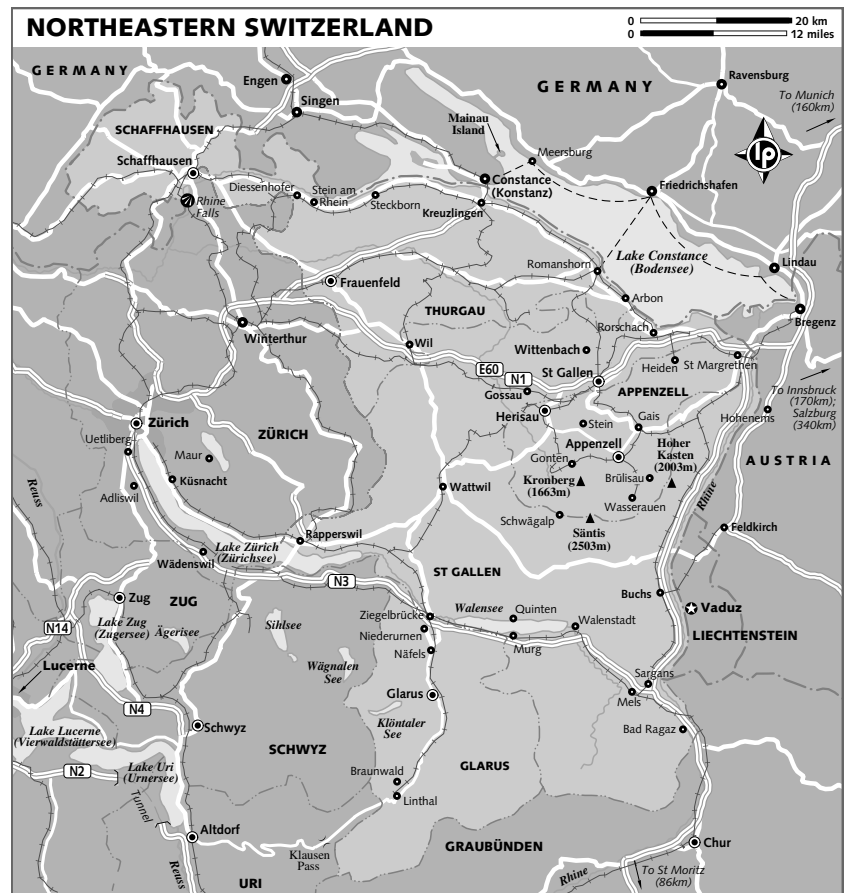
This area lies between Zürich and Friedrichshafen (Germany) airports and can be conveniently reached from either by public or private transport. Road and rail link Zürich with Schaffhausen, Stein am Rhein,

St Gallen and even Linthal, for Braunwald. Alternatively, a ferry will bring you across the lake from Friedrichshafen to Romanshorn, which also has good car and train links.

Several areas, such as the Bodensee region around Lake Constance and Appenzellerland, offer regional passes. For details, see the individual sections.

SCHAFFHAUSEN CANTON

Cyclists love touring this relatively flat region of the country, and accommodation (particularly cheaper accommodation) books up swiftly on weekends. However, excellent



transport and manageable distances make it an easy day trip from Zürich (p194), too.

SCHAFFHAUSEN

pop 33,450 / elevation 404m

Schaffhausen is the kind of quaint medieval town one typically finds in Germany and, sitting on the northern shore of the Rhine not far from the border, it nearly is. Ornate frescoes and 'oriel' (bay) windows adorn the pastel-coloured houses lining the stone pavements of its pedestrian-only Old Town. Amidst this, on a vine-covered hill, stands the city's signature fortress, the circular Munot.

Despite this highly visible landmark, allied pilots really did 'mistake' Schaffhausen for Germany during WWII, dropping bombs on the outskirts – on 1 April 1944 – and making it the only bit of Swiss soil to take a direct hit during the war. This and another bombing of the city post-April Fools' Day were officially declared accidents. However, rumour has it they were a warning to Schaffhausen's powerful munitions industry to stop illicit dealings with the Nazi regime.

Orientation

The train station, served by Swiss and German trains, lies parallel to one of the main streets, Vorstadt. Cross the road and head straight ahead about 150m to find yourself in the thick of things.

Information

Main post office (☎ 052 630 03 40; Bahnhofstrasse 34; ☎ 7am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Sat) Opposite the train station.

Tourist office (☎ 052 632 40 20; www.schaffhausen-tourismus.ch; Herracker 15; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-4pm Sat, plus 9.30am-3.30pm Sun Jul & Aug) Has one free Internet terminal.

Sights & Activities

Many visitors come to Schaffhausen for the nearby Rheinfall (Rhine Falls; see p250). However, it's worth spending a few hours seeing the Old Town, too. The tourist office offers **walking tours** (adult/child Sfr12/6; ☎ 2pm Tue, Thu & Sat May-Oct), with wine-tasting tours another possibility.

Schaffhausen is often nicknamed the *Erkerstadt* in German because of its 170

Erkers, or oriel bay windows, which citizens built as a display of their wealth. One of the most noteworthy windows belongs to the 17th-century **Zum goldenen Ochsen** (Vorstadt 17). Further south, past the 16th-century Mohrenbrunnen (Moor fountain) is the old market place, Fronwagplatz, which is dominated by the Metzgerbrunnen (Butcher's fountain with a William Tell-type figure) and a large clock tower.

As you face the clock, you'll see the late baroque **Herrenstube** (Fronwagplatz 3), built in 1748 and once the drinking hole of Schaffhausen nobles. To your left, a street away, lies the town's most famous building, **Haus zum Ritter** (Vordergasse 65), built in 1492. Its detailed renaissance-style fresco is a copy, and if you're keen you can see parts of the 16th-century originals in the **Allerheiligen Museum** (☎ 052 633 07 77; www.allerheiligen.ch; Klosterplatz; admission free; ☎ 11am-5pm Tue-Sun). However, overall, this museum is rather unfocused and you'd be better off devoting time to the attached **Allerheiligen Münster** (All Saints' Cathedral; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-5pm Tue-Sun) instead.

East of Haus zum Ritter, Vordergasse eventually becomes Unterstadt, where you'll find the stairs to the 16th-century **Munot** (admission free; ☎ 8am-8pm May-Sep, 9am-5pm Oct-Apr). The circular shape of Schaffhausen's fortress is highly unusual and it was built by forced labour following the Reformation. Inside its dimly lit interior, a relatively slippery circular ramp leads up to a large roof terrace, where you can grab a drink while enjoying the views over Schaffhausen's rooftops. Alternatively, the wooden door to the right as you enter the Munot leads to stairs that run through the vines of the surrounding hill.

The 45km boat trip from Schaffhausen to Konstanz is considered one of the Rhine's more beautiful stretches, lined as it is with castles, quaint villages and lush countryside. **Boat trips** (☎ 052 634 08 88; www.urh.ch or www.river ticket.ch; Freier Platz; one way/return Sfr21/30; ☎ 4 times daily May-Sep, four times Sat & Sun Apr) head to/from Konstanz via the island of Reichenau and Stein am Rhein. The journey takes 3¾ hours heading downstream to Schaffhausen and 4¾ hours going the other way.

Sleeping

SYHA hostel (☎ 052 625 88 00; www.youthhostel.ch/schaffhausen; Randenstrasse 65; dm Sfr25.50; ☎ reception closed 9am-5pm, hostel closed Nov-Feb; ☎ P)

This old pile of a mansion has clean, modern bathrooms, although the 10-bed mixed dorms are a bit musty. Set in leafy grounds, it's 15 minutes by foot west of the train station, or take bus No 6 to Hallenbad.

Gasthof Löwen (☎ 052 643 22 08; fax 052 643 22 88; Im Höfli 2; s/d with shared bathroom from Sfr65/110) Decent pension about 3km north of the centre. Take Bus No 5.

Park Villa (☎ 052 635 60 60; www.parkvilla.ch; Parkstrasse 18; s/d from Sfr80/130, with bathroom from Sfr170/180; ☎ P) The eclectic furniture in this faintly Gothic house resembles a private antique collection, with a various array of four-poster beds, Persian carpets, chandeliers, patterned wallpaper, fake Ming vases and so on, in individually decorated rooms. South of the station on the western side of the tracks, the hotel faces a pleasant park, and has quirky sculptures in its own garden.

Zunftaus zum Rüden (☎ 052 632 36 36; www.rueden.ch; Oberstadt 20; s/d Sfr150/180; ☎ P) Refurbished guildhall with character, despite being mainly a business hotel.

Fischerzunft (☎ 052 632 05 05; www.fischerzunft.ch; Bahnhofstrasse 46; s/d from Sfr142/215) One of Switzerland's most opulent hotels, this has a subtle Oriental theme, with printed silks in the bedrooms and subtle Asian flavours in its sinfully expensive restaurant (menus up to Sfr265!).

Eating

Café Vordergasse (☎ 052 625 42 49; Vordergasse 79; snacks & light meals Sfr5-16; ☎ Mon-Sat) This deservedly popular Art Nouveau-style tearoom has an international flavour, with a range of sandwiches, salads, quiches and even hummus in pita bread. Mango lassis, Indian and African teas and even unusual juices like lychee are on the menu, too.

Fass-Beiz (☎ 052 625 46 10; Webergasse 13; meals Sfr7.50-25; ☎ Mon-Sat) This tucked-away alternative bar-café enjoys a laid-back atmosphere and serves sandwiches and tasty sit-down dishes, with an excellent vegetarian selection. There are music gigs and theatre performances in the cellar below.

Schäfli (☎ 052 625 11 47; Unterstadt 21; menus Sfr15-22; ☎ Tue-Sat) This solidly unpretentious place near the stairs to the Munot serves a range of classic Swiss dishes from cheese dumplings to *Geschnetzeltes* veal.

Schützenstube (☎ 052 625 42 49; Schützengraben 27; mains Sfr18-38; ☎ Mon-Fri) The ornate historic



exterior might lead you to suspect a tourist trap, but this comfy tavern usually contains plenty of locals. The emphasis is on fresh seasonal ingredients, with the chef sometimes emerging from the kitchen to check diners are happy with their meals.

Getting There & Away

There are hourly trains to/from Zürich (Sfr17.60, 40 minutes). Local trains head half hourly to Stein am Rhein, Kreuzlingen, Romanshorn and either Rorschach or St Gallen. After 7pm, these services terminate at Romanshorn.

Schaffhausen also has excellent road connections radiating out in all directions.

RHEINFALL

The roar of water, the tang of salt spray and the chatter of hordes of day-trippers announce the presence of Europe's largest waterfalls. The **Rhine Falls** (www.rhinefalls.com) might not give Niagara much competition in terms of height (23m), width (150m) or even flow of water (600 cu metres per second in summer), but it's certainly a stunning sight when you arrive to see people standing on the tall rock in the middle, with the Swiss flag patriotically flying above.

Two castles overlook the falls. The smaller **Schlössli Worth** is on the north bank facing the falling water and is surrounded by touristy restaurants, shops, an information centre and small ferry wharves. The more imposing **Schloss Laufen** on the southern bank overlooks the falls at closer quarters, as they rush over the cliffs.

They are several ways to reach the falls, which governs where you arrive. If you catch bus No 1 or 6 from Schaffhausen train station to Neuhausen Zentrum (Sfr2.20), you'll follow the yellow footprints on the pavement until you come to a point where you can go right towards Schlössli Worth or left across the combined train/footbridge to Schloss Laufen.

If you come by local train from Schaffhausen or Winterthur to Schloss Laufen am Rheinfall (April to October only), you'll need to climb the hill to the castle. And if travelling by car, you'll pull up in the car park behind it.

Most views of the falls are free, but perhaps unsurprisingly, you pay for the best. To get close up to the rushing waters on the

south side of the falls, you pay Sfr1 at the Schloss Laufen souvenir shop (open daily) to descend the staircase to the Känzeli viewing platform.

During summer, **ferries** (☎ 052 672 48 11; www.maendli.ch) flit in and out of the water at the bottom of the falls. Some merely cross from Schlössli Worth to Schloss Laufen (adult/child Sfr2.50/1.50), but the most unusual excursion is the 'Felsenfahrt Panoramasicht' journey (adult/child Sfr6.50/3.50) to the tall rock in the middle of the falls, where you can climb to the top and watch the water rush all around you.

On the Swiss National Day, 1 August, there are spectacular fireworks over the falls.

If you're interested in the sound of the waterfall lulling you to sleep at night, there's an **SYHA hostel** (☎ 052 659 61 52; www.youthhostel.ch; dm Sfr25.50; ☹ reception closed 9am-5pm, hostel closed mid-Oct-mid-Mar) inside Schloss Laufen.

STEIN AM RHEIN

pop 3000 / elevation 407m

Stein am Rhein is a village straight out of Hans Christian Anderson fairytales: its immaculate appearance is something you'd only really expect in a children's picture book. The effect is most overwhelming in its cobblestone Rathausplatz, where dinky half-timbered houses decorated with ornate frescoes sit shoulder to shoulder in a united front against modernity.

This is frequently regarded as Switzerland's most beautiful town square, but the waterfront and a few side streets are also well worth exploring – which over one million tourists a year do. If you wish to avoid the worst crush, come on a weekday and stay until after 5pm.

Orientation & Information

The train station is on the southern side of the Rhine, while the Old Town lies on the northern bank. To make the short walk from the station (which has bicycle rental and lockers), head straight along Bahnhofstrasse. Turn right, then left and cross the bridge. Veering left, you'll enter the pedestrianised Rathausplatz.

The tiny **tourist office** (☎ 052 742 20 90; www.steinamrein.ch; Oberstadt 3; ☹ 9.30am-noon & 1.30-5pm Mon-Fri) is found to the east (right) of this square. Hotels can help with information when the office is closed. If arriving by ship,

simply head inland, and you'll soon arrive at Unterstadt, with Rathausplatz to your right.

Sights & Activities

The **Rathaus** (town hall) stands at the eastern end of **Rathausplatz**, around which the 16th-century houses are named according to the pictures with which they are adorned. So, for example, there is *Hirschen* (Stag), *Roter Ochsen* (Red Ox), *Sonne* (Sun) and *Weisse Adler* (White Eagle).

The point of Stein am Rhein is really to just wander around soaking up the atmosphere – while ducking the costumed tour guides and pony-trap rides. However, one four-storey house has been converted into the surprisingly diverting **Museum Lindwurm** (☎ 052 741 25 12; Unterstadt 18; adult/student Sfr5/3; ☹ 10am-5pm Wed-Mon Mar-Oct), which evokes the bourgeois lifestyle of the mid-19th century. The living rooms, servants' quarters and kitchen replicate the conditions enjoyed by the family who once lived here, while there are stables, too.

Around the town, there are several gate towers built in the 14th century, including one at the end of Unterstadt.

Sleeping & Eating

SYHA hostel (☎ 052 741 1255; www.youthhostel.ch/steinamrhein; Hemishoferstrasse 87; dm Sfr24.50; ☹ reception closed 9am-5.30pm, hostel closed Nov-Feb) Hemishoferstrasse is the continuation of Unterstadt to the west, and about 1.5km from the centre of town you'll find Stein am Rhein's pleasant hostel, some two minutes from the beach.

Mühlethal Gasthaus (☎ 052 741 27 25; Öhningerstrasse; s/d Sfr75/100) This place, 200m east of the tourist office, is good value with compact rooms.

Rheingerbe (☎ 052 741 29 91; www.rheingerbe.ch; Rathausplatz 2; s/d Sfr85/150) The compact rooms here are old-fashioned, but that seems entirely fitting in Stein am Rhein. You need to book to get a river-view room.

Rheinfels (☎ 741 21 44; www.rheinfels.ch; Rathausplatz 2; s/d Sfr135/190) Up the creaky staircase, past the suit of armour (or straight up the lift instead), this atmospheric hotel has generously sized rooms, decorated in an older style with lots of pink and brown, but many with river views.

Grenzstein (☎ 052 741 51 44; camp sites per adult/tent Sfr7/7; ☹ year-round) This smallish camping

site is 2km from Stein village, beside the Rhine. Good facilities onsite include washing machines, camp shop and restaurant.

Eating, like sightseeing, is very much a question of wandering around and seeing what takes your fancy.

Sonne (☎ 052 741 21 28; Rathausplatz 13; mains Sfr30-50; ☹ Thu-Mon) It's the oldest restaurant in town (the building is a cracked and crumbly 1463 slice of architecture). Fish dishes are delicate of texture, though rich in taste. There are also seasonal specialities.

Both hotels **Rheingerbe** (mains Sfr18 to Sfr28) and **Rheinfels** (mains Sfr35 to Sfr40) have highly rated fish restaurants.

Burg Hohenklingen (☹ Tue-Sun Mar-Dec) Up the hill above the town, Burg Hohenklingen provides a commanding view and a commendable restaurant.

Getting There & Away

Travel by train to Zürich costs Sfr23. Stein am Rhein is also on the hourly train route that links Schaffhausen (Sfr7.20) to the west with Rorschach (Sfr19) or St Gallen (Sfr23) to the east.

A boat trip along this stretch of the Rhine is pleasant if you have time (see p249), although you see many of the same sights during the quicker train or car journey. The latter follows Hwy 13, along the southern bank of the river.

ST GALLEN CANTON

ST GALLEN

pop 69,900 / elevation 670m

St Gallen's history as the 'writing room of Europe' is still evident in its principal attraction today. The ornate rococo library of its huge Catholic abbey remains its central focus. However, you don't have to be a complete bookworm to enjoy the place.

Its Old Town forms an attractive core, perfect for wandering, and with street names hung in large writing across their entrance, it's hard to get lost. Meanwhile, St Gallen's new outdoor 'City Lounge' provides a very modern counterpoint.

Orientation

The pedestrian-only Old Town, containing most major sights, is five to 10 minutes east of the train station.

Information

Main post office (☎ 071 499 73 04; Bahnhofplatz 5; ☎ 7am-7.30pm Mon-Fri, to 8pm Thu, 7am-4pm Sat, 3-6pm Sun)

Tourist office (☎ 071 227 37 37; www.st.gallen-boden.ch; Bahnhofplatz 1a; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat)

Sights

STIFTSBIBLIOTHEK & CATHEDRAL

St Gallen's 16th-century **Abbey Library** (www.stiftsbibliothek.ch; adult/student & senior/child Sfr7/5/free; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, to 4pm Sun Apr-Oct; 10am-noon & 1.30-5pm Mon-Sat, to 4pm Sun Dec-Mar) is one of the world's oldest libraries and the finest example of rococo architecture in Switzerland. Filled with priceless books

and manuscripts painstakingly handwritten by monks during the Middle Ages, it's a dimly-lit confection of ceiling frescoes, stucco, cherubs and parquetry. Only 30,000 of the total 150,000 volumes are in the library at any one time, and only a handful in display cases, arranged into special exhibitions by theme.

Above you, carved wooden balustrades prop up a mezzanine floor of yet more books. If there's a tour guide in the library at the time (and you usually don't have to wait long for one) you might be lucky enough to see the monks' filing system, cleverly hidden in the wall panels.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the numerous school groups who tour the library are most

THE LEGEND OF ST GALLEN

St Gallen all began with a bush, a bear and an Irish monk who should have watched where he was going. Or at least, so the legend goes. In AD 612, itinerant Gallus fell into a briar, but considered the stumble a calling from God rather than sheer coincidence. After a fortuitous encounter with a bear, in which he persuaded it to bring him a log, take some bread in return and leave him in peace, he used the log to begin building a hermitage. The result eventually became St Gallen's cathedral – allegedly.

enthralled by the 2700-year-old mummified corpse in the far corner.

The twin-towered **cathedral** (☎ 9am-6pm Mon, Thu & Fri, to 5pm Tue, 10am-6pm Wed, 9am-3.30pm Sat, noon-7pm Sun, but closed during services) is only slightly less ornate than its library, with dark-green ceiling frescoes and stucco embellishments. The remainder of the wall in the northeast corner of the Abbey complex is used to separate the Catholic and Protestant areas of town.

STADTLOUNGE

Historic St Gallen has recently given over part of its Bleicheli quarter to a stunningly modern art installation by Pipilotti Rist and Carlos Martinez. A rubberised red tennis-court coating has been spread over the ground between Gartenstrasse, Schreinerstrasse and Vadianstrasse, and this 'carpet' also covers a range of outdoor furniture like chairs, sofas, and tables, as well as a car.

This Stadtlounge project is intended as an 'outdoor living room' where people are encouraged to linger and chat. Huge bubbles hang over the street as lamps to add to the feeling of warmth.

BAY WINDOWS

St Gallen boasts a fine selection of elaborate 'oriel' bay windows, especially around Gallusplatz, Spisergasse, Schmiedgasse and Kugelgasse. **Walking tours** (adult/child Sfr15/10; ☎ 2pm Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri & Sat May-Oct, plus 2pm Sun Jul & Aug) leave from outside the tourist office.

TEXTILMUSEUM

St Gallen has long been an important hub of the Swiss textile industry, and the **Textil-**

museum (☎ 071 222 17 44; www.textilmuseum.ch; adult/student Sfr5/2; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-5pm Tue-Sat, 10am-5pm Sun, plus 10am-5pm 1st Wed of every month) is its most interesting. It traces the history of cloth-making in the town, but isn't all linen and old lace. Every season, there's also a selection of the latest fabrics waiting to be snapped up by haute-couture houses in Italy.

Sleeping

St Gallen is a business town, and frequent exhibitions and conferences can make beds scarce and prices high. Busy times are usually April and October.

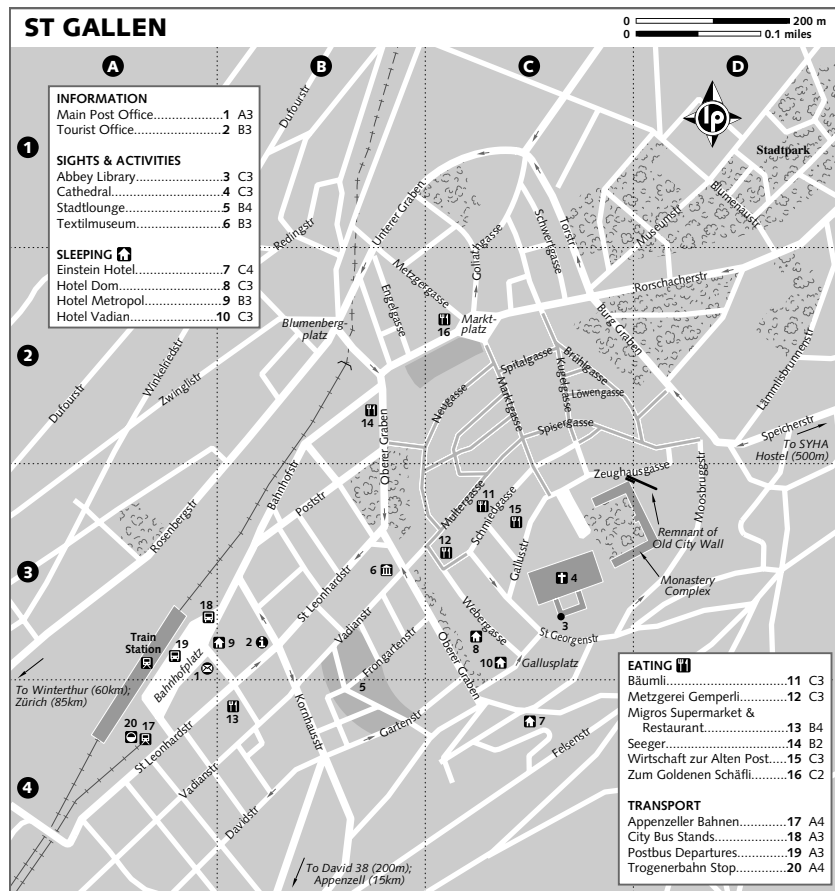
SYHA Hostel (☎ 071 245 47 77; www.youthhostel.ch/st.gallen; Jüchstrasse 25; dm Sfr27, s/d/q per person Sfr46.50/36/31, r per person Sfr34; ☎ reception closed 9.30am-5pm, hostel closed mid-Dec-Mar) Signposts mark the 15-minute walk from the Old Town to this modern, quality hostel. However, it's easier to take the orange Trogenerbahn from outside the train station to 'Schülerhaus' (Sfr2.60) and walk a few minutes up the hill until you see the hostel on the left.

Hotel Vadian (☎ 071 223 60 80; ☎ 071 222 47 48; Gallusstrasse 36; s/d from Sfr75/120, with bathroom Sfr105/165) This 'alcohol-free' hotel offers good value with sparse modern rooms given a bit of personal character with the occasional decorative feature.

Hotel Dom (☎ 071 227 71 71; www.hoteldom.ch; Webergasse 22; s/d Sfr90/110, with bathroom Sfr130/190; ☎) The friendly service is the selling point at this clean, comfortable and extremely convenient three-star establishment. The staff are all people with minor disabilities, who put a lot of loving care into their work – including the art which decorates the place.

Hotel Metropol (☎ 071 228 32 32; www.hotel-metro.ch; Bahnhofplatz 3; s/d from Sfr155/225; ☎) Rooms here are new and very stylish with lots of matt lacquer, white linen, broad-striped curtains and original art. There are blackout blinds to keep out the light from the train-station surrounds, and an excellent restaurant.

Einstein Hotel (☎ 071 227 55 55; www.einstein.ch; Berneggstrasse 2; standard s/d from Sfr200/250, superior from Sfr275/300; ☎ ☎ ☎) Even demanding rich Russians seem mollified by the levels of service and luxury at St Gallen's premier hotel. One wing contains the slightly older standard rooms. The superior rooms are brighter, airier, more hi-tech and spacious.



AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Zum Goldenen Schäfli (☎ 071 223 27 27; Metzgergasse 5; mains Sfr20-45; ☹ closed Sun in summer) This delightfully cosy 1st-floor restaurant has a distinctly sloping floor and eye-catching, sloping apéritif glasses to match. The glasses, silverware and flowers crowd the white tablecloths and a tiled medieval oven sits in the corner. The house speciality is tripe in white-wine sauce and meat dishes are numerous, but Schäfli also has half-a-dozen vegetarian choices, including home-made pasta.

Eating**FIRST-FLOOR RESTAURANTS**

St Gallen is noted for its '1st Stock Beizli', which are traditional taverns situated on the first floor of half-timbered houses.

Bäumli (☎ 071 222 11 74; Schmiedgasse 18; mains Sfr20-45; ☹ Wed-Sun Aug-Jun) This cheap and homey option showcases all the typical first-floor specialities, from bratwurst with fried onions to lamb cutlets, Wiener Schnitzel, Cordon Bleus, *Geschmetzeltes* veal and *Most-bröggli* (smoked beef jerky).

Wirtschaft Zur Alten Post (☎ 071 222 66 01; Galuststrasse 4; mains Sfr30-42; ☹ Tue-Sat) Things are a little ritzier at this upmarket *beizli*, where Swiss dishes are complemented with the likes of lamb on chilli risotto or mussels in lemongrass broth.

OTHER CUISINE

Seeger (☎ 071 222 97 90; Oberer Graben 2; mains Sfr9-27) This relaxed café attracts a broad mix of customers, with a few suits and ladies who lunch found among 20-somethings. Brunch is also served on weekends.

David 38 (☎ 071 223 28 38; Davidstrasse 38; mains Sfr20-42; ☹ Mon-Sat) This trendy upmarket bistro is a hit with the business set, with its range of fish and modern international cuisine.

Inexpensive restaurants are strung out along Marktplatz. St Gallen is also known for its Olma bratwurst, served plain in a *bürli*, or bun. Sausage stands are ubiquitous, but the best outlet is at **Metzgerei Gemperli** (cnr Schmiedgasse & Webergasse; sausages from Sfr6.50). For another budget option and self-catering, check out Migros Supermarket and Restaurant.

Getting There & Away

It's a short train or bus ride to/from Romanshorn (Sfr10.40). There are also regular trains to Bregenz in Austria (Sfr18), Chur (Sfr35) and Zürich (Sfr30, 70 minutes via Winterthur).

By car, the main link is the N1 motorway, which runs from Zürich and Winterthur to the Austrian border. It passes close to the centre of town, just slightly to the north.

Getting Around

Single journeys on the bus cost Sfr2.60, while it's Sfr8 for a day pass or Sfr32 for one week. Individual bus tickets are not valid on the Trogenerbahn, where the fare depends upon distance, but the general day passes are valid (as far as Rank station).

APPENZELLERLAND

The Appenzellers are the butt of many a cruel joke by their fellow Swiss. Just as Tasmanians are to Australians and Newfoundlanders are to Canadians, these are the nation's country bumpkins, reputedly slow on the uptake. Or as it would be delightfully described in Schwyzertüttsch, they *hätte ä langi Laitig* (have a very long cable). It takes a while after you tug for them to get the message.

The roots of this backward reputation are fairly easy to divine. Innerhoden, one of the two semi-cantons that make up Appenzellerland (the other is Ausserrhoden), unusually still holds a yearly open-air parliament, and it didn't permit women to vote until 1991, to take just one example. Even then, the Supreme Court had to intervene.

In a general sense, however, many foreign visitors find the Appenzellers' devotion to rural tradition immensely charming and just what they expected from Switzerland. Maybe some things are best left unchanged. Appenzellerland has beautiful villages, mostly untouched by modern times. Life moves along at an enviably relaxed pace – the contented locals may know more than they are credited with.

Information

People who stay three days or longer in the region are eligible for the free Appenzeller Ferienkarte, which offers transport, sport-

ing and museum discounts. Ask at the Appenzell tourist office (see below).

APPENZELL

pop 5530 / elevation 785m

Appenzell is a feast both for the eyes and the stomach. Behind the highly decorative façades of its traditional Swiss buildings lie numerous cafés, *confiseries* (confectionery shops), cheese shops, delicatessens, butchers and restaurants all offering local specialities. (Inevitably, given Appenzell's popularity with guided bus tours, there are plenty of shops selling tacky trinkets, too.)

This pastel-coloured Innerhoden village is suitable for lunch and a wander on a Sunday afternoon, or you could come for longer and explore the surrounding hills. Whichever you choose, remember to come hungry and with enough space in your luggage for chocolate, cheese and alcoholic souvenirs.

Orientation & Information

The train station (with money-exchange facilities and bike rental) is 400m from the centre of town. Take the exit marked 'Ortszentrum' and continue north roughly straight ahead (veering slightly left around the lilac house) until you come to Hauptgasse. The Landsgemeindeplatz is to your left (west); to your right (east), 100m along or so, is the **tourist office** (☎ 071 788 96 41; www.appenzell.ch; Hauptgasse 4; ☹ 9am-noon & 1.30-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon & 2-5pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct, 9am-noon & 2-5pm Mon-Fri, 2-5pm Sat & Sun Nov-Mar).

Sights & Activities

Appenzell's main focus is the **Landsgemeindeplatz**. This is not just the square where the open-air parliament takes place the last Sunday of every April, with locals wearing traditional dress and voting (in the case of the men, by raising a short dagger). It's one of the most picturesque spots in town all year round, with several elaborately painted hotels and restaurants around its edges.

The buildings along Hauptgasse are also worth admiring. The village **church** along here has gold and silver figures flanking a baroque altar. Nearby, beside the tourist office, is the **Appenzell Museum** (adult/student Sfr6/4; ☹ closed Mon in winter), which will fill you in on traditional customs and lifestyle – although you'll learn more at the museum in Stein (p256).

On the other side of the train station from the town is the **Museum Liner** (☎ 071 788 18 00; www.museumliner.ch; Unterrainstrasse 5; adult/concession Sfr9/6; ☹ 10am-noon & 2-5pm Tue-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct; 2-5pm Tue-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun Nov-Mar). This is Appenzell's contemporary art gallery, but the building is more interesting than the collection within.

There are numerous hikes in the region – so many in fact that it's simplest to ask for recommendations at the tourist office or pick up one of its brochures. Many hiking trails are lined with mountain restaurants, where you can restock on calories. One unusual trail is the **Barefoot Path** from Appenzell to Gonten, where you really don't need shoes. In Gonten there is also a **natural moor bath** (see the boxed text Spas & Thermal Springs, p47).

Sleeping

Gasthaus Traube (☎ 071 787 14 07; www.hotel-traube.ch; s Sfr85-110, d Sfr150-180; ☹ Mar-Jan) The most charming place in town isn't even the most expensive, but it does have just seven rooms. These are small, but feature wooden beds and new bathrooms with

SAY CHEESE

Appenzell is best known for its **strong-smelling cheeses** (www.appenzeller.ch). They make excellent fondues when mixed with fresh herbs and alcohol, and restaurants also dish them up in the form of *Käseschnitte* (cheese on toast), *Chäshöornli* (irregularly formed cheese dumplings with fried onions) or *Chäsmageroone* (macaroni cheese).

An Appenzell *Chäsflade* is a savoury cheese tart with coriander, and a *Chäshap- pech* is a pancake made with cheese, flour, milk, beer and eggs, and fried in oil. With raclette also popular, vegans might want to drown their sorrows in *Saurem Most* (local cider) or *Alpenbitter*, a herbal alcoholic drink a la Jägermeister that's another Appenzell speciality.

Local menus also feature lots of rösti, pork cutlets, veal, calf's liver and rabbit, but change regularly to accommodate seasonal specialities (ie venison and pumpkin in autumn). Appenzell produces a wide range of its own confectionery.

sliding frosted-glass doors. The modernist, tan-leather chairs are memorable, as is the staff's friendliness. This guesthouse is just off Landsgemeindeplatz, behind Hotel Sântis.

Hotel Appenzell (☎ 071 788 15 15; www.hotel-appenzell.ch; Landsgemeindeplatz; s/d Sfr125/210, with discounts for longer stays; ☒) Rooms in this attractive traditional building are generously sized, with wooden beds and slightly older bathrooms. The yellow decoration on the lower floor is much brighter and uplifting than the dusky pink on the upper.

Hotel Adler (☎ 071 787 13 89; www.adlerhotel.ch; Adlerplatz 5; 'Appenzeller' r Sfr180-200, ste Sfr240-260; ☒ (P)) Overall, this place could do with some renovation, but it's worth staying in one of the 10 traditionally decorated 'Appenzeller' rooms. They feature painted wardrobes and some have tiled ovens as decoration; No 34 is particularly attractive. The hotel is near the eastern end of Hauptgasse, further still than the tourist office, on the other side of the street.

Hotel Sântis (☎ 071 788 11 11; www.saentis-appenzell.ch; Landsgemeindeplatz; s Sfr120-180, d Sfr180-300; ☒ ☒ (P)) Appenzell's luxury option has one of the most striking façades on Landsgemeindeplatz and a romantic atmosphere throughout. Large rooms all have modern bathrooms; some come with four-poster beds.

A decent cheap option is **Gasthaus Hof** (☎ 071 787 22 10; www.gasthaus-hof.ch; Engelgasse 4; s/d/tr/q Sfr90/130/180/220), just off Landsgemeindeplatz. Four kilometres away in Kau, **Gasthaus Eischen** (☎ 071 787 50 30; www.eischen.ch; ☒ Mar-Jan) has an attached camping site.

Eating

Most places charge roughly Sfr12 for *Käseschnitte* (cheese on toast) and snacks, or Sfr20 to Sfr40 for main courses. Many of the best restaurants are in the hotels.

Hotel Appenzell (☎ 071 788 15 15; Landsgemeindeplatz) In many people's opinion this is the best place to try for its wide-ranging seasonal menu that includes vegetarian dishes. The restaurant, through the hotel's mouthwatering *Conditoirei*, has a non-smoking section.

Gasthaus Traube (☎ 071 787 14 07; ☒ Tue-Sun) The restaurant on the first floor has the atmosphere of a traditional 'Stube' or tavern. It's a good place to try fondue or calf's liver. It is off Landsgemeindeplatz.

Gasthaus Hof (☎ 071 787 22 10; Engelgasse 4) Very smoky, very old-school restaurant with plenty of local bonhomie. Menus are attractively displayed and explained in several languages at the door.

Hotel Freudenberg (☎ 071 787 12 40; Riedstrasse 57; ☒ Tue-Mon Dec-Oct) Ten minutes' walk up the hill from the train station, in the opposite direction from the town, this family-run restaurant has a terrace with panoramic views of Appenzell and around.

Hotel Sântis (☎ 071 788 11 11; Landsgemeindeplatz) Sântis has several restaurants including a ground floor restaurant and terrace, serving all the usual Appenzell specialities, including fondue. Upstairs is more formal.

Getting There & Away

The narrow-gauge Appenzell train leaves from the front and to the right of the main St Gallen station (Swiss Pass and Eurail valid; Inter Rail half-price). To Appenzell (Sfr10.40) it takes 50 minutes. There are two routes so you can go back a different way. Departures from St Gallen are approximately every half-hour, via Gais or Herisau.

STEIN

En route to/from Appenzell, it's worth dropping into Stein for its **Volkskunde Museum** (Folklore Museum; www.appenzeller-museum-stein.ch; adult/student/child Sfr7/6/3.50; ☒ 1.30-5pm Mon, 10am-noon & 1.30-5pm Tue-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Sun only Nov-Mar). This gives a comprehensive and interesting rundown on traditional life in the region.

Should you not yet have had your fill of cheese, there's also the **Appenzeller Schaukäserie** (Appenzell Showcase Cheese Dairy; ☎ 071 368 50 70; www.showcheese.ch; admission free; ☒ 9am-7pm May-Oct, to 6pm Nov-Apr). It runs through the manufacturing process, explaining how cheeses like the famous Räss get their sweaty-socks smell (a coating of herbs and brine, apparently). Try to get here between 9am and 2pm, after which there's nothing much to see. The restaurant offers cheese-based dishes and cheese tastings. On Sunday, from 9am to 11am, there's an all-you-can-eat breakfast buffet (Sfr22.50).

Hourly buses go from the Appenzell train station to Stein (15 minutes, Sfr9.80, Swiss Pass valid) and drop you right opposite the cheese dairy.

SÄNTIS

Small in Swiss terms, Sântis (2503m) is the highest local peak, and offers a marvellous panorama encompassing Bodensee, Zürichsee, the Alps and the Vorarlberg Mountains. To get there, take the train from Appenzell to Urnäsch and transfer to the bus (approximately hourly) to Schwägalp (total fare Sfr16). From Schwägalp, the cable car, **Sântisbahn** (☎ 071 365 65 65; www.saentisbahn.ch; one way/return Sfr24/34; ☒ 7.30am-6.30pm summer, 8.30am-5pm rest of year) ascends to the summit every 30 minutes.

From Sântis, you can walk along the ridge to the neighbouring peak of Ebenalp (1640m) in about 3½ hours. At Wildkirchli on Ebenalp there are prehistoric caves showing traces of Stone Age habitation. The descent to Seeläpsee on foot takes 1½ hours. Alternatively, a **cable car** (☎ 071 799 12 12; www.ebenalp.ch; one way/return Sfr18/25 in summer, Sfr25/33 in winter) runs between the summit and Wasserauen approximately every 30 minutes. Wasserauen and Appenzell are connected by rail (Sfr3.80).

LAKE CONSTANCE

Before package holidays began carrying large numbers of locals and their beach towels abroad in the 1970s and '80s, Lake Constance (Bodensee) was the German Mediterranean. Lionised in poetry and song – just like the River Rhine that flows into it – it's still a hugely popular destination with neighbouring Germans, Austrians and Swiss. The 'Swabian Sea', as it's nicknamed, is a great place to wind down for a few days and enjoy the water. Although even Swiss people admit that the towns on the northern German shore are more attractive, cyclists do like to tour through the very pleasant green countryside between the less-developed Swiss resorts, stopping briefly en route.

Orientation

Lake Constance is shared by Switzerland with its more affordable neighbourhoods Germany (country code ☎ 49) and Austria (country code ☎ 43).

Konstanz is the largest town on the lake and sits on the end of the peninsula between the two western arms, the Überlinger

See and the Unter See. Konstanz proper is in Germany, although the adjoining town of Kreuzlingen is Swiss and they are both really part of the same conurbation. Romanshorn, Arbon and Rorschach are also on the Swiss side. Other noteworthy tourist centres include Bregenz in Austria.

Information

DISCOUNT CARDS

The Bodensee Erlebniskarte (Sfr82/105/149 for 3/7/14 days) is sold from March to October and entitles the holder to free unlimited ferry travel and entrance to many museums, including the Zeppelin Museum in Friedrichshafen, a return journey up the Sântisbahn (left), walking tours in St Gallen and more.

MONEY

Almost without fail, shops, restaurants and other businesses in the region accept neighbouring currencies.

Getting There & Away

Ryanair (www.ryanair.com) flies from London Stansted to **Friedrichshafen Airport** (www.fly-away.de) in Germany. Friedrichshafen is connected by (car) ferry to Romanshorn on the Swiss side of the lake, with connections onwards to other towns in the region, as well as to St Gallen and Zürich.

There are good rail connections from Zürich to Konstanz. From Germany, they come south from Munich to Konstanz. Trains from Austria come via Bregenz and enter Switzerland at St Margrethen.

An enjoyable way to enter the region is to take a cruise along the Rhine from Schaffhausen to Konstanz (p249).

Access to the lake by road is good on all sides. From Zürich, the N1 (E60) motorway runs east, via Winterthur and St Gallen, to the Austrian border near Rorschach. The N7 branches off just after Winterthur and leads to Kreuzlingen.

Getting Around

Ferries (Switzerland ☎ 071 466 78 88; www.sbsag.ch; Austria ☎ 05574 428 68; www.bodenseeschiffahrt.at; Germany ☎ 07531 28 13 89; www.bsb-online.com) travel across, along or around the lake from early March to late October, with the more frequent services starting in late May. These boats are dubbed the *Weissen Flotte* or

white fleet. A Swiss Pass is valid only on the Swiss side of the lake.

Trains tend to be the easiest way to get around on the Swiss side, buses on the German bank.

The B31 road hugs the northern shore of the lake, but it can get busy. Likewise on the southern shore, where Hwy 13 shadows the train line around the lake, linking all the Swiss resorts mentioned in this section.

A 270km bike track encircles the lake and is well signposted. Train stations in the region mostly rent out bikes (p327).

KONSTANZ

☎ 07531 / pop 79,000

Konstanz (Constance) is the bustling, cosmopolitan hub of the Bodensee; one in seven inhabitants – affectionately known as *Seehas* (sea hares) – is a student at the university.

The **tourist office** (☎ 133 030; www.konstanz.de/tourismus; Bahnhofplatz 13; ☎ 9am–6.30pm Mon–Fri, 9am–4pm Sat, 10am–1pm Sun Apr–Oct, 9.30am–12.30pm & 2–6pm Mon–Fri Nov–Mar) is a few minutes' walk north (right) of the main train-station exit. There's a 24-hour hotel board in front, and another information counter near the ferry landing.

Konstanz's moment of glory came in 1414–18, when the Council of Konstanz convened here to elect a single pope and tried, unsuccessfully, to heal the schism in the Catholic church. That council convened inside the enormous **Münster** (cathedral), which showcases various architectural styles from 1052 to 1856. The Gothic spire can be climbed for truly vertiginous views.

Stretching north from the cathedral to the Rhine is the old quarter of **Niederburg**, with lots of tight winding alleys.

There are several **museums** in town, but Konstanz's most astonishing attraction is a little out of the centre, reached by ferry or via bus 4 from the main train station. It's **Insel Mainau** (☎ 303 0; www.mainau.de; adult/child €11/3.40, Apr–Nov €6/3; ☎ 7am–8pm Mar–Oct, 9am–6pm Nov–Apr), an island landscaped with 45 hectares of splendid gardens, including a tropical garden, an Italian garden, a butterfly enclosure and a palm house (closed winter). There's also a baroque church and various arboretums. It can get crowded in summer, when it's best to come late or early. It's possible to take bikes onto the island. To rent one, try **Pro Velo** (☎ 293 29; Konzilstrasse 3).

Sleeping

DJH hostel (☎ 322 60; fax 311 63; Zur Allmannshöhe 18; dm junior/senior €22/28; ☎ Mar–Oct) Although it's located in a converted water tower, this hostel's rooms are fairly bland and institutional. Catch bus No 4 from the station to Jugendherberge or you can take bus No 1 to Allmandorf-Post.

Barbarossa (☎ 128 990; www.barbarossa-hotel.com; Obermarkt 8–12; s €40–65, d €90–110) With its three categories of rooms, this labyrinthine hotel caters for most budgets and tastes, but is very popular in summer so you should book. The cheaper rooms are modern and simple; the costlier ones are more traditional and atmospheric.

Campingplatz Bodensee (☎ 322 60; fax 07531 311 63; Zur Allmannshöhe 18; ☎ Mar–Oct) This modern camp site, only built in 1995, is in the neighbourhood of the car-ferry port. It hires out surfboards and canoes. Take bus No 4 to get there.

KREUZLINGEN

pop 16,770 / elevation 404m

Kreuzlingen is little more than an appendage to Konstanz and not as attractive as the larger town. There's a good **SYHA hostel** (☎ 071 688 26 63; www.youthhostel.ch/kreuzlingen; Promenadenstrasse 7; dm Sfr28.50; ☎ Mar–Nov), but otherwise the most sensible thing is to change trains at Kreuzlingen station and head straight to Konstanz (Sfr2.80, three minutes); there is no passport control. Should you need more details, try the **tourist information counter** (☎ 071 672 38 40; www.kreuzlingen-tourismus.ch; TCS Travel Agency, Hauptstrasse 39; ☎ 8.30am–noon & 1.45–6pm Mon–Fri, 8.30am–noon Sat). Direct trains run every 30 minutes between Kreuzlingen and Schaffhausen (one hour).

FRIEDRICHSHAFEN

☎ 07541 / pop 57,500

Friedrichshafen, in Germany, will forever be associated with the Zeppelin, the early cigar-shaped craft of the skies. The first of Graf (Duke) Zeppelin's airships made its inaugural flight over Lake Constance in 1900 and several years ago these rigid-framed 'blimps' were resurrected here as a tourist attraction. **Deutsche Zeppelin Reederei** (☎ 0700 9377 2001; www.zeppelinflug.de; 30min/1hr from €250/335; ☎ Apr–Nov) offers sightseeing flights over Lake Constance or Friedrichshafen. There's also the **Zeppelin Museum**

(☎ 380 10; www.zeppelin-museum.de; Seestrasse 22; adult/senior/student & child €7.50/6.50/3; ☎ 9am–5pm Jul–Sep, 9am–5pm Tue–Sun May, Jun & Oct, 10am–5pm Nov–Apr), with a small re-creation of the crafts' train-like sleeping cabins and smoking room. The audio guide makes it much more exciting.

The **tourist office** (☎ 300 10, for 24hr hotel booking ☎ 194 12; www.friedrichshafen.ws; Bahnhofplatz 2; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Fri, 9am–1pm Sat May–Sep, 9am–noon & 2–5pm Mon–Fri Apr & Oct, 9am–noon & 2–4pm Mon–Fri Nov–Mar) is just outside the Friedrichshafen Stadt train station and can book everything from Zeppelin flights to accommodation.

To get to Friedrichshafen's busy **DJH Hostel** (☎ 724 04; Lindauer Strasse 3; dm junior/senior 19/21.70), take bus No 7587 from the Friedrichshafen Stadt train station. **Gasthof Rebstock** (☎ 216 94; www.gasthof-rebstock-fn.de; Werastrasse 35; s/d €50/70; ☎) is a pleasant, family-run pension with simple but fresh and tidy rooms, a short walk southeast of the same train station. Reception is closed Fridays, so ring ahead.

There are two trains an hour (€1.50, 15 minutes) from the **airport** (www.fly-away.de) to Friedrichshafen Stadt and Friedrichshafen Hafen, where you'll find the Zeppelin Museum and ferries. A **car ferry** (☎ 923 8389; www.bsb-online.com; adult/child/family €6.20/3/30, car €14, Swiss francs accepted) runs between Friedrichshafen and Romanshorn hourly from at least 8.30am to 5.30pm, with extra early and late services most days. The landing stage and passport control in Romanshorn are next to the train station. From Friedrichshafen, you can also take a ferry to anywhere on the lake.

ROMANSHORN & ARBON

pop 8950 & 13,110 / elevation 398m

Despite its one prominent church spire, Romanshorn is of minimal sightseeing interest – little more than a staging point as you go to/from Friedrichshafen on the ferry. If you do decide to stay, the **tourist office** (☎ 071 463 32 32; www.romanshorn.ch; ☎ 10am–noon & 2–6.30pm Mon–Fri, 10am–noon Sat Apr–Sep; 10am–noon & 2–5pm Mon–Fri, 10am–noon Sat Oct–Mar) is in the train station.

The medieval village of Arbon is prettier, either for a day trip spent wandering and admiring its half-timbered houses and ancient chapels, or for a day or two's quiet relaxation and water sports. It's on the train

line between Zürich and Rorschach, and there are direct connections to Roman-shorn and Schaffhausen.

Leaving the train station, walk 10 minutes north (left) up Bahnhofstrasse, until you come to a lakeside intersection with Hafenstrasse heading right and Hauptstrasse left. Continue another five minutes to the left until you come to Schmiedgasse on your right and the **tourist office** (☎ 071 440 13 80; Schmiedgasse 40). You're now in the historic town centre, with its 16th-century castle and accompanying **historical museum** (admission Sfr3; ☎ 2–5pm May–Sep, Sun only Apr & Oct).

There's a good range of places to stay from the cheerful **Hotel Rotes Kreuz** (☎ 071 446 19 18; www.hotelroteskreuz.ch; Hafenstrasse 3; s/d Sfr70/140) and comfortable **Hotel Park** (☎ 071 446 11 19; www.hotelpark.ch; Parkstrasse 7; s/d Sfr85/150) to the more upmarket **Gasthof Frohsinn** (☎ 071 447 84 84; www.frohsinn-arbon.ch; Romanshornstrasse 15; s Sfr105–120, d Sfr160–175) and **Gasthaus Römerhof** (☎ 071 447 30 30; www.gasthausroemerhof.ch; Hauptstrasse; s/d from Sfr120/180). Both of these last two have good restaurants, and Frohsinn also has a microbrewery.

RORSCHACH

pop 8640 / elevation 398m

Nothing to do with the psychiatric ink-blot tests with which it shares its name, the quiet resort of Rorschach sits on the waterfront below a wooded hill. Although something of a faded beauty these days, the town does have some fine 16th- to 18th-century houses with oriel windows.

There are three train stations, which can be confusing. If coming from St Gallen, alight at Rorschach Stadt station (Sfr6) and walk 500m east through the centre to Rorschach Hafen station (which is on the line from Romanshorn, Arbon, Kreuzlingen and Schaffhausen). Here, you will find the **tourist office** (☎ 071 841 70 34; www.tourist-rorschach.ch; Hauptstrasse 63; ☎ 9.30–11.45am & 2–5.30pm Tue–Fri, 2–5.30pm Mon–Apr–Oct, plus 9.30am–noon Sat Jun–Sep, 2–5.30pm Mon–Fri Nov–Mar) and the cogwheel train which leaves to the **health resort** of Heiden.

The Rorschach Hafen station is also handily located on Hauptstrasse. Walk left (east) from the station to see some fine oriel windows, particularly at Nos 33, 31 and the town hall, No 29. Walk right from the train station to find the main hotels,

AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Schloss Wartegg (☎ 071 858 62 62; <http://wartegg.ch>; Rorschacherberg; s/d/f Sfr120/185/205; 📍 📍) Want to spoil yourselves while exploring the Lake Constance and nearby Appenzellerland regions? If you have a car, book into this magnificent schloss on the hillside above Rorschach, a 10-minute drive away. This 16th-century former royal Austrian castle, set in leafy grounds on the hill above Rorschach, was converted to a sleek modern hotel in 1999, with an emphasis on wood and other natural materials, offset with lots of white and a few muted tones. There's a playground and special facilities for children as well as a turquoise-coloured spa tub – 'Switzerland's most beautiful bath' – and an excellent restaurant.

return €9.80/8.80; 🕒 9am-7pm, closed 2 weeks in Nov) carries you up and back.

There's a hotel board with free phone by the train station, while the **tourist office** (☎ 495 90; www.bregenz.at; Bahnhofstrasse 14; 🕒 9am-noon Mon-Sat & 1-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-7pm Mon-Sat during the Bregenz Festival) is on the edge of the town centre.

The **HI Jugendgästehaus Bregenz** (☎ 428 67; www.jgh.at; Mehrenerstrasse 5; dm summer/winter from €19/17, s/d available in winter for extra €7) is near the skateboard park visible from the train station. Rooms are modern and comfortable, most with five or six beds and private bathrooms.

Pension Gunz (☎ /fax 436 57; Anton Schneider Strasse 38; d from €54, s/d with bathroom from €31/56; reception 🕒 Wed-Mon) is a humble, but comfy enough abode, with an attached restaurant.

GLARNERLAND & AROUND

At the bottom of eastern Switzerland, connected to the centre of the country only by the narrow Klausenpass, this little pocket gets relatively little attention. That doesn't mean it's undeserving, however, just that you have more of it to yourself. Besides the car-free resort of Braunwald and the dramatic Churfürsten mountains, Glarnerland offers breathtaking hiking, low-key skiing and snowboarding, and plenty of climbing and adrenaline sports. For more information, contact **Glarner Tourismus** (☎ 055 610 21 25; tourismus@glarusnet.ch).

BRAUNWALD elevation 1256m

Car-free Braunwald basks in sunshine on the side of a steep hill, gazing at the snow-capped Tödi mountain (3614m) and the pastures in the valley below. It's not *quite* as breathtaking as Mürren (p165) or Wengen (p156) in the Bernese Oberland, but it feels like more of a discovery, and the air really does feel clean up here.

The resort is reached via the Braunwaldbahn (one way/return Sfr7.20/14.40, Swiss Pass holders free, seven minutes travelling continuously), which climbs the hill from the Linthal Braunwaldbahn station in the valley.

Braunwald Tourism (☎ 055 653 65 65; www.braunwald.ch; 🕒 8.30-11.45am & 2.15-5.30pm Mon-Fri, plus Sat Jul-Nov) is on the top floor of the funicular station (go around the back), next to the **post office** (☎ 055 643 16 05; 🕒 8.30-11.45am & 3-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 8.30-10am Sat).

To the left of the station, **Hotel Alpenblick** (☎ 055 643 15 14; www.alpenblick-braunwald.ch; per 30 min Sfr7; 🕒 24hr) runs an Internet café and offers public wireless LAN.

Braunwald is a hiker's paradise, and you'll find pamphlets at the funicular station outlining several hiking routes, including to the **Oberblegisee**, a well-known local lake. Mountain climbing is also a popular pastime, as are skiing and snowboarding. The tourist office or your hotel can help with more details.

When entering or leaving the region, think about doing so over the vertiginous **Klausen Pass** (right for details), which is an attraction in its own right.

Sleeping & Eating

Call ahead if you want help in carting your luggage up the steep mountainside.

Hostel Adrenalin (☎ 079 347 29 05; www.adrenalin.gli; r Sfr35, bedding & towels each Sfr5, breakfast Sfr8, surcharge for short stays) Less than two minutes from the funicular station, this hostel is the hub of the young snowboarding and adventure-sports community in winter, with video games and lots of parties. However, it can be quiet in summer. A converted budget hotel, it consists of 50% singles and doubles, and 50% dorms. Most feature lots of orange.

Alexander's Tödblick (☎ 055 653 63 63; www.holidayswitzerland.com; s Sfr75-130, d Sfr150-260, s/d with shared bathrooms from Sfr60/120) You instantly feel at ease in this rustic chalet hotel. The rooms are traditionally Swiss, with old-fashioned but spotless bathrooms and balconies, the owners are charming and the restaurant – worth visiting even if you're not staying – serves good home-cooking, with fresh-made pasta, local specialities, vegetarian options and herbal teas (mains Sfr20 to Sfr35).

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Märchenhotel Bellevue (☎ 055 653 71 71; www.maerchenhotel.ch; r per person Sfr185, child under 6yr free, various discounts and weekly packages available) Is this the best family hotel in the world? A converted grand Victorian hotel, it combines elegant modern rooms and saunas and bars for parents with all manner of playthings for children. So while youngsters enjoy the theatrical props, computer games, climbing wall and the fibreglass cow that you 'milk' in the breakfast room, adults can relax in the top-floor, glass-walled spa, with its amazing views. The name means fairytale (the owner tells one every evening) and it really is.

Getting There & Away

The Glarner Sprinter train (www.glarner-sprinter.ch) runs hourly between Linthal Braunwaldbahn and Ziegelbrücke (40 minutes) every day, from where there are handy connections to Zürich (Sfr27, 1½ hours from Linthal Braunwaldbahn). It's a one-hour drive to/from Zürich along the A3.

From June to October, postbuses travel daily (usually around 3pm) from Linthal main train station (two minutes down the line from Linthal Braunwaldbahn) to Altdorf (Sfr34, 2¼ hours) via the spectacular Klausen Pass. For the latest schedules, check www.postbus.ch. Alternatively, ask Braunwald Tourism or at the Linthal Braunwaldbahn station.

WALENSEE

This lake is guarded by the Churfürsten Mountains to the north. Wedged between the steep rocks and rippling water is **Quinten**, a tiny hamlet with just a couple of guest-houses. There's no road – you have to walk from Walenstadt (one hour), the nearest train station, or take a boat. Boats go year-round from Murg on the southern shore, though other boat tours of the lake are in the summer only. Contact **Schiffsbetrieb Walensee** (☎ 081 738 12 08) for details. The main train route from Zürich to Sargans passes along the southern shore of the lake.

including the individualistic **Hotel Rössli** (☎ 071 844 68 68; www.hotel-roessli.ch; Hauptstrasse 88; s/d from Sfr105/135) and **Hotel Mozart** (☎ 071 844 47 47; www.mozart-rorschach.ch; Hafenzentrum; s/d from Sfr105/150; 📍 📍), which is outwardly all tacky reflective gold, but inside features a mix of pleasant modern and traditional rooms.

Behind the Rorschach Hafen station there's also the **Automobil, Motorrad und Automaten Museum** (adult/child Sfr8/5; 🕒 1.30-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun Mar-Jun & Sep-Nov, 10am-6pm daily Jul & Aug; 1-6pm Dec-Feb), with ancient cars and motorcycles.

About the only time you need to alight at the main Rorschach station is if you're staying at the lakeside **SYHA Hostel** (☎ 071 844 97 12; www.jugendherberge-rorschach.ch; Hauptstrasse 92; dm Sfr25.50).

BREGENZ

☎ 5574 / pop 27,500

With its face to the waters of the lake and its disproportionate number of expensive clothes stores, Bregenz feels more like a posh seaside village than the provincial Austrian capital it is. The town is busiest during the spectacular annual **Bregenz Festival** (☎ 407-6; www.bregenzfestspiele.com; 🕒 Aug), when opera, rock and classical music are performed on a vast waterborne stage on the edge of the lake. At other times, there are spectacular views and **hiking** atop the nearby Pfänder mountain (1064m). A **cable car** (☎ 42 16 00; www.pfaenderbahn.at; adult/senior