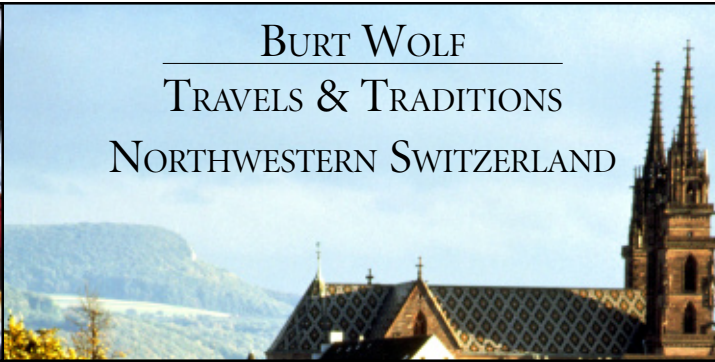


BURT WOLF
TRAVELS & TRADITIONS
NORTHWESTERN SWITZERLAND



Basel, in the northwest corner of Switzerland, is the nation's third largest city. Its citizens are polite, organized, and efficient. They speak German, have a deep respect for their history and tend to lead lives that are financially conservative. But that is only half the story.

On the Monday morning after Ash Wednesday, tens of thousands of people gather in the streets. At exactly 4 AM



the lights of the city go out and huge lanterns go on. Basel's annual *Fasnacht* festival has begun. Each lantern is carried through the streets of the city and belongs to a group who built it in order to

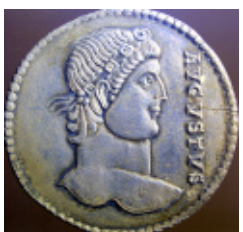
express their thoughts on a specific subject. Both positive and negative feelings are presented and the festival continues for three days. Like all European festivals that mark the beginning of Lent, Basel's *Fasnacht* has its roots in ancient celebrations that gave people with less power the opportunity to comment on people with more power.

Fasnacht is an excellent symbol for Basel, because along with the city's somewhat conservative Swiss German structure there is a powerful tradition of being liberal, intellectual and artistic.



The Ancient Roman Town of Augusta Raurica

About 8 miles north of Basel are the ruins of the ancient Roman city of Augusta Raurica. In 44 BC Julius Caesar asked an old friend to move into the neighborhood and set up a town. One of the reasons he picked this area is that it was midway on the trade route between Rome and London and at the time London was part of an important Roman colony. In the 19th century serious excavation



began at the site and today about twenty percent of the ancient city has been uncovered.

There is a museum with 700,000 artifacts from the area including a silver table service, a gilded candelabrum and hundreds of

silver coins that were buried in the middle of the 4th century to hide them from invading Germanic tribes. The museum also has a reconstructed private home from the period, with a 2000-year-old kitchen. The pots and pans are almost the same. The dishes for cooking snails look very similar to the ones we use today. The grill is exactly the same and there's a bowl that would have been perfect for Caesar salad.

The ancient Roman system for heating a house was very cool. Servants, working outside the house, made a fire, boiled water and sent the steam under the floor. The walls were filled with a series of pipes that let the steam escape as it heated the floors and walls. They have also uncovered an authentic Roman mosaic depicting gladiators in battle and dressed like Russell Crowe.

Basel Cathedral



The oldest part of the building dates to the late 900's but most of it was put up during the middle of the 14th century. It's made of red sandstone and has two Gothic towers. Near the entrance there are two statues designed to send a warning. One is the "worldly prince"—charming up front, but look behind and you will see that he is covered with evil serpents and symbols of corruption. Standing beside the worldly prince is the "foolish virgin" who is unable to see the danger or resist the seducer.

Basel took part in the Protestant reformation but with a moderate approach that helped the city develop its reputation for being tolerant. When Protestants were forced out of France by Louis XIV, thousands came to the safe city of Basel, and many of them were skilled weavers and dye masters. Their knowledge of the chemistry of dyeing fabrics formed the basis of Basel's giant chemical industry.

Fischerstube Brewery

During the early '70s, Dr. Hans Jakob Nydegger was studying the properties of yeast as part of his medical

research. The more he studied them the more he thought about beer because without yeast you can't make beer. Eventually his thirst for knowledge just turned into thirst and he opened the Fischerstube brewery.

They brew four different types of beer and offer them in a tasting service. There's a light, a special which is their standard, one made from wheat, and one flavored with ginger. A tree of salted pretzels sits in the middle of each table just in case your thirst begins to falter.



When you know which beer you like, you can get a glass or a *stein* full. If you are a regular you can have your own stein with your name on it. It gives you a sense of community. For some people it helps them remember their names.

The Basel Ferry

The Rhine River divides Big Basel (the main city) from Little Basel (a more industrial area) and the most interesting way to cross the river is on a ferry. The idea of having a ferry service came from a chairman of the local art society, who thought it would be a good way to raise money for the group's exhibition space. His first ferry went into operation in the middle of the 1800's and was an immediate success—both in terms of public use and as a moneymaker for the society. Today there are four ferries crossing up and back.



The power that moves the ferries comes from the river. The front of the boat has a rod that is connected to a cable that runs across the river from one bank to the other. A lever positions the cable on one side of the boat or the other. The ferry will move to the side where the cable is positioned.

The force of the current pushes the boat in the direction it is pointing, but the line to the cable keeps the boat from going downstream and redirects the force so the boat just goes across to the other side. It uses the

natural energy of the river, which is perpetually available and free. When one of the large barges comes down the Rhine the ferryman directs the boat into the current, which keeps it in one place, or he can turn it back towards the other shore.

The ferryman has a role in the mythology of almost every society. He takes you from where you are to where you must go, both physically and mentally. It was a ferryman that took the ancient Greeks between life in this world and death in the underworld and it was a ferryman that took Buddha to a place of greater understanding.

Safran House

The Safran House belongs to a guild that dates back to the Middle Ages. A guild was an association of people who practiced the same trade. Each guild had a coat of arms. There were wigmakers, pharmacists, glove makers, and plumbers—at one time there were twenty guilds in Basel. Safran House was—and continues to be—the home of the spice dealers. The building was originally put up in 1423 and though it has gone through a number of reconstructions it still has a medieval look.



The guild lease space to a restaurant so they can have a good place to eat and they are kind enough to open it to the public. The menu is primarily Swiss and features the typical Basel specialty of sautéed salmon on a bed of red cabbage with boiled potatoes. (The recipe appears on page 5).

The guild lease space to a restaurant so they can have a good place to eat and they are kind enough to open it to the public. The menu is primarily Swiss and features the typical Basel specialty of sautéed salmon on a bed of red cabbage with boiled potatoes. (The recipe appears on page 5).

A hundred years ago there were so many salmon in the Rhine River that it was the cheapest food in the neighborhood. People would try to feed it to their servants every day. Things got so bad (or good depending on your viewpoint) that the government passed a law limiting the serving of salmon for servants to three portions a week.

Another Safran House specialty is *fondue bacchus*. A bowl of vegetable broth with red wine is kept hot in the center of the table. Wooden skewers with thin slices of veal are dipped into the broth. Two minutes of cooking and the veal is dipped into one of a dozen sauces that surround the fondue pot.

Marktplatz and the Town Hall

Basel's marketplace is open every morning of the week except Sunday. Farmers and craftsmen come in from the surrounding Swiss countryside but so do farmers and craftsmen from nearby villages in France and Germany.



The market takes place right in front of the Town Hall, which was built in the early 1500s in a style known as Late Burgundian Gothic. You can tell it is

WHERE TO EAT

RESTAURANT SAFRAN ZUNFT
 GERBERGASSE 11
 CH-4001 BASEL, SWITZERLAND
 TEL: +41 (0) 61 269 94 94
 FAX: +41 (0) 61 269 94 99
WWW.SAFRAN-ZUNFT.CH

THINGS TO DO

ANDREAS SCHENK SCRIPTORIUM (CALLIGRAPHER)

RHEINSPRUNG 2
CH-4051 BASEL, SWITZERLAND
TEL: +41 (0) 61 261 39 00
FAX: +41 (0) 61 263 93 66
WWW.KALLIGRAPHIE.COM

BASLER PAPIERMUHLE (THE PAPER MILL)

SCHWEIZERISCHES PAPIERMUSEUM
ST. ALBAN - TAL 37
CH-4052 BASEL, SWITZERLAND
TEL: +41 (0) 61 272 96 52
FAX: +41 (0) 61 272 09 93
E-MAIL: INFO@PAPIERMUSEUM.CH

FISCHERSTUBE BREWERY

RHEINGASSE 45
CH-4058 BASEL, SWITZERLAND
TEL: +41 (0) 61 692 66 35
FAX: +41 (0) 61 692 74 04

JOHANN WANNER CHRISTMAS STORE

SPALENBURG 14
CH-4051 BASEL, SWITZERLAND
TEL: +41 (0) 61 261 48 26

LÄCKERLI HUUS (COOKIES)

GERBERGASSE 57
CH-4001 BASEL
TEL: +41 (0) 61 264 23 23
FAX: +41 (0) 61 816 23 65
WWW.LAECKERLI-HUUS.CH

MUSEUM JEAN TINGUELY BASEL

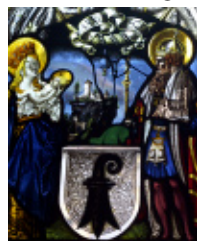
PAUL SACHER-ANLAGE 1
P.O. BOX 3255
CH-4002 BASEL, SWITZERLAND
TEL +41 (0) 61 681 93 20
FAX +41 (0) 61 681 93 21
WWW.TINGUELY.CH

RÖMERTADT AUGUSTA RAURICA (ANCIENT ROMAN TOWN)

GIEBERNACHERSTRASSE 17
CH-4302 AUGST, SWITZERLAND
TEL: +41 (0) 61 816 22 22
FAX: +41 (0) 61 816 22 61
WWW.AUGUSTA-RAURICA.CH

Gothic because the arches are pointed at the top rather than round. You can tell its Burgundian because it's like the buildings in the Burgundy region of France that are brightly colored and covered with painted decoration. It's late because the guys who built it didn't get here until the Burgundian period was almost over.

Inside there is a courtyard with a statue of Munatius Plancus, a Roman general who got here early. He arrived in 44 BC and is given credit for founding the city. Next to



Plancus is a fresco that shows Basel's acceptance into the Swiss Confederation.

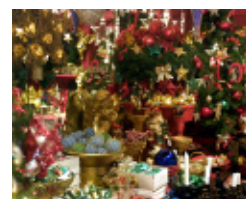
The stained glass windows in the council chamber represent the states that were part of Switzerland in 1501, which was the year that Basel joined the confederation. Basel's window shows King Henry II, who is always presented with the cathedral in his left hand because he put up the money for it.

Johann Wanner's Christmas Store

Down the block from the Town Hall is the Christmas Shop of Johann Wanner.

Originally, Johann and his wife Ursel had an antique store. One day an elderly gentleman came in and asked about three glass Christmas tree ornaments. The man was a glass blower from Lauscha, Germany, a town where two out of every three men were glass blowers.

The Wanners had a collection of molds for glass Christmas tree ornaments, but didn't know how to use them. The man from Germany did.



Today the shop has one of the world's largest selections of handmade ornaments. Paper-thin glass is molded in the antique forms using traditional techniques.

Läckerli House

Läckerli are cookies made with honey, nuts, citrus zest, spices (especially ginger) and a Swiss cherry liquor called *kirsch*. It's sweet and chewy and the official cookie of Basel. People have been making läckerli since the Middle Ages and it was brought to Basel by German bakers in the early 15th century. You can buy läckerli in a paper cone or in a simple box, but Läckerli House is famous for its packaging, especially their tins. They have a collection of antiques that is open to the public.

In the middle of the 1800s, the middle class fell in love with shopping and packaging became an important way of attracting new business. For cookie makers, the tin became an essential marketing tool. They were often reproductions of things from upper class life. You may not

have had enough money to buy the real thing but you could afford a semblance of control by rolling your miniature Rolls Royce along the floor.



The most popular tins were shaped like cars, trains, planes and boats because they made perfect Christmas presents for children. The tins were often manufactured for toy companies who sold them in upscale toy stores during the first season and during the next year in an aftermarket with cookie makers. Today they are considered to be valuable antiques with collectors paying \$15,000 to \$25,000 for important examples.

The Paper Mill

Basel is one of the cultural centers of Europe and the event that turned the city into a hot bed of creativity and learning was a meeting of princes and bishops that convened in Basel in 1431. They came together to discuss a plan for reforming the church. It was a complex subject and most of the participants spoke slowly. As a result they ended up staying here and debated the matter for 17 years.

Their need for intellectual support during that period helped establish Switzerland's first university, which in turn helped with the development of Basel's papermaking and printing industries. All of which helped Basel develop as a center of freethinking.

The papermaking tradition in Basel goes back to the 15th century when monks required paper for their illuminated manuscripts. If you'd like to see what the process looked like in the middle of the 1400's, stop in to Basel's historic paper mill. Craftsmen have been making paper there for over 500 years. They also have a few dozen printing presses. All are classics and some of them are hundreds of years old.



In addition, the mill has a papermaking museum, which traces the early history of writing, papermaking and printing, and they hold classes that teach the techniques. Tourist can take part in a class and you can even assemble your own group to make paper and do a bit of printing.

Basel's Calligrapher

When Gutenberg introduced Europe to moveable type in the 1400s information could be reproduced and distributed at a rate that was previously unimaginable. But the ancient art of the scribe continued to flourish right alongside the press and Basil is home to one of Europe's master calligraphers.

The sign in front of the tiny shop reads "Scriptorium". Inside Andreas Schenck practices his craft. He drafts family

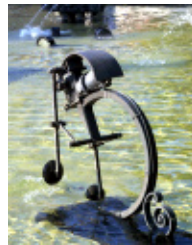


trees, historical documents, and social invitations. He also makes his own inks and cuts his own quills. His work requires over 600 different nibs.

Even with the arrival of printing, calligraphers were still in great demand for private letters and formal correspondence. One reason that calligraphy has survived the printing press and the computer is that the calligrapher understands the spirit of the text. He knows why the author chose the words and presents them with an awareness and grace that can never be captured by a machine. On the other hand, there's no spell check.

The Tinguely Museum

Jean Tinguely was born in Switzerland and lived from 1925 to 1991. He became a leading member of a group of artists who created sculptures that moved. His works were designed to counter the traditional concept of art that just stood still. And he poked fun at modern society by



using unconventional materials. One of the best examples of his inventive spirit is the fountain in front of the municipal theater of Basel—nine metallic structures in perpetual motion.

He also believed that the onlooker should take part in the art. Many of his works need to be turned on by the viewer before they start moving. Once he got his sculptures to move he decided that they should also make sounds.

In 1996 a museum completely devoted to his work was designed by the Swiss architect Mario Botta. The exhibition rooms are laid out according to the stages of the artist's life. On the ground floor in a huge room is the Grosse Meta Maxi-Maxi Utopia: a larger-than-life sculpture that represents a walk-in dream world. Tinguely wanted to create a sculpture that people could move through—where there were things to play with. He wanted them to forget that they were in a sculpture and just move about in a happy space, and that is the feeling you get from being inside it.

TO LEARN MORE . . .

SWITZERLAND TOURISM
TOLL-FREE: 1-877-794-8037
www.MySWITZERLAND.COM



TRAVELS & TRADITIONS

RECIPES FROM NORTHWESTERN SWITZERLAND

SCOTTISH SALMON ON GLAZED RED CABBAGE,
SERVED WITH DRY WHITE WINE SAUCE AND
STEAMED POTATOES

*Schnitzel von Schottischem Lachs auf glasiertem
Rotkraut an einer Gutedel-Sauce, serviert mit
Dampfkartoffeln
Makes 4 Servings*

FOR THE CABBAGE

*2½ cups shredded red cabbage
1 cup sliced peeled apple
½ cup red wine
1 tablespoon of red currant jelly
1 whole clove
1 bay leaf
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 slices bacon*

FOR THE SALMON

*4 6-ounce salmon filets
¼ cup dry white wine
2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon butter*

FOR THE SAUCE DEZALEY

*3 tablespoons butter
½ cup chopped onion
1 cup Dezaaley or other dry white wine
1½ cups fish stock
1 cup heavy cream
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Pinch of cayenne pepper*

*Boiled potatoes (optional)
4 sprigs flat-leafed parsley (for garnish)*

To prepare the cabbage: In a large bowl, mix together the cabbage, apple, wine, jelly, clove, and bay leaf, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Cover and refrigerate

overnight, turning the mixture once or twice. The next day, place the marinated cabbage and bacon into a medium saucepan and bring the mixture to a boil over high heat. Cook, stirring the mixture, until the cabbage begins to wilt, about 5 minutes. Cover and reduce the heat to low, and slowly cook for about 45 minutes, or until the cabbage is tender and the sauce has reduced. Keep the glazed cabbage warm over the lowest heat. This part of the dish can be made one or two days in advance. Remove the bacon slices before serving.

TO PREPARE THE SALMON: Mix together the wine and lemon juice in a deep dish. Place the fish, skin side up, into the dish and marinate while you prepare the sauce.

TO PREPARE THE SAUCE: Melt the butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the onions and sauté until the onions begin to turn golden. Pour the wine into the pan, increase the heat to high, and, with a wooden spoon, scrape up any browned bits clinging to the pan. Boil until the wine has reduced to about 1/3 cup. Add the fish stock and boil until the stock has reduced by half. Pour in the heavy cream, bring to a boil, reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer, until the cream mixture has reduced down to 1 cup and the satiny sauce coats the back of the spoon. Puree the sauce in an electric blender until smooth and return the sauce to the pan and season to taste with salt and pepper and a pinch of the cayenne. Keep warm over the lowest heat while you cook the salmon.

TO COOK THE SALMON: Heat a large non-stick skillet. Season the fish with salt and pepper. Add the oil and butter to the pan and sauté the salmon, skin side up first, and the marinade, over high heat, until lightly browned, 3 to 4 minutes per side, depending on the thickness of the fillets.

TO PRESENT THE DISH: Ladle the sauce in the center of 4 dinner plates. Spoon a mound of the glazed cabbage in the center of each plate and top each mound with the salmon filets. Serve with boiled potatoes and garnish with the parsley.

Recipe courtesy of Restaurant Safran Zunft, Basel, Switzerland.