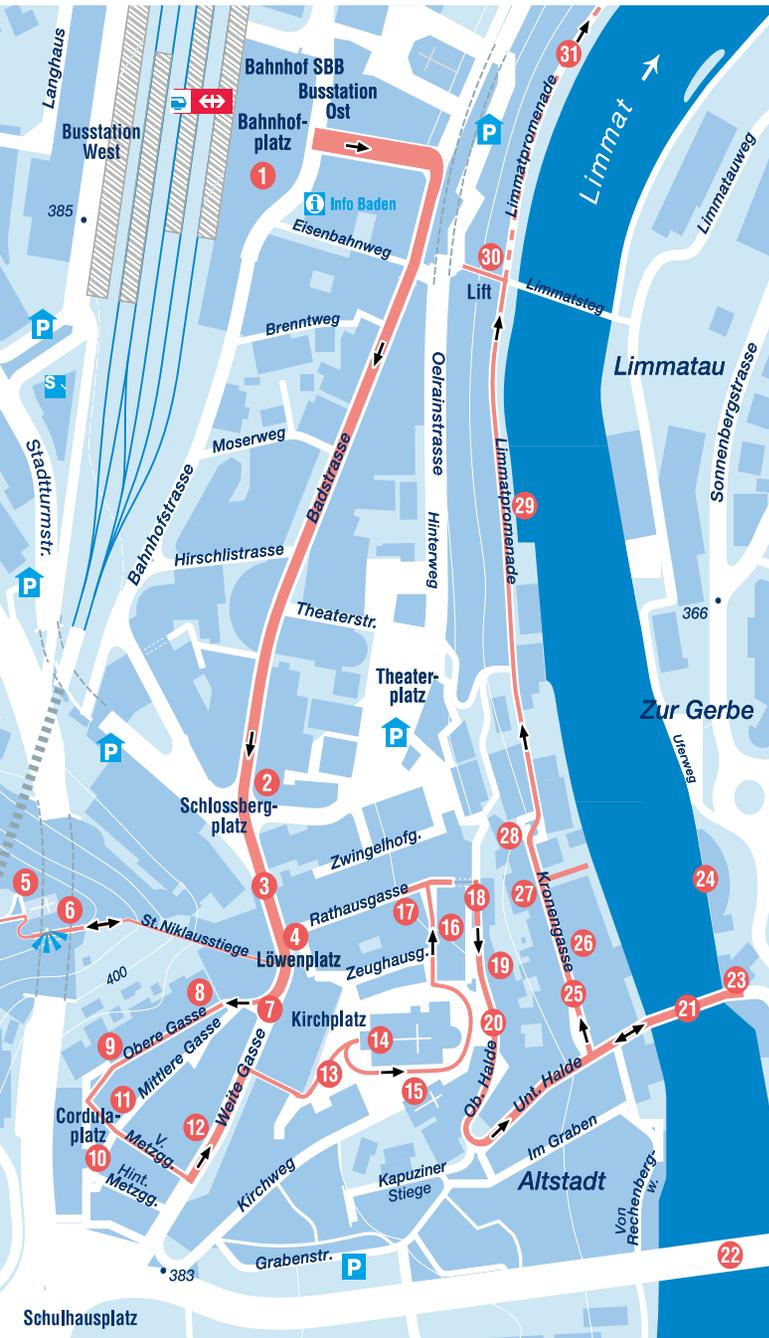# City Walk

Baden and its eventful history

Explore Baden then and now: learn about the Roman bath destination becoming an important industry hub and present culture and spa town.

The Romans discovered hot springs near the River Limmat about 2000 years ago and named the adjacent settlement "Aquae Helveticae". Since this discovery, Baden has been known for its healing and mineralrich thermal springs.

In 1415, when the Swiss confederates conquered Aargau from the Habsburgs and destroyed their fortress, Schloss Stein, Baden became a centre for gatherings. These annual meetings brought prosperity to the "unofficial capital of the Confederation", and made it famous throughout Europe as a spa town.

In 1847, Baden became the terminus of the first Swiss railway line, the "Spanischbrödlibahn", which stretched from Zurich to Baden. A few years later, the forward-looking Brown Boveri & Cie (now ABB) was founded and further boosted Baden's industrialization.

Today, Baden is known as a diverse city of culture and wellbeing as well as an important business and conference location in the Greater Zurich area. With the opening of the wellness spa FORTYSEVEN the entire area of the baths has been redesigned. Thus, the hot fountains on both sides of the Limmat invite you to experience the thermal water spontaneously and for free.

On tour with insiders

The city guide team will take you on a journey through time, show you hidden corners of the city and tell you entertaining anecdotes. Whether on a public tour or a private tour, let Baden surprise you.
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Swiss tainable engaged

City walk through historic center

Immerse yourself in the historic alleys and discover Baden's eventful history

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BADEN
culture & spa town

Immerse yourself in the facets of the picturesque old town

This route takes you through narrow medieval streets past historical houses and city squares that reveal a long and colourful history.

1 Baden train station
You are standing in front of the oldest railway station in Switzerland. The first train rumbled back and forth between Baden and Zurich (Spanischbrödli-bahn) in 1847.

2 Schlossbergplatz
The city's most popular pedestrian square was named after the Schlossberg mountain, which towers behind it and is home to the ruins of Stein Castle.

3 Stadtturm (City Tower)
The 15th century city tower boasts coloured roof tiles of the city flag and has become Baden's primary landmark. The tower has 12 cells and was used as a prison between 1846 and 1984. The ruins are a Swiss heritage site and can be visited as part of a city tour.

4 Löwenplatz
This city square used to host a regular fish market and was also the site of public trials. The lion sculpture by Hans Trudel has adorned the fountain since 1918.

5 Stein Castle ruins
This castle was built in the 11th century and destroyed when the confederates conquered Aargau in 1415. Major rebuilding work was completed between 1658 and 1670. Then in 1712, during the second battle of Villmergen, Baden was forced to raze the fortress due to pressure from Zurich and Bern, the victorious powers in the reformation wars.

6 St. Niklaus Chapel
This chapel was the Habsburg's court chapel. It was severely damaged when Zurich invaded and conquered the region in 1712, but has subsequently been restored.

7 Weite Gasse
The Weite Gasse was a respectable middle-class residential area and marketplace. The city stream used to flow through here, which was also used to clean the city. Every Saturday, a popular market is still held at the Weite Gasse.

8 Haus zum Wilden Mann
The former lodgings of the imperial ambassadors is one of the oldest stone buildings in Baden.

9 Former Reformed Rectory
This residential house was assigned to Baden's first reformed priest in 1725/26.

10 Cordulaplatz
Until 1874, the Mellinger Tower stood at this square, watching over the city's southern entrance. On 22 October 1444, St. Cordula Day, Zurich's army tried to take over the city of Baden from this entrance using a clever ruse – but they were unsuccessful. An annual memorial is still held every year to honour the bravery of Baden's residents.

11 Haus zum Paradies
Constructed at the start of the 17th century, this building was a meeting place for distinguished foreign diplomats and is now a heritage site.

12 Bernerhaus
This gable-fronted baroque building was constructed by citizens of Bern as a sign of power in 1676 and served as accommodation for the Bernese envoy to the court hearings.

13 Kirchplatz (Church Square)
The Hungarian Queen Agnes, daughter of the Habsburg King Albrecht, who was murdered in Königsfelden in 1308, founded the Hospice of the Holy Spirit in 1349. The city cemetery was also located next to the church until the mid-19th century.

14 Catholic Church Mariä Himmelfahrt (Church of the Assumption)
The church's foundation walls were built back in the 9th century, but the design of the current structure dates back to the 15th and 17th centuries. During the disputation of Baden in 1526, the traditional believers and the reformers stood opposite each other in the church's galleries. Following 17 days of discussion, Baden chose to retain the old Catholic belief system.

15 Sebastian Chapel
The chapel, which is dedicated to St. Sebastian, the saint of plagues, was built over an existing charnal house at the start of the 16th century. The chapel was incorporated into the old city wall.

16 Stadthaus (City Hall)
The impressive main building of the city's administrative body consists of four previously separate structures: the chancellery, the armoury, the town hall and the city hall. The confederates' annual Tagsatzung legislature was held on the second floor every year between 1497 and 1712. These days the historically significant and beautiful hall can be visited as part of a city tour.

17 Amtshaus (Council Office)
Originally used as a market house and salt storehouse in the 14th century, the Amtshaus was fully modernised in 1985.

18 Lower old town
Reach the lower section of the old town by stepping through the arcade of City Hall. This part of Baden showcases one of the most impressive medieval settlements in Switzerland. What's more, from here you can enjoy the great view of Schartenfels. The Schartenfels lookout point has the most famous and spectacular view of Baden.

19 Trudelhaus
For a long time, this house was used as a workshop by the Baden sculptor Hans Trudel (1881 to 1958) and now hosts contemporary art exhibitions.

20 Halde
Until the mid-19th century, travellers had to wind their way up the steep Halde to reach the city. Exhausted horses pulling heavy carts had a chance to rest in front of the Engel guest house at Löwenplatz.

21 Covered wooden bridge
The current bridge was built in 1809, but it had at least five predecessors since 1242. Until 1766, it was the only bridge between Zurich and Gebenstorf, making it hugely important for trade. However after the

22 Hochbrücke was opened in 1926, the wooden bridge became less important for the traffic moving through Baden.

23 Landvogteischloss and 24 Baden Museum of History
The castle was the seat of the Swiss Confederate bailiff for the subject territory of Baden from 1415 until 1798 and bears the coats of arms of the eight original Swiss cantons. Today it forms part of the Baden Museum of History, together with a modern extension that was added in 1993 and is colloquially known as the melon slice. The museum is not only dedicated to the history of Baden and the surrounding region, but also hosts exhibitions of a variety of contemporary topics.

25 Kronengasse
The Kronengasse was formerly home to many skilled craftspeople. The names on the houses indicated what trade was plied by the residents. An active blacksmith can still be found at house number five.

26 Kornhaus granary
The Kornhaus was built in 1511 to store grain for the Hospice of the Holy Spirit at the Kirchplatz. The building has occasionally also been used as a prison. These days, the Theater im Kornhaus (ThiK) can be found in its cellar vault.

27 Hohes Siechenamtshaus
Inside this building, officials would decide whether a person exhibiting unusual symptoms or behaviour should be banished to the Siechenhaus outside the city walls. Walk over to the small square opposite the building. From there you can see the Siechenhaus above the Landvogteischloss.

28 Haus zum Mühlengrund
This building was formerly known as the executioner's house. The executioner didn't exactly enjoy a privileged social status and had to make do with what was at the time a highly undesirable address.

29 Limmat promenade
In the Middle Ages, the Limmat river was the safest way to travel from Zurich to Baden (outbound journey 2.5 hours, return journey 18 hours). Many travellers making the Baden-fahrt (Baden journey) also used the river to visit the city's renowned health spas. This journey has since lent its name to the largest and most unique cultural festival in Baden.

30 Promenade lift
This steel bridge and lift construction was built in 2007. It directly connects the Limmat promenade with Bahnhofplatz square, making it easy to cross the river Limmat to get to Ennetbaden.

Option: Keep following the promenade along the river Limmat to reach the most historic district of Baden.

31 The great baths
With the FORTYSEVEN Wellness-Therme Baden designed by star architect Mario Botta, the spa town has been shining in new splendor since 2021. Switzerland's most mineral-rich thermal water can also be experienced at the Hotel Limmathof or the Atrium Hotel Blume. Open air and for free, the thermal water is also accessible at any time in the public „hot fountains".