

Baden Baden

Baden Baden (meaning Bathing Bathing) is a spa town built on thermal springs at the edge of the Black Forest in Baden Württemberg, south West Germany. Don't be put off by its reputation as a hangout for the rich. This picturesque town is beautifully situated in a wooded valley, and you can enjoy yourself here without spending or gambling a fortune.

Get in

By train

The railway station is a 15 minutes' bus ride from the town center. It is served by Deutsche Bahn running north–south along the Rhine (Mannheim–Basel) and east–west (Munich–Stuttgart–Strasbourg–Paris). On arrival, catch the frequent bus 201 to the town center (*direction Lichtental/Oberbeuern; get off at Leopoldplatz*).

<http://www.bahn.de/p/view/index.shtml>

By Plane

The airport *Karlsruhe/Baden Baden* is located only 10km from the city. The airport is served by low-cost carrier Ryanair, offers cheap flights to several European destinations.

<http://www.badenairpark.de/>

Get around

The town centre is small enough to walk around. Bus routes to surrounding towns and villages radiate from the town centre (Leopoldplatz and Augustaplatz). Buy your ticket at the machine at the bus stop before boarding. You can get also tickets from the bus drivers. It's rather to use the express busses. They need only 5 minutes from the main station to the city. <http://www.karlsruhe.de/broken>

See

- **Casino** (Spielbank), 1 Kaiserallee, +49 72 219000, James Bond-worthy cocktail club complete with gilt ceilings, 11 roulette tables and an outdoor baccarat terrace.
- **Concert hall** (*Festspielhaus*)
- **Drinking hall** (*Trinkhalle*)

- **Art Museum**
- **Frieder Burda Museum**, 8b Lichtentaler Allee, +49 72 21398980, a dazzling collection of German Expressionist and Gerhard Richter masterworks on display are attracting tourists from around the world.
- **Brahms House**
- **Lichtental Monastery**
- **City Museum of Baden-Baden**
- **Ruins of the Roman Baths**
- **Castle Hohenbaden**

Do

- **Walk** along the river Oos or in the hills and forests around the town. The tourist office at the *Trinkhalle* can sell you a booklet of walks based on bus routes. The walking is generally easy, but for maximum reward for minimum effort, take bus 204/205 to the *Merkur Bergbahn* funicular railway, ride up to the cafe at the top, and walk back via the old castle (*Altes Schloss*).

Thermal baths

Römerplatz, the heart of the bath quarter (*Badeviertel*), is five minutes' walk from Leopoldplatz through the pedestrian zone. In Römerplatz you can see the ruins of the Roman baths and take to the thermal waters yourself at Caracalla Therme and Friedrichsbad. More details:

- **Roman bath ruins** (*Römische Badruinen*), (*adjacent to the underground car park below Römerplatz*). Tel +49 7221 275934. Every day, 11AM-5PM. Small area of excavations with good audioguide in English.
- **Caracalla Therme**, tel +49 7221 275940 (*fax +49 7221 275980, info@carasana.de*). Every day, 8AM-10PM. Follow the steam rising off the outdoor pools to find this modern bathing complex. Your ticket gets you into the pool area (where you'll find a cafe, several indoor and outdoor pools, whirlpools, waterfalls, water jets and so on) and the upstairs Roman Sauna Scape. <http://www.carasana.de/home/en/caracalla.html>
- Caracalla Therme spa is unlike its sister Friedrichsbad Spa next door in that swimming costumes are required to be worn at all times in the pools. The upstairs sauna area is nude only however and you should be warned is both men and women for those with a prudish nature. Once you have removed your swimwear however you are free to enjoy a wonderful series of indoor and outdoor saunas, steam rooms, plunge pools, hot tubs and relaxation areas at your leisure. This is a unique and highly invigorating experience to be tried at least once in your lifetime.

- **Friedrichsbad**, tel +49 7221 275920 (fax +49 7221 275980, info@carasana.de). M-Sa 9AM-10PM, Su 12PM-8PM. Friedrichsbad is a beautiful temple to traditional bathing culture, built in 1877, complete with statues and decorative tiling and culminating in a circular central pool in an ornate domed hall. In these elegant surroundings, the Roman-Irish bath (*Römisch-Irisches Bad*) is a programme of heat, massage, steam and water that will detoxify and rejuvenate any weary traveler. It's a wonderful, deeply relaxing experience. No children under 14.

The procedure at Friedrichsbad is unique, so read these instructions carefully before you go in, especially if you don't speak German. Buy your ticket at the entrance, plus a token for the soap-and-brush massage (*Seifenbürstenmassage*) if you want. At the top of the stairs, men and women go into separate changing rooms and follow the programme separately for the first hour or so. Take off all your clothes and put them in a locker, inserting your ticket into the slot inside the door before locking it. Naked, follow the sign to the baths, where an attendant will greet you. Follow the numbered sequence of rooms. Each room has a sign in English on the wall telling you how long you should spend there. You'll be given a towel and bath shoes at the first shower. You need these for the hot rooms (you must lie or sit on your towel). After the hot rooms, you reach the massage station, where you must hand back your towel, shoes and token. After the massage, proceed to the steam room(s) and shower again before going through to the pool area, where men and women bathe naked together in pools at three different temperatures. When you've had enough, head back via the cold plunge pool and the sleeping room, to be wrapped in blankets for half an hour.

Eat

There are plenty of cheap places to eat in the pedestrian zone in the town centre. Vegetarians need not despair. Noodle dishes (*Spätzle*) are ubiquitous, and look out for dishes based on chanterelle mushrooms (*Pfifferlinge*).

Contact

Free **Internet access** is available at the public library (*Stadtbücherei*) in Lange Strasse, but you might need to book your session in advance.

Get out

Baden-Baden is ideally placed for day trips into the Black Forest. Other cities within easy reach include Freiburg, Strasbourg and Stuttgart. Avis and Sixt both have car hire depots in the town.

For more info see: www.wikipedia.org

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