

Discover Blaubeuren



Tourist-Info

Kirchplatz 10
89143 Blaubeuren
Phone +49 73 44 96 69 90
tourist@blaubeuren.de
www.blaubeuren.de

Opening hours

15 March – 30 November:
Mon – Sun 10 am – 5 pm

1 December – 14 March:
Mon – Sat 10 am – 12 noon
Sun 10 am – 5 pm

Closed on 24 Dec, 25 Dec, 26 Dec,
31 Dec, 1 Jan and Good Friday

Welcome to Blaubeuren

The small picturesque town of Blaubeuren nestles snugly in the valley of the ancient Danube, surrounded by wooded slopes and rocky outcrops. Its geological and geographical situation, its historic buildings and its cultural as well as archaeological treasures have earned it the epithet "Pearl of the Swabian Jura".

We would like to invite you to absorb the charm of the mystic Blautopf (Blue Pool) and the aura of the awe-inspiring monastery with Germany's only preserved monks' bathhouse. Enjoy the idyllic atmosphere of the medieval parts of the town and admire the extraordinary prehistoric artefacts found in the nearby caves and exhibited in our Museum of Prehistory.

We wish you a lovely stay in our quaint little town.





The Beautiful Lau

The Blautopf

The Blautopf (Blue Pool) is Blaubeuren's best known sight. It is Germany's most beautiful karst spring. The spire of the neighbouring former Benedictine monastery is reflected in the strikingly blue water of the almost 22 m deep funnel-shaped pool. After some days without precipitation the water appears as a mystical deep turquoise blue which is the result of the reflection of the light. All long-wave colours are absorbed, whereas the short-wave blue is reflected and thus becomes visible. Every now and then the Blautopf 'boils over', which means that huge quantities of water gush out, even up to 32,000 l/sec. On average the source discharges 2,300 l/sec.

Why do we find this spring at the foot of the southern rim of the Swabian Alb? The bedrock of this mountain range is limestone. This is why precipitation drains away very quickly. In the course of many millennia a vast cave system has been washed out in the belly of the mountain behind the Blautopf. Speleologists have so far explored and mapped more than 18 km of passages and shafts. An end to their explorations is not yet in sight.

Next to the Blautopf there is a water-powered drop hammer mill, which was a working smithy from 1804 to 1889. In 1964 it was turned into a museum. It illustrates how in the old days iron was forged with the help of drop hammers.



Drop Hammer Smithy



Cavern in the Blue Cave system

The Beautiful Lau

The Blautopf is steeped in legend. Its various shades of blue were a source of inspiration for the poet Eduard Mörike who wrote *The Story of the Beautiful Lau*. It is a romantic fairy tale about a water nymph from the Black Sea who lived at the bottom of the Blautopf. Back home she had suffered from a bad depression, so she could only give birth to stillborn children. Her mother-in-law predicted that she would only be able to give birth to healthy babies after laughing out loud five times. As the Beautiful Lau failed to do so her angry husband, the Water King of the Black Sea, banished her from the court and sent her to the Blautopf in Blaubeuren, where she eventually regained her good spirits after socializing with some women from the town. When she experienced some amusing episodes in their company she laughed out loud and thus was cured from her evil curse. Every now and then you can still hear her peeling with laughter at the Blautopf...

Drop Hammer Smithy

Opening hours

April – October: daily from 9 am – 6 pm

www.blautopf.de

Take a train ride on the “Blautopfbähnle” Guided tours in English

As a group you can get on a little train (the ‘Blautopfbähnle’) which will take you on a panoramic trip in and around the town (60 min, minimum 20 persons)

www.auto-mann.com



The Monastery

The courtyard of the former Benedictine Monastery is another idyllic spot in Blaubeuren. Apart from the cloister and the church there are medieval working quarters and store houses, the administration building and the bathhouse of the monks. These late gothic style buildings were erected between 1466 and 1510. After the Reformation the Catholic monks left Blaubeuren and the regent, Duke Christoph, transformed the monastery into a Protestant monastic school. Today the monastery compound houses the Evangelisch-theologisches Seminar, a Protestant boarding school, which is a grammar school with an excellent reputation. The beautiful cloisters and the inner courtyard invite you to take a stroll.

Germany's only preserved monks' bathhouse was built in 1510. On the ground floor were the rooms with the bathing facilities. Here the visitor is made familiar with the bathing culture of the Benedictine monks. The first floor was reserved for aristocratic guests who celebrated their successful hunts in the gorgeous banquet hall. Its walls are adorned with frescoes showing lots of hunting scenes with various hunting methods. The monks' bathhouse also accommodates the Museum of Local History with a collection of splendid ivory artwork. The exhibition shows decorative and functional items carved by local ivory carvers at the beginning of the 20th century when this trade flourished in Blaubeuren.



High Altar



The Monks' Bathhouse

The Choir Stalls and the High Altar

It was Heinrich III Fabri, abbot from 1475 till 1495, who directed the fittings and furnishing of the monks' choir. He made deals and contracts with the finest artists of Southern Germany, who had their workshops in the nearby free imperial town of Ulm.

They created the oak stalls and a magnificent double-winged high altar with painted wooden panels and statues. It is an altar-piece of abundant ornateness and splendour, which makes it one of the most important gothic masterpieces in Southern Germany.

Monastery

Opening hours

1 March – 1 November: daily from 10 am – 5 pm

2 November – 28 February: Mon – Fri 2 pm – 4 pm | Sat and Sun 11 am – 4 pm

Monks' Bathhouse

Opening hours

1 April – 31 October: daily 10 am – 5 pm

Guided tours in English

"The Monastery" • 60 min, max 25 persons

"The Monastery and the Monks' Bathhouse" • 90 min, max 25 persons

for more information contact tourist@blaubeuren.de



Prehistory

During the last Ice Age Neanderthals and later anatomically modern humans repeatedly occupied the caves in the Ach Valley near Blaubeuren. As hunter-gatherers they practised a nomadic lifestyle. Early modern humans arrived there for the first time about 43,000 years ago. Not only did they develop new tool making techniques, they also manufactured personal ornaments, the earliest musical instruments and the world's oldest known figurative artworks from mammoth ivory. This was a huge leap in the cultural development of mankind and a testimony to the new self-awareness of modern humans.

Three of the caves in the Ach Valley and three in the Lone Valley were designated as the UNESCO World Heritage site "Caves and Ice Age Art in the Swabian Jura".

The cave sites near Blaubeuren are in a beautiful, unique landscape. During the Ice Age, three different habitats in proximity of the caves (Alb plateau, rocky slopes and valley floodplain) provided ideal living conditions for Ice Age people.

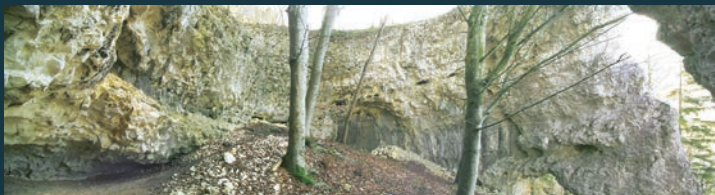
The valley can be explored by car or bicycle. Wonderful hiking paths and striking views invite ramblers to discover the charming landscape on foot.



Sirgenstein

This cave is located 3 km southwest of Blaubeuren halfway to Schelklingen about 35 m above the bottom of the valley. Neanderthals and modern humans successively occupied the site. Its stratigraphy is hugely important as to the history of archaeological research as excavations were performed there as early as 1906.

No bars, cave is freely accessible



Geißenklösterle

Located 2.5 km southwest of Blaubeuren to the left of the Ach about 60 m above the bottom of the valley. The most important excavations were conducted between 1976 and 1991 and continued between 2000 and 2002. Remains of artefacts dating from Upper Palaeolithic occupations were found here such as stone and bone tools, ivory figurines of animals and an anthropomorphic relief next to three flutes which are the earliest evidence of musical instruments.

The Cave is barred, but its inside fully visible. Both caves (Sirgenstein and Geißenklösterle) can be reached only on foot.



Hohle Fels

A short and easy walk from the well signposted parking lot will take you to this cave near Schelklingen. It is a large cavern about 7 m above the stream Ach. In this extensively explored cave archaeological excavations are still in progress. The finds deliver clues as to the living conditions and lifestyle of the hunter-gatherers passing through the valley. Various figurines carved from mammoth ivory have been found here, among them the famous 40,000-year-old Venus from Hohle Fels.

The cave is easily accessible from the parking lot

Open for visits: 1 May – 31 October • www.schelklingen.de



The Museum of Prehistory

The Museum of Prehistory – named URMU – is the central museum of Ice Age Art of the Swabian Jura. Visitors are taken back 40,000 years in time.

The museum takes pride in being the home of the original Venus from Hohle Fels, the oldest depiction of a woman worldwide. The statuette is carved out of mammoth ivory. Visitors can also see and listen to the world's oldest flutes. They are about 40,000 years old. One is carved out of a swan bone, one of the radius of a griffin vulture and one is even elaborately made of mammoth ivory.

The museum building is the former Heilig Geist Spital, a medieval residential home for Blaubeuren's old, ill and handicapped inhabitants. The rooms of the former residents have been transformed into "treasure chambers" where Ice Age art is presented to visitors.

The annual program of the museum can be found on the website. It includes guided tours, Stone Age workshops, lectures, festivals as well as visits to archaeological sites.



Venus of Hohle Fels



Flute carved out of mammoth ivory

The Venus of the Hohle Fels

The Venus from Hohle Fels was found in the Hohle Fels Cave in 2008. It was a sensational discovery: ivory fragments of a female figurine dating back to the early Aurignacien, i.e. about 40,000 years BP. It is the oldest statuette depicting a woman worldwide. Instead of a head she has an eyelet which shows traces of wear. This indicates that the figurine was worn as a pendant. Her prominent sexual parts leave space for interpretation: Her broad child-bearing hips and huge breasts might symbolize fecundity and nourishment.

Museum of Prehistory | URMU

Opening hours

1 April – 31 October: Tues – Sun 10 am – 5 pm

1 November – 31 March: Tues – Sat 2 pm – 5 pm | Sun 10 am – 5 pm

Phone +49 73 44 96 69 90 • www.urmu.de • info@urmu.de

Guided tour in English

The guided tour of the "Prehistoric Museum" focuses on the living conditions and life style of the palaeolithic hunter-gatherers in our region (Neanderthals and Homo sapiens) and shows the earliest pieces of art, musical instruments and Ice Age ornaments. (90 min, max 25 persons)

advance reservation acquired • for more information contact info@urmu.de



Habitat

Exhibition Tour

Ground floor



The museum tour starts on the ground floor with the habitat and daily life of the Ice Age hunters and gatherers. Ice Age scenarios, interactive elements and movies help visitors immerse themselves into life some 40,000 years ago.

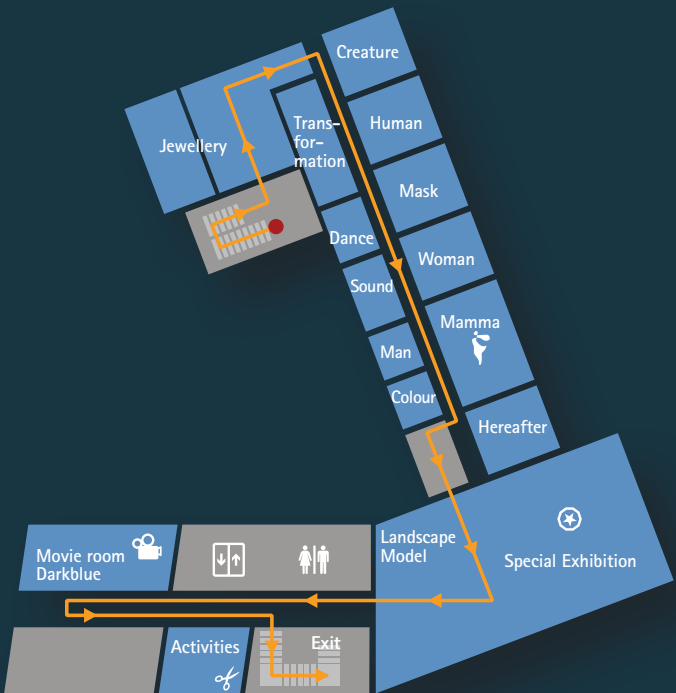


Water bird



Treasure Chamber Woman

First floor



Annual special exhibitions highlight different aspects of the Ice Age and other archaeological topics. Every weekend during summer season guests can participate in a Stone Age workshop. The film "Dunkelblau" (dark blue) about the underworld of the karst system of the Blautopf is shown at the Museum as well.



The Old Town

The historic old part of Blaubeuren is one of the best preserved medieval town centres in the south-western part of Germany. Its half-timbered houses, the remaining parts of the old town wall, twisting lanes and hidden places add up to the allure of the town. Since 2010 the historic town centre along with the mill quarter and the former monastery have been distinguished as listed.

Scattered around the Parish Church St. Peter and Paul are some small shops, inns and cafés. The fountains in the town are a clear sign of the fact that – in contrast to the villages on the Alb plateau – Blaubeuren has always had plenty of water, which in fact was the reason for the foundation of the town and the monastery in this location. The market square and the market fountain are right in the centre of the town. The square is flanked on all four sides by important secular buildings like the town hall, the old customs house and inns. Here the merchants and travellers found a place to stay overnight when on their way from Augsburg to Strasbourg.

In former times the town hall was a multipurpose building used as an indoor market, an assembly hall, and as the town's granary. The tanners had their workshops in the Aachgasse along the brook Ach. The houses have wooden balconies where in the old days the tanners used to dry the animals' hides. The Hohe Wil (Steep Roof) is the most imposing building in this lane. It clearly demonstrates the importance of the trade at that time.



Former Spital, now Prehistoric Museum



Kleines Großes Haus
Little Big House

Half-timbered houses in Blaubeuren

Blaubeuren is at the Deutsche Fachwerkstraße, which is a scenic route linking towns with numerous half-timbered houses from the Middle Ages. When looking closely at some buildings, e.g. the Große Haus or the Prehistoric Museum, you can see that different timbering techniques were used for different floors or extensions. Building laws and regulations had changed by the time a new storey or annexe was added.

Guided tours in English

The "Pearls of Blaubeuren" tour takes you to the Venus from Hohle Fels, the tanners' quarter, the monastery with its famous high altar and the Blautopf. (90 min)

The "Guided Walk through Blaubeuren" takes you to the finest half-timbered houses in the historic old town, to the monastery with its fountain chapel, cloisters and high altar and to the Blautopf. (90 min)

The "Strong Women" tour takes you to the Venus from Hohle Fels, the Virgin Mary at the high altar and the Beautiful Lau at the Blautopf. (90 min)

The "Pick and Choose" option allows you to compile your own programme by combining components of your choice: Blautopf, Drop Hammer Smithy, Old Town, Prehistoric Museum, Monastery, Monks' Bathhouse, Regional fingerfood at the local greengrocer's, Guided rambling tour. (minimum 60 min)

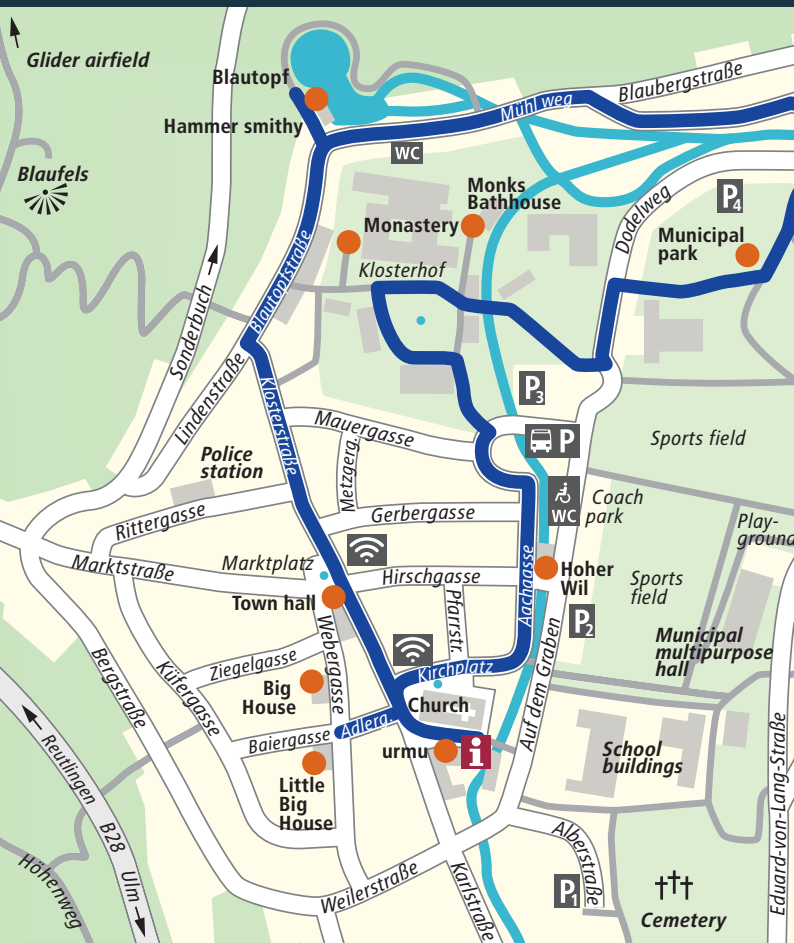
for more information contact tourist@blaubeuren.de



Town hall



Blautopf (Blue Pool)



Free WiFi



Tourist-Info



Buildings worth seeing



In the Tanner's Quarter



The romantic church square



Digital city tour

Along the approximately 2 km circular route that takes you to the most beautiful sights in Blaubeuren you will find cube-shaped seats with QR codes providing you with additional information.



Tour



The landscape surrounding Blaubeuren

It was the ancient Danube which meandered through the area and dug the valley where Blaubeuren is situated. The Blautopf, numerous caves, rocks, quarries, dry valleys, woods and juniper heaths around Blaubeuren are all part of the UNESCO GeoPark Swabian Alb.

The Swabian Alb is Germany's largest karst region and thus the area richest in caves. As the name suggests, the bedrock of the Swabian Jura is limestone. It is the result of the sedimentation of the Jurassic Sea that covered the area some 150 million years ago. In the Tertiary the several hundred metres thick layers of sediments were lifted up to about 700 m above sea level. Its top layer (White Jurassic) forms an impressive escarpment with deep valleys where the fossilized reefs and sponges now stand out as rocky outcrops. The quarries in the valleys of the Ach and the Blau provide valuable raw material for cement works. Chemical plants also make use of the very pure limestone which is found and quarried in the vicinity. And what is more, you might sometimes even chew it, as pure limestone also finds its way into food industry.

Guided tour in English

The tour "About enchanted springs and vanished rivers" will take you to the mysterious Blautopf and along the valley of the ancient Danube where you will discover some more springs and learn how this beautiful landscape has been shaped.



For detailed information and special requests,
opening hours, fees, reduced admission prices
for groups etc., please contact our staff at the
tourist office.

tourist@blaubeuren.de

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Part of
Swabian
Alb!