



## Discover Blaubeuren

Sights Worth Seeing – Facts Worth Knowing

### **Tourist-Info**

Kirchplatz 10  
89143 Blaubeuren  
Phone +49 73 44 / 96 69 90  
[tourist@blaubeuren.de](mailto:tourist@blaubeuren.de)  
[www.blaubeuren.de](http://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 weeks 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 14 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 pealing with laughter at the Blautopf...

## Drop Hammer Smithy

### Opening hours

April – October • daily from 9 am – 6 pm

[www.blautopf.de](http://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 (75 min, minimum 20 persons)

[www.auto-mann.com](http://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. It offers an insight into the living and working conditions of our ancestors.



Choir Stalls



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

April – end of October: Tues – Fri 10 am – 4 pm • Sat and Sun 10 am – 5 pm

## Guided tours in English

### Prices

"The Monastery" (60 min, max 25 persons): 70 € + entrance fee

"The Monastery and the Monks' Bathhouse" (90 min, max 25): 95 € + entrance fee





## Prehistory

During the last Ice Age, first Neanderthals and then anatomically modern humans lived successively in the caves of the Aach Valley near Blaubeuren.

Early modern humans (hunters and gatherers) settled there approximately 40,000 years ago. Not only did they develop new tool making techniques, they also produced personal ornaments, the earliest musical instruments and the world's oldest known figurative artworks from mammoth ivory. This was a huge leap in the development of mankind and a testimony to the new self-awareness of modern humans.

Three of the caves in the Aach 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 floor) provided ideal living conditions for Ice Age people.

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

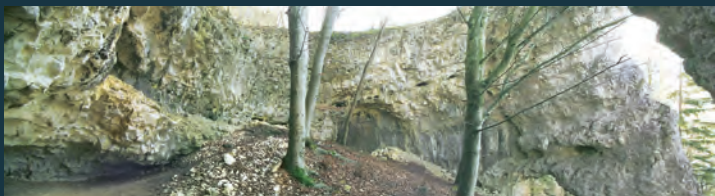




### Sirgenstein

This cave is located on the northwest side of the Ach, about 35 m above the valley. Archeological excavations were undertaken in 1906. Neanderthals and modern humans lived successively at the site. This site is significant in research history.

No bars, cave is freely accessible



### Geißenklösterle

Located southwest of Blaubeuren, about 60 m above the Aach River. The most important excavations were conducted between 1976 and 1991 and continued between 2000 and 2002. Traces of settlements from Upper palaeolithic were found here. Stone and bone artefacts, tools and daily life remains, were found next to ivory figurines – animals and an anthropomorphic figurine. Three flutes are the earliest evidence of musical instruments.

The Cave is barred, inside fully visible. Both caves (Sirgenstein and Geißenklösterle) can be reached only on foot. A path with detailed information will be completed in summer-autumn 2020 to each site.



### Hohle Fels

This cave is located north-east of Schelklingen on the southeastern edge of the Aach valley, about 7 m above the river. It is a large cavern (one of the largest in Southern Germany). Archeological excavations are still in progress. It has been extensively explored. The finds deliver important clues as to the living conditions and life style. Some figurines carved from mammoth ivory have been found here, among them the 40,000-year-old Venus of Hohle Fels.

The cave is easily accessible from the parking lot

**Open for visits:** 1 May – 31 October • [www.museum-schelklingen.de](http://www.museum-schelklingen.de)



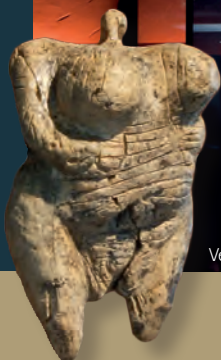
## The Museum of Prehistory

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 is home of the original Venus of Hohle Fels – the oldest depiction of a human worldwide. It is carved out of mammoth ivory. Visitors can also listen to and see the world's oldest flutes, about 40,000 years old: One carved out of a swan bone, one of a griffin vulture and one even elaborately made of mammoth ivory. They may also experience the sharpness of flint, the feel of mammoth ivory and sense the variations of hides and furs.

In addition, the museum building itself is worth a visit. It is the former Holy Spirit 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.

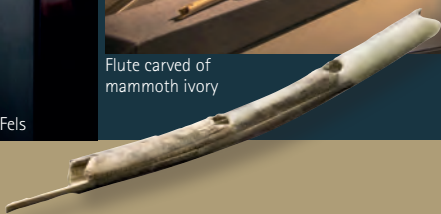
The annual program of the museum can be found on the website. It includes guided tours, Stone Age workshops, lectures, festivals as well as visits to archeological sites.



Venus of Hohle Fels



Flute carved of mammoth ivory



### The Venus of Hohle Fels

The Venus of Hohle Fels was found in 2008 during an archeological excavation at the Hohle Fels Cave. It was a sensational discovery: The fragments of a mammoth ivory figurine of a female belonging to the early Aurignacien around 40.000 years ago is the oldest figurine depicting a woman worldwide. Its height is 6 cm, in place of the head it has a loop. Traces of wear indicate that it was worn as a pendant. Its prominent sexual characteristics provide scope for interpretation: The huge breasts and broad child-bearing hips may be a symbol of reproduction and nourishment.

## Museum of Prehistory | urmu

### Opening hours

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

1 December – 14 March: Tues and Sat 2 pm – 5 pm | Sun 10 am – 5 pm

Phone +49 73 44/96 69 90 • [www.urmu.de](http://www.urmu.de) • [info@urmu.de](mailto:info@urmu.de)

### Guided tour in English

The guided tour of the "Prehistoric Museum" focuses on the living conditions and life style of the paleolithic hunter-gatherers in our region (Neanderthals and Homo sapiens) and shows the earliest pieces of art, musical instruments and Ice Age ornaments. (60 min or 90 min, max 25 persons)

### Prices

60 min: 70€ + entrance fee • 90 min: 95€ + entrance fee  
advance reservation acquired



Daily Life

## Tour of the museum

### 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.

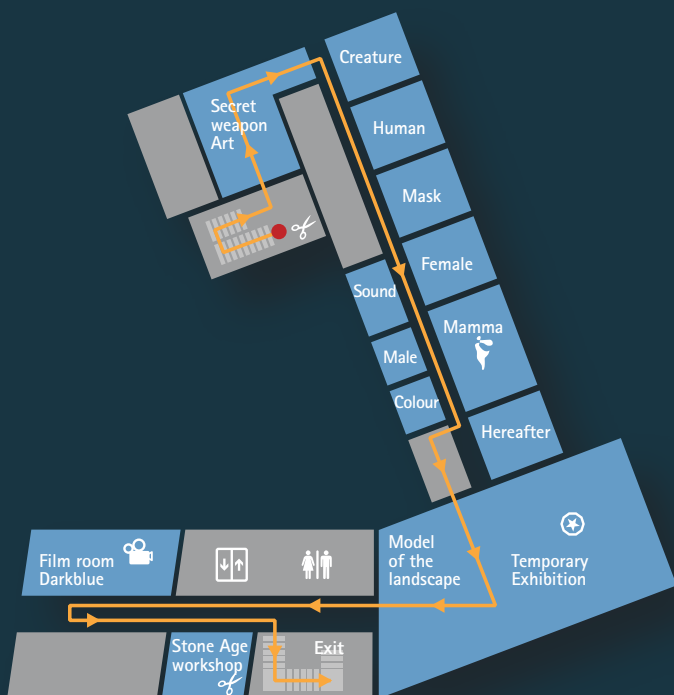


Water bird



Treasure Chamber Female

## First floor



Annual special exhibitions highlight different aspects of the Ice Age and other archeological topics. Every Sunday 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.



## 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.

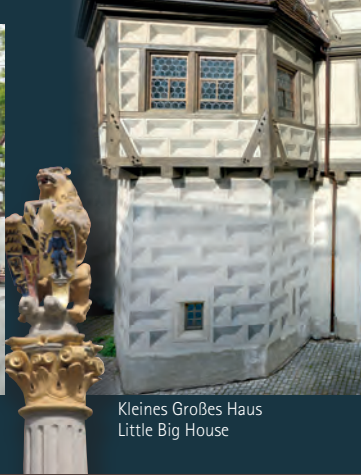
Scattered around the Parish Church St. Peter and Paul are some small shops, inns and cafés. The fountains in the town are a clear sign of the fact that – in contrast to the villages on the Alb plateau – Blaubeuren has always had plenty of water, which in fact was the reason for the foundation of the 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 Aach. 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.

## Do a tour of the historic part of the town

When following the 1500 m long trail with 13 information boards you will discover the most beautiful spots of our town. You can start your walk at any information board. An arrow points in the right direction so you will always get back to your starting point.

## 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)

### Prices

60 min: 70€ + entrance fee • 90 min: 95€ + entrance fee • max 25 persons





Imitation of hewn stones painted on the plastering of the Little Big House

## Do a tour of the historic part of the town



Free WiFi



Tourist-Info



Wall frescoes in the Monks' Bathhouse



The tanners' quarter



When following the 1500 m long trail with 13 information boards you will discover the most beautiful spots of our town. You can start your walk at any information board. An arrow points in the right direction so you will always get back to your starting point.

● Buildings worth seeing



## 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 Aach 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.

#### Price

100 min: 120€ • max 25 persons



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](mailto:tourist@blaubeuren.de)

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