

BASISPRESSETEXT (1.187 Zeichen)

Feel the mix of elements at the western end of Lake Constance

## Sensual realm of islands and volcanoes

**Shimmering blue-green waters, gloriously lush islands and proudly towering volcanoes really make us happy. Every now and then we grab our phones out of our pockets to capture this beauty and vastness through a photograph. Wait a minute, did you say volcanoes? At Lake Constance? Yes, this area has a fiery past. Nowhere else on the lake will you find more magical landscapes, more islands and as unspoiled nature as on the so called Untersee. This area, formed by fire and ice, creates many unique moments.**

It may have been millions of years ago that the volcanoes in the Hegau last spew lava and ash: the magma that cooled in the vents withstood the passage of time and the pressures of the ice ages throughout the millennia. These ages put the finishing touches on the landscape: At the same location where the Rhine glacier carved out Lake Constance, sculpted mountain ridges and created dreamy islands in the lake, today, a natural paradise awaits those seeking peace, adventure and enjoyment in the region around the German–Swiss border.

### Island-hopping in the Garden of Eden

The islands of western Lake Constance are little jewels in the blue water. They invite locals and visitors to enjoy island-hopping by bike, canoe, SUP, solar ferry or passenger boat. The island of Reichenau is an UNESCO World Heritage Site and is known for growing delicious vegetables. The air in the ornate churches with more than a thousand years of worship, seems to be thick. These are the exact spots where monastic scholars once helped to form today's world. Those who are seeking a breath of princely roses will definitely find what they are looking for near Konstanz, on the Island of Mainau. The island is known all over the world for its amazing flowers and eye-catching mix of colours. Garden lovers cannot help but to be amazed here. The little love island near Radolfzell became famous through the wide known movie *“Die Fischerin vom Bodensee”*. The easiest form to visit is by canoe or kayak. The tiny monastery island of Werd near Stein am Rhein is known to be extremely peaceful. A narrow wooden walkway leads to the quiet chapel where the Untersee and the Rhine shake hands in farewell. The peninsulas of Mettnau, Bodanrück and Höri offer pure adventure for hiking and cycling enthusiasts.

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Scheduled boats cruise the lake to fulfil the wide offer and simplify transportation all around the Untersee. The season has even been extended by four weekends in late autumn, through the so-called autumn-hopping.

### **Discover power spots with volcano-hopping**

The skyline of western Lake Constance consists of skyscrapers of a somewhat different kind: volcanoes dominate the horizon. They form the backdrop to a paradisiacal hiking and mountain biking area just a stone's throw from the lake. Seven in one go? That's not possible unfortunately. But you should definitely take a few extra days for volcano-hopping in the Hegau. One option is to choose from nine premium hiking trails called "Hegauer Kegelspiel". Fantastic views open up from the airy peaks, often decorated with medieval castles, as for example on the Stettener Panoramaweg near Engen or the Alter Postweg near Tengen. The volcanic landscape generously reveals mysterious crater lakes, orchid forests and the Aach spring surging up from the depths. The Hohentwiel in Singen, king of all Hegau volcanoes, is not only crowned by Germany's largest fortress ruin, but the slopes of this nature reserve are also home to the highest vineyard in Germany. Thanks to augmented reality, visitors can now discover what the fortress used to look like hundreds of years ago in 3D.

### **Pleasurable walks and treats for all the senses**

Stroll in the shade of giant trees, unwind in wildlife gardens or talk to locals about old seeds in farm gardens: at the western end of Lake Constance, the symbiosis of nature and the gardener's shovel has become an art form. No wonder this is also the cradle of horticulture: on the island of Reichenau, abbot Walahfrid Strabo established a monastery garden as early as the ninth century. From his findings he wrote Europe's first gardening guidebook, the "Hortulus". Locals pay tribute to him with the most beautiful gardens: 79 private oases and parks open their doors for the "Grenzenlose Garten-Rendezvous" (Boundless Garden Rendezvous). A visit to the market of herbs in Radolfzell is to be recommended as locals and visitors celebrate herb weeks all over the region from April to June.

### **Through the eyes of Hesse, Dix & Co.**

The painters of the Höri have been taking inspiration from the picturesque shores of the Untersee and steep volcanic vents for a long time. If you want to see the islands and volcanoes of western Lake Constance through their eyes, the KunstRoute (route of arts) is the way to go. Iron slabs reveal where the easels of great artists such as Otto Dix, Adolf Dietrich or Erich Heckel once stood. They frame the painters' motifs and compare them to the finished

painting. The existing route will be renewed soon and extended to the Hegau region later on. Many great writers have also been staying at the lake: Hermann Hesse lived on the Höri for eight years. The exact old farmhouse now houses the Hesse Museum in Gaienhofen. The literary cycle route “Per Pedal zur Poesie” (“Pedal to Poetry”) follows known literary figures like Johann Wolfgang von Goethe or Fritz Mühlenweg who lived or travelled around the Untersee.

### **Feasting between islands and volcanoes**

At the weekly and evening markets, tables groan under the massive displays of local food manufacturers and vegetable farmers. Fishermen cheerfully hawk their freshly caught fish and the pleasant scent by nearby restaurants wafts temptingly around visitors. Due to the beauty of the landscape, there is a wide offer that combines breath-taking views, exercise and culinary delights, including the tour “Rettich, Bülle und Salat” (Radish, onion and lettuce) on the Höri peninsula and culinary hikes on the island of Reichenau. These tours lead past vegetable fields, stalls and vineyards to the best restaurants, where delicacies are already waiting to refresh visitors. For those who prefer to feast in style on the lake, the culinary delight cruises on the Untersee are just the right option. Later in the year wildly romantic hiking and eating delicious game can be recommended. The “Wilde Wochen” (Game weeks) begin in the quiet low season: from November to February, visitors will find hearty game dishes in the restaurants on the volcanic landscape in and around the Hegau and by the lake. And it is when the crimson sun sinks behind the old chimneys in the evening after an eventful day that the imposing power of nature can be felt.

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