

LAKE CONSTANCE - STUNNING REFLECTION OF EUROPE



Many places claim to be at the 'heart' of Europe. Lake Constance can genuinely adopt this title, both due to its geographical presence and natural wonder, as well as its warm and hospitable people. 14% increase in visitor numbers shows the growing popularity of the destination.

Travelling around Europe can be an endless experience, with so many diverse and interesting places and cultures. Most international (and even regional travellers for that matter) would not be so aware of the more 'hidden' gems. Lake Constance (Bodensee) is certainly one of these, and one that truly depicts what much of Europe is all about.

Lake Constance is the third largest lake in Central Europe, located at the northern foot of the Alps and on the path of the Rhine River. The region is indeed unique as a destination, as it offers holiday experiences of four countries - Germany, Switzerland, the Principality of Liechtenstein and Austria. It is also at the cross road of the rest of Europe, therefore also reflecting many other flavours.

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Tourism - Mostly Domestic

As a travel destination it still very much revolves around domestic tourism. In fact, around 90% of all arrivals are made up of Germany (78%), Austria, Switzerland and Principality of Liechtenstein. Other key international feeder markets are Italy, France, Low Countries and the UK and USA.

Most guests to the region are couples and families (approximately three quarters of all guests). The rest are single travellers and small groups.

In 2013, the region recorded a small increase in tourist arrivals over the previous year. Since 2007 to date, there has been a 14% increase in arrivals. According to General Manager, Internationale Bodensee Tourismus GmbH, Jürgen Ammann, there has been an increase in short, more spontaneous type of trips to the region, but the travellers also come more often.

"This means for the service provider to respond more flexibly to it. Hoteliers (for instance) have shorter advanced booking periods which leads to less predictability," he said.

"There has also been a change in the travel time as day trips are becoming increasingly important. Also, the guests of today are better informed, well-travelled, critical and finally also demanding," he added.

Image Source: International Bodensee Tourismus GmbH, Photographer Achim Mende

Fascinating Nature

Lake Constance balances beautiful landscapes, unspoilt nature with adventure options, relaxation, a rich cultural history and culinary experiences.

There is an abundance of beautiful picturesque spots: composed panning lake views, forests, vineyards, orchards, and hilly to mountain backdrops; extremely well maintained and distinctive architecture - castles, churches, monasteries, villages - that truly take you back in time; plus an array of lights and colours throughout the year.

Overall the entire region's temperament is one of being easy going, cheerful and inspirational. This is supported by its foundations in artistic, holistic and organic ways, together with a more slow paced and community-bound way of life.

Image Source: International Bodensee Tourismus GmbH, Photographer Achim Mende

Spanning from this are other key touristic segments, including medical, health and wellness, events for children, families and business, educational institutions, art and culture, among others.

It might not be an action-packed and buzzing destination for youngsters and hipsters, nor does it pretend to be. Lake Constance is more about serenity, nature and traditional experiences. This comes with first-class options in dining, accommodation ranging from luxurious to mid-range and budget hotels, guest houses, self-serviced apartment, and camping grounds, as well as many activities.

Image Source: International Bodensee Tourismus GmbH, Photographer Achim Mende

Getting There - Cross Roads of Europe

Lake Constance is easily accessible from much of Europe and by all main modes of transport.

The closest commercial airports (all within about 2 hours drive of the lake) are in Friedrichshafen, Memmingen, Stuttgart and Zurich, as well as EuroAirport Basel Mulhouse Freiburg, which is also well serviced by low cost carriers.

Destinations along the lake are well connected with trains, road and ferries. Meanwhile, another great option to seeing parts of the region includes cycling along the many long promenades.

Image Source: International Bodensee Tourismus GmbH, Photographer Achim Mende

Things to See & Do: Calm, Coherent and Charming

There are many towns and villages throughout the region, each with its own unique charm and attraction. From Überlingen, Konstanz, Meersburg, Lindau and Friedrichshafen in Germany, St. Gallen, Thurgau and Bischofszell in Switzerland, and Vorarlberg and Feldkirch in Austria.

As a whole, Lake Constance offers many travel options. To name a few - extensive hiking and bicycle paths, thermal springs, health and wellness, sailing, swimming, canoeing and other water activities, all sorts of sporting activities, boat cruises, galleries and a variety of museums, extensive culinary choices, sightseeing zeppelin flights, shopping and markets, landscaped gardens, and multitude of events throughout the year for age groups. More information on the region can be found at www.bodensee.eu

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