



Animal Parks: An Adventure for Everyone

By Adriana Musso

Did you know that wolves can go more than a week without eating? Or that a tiger's roar can be heard as far as two miles away? Or even that a giraffe's heart weighs about 11 kilograms? It can be fascinating to watch and learn about animals because big or small, somehow animals just fascinate us all.

So what better way to spend a family day out than visiting an animal park? Believe it or not, there are at least 29 animal parks in a 90-minute radius from Basel! Whichever size and type of animal park you prefer; there is surely one for every taste! If you favor large zoos with diverse exhibits that will take probably a whole day (or maybe even two) to visit, there are great options like the Basel Zoo, Zürich Zoo, Bern Tierpark (animal park) "Dählhölzli," or the Mulhouse Zoological and Botanical Garden. These offer a unique park-like atmosphere with enclosures that often attempt to replicate the animals' natural habitats, for the benefit of both animals and visitors. They exhibit a wide array of species and include conservation projects to promote care and reproduction of the animals as well as education.

If you prefer, however, to skip the large queues and big crowds, there are many smaller parks that house either endangered, exotic, or regional species worth visiting, such as the Sikypark, Toni's Zoo, Zoo Hasel, Plättli Zoo, and Tier-Natur-Erlebnispark Mundenhof.



An even larger number of animal parks house local species, where visitors can specifically discover and enjoy the regional fauna. Most of these are part of local animal conservation initiatives and offer the chance for visitors to get close to the animals and even partake in their feeding and petting. These include parks such as the Tierpark Lange Erlen, NaturOparC, Tierpark Reinach, Langental Zoo, Tierpark Bad Zurzach, and many more.

A handful of animal parks also specialize in certain species of animals such as the Vogelpark Steinen, a bird park dedicated to birds of all sizes and from different habitats; La Montagne des Singes, a natural reserve for the preservation of monkeys; the Schlangen Zoo, which exhibits non-toxic and poisonous snakes; and Bern's Bear Park. Additionally, a very peculiar park is the Römischer Haustierpark in Augusta Raurica, which specifically exhibits animal species that were popular in Roman times.

And finally, if you are looking for a mix of animals and adrenaline, there are also a few animal theme-parks offering a combination of zoo and amusement elements, such as a stage shows, rollercoaster rides, and mythical creatures. Among them are the very popular Steinwasen Park, Tatzmania, and Erlebniswelt Seeteufel. These exhibit a smaller number of animal species, offering their visitors the opportunities to also enjoy fun rides, bobsled runs, and water rides. In addition to the animal exhibits, most of these parks offer the opportunity to pet animals, attend feeding sessions, and host birthday parties, while others also offer pony riding sessions and special tours. The following table provides information about nearly 30 animal parks that are within a 90-minute drive from Basel (ordered by country and then by distance from Basel)—you will surely find one to please every member of the family!

ANIMAL PARK	GETTING THERE	DESCRIPTION	PRACTICAL INFO
Switzerland			
Zoo Basel (Basel) www.zoobasel.ch	On foot: 20 minutes from Marktplatz Public Transport: Tram 1 or 8 to "Zoo Bachletten," tram 2 or bus 34 or 36 to "Zoo Dorenbach," or tram 10 or 17 to "Zoo"	The zoo is home to over 6,000 animals. Many exhibits have indoor and outdoor viewing areas, so animals can be visited in all weather conditions. Exhibits include an African theme area, Vivarium, an Australia exhibit, and the antelope house, ape house, and elephant house, among others.	Large restaurant, kiosk, playground. When weather permits, penguins walk through the zoo at 11:00.
Tierpark Lange Erlen (Basel) www.erlen-verein.ch	By Car: 3 min from Basel city center, limited parking places Public Transport: From Badischer Bahnhof, take bus 36 direction "Kleinhüningen" to stop "Lange Erlen"	A beautiful small animal park in the outskirts of Basel, with a selection of native animals, such as deer, goats, ducks, swans, boars, etc. The park borders the Wiese river, which is an ideal path for bike riding or walking. Free entry	Kiosk, restaurant, playground. Pony rides are offered every Sunday afternoon.
Tierpark Reinach (Reinach, BL) www.tierpark-reinach.ch	By Car: 20 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Reinach (20 min) + 6-min walk	Zoo is home to fallow deer, pygmy goats, ducks, geese, hens, rabbits, and various ornamental birds. Free entry	The "Tierparkfest" usually takes place on the first Sunday in June.

Römischer Haustierpark Augst (Augst, BL) www.augustaurica.ch/en/visit/sights/animal-park	By Car: 20 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Kaiseraugst (12 min) + 11-min walk	Augusta Raurica presents a wonderful indoor and outdoor museum of the Roman era. In the zoo, you can see animal species that were already popular during Roman times. <i>Free entry</i>	Visit the animal park in combination with the Roman museum and Roman excavated ruins.
Tierpark Weihermätteli (Liestal, BL) www.tierpark-weihermaetteli.ch	By Car: 25 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Liestal (9 min) + 13-min walk.	This publicly accessible, beautifully landscaped animal park is home to around 200 animals. Many of these are indigenous to the region; however, this park also houses other animals such as Scottish Highland cattle, llamas, Dartmoor ponies, and spotted deer. <i>Free entry</i>	Self-service restaurant Pony rides are offered Wednesdays from 14:00–16:00.
Wildpark Roggenhausen (Aarau, AG) www.roggenhausen.ch	By Car: 50 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Aarau (40 min) + bus to Aarau, Roggenhausen (3 min) + 2-min walk	The Wildpark Roggenhausen is an area of around 15 hectares featuring regional wildlife, rare pet species, a nature trail, and an orchard. Visitors can expect fallow deer, spotted deer, red deer, wild boar, mini pigs, chickens, and more. <i>Free entry</i>	Restaurant with playground Visitors can download and print documents from the zoo's website.
Langenthal Zoo (Langenthal, BE) www.vvl-langenthal.ch	By Car: 50 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Langenthal (35 min) + bus to Langenthal, Elzweg (4 min) + 4-min walk	The zoo covers an area of 30,000 m ² where about 80 animals live in loosely structured enclosures. You can observe red deer, wild boar, dwarf goats, donkeys, and ponies in the wild. Feeding is allowed! <i>Free entry</i>	There is a children's playground right next to the animal enclosures.
Zoo Hasel (Remigen, AG) www.zoo-hasel.ch	By Car: 50 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Brugg (45 min) + bus to Rüfenach (13 min) + 10-min walk	Petting zoo with exotic species; it currently has about 160 animals in an area of 10'000 m ² . Animals include donkeys, mini-pigs, ponies, emus, alpacas, snowy owls, a black vulture, nymphs, and budgerigars, as well as cockatoos, grey parrots, and macaws.	The park offers children's birthday parties, pony rides, as well as carriage rides.
Sikypark (Crémines, BE) www.sikypark.ch	By Car: 60 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Cremines Zoo (60 min) + 3-min walk.	This animal park houses 300 animals from 54 different species, including native and exotic animals, big cats, house pets, and birds of prey. The zoo team reports daily on the diverse and amazing abilities of the animal inhabitants. Do not miss the walk-in aviary, the largest of its kind in Switzerland.	Restaurant, picnic areas, pony riding, Siky Express train, playground, and mini-luna park
Vogel Voliere Stansstad (Stansstad, NW) www.voliere-stansstad.ch	By Car: 60 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Stansstad (75 min) + bus to Stansstad, Schützen (1 min) + 9-min walk.	This bird park houses a large number of species, such as cockatiel, canary, zebra finches, rose-ringed parakeet, black-headed parrot, sun conure, Bali star, purple starling, silver duck, Mandarin duck, sulfur crested cockatoo, and a variety of parrots. <i>Free entry</i>	Located next to Lake Lucerne, visitors can enjoy a relaxing lake-side stroll.
Zoo Zürich (Zürich) www.zoo.ch	By Car: 65 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Zürich HB (60 min) + tram to "Zoo" (17 min) + 4-min walk.	Around 360 animal species from all over the world can be observed at the Zürich zoo. The animals live in different exhibits designed to mimic nature. Travel down under and marvel at the koalas Milo and Mikey as well as kangaroos, emus, and giant blinds. Another attractive exhibit is Kaeng Krachan elephant park. If you prefer to see the winter professionals, you can visit the Amur tiger and the small pandas.	SBB offers discount for the travel tickets and entrance to the Zürich Zoo; more info on SBB website.
Tierpark Bad Zurzach (Bad Zurzach, AG) www.tierpark-badzurzach.ch	By Car: 70 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Brugg (45 min) + bus to Tierpark Bad Zurzach (31 min) + 3-min walk	At the Tierpark Bad Zurzach, people can find fallow sheep, dwarf goats, ducks, geese, aviaries with cranes and exotic birds, and a special variety of peacocks and pheasants. <i>Free entry</i>	Visitors can observe the feeding of the animals daily.
Erlebnisswelt Seeteufel (Studen, BE) www.seeteufel.ch	By Car: 70 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Biel/Bienne (70 min) + bus to Studen BE, Grien (16 min) + 3-min walk	This animal and adventure park houses more than 45 species of animals from all continents, including lemurs, red-necked wallabies, nandus, crocodiles, watusi, and zebras. Additionally, the park has an adventure world that includes numerous games and entertainment options for children ages 2–12.	Attractions include feeding animals, pony rides, playground, indoor game room, beer garden, small train ride, mini cars, and bumper boats.
Bern Animal Park—Dählhölzli (Bern) www.tierpark-bern.ch	By Car: 75 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Bern train station (57 min) + bus to Tierpark (7 min) + 7-min walk	About half of the Dählhölzli is freely accessible or visible: the enclosures along the Aare river, the children's zoo, the lynx park, the wisent forest, the grouse, and flamingo enclosures. But if you wish to visit the vivarium or the species that live beyond it (brown bear, leopard, wolf, elk, seal, muskox, and many others) you will have to pay the entrance fee. Their smartphone quiz offers a wealth of information.	Restaurant, playground, grill and picnics areas The park offers pony rides and face painting.
Bern Animal Park—Bear Park (Bern) www.tierpark-bern.ch	By Car: 75 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Bern Train Station (57 min) + Bus to Tierpark (7 min) + 7-min walk	Visit the three brown bears living in the heart of the city of Bern, in a generously sized, humane enclosure—a unique experience. From the upper terrace or from the Aare, visitors can observe how the powerful bears search out food, laze around in the sun, or take a cool bath. <i>Free entry</i>	A free lift connects the Aare promenade with the visitors' path near the restaurant. The bears used to be kept in small pits that are now open to visitors; children can climb on the wooden bears and boulders.
Tierpark Biel (Biel/Bienne, BE) https://tierpark-biel.ch	By Car: 80 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Biel/Bienne (65 min) + bus to Taubenloch (11 min) + 12-min walk	The Tierpark Biel offers many native animals in their natural habitat, including red fox, lynx, wild boar, marmot, racoon, chamois, mouflon, sika deer, red deer, and capricorn, amongst others. There are no fences around the park and no cash register. <i>Free entry</i>	Playground and BBQ fire pits

Special Feature *(continued)*

Toni's Zoo (Rothenburg, LU) www.toniszoo.ch	By Car: 80 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Menziken (36 min) + bus to Rothenburg, Wegscheid (28 min) + 7-min walk	The park houses approximately 400 animals from 90 different species, including cheetahs, leopards, black panther, donkeys, llamas, snakes, amphibians, a wide variety of birds, and more.	Restaurant and playground Guided tours and birthday celebrations are offered.
Wildpark Bruderhaus (Winterthur, ZH) www.wildparkverein.ch	By Car: 80 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Winterthur (75 min) + bus to Bruderhaus (10 min) + 2-min walk	This park houses a small but significant number of endangered species, including fallow deer, lynx, mouflon, Mongolian wild horse, red deer, Vietnamese sika deer, wild boars, European bison, and European grey wolves. Free entry	Guided tours are available.
Nature and Animal Park Goldau (Goldau, SZ) www.tierpark.ch	By Car: 80 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Arth-Goldau (100 min) + 8-min walk	On 42 hectares you can observe deer, wolves, bears, lynx, birds of prey, and many other animals up close. The nature and animal park Goldau accommodates around 100 domestic and European wildlife species. Watch the animals swimming through the underwater window in the pool of the common enclosure for bears and wolves.	Restaurant, playgrounds, grill, and picnic areas They also offer interesting events and courses.
Plättli-Zoo (Frauenfeld, TG) www.plaettli-zoo.ch	By Car: 85 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Frauenfeld (89 min) + bus to Frauenfeld, Plättli Zoo (5 min) + 1-min walk	In the Plättli Zoo, visitors can admire wildlife such as lions, pumas, wild boars, llamas, camels, ponies, goats, and donkeys. There is also a significant number of birds, rabbits, turtles, and guinea pigs.	Restaurant, playground and birthday parties are available.
Schlangenzoo Eschlikon (Wallenwil/Eschlikon, TG) www.schlangenzoo.ch	By Car: 90 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Eschlikon (99 min) + 6-min walk	The park exhibits over 220 non-toxic and poisonous snakes from all over the world in a 320 m ² exhibition area.	Photo shooting session with snakes are available.

Germany

Vogelpark Steinen (Steinen-Hofen, DE) www.vogelpark-steinen.de	By Car: 30 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Steinen (25 min) + bus to Hofen Vogelpark (25 min) + 1-min walk	This park is dedicated to birds of all sizes and from different habitats. A special attraction is the daily bird-of-prey show with eagles, falcons, and owls. The park also features a free-flight aviary containing many types of parakeets, exhibits of Barbary Macaques, and the Bennett kangaroos.	Restaurant, children's playground, kiosk, areas for barbecues, and a paddling pool with barefoot path Visitors can feed the monkeys.
Tier-Natur-Erlebnispark Mundenhof (Freiburg, DE) www.mundenhof.de	By Car: 45 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel Badischer Bahnhof to Freiburg, Breisgau (30 min) + 2 busses to Freiburg Mundenhof (30 min) + 9-min walk	With 38 hectares, the Mundenhof is the largest animal enclosure in Baden-Württemberg. Domestic and livestock breeds from all over the world live on the spacious paddocks. In addition, agriculture continues to provide around 180 hectares for an ecological cycle economy. Free entry	Playground, restaurants, and picnic places
Steinwasen-Park (Oberried, DE) www.steinwasen-park.de	By Car: 70 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel Badischer Bahnhof to Freiburg, Breisgau (30 min) + tram to Freiburg Lassbergstrasse (18 min) + bus to St. Wilhelm Steinwasen, Oberried (33 min) + 5-min walk	Several animal enclosures and fun rides are spread over an area of 35 hectares. The park is integrated into the natural mountain landscape and takes the Black Forest as a central theme. Over 30 different wild animals live in their natural habitats in the park. It is particularly attractive for young families.	Kiosk, restaurants, playgrounds, many fun rides, and even a 3-D cinema are available.
Schwarzwaldzoo Waldkirch (Waldkirch, DE) www.schwarzwaldzoo.de	By Car: 80 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Denzlingen (50 min) + bus to Post, Waldkirch (14 min) + 8-min walk	At this zoo, visitors can enjoy a pleasant stroll discovering animals such as deer, alpacas, ibex, lynxes, foxes, diverse types of birds, and many other species. Due to its great location at the edge of the forest and diverse leisure facilities, the family fun is combined with a walk in the great outdoors.	Large games arena, kiosk restaurant, and barbecue area
Tatzmania (Löffingen, DE) www.tatzmania.com	By Car: 90 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel Badischer Bahnhof to Titisee (80 min) + bus to Löffingen (31 min) + 14-min walk	Tatzmania is an animal park that also includes fun rides. It exhibits tigers, lions, bison, deer, sheep, llamas, porcupines, pygmy goats, elk, ibexes, ponies, kangaroos, blue peafowl, domestic chickens, and emus. It also has a few fun rides such as Waveflying, African Spin, free-fall tower, Venture River, and a jungle land for the younger guests.	Beer garden and restaurant

France

Mulhouse Zoological and Botanical Garden (Mulhouse, FR) www.zoo-mulhouse.ch	By Car: 30 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Gare de Mulhouse (31 min) + 18-min walk	Visit the Zoological and Botanical Park of Mulhouse and discover 1,200 animals from all continents, ranging from lions, Siberian tigers, and polar bears to red pandas and a wide collection of birds. The botanical garden consists of 25 hectares of greenery where 3,000 varieties of trees and plants flourish. Visitors can download and print documents from the zoo's website as well as the zoo's App.	Kiosk, restaurant, playground, stroller friendly Thematic activities for children and a train "Zoo express" are available.
NaturOparC (Hunawir, FR) www.centredereintroduction.fr	By Car: 55 minutes	This center aims to safeguard regional species like storks, giant hamsters, otters, goats, ducks, penguins, nutria, turtles, and more.	Restaurant, playgrounds, and picnic area are available.
La Montagne des Singes (Kintzheim, FR) www.montagnedessinges.com	By Car: 60 minutes Public Transport: Train from Basel SBB to Sélestat + shuttle "Navette du Haut-Koenigsbourg—Linie 500" to Montagne des Singes (approx. 25 min)	In the Monkey Mountain, about 200 Barbary Macaques roam freely through this protected area. As you walk through and receive informative explanations, monkeys appear from all parts of the forest, very keen to receive a popcorn treats from your hand (provided to you at the park entrance).	Park includes a self-service cafeteria, children's play area, and picnic area.

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Adriana Musso is a communications, journalism, and media specialist with 12 years of experience in the field. She is married and has two children and has lived in Basel since 2009. Adriana has previously lived and worked in Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East. She holds a Master's degree from the University of Oxford and a Bachelor's degree from the University of Lima.