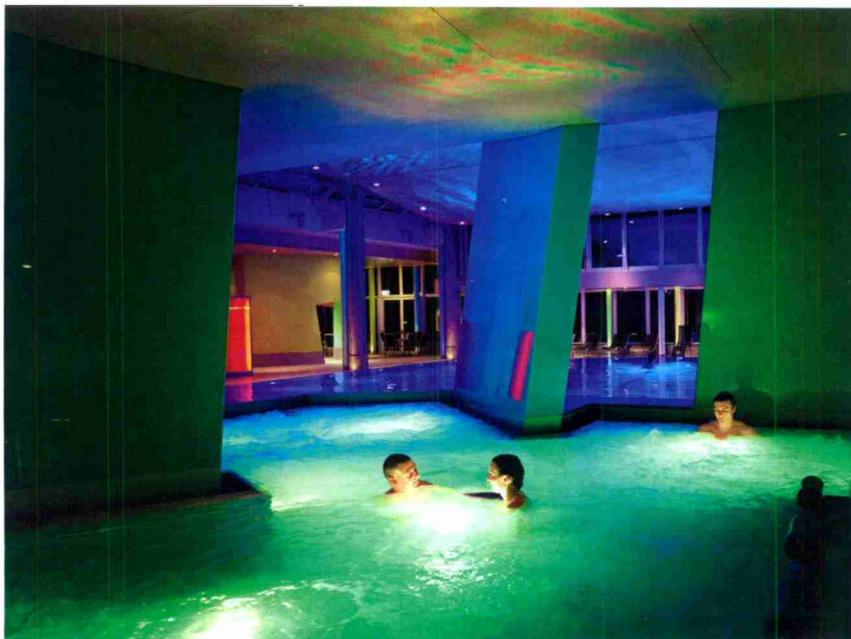


# Discover Switzerland: Spas & Wellness

Spring is the traditional time of year when many Swiss like to take a “wellness break”.



The indoor whirlpool

(© Parkresort Rheinfelden)

As the most mountainous country in Europe, Switzerland is also renowned for its natural thermal springs, whose beneficial and therapeutic qualities were discovered as early as Roman times. It would be impossible to give a comprehensive list of all the spas and thermal baths scattered all over Switzerland. Instead, we present a “taster” of the range and varieties of spas available for you to experience and enjoy. Wherever you live in Switzerland, you won’t be far from a spa to suit you.

## Basel Region

Claiming to be the most exciting waterpark in Switzerland is the new **Aquabasilica** in Pratteln, which opened in a blaze of glory just a year ago. Situated in the same new complex as the Courtyard Hotel, it’s a large

and beautiful spa and wellness centre which has everything – leisure and vitality pools, a sauna area, spa facilities and a fitness centre all under one roof. Attractions include water slides, a wave-pool for children and whirlpools. The sauna area has a choice of different types of sauna (with separate zones depending on whether you want to keep your swimsuit on or prefer to go without) and special events are on offer, like the candlelight evening with buffet. If you’re used to small intimate saunas, the large sauna holding up to about 50 people at once is rather a different experience, but none the worse for that. Spa facilities include everything from massage to facials and cosmetic treatments. [www.aquabasilica.ch](http://www.aquabasilica.ch)

The baths at Rheinfelden has expanded its facilities and been re-christened

**Sole Uno Wellness-Welt.** Part of Rheinfelden’s Parkresort, including a lovely hotel by the river and a rehabilitation centre, it’s very popular, and with reason: the water provided for the pools is Rheinfelder Natursole® and the whole place has a very nice atmosphere. Again, there are separate zones for the clad and unclad. The swimming pools have relaxing water jets under the surface and sculpted waterfalls. Downstairs is a quiet area with a saltwater pool you can float in, and shower rooms with water dripping from the ceiling like a tropical down-pour. There are three Finnish saunas (indoor and outdoor), complete with wood stoves. Try the “Wenik-Ritual”, a Russian sauna where you’re plied with tea, fresh fruit and vodka, whipped with birch branches (the essential oils are apparently good for the circulation) and given a honey-and-salt rub. If you find the sauna too hot, there is also a bio-sauna and steamroom.

[www.parkresort.ch](http://www.parkresort.ch)

In Basel itself is the **Migros Fitness Park** on Heuwaage, which is conveniently situated and also has a “wellness” area including sauna. It’s a good, efficient, well-equipped, professionally run place, and there are three saunas, for women, men and mixed. New in Basel is also the **Dampfbad St Johann**, i.e. steambath or hammam, which was opened last November in the old railway control centre at St Johann station.

[www.fitnesspark.ch](http://www.fitnesspark.ch)

[www.dampfbadbasel.ch](http://www.dampfbadbasel.ch)

Anitra

(with help from Frances and Lisa)

massages, day spa packages and special event packages, such as the 4-handed bride massage.

[www.hammam-bern.ch](http://www.hammam-bern.ch)

*Querida*

### **Romandie area**

#### *Swimming under the stars*

For those who haven't got a whole day to spare, there are many spas that open late into the evening. Whether it's after a day's skiing, or a day at the office, there is something quite special about being able to swim under stars surrounded by the outline of the Alps. One such place is **Les Bains de Lavey** where you can swim or soak till your heart's content until 21:00 during the week and until 22:00 Fridays & Saturdays.

These baths in the Valais are one of the closest to Lausanne/Geneva and around 15 kms from Aigle. If you want to stay overnight there is hotel accommodation provided on site. The Bains de Lavey claim to have the warmest thermal waters in the country. It has three pools (two outdoor and one indoor), the temperature of the water is maintained at 32-36C and here you will also find neck massage showers, whirlpools pressure jets, waterfalls and more. The spa's own website says: "A fairy-like atmosphere descends after dark, when the largest outdoor thermal pool is illuminated." This author can attest to the magical atmosphere!

Once you have soaked in the waters, you can walk (quite quickly in the invigorating outdoor air!), to the "pavilions" which house both a Nordic centre

with saunas and cold water wells, or the Serenity pavilion where you can relax in ultra violet lighting, soft fragrance and music, or simply read a book in the relaxation area by a fireplace. Away from the pavilion and in the main building, the Oriental Centre has a mixed hammam, separate Turkish baths, water fountains and another relaxation area for more de-stressing. With fresh fruit juices and salads available at the Arc en Ciel food bar (open till 21:00 on Fridays and Saturdays), you can round off your evening feeling healthy and relaxed before heading home. Thankfully the prices of swimming under the stars are not astronomical either. See website for full info.

[www.lavey-les-bains.ch](http://www.lavey-les-bains.ch)

A little further afield, the **Bains de la Gruyère** in Charmey also offer thermal bathing, massages, water therapy and wellness packages. These baths are situated in a stylish modern building amongst the stunning Fribourg countryside.

[www.les-bains-de-charmey.ch](http://www.les-bains-de-charmey.ch)

If you don't have time to head off to the Valais or Fribourg, check out some of the following places near cities that offer day spa packages.

Geneva: The exclusive **La Reserve** half and full day packages available, the spa is open until 22:00.

[www.lareserve.ch/en/the-spa](http://www.lareserve.ch/en/the-spa)

**After the Rain**, an urban spa in the centre of Geneva.

[www.aftertherain.ch](http://www.aftertherain.ch)

Montreux: **The Willow Stream Spa** at the Fairmont Montreux Palace.

[www.fairmont.com](http://www.fairmont.com)

*Catherine*