

## Guided Lite Route: Day 8 / Zofingen to Baden

To Follow: National route 5

Map: Route 5 Book pages 28, 26 (and Zofingen detour map)

GPS points: 6.1-6.77

Distance: 61 KM

### Points of Interest:

**POI Aarau:** Go over bridge between 6.27 and 6.28

**POI Brugg:** (Mental institution and cathedral)

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You will need to begin this morning by backtracking to Aarburg, but the GPS will take you on a different road to avoid congestion.

You'll pass through several large, economically important cities this morning, the first being Olten. Here you will notice the long wooden bridge which crosses the Aare. Although rebuilt several times, there has been a bridge at this spot ever since 1201. Olten's importance grew in 1856 when it became a central hub for the newly created Swiss railroad. Afterwards, the city was quickly transformed and is now an important city for sales and service industries.

Further on is the even more important city of Aarau. This city's history goes back to 1250 and was built by the Kyburg family, (more about this them tomorrow when you go through their village). Aarau was long a city of skilled craftsmen and many of the streets in the old town were devoted to different trades. Even today you can still get a sense of this from the heraldry outside certain shops in the old town (a knife to indicate a barber shop, scales to indicate a grocery, etc.). In any case, the gabled streets of Aarau are worth a wander and the Migros supermarket has a cafeteria with a lot of good, healthy and affordable choices for lunch.

Brugg is another interesting city on the route. The name comes from the Swiss German word for "Bridge" and is named such because the town was purposely built at the narrowest point of the Aare to allow an easier access to the Swiss plains. The Hapsbourg family, before moving to Austria, lived in this area and their oldest family residence is just outside Brugg. On the way out of Brugg, you'll notice some lovely modern buildings reminiscent of a university campus. In fact, this is a local mental institution. If you're not afraid of the patients, it's a good cheap place to have a coffee. You'll also likely see a gothic church in the distance. You should definitely have a look at the church's interior, as its reputed to have the most beautiful stained glass windows in Switzerland from the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

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None of these cities however, compare to our overnight stop. The town is dominated on the west by the ruined castle of Stein, and the rest of the city is very picturesque, with steep and narrow streets, a Medieval wooden bridge and one surviving gateway.

Baden has a long history of being a getaway-city. Indeed, it was the first destination for the Swiss railroad, (a line was built from Zurich to Baden to allow the rich Zurichois to conveniently access the town's thermal spas.) Indeed, these sulphur springs were first mentioned by Tacitus in the first century ! They are considered to be especially beneficial for cases of gout or rheumatic problems...and will probably do your legs good. The main spa is right outside your hotel, but you can also "take the waters" at our hotel's private bathing rooms.

Tonight's meal is in the hotel's magnificent banquet room, so extravagant that we might let ourselves believe that we're medieval knights.