

Discover, Experience, Understand

Exploring geology means immersing yourself in the unique geological history of the Swabian Alb (or Swabian Jura) – and you can do so with all your senses. Experience the magical silence of a stalactite cave, trace the life of an Ice Age mammoth hunter or learn what fossils tell us about life in the Jurassic Sea. We take you on an exciting journey into the past. The Swabian Alb adventure awaits you.

With this map, you can explore the Swabian Alb in a whole new way. The geological map provides fascinating information. The colour coding ensures that you always know where you are on your tour. Each colour represents a period in the history of our planet (see key) and also indicates which rocks were formed during that period.

The colour blue, for example, stands for a tropical sea period, when the Swabian Alb was a tropical sea. That is why you will mainly encounter limestone when you are on blue terrain. The red marks, on the other hand, are evidence of volcanism in the Tertiary period (see number 35/Randecker Maar). So, keep your eyes peeled!

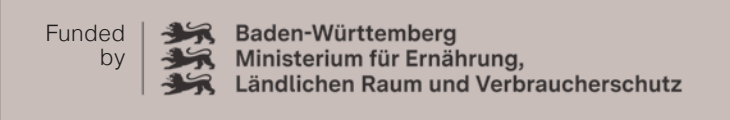
In combination with further content on our website, the explorer's map is a perfect educational tool for learning about the Swabian Alb, its unique landscape and geology.

What does the explorer's map show?

The destinations are numbered from bottom left to top right and marked with symbols. You can find information about them on the reverse. Many of the exciting places are surrounded by nature. Nevertheless, the exact geographical coordinates will take you precisely to your destination. Simply enter them into the Google search box on your smartphone without any spaces and your discovery tour can begin.

Another tip: this map also features "knowledge to go". These geo-facts reveal the geological history of the area and broaden your view of the Swabian Alb.

Have fun exploring, experiencing and understanding!



The AlbCard

Guests staying at one of the around 150 participating hosts in the Swabian Alb can enjoy an 'Alb-Inclusive Holiday': with the AlbCard, they can travel by bus and train throughout the region free of charge and visit over 180 attractions.

Further information is available from the Swabian Alb Tourism Association (www.schwabischealb.de), www.albcard.de



Volcanic activity occurred in the central Swabian Alb around 15 million years ago during the Tertiary period. The 'Swabian Volcano' has been identified at over 350 locations and shapes the landscape of the Albrauf escarpment with its characteristic volcanic formations.

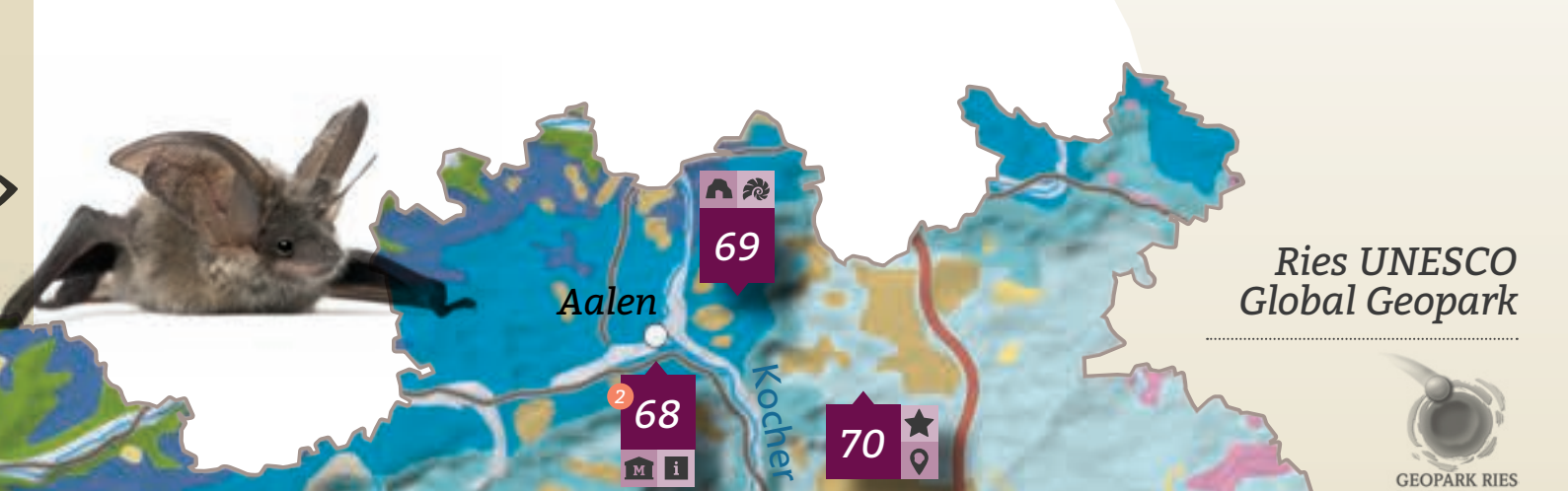
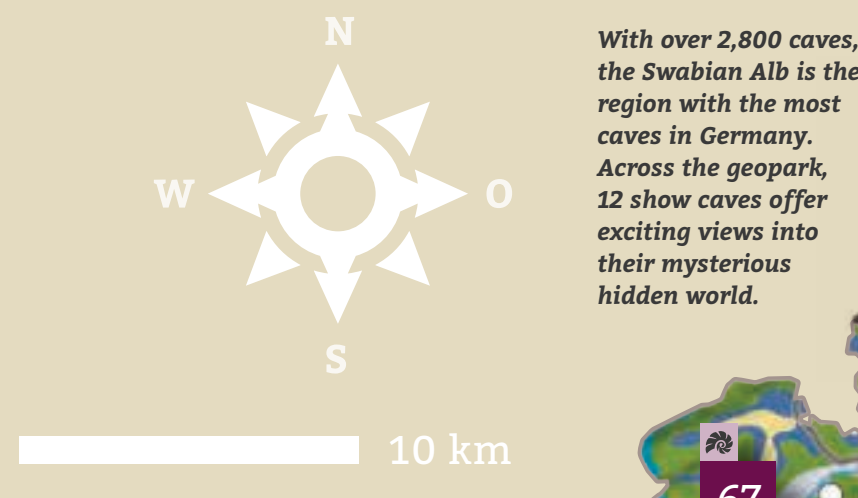
On the northern edge of the Swabian Alb, there is a steep escarpment of up to 400 m, known as the Albrauf. Here, the oldest rocks of the Swabian Alb, such as the world-famous Posidonia Shale, are exposed; you can marvel at wonderfully preserved ichthyosaurs in museums.

Key to the rocks of the Swabian Alb

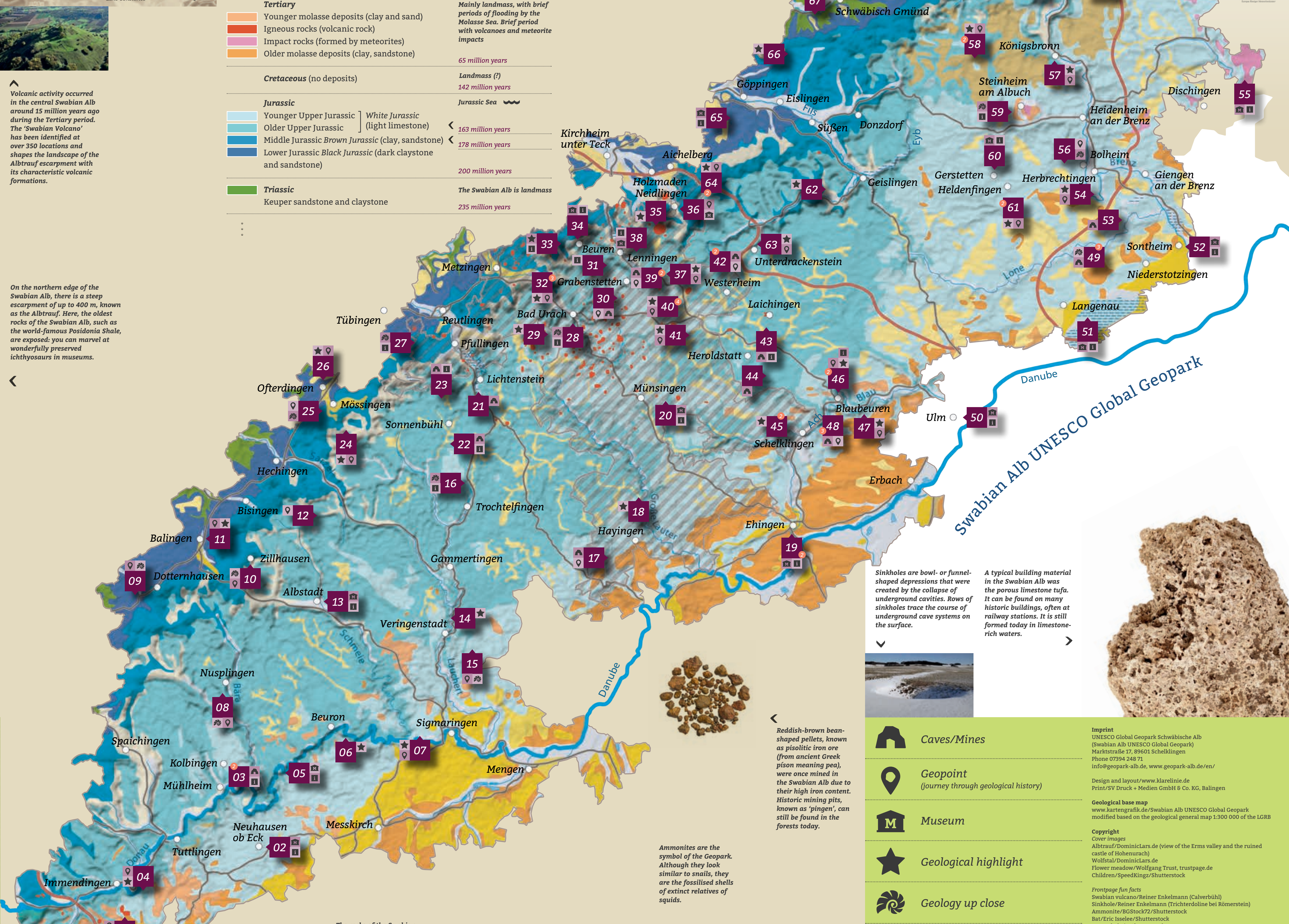
Quaternary	
	Valley deposits
	Slope debris
	Loess
	Pebbles and sand from the Riss Glaciation
	Various redeposited sediments
Tertiary	
	Younger molasse deposits (clay and sand)
	Igneous rocks (volcanic rock)
	Impact rocks (formed by meteorites)
	Older molasse deposits (clay, sandstone)
Cretaceous (no deposits)	
Jurassic	
	Younger Upper Jurassic } White Jurassic (light limestone)
	Older Upper Jurassic } (light limestone)
	Middle Jurassic Brown Jurassic (clay, sandstone)
	Lower Jurassic Black Jurassic (dark claystone and sandstone)
Triassic	
	Keuper sandstone and claystone

Chronological development

	Age increases
Today	
The Swabian Alb is landmass	
Ice ages (glaciations)	
2.6 million years	Mainly landmass, with brief periods of flooding by the Molasse Sea. Brief period with volcanoes and meteorite impacts
65 million years	Landmass (?)
142 million years	Jurassic Sea
163 million years	Younger Upper Jurassic
178 million years	Older Upper Jurassic
200 million years	Middle Jurassic
235 million years	Lower Jurassic



With over 2,800 caves, the Swabian Alb is the region with the most caves in Germany. Across the geopark, 12 show caves offer exciting views into their mysterious hidden world.



Sinkholes are bowl- or funnel-shaped depressions that were created by the collapse of underground cavities. Rows of sinkholes trace the course of underground cave systems on the surface.

A typical building material in the Swabian Alb was the porous limestone tufa. It can be found on many historic buildings, often at railway stations. It is still formed today in limestone-rich waters.



Reddish-brown bean-shaped pellets, known as pisolitic iron ore (from ancient Greek pison meaning pea), were once mined in the Swabian Alb due to their high iron content. Historic mining pits, known as 'pingen', can still be found in the forests today.

Ammonites are the symbol of the Geopark. Although they look similar to snails, they are the fossilised shells of extinct relatives of squids.

The rocks of the Swabian Alb were deposited in a tropical sea during the Jurassic period, between 200 and 142 million years ago. It is divided into the Black, Brown and White Jurassic. The limestones of the White Jurassic are the youngest rocks.

The karst mountains of the Swabian Alb are gradually disappearing: rainwater seeps into the ground, continuously dissolving the limestone, which is then carried away by rivers.



Explorer Map
Discover Experience Understand



What is a UNESCO Global Geopark?

This title is awarded by UNESCO to outstanding landscapes that have a globally unique geological history. As of 2025, there are 213 UNESCO Global Geoparks in 48 countries. Most are located in Europe (European Geopark Network).

The Swabian Alb (or Swabian Jura) has held this title since 2015, which is both a great honour and a responsibility. Its mission is to raise awareness of geological history, geoscience education and knowledge transfer towards sustainable regional development. The area covers more than 6,200 square kilometres across ten districts (Landkreise).



	Caves/Mines
	Geopoint (journey through geological history)
	Museum
	Geological highlight
	Geology up close
	Geopark Info Point
	Multiple points of interest
	Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO)

Imprint
UNESCO Global Geopark Schwäbische Alb (Swabian Alb UNESCO Global Geopark)
Marktstraße 17, 89601 Schelklingen
Phone: 07394 248 71, info@geopark-alb.de, www.geopark-alb.de/en/
Design and layout: www.klarelinie.de
Print/SV Druck + Medien GmbH & Co. KG, Balingen

Geological base map
www.kartengrafik.de/Swabian Alb UNESCO Global Geopark
modified based on the geological general map 1:300 000 of the LGRB

Copyright
Cover images
Albrauf/ DominicLars.de (view of the Erms valley and the ruined castle of Hoheneck)
Wolfstal/DominicLars.de
Flower meadow/Wolfgang Trust, trustpage.de
Children/SpeedRingsz/Shutterstock

Frontpage fun facts
Swabian volcano/Reiner Enkelmann (Calverbühl)
Sinkhole/Reiner Enkelmann (Trichterdoline bei Römerstein)
Ammonite/80Stock372/Shutterstock
Bat/Eric Isselee/Shutterstock
Water/kubais/Shutterstock
Limestone tufa/Fokin Oleg/Shutterstock

Reverse
01/Swabian Alb UNESCO Global Geopark
08/Günter Schwiger (fossilised dragonfly from Nusplingen)
15/Swabian Alb UNESCO Global Geopark
17/Reinhold Schumann
18/panoglobe/Shutterstock
22-23/Swabian Alb UNESCO Global Geopark
30/jepelka/Shutterstock
32/Reiner Enkelmann
34/Horst Guth, cinecopter.de
37/Reiner Enkelmann
44/Reiner Enkelmann
46/Moritz Klingenstein/Shutterstock
47/Reiner Enkelmann
48/urmu, Claus Rudolph (ice age art - water bird)
49/Archivpark Vogelherd, Günther Bayer
51/Erlebniswelt Grundwasser Langenau
53/HöhlenErlebnisWelt Giengen-Hürben
54/Reiner Enkelmann
55/Video Media Studio Europe/Shutterstock
60/Ulf Thewalt (carpet coral)
66/Anastasia Kamysheva/Shutterstock
67/Günter Schwiger (belemnoid fossil)
69/bengwerk-aalen.de
70/Swabian Alb UNESCO Global Geopark

01 Höwening Volcanic Landscape



The volcanic landscape with its Höwening near Immdingen, with its mysterious crater lake, is not only a jewel amongst the natural wonders of the Swabian Alb, but also a nature reserve and habitat for rare plants and animals.

Immdingen
N 47.911922 E 8.741725
<https://www.geopark-alb.de/en/experience-geopark/journey-into-earths-history/>

02 Neuhausen ob Eck Open Air Museum

In the museum village, visitors can experience the rural history of the south-western Swabian Alb up close. In more than 20 buildings, which have been faithfully relocated, you can immerse yourself in the everyday life of our ancestors on the 'Raué Alb' (the 'rough Alb') – and every day at 2 p.m., the pigs 'go wild'.

78579 Neuhausen ob Eck Museumsweg 1
www.freilichtmuseum-neuhausen.de

03 Caves around Mühlheim

There are fewer caves in the south-western Swabian Alb than in the central Swabian Alb – two of them are located near Mühlheim. High up on the mountain lies the **Kolbinger Cave**, featuring stalactites. It is the only show cave in the south-western Swabian Alb and a Geopark Info Point. From here, you have a magnificent view of the Danube Valley. Guided tours of the cave are available, and information on the regional geology is freely accessible. Both the Felsenhöhle, a snack shack that is open on weekends, and a covered barbecue area invite you to take a leisurely break. The remarkable **Felsenhöhle** (Rock Cave) near Mühlheim can only be visited on Ascension Day as part of a guided tour.

04-06 The Mysterious Danube Valley

The town of Balingen has a natural source of sulfur water with health-promoting properties. Only the small historic sulfur fountain remains, as a reminder of Balingen's former bathing tradition.

Balingen
N 48.269722 E 8.850893
<https://www.geopark-alb.de/en/experience-geopark/journey-into-earths-history/>

[4] Anyone following the uppermost course of the Danube in summer will hardly believe their eyes. Where the water was sparkling just moments before, all that remains downstream is a dry riverbed. At the **Danube Sinkhole** between Immdingen and Fridingen, the water disappears into the karstified subsoil at various locations and continues to flow underground. The fish in the remaining pools are literally left behind. Around twelve kilometres away, some of the Danube water resurfaces at the Aachtal. However, it does not flow into the Black Sea like the Danube, but via the Rhine into the North Sea. The reason for this peculiarity is the European watershed, which runs right through this area.

Immdingen
N 47.935661 E 8.765568

[5] Between Fridingen and Sigmaringen, the Danube breaks through the Swabian Alb plateau, winding its way wildly through rugged limestone crags and shaping one of the most beautiful landscapes in Baden-Württemberg: the **Upper Danube Valley**.

07 Erratic Boulder Sigmaringen-Laiz

Near the premium hiking trail lies a stone by the side of the path that is inconspicuous at first glance. This rare boulder was carried all the way from the Alps to the Sigmaringen area by glaciers during the Ice Age. It still shows us today how far the ice had advanced.

Sigmaringen
N 48.086211 E 9.178897
<https://www.geopark-alb.de/en/experience-geopark/journey-into-earths-history/>

08 Educational Trail 'Into the Realm of Sea Angels'



The 'ore pits' are one of five stops on the history trail. It tells the story of historical pitsoilic iron ore mining in the Swabian Alb. The distinctive bear- or pees-shaped iron ore pellets can still be found there today.

Veringenstadt
N 48.168547 E 9.241607
www.veringenstadt.de

09 Dormettingen Trail of Remembrance

The approximately 3 km long 'Unternehmen Wüste' (Operation Desert) trail of remembrance, featuring information boards, a slate skin and an outdoor exhibition, focuses on a dark chapter in history: the mining of oil shale during the Nazi era under inhumane conditions. Today, this place has become a refuge for rare bird species.

Dormettingen
N 48.2326023 E 8.7668334
www.schiefererlebnis.de/aktivitaeten/erinnerungspfad/

10 Geological Hiking Trail Zillhausen Waterfall

The geological hiking trail (Geo-Wanderweg) in Balingen-Zillhausen impressively shows the exposed layers of the Brown Jurassic (Middle Jurassic) and brings geology to life on ten information boards. The highlight is the Zillhausen waterfall, which plunges 26 m into the depths here.

Zillhausen
N 48.255064 E 8.920044
www.zollernalb.com/attraaktionen/

11 The Balingen Sulfur Fountain

The town of Balingen has a natural source of sulfur water with health-promoting properties. Only the small historic sulfur fountain remains, as a reminder of Balingen's former bathing tradition.

Balingen
N 48.269722 E 8.850893
<https://www.geopark-alb.de/en/experience-geopark/journey-into-earths-history/>

12 Hangender Stein

Deep fissures on the Hangender Stein impressively illustrate the ongoing process that shapes the landscape of the Albraut escarpment. Those who dare to cross the bridge over the 2 m wide crevice and follow the signposted path to the northwest will be rewarded with one of the most spectacular panoramas of the Swabian Alb, the view of Höhenzollen Castle, majestically towering on an isolated hill, a so-called 'Zeugenberg' or outlier. The reason for this peculiarity is the European watershed, which runs right through this area.

Immdingen
N 47.935661 E 8.765568

[5] Between Fridingen and Sigmaringen, the Danube breaks through the Swabian Alb plateau, winding its way wildly through rugged limestone crags and shaping one of the most beautiful landscapes in Baden-Württemberg: the **Upper Danube Valley**.

13 The Kräuterkasten Museum

The museum presents a variety of the beers across three floors. Visitors can marvel at the cultural development of the region, the local wildlife, the geology of the Swabian Alb and impressive fossils from the Jurassic Sea.

72458 Albstadt-Ebingen Im Hof 19
www.museen-albstadt.de

14 Gallus Spring

Second only to the Aachtopf, the Gallus Spring is the most productive spring in the western Alb. It is easily accessible on the outskirts of Veringenstadt-Hermelingen in the Lauchert valley, a beautiful side valley of the Danube.

Hermelingen/Veringenstadt
N 48.199919 E 9.214714
www.laucherttal.de

15 Veringenstadt History Trail

The 'ore pits' are one of five stops on the history trail. It tells the story of historical pitsoilic iron ore mining in the Swabian Alb. The distinctive bear- or pees-shaped iron ore pellets can still be found there today.

Veringenstadt
N 48.168547 E 9.241607
www.veringenstadt.de

16 ALB-GOLD Nature Garden

Discover over 1,000 different plant species and medicinal herbs and the different rock strata of the Swabian Alb in this beautiful 2-hectare nature garden. There is no shortage of experiences either: feel the stones under your feet on the barefoot path and climb, hang and play in the adventure playground.

72818 Trochtelfingen Klaus-Freidler-Str. 1
<https://www.alb-gold.de/en/>

17 Winsen Cave

The Bärenhöhle (Bear Cave) [22] and Nebelhöhle (Misty Cave) [23] near Neuhäusel have joined forces as a Geopark Info Point and take visitors on a journey into the fascinating underworld of the Swabian Alb, the realm of stalactites and cave bears.

Neuhäusel, with its rich stalactite decorations, leads 20 m below the earth's surface and is accessible for 292 m. Up to the halfway point, it is also wheelchair accessible. The skeleton of the cave bear to which the cave owes its name, can still be seen today and dates back to the Ice Age, approx. 20,000 to 50,000 years ago. 141 steps lead down into the fascinating **Nebelhöhle**, or Misty Cave. At a depth of 25 m, a breathtaking backdrop of stalactites and stalactites opens up. Towering columns and fantastic figures can be discovered over a length of 450 m.

Karls- und Bärenhöhle 72820 Sonnenbühl Erpfingen Nebelhöhle 72820 Sonnenbühl Gemingen
www.hoehlen.sonnenbuehl.de

18 Valley of the Great Lauter

The Great Lauter Valley with its idyllic landscape is a very special part of the Swabian Alb. The Great Lauter river has its source near Offenhausen and winds its way past characteristic juniper forests, caves, castles, rocks and forests. It is not surprising that it was voted Germany's most beautiful natural wonder in 2019.

Wandererplatte Gundelfingen
N 48.315997 E 9.507153
www.bit.ly/4917m7C

19 Info Centres in Ehingen

Ehingen Museum – At the heart of the museum's geological section is a colourful display of the Jurassic Sea. You can also find out about how regional raw materials are used. Tip: explore the natural stones in the town centre! The accompanying Geopark brochure is available at the museum.

Berg Brauerei – Water is a valuable resource. It is particularly refined when used as brewing water. The Berg Brauerei in Ehingen is one of the oldest breweries of the Swabian Alb and has been brewing beer using traditional methods since 1466. Here you can learn about the art of beer brewing and enjoy the product in the brewery restaurant.

Berg Brauerei 89584 Ehingen (Donau) Graf-Konrad-Straße 21
www.bergbrauerei.de

Ehingen Museum 89584 Ehingen (Donau) Am Viehmarkt 1
<https://museum.ehingen.de>

20 Swabian Alb Biosphere Centre

The Liftho Environmental Education Centre is located directly next to the nature reserve, allowing visitors to experience nature up close. The Geopark Info Point offers a varied programme of events and holiday activities. There is always something exciting to discover during excursions or in the insect house.

72770 Reutlingen Friedrich-List-Hof 1
www.liftho-reutlingen.de

21 Olga Cave

The Olghöhle (Olga Cave) in Lichtenstein-Honau is Germany's longest tuff cave and a unique geological gem. Unlike the numerous karst caves in the Swabian Alb, this rare primary cave was not formed by the dissolving of limestone, but by the formation of new rock. 'Cave popcorn' is a typical feature. The cave is located near Lichtenstein Castle – so why not set off on an exciting Sunday outing?

72805 Lichtenstein-Honau Olghöhle 31
www.olghoehle.de

22-23 Bärenhöhle und Nebelhöhle Caves

The Bärenhöhle, with its rich stalactite decorations, leads 20 m below the earth's surface and is accessible for 292 m. Up to the halfway point, it is also wheelchair accessible. The skeleton of the cave bear to which the cave owes its name, can still be seen today and dates back to the Ice Age, approx. 20,000 to 50,000 years ago. 141 steps lead down into the fascinating **Nebelhöhle**, or Misty Cave. At a depth of 25 m, a breathtaking backdrop of stalactites and stalactites opens up. Towering columns and fantastic figures can be discovered over a length of 450 m.

Karls- und Bärenhöhle 72820 Sonnenbühl Erpfingen Nebelhöhle 72820 Sonnenbühl Gemingen
www.hoehlen.sonnenbuehl.de

24 Mössingen Landslide

Geology is anything but static. The Mössingen landslide shows that the Swabian Alb is constantly changing. In 1983, the largest landslide in Baden-Württemberg occurred here on the Albraut escarpment. It left behind a primeval landscape that is now slowly regenerating and can be explored on signposted trails or with a guided tour. The nature reserve was declared a national geosite in 2006.

Mössingen
N 48.37779 E 9.06680
www.moessingen.de/bergrutsch

25 Bad Sebastiansweiler Sulfur Spring

The healing sulfur water of Bad Sebastiansweiler, located at the foothills of the Albraut escarpment, has been used for centuries. The active ingredient originates from a rock layer that is over 180 million years old. Visitors can even taste the water in the historic drinking pavilion and experience geological history with all their senses.

Mössingen
N 48.399267 E 9.020639
www.moessingen.de/schwefel

26 Oferdingen Ammonite Pavement

In the bed of the Steinalcher river, in the heart of the village, a fossiliferous sediment is exposed at low water. It reveals hundreds of impressively large ammonites and oyster shells. This strictly protected national monument is a national geosite.

72131 Oferdingen near Kriegsbühl 5
<https://www.geopark-alb.de/en/experience-geopark/journey-into-earths-history/>

27 Liftho Environmental Education Centre

The Liftho Environmental Education Centre is located directly next to the nature reserve, allowing visitors to experience nature up close. The Geopark Info Point offers a varied programme of events and holiday activities. There is always something exciting to discover during excursions or in the insect house.

72770 Reutlingen Friedrich-List-Hof 1
www.liftho-reutlingen.de

28 Bad Urach Discovery World

The nature of the Swabian Alb and the history of the medieval town of Urach come to life at the Bad Urach Discovery World. An interactive exhibition with the **Panorama Spa**, Steam baths, a sauna area and a thermal grotto allow you to experience the geology of the Swabian Alb with all your senses.

72660 Beuren Am Thermalbad 5
www.panorama-therme.de

29 Urach Waterfall

At the Urach Waterfall, probably the most beautiful waterfall in the Swabian Alb, water from a karst spring plunges 37 m into the valley in a free fall – and then flows over a steeply sloping, moss-covered cushion of limestone tufa. This nature reserve, which is home to rare animals and plants, is very sensitive and could be damaged if entered. Visitors are urged to stay on the marked paths to preserve this rare geosite!

Bad Urach
N 48.482223 E 9.368002
www.badurach-tourismus.de

30 Falkenstein Cave

How did people live and work in the Neckar region and the Swabian Alb in the past? You can find out here. A lime bears witness to the laborious process of extracting quicklime from Jurassic rock. An educational trail illustrates the different types of soil on the Albraut escarpment.

72660 Beuren In den Freilichtmuseen-beuren.de

31 Heidengraben Centre

Even the Celts appreciated life in the Swabian Alb and built the largest settlement (oppidum) in Central Europe at the Heidengraben. Immerse yourself in the history of this over 2,000-year-old site and the fascinating world of the Celts at the Heidengraben Centre, which opened in 2024, and on the Celtic adventure trail. A viewing tower offers a view over the extensive grounds.

72368 Erbenbrechtswiler Burrenhof 2
www.region-heidengraben.de

32 Urach Volcanic Region

During the Tertiary period (over 18-10 million years ago), the Swabian Alb was an active volcanic region with over 350 volcanoes. This is known as the 'Swabian volcano'. Volcanic pipes exposed by erosion still characterise the landscape today. The **Calverbühl**, with its picturesque linden tree on the summit, is the landmark of Dettingen. Here you can find typical volcanic tuff, in which you can discover small ball-shaped rocks known as lapilli. So keep your eyes open! The 673 m high **Jusi** is one of the most striking volcanic pipes in the Swabian Alb. You can explore the nature reserve on numerous hiking trails. At the **Neufener Steige**, you can see how dark volcanic rock meets light limestone: a volcanic pipe once roke through the Jurassic limestone here – and created a unique geosite.

Calverbühl
N 48.522557 E 9.243284
www.bit.ly/4Aggq8FB

Jusi
N 48.55047 E 9.33827
<https://www.geopark-alb.de/en/experience-geopark/journey-into-earths-history/>

'Neufener Steige volcanic pipe
N 48.538228 E 9.407055
<https://www.geopark-alb.de/en/experience-geopark/journey-into-earths-history/>

33 Panorama Spa Beuren

Every day, around 500,000 litres of natural thermal water bubble up from deep underground in Beuren. They feed seven pools at the **Panorama Spa**. Steam baths, a sauna area and a thermal grotto allow you to experience the geology of the Swabian Alb with all your senses.

72660 Beuren Am Thermalbad 5
www.panorama-therme.de

34 Beuren Open Air Museum

How did people live and work in the Neckar region and the Swabian Alb in the past? You can find out here. A lime bears witness to the laborious process of extracting quicklime from Jurassic rock. An educational trail illustrates the different types of soil on the Albraut escarpment.

72660 Beuren In den Freilichtmuseen-beuren.de

35 Randecker Maar

With a diameter of approximately 1.2 km, the Randecker Maar is the largest crater and probably the most significant remnant of the 'Swabian volcano'. Unique fossils found here bear witness to the maar lake, which formed around around 17 million years ago. The spectacular landscape, which has been designated a national geosite, is well worth a visit!

Ochsenwang
N 48.747733 E 9.525104
www.naturerschutzzentrum-schopfloch.de

36 Neidlingen Marble Mill

At the marble mill, local rocks are rolled into beautiful spheres and marbles using water power, just as it was back in the days of our great-grandparents. These small works of art can be purchased on site.

72372 Neidlingen Giefenstraße 12
www.kugelmühle-neidlingen.de

37 Neidlingen Waterfall

Whilst both caves are located close to each other, only the impressive Schertelhöhle cave has been outfitted as a show cave. With its cosy restaurant and terrace, it is a popular destination for families. Daylight falls mysteriously through the 'Kuhloch' (cow hole) into the **Schertelhöhle**, a former hideout for robbers. Anyone who visits the **Steinernes Haus** (stone house) will immediately understand how the cave got its name.

Schertelhöhle
N 48.534759 E 9.587706
www.westerheim.de

38 Nature Conservation Centre Schopfloch Alb

The Nature Conservation Centre Schopfloch Alb offers a wide range of activities providing insights into the geology, volcanism, landscape history and habitat of the Swabian Alb. The outdoor area includes a former quarry and a show garden.

72352 Lenningen-Schopfloch Vogelloch 1
www.naturerschutzzentrum-schopfloch.de

39 Gutenberg Caves

The two show caves, located close to each other, enchant visitors with impressive stalactites. Equally remarkable are the history of their discovery and the numerous fossils from the Gutenberg Cave with its impressive foreground. The cave is around 200 m long. With glittering crystals, the smaller Gutenberg Cave mesmerises visitors. The caves can be visited on a public guided tour from May to October. During the week, guided tours are available by appointment from the Gutenberg local authority.

Gußmannshöhle
N 48.542857 E 9.819997
Gutenbergberg
N 48.542465 E 9.522218
<https://www.geopark-alb.de/en/experience-geopark/journey-into-earths-history/>

40 Geosites around Gutenberg and a Nature Reserve

There are numerous geosites typical of the Alb to discover around Lenningen, Gutenberg and Schopfloch. Right in Gutenberg, you can admire the **sinter steps**, a series of limestone sinter basins. These rare formations are created by the precipitation of lime from the flowing water. They grow slowly but steadily. As they are very sensitive, they must not be walked on. A few hundred metres above, on the slope, the **Höllstern spring** and the **Höllsternbröckel** cave only carry water after heavy rainfall. The **nature reserve** around the Upper Lenningen Valley offers a hands-on history of the landscape. Here, the European watershed runs. Beneath the surface, the water's path separates between the older river system of the Danube and the newer west-east Rhine. On the surface, the **Lenningen valley head** continues to cut ever deeper into the Alb plateau. The **Hänsental** is a typical dry valley of the karstified Alb landscape. Water retaining volcanic rock created the **Bensinalche** wetland. In the nearby **Hänsental sinkhole**, rainwater disappears with a gurgling sound into a grotto.

Sinter steps Gutenberg
N 48.532446 E 9.509257
Höllstern spring
N 48.534361 E 9.511113
Lenningen valley head
N 48.530123 E 9.536543
'Sinkhole Hänsental
N 48.53942 E 9.550917
<https://www.geopark-alb.de/en/experience-geopark/journey-into-earths-history/>

41 Zainingen Hüle

The 'Hüle', a small lake or pond often found in the centres of villages, is a special feature of the Swabian Alb. Natural water sources are very rare on the Alb plateau, as rain quickly seeps away into the karstified rock. In the past, these ponds were therefore vital and often a prerequisite for the establishment of settlements. Zainingen is a wonderful example of this. The impermeable tuff rock of a former volcanic pipe beneath the surface has allowed a small lake the Zainingen Hüle, to form here. It is a valuable geosite and natural monument. In addition to an information board, there is also a geocache called 'Geotulle' on the theme of water.

Römerstein-Zainingen
N 48.481803 E 9.547489
www.roemerstein.de

42 Westerheim Caves

Whilst both caves are located close to each other, only the impressive Schertelhöhle cave has been outfitted as a show cave. With its cosy restaurant and terrace, it is a popular destination for families. Daylight falls mysteriously through the 'Kuhloch' (cow hole) into the **Schertelhöhle**, a former hideout for robbers. Anyone who visits the **Steinernes Haus** (stone house) will immediately understand how the cave got its name.

Schertelhöhle
N 48.534759 E 9.587706
www.westerheim.de

43 Laichingen Deep Cave

The Tiefenhöhle (Deep Cave) is the deepest accessible show cave in Germany. No other cave demonstrates the karstification and stratification of the Swabian Alb so impressively. It is up to 80 m deep, and visitors can descend to a depth of 55 m. The entrance building houses a speleological museum that is well worth exploring and accessible for visitors with limited mobility, as well as a cosy place to stop for refreshments.

Höhlenweg 220 89150 Laichingen
www.tiefenhoehle.de

44 Sontheim Cave

The Sontheim Cave near Herdoldst is the oldest show cave in Germany and can be explored along a path of 190 m. The cave contains a wealth of stalactite and stalagmite formations. In winter, it shelters an important bat colony. Each year, a large festival is traditionally held on Whit Monday. Guided tours are offered on weekends, and the restaurant invites visitors to take a break.

Sontheim-Herdoldst
N 48.43115 E 9.683774
www.sontheimer-hoehle.de

45 Springs near Schelklingen

The blue shimmering spring pools of Ach and Urspring can be admired on a mountain, once encircled by the primeval river Danube. The German term 'Quelltopf' refers to the mostly circular karst springs that are typical of the southern edge of the Swabian Alb. The **Urspringtopf** is picturesque located in the grounds of a boarding school, whereas the **Achtopf** can be found adjacent to the trail. Insider tip: hikers and cyclists: discover the three karst springs **Blautopf**, **Achtopf** and **Urspringtopf** on your own and combine your trip with a visit to the caves in the Ach Valley!

Achtopf
N 48.376865 E 9.71007
Urspringtopf
N 48.381365 E 9.718123
www.schelklingen.de
www.urmu.de
www.blaubeuren.de/Aachtal

46 Blautopf and Blau-beuren Swabian Alb/ Tourist Information

In the **Eesselburg Valley** nature reserve, the river **Steine** curves around a hill. The legendary **Stone Virgins**, two bizzare Jurassic rock formations, captivate hikers and cyclists alike.

Herbrechtingen-Eesselburg
N 48.608150 E 10.178506
www.heldenheim-mer-brenzregion.de

47 Gerhausen Window into the Jurassic

With its fascinating outlook, the 21m deep karst spring of the river **Blau** never fails to captivate visitors. Its location in the rocky valley basin of Blau-beuren makes the **Blautopf** one of the most popular destinations in the Swabian Alb. The entire Blau-beuren Swabian Alb has been designated a national geosite. The tourist information office on the church square serves as a Geopark Info Point, and it is the place to go if you have any questions.

Blau-beuren
N 48.416291 E 9.783743
www.blaubeuren.de/Geotourismus

48 Caves in the Aachtal

The **Bockstein Cave**, which is also the most important site for the Neanderthal period in Europe. A delicately crafted horse and a small mammoth were found in the **Vogelherdhöhle**.

Bockstein
N 48.554283 E 10.154766
Hohlenstein-Stadel
N 48.5493 E 10.172696
www.lonetat.net

49 Caves in the Lone Valley

In addition to natural treasures such as rare plant and bird species, caves can be discovered in the impressive landscape of the Lone Valley, which have yielded unique finds. The **Hohlestein-Idol** is freely accessible and is home to the famous Lion Man, an impressive ivory figure over 30 cm tall, which can now be viewed in the Ulm Museum.

Bockstein Cave, which is also the most important site for the Neanderthal period in Europe. A delicately crafted horse and a small mammoth were found in the **Vogelherdhöhle**.

Bockstein
N 48.554283 E 10.154766
Hohlenstein-Stadel
N 48.5493 E 10.172696
www.lonetat.net

50 Ulm Natural History Museum

Founded in 1923, Ulm's 'natural history collection' is an exciting educational facility for young and old alike, covering topics such as geology, landscape, ecology and nature conservation. Parts of the exhibition are also accessible in Braille.

Obere Weiler 1-3 89073 Dischingen
www.burgkatzenstein.de

51 Langenau Groundwater Experience

The 8 km long 'primeval world trail' takes you back 160 million years in time. Twelve stops tell the story of how the Alb landscape changed and how the landscape was shaped by long-lost primeval worlds such as fossil reefs, cliff coasts, primeval rivers and typical karst phenomena. From the **Bunnenhau** trailhead parking, you should allow 2-3 hours for the walk.

Boihelm
N 48.635963 E 10.118639
<https://www.geopark-alb.de/en/experience-geopark/journey-into-earths-history/>

52 Brenz Castle in Sontheim

The modern-day Renaissance castle in Brenz was remodelled in 1672 from a medieval stronghold. It houses one of the oldest local history museums in Württemberg with an impressive collection of fossils and interesting information about the local geology.

Schlossstraße 3 89657 Sontheim an der Brenz
www.sontheim-brenz.de

53 Charlotte Cave

The modern-day Renaissance castle in Brenz was remodelled in 1672 from a medieval stronghold. It houses one of the oldest local history museums in Württemberg with an impressive collection of fossils and interesting information about the local geology.

Schlossstraße 3 89657 Sontheim an der Brenz
www.sontheim-brenz.de

54 Eesselburg Valley with Stone Virgins

In the **Eesselburg Valley** nature reserve, the river **Steine** curves around a hill.