

Saale-Unstrut Wine Route -- Europe's Northernmost Wine Route

Did you know that the Saale-Unstrut Wine Route, or the *Weinstrasse Saale-Unstrut*, is the northernmost wine route in Continental Europe? Always nice to start off a scenic route with a piece of trivia, don't ya think?

Hell no, this is a wine route ? give me a glass of Merlot. ;-)

That's better ? and they've been making it around this western part of the Burgenlandkreis in Saxony-Anhalt for a millennia, so you know they've got it totally right.

This route is pretty short ? only 55 kilometers or 34 miles, touching the historic Saale ? though I recommend to **not** rush through it. Take your time. It's well worth it.

Start of the Saale-Unstrut Wine Route

With that out of the way, welcome to Memleben (actually, this is a village in the town of Kaiserpfalz), the first stop on the Saale-Unstrut Wine Route. What makes Memleben even better than just its vineyards painting the landscape are its 14th century castle and 10th century Abbey & Imperial Palace ruins.

Speaking of castles, wouldn't it be nice to enjoy a glass of wine in one? You can in Nebra. That is, technically, in one's wine cellar.

As wonderful as that sounds, the infamous *Himmelsscheibe von Nebra* (Nebra Sky Disk) is the real show-stealer. Never heard of it? This is an amazing 30cm bronze disk with a celestial theme from around 1600 B.C. Awesome, right?

As hard as it is to leave Nebra, you gotta ? there are seven more towns to go, and hundreds of hectares of vineyards to see.

What's a hectare? Only 10,000 square meters! That's a whole bunch of grapes. ;-)

Anyway, if you don't leave Nebra you won't see the 9th century Church of St. Lawrence in Karsdorf-Burgscheidungen. Or its palace, for that matter.

For a medieval flair, your next town of Laucha an der Unstrut is it. Sorry, its *Rathaus* comes from the Renaissance period, built in 1543; but its *Stadtmauer* (a city defense wall) and three gates are from the 1400s. Modern activities include paddleboating, rowboating, and canoeing.

What good is it to trek along a scenic route along two rivers, if you ain't gonna enjoy the water? Oh yeah, this is about the wine...

Funny, that's exactly what you'll get in Freyburg, and find the headquarters to one of the largest wine companies in Germany. Perfect place for the yearly *Winzerfest* in September, right? Don't skip town before seeing Neuenburg Castle, though.

Keeping with the wine theme (duh, Wine Route ? what am I thinking) you'll want to see the Max Klinger vineyards (which are not named after the character on M*A*S*H, a TV program of the 1970's), in Großjena. You also need to see the Baroque rock reliefs depicting the Old Testament.

Old Testament, New Testament, it's all there at Naumburg Cathedral in Naumburg (Saale). The church earns it a place on the Romanesque Route; the surrounding vineyards earn it a spot on the Saale-Unstrut Wine Route.

Whatever road you're on the medieval *Altstadt* (Old Town) deserves applause. As does the annual Cherry Festival on the last weekend of June.

Too bad we're almost at the end... I'm rather enjoying myself. It must be the fresh air. No, it must be those three glasses of white wine. ;-)

Forget about Rudelsburg Castle and the spas, Bad Kösen's got all sorts of wine taverns to sample. OK, ok, you can't totally forget about those things, but when viticulture's been around

since the year 1147 it's hard to think of little else.

To be fair, Bad Kösen's also got a Local History Museum which will tell you about salt extraction in the area, as well as the wine.

Our lovely Saale-Unstrut Wine Route ends in Bad Sulza with its marked hiking trails through its vineyards, TOSKANA spa (with a Tuscan theme), and a replica of Goethe's garden. Hopefully you've made it for the Wine Festival (3rd weekend of August, if you're interested) and the crowning of the yearly Wine Queen.

I hope you've enjoyed the *Weinstrasse Saale-Unstrut* as much as I have. Now, maybe I should try a Rose? Hmm... it's good to have choices.

Saale-Unstrut Wine Route Web Site

Here's a Web site dedicated to the area including the [Saale-Unstrut Wine Route](#).