

Bad Liebenstein -- Castles, Celebs, Thuringian Forest

It's late on a Sunday night, my head is reeling from what was a long day — all the while wondering what I want to tell you about the [Thuringian](#) town of Bad Liebenstein...

Do I dive right in to tell you such noted figures in history like Albert Schweitzer, Franz Liszt, and Martin Luther were once here? Do I make a mad dash to the keyboard to write the night away about all its wonderful castles and manors? What do I say about all the activities that take you through the [Thuringian Forest](#)?

Some days are so much easier than others. But, I got the best gig in the whole world; as if I would truly complain about spending my days staring at an 18th century castle. ;-)

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As its name implies, Bad Liebenstein is a spa town, located in the northwestern region of the Thuringian Forest. Some say it's one of the oldest spa towns in the region, while others say it is the actual oldest. Tomatoes, tah-mah-toes, it doesn't matter. What does matter is guys like Liszt and Schweitzer were here to enjoy the health clinics, while Luther stopped here on his way back from the Diet of Worms in 1521. A memorial, an obelisk some 10 meters high, stands for Luther in the village of Steinbach.

Ok, so what's the big deal? Luther was here, so what? The point is, Luther stopped here before he could be arrested — and was secreted away to nearby [Wartburg Castle](#), where he translated the Bible into German during his stay. I'd say this was a very big deal for its time.

I'm not saying go run off to Wartburg Castle, not yet anyway. First you need to see the castles here. Burg Liebenstein might not be the formidable castle of its heyday, but castle ruins are still

evocative of clanking armor and Fair Maidens of the Middle Ages.

Schloss Glücksbrunn isn't a medieval castle, by no means. It's a graceful 18th century castle, with winding paths shaded by trees — and the prettiest of gardens. Schloss Altenstein is also a pretty castle, a tad more ornate than Glücksbrunn. Not too shabby for what's called just a "country house," although these days the castle acts as a museum.

Not too far from Schloss Altenstein is the Alstein Cave, or *Alsteiner Höhle*. Guided tours are available to take you there, but I'd have to say the acoustics make for great concerts. The kids might prefer a trip to the *Tierpark* instead — and who wouldn't want the chance to see all kinds of animals, like llamas and kangaroos? Ahh, there's plenty of time to do both.

Just as there's plenty of time to find a hiking trail that strikes your fancy. I was too tired to walk, so it was a leisurely horse ride for me. I thought after a rest a canoe ride along the Werra River sounded good. Yeah, sounded good, I didn't actually do it. ;-)

Don't judge me, I had plans for a concert at the *Kurtheater* to get ready for. The theater isn't limited to just musical concerts, the place is a venue for cabaret and literary events, too.

My only lament was I missed out on the *Burgfest*, a 2-day event in May at the Burgruine Bad Liebenstein, and I'll be long gone for the *Altensteiner Fröbelfest* in June.

Drats, I missed out on two seriously fun festivals — but at least I got to enjoy the rest of it. I wonder what Liszt, Schweitzer, and Luther would think of it all now?