

## Bad Saulgau -- Winter Carnivals And The Original Hummels

Bad Saulgau may be written off as just another sleepy [Upper Swabian](#) spa town, unless you happen to be there the first week in January. Then you may be wondering what insane corner of the world you've wandered into!

It's just the mad masks of the *Bächtlefest*. ;-)

As usual in German, this "sleepy" town has much more going on than its postcard worthy surface might suggest.

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Bad Saulgau is one of the premier strongholds for the Swabian-Alemannic carnival tradition, which dates back to the 13th century. Basically, it is a guarantee that jesters, wild animals, and special spirits will be dancing about in parades and through vendors stalls in the weeks after Christmas.

When you get worn out from the dancing in the streets, it's okay to move indoors. There are festivals held in the summer months, too, but fortunately the spas are open year round. People have been taking the waters here since Celtic times, and the name of the town actually comes from *Sulis*, the Celtic goddess of the thermal spring.

Here, the springs even carry certificates of authentic medical benefit!

Once you've soaked and refreshed, you'll be ready to appreciate one of the other strongholds of the town — the *Hummels*. The word *Hummel* usually brings to mind little figurines of traditional German folk, but few people are aware that the figurines were based on the drawings of a young nun. Berta Hummel lived at the 800 year old Siessen Monastery when she became famous, and

her drawings are on permanent display in a free museum there.

Other museums to see in Bad Saulgau include the *Katzentürmle*, where witches were locked in the tower, and the *Buchauer Amtsgericht*, which has a unique arched front.

There are also a number of medieval and Gothic churches to visit. Thus, under no circumstances should you be tempted to write this town off as a sleepy village — if you look past the surface, you'll find plenty to see and do here at any time of year!