

## Balingen As Well Offers Culture, History, And Recreation

As impressive as Balingen is today, there might have been so much more had the town not been the victim of a terrible fire in 1809. Today, what remains shows the determination and resilience of its people.

The Protestant Church and its soaring tower are located right in the middle of the bustling marketplace. A stroll down the main thoroughfare of Friedrichstraße and its neighboring streets treat you to some of Balingen's architectural gems.

You will pass the traditional timber houses of Lämmle and Sonne, the "new" hospital reconstructed after the 1809 blaze, and the Gothic Church of the Holy Spirit. A series of narrow streets near the Zehntscheuer district have been dubbed *Klein-Venedig* or "Little Venice" because of the waterways intersecting the quaint neighborhood.

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But we said that there's something for everyone, right? If history and architecture bore you, be sure to take advantage of Balingen's thriving winter activities among the Swabian Alb (yes that's Alb, not Alp!) mountain range. Ice-skating and ice-hockey are two popular sports. And the obligatory skiing, snowboarding and bob-sledding are always favorites.

While winter sports are always in demand, there is no shortage of things to do in the summer. You can go hiking and biking in the steep hills, or play a relaxing round of golf.

If the only physical activity you enjoy is window-shopping and swiping your credit card, then Balingen also has something for you. The numerous shops boast a wide array of purchasable items, from souvenirs and gifts, to musical instruments, antiques, leather goods and perfumeries.

The town's reputation as a mecca for sun-worshippers with a large fairground allows it to play host to many special festivals and events, like an annual folk festival and Christmas market.

With so many amenities, cultural and physical activities and an abundance of natural beauty, Balingen is an ideal destination for the whole family.