

Black Forest High Road -- Schwarzwaldhochstrasse

The Schwarzwaldhochstrasse, or Black Forest High Road, is one of the best known [scenic routes in Germany](#), stretching for some 60km (37mi) from [Baden-Baden](#) to [Freudenstadt](#) on the B500 highway.

Sixty kilometers doesn't seem like a huge distance. Heck, drive fast enough and you can cover that distance in less than an hour. However, sixty kilometers can seem like a million if you're walking it. But, when the countryside is as magnificent as the [Black Forest](#) — you'd walk that million kilometers to see it.

It's just as well that the Schwarzwaldhochstrasse isn't quite that long. Yet if it was, I'd walk it.

For centuries the Black Forest has been the stuff of legends, myths, and fairytales — told from parents to children, to their children and beyond. One story tells the tale of a werewolf that killed sheep in the city of Freudenstadt, another of the girl who was saved by the forest dwelling dwarves when she ran off in order to avoid being married off to a really rotten guy.

These two stories don't have anything to do with the Schwarzwaldhochstrasse, but for years people avoided coming here because of it. Oh, what they were missing...

The Black Forest is the largest nature park in all of Germany — stretching from [Ettlingen](#) and [Pforzheim](#) in the north down to [Bad Säckingen](#) and the Swiss border in the south.

But we ain't going there on this scenic route. We're starting in the classic spa city of Baden-Baden, following it to Freudenstadt. Plus, two little extra towns at the end for good measure.

Baden-Baden has been a spa town for centuries, which is seen by the ruins of the Roman Baths. This city is great for thermal spas, has an Italian Renaissance Garden, concerts at the castle, an excellent Christmas Market, and meets with the [Baden Wine Route](#).

It's also a casino town — so please bet responsibly. No need to lose your shirt before you've seen the rest of the Black Forest High Road.

Besides, the usual elevation on this route is between 600 – 1,000 meters above sea level. So, you're gonna need all the shirts you can get to stay kinda warm. ;-)

Oh, my apologies. Did I forget to tell you that this is a *hiking* route? That's a good piece of information to have. You can't just go speeding along the Black Forest High Road in a car — you'll miss out on so much. Like some *Vesperstuben* along the way — these little snack shops and rest areas for when you're tired.

Now head towards Lichtental and the Geroldsauer Strasse, continuing on the B500 to the classy Schlosshotel Bühlerhöhe and Bühlerhöhe Castle. The vistas from here are breathtaking, and not for nothing is it known by prominence and politicians as the *Insel der Erholung* (Island of Relaxation).

If you like, at the village of Sand is an intersection with a road leading to the town of [Bühlertal](#). From here you could join the Westweg (another hiking trail), or you can stick around to try mountainbiking, enjoy a walk on the Wine Trail, or sit for an afternoon of wine tasting.

The Westweg might be good for another day, but I'm going back to Sand, and continue on the B500 (i.e., the Schwarzwaldhochstrasse) towards Unterstmatt. Because there's a road towards Sasbachwalden and the *Hornisgrinde*. The latter being the highest point of the Northern Black Forest (1,164 meters). Sasbachwalden is also all about wine, and has quite a few Michelin-star restaurants. Not bad for a small town of less than 2,500 people.

You can also take the bus to the Mummelsee from here, or simply go back to the B500 as the Schwarzwaldhochstrasse passes right along this amazing lake. The Mummelsee is an excellent adventure in the Black Forest, said to be inhabited by the Nix (a water spirit) and a mermaid. Who cares who lives here — it's located over a thousand meters above sea level, so the view is enough to make you speechless.

A hard feat for a writer, and it took me totally by surprise. I don't think I managed to talk for a good five minutes after catching a look at this forest-surrounded lake. ;-)

I don't want to leave the Mummelsee, but it's a hike (literally) to the health-resort town of Seebach. This town of around 1,500 people is totally family-friendly with hiking trails, biking paths, skiing, an art trail, and a Folk Costume Museum.

Seebach is an excellent place to go skiing in the winter, BTW.

Oh, I already said that? Silly me...

Onwards to Ottenhöfen and the ruins of Burg Bosenstein. It was built sometime between the years 1000 to 1100, and dominated the landscape until the [Thirty Years' War](#), when it was destroyed. Here in Ottenhöfen you can also jump on the Acher Valley Railway, party at the *Dorfbrunnenfest* (last weekend of July), or visit the Old Mill and Church History Museum.

Don't fret, back it goes to the B500 and the Schwarzwaldhochstrasse as we meet up with the Naturschutzzentrum (Nature Protection Center) Ruhenstein and the ski area at the Vogelskopf and Schliffkopf mountains, at a height of some 1,055 meters.

Passing the ski center of Kniebis, the Black Forest High Road ends in Freudenstadt, a town of

around 23,000 residents. Lucky ducks, every single one. ;-)

Freudenstadt might have been the place of the werewolf story, but today's it's a town with great golfing, fantastic architecture (check out the *Friedrichsturm*), lies along the [Northern Black Forest Monasteries Route](#) and the [Black Forest Spa Route](#), and has a great summer theater program. They like a good festival as much as any other town, and the *Afrikafest* is one of the biggest on the last weekend of July.

The Schwarzwaldhochstrasse, or Black Forest High Road, ends at this point, but if you don't hike on over to Bad Peterstal-Griesbach you're missing out. Located along the Glaswaldsee (created by an Ice Age glacier), Bad Peterstal-Griesbach has a culinary summer festival called the *Suppegassefescht*.

The food in the Black Forest is delicious, scrumptious, mouth watering, and downright yummy. How could anyone possibly say no eating here? Please, I ain't turning down Black Forest Cake or Black Forest Cherry Schnapps, for that matter. Could be why there are so many hiking trails — gotta burn off all those calories. ;-)

You can certainly burn them off in the 35 villages and farms that make up Bad Rippoldsau-Schapbach, too. No me, I'm soaking myself in their 32°C (90°F) mineral baths, and calling it a day. You're more than welcome to continue on play miniature golf or tennis. Or, to check out the Burgbach Waterfall (it's some 32 meters high), the Wolf & Bear Park, the Weinbrenner style church, or the natural rock formations known as *Kastelstein* and *Klagstein*.

And hiking, or driving, over to [Baiersbronn](#) is a must, too. Almost 200 sq km big, Baiersbronn has a totally intimate feel (even with its shopping centers). Perhaps it's the rolling hills and all the trees? It's also got a totally yummy part since it's got two Michelin 3-star restaurants (7 Michelin stars in Baiersbronn altogether, BTW, which is unique in all of Germany).

See? You're not getting away from Baiersbronn so easy. Hanging out by the Huzenbacher Lake is a great daytime activity, as is visiting the Monastery Reichenbach (1085) and the Fairytale Museum. During the summer there are quite a number of performances at the outdoor theater.

Aren't you glad you walked all this way? The views are stunning, the food is more than delicious, the people are friendly, its architecture is outstanding, and the spas are heavenly. This is why I said I'd walk a million kilometers of it if I could.