

Germany's Castle Road Is Leading Through German History

Germany's Castle Road (German: *Burgenstrasse*) begins at [Mannheim](#) in the [Neckar River Valley](#). Before leaving Germany it takes in the forested slopes of the [Odenwald](#), the vast expanses of the [Hohenloher Ebene](#), the medieval glories of [Frankenhöhe](#), and the romance of [Franconian Switzerland](#).

Mannheim, at the confluence of the [Rhine](#) and Neckar Rivers, is built around the *Kurfürstliches Residenzschloss*. The largest Baroque palace in all of Germany, it set the standard for the Castle Road attractions to come! Here is a handful of the most notable:

On the Neckar southeast of Mannheim is [Schwetzingen](#). Its [Schwetzingen Castle](#), with formal gardens in Baroque, rococo, and English landscape designs, also has six restaurants and a brewery on its Castle Square alone (not to miss the other approx. 596 restaurants throughout the town)!

Then [Heidelberg](#), about 2 miles/3 km northeast of Schwetzingen, is considered one of Germany's most romantic cities. Its most famous monument to Romanticism is the magnificent [Heidelberg Castle](#) complex.

This red sandstone behemoth, set on a bluff overlooking the town, took over four centuries to complete, as its eclectic architectural styles reveal! Roman gods vie for recognition with Christian saints in the Otto-Heinrich Wing, and in the cellar is the world's largest wine barrel, the Heidelberg Tun!

After Heidelberg continue on along the Neckar up to [Neckargemünd](#) and its Bergfeste Dilsberg, a castle from the 12th century overlooking the Neckar valley.

Next step on our Castle Road tour? The village of Neckarsteinach, which has four castles, including the "Swallow's Nest." It could not be constructed until part of the face of the mountain on which it sits was carved away to make room for it!

Above the Neckar-side town of Hirschhorn is the 12th-century Knight's Castle (*Ritterschloss*), where the restaurant terrace offers a splendid view of the river and town.

Heading south, the Castle Road passes one of the Neckar Valley's oldest (and best preserved) castles in [Haßmersheim](#). Guttenberg Castle, with its Falcon Center, has remained in the same family since the mid-15th century!

Advancing further towards west, you'll find no better example of a medieval spa than [Bad Wimpfen](#), where the enormous imperial palace's red and blue towers loom over steep cobblestoned streets.

The Castle Road is now in wine country. The 10th-century castle ruins on a hill overlooking the town of [Weinsberg](#) are those of one of Germany's oldest noble residences. Adelheid, Emperor Konrad II's mother, lived here.

Langenburg Castle, in Langenburg in the [Schwäbisch Hall district](#), has also remained in the same family for centuries — since 1226, to be exact. Its Baroque gardens are frequently open to the public.

Although it lacks a castle, the walled town of [Rothenburg ob der Tauber](#) is considered the purest example of German Romanticism. A stroll through its *Plönlein* (Little Square) erases five centuries of [German history](#)!

The Castle of the Margraves lords it over the town of [Ansbach](#) southeast of Rothenburg. It began as a simple moated castle before being transformed into a gem of rococo opulence in the 1500s.

The Imperial Nuremberg Castle in [Nuremberg](#), the next stop on our Castle Road tour, is worthy of the historic city at its feet, serving between 1050 and 1571 as a part-time residence for all of Germany's emperors. Its Sinwell Tower provides a panoramic outlook of the city.

Plassenburg Castle, with its collection of 300,000 tin soldiers perpetually engaged in battles from the pages of German history, watches over the [Franconian](#) town of [Kulmbach](#). The people of Kulmbach consume more beer per capita than the people of any other town on Earth! Is there a connection?

[Bayreuth](#), the city so entwined in the life of Richard Wagner, is our last stop on the German Castle Road. Its 18th-century rococo New Palace (*Neues Schloss*) was the city home of the Margravine Wilhelmine. The ceiling of its Cabinet of Fragmented Mirrors takes rococo to an entirely new place!

Castle Road Web Site

Here is the official Web site of the [Castle Road](#). Enjoy! :-)