

Classics Road -- Timeless, Inspiring, And Classical Throughout

Within the German travel industry are travel specialists whose sole job is to design all sorts of [touristic and scenic routes in Germany](#), like the Classics Road, or *Klassikerstrasse* in German, that runs for 300km/186mi through [Thuringia](#).

Well, whoever put this one together deserves the highest praise and accolades. Hell, I should buy you a glass of wine because this route is awesome.

Start of the Classics Road

Because of its Figure-8 design it doesn't matter too much where you start, but I'm going to begin in the middle of that figure, in [Arnstadt](#). What better way to start the Classics Road than with a classic castle ruin. Three of them, come to think of it.

The three castles known as *Drei Gleichen* (fittingly in a town known as [Drei Gleichen](#)) also lies on the Thuringian Castle Road. Burg Gleichen might be in ruins, but there's enough left for a small museum and restaurant at what is a 11th century castle.

You think that's old? Puhleeze — Castle Gleichen is the youngest of the three castles here. Veste Wachsenburg (in [Amt Wachsenburg](#)) is the second-oldest (built in 930) and the only one not in ruins. It's part hotel, part museum, part restaurant — and all wonderful.

Mühlberg is the oldest of the three, thought to have been built sometime in the early 8th century (yes, that's the 700s in case you're wondering). The castle's got a Pottery Museum and a restaurant for anyone interested.

Arnstadt might be great because of its castles, but it's also home to the Johann Sebastian Bach Church, named because the man himself played here. Great, classical music to listen to on the Classics Road — I'm starting to get it now... ;-)

Listen to some of his works while you're on your way to [Erfurt](#), where Martin Luther lived at the Augustinian Monastery. It's not just a place where the leader of the [Protestant Reformation](#) lived as a monk, there's also a guesthouse here where you can spend the night. Don't expect 5-star luxury digs, though, accommodations are simple, super-clean, and affordable in the City of Towers & Bridges.

Erfurt is not only a Martin Luther town, but home to the annual Bach Festival every March, the Cathedral Festival in August, and the Krämer Bridge Festival in June.

[Gotha](#) with its Schloss Friedenstein is next. This Baroque palace is a piece of art onto itself, but it's just filled with works from both German and Dutch painters. The Schlosspark is a treat too, perfect for a leisurely stroll to inspire *your* creative side.

Welcome to [Eisenach](#), home to the narrowest house in Germany (located at Johannisplatz 9), the *Bachhaus*, the St. George Church, the Luther House, and one of the world's most magnificent castles. The [Wartburg Castle](#) stands watch over Eisenach in all its half-timbered and stone glory.

The Classics Road meets up with the Thuringian Castle Road once again at the gargantuan Wartburg. Not only is it an UNESCO World Heritage Site, but it was the home of St. Elisabeth of Hungary (she was married to a Duke) and for a short time Martin Luther, who translated the bible into German in a room that hasn't changed much over the last 500 years.

The next town of [Meiningen](#) was also home to dukes, this time the Dukes of Saxony who lived in Schloss Elizabethenburg. Within the castle's walls are all sorts of musical manuscripts and artwork ranging from sculptures to paintings.

One of the biggest cultural events in Meiningen is its annual *Hüttesfest* in June/July — it's a huge food festival so you'll be eating quite good.

Working off those extra calories will be a breeze as you'll be walking all around [Ilmenau](#), especially if you're on a literary pilgrimage to the Goethe House. Goethe's influence in Ilmenau doesn't end there, you'll want to see the Goethe & Glass Museum as well as the *Amtshaus*, a Baroque building that Goethe used to visit. Sort of, since the original one burned down 90 years after Goethe wrote about it. Oops!

Let's recap for a minute... So far the Classics Road has given us classical music with Bach; a classic monastery, a classic castle (I guess we can combine that to classic architecture), and a classic writer. Yeah, I'd say the Classics Road was appropriately named, wouldn't you?

[Rudolstadt](#) is next, and where you must see the *Klosterruine Paulinzella*. It was built more than 800 years ago, and even has a 17th century hunting lodge on its grounds as well as a Monastery Museum.

The Heidecksburg Royal Palace is yet another place you can't miss. Within this Baroque castle is an extensive art collection and weapons exhibit, but I think its Rococo ballroom is the real winner here. ;-)

We're almost done, would you believe it? [Jena](#) is our second to last town, so if you want to prolong your stay on the Classics Road then take your time at the town's Botanical Gardens, the Schiller House (he wrote *Wallenstein* here), and the Dornburg Castles (yes, plural, so there's more than one).

The Dornburgs are of medieval and Renaissance design, and open to visitors every year from April to October. You'll be following in the footsteps of Goethe here; he was a big admirer of the Dornburgs. I bet he'd have loved the Pottery Market every June, too.

Our journey on the Classics Road ends in grand [Weimar](#), a town that lent its name to Germany's Weimar Republic. [German Politics](#) aside, Weimar is a cultural jewel at celebrates Goethe's birthday every year in August, has a Bach Festival every March, an Arts Festival in August, and an Onion Market every October.

The festivals in Weimar are fantastic, as is its sightseeing. You'd be crazy to miss the Royal Palace, the Goethe House, the Schiller House, and the German National Theater.

You'd be even crazier not to see the city's Church of Sts. Peter & Paul, a church built in 1433. And interestingly enough, was rebuilt in 1953 (even while the area was occupied by the Soviets) because it was flattened during [World War II](#).

It would be the craziest of all to miss seeing Belvedere Castle. Sorry, if you're looking for a medieval, Frankenstein movie kind of castle, this isn't it. The Belvedere is a bright yellow Baroque building filled with all sorts of period furniture and pottery. Belvedere's gardens are extraordinary, as bright as the castle itself I would say.

The Classics Road is inspiring and timeless — and that's what makes it a classic.

Classics Road Web Site

Here's the official Web site of the [Classics Road](#).