

## Colditz -- More Than Just An Infamous Castle

The first thought in your head about Colditz is its castle, right? I know, I'm guilty of the same thing, but let me tell you... there's more to be found within this Muddle Valley town than just its Schloss. Who knew?

As much as I'd love to start all this at the castle, it's probably best to start at the Local History Museum (called *Heimatmuseum*); all filled with interesting facts about the town and its former residents.

Interestingly enough, Colditz is home to a museum about dental history too.

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However, it isn't dentistry that caught my attention — it was the life and work of Johann David Köhler, a historian who studied the Romans (and there were plenty of them here in Germany), and whose work innovated the library sciences.

In no way does Colditz's enthralling facts and "attractions" end with a visit to the Köhler House — oh heck no. Colditz comprises of some 25 different villages, so you will find something else that strikes your fancy (again, besides the castle). The countryside could do that — so why not climb the 20-meter of the *Heimatturm* and see the natural beauty of [Saxony](#)?

And if you're into all the fun festivals to be found in a German town — then, Baby, you don't have it any better than right here. Wintertime, Summertime, it doesn't matter the season, Colditz is a party town.

Whatever kind of party you can think of can be found right here. The *Osterfeuer*, or Easter bonfire,

is a sure way to welcome in Spring (and Easter), followed up by the *Barkenfestregatta* at the end of the month. Oh, this is a joyful festival of live music, another bonfire, and fireworks.

Of course, the Autumn season isn't to be outdone in the festivities department — there's an *Erntedankfest* in September, with both a *Kirmes* and Autumn Festival in October.

Personally, I think the Advent/Christmas season is the best — maybe because of the traditional Christmas festivities at the famous (and infamous) Colditz Castle.

Colditz Castle wasn't always so inviting, by the way. Back in the 1930s, Schloss Colditz was a prison camp — housing those deemed totally “undesirable” by the Nazis. By 1939 the amazingly gorgeous Renaissance castle was officially known as *Oflag IV-C*, a POW camp for officers. Colditz Castle has even been immortalized by actual daring prison escapes, and was even a BBC television program in the early 1970s.

These days Schloss Colditz is a youth hostel, and everyone is welcome to enjoy the stunning architecture, like its 12th century chapel and its sandstone reliefs. No wonder so many artists have been inspired to paint it countless times over the centuries; perhaps you will be too.

Not me, I don't think with that side of my brain. However, my mind is twisted enough to enjoy a creepy night tour of the castle. ;-)

Truthfully, I never gave Colditz too much thought before today — but you sure can bet I won't make that mistake again.