

Dresden Parks -- Crocodiles And Chichi Gardens At The Elbe

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- [Gunzenhausen](#)
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Dresden is home to a number of beautiful gardens, parks, a superb zoo and the superbly picturesque [Elbe](#) River Meadows. With so many green attractions, you may forget that you are even in a big city! :-)

Dresden Zoo

This Dresden nature park is well-known for its fantastic array of animals. There are over 3,000 animals and 400 species on showcase here. Come and visit the zebras, elephants, peacocks, giraffes, lemurs and lions.

There's a petting zoo for the children as well. And be sure not to leave until you've said a *Guten Tag* to the zoo's mascot, saltwater crocodile Max! ;-)

Elbe Meadows

This Dresden nature attraction is at the forefront of many festivities and events. The Elbe meadows stretch along the Elbe River Valley into the very heart of Dresden itself. Cycling along this picturesque area is a particularly popular pastime. You will be greeted with views ranging from old castles to lush vineyards and the famous city skyline of Dresden.

During the warm summer months, the meadows are the perfect spot for a lunchtime picnic or evening barbecue.

The Great Gardens (Großer Garten)

This Dresden nature park is known as the city's "green lung." You can take a leisurely walk around the *Großer Garten*, or join the the crowds of roller bladers.

If you're lacking energy from your long day of sightseeing, you can see the park the lazy way — by taking a mini-train around the grounds!

Pillnitz Palace Grounds

The Pillnitz Palace is the former seat of Saxon royalty. These days, it's a tourist attraction with a beautifully landscaped English garden. Designed in the baroque style, this Dresden nature park also features a Japanese camellia tree that is over 200 years old.

The summer palace is also home to exquisite vineyards as well as home to the Museum of Decorative Arts.

Saxon Switzerland

Hiking fans will love to travel the 30 km (18 mi) from the city center to check out this sandstone mountain. The hiking trails and natural beauty, [Saxon Switzerland](#) is an ideal day trip for nature lovers.