

Elztal -- Romans, Teutonic Knights, Odenwaldlimes

To quote my good friend, Willy Shakespeare: Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears (said by Marc Anthony in Julius Caesar). I could change that a bit to lend me your eyes since you're reading this — but the point is the same. The town of Elztal was once crawling with Romans.

The Romans made such an impact here in the [Odenwald](#) area of northern [Baden-Württemberg](#) that they didn't just build one Roman fort, they built two. Which is why I'm thinking Elztal lies along what's known as the *Odenwaldlimes* — and the forts are known as the *Kastelle von Neckarburken* (circa 159 A.D.).

A visit over to the Elantia Museum (*Neckar-Odenwald Limes*) is all about the Romans' role and lives here in the area, housed in a pretty half-timbered building that's open on Sundays from April to October.

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Long before the Romans came to town, prehistoric men and women lived here. How do I know? I think the 14 prehistoric graves found, kind of prove that.

After the Romans came the Alemanni and the Franks — ushering in the Middle Ages. This time period was a boom to Elztal, and Schloss Dallau is a medieval castle that once belonged to the very famous Teutonic Knights.

While small by many castle standards, this very pretty castle is now a nice place to get married.

Some of Elztal's churches are also a nice place to get married (or just visit). The Church of St. George in the village of Rittersbach might look Romanesque, but it's from the 19th century — too

bad you can't tell it really was a medieval original.

Where else? Oh yes... the Baroque Church over in Neckarburken — located right next door to the half-timbered Town Hall.

And before you rush off on one of the marked hiking and biking trails (like the Roman Road), here's when Elztal holds some festivals and markets. You don't want to miss them, do you?

OK, on the first Tuesday in July there's a festival, with the *Backofenfest* and Community Carnival in September. All this is followed by four (yes, 4) *Kerwe* events in October, as well as an Oktoberfest at the end of that month.

Come Advent, you'll find some Advent Celebrations as well as a Christmas Market on the first weekend of the season.

As my time for Elztal comes to an end, again forced to quote Willy — parting is such sweet sorrow — although I'm sure when Juliet said it to Romeo, she didn't mean Elztal. But, the saying does fit. ;-)