

European Celtic Route -- Europäische Keltenroute

We know Germany has its fair share of [scenic routes](#), dedicated to everything (Industrial Heritage, monasteries, etc) and everyone (the Romans, etc), so why should the Celts be any different? They're not, which is why there's the *Europäische Keltenroute*, or as it's called in English the European Celtic Route.

This route is laid-out a bit different, and it also travels into France & Luxembourg. Nothing personal against our French-speaking neighbors, but the majority of sightseeing falls within Germany's borders. And since this is about Germany and Germany only...

We'll start at the Völklingen Ironworks, or the *Völklinger Hütte*, in [Völklingen](#), which is an [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) and the world's only surviving iron works from the heydays of the iron and steel industry.

Up next is the Fürstengrab (Princely Tomb) Elm-Sprengen, a reconstructed Celtic grave in the town of [Schwalbach \(Saar\)](#). The original dated to around 500 B.C., and it's where they found a 4-wheeled wagon. It's also located along the 11.5 Celtic Walking Trail, for a nice hike in their long-gone footsteps. In your GPS, enter *Püttlingen* for the city and *Saarlouiser Straße* for the street and you'll find it.

In Niedaltdorf (part of [Rehlingen-Siersburg](#)) along the French border are 40 Celtic burial mounds. This too has a hiking trail, this time the 6km circular *Druidenpfad*. Search for *Neunkircher Str.* and you're good to go.

A dedicated hiker will appreciate Düppenweiler-Nalbach, which lies within [Beckingen](#). Follow the *Litermont-Sagenweg* or Litermont Legend Trail (17km total) to the *Grauer Stein* or Grey Stone (a.k.a. Druid Stone). OK, OK, no one knows for certain if the Druids or Celts used this peak for anything — but it does feel “magical.” BTW, *Piesbacher Str.* is the meeting point here.

Not only do you get Celts in the Borg district of [Perl](#), but Romans too. Excavations at the Villa Borg found artifacts dating to the Romans (around 190 B.C.). It's now an archaeological park and includes an excavated Roman Tavern — located at *Im Meeswald 1*.

For a bit of folklore, it's [Mettlach](#) you want. Besides a Celtic Fort (circa 500 – 300 B.C.) over at Burg Montclair, it's thought that there are a few altars used for sacrifices nearby. Plus, the stunning view over the *Saarschleife* is just gorgeous. Target the *Bezirksstraße* in *Mettlach* in your GPS device and then follow the signs from there.

As if the Celts and Romans weren't enough, how about we throw Etruscans into the mix? The Etruscans? What do they have to do with the Celts? Everything — since some of their “goods” were found in the three graves in [Weiskirchen](#), along with gold. Over at the *Haus des Gastes* is a

small museum displaying some of what was found.

BTW, the Etruscans were an ancient civilization that predate the Romans in an area of Italy's Tuscany Region.

More Celtic burial mounds (re-erected) await you in [Wadern](#); as does a Roman Temple and Villa. Guided tours are available year-round if you're so inclined to learn more. How could you not? GPS users target the parking area at *Höhenstraße* in the Oberlöstern district of Wadern. From here on in simply follow the signs to the two *Grabhügel*.

The Otzenhausen district of [Nonnweiler](#) is a Celtic delight. Not only is there a circular wall (called *Keltischer Ringwall*) along a former fort site (400 – 50 B.C.) with walls 25-meters thick, but a Celtic Sculpture Trail and a Celtic Festival (called *Celtoi*, held every 2 years). Take a guided tour or walk around on your own — choice is yours. You'll find the parking area at the *Ringwallstraße*.

Still in Nonnweiler, two Celtic graves were found in its Schwarzenbach district (search for *Zur Schellkaul* in your GPS), but that's not the most spectacular part. It was all the Celtic jewelry found within them that makes this worthwhile. Take a guided tour to hear all about the magnificent "golden bowl" and other artifacts that were found.

[Tholey](#) is a treat. Not only does it have a replica of a Celtic burial chamber (Birkenfelder Str.) — but also the Theulegium Museum (Rathausplatz 6), filled with all sorts of Celtic and Roman artifacts. Some of the jewels from the chamber even found themselves in a museum in [Trier](#).

No graves in [Schmelz](#) (Limbach district; parking area at Schmelzer Str.), just a hilltop fortification known as the *Birg*. It is thought the fort fell during the Gallic War (58 – 51 B.C.), and today you can enjoy a stunning picnic area or take a guided tour. Ahh, you know what? Do both.

The Etruscans make a comeback in [Marpingen](#)-Remmesweiler, as more of their wares were found in Celtic burial mounds (5th & 4th century B.C.), as were gold and iron goods.

It is believed that a grave of a Celtic princess was found in [Homburg](#), along with grave steles. Sorry, the only way you'll get to see this is if you're willing to hike the forest trails to get here. The parking area is at *Saar-Pfalz-Straße*.

Oh, buck it up!! You wouldn't want to miss out. ;-)

Still in Homburg, for a look at Roman or Gallic farms, you don't have to go any further than its Schwarzenacher district. You'll also see a Roman Temple site at the Roman Museum. Of course with this kind of history, a guided tour is always a good idea.

At [Sankt Ingbert](#) a little bit of history and legend come together. Yes, there was a Celtic fort here

(then a medieval tower at one time), but at the strange rock formation known as *Großer Stiefel* (Big Boot) it was believed the Celts used to gather for all sorts of rituals. Whether they did or not, the natural landscape is marvelous. Again, you'll have to hike a bit along some forest trail, which is so worth it. The *Waldparkplatz* in the Sengscheid district is a good starting point.

It's back to the Celtic graves again, this time in [Gersheim](#) — more specifically the *Europäischer Kulturpark* (European Culture Park) Bliesbruck-Reinheim (Robert-Schuman-Straße 2). Here you'll see replicas of Celtic jewelry (including rings & brooches) and even a mirror. That is, if you're here between March & October.

We've finally reached [Saarbrücken](#), where you can take your time visiting the *Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte* (Pre & Early History Museum, located at Schloßplatz 16), or walking along the *Rennweg* — a Celtic Culture trail. A good starting point for the latter is the parking area at *Großblittersdorfer Straße*.

As pretty as Saarbrücken is, it's time to visit the oldest city in Germany: [Trier](#). This place has it all, Stone Age, Celtic, and Roman artifacts — all neatly wrapped up at the *Rheinisches Landesmuseum* (Weimarer Allee 1).

The Landesmuseum in [Birkenfeld \(Nahe\)](#) (Friedrich-August-Straße 1) also houses a Celtic exhibit, as well as highlighting on 8 "stations" everything about Celtic farming, religious practices, crafts, and more. Sorry, the museum's closed December & January, so plan accordingly.

Wow, only six towns left — I hope you've enjoyed this route so far as much as I have.

What I like about the Archaeology Park Belginum in [Morbach](#) (Keltenstraße 2) is that you'll see the living side of the Celts. What they ate, how they worked, what tools they used, that kind of thing — just as long as it's between March and October.

From April 1 to October 31 you can see what a Celtic Settlement looked like in Budenbach (Friedhofsweg). Not only are there replicas of Celtic houses, but all sorts of Celtic events (including the *Altburgfest*) held throughout the year.

In Pommern (Mosel), there's an archaeological park that highlights a fortified settlement and a Roman Temple. The park is only open April 1st to October 31, and guided tours are available. In your GPS, target *Am Goldberg*.

What's next? [Mainz](#), a city on a trade route from as far back as the Stone Age. Hey, Etruscan goods had to get here somehow, right? Anyway, not only does Mainz have a superb collection of prehistoric artifacts in its Landesmuseum at Große Bleiche 49 (that would include the Celts), but also a gorgeous cathedral, and great weather.

Can you ask for anything more? Yeah, actually. ;-)

Steinbach am Donnersberg would be one, a site of a reconstructed Celtic Village (called *Keltendorf am Donnersberg*). The wall itself isn't new, it dates to around 130 B.C. — and you can even get a real hands-on experience in Celtic crafts.

The European Celtic Route ends at the *Historisches Museum der Pfalz* (Historical Museum of the Palatinate) in [Speyer](#). The museum, open Tuesday to Sunday, has all sorts of exhibits from the Dark Ages, right down to Celtic jewelry. The oldest piece in the history's collection is a *Faustkeil* (Hand Axe) that's whopping 190,000 years old.

No, that's not a misprint. ;-)

The European Celtic Route has given us the best of Germany's Celtic history — a nice change since most associate the Celts with places like Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. And you'll see as you go along, that while the Celts might have been living in prehistoric days, they were quite an advanced society. Don't you agree? :-)