

## The Fichtelgebirge Is Waiting To Put On A Show For Ya! :-)

Forming a horseshoe around the northeastern [Bavarian](#) town of Marktleuthen, the Fichtelgebirge Mountains give rise to four rivers.

The Eger River begins at their western edge, near Weißenstadt; the White Main rises at the 1024m or 3359-foot Ochsenkopf; the Naab begins near Nagle; and the [Saale](#) originates on the slopes of the Waldstein, with its massive Devi's Table granite formation.

Each of these rivers, oddly enough, flows in a different direction! Their traveling habits have earned the Fichtelgebirge the nickname "The Navel Of Germany."

Visitors to the Fichtelgebirge Nature Park have their choice of an entire network of cycling or hiking routes which, like the rivers, will take them whichever way the wind blows! It's a forested region that offers a wider selection of landscapes than Caspar David Friedrich, with deeply mysterious forests yielding to sunlit meadows and soaring mountains protecting picturesque lakes and villages.

One of its unique sights can be found in the porcelain-manufacturing town of [Selb](#). Here the artists Otto Piene and Phillip Morandini have teamed to paint the Rosenthal headquarters with rainbow colors, reflected in the façade of the Mirror House next door!

Germany's Porcelain Route runs right by the Rosenthal and Hutschenreuther factories in Selb, and continues to the German Porcelain Museum at Hohenberg an der Eger. The Fichtelgebirge provided both charcoal and china clay to Germany's porcelain makers during the 19th century.

Long before Johannis Böttger created the first German porcelain at Dresden in 1709, however, the Fichtelgebirge had been mined for its treasures. Iron, tin, and gold were all taken from these mountains during the Middle Ages, as well as the coal needed to smelt the ore.

The visitor mine at Fichtelgebirge-Neubau and the *Fichtelgebirgsmuseum* at [Wunsiedel](#) both provide great insights into the area's mining history.

At Wunsiedel is another unique attractios, the Luisenburg rock labyrinth. You'll love the path encircling it. The outdoor stage beneath the Luisenburg is the site of an outdoor summer festival during which opera, Shakespeare, Bavarian farce, and fairy-tales all come to life!

Just to the south of Wunsiedel is the health resort of Bad Alexandersbad. Here the Luisenburg Spring has been easing aches and pains since 1783!

Where there was medieval mining, of course, there were medieval castles to protect the mines. The Fichtelgebirge has its share of them. Castle Thierstein, just to the east of Höchstädt, dates to the early 14th century.

Even earlier are the ruins of Castle Epprechstein, located about 800m/2600 feet above sea level west of Marktleuthen. Offering a marvelous view of the Fichtelgebirge, it was constructed in 1200.

Hohenberg, on the Eger River at the Czech border, is the site of the Fichtelgebirge's only preserved castle. First documented in 1222, it has been repeatedly rebuilt following wars and fires. Visiting it will help you appreciate what remarkable defenses it must have provided, with its sweeping border view!

In the western part of this region, between its two highest peaks (the *Schneeburg* and the *Ochsenkopf*), is the winter sports Mecca of Bischofsgrün. Here are both Northern Bavaria's longest artificially-primed ski run and the K65 Ski Jump.

A 6 mile/10km hike across the Fichtelgebirge Nature Park leads to the health resort and 14th-century village of Weißenstadt, with its lakeside promenade. Weißenstadter Lake, fed by the Eger River, brings yachtsmen, swimmers, and anglers here from nearby [Bayreuth](#), just to the west.

Wherever you head in this delightful corner of Bavaria, from Hof's International Film Festival to the Richard Wagner Festival in Bayreuth, the Fichtelgebirge is waiting to put on a show!