Fulda River -- The Water Boy Of Hesse

If I threw the word Fulda out there, I'd bet dollars to donuts that the 8th century Fulda Monastery would be the first thing coming to your mind — not the river with the same name (right?).

For about 221km, the Fulda River makes an impact on the many towns along its banks; and runs along the Kaufungen Forest and the Reinhardswald.

It has two sources, but the main one associated with the Fulda River is about a kilometer and a half north of Gersfeld on a plateau called the Wasserkuppe, the highest peak in the [Rhön Mountains](#).

The Wasserkuppe is also famous for its role in aviation history. Gliders were developed here, and it's partially where the Luftwaffe got its start.

Traveling downstream for about 50km, the Fulda River picks up its first tributary. One of like 25, although the biggest contributor to the Fulda is the Eder — which we'll get to in a minute.

But, I'm going to [Eichenzell](#), a town situated around the [Vogelsberg Mountains](#) that's got a Renaissance Castle, a Heritage Museum, and an Old Cemetery where you can sit for a spell.

Please, it's not a morbid thing to do in Germany — cemeteries are like parks, just with more quiet activities.

OK, so no cemetery for you — we'll go to [Fulda](#) instead. Yes, the town this time — with its monastery that was founded in 744 by St. Sturm; and where Charlemagne was a visitor.

Fulda was more than just a kloster town, it was once along the Inner German Border, Napoleon's Army tramped through, and it's got a bunch of other sightseeing — like the St. Michael Church (my favorite) and the Old Town Hall.

Speaking of monasteries, [Bad Hersfeld](#)'s got one too. So what if it's in ruins, the Hersfeld Abbey (built 769) hosts an annual festival that attracts thousands of partygoers. Festival or not, the abbey is one of the best pieces of Romanesque architecture you'll see anywhere. It helps that two saints were buried here, and Martin Luther even visited.

What else does Bad Hersfeld have? How about an Opera Festival, Bach Days (great, classical music), a Town Museum, and a half-timbered house built in 1452 (but isn't the only framework house).

In our next town of [Bebra](#), the Fulda River picks up five more of her tributaries. It's easy to get caught up in Bebra's festive spirit. It seems like there's always a festival of some sort going on — like the Dragon Festivals, the Fisherman's Festival (like a river town's not gonna have one), the

Easter Market, and the obligatory Christmas Market.

In [Rotenburg an der Fulda](#), the Fulda River picks up one of its sluices; and its bridge links the *Altstadt* (Old Town) with the New Town.

The old part of Rotenburg is where you'll find half-timbers facing the river, a Puppet & Toy Museum, a Town Hall built in the 1590s, and an old Jewish ritual bath called a *mikvah*.

Before you leave here, go see the Sts. Elisabeth & Marien Monastic Church, and the Jakobikirche. Trust me.

Would you believe there's yet another Monastery on the Fulda River? This one being the 13th century Kloster Haydau, that's now a venue for all sorts of professional and cultural activities.

Don't get lazy, on it goes…

From the looks of it you might not guess that almost 100% of [Guxhagen](#) was destroyed by [World War II](#) bombings. It's location along the Habichtswald, is so peaceful & serene (and where the Fulda River picks up its biggest tributary, the Eder). A good place to eat some *Ahle Wurst*, a local delicious sausage.

No time for food for me, I'm off to [Kassel](#), a town named after a [Germanic Tribe](#). This is also where the [Weser River](#) gets part of its start; and the Brothers Grimm got their own museum, in addition to the Natural History Museum.

The journey of the Fulda River ends in the Three-River City of Hannoversch Münden, or [Hann. Münden](#) for short. The length of its name is nothing compared to its history. It's where the Fulda and [Werra](#) pour into the Weser. That would explain all the Weser Renaissance architecture, wouldn't it? ;-)

The 12th century *Stadtmauer*, however, is of a medieval design.

The architecture of the Fulda River is more than just a monastery that bears its name. It's also more than just the towns you'll find along the way. This is the heart of Hesse. At least I think so anyway.