

## German Abbeys Are A Way To See Our Religious Past

Not afraid of some hard work? Care to pray six or seven times a day? Such was the life of those in one of Germany's many monasteries during the Middle Ages and beyond.

Some abbeys and monasteries have gone by the wayside, but many are still around. And you're always welcome to join in for services at one of their churches.

There is one still being used by Benedictine nuns today who tend the vineyards at St. Hildegard in Eibingen im Rheingau (part of [Rüdesheim](#)), and have been since 1165.

The ladies will give you a tour in either French or English — and you're welcome to join in for prayer services anytime between 5am and 8:15pm.

One of the wealthiest abbeys was the Fulda Abbey, of the Benedictine Order. Its St. Michael's Chapel was built along its cemetery in 822.

Maria Laach is another famous Benedictine Abbey, built around the Laacher See in 1093. This is a true Romanesque delight — right down to its towers, arcaded gallery, and Paradise.

Wow, can't believe it's another Benedictine Abbey in Ettal. This was a place where you'd have found [Teutonic Knights](#) wandering around — as well as pilgrims since it had a pilgrimage church.

Ottobeuren Abbey had a saint for an Abbot, except he was just Ulrich back then. The gold & marbled Rococo Church is a wonderful venue for its weekly Saturday concerts. A wonderful way to see an 8th century abbey that became an Imperial one in 1299.

Prüm Abbey in [Prüm](#) was also begun in the 8th century, and then becoming an Imperial Abbey. It's also said to house the sandals of Christ.

The 8th century was really popular for the creations of abbeys, as this is when the Benediktbeuren Abbey was built too — which you can't tell from its Baroque church interior.

One of the most beautiful of all the abbeys is Reichenau Abbey, a UNESCO site where you'll see Ottonian and Carolingian art from around 900 A.D.

St. Michael's in [Hildesheim](#) is also a UNESCO site, and I'm sorry to say the bishop that commissioned this abbey church never saw it completed — dying 9 years before it was finished in 1031.

Around the same time the Michaelsberg Abbey was built in [Bamberg](#) (1015 A.D.), which was destroyed by an earthquake (don't be frightened, this was in 1117). Another church was built in

1121, only to be destroyed by fire in 1610. When it was rebuilt, artists added the Garden of Heaven painting on its ceiling.

It doesn't matter if you've come to join in for services or not, Germany's Abbeys are terrific for looking into the country's past — and those who lived here.