

German Ceramics Route Is All About Clay, Pottery, Bricks, Ceramics

If you didn't speak German you might look at the name *Deutsche Tonstrasse* and wonder, what the heck is that? Well, my English speaking friends — it's the German Ceramics Route.

Ceramics? For real? Like as in little figurines that you paint for a hobby?

Well, yes and no.

There's more to the German Ceramics Route than meets the eye. This is more of a getting in touch with your inner brick kind of trail; and where you'll certainly find little ceramic and pottery studios along the way, too.

Seriously though, the bricks made in the Ruppiner Land region in northern [Brandenburg](#) went on to build some of the most beautiful brick churches in the federal state; and which you'll see when you travel along this 215km circular trail that starts in [Velten](#).

Velten makes the perfect start to the Ceramics Route as it's home to the Oven & Ceramics Museum (located in the *Alte Mühle* or Old Mill). The town has a long history of tile production and white enamel glaze was invented here.

After a visit to the museum and the Catholic Church St. Joseph get ready to see [Hennigsdorf](#), where the Martin Luther Church was built from locally made brick. Isn't this what the route is all about?

Next up is Stolpe, an old village with cafes, a golf course (not that this has anything to do with ceramics — it just makes for a good time), and a 14th century church.

Over in [Hohen Neuendorf](#) you'll find wetlands, forests, and lots of ceramic studios and workshops. I'm pretty sure you'll find the perfect gift for yourself here.

There are more ceramic studios in [Glienicke](#), as well as forest paths to walk and a brick church to see. There's also a weekly market on Wednesdays which is great for finding little gifts to bring home.

Looks like shopping is on the agenda for your next town of [Mühlenbecker Land](#), particularly its Schildow district. Don't spend all your time shopping, you got an antique train station and red brick church to see too.

And over in the Mühlenbeck district you got the Mühlenbecker Castle (built as a hunting lodge in

the 1760's) to see. Mühlenbeck is also a site of large clay deposits, which is needed in all this ceramic & brick production. I guess the stuff's gotta come from somewhere — might as well be in town as pretty as Mühlenbeck.

A few kilometers away is Summt (still in Mühlenbecker Land though), where you can forget about bricks and clay for a little while. How? By riding, cycling, or walking around the moorlands, of course!

Another five kilometers and you've reached Zühlsdorf (you guessed it... still in Mühlenbecker Land), a village of tar works, a saw mill, and an agricultural museum. Sounds nice, right? Yeah, I thought so, too.

In Wensickendorf, which is a neighborhood of [Oranienburg](#), go have a nice swim, a game of tennis, and a visit to its medieval stone church before you relax at one of the town's beer gardens at the end of the day.

Shopping is on the "to do" list again in Schmachtenhagen (Oranienburg) at its Farmers Market. The rest of the day can be spent at the petting zoo, finishing off at the late 19th century brick church.

There's also a 19th century church in Zehlendorf (Oranienburg). But, the town's also known for its cycling and nature walking trails, too.

After all the walking & cycling it'll be nice to sail along on a canal ride in Kreuzbruch (Liebenwalde), which'll take you right past the town's brick church.

Only a short distance (4km) is Liebenwalde with lots of watersports and framework houses (many from the 18th century). The Burg Liebenwalde is now a museum — don't you just love [German castles](#)? Yeah, me too.

Krewelin (Zehdenick) is a town of little bridges and a timber framed church that was destroyed during the [Thirty Years' War](#). It was rebuilt and its alterwings date to the 15th century.

[Zehdenick](#) is another town famous for its clay deposits. It also has a Cistercian monastery ruin with a gallery in the old monastery's barn.

Funny, its Mildenberg district has a large lake with clay deposits and its also a big brick producing town. But, I think you'll remember it more for its 13th century rectangular stone church.

Ribbeck (part of [Nauen](#)) also has a 13th century church (the tower didn't come along for 500 more years). In the town's nature protected area you'll find many rare plants, a place to fish, and many hiking trails.

What is it with 13th century churches? There's another one in Zabelsdorf, too! Check out its gold chalice — it's some of the most beautiful craftsmanship you can imagine.

Less than three kilometers is Marienthal where the Wentowsee has more clay deposits. The village also has little canal locks, a half-timbered church from the 1780's, and a nature reserve area for walking and cycling.

You're half-way done! Congrats! :-)

The German Ceramics Route certainly has lived up to its name, yes? You've seen so many brick churches and lakes with clay deposits. Not too many castles, though. Good thing there's one in Tornow and another one in Blumenow (both of which belong to Fürstenberg (Havel)), although this one's in ruins.

The Stone Age village of Bredereiche has a charming half-timbered Village Church decorated with St. Andrew Crosses. Himmelpfort has an old monastery with a museum and herb garden. And in Fürstenberg proper there are islands out in the lakes, a castle, a city park, a butter market, and a medieval yellow brick church (that does NOT lead to the Wizard of Oz in case you're wondering).

You'd think that Neuglobsow in Stechlin would be on a Glass Route because it's known for its glassworks, but no. Anyway, it's nearby lake is one of the deepest in Germany (just in case you ever have to answer a trivia question).

You're coming around to Menz now, where the oldest building in the village is a 13th century stone church. At Kirchstrasse 4 is Menz's Forest Museum that's open from April to October.

It's back to the ceramics in [Rheinsberg](#) where you can take a ceramics factory or castle tour. Ah, just do both then visit some of Rheinsberg's ceramics shops.

You might want to plan to be in Köpernitz over a weekend since that's when the Baroque Köperntzer Manor House is open to tourists. Or, unless there's a concert or event going on. Weekday? Try a hike through the forest instead.

Heinrichsdorf is a brick village. It's got a brick church, a brick schoolyard, and brick factories. I told ya it was all about the bricks here.

Dierberg (notice that, politically, you're still in Rheinsberg) is a picture perfect medieval village, and the best time to see it is from May to October. Klosterheide's a charming town, too.

Lindow (Mark) has a lot going on, so you might want to stay here for the night. It has a lovely 13th century convent, lakes, monastery ruins (that hold both literary and music events), an old watermill, and the whole town takes part in the Lindower Summer Concerts.

If you're a sucker for a great lake view, Seebeck's got it. It's also got lots of clay deposits, too. Only two kilometers away is Vielitz, a village totally abandoned during the Thirty Years' War. Now, it's a modern village with tree lined streets and a picturesque Gothic church.

It's too bad the three brickwork factories in Herzberg (Mark) are gone. But, it does have gorgeous medieval frescoes in its 13th century church sanctuary — which is also where you'll find summer music concerts going on.

A quick trip to Rühnick is all it takes to see its 19th century church and its plasterhouses.

Then it's on to [Kremmen](#) and its Beetz district for fishing, its windmills, and village church. Stopping in the other neighborhood of Sommerfeld to see its Bavarian style cottages — not bad for a one-time Swedish village that was totally leveled a few centuries back.

Kremmen's Marktplatz is where you'll see a historic *Rathaus* (Town Hall) and a stone cross with the Hohenzollern coat of arms. The St. Nikolaus Church was built in 1200, when it was burned down in 1600 it was rebuilt with brick — earning the town its spot on the *Deutsche Tonstrasse*. OK, its two brick factories and clay pottery workshops helped, too.

You're almost done with the German Ceramics Route... only a few kilometers to go!

You got a castle in Groß-Ziethen (Kremmen). This Burg has undergone an amazing transformation from its 13th century beginnings, to a Renaissance style, then totally rebuilt in the Baroque. That's a lot of history all under one roof.

Funny, we're coming to the end of the German Ceramics Route and NOW we're getting a whole bunch of castles. Schwante Castle (in [Oberkrämer](#)) is a stunning 2-story Baroque palace where you can take in cultural events, art exhibits, and concerts.

Vehlefanzen welcomes visitors with a charming windmill and a 13th/14th century church. In Eichstädt, the next to last village, visitors are always welcome at its 14th century stone church.

I can't think of a better place to end my journey on the German Ceramics Route than Marwitz with its factories, ceramics workshops, and pottery studios.

Forgive me for leaving you here — I think I have some shopping to do...