

## German Fairy Tale Road -- Gateway To Favorite Childhood Stories

If you've ever wished you could step into one of your favorite fairy tales, your dream can (almost!) be realized here in Germany. Follow the 600 km (372 mi) of the German Fairy Tale Road, or *Deutsche Märchenstraße*, and you'll see how the Brothers Grimm invented and collected their famous stories.

The route begins in [Hanau](#), the birthplace of the Brothers Jacob and Wilhelm. You can take your picture with the well-known statue of them while here.

You can also imagine what their childhood must have been like, growing up in a well-to-do magistrate's house until the death of their father. With only their mother to support them, the Grimm family became more impoverished. In fact, many scholars believe these circumstances led to their portrayal of mothers as wicked or evil, while making excuses for the fathers. You can decide for yourself.

Our next stop on the German Fairy Tale Road brings us to [Steinau an der Straße](#), where the Brothers spent a good part of their happier childhood, and then through the [Vogelsberg Mountains](#).

In the town of [Grebenhain](#), you'll see the mysterious Devil's Mill, a half-timbered house that looks like it was plucked right out of a fairy tale. It is rightfully regarded as one of the finest examples of German half-timbered houses, and certainly has a magical element to its picturesque facade.

We move further north as we head to [Lauterbach \(Hesse\)](#). Lauterbach was known for its production of garden gnomes. Each year, they churned about 60,000 of these little decorative men. That's just 59,993 more than Wilhelm and Jacob needed for one of their most famous stories, *Snow White* and the *Seven Dwarves*.

We can see even more excellent examples of half-timbered houses as we follow Germany's Fairy Tale Road to [Alsfeld](#). Alsfeld has an incredible assortment of other buildings as well, like its impressive Town Hall and Market Square. One of the truly unique thing about this [German city](#) is the optical illusions created by the curved streets and somewhat unusual buildings. You can certainly feel the essence of the fantastical in Alsfeld!

Our itinerary takes us from Alsfeld to the town of [Schwalmstadt](#). See if you can guess what fairy tale this town inspired, when you hear about the unmarried girls who wear red caps on their heads. Why, it's none other than our Grandma-visiting, Big Bad Wolf-avoiding Little Red Riding Hood. To this day, you can still see many of these traditional costumes.

[Kassel](#) brings us to the halfway point on our journey through fairy tales. It is the home of the

Brothers Grimm museum, and also the site of the Friedrichs-Gymnasium, where the boys once studied. After a brief stop here, we can move on to [Eschwege](#). Apart from the 1,000 (!) half-timbered houses here, you can also enjoy the Meißner nature reserve. The mountains in this area are the reputed home of *Frau Holle*, or Mother Holle.

If you haven't heard of Mother Holle yet, then don't despair. You probably have heard of the Sleeping Beauty, and her castle is on the German Fairy Tale Road as well. The Castle Sababurg lays claim to this sleeping princess. Rather fittingly, the castle is also a hotel, so you can also get the experience of the Sleeping Beauty, but hopefully not an enchanted sleep that lasts for a hundred years! ;-)

As we reach the last leg of our journey, you'll see the rest of your favorite fantasy characters. At the *Trendelburg Turm* in [Trendelburg](#), you'll witness the tower where Rapunzel was kept captive by an evil witch, until she was able to let down her hair. The town of [Hamelin](#) (called *Hameln* in German), is where the Pied Piper first rid the city of a plague of rats. When the ungrateful townspeople refused to pay him for his services, he spirited their children away as well.

And, finally, we can reach [Bremen](#). This is the destination that the Bremen Town Musicians never quite got to. But you can experience this delightfully charming medieval town for yourself. And be sure to take your photo with its most famous musicians, so you can tell all your friends that Germany is the place where fairy tales come to life! ;-)