

German Gemstone Route -- Aren't Gemstones A Girl's Best Friend?

The German Gemstone Route, or the *Deutsche Edelsteinstraße* as it's called in German, is a scenic route that circles in and around [Idar-Oberstein](#) and the northern half of the [Birkenfeld District](#) in [Rhineland-Palatinate](#).

Now I'm sure that the song "Diamonds Are A Girl's Best Friend" will somehow wind up playing over and over in your head, won't it?

While you take the chance and change a song's title to meet your current trip (as I just did in the headline), you can also choose whether you want to follow the Gemstone's Inner or Outer Ring. Oh, what about doing them both... The Gemstone Route is only about 70km long, then you won't miss anything that way, either.

German Gemstone Route — Inner Ring

Let me first guide you through the Inner Ring with the starting point in Idar-Oberstein, which is the central hub of the gemstone and jewel industry on the *Edelsteinstraße* and beyond.

Besides many artisans, you have the chance to get your hands dirty and see for yourself a real-life jewel mine. OK, you're not going to find diamonds (or else I'd have to change the headline of this page!), as it was once mined for agate; and has been around for 240 million years (oops!).

That's not even the coolest part of Idar-Oberstein, the Jewel Museum is. More than ten thousand pieces of raw and polished stones sit on display. You'll even find some meteorites among them!

On second thought, that's not fair to the Church in the Rocks in town. I can't even begin to imagine how they built this magnificent church right into the walls of the cliffside.

Nevermind, the *Felsenkirche* is the second coolest thing in town.

Heading out of Idar-Oberstein, you'll pass through Katzenloch, which translates to Cat Hole, a small village with only 75 cats... err, residents! Its point of interest is a waterfall (with hidden gems?). Plus, due to the healthy air around here it attracts tourists since the mid-20th century.

At the next stop, Kempfeld, is a cute Jewel Garden. Just follow the signs and you can touch over 100 stones in their raw state. Oh, and it's free!

You can also see the ruins of Burg Wildenburg while you're here. While I might be a sucker for old castles, Burg Wildenburg surpasses my expectations. It's not just your average medieval castle... it

was built on the remnants of a Celtic Settlement.

If you're at the castle look for the remainder of the wall that stretches right into the *Wildenburger Kopf*, a mountain range that's within a National Park. From here, you can either take the kids to the game park (*Tierpark*) in the Wildenburg National Park OR you can follow the Wildenburg Historical Path, leading off through more than two millennia of [German history](#).

The next opportunity to lead off the route is at Asbacher Hütte, another cute village with only 149 residents. Make sure to pay a visit to the historical *Edelstein-Wasserschleiferei Biehl*, a Gemstone Water Grinding Machine from 1880 that's still in operation!

Mörschied, the next stop, offers free summer plays at its outdoor theater. But its true highlight is the *Mörschieder Burr* and the Rock Massif with Quartzite stones.

We advance to Herborn that's perfect for hiking since this village is almost half-wooded and has a few small gemstone factories. Does it even get better than this?

Yes, it does. You got a 2km trail to hike to come to Veitsrodt. Keep a lookout for the stony *Goldenes Buch der Deutschen Edelsteinstraße* (Golden Book of the German Gemstone Route) with signatures embedded in a bunch of rocks, signed by many famous folks.

Don't rush through Vollmersbach. Sit and catch a game of tennis or handball AND pay your regards to its *Andreasbrunnen* (Andreas Fountain) where it was traditional to leave "thank you" trinkets. Afterwards, spend some time exploring the numerous engraving works that are scattered throughout.

Afterwards, you're right back where you started in Idar-Oberstein, ending your trip on the Inner Ring.

German Gemstone Route — Outer Ring

Now that you're back in Idar-Oberstein, are you ready for the Outer Ring of the German Gemstone Route?

If yes, then pass through hilly Rötzeiler-Nochenthal and head right over to Mackenrodt and its *Streuobstwiesenpfad* (Orchard Trail). When you're done eating some of the local produce, continue your tour to Hettenrodt with its commitment to excellence in terms of village development and gemstone production.

After experiencing Hettenrodt's exemplary hospitality, you're on your way to Kirschweiler to play a round (or two) of golf and see the *Edelsteinbrunnen* or Jewel Well in the center of the village.

Passing through beautiful Katzenloch once again, head to Allenbach's formidable castle and the ancient Mill from 1450 before advancing to the geological park in Sensweiler (called *Geopark Krahloch*).

After Langweiler (hiking), Bruchweiler (health resort), Schauern (gemstone works), and Asbacher Hütte (again), you'll reach the next major stop, Herrstein, on the route for historical sightseeing with many half-timbered buildings, two medieval towers (*Uhrurm* and *Glockenturm*), and the *Heimatkundliches Museum* (Local History Museum) that also shows exhibits of the local gemstone works (of course!).

Then, Niederwörresbach invites to check out its numerous gemstone engravers.

Lastly, in Fischbach one cannot only go fishing, but its other highlights include the *Kupferbergwerk* (Copper Mine) that was established in 1472, and the *Bergbaurundweg*, a 3.5km long trail that provides an insight into the German mining industry.

Leaving Fischbach, you'll be right back in Idar-Oberstein where you left off twice.

Final Thoughts

Now it's time to spend some quality time shopping at all the stores selling jewelry and gemstones that were produced along those two paths of the German Gemstone Route, don't you agree? Not for nothing did I slightly change the song to "Gemstones Are A Girl's Best Friend"! ;-)