

German Wild Game Route -- Wild Animals In The Volcanic Eifel

I don't know about you, but if you have a "Bucket List" — and on that list is to take an African Safari with a chance to play with a little fuzzy lion (or baby cheetah, let's not be picky), see some elephants, maybe even a giraffe or two...

So, if a safari kind of thing is on your "Bucket List" and a trip to Africa is out of the question, then maybe the German Wild Game Route, or *Deutsche Wildstrasse*, will work for you instead.

All right, you might not be able to see any giraffes or play with a cuddly (did I say cuddly, I meant ferocious) lion, but it IS like taking a safari through the [Eifel](#) region; and adding a few volcanoes (incl. the [German Volcanoes Route](#)) in for good measure (hence the *Vulkaneifel* — Volcanic Eifel).

But, even if a safari isn't on your list, do yourself a favor and add this route anyway, because this short 146km route is pretty awesome!

Start of the German Wild Game Route

The *Deutsche Wildstrasse* is a circular route through the [Rhineland-Palatinate](#) centering around the Eifel.

Start in [Gerolstein](#), a town that was once a Celtic Settlement and the site of quite a few Roman Temples — oh, and it's built on a 10,000 year old volcanic crater.

Here you'll want to head to the village of Pelm and its *Adler und Wolfspark Kasselburg* to get in on the eagle and wolf fun.

Gerolstein is also perfect for hiking and biking through the Eifel (an area created 400 million years ago by volcanoes), a perfect place to see all sorts of indigenous animals and birds that call this place home.

You'll also see quite a few castles (a few in ruins, by the way); and one of which is now a meeting & culture center.

Next over is [Daun](#), a town on the German Volcanoes Route. There are three volcanic lakes as well as the EifelVulkan Museum. But, that's not why Daun is on the German Wild Game Route, it's because of the town's Wildlife Park — the *Wild & Erlebnispark Daun*.

Of course, that's not the only reason to visit. Daun has mineral springs, natural rock formations, mountain biking, Nordic Walking routes, a Romanesque Church with 13th century crypts, an annual

Eifel Marathon Bike Race, and the Dauner Burg.

The area around the “castle” has been used since 700 B.C. and was thought to be a Celtic stronghold. The castle’s been sacked quite often throughout the years, however, the last time it happened was in 1689 by naughty French invaders.

Since you’re traveling clockwise (well, in this article anyway) Manderscheid is the next town you’ll come to on the *Deutsche Wildstraße*. This is yet another Celtic & Roman settlement town — and has its own Villa Rustica (Roman mansion).

It also has 330km of hiking trails, one of them is the *Eifelsteig* leading from Aachen to Trier. There are the ruins of two castles (the Oberburg and the Niederburg), which is where you’ll go to party at the Castle Fest. The best museum in town is the Museum Maar, which is all about volcanic lakes.

If you haven’t noticed yet, a fun dialect of German is spoken here in the Eifel. You might not notice if you don’t speak German — but it’s a nice piece of trivia anyway ;-)

Next over is Himmerod with its 12th century Abbey. OK, so there aren’t any game parks (*Tierparks* in German), but this abbey was used for almost 700 years before it fell into ruin. In 1922 some monks reconsecrated the abbey and it now houses a museum, book shop, publishing house, art shop, cafe, fishery, and a guesthouse. I wonder if I bring them my manuscript of my book if they would consider publishing it? HMMMMM...

My opinion is that the German Wild Game Route was created because of Gondorf. Yeah, yeah, the village has got 2nd & 3rd century Frankish finds (including bones and artifacts) that are housed at the Wilhelm Hack Museum in [Ludwigshafen](#). But, that doesn’t earn it its spot here.

It’s the [Eifelpark](#), filled with everything from Canadian timberwolves (awww, they’re so cute, but they’re strong enough to do some damage!), emus, lynxes, deer, and birds of prey (think eagles & falcons). Can’t have a wild game route without wild animals now, could we? Besides, it’s a real theme park with amusement park rides and all sorts of other fun stuff.

I’m inclined to forget about the animals when I arrive in [Bitburg](#), a town famous (and I mean FAMOUS) for its beer — which is probably why the *Bitburger Brauerei* is the town’s landmark.

Beer aside, Bitburg has its own castle, a Jupiter Column & remnants of a Roman wall (those guys sure did get around... Roman, roaming — close enough, eh?), and it’s got one of the largest folk festivals in all of Germany.

From there it’s over to Biersdorf am See in the southwestern part of the Eifel. After a quick jaunt to the Burg Rittersdorf, which is now a museum, get out into the nature park for all sorts of natural flora, fauna, and animals.

In Schönecken, in the West Eifel, you'll find a town that's been around since Celtic Times (about 500 B.C.).

It's Castle Clara Costa is one of the largest in the Eifel and most visitors like to stop at the Castle Chapel of St. Anthony — which is where the annual *Burgkapellenfest* is held on the 1st Sunday in July.

However, to see the animals go to the Eifel Zoo (in nearby Lünebach-Pronsfeld), which is open daily from 9am-7pm. It's a natural habitat for many creatures scattered around meadows, streams, and ponds. You'll even find palm trees along the foot paths!

Your last town is an eight in one special because that's how many municipalities are in the town of [Prüm](#). This Carolingian town is another top location to enjoy countless walking and cycling paths through the gorgeous countryside.

You're officially done! You can either head back to Gerolstein where you left off or pick another [scenic route in Germany](#).

If the African Safari is still on your Bucket List, I sure hope you're glad you made room on it for the *Deutsche Wildstrasse*, too.

German Wild Game Route Web Site

Here's a rough overview of the [German Wild Game Route](#).