

The Glass Route -- Oh Look, Shiny Artwork!

How many of us are distracted by... Oh, look, shiny artwork! Yeah, you get my point? There's something special about a beautifully blown piece of glass, isn't there?

I know I love all things crystal. So, if you're like me, then the Glass Route, or Glasstrasse in German, is the perfect [scenic route](#) for you.

The Glass Route is a 250km/155mi long route through [Lower Bavaria](#), the [Upper Palatinate](#), and the [Bavarian Forest](#) showcasing the Bavarian and Bohemian glass craftsmanship tradition.

The Start Of The Glass Route

The route starts and ends in [Passau](#) and kinda zig-zags its way along the border of the Czech Republic (who are also known for their crystal).

Three rivers come together in Passau, and it's where you'll find a Local History Museum, a stunning Baroque Cathedral, and the Passau Glass Museum.

As hard as it is to leave Passau, you've got a bunch of other pretty towns & villages to see. But, as I warned you, the Glass Route is made up of a number of circular routes, and you may decide to just go from south to north. And that's exactly what I'm gonna do... go from south to north, and you pick what interests you most.

[Vilshofen](#) is big in glass making and even has a Fachhochschule (University for Applied Science) for glass technology.

Saldenburg has a forest landscape, a mansion that's now used as a youth hostel (save money anyone?), a pilgrimage church, and cross country skiing trails.

Not only was glass big in the next town of [Waldkirchen](#), so was salt & gold. The Gold Trail Museum is worth a stop too.

Jandelsbrunn is your next town that was once under Austrian rule. It has fishing, 55 hiking trails, an 18-hole golf course, and a lake with water so pure you can drink it!

Grainet, a glass producing town since the 15th century, also has 120km of hiking trails (including themed walking paths), horseback riding, swimming ponds, and carriage rides. How romantic!

Your next stop is the village of Philippsreut, located between the Bavarian & Bohemian Forests. After taking a glass factory tour, why not get out and enjoy the Bavarian air on any one of the cycling and walking paths?

Then in Sankt Oswald-Riedlhütte you MUST see the *Riedlhütte*, one of the oldest glassworks in the Bavarian Forest. They've been making glass here since the year 1450! Kloster St. Oswald is also one of the town's highlights.

Hohenau is a town with not only a glass factory but a brewery, too. Come see glass in a whole new light — filled with a good Bavarian beer ;-)

The glass loving town of [Grafenau \(Lower Bavaria\)](#) trumps with the world's biggest snuff glass weighting more than 30kg!

You'll like Spiegelau andh its old churches, artist studios, and Lead Crystal Works.

[Zwiesel](#), oh Zwiesel... you are a glass & crystal lovers dream! Glassworks, stained glass, cathedral glass — Zwiesel has it all & more! Come see the student's artwork on display at the Trade School; and the glass pyramid in the center of town is totally amazing.

Make a quick sidetrip before you continue on towards the north and pay a visit to [Regen](#) and its awarded *Gläserner Wald* (Glass Forest) with a growing collection of glass sculptures. You may also like to stroll through the *Museum Fressendes Haus* next to it. Be careful though... this museum translates to Eating House! ;-)

Back by the border is Bayerisch Eisenstein, a town of just over a thousand, is filled with all sorts of glass artisans & a glass factory. And Lohberg with its *Glashütte Alte Kirche*, a lovely church displaying glassworks since 1540.

Lam, too, has been making glass for over seven centuries. Like the stained glass at the Pilgrimage Church Maria Hilf and the town's fairytale castle.

Drachselsried might be a newcomer to the art of glass making. But, you'll find quite a few local artists that realize quality is better than quantity.

No major glass production goes on in Arnbruck. But, don't skip out before you've seen the St. Bartholomäus Church and the Lady Chapel.

In [Viechtach](#), you've got a quartz protected nature area, a Nostalgia Museum — remember the good old days ;-) — a Crystal Museum, and the awarded *Gläsernen Scheune* (Glassy Barn). More shiny things!

The next town, or village rather, of Sankt Englmar, is where glass had been produced since the 18th century. While you're here, you might as well enjoy the summer art exhibits and the winter skiing & tobogganing.

Prackenbach is more of an outdoorsy town. Besides the glass paintings in its Parish Church St. Georg, it has over 100km of walking, cycling, and hiking trails; and boating trips, a bird park, miniature golf, and a sauna. Ahhh, I feel refreshed already!

Hiking's big over in Arrach with over 99km of hiking trails. Not as big as glass production and glassblowing which has been done here for over 700 years.

Within the Bohemian Forest, there has been three generations of glass makers in Winklarn. But, that's nowhere near as long as in the town of [Waldmünchen](#), where it's been going on since the 13th century. Although, most of the glass & crystal production on this German/Czech border town was relocated to Neustadt (we'll get to that one shortly).

Almost done!

We're about to get to the last circular part of the Glass Route, which starts in [Oberviechtach](#), a village with lots of local glass artists. It was also big on stained glass production — and now has a Culture Heritage Museum to visit.

Over in Schönsee you've got nature trails and a glass fountain right outside the *Rathaus*. It'll be hard not to go see the works of art on the inside, too.

Plößberg is knee-deep in glass business with its Porcelain & Glass Museum that shows you tried & true crafting techniques. Afterwards, you've got Wildenau Castle and ruins of Burg Liebenstein to see.

[Tirschenreuth](#) is more known as a porcelain town. But, when you've got museums, natural rock formations, a *Stadtmauer*, and a Gothic church, I'm not gonna split hairs.

You'll more than make up for it in [Waldsassen](#), where glass has been in production since 1884. That's a mere drip in time compared to some of the other towns — but, its 12th century Cistercian Abbey is lovely.

[Mitterteich](#)'s glass factory produces about 55-thousand tons of glass a year. That's all fine & dandy, but I personally like the glass sculpture at the Station Square's water fountain instead, while vying over egg fights with my fellows.

Glassblowing has been going on in [Neustadt an der Waldnaab](#) for centuries. You've got two glassworks to see, a Baroque palace, a City Museum, a parish church, AND a gorgeous cobalt blue glass sculpture standing 6 meters high at the New Town Hall.

[Weiden](#), our last stop (for today anyway), is a 750 year old town and glass production has been going on for most of them. The New Town Hall is full of glass objects d'art and the Old Town Hall

has wonderful stained glass mosaics. Need I say more? OK, Weiden also has a great pedestrian zone for shopping and eating!

We're done with the Glass Route — phew! Can you believe it?

That was a wholatta glass & stuff to see and touch. I hope you enjoyed the *Glasstrasse* as much as I did (and still do).

Glass Route Web Site

Here's the official Web site of the [Glass Route](#).