

Grafenau (Lower Bavaria) -- Old Town With A Young Heart

Welcome to Grafenau (Lower Bavaria), the oldest town in the [Bavarian Forest](#)!

Not only does Grafenau carry the “oldest” moniker, it’s also a climatic health resort town. So, breathe easy... you’ll have a jolly grand time here. I mean with all the culture, history, countless outdoor activities, and plenty of festivals throughout the year, how could you not?

Since Grafenau is the oldest community in the forest, it’s only fitting to discuss the town’s history first. The architecture found around town is a wonderful way to experience it. Sankt Oswald Church was built in 1396, the *Rathaus* (Town Hall) in 1845, and the Maria Ascension Church might be built in the intricate and ornamental Baroque design, but it’s alter is all Gothic.

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If you want more churches (always a sure bet for grand artwork), there’s the Martin Luther Church (built 1901) and Holy Trinity Church, built in 1759.

With your history lessons for the day out of the way, come see Grafenau’s museums. While the City Museum looks at the cultural side of the town, the Spa Park has exhibits on 18th/19th century furniture.

The most interesting of Grafenau’s museums is the Snuff Museum. Snuff? Never head of it? It’s a tobacco product that’s not smoked or chewed, it’s sniffed. Visitors to the museum will find a 30kg snuff glass on display — I’m still trying to figure that one out. ;-)

I gather the outdoor types would prefer the town’s golf course, the year-round camp site, the outdoor pool, or hiking along the Bavarian Forest Trail, than being stuck indoors.

All that's left to do in Grafenau is to enjoy one of its festivals or markets. The *Volksfest* comes in July, as well as the *Grüner Sonntag* or "Green Sunday," an Art & Culture Festival.

Beginning of August is the time for the *Salzsäumerfest*, while at the end of August everyone gets ready for the *Rockfest*; and on odd-numbered years Oktoberfest (in early October) is the highlight of the year.

The year ends out with the obligatory Christmas Market on the Marktplatz with everyone sipping on mulled wine and shopping for just the right gift.

It sure seems like Grafenau in [Lower Bavaria](#), the oldest town in the Bavarian Forest, is really young at heart!