

## Hildburghausen -- A Duchess, A Queen, And A Dark Countess

There are few things as definite as the sun rising in the east-setting in the west, death and taxes. And, that is some historic town in Germany is gonna have at least a castle and a church (Protestant in this case) that has overseen centuries of history.

Oh, I'm not discounting the [Thuringian](#) town of Hildburghausen as just your everyday, run-of-the-mill, doesn't have much else to see kind of place. Quite the contrary, really, this place has been the stomping grounds for many a duchess and even Marie von Sassen-Altenberg, the last Queen of Hanover.

It would only be fair to mention its "Dark Countess" legend. It's reported that the reclusive woman living in a nearby castle was Marie Thérèse, first child of King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette (thus having the title Madame Royale); having come to Hildburghausen after surviving prison and not losing her head on the guillotine the French Revolution.

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So, in honor of its aristocratic ties it's only fitting to start at the Schloss Hildburghausen. Although, not much remains of the late 17th century castle much in part to bombing from the Second World War.

Speaking of the 20th century, visit Hildburghausen's old Jewish synagogue that was built in the 19th century. Though it was destroyed in November 1938, it's now a protected historical site. At the Hildburghausen Urban Cemetery you'll find a memorial dedicated to 23 POW's from the Soviet Union.

Atop the 19th century Bismark Tower at the peak of what's known as the *Stadtberg*, you can see the ruins of Castle Straufhain and the Thuringian Forest. Hikers and skiers alike will love the forest. There are plenty of hiking and cross country skiing trails, some with elevations over 1500 feet.

With legends, history, and sports that abound here in this Thuringian city, you might want to make a reservation at one of the few local guesthouses in town (some even include breakfast). They're clean, they're comfortable, and affordable so everyone can enjoy.