

Hirschberg an der Bergstraße -- An Architectural Layer Cake

In northern [Baden-Württemberg](#) almost at the [Hessian](#) border is a tiny town with a super long name, Hirschberg an der Bergstraße. The only thing longer than its name is its history.

Being along the scenic [Bergstrasse](#) route, Hirschberg's history spans back all the way to the Romans when the area was under Roman rule. Remnants of this time can be seen at the Villa Rustica (the name just oozes Roman, doesn't it?). Later on came the Celts, but sadly not much remains of that time.

You have to jump ahead quite a few centuries to meet up with another important time period of Hirschberg's history when the Hirschburg was built in the 12th century. The castle, now in ruins, was here for more than 400 years before it was destroyed.

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In the 14th century the Protestant Church (in the village of Leutershausen) was built; and a century later came the United Evangelical Church. Which was right around the time Leutershausen's beautiful Old Town Hall was built, too.

Wow, it's like an architectural layer cake around here, isn't it?

The 18th century saw the building of the *Schloss der Grafen von Wiser* (what is it with long names around here?), or just simply the Wiser Castle. This is more of an Italian style castle and its farm buildings, orangery, and chapel still stand. Look around the castle park to see sculptures depicting everything from Greek gods to the four seasons.

In the 1860's the Jewish residents of Hirschberg built a synagogue, which wasn't destroyed in

1938 because by then the house of worship was used as a community meeting center. Today, the former synagogue is now a culture and community center.

Speaking of culture, you'll love to be here for the *Gassenkerwe* festival in Großsachsen in August, the *Storchenkerwe* in Leutershausen in September, or the *Straßenfest* (Street Party) in July.

However, Hirschberg's top event is the Odenwald Bike Marathon in September. I'm not sure how they map out the race, but I'd like to think they're using the old stone deer antler landmarks.

You don't have to join the marathon to see them, though, any time you're here in Hirschberg an der Bergstraße is just fine. Besides, any [German town](#) this old isn't going anywhere anytime soon. ;-)