

Ilshofen -- With Footprints From The Staufers

In an area known as the [Swabian-Franconian Forest](#), lies the small town of Ilshofen. Its 54.9 square kilometers is spread out, even separated in part by the neighboring towns of Gerabronn and Wolpertshausen.

Ilshofen's northern tip is split by the Schmerach River, which starts nearby. This is where you'll find the Burgruine Klingenfels, a castle ruin who saw its glory days back in the 12th and 13th century.

The other castle ruin is Burg Leofels, another 13th century castle. This one once belonged to the Staufers (that family that went on to produce some of the biggest names in German history, like Barbarossa and Henry VI), and towers over the town at over 400 meters above sea level.

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And speaking of level, it wasn't a war that leveled the castle; it was struck by lightning back in 1707. Still, the castle's arched windows and stone walls are incredibly striking — making it a wonderful venue for the Summer Theater performances.

It isn't a one culture event town, either, by the way. Ilshofen is a fun loving town with Christmas Concerts and an annual *Töpfermarkt & Hebstfest*. That would be a Pottery Market and Fall Festival (in the middle of September) for the English speakers.

Sorry... the City Festival (*Stadtfest*) is only held on even-numbered years on the 3rd weekend of June.

When you're not shopping til you drop, or pretending your Lady of the Castle Ruins — you can hire

a local tour guide to take you all around the [Hohenloher Ebene](#) for wine tastings and such.

As you can see, much of Ilshofen is best enjoyed outdoors, and there's plenty of activities to keep you busy. You can always try tennis, swimming (May-September), hiking, biking, and carriage & wagon rides. Don't let winter stop you — ice skating around here is always fun.

I think taking a balloon ride is another great way to experience Ilshofen, but then again so is taking one of the marked hiking trails.

Right, didn't I tell ya that this place was in the Swabian-Franconian Forest in the beginning?