

## Kirchen (Sieg) -- Rainy Spa Town With Spectacular Vistas

When warm sunshine and cloudless days are your forte, chances are Kirchen (Sieg) in the Rhineland-Palatinate won't be. GASP! Am I saying there's something wrong with the place? Oh, no, sweet Germany loving friends, I wouldn't dream of it.

I'm only saying that this spa resort town gets lots (and lots) of rain every year. But, don't let some raindrops stop you from getting out to exercise at the Nordic Walking Fitness Park. And don't let it keep you from horseback riding, hiking, and biking either.

I would recommend waiting for some sunny weather if you want to go swimming at one of Kirchen's ponds and lakes, or to see the *Druidstein*, a rock formation standing 450 meters above sea level. Oh, think of the view!

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You can save the real rainy days for castle sightseeing.

Kirchen's landmark is the Freusburg Castle, a Burg built in 913 then again in 1100 (which is pretty much what you see today). Since 1928, Freusburg Castle is one of the most popular youth hostels in all of Germany. Even if you don't stay here, you can still get some spectacular views of the forest area surrounding the castle.

Another building to enjoy that view is when you climb up the *Ottoturm*, an observation tower standing 18 meters above the Kahlberg mountain.

There are two other castles around Kirchen, one is the ruins of Wildenburg (built 1230) and its keep which stands 20 meters high. The other is Schloss Crottof, built around the turn of the 13th/14th

centuries.

Just as any proper medieval & Renaissance town has its castles, it has its churches too. Let's see, which one to see first?

There is the late 17th century *Rote Kapelle* (Red Chapel, which is also called the Anna Chapel), the Evangelical Chapel Freusburg (built 1592), the Gothic Cathedral St. Michael, and the Romanesque Evangelical Luther Church that was built in the 12th century.

Don't stress too much if you can't fit all this in. A trip over to Kirchen's Local History Museum (*Heimatmuseum*) will give you the "Cliff Notes" version of the town's long, long history.

But, if you do have a bit more time come see the town's Mining Museum and the Otto Pfeiffer Museum, filled with works from this late 19th/early 20th century impressionist.

Sounds like Kirchen (Sieg) is indeed befitting for spending either a rainy or sunny afternoon (and more).