

## Kulmbach -- Famous Breweries And A Haunted Castle

Are you one of the many people who cannot think about Germany without also thinking of beer? Do you sometimes conjure up visions of “oompha” band members playing German folk tunes and wearing colorful costumes while walking the streets of a picturesque town? Then you really should visit Kulmbach in Northern [Bavaria](#). :-)

While its beer festival may not be as famous or large as Oktoberfest in [Munich](#), the town is unmatched when it comes to welcoming visitors with entertainment, good food and beer, beer, beer.

The yearly *Bierfest* (Beer Festival) takes place from the last weekend in July through the first weekend in August. Accommodations tend to fill up, so if you want to visit at that time, make plans well in advance.

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There are two breweries in the town... The *Kommonbräu*, which is quite small, and the much larger *Kulmbacher Brauerei*. The latter also houses the Bavarian Brewery Museum. You are warmly welcomed in all three locations and samples of many brews are available.

It is said that Kulmbach brews the “strongest beer in the world,” so tasters should beware. Many who have tried it are reluctant to go back to their regular brand. ;-)

Kulmbach is also one of the stops on the famous [Castle Road](#) scenic drive. This is a 1,000 km stretch of road that covers the width of Germany and crosses the border into the Czech Republic. The route is well marked (look for “Burgenstraße”) with information about palaces, medieval architecture, and castles along the way.

Kulmbach is noted on Castle Road for the Plassenburg Castle. It was originally built during the 12th and 13th centuries, and was reconstructed after being burned by marauders in the 1560's. It is considered an important example of Renaissance architecture because of its ornate courtyard.

The townspeople love to tell the story of the "White Lady," a widowed countess who lived in the Castle. She supposedly killed her two children with a needle inserted in their skulls because she thought they were standing in the way of her marriage to the man she loved. When she was stricken with a guilty conscience, she went to beg the Pope in Rome for mercy. He promised her forgiveness if she would devote her life and fortune to the work of the church.

Some versions of the story say that she was able to found a monastery, others say she died trying, but all the tales agree that she still haunts the Plassenburg Castle. It would be worth a visit there just to see for yourself.