

Lech River -- Alpine Scenery, Lofty Castles

Experts have been arguing for ages about the total length of the Lech River. Some say it's 264 km (164 mi), others say its 248 km. [Bavarian Swabian](#) experts measured it at 256 km.

I don't put too much stock in Bavarian Swabian "experts." If they're arguing about a handful of kilometers, they've gotten too much [beer](#) (oops!).

Not all of the Lech River runs through the most visited German state in the country. It starts in the Vorarlberg in Austria, not coming to Germany until the water crashes down the 39-meter waterfall known as the *Lechfall*.

OK, now the river belongs to Germany. And what a trek it is. The Lech River flows from the *Lechfall* into the [Forggensee](#), passing by the classy town of [Füssen](#) in between.

Sure, you've heard Füssen — it's where you've got stunning views of the [Alps](#), but this is where the Lech meets the [Via Claudia Augusta](#) and the handy work of Ludwig II at [Neuschwanstein Castle](#).

You can see where my pal Ludwig spent his early days over at [Hohenschwangau Castle](#), too.

From here the Lech travels to the [Romantic Road](#) town of [Schongau](#). To heck with romantic... this is a money town. Schongau was the site of a 16th century Mint.

OK, history lovers will probably appreciate Schongau's *Altstadt* (Old Town) and the frescoes at the town's Rococo Church more. ;-)

The Romantic Road takes us down the Lech River to the town of [Landsberg am Lech](#). This town is both famous and infamous, and lies along the border between what is called *Altbayern* (Old Bavaria) and *Schwaben* ([Swabia](#)).

Why do I say Landsberg is infamous? Well, it had an infamous resident, [Adolf Hitler](#), who spent some time in the Landsberg Prison during the early 1920s.

You don't want see a correctional facility — so let's head to see the historic *Altstadt*, the *Altes Rathaus*, the St. John Church, and to chill out on the gravel beach of the Lech.

Shopping is always good, and you can do it twice a week at the Weekly Market on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

The Lech meets the Via Claudia once again as the river flows into the city of [Augsburg](#). This is also where the Lech meets the Wertach, one of its major tributaries.

I really like how Augsburg is a big city (and one of the oldest in Germany), but one-third of it still remains forested. All the better to enjoy the orchids, don't ya think?

It is truly amazing how Germany has managed to harness the power of the Lech, with 24 dams and some 30 power plants — yet still manages to have nature conservation areas like they have around Augsburg.

Don't let the brown water fool you — it's because of the plankton and the minerals in the water. Otherwise, who'd want to raft, canoe, or fish along the way?

I wouldn't. ;-)

The last nature park you'll find along the Lech is the [Altmühltal](#) around Marxheim, where it meets the mighty [Danube](#) on its way to the Black Sea.

Yeah, experts can argue all they want about the length of this magnificent river. I so totally get Bavarian Swabia — and its amazing towns — that a few kilometers won't make a difference to you and me.