

## Lichtenfels -- The Basket Making Capital of Germany

Situated on the River Main, Lichtenfels is the capital of the district of the same name, and a small town that still practices many old craft skills. Meaning, it's an ideal place to visit for those who wish to get somewhat of a feel for traditional rural life in Germany.

You can even attend the local college and learn about basket making — the only place in the country where this skill is still taught. Speaking of which...

In keeping with the rustic traditions of the town, the most important time in the town's year is at the end of September, when basket makers from around the world flock to Lichtenfels to sell their wares, and exchange basket-related knowledge. This is also a great time to visit, and you can watch the basket makers at work and pick up a few tips, or have a go at learning a new skill if it's something you've never tried before.

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Much of the action both during the festivals and during everyday life is centered around the picturesque town square and its most important building, the Lichtenfels Town Hall (*Rathaus*). The surrounding cafes are a great place to sit with a coffee and watch the world go by.

Also held in this area on a regular basis is the local market, where you can pick up some fresh produce and enjoy the local cuisine, and enjoy bartering the traditional rural way.

After gorging yourself on sausage and sauerkraut you may feel the need for a spot of exercise to burn it off. The surrounding *Oberes Maintal* region (Upper Main Valley) offers walking, water sports, cycling and hiking opportunities.

There are also a number of relaxation and thermal salt water spa facilities at nearby Bad Staffelstein, for when it all becomes too much like hard work, and you need a massage to recover.  
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