

Middle Franconia Is Where You Can Expect the Unexpected



[Middle Franconia Map](#)

One of the most noticeable oddities of Germany's Middle Franconia (German: *Mittelfranken*) is its name. Middle Franconia, as many would **not** expect, is located **below** [Lower Franconia](#)!

Develop a clearer sense of the relationships of the three [Franconias](#) by heading for Middle Franconia's section of the [Steigerwald](#) Nature Reserve, where you'll find the Three Franconian Stone. Erected in 1895, this stone sits at the exact spot where the three administrative districts of Upper, Middle, and Lower Franconia meet, and is encircled by a path connecting towns in each.

Both the Steigerwald and [Altmühl Valley](#) Nature Reserves reach into Middle Franconia, a land of rolling hills and mist-enshrouded valleys. A hikers' and rock climbers' paradise, with plenty of caves to please those who prefer to test their courage underground, Middle Franconia has everything for the outdoor enthusiast. (The name Franconia, by the way, is based on an ancient word for "wild," or "courageous.")

Even the great (if slightly tarnished) [Nuremberg](#), where the brilliant works of Albrecht Dürer still shine long after the flames of the [Third Reich](#) have been forever extinguished, gets in on the act with its High Rope Gardens. Here anyone with the fortitude can master the art of climbing without leaving the city.

While the architectural glories of Nuremberg are well-known, this spectacular city has plenty of less-discovered but equally interesting attractions. Just to the city's west is the city of [Fürth](#), now into its second millennium. Fürth enlightens visitors with its Nature Trail for Urban Ecology, beginning in, of all places, an underground railway station!

The agricultural region to the north of Nuremberg, *Knoblauchsland*, is affectionately called “Garlic Land.” It’s far better known, however, for the highly-prized white asparagus which makes its way to Nuremberg’s Hauptmarkt.

Just beyond the vegetable fields of *Knoblauchsland*’s village of Kraftshof is the Irrhain. In this 17th century maze, the Pegnesian Order of Flowers, a poetic society, held their meetings.

The [Upper Franconian](#) town of [Coburg](#) may be justified in boasting of its sausages, but they have nothing on Nuremberg’s *Drei im Weggla*, or three sausages in a roll. This city is so protective of its sausage reputation, in fact, that thanks to a European Union regulation, the name “Nürnberg Roast Sausage” can’t be used outside of the city! ;-)

Another Middle Franconian specialty is the *Aischgrunder Spiegelkarpfen* (a carp found in the [Erlangen-Höchstadt county](#) along the River Aisch). Franconian blue carp with dill sauce is a classic! Where but in Middle Franconia will you find a cycling route dedicated to carp?

The Feuchtwangen Carp Cycle Route runs through the lovely Sulzach Valley, along a tributary of the River Wörnitz. It’s one of a half-dozen Middle Franconian cycling routes along carp ponds. Charlemagne visited [Feuchtwangen](#) in around 800 A.D., and he might have indulged in some carp himself. ;-)

Middle Franconia is where you’ll find the most famous small town in Germany, [Rothenburg ob der Tauber](#). Pass through the ramparts of Rothenburg, on a headland overlooking the River Tauber, and you’ll feel as if you just missed the legendary drinking feat of *Bürgermeister Nusch*.

Don’t worry, because that feat is reenacted every day by copper-plated figures adorning the clocks of the tavern in which it occurred. Climb to the viewing platform in the Town Hall tower for a great view across the red tile roofs of the town to the meadows and woods beyond.

Just to the south of Rothenburg is [Ansbach](#), the glorious royal seat of the Hohenzollerns, where the Baroque era is restored to vibrant life each year with the Ansbach Bach Festival. One of the treats of exploring this city is in finding its concealed Renaissance courtyards.

Bottom line? The only thing you can expect from your visit to Middle Franconia, it seems, is the unexpected!