

Moselle Slate Route -- Moselschiefer-Strasse

Chances are if you're following the Moselle Slate Route, or the *Moselschiefer-Strasse* as it's known in German, you know a thing or two about slate. Even if you don't know anything about slate, you still might enjoy following this 110km route through the [Moselle](#) Region.

For those of you not familiar with slate, it is often used for roofing and floor tiles; and made of either clay or volcanic ash. Because the Moselle Slate Route is located in the [Eifel](#) (in what was once a volcanic area), I guess we can guess what the quarried slate was made from, huh?

Start of the Moselle Slate Route

Monreal – [Mayen](#) – Trimbs – [Polch](#) – Rüber – Münstermaifeld – Lehmen – Löf – Hatzenport – Müden (Mosel) – Treis-Karden – Pommern (Mosel) – Klotten – [Cochem](#) – Landkern – Kaisersesch – Laubach (Eifel) – Eppenberg – Kalenborn – Bermel – Niederelz

The route is circular, so it doesn't matter too much where you start — you'll always wind up back where you started. So, I threw a dart at the map, and figured I start where it landed.

Monreal was where it landed, and considering the Romans were mining slate here a couple thousand years ago, it was as good of a place to start as any. It also lies on the Eifel Slate cycle Track, which is another way to enjoy getting around.

After scoping out the Roman used slate pit, Monreal has half-timbered houses, a Local History Museum, the Löwen und Philippsburg Castle, the Holy Trinity Church, and the Klosterruine Mädburg to visit.

Upon leaving Monreal, head east towards the Katzenberg. Here you'll find a Roman Watchtower using lots of that mined slate the Romans wanted so much.

[Mayen](#) is next on the Moselschiefer-Strasse, and along the volcanic Eifel. What you'll find is 2000 years of mining, making the mining pits the oldest slate quarry in Germany. Most of that long history (with details of places like the nearby *Schiefergrube Bausberg*) is explained pretty darn good at the Eifel Museum, I'd say.

Want to see what's done with all that slate mining? Go to Mayen's Church of St. Sylvester, which not only has a slate roof, but the saint for whom the church's named is the Patron Saint of slate mining.

Here's where the Moselle Slate Route gives you choices. You could bike your way to [Polch](#), or you can drive around which'll take you to Hausen. Either way there's no point traveling on the Moselle Slate Route if you don't see the *Moselschieferbergwerk Margareta* (in Polch-Nettesürsch) — another one of the route's mining pits.

Polch is charming enough with a Heritage Museum, the medieval Abbey St. Matthias, the Parish Church of St. Stefan, and a 19th century synagogue that's now a cultural events center.

By this time someone on the route is going to want to see a castle (OK, it's me), so luckily I've found one over by Münstermaifeld. Actually, I found three. And, oh yeah, I found the *Moselschieferbergwerk* — a mine that goes some 220 meters deep. And the *Jakobskapellechen* has got a slate roof (that they're real proud of, BTW).

I had to put the mine thing in there — this is a slate mining route. Now back to the castles.

[Burg Eltz](#) is said to be haunted, and it's one of only a handful never to have been destroyed in 800+ year existence. Unlike Burg Pymont (about 5km away), which suffered some during the [Thirty Years' War](#) — and is now a City Museum. Burg Bischofstein is another beauty, which almost pales in comparison to the view from its keep.

Heading to Lehmen, we're finally reaching the Moselle River. Advancing to Löff, stopping in Treis-Karden is an absolute must. The Church of St. Castor's museum houses two millennia of the region's history, not to mention it has castle ruins and a Gallo-Roman Temple Complex.

It was the Romans that kicked off this whole slate mining thing, so let's give it up for the Italian guys. ;-)

Klotten is next, which is close to the *Moselschiefer Haus*. Come to think of it, if you skip over Klotten, you'll miss out on seeing the 10th century Burg Coraidelstein, the 19th century Jewish cemetery, a bunch of centuries old churches & chapels, and some half-timbered houses with slate roofs.

Again, this is a slate route — gotta see it where you can.

As for the *Moselschiefer Haus*, it was a center for slate shipping for years. All the quarried slate wasn't just used locally, ya know. You can see it after leaving Klotten and before you arrive in [Cochem](#). Because once you're there, you'll be checking out the Moselle Wine Express.

The Moselle Wine Express runs from April to November, leaving every 30 minutes from the city's Old Bridge. It's a cute (and very inexpensive) way to see the city — going around to the Church of St. Martin, the Monastery, and giving you great views of the castle.

You also get a tour of the surrounding vineyards, and a chance to sample some of the wines grown in the region. Three cheers for Cochem!

My Moselle Slate Route tour ends in the town of Kaisersesch, which is where you can idle away the time on the Slate Pit Walking Way, or check out the slate roof of the 13th century St. Pankratius Church. You'll miss it if you don't ever come in from all the hiking and Nordic Walking trails that you'll find around Kaisersesch.

Another place to stop in town is the old prison, where there are exhibits on the legal system of the Middle Ages. And trust me, if you know anything about medieval life, you know I'm using that term very loosely. ;-)

It's a good thing those slate tiles found on many of the roofs along this scenic route are as loose as that, huh?

Moselle Slate Route Web Site

Here is the official Web site of the [Moselle Slate Route](#).