

Oberkotzau -- More Than Fire Extinguishers

There are two words that stand out in my mind when thinking about the [Upper Franconian](#) town of Oberkotzau: fire extinguishers.

No, they don't make them here, it's nothing as simple as that. It's just it took me by surprise to find them on sale at the town's Spring Market. Yup, here among the tables for beer, people walking their dogs, and stalls selling flowers, are fire extinguishers.

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I know if you come to Oberkotzau something else will probably stick out in your mind, perhaps it might be the *Burgstall Haideck*, a 14th century castle that was destroyed less than 300 years after it was built. Schloss Oberkotzau could be the winner with you, but you'll have to be content looking at it from the outside — it's privately owned.

Drats, hate when that happens. ;-)

Many of you might have the totally romantic stone bridge, found over by the castle, ingrained in your mind's eye. Or, the totally lovely Kirche St. Jakobus could be your "fire extinguisher" memory.

And as this is Upper Franconia, the outdoors will no doubt be forever on your mind. Who couldn't love the Untreusee, an artificial lake where you can do everything from canoeing to surfing, paddle boat to sailing?

Speaking of lakes, Oberkotzau lies along the *Seenweg*, a 70 km trail that's all about the region's lakes.

A really nice route around here is the *Saale-Radweg*, or Saale Cycle Path, as is the *Jean-Paul-Weg* — a hiking trail honoring the Classical/Romantic writer, Jean-Paul Richter. And while not exactly a “scenic route”, the *Bibelweg* is a good walk, too.

It seems as though there are just as many festivals as there are “routes” to follow; and one of the best is the *Wiesenfest* — taking place on odd-numbered years on the first weekend of July. The Wine Festival is a great one in September, whereas August is the month for the annual *Waldfest*. Oktoberfest is truly an October event, the *Maibaumfest* is every May 1st, and Christmas Market happens on the second weekend of Advent.

Have I left any out? Sorry — yeah, I almost left out the *Herbstkirchweih* (3rd weekend of October) that takes place both indoors and out, as well as the *Sommerkirchweih* that’s full of music, dancing, and a “Parade of Dogs.” Hey, if you’re proud of your pooch, make sure you enter them in the annual parade.

All of these things are great, and you’re bound to bring home lots of memories — just like the fire extinguishers are mine. ;-)