

## Ortenberg (Hesse) -- From A Vulcano To The Middle Ages

Extra, extra! Get your really old history here! Read all about it!

Oh, do I have your attention? Cool, because I want to tell you about Ortenberg (Hesse), an alluring town that you'd be crazy to pass up.

First off, Ortenberg has a lot more going on than just historical sites. Like what? Oh, how kind of you to ask; but, I was going to tell you anyway. ;-)

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How about a volcano? Yes, a volcano. Not a fire breathing, active volcano mind you. This one might be extinct, but it has shaped the countryside — which is why you'll find the town on the *Vulkanradweg*, or Volcano Bike Route.

Many millenia after the last we've heard from the volcano, residents of Ortenberg built many of its medieval sites. Oh, and there's quite a bit of them, too, just in case you're wondering.

Castle Ortenberg might be a medieval original with a museum, but the ruins of Burg Lißberg are the show stopper. Not only is this place famous for its *Mittelaltermarkt* (Middle Ages Market) in August. It's also popular with regular old tourists all year round. They come not only to camp, but to see medieval foundations including a Middle Age kitchen.

Other medieval sites in Ortenberg include the late 13th century *Obertor* (Upper Gate), the late 15th century *Altes Rathaus* (Old Town Hall), its *Stadtmauer* (defense fortification wall), its *Gefängnisturm* (Prison Tower), and 14th century St. Mary's Church (which is open daily from 9am-7pm).

I almost left out the Kloster Konradsdorf and nearby monastery ruins. Good thing I went back over my notes. ;-)

While you're out exploring the monasteries (or what's left of them) you can do it either by foot or bicycle. Other hiking and biking trails exist, if you're so inclined to head out further into the countryside.

If you want something that requires less energy, why not play a game of miniature golf or float in the municipal pool (open from May to August).

Shopping is always a great idea; and the Cold Market (last weekend of October) and the Christmas Market (1st weekend of Advent) prove it year after year. And the Flea Market on Saturdays prove it week after week.

Better yet, hit up the town's Jazz club and let picking up a glass of wine be the most strenuous thing you do.

Didn't I tell you that you'd be crazy to pass up Ortenberg?