

## Pottenstein -- Blown Away In Franconian Switzerland

Holy Mackerel, I wasn't expecting all this in the town of Pottenstein. I was so totally blown away, a minute (or two) is needed before I can write this.

All I can say is, if you love castles and [Bavaria](#) (would that be castles in Bavaria?), then look no further than right here. What's even better are the two "scenic routes" that lead you through some of the best countryside in [Franconian Switzerland](#). But, first, the castles.

The most famous would be Burg Pottenstein, once a temporary residence of St. Elisabeth in the 13th century. The castle dates back centuries before its famous resident, sometime in the 11th century. It's changed a bit over the years, but what's there now is really remarkable — and its garden is one of the best places to overlook the countryside.

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As I said, this isn't a one-castle town. Nearby is Burg Gößweinstein, another 11th century medieval castle. It, too, has seen destruction and rebuilding over the last 900 years — and you won't want to miss its Gothic figurines in the Castle Chapel.

Two castle ruins await at Burgruine Kohlstein and Burgruine Hollenberg; the former destroyed during the [Thirty Years' War](#), while the latter during the [Peasants' War](#) in 1525.

Excuse me, there's another castle. Burgruine Leibenfels (built around 1300) saw action during both of those wars — but it was the Thirty Years' War that left it in ruins.

Believe it or not, you can't live by castle hopping alone — so off to the *Teufelshöhle* for you; which is full of stalactites in this 1.5 km cave. If you want to see what's above ground, then head to the

Marktplatz that's got lovely half-timbered houses.

You can pick up the Elisabeth Route from here, which runs along for a few kilometers in honor of the saint who called this place home. There's also a chance to travel along part of the *Jakobsweg*, or [Way of St. James](#), too.

I'd have to say it's best to stick around for a while; you wouldn't want to miss the Christmas Market, the always fun Carnival, or the seven (yes, 7) *Kerwa* events. One of the best cultural events is the *Johannesfeuer*, where everyone gathers around this huge bonfire at the Summer Solstice.

What I found out about Pottenstein is too much to do at one sitting — this is gonna require another visit. I think I see a G-ZINE Trip Tip in the very near future...