

Saar-Hunsrück Nature Park -- Breathtaking Views

Guten tag. Bon jour. Yes, the Saar-Hunsrück Nature Park falls within three countries: Germany (in the [Rhineland-Palatinate](#) & [Saarland](#)), France, and Luxembourg.

What to expect? The Saar-Hunsrück Nature Park is 1,938 square kilometers of deciduous trees (those awesome color-changing ones), rock formations, and the old stomping grounds of Celts and Romans.

Of all the nature parks in Germany, this one has to be one of my favorites. It's got history and castles, it has rivers (the [Saar](#) and the [Moselle](#), for example), and a variety of wildlife including deer, beavers, and wildcats. OK, it's got wild boar, but I'm trying to forget that. ;-)

And what kind of writer would I be if I didn't mention that you'd find a bunch of scenic routes along the way?

I'm not, however, going to worry about the French or Luxembourg portion of the Saar-Hunsrück Nature Park, only Germany. Deal?

Live and learn, I tell you.

Let's start off our trip through the Saar-Hunsrück Nature Park in [Mettlach](#), famous for its *Saarschleife*. This is the sharp curve of the Saar River that you see on many postcards, and the vistas from atop are breathtaking. So go visit Mettlach so you can say, "Been there, done that."

A visit of its three castles (Montclair, Ziegelberg, Saareck) is in order too, as is its spa center to receive some well deserved treatments and relaxation.

Once we're pampered, we're ready to tackle a portion of the *Saar-Hunsrück-Steig* premium trail — leading us to [Losheim am See](#). Its historical *Dampflok* (a steam locomotive; and yes, we can drive with it!) and the *Eisenbahnmuseum* (Railway Museum) are on our itinerary, as is the *Stausee* (a Reservoir, incl. a recreation center) and the 50,000 sqm large *Park der Vierjahreszeiten*, or Park of Four Seasons.

The Saar-Hunsrück Nature Park has its own Information Center, found in the center of the nature park in [Hermeskeil](#).

Besides that, it's got a pedestrian zone with nice small shops and cafes, and the *Rheinland-Pfälzische Feuerwehrmuseum* (Rhineland-Palatinate Fire Department Museum). And speaking of museums, we also need to visit the *Flugausstellung Hermeskeil*, Europe's largest private airplane exhibition.

From here we're on to [Idar-Oberstein](#). While famous for its Church of the Rock (built straight into the cliffside) and its location on the [German Gemstone Route](#), the town falls on the eastern edge of the Saar-Hunsrück Nature Park.

Wait 'til you hear this... [Birkenfeld \(Nahe\)](#), our next town, has at least four cycling routes and trails (*Glockenweg* (Bells Trail), *Mausweg* (Mouse Trail), *Mühlenweg* (Mills Trail), *Rehweg* (Deer Trail)), 60km of hiking trails (what's a nature park for if you're not going to visit it), a Local History Museum, a former medieval monastery, and a castle. Please... you know we have to at least see one on our travels.

I could stay here forever. Too bad I can't — time to move on.

We're going to [Sankt Wendel](#) next, that's mostly famous for its former resident (St. Wendel) and its pilgrimage every October to his gravesite. Pay a visit to the Wendalinus Basilica, the Jewish cemetery, the Heritage Museum, City Museum, and the *Straße der Skulpturen* (Street of Sculptures) before going on to Neunkirchen.

You can't tell today that most of [Neunkirchen \(Saar\)](#) was destroyed in 1945, could you? No, I didn't think so either — but then again, I was enamoured with the architecture of the Stummsche Chapel (1846).

All right, Oktoberfest kind of helped too. The other festivals here in Neunkirchen are the huge *Rosenmontagsumzug* (Rose Monday Parade, right before Ash Wednesday), the City Festival in June, and the Christmas Market.

Wow, I didn't realize how much Neunkirchen had in common with [Saarlouis](#) until right now. Saarlouis has an Oktoberfest, a Christmas Market, and an *Altstadt* (Old Town) Festival.

The city also has a City Museum, and Art Museum, and the 17th century Parish Church of St. Ludwig (or, Louis if you're speaking French) for more intellectual pursuits.

You might start to hear French since that's one of the languages spoken in Luxembourg — which borders our next town of [Merzig](#). Well, the Saar River is the official border.

Merzig is a member town of *Gärten ohne Grenzen* (Gardens Without Borders), has a Heritage Museum, a Railway Museum, and prehistoric grave mounds in its 21,000 hectare forest.

Speaking of forest, the last place I'm heading to is Waldweiler (and its Gothic St. Willibrord Church) in the Schwarzwälder Hochwald (Black Forest High Forest; a strange name, I know), a place of just around 850 people. The *Teufelskopf* (Devil's Head) mountain attracted me — another place for breathtaking vistas over the stunning Saar-Hunsrück Nature Park.

I guess I should now pick the winner of this tour — the *Saarschleife* or the *Teufelskopf*?