

Saar-Palatinate Baroque Route -- The Most Elegant Of Designs

If you're not familiar with Baroque architecture you're missing out on what some would consider the most elegant of designs.

The Baroque period started in Italy back in the late 16th century, and by the time the 18th century came rolling around the sweeping embellishments of gold and marble had found its way through Europe and the New World.

Yes, Germany's not too far from Italy — so you'd think that it wouldn't have taken too long before the country jumped on the Baroque bandwagon. Sadly, not true.

Germany was in the midst of a serious warfare back in the early 17th century, fighting the [Thirty Years' War](#) from 1618-1648. The destruction and devastation left behind in its wake might have curtailed the arrival of the grand Baroque style, but it also gave cause for many of the country's medieval churches and castles to be rebuilt.

So, what did the people do? They rebuilt, and rebuilt them in a grandiose style of the day. The Saar-Palatinate Baroque Route, or *Barockstrasse Saarpfalz* in German, might not be long, but the six towns along its 100km length are smattered with some of the prettiest architecture in the country.

Start of the Saar-Palatinate Baroque Route

Where does the Saar-Palatinate Baroque Route start?

It starts in [Ottweiler](#), where its Baroque Rose Garden is the stuff of legend. Oh, didn't I mention that the Baroque stylings weren't just limited to buildings?

The Witwen Palais is another grand example of the Baroque, as well as the Stengel Church and even Ottweiler's Evangelical Church from the late 15th century (whose Baroque accents were added much later).

What's next?

Welcome to [Homburg](#), where the Baroque Gustavsburg started off as a simple "hunting residence" in the 1750s; and was destroyed only a few decades later during the French Revolution. The ruins of Castle Karlsberg is also a must-see, as well as the Vauban Fortress ruins — which were built by King Louis XIV.

In the historic downtown section, many of the Baroque buildings are the work of one man —

Sebastien Le Pretre de Vauban. Yes, the same guy that designed the Vauban Fortress for the French king.

We're halfway through the Saar-Palatinate Baroque Route when arriving in the town of [Blieskastel](#). It's Castle Church is the highlight; built in 1773 it's a wonder of plaster, stucco, gold and marble. It's also the final resting place for a Count and Countess.

If you got time, stop for lunch at the Orangery within the Baroque Gardens. Plus, much of its Old Town has a number of Baroque monuments and houses, and during Baroque Adventure Weeks (in September) the town offers all sorts of events, tours, and soirees with the Baroque period as the guest of honor.

You can also take culinary tours in Blieskastel, which is also a fun (and delicious) way to enjoy the place.

Our next stop leads us to the magnificent Baroque church in the town of [Sankt Ingbert](#). The St. Ingbert Church was built in 1755, and is considered one of the most special of all the buildings of the era; as is the graceful and charming *Roter Bau*.

Don't leave before you've seen the Holy Cross Chapel (built 1682) that was said to hold the relic of Jesus' Cross.

It's time we leave for [Zweibrücken](#), whose *Tschifflick* (built 1715) was the residence of an exiled Polish aristocratic family. Another graceful Baroque palace is the Residenzschloß, built four years after *Tschifflick*.

The Swedish King approved the Charles Church, so named after him — but it's also called the Luther Church. Whatever its name, it was built in 1707 — in, can you guess, a Baroque style. ;-)

Our expedition of the Saar-Palatinate Baroque Route ends in [Saarbrücken](#). What a beautiful place to end our trip, whose Castle Church has six centuries (from the 13th to 19th centuries) of religious artwork — including Baroque.

That is the reason you've come this far, right?

While some might have called Püttlingen Castle a hunting lodge, it is a gorgeous example of Baroque architecture. It even once belonged to the French, but it's all Germany's now. ;-)

The Baroque doesn't end there yet. I wouldn't have you come all this way to end it just like that.

In order to get the whole Baroque experience, you need to see Saarbrücken's Huguenot Church — built by French Calvinists in the late 16th/early 17th centuries — but it is its Baroque Hall that steals

the show.

You'll also find another Baroque Church on the Ludwigsplatz, and the Basilica of St. John was also built in the style in 1754.

Saarbrücken's Watchmaker's House is one of the youngest of the Baroque buildings on the route — it didn't come along until the 19th century; whereas the Parsonage House (in the village of Heusweiler) was built in the 18th century.

Sounds good, yes? Well, I've saved the best for last — the Palace Square. Or, as some might have heard it referred to as the *Castellum Sarrabrucca*. The palace is a 17th century Renaissance design with 18th century Baroque renovations, but the square itself has been around from 999 A.D. Yeah, that would be dawn of the 11th century.

One thing's for sure, I'm just glad that Germany eventually jumped on the Baroque bandwagon. Otherwise we'd probably be on [some other German scenic route](#) right now. ;-)

Saar-Palatinate Baroque Route Web Site

For a bit better planning and more info, here's the official Web site of the [Saar-Palatinate Baroque Route](#).