

Saar River -- Vineyards In A Postcard Perfect Countryside

Look at any German travel brochure, and chances are you've seen the most famous picture of German landscape ever taken. That's right, that hairpin river turn taken from a high vantage point is, more often than not, none other than the Saar River.

The official length of the Saar is 246 km (153 mi), but no argument over its length here. Only 120 kilometers of it belongs to Germany. The other 126 km belong to France where the Saar starts at two sources, with the Red Saar being at the highest point at 785 meters above sea level.

The Saar doesn't officially arrive in Germany until it gets to [Kleinblittersdorf](#), which is just south of [Saarbrücken](#). The beautifully modern, culturally rich city of Saarbrücken.

Because this is about the river, I have to tell you that if you want a boat ride — this is the place to do it. Ferries and all kinds of small boats like to find themselves in this magnificent city. Mostly coming from the French side of the river, BTW.

I'm guessing that everyone wants to see all its museums (like the Pre & Early History Museum, the Local History Museum, and the Saar Museum); or to walk along the Old Bridge.

As I said this is a cultural city, so no wonder the Saarland State Theater is here, but the St. Ludwig Church is the city's landmark.

Most large vessels will travel the next 100+ kilometers, as the region is quite industrial. It is this industry that earned the Saar River's next town a spot as a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) and on the European Route of Industrial Culture, [Völklingen](#).

Völklingen's claim to fame might've been its Iron Works (called *Völklinger Hütte*), but I like to think that its Huguenot and St. Eligius Churches had something to do with it.

What's with all the "saars" anyway? Is everything named "Saar"?

[Saarlouis](#) is one of the most stunning cities along the Saar River, and it once belonged to both [Prussia](#) and France. Albeit not at the same time.

Saarlouis' claim to fame is the *Großer Markt*, which is where you'll find the 17th century Church of St. Louis, whose *Kirmes* "party" takes place on Good Friday.

I meant, St. Ludwig. This is Germany now. ;-)

The *Altstadt* (with castle, no less) is the setting for the annual Old Town Festival; and there's also a huge Oktoberfest, and Easter & Christmas Market.

The Saar River meets the Rhenish Slate Mountains in the town of [Merzig](#), on a flood plateau. This town is equal distant (50 km) to [Trier](#), Metz in France, and the country of Luxembourg.

No French speaking places for us, so I'll stay right here to see the "Green City" (don't you just love environmentally friendly places?) that hosts a yearly Harbor Festival. Better yet, it's also got a bunch of medieval buildings (including a 12th century Romanesque Church, St. Peters), a Heritage Museum, and a wolf sanctuary.

One of the most photographed places in Germany is right here along the Saar where it bends in a hairpin turn at [Mettlach](#).

The fact that Mettlach is just shy of being 50% forested might have something to do with it. If you hike the *Saar-Hunsrück-Steig* and/or the *Saarland-Rundwanderweg*, you'll see it all for yourself.

Speaking of the Saar-Hunsrück, the [Saar-Hunsrück Nature Park](#) is here in [Saarburg](#). This is also where the Leukbach empties, which is one of the Saar's 28 tributaries.

Forget water for a minute. Saarburg's historic *Altstadt* has a castle and 17th/18th century houses; along with a museum at the Old Mill, and an 11th century church.

Besides, Saarburg hosts a yearly Wine Festival in September, has a summer toboggan track, and offers lots of boat trips along the Saar.

Wait, how could I forget the water — there's a waterfall running through the middle of town. Would it be wrong to stay here for a while, as you go off to Wiltingen?

OK, I'll go. This municipality of just over 1,400 is a real wine making town — mostly the Riesling, great if you like dry Whites.

Nothing like a good bottle of vino to keep me going, so I'm going to make it to [Konz](#) after all. What's so special about Konz? This is where the Saar enriches the [Moselle](#).

Before advancing to the Moselle, I'll be off to the Roman Emperor Villa ruins, and the Old Mill. Even better, you're just one town over from Trier, Germany's oldest city.

Nah, with all the vineyards that I've seen along the banks of the Saar, I'm staying right here. ;-)