

Salem (Baden) -- A Majestic Invitation To Lake Constance

Around the same time the Puritans were making one Salem famous (the Salem Witch Trials in 1692), in what became known as the New World, some monks were already famous in a town called Salem in the Old one.

Really, this Salem's been around a lot longer. People have lived in this part of Germany, that's only a few kilometers from the *Bodensee* (better known by my English speaking friends as [Lake Constance](#)), since the Bronze Age.

One of the greatest places to visit in Salem (Baden) is the Salem Abbey. This gigantic complex was founded here way back in the 1130's and prospered for centuries. A fire ravaged the medieval complex in the 1690's (see, right around the same time), and the town was rebuilt in the Baroque style that was popular of the time around three squares.

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The castle of the Abbey was even used by Württemberg Grand Dukes and its library once housed over 30,000 books. Since part of the castle is now a boarding school, it's now filled with different sorts of books. It's too bad that what was once one of the wealthiest abbeys in all of Germany closed its doors in the very early 19th century.

Oh, maybe not, since now you don't have to join a religious order to see it all. No vocation is necessary to see the incredibly ornate Gothic church known as the Salem Münster, either.

Also within Salem and the complex of the Abbey you'll find 700 years worth of art, an old distillery, and a richly decorated chapel to St. Stefan.

From reading all this, you'd think that Salem is all religious sites and art. But, that's not the case. Summer brings on the *Schlossseefest*, an outdoor festival with lots of music and fireworks. And, since Salem sits within a heavily forested area of [Baden](#) means the walking trails are nice and shaded.

Now this Salem is famous for more than just its Abbey and not known at all for witch trials. I'd say that was a good thing and believe you'll think so, too.