

Sauerland -- Cheese In The Caves, Culture In The Forest

Are you longing for a vacation far from the madding crowd, where you can bask in the glories of nature and immerse yourself the magic of tranquil villages complete with ancient castles and abbeys? You won't find a better choice than a stay in Germany's Slate Mountain region of Sauerland.

Sauerland owes its existence to its abundant natural resources: the rich ores beneath its soil; the dense forests which that soil nourishes; and the hundreds of springs which today keep its reservoirs brimming. The pure spring water of its springs is responsible for the exceptional quality of Sauerland beer. It will taste even better after you've spent a day exploring the region's outdoor attractions. Outdoor attractions? Yup, this region is also made for the outdoor enthusiast, whether you're a cyclist, hiker, climber, or water lover.

If you're a cyclist you'll be thrilled to learn about the whopping 1,700 km (1050 mi) and 38 routes at the Bike Arena Sauerland, where you can be challenged regardless of your fitness level. Cycling here will take you through the best of its undulating hills, soaring peaks, serene valleys, and ancient woodlands.

Sauerland's spring water, over the eons, has created an astonishing network of dripstone caverns. The limestone formations in the Atta cave at [Attendorn](#) are among the most spectacular in all of Germany. One highlight of your trip to Attendorn will be sampling the cheese which is ripened there in the Atta Cave (the only cave-ripened cheese in all of Germany!). So, why not wash it down with some of that amazing Sauerland beer? ;-)

If hiking and modern art are your shared passions, you'll love the *Waldskulpturenweg* (Woodland Sculpture Trail), a 23km (14 mi) stretch which extends over the ridge of the [Rothaar Mountains](#) between [Schmallenberg](#) and [Bad Berleburg](#). Along the way you'll pass eleven resting points where you can reflect on very different, but equally inspiring pieces of contemporary art. Schmallenberg also has a delightful Doll Museum.

Also in southeastern Sauerland is the high altitude resort at Winterberg, with its world-class bobsled and toboggan runs. The town of Winterberg has now become a year-round vacation spot, with a train providing 30-minute tours of its Old Town and 90-minute tours of the sports venues in the mountains. Try your luck on the summer toboggan run!

Summer means water sports, and there's no better place to enjoy the water in all of Sauerland than at its largest reservoir, the *Biggetalsperre*, located about halfway between Winterberg and the International Folk Festival city of [Olpe](#). This is the third largest reservoir in Germany, formed by one of the ten dams in the [Ebbegebirge Nature Park](#).

No matter where you head in Sauerland, you'll never be far from historic towns like [Arnsberg](#) or

[Lüdenscheid](#) — with streets lined with half timbered houses, and the centers on which contain ancient marketplaces, town halls, and churches holding priceless woodcarvings.

If you want something completely different, however, (especially if the kids came along) spend an afternoon striding down the streets of the Old West or digging for gold in the Devil's Mine of [Fort Fun](#) in [Bestwig-Wasserfall](#).

Tip: Finish your day of Sauerland sightseeing with a meal of the region's specialty, *Potthucke*. This is delicious baked pudding of potatoes, eggs, and milk, sliced and fried to serve with bacon and a spread of pork sausage. Accompanied by some of that marvelous Sauerland cheese and beer, it will have you begging for more! ;-)