

Schwetzingen -- Famed Asparagus With A Side Of Culture

Schwetzingen grows some of the nation's most delicious asparagus, which may be reason enough to pay a visit to this quaint town west of [Heidelberg](#). But if you have an appetite for architecture and culture as well as cuisine, you have also come to the right place.

Start your tour here at the early-18th-century [Schwetzingen Castle](#), where you can wander one of the most beautiful gardens in all of Europe. It presents a unique combination of French and English landscaping, recommended to UNESCO as a World Cultural Site.

The castle itself is a sprawling palace built by Elector Carl Theodor (1724-1799) upon the grounds of an ancient hunting lodge. You will marvel at its stone-lined circular halls and theaters, along with its extensive water features, lovely mosque, pavilions and sculptures.

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It may come as no surprise that Amadeus Mozart himself performed within these walls in 1763 and was inspired by the castle's beauty. The noted French philosopher/author Voltaire also walked these spectacular grounds.

Following your castle tour, head on over to *Schlossplatz* (Palace Square), flanked by sophisticated boutiques, cafés and restaurants, for some shopping and a glass of Rhine Valley as well as Baden wine. If your timing is right, you may be able to enjoy a lively, open-air party, such as the Christmas Market, summer's Fiesta Mexicana, *Schlossplatzfest*, the annual Mozart Festival in fall, or the world's biggest (radio) festival for classical music during two months in spring, the *Schwetzingen Festspiele*.

Notice how the town's many palm trees give Schwetzingen an almost Mediterranean feel. In

summer, you can enjoy swimming, as the outdoor facilities open up, or tennis, golf, cycling and jogging to your heart's content.

Music will never be far from your ears during your stay, either. Concerts and other musical performances take place frequently at the castle and the Palace Square. You can enjoy a variety of art exhibitions year-round, too.

But whatever you do, don't miss the asparagus. Really! It's such a specialty of Schwetzingen cuisine, there's even an annual celebration, *Spargelfest*, held here one Saturday each May.