

## Sondershausen -- A Hidden Thuringian Gem, Castle Included

Sondershausen, once the capital of the principality of Schwarzberg, is now within the German State of [Thuringia](#). In what was once a mining town in East Germany, it doesn't seem to be too well-known for tourists, but is quite appealing nonetheless, situated within vast forests and a picture-perfect countryside.

The main attraction is the Schloss Sondershausen that sits right in the middle of town and was once the home of the princes of Schwarzberg-Sondershausen from the 17th century. It's now a museum open to the public who can see the grand rooms, which are richly decorated and furnished. A notable room is the Am Wendelstein featuring stuccos from the 17th century.

The castle gardens are great for walking around while discussing this impressive castle built in the 16th century or the golden carriage made in France, or perhaps the natural history collection.

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For something really different, take a 2 1/2 hour tour of the *Erlebnisbergwerk*, a former potash (potassium carbonate) mine. You'll don a yellow hard-hat and blue overcoat and go some 2300 feet below the surface of the Earth and explore the mine that was opened in 1893.

The market square is the main meeting place in Sondershausen. Besides finding tons of cafes (where they drink their coffee really strong), bars, and restaurants, you'll find plenty of really old buildings to look at. Just like the Trinity Church (*Trinitatiskirche*), one of the oldest buildings in Sondershausen, dating back to the middle of the 13th century.

Sondershausen is a welcoming place where you'll find great food, great people and an all around good time. Do yourself a favor and rent a bicycle to ride around this really remarkable town before

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