

## Steigerwald -- Charming Towns, Fun Festivals, Stunning Scenery

Time to put your science hats on, my friends. How many of you know that a coniferous tree gives off its seeds in cones; and deciduous trees are the ones that change colors?

Guess what? Does it matter? No, since you'll find both in the Steigerwald Nature Park. But just think of how colorful it'll be in the Fall. ;-)

About half of this 1280 square kilometer forest and nature park lies within the [Middle Franconia](#) region (with almost half of the forest region protected), but does meet up at what's called the *Dreifrankenstein*.

No, it isn't some mythological creature — it's boundary stone where [Lower](#), Middle, and [Upper Franconia](#) meet. If you're wanting the towns, that'll be [Schlüsselfeld](#), Burghaslach, and Geiselwind.

The Steigerwald even has its own [scenic route](#), the *Steigerwald-Höhenstraße* that runs for 70 kilometers from [Eltmann](#) to [Neustadt an der Aisch](#).

I'll be heading to both of these towns on my trip around the Steigerwald, but I'm not following the Steigerwald-Höhenstraße directly.

No need, the Steigerwald doesn't have distinct borders — but a general guideline is the [Main River](#) that runs along the north and western section, while the Regnitz is to the east, and the Aisch runs along the south.

That's where I'm headed first, the south, at the town of [Bad Windsheim](#) to meet up with my 8 meter tall buddy, Roland. He overlooks this spa town with its Imperial City museum, its 10th century burial sites, and likes to party at the *Altstadtfest* on the first weekend of July.

No time for a massage, I'm heading towards the medieval town of Neustadt an der Aisch. Sure walking along its *Stadtmauer* and going to see its Old and New Castle sounds great, and the German/Italian Wine Festival is even better.

A small town awaits you in Scheinfeld, even though it has thirteen districts. Once you've seen the Kloster Schwarzenberg and the Schwazenberg Palace, you're free to head to [Höchstadt an der Aisch](#).

Höchstadt is just as awesome underground as it is above it. On the sunlit side of town are all sorts of fishing lakes, art festivals, a castle festival, a folk music festival, a medieval market, a medieval tower, and the Spixmuseum with the works of the German scientist Johann von Spix.

Höchstadt's underbelly includes two kilometers of cellar trails — and that's just what you can see. Wow.

We've finally reached Eltmann, which would be the first stop along the *Steigerwald-Höhenstraße*. Sure, with the Eltmann Beer Days you might want to make this your first stop — but I say no. This way there's no having to rush off, and not finishing your beer. ;-)

Eltmann is an old medieval town, seen by its *Wallburgturm* (13th century). The Baroque period painted the town as well, which you can see if you visit the Pilgrimage Church (1751).

A stop to the Local History & Craft Museum does a lot in explaining the golden days of Eltmann, and the annual Music Festival does a lot for our soul.

Eltmann might have its Beer Days, but [Bamberg](#)'s got all the breweries and taverns (curious since the area of the Steigerwald is known for its vineyards). It also has the Michaelsberg Abbey and a 13th century cathedral too.

As you leave Bamberg, head towards the Bamberg Gate in [Haßfurt](#). Right along the Marktplatz is the Parish Church of St. Kilian, but it's the Knights Chapel of St. Mary (1431) that you absolutely must see.

Along the right bank of the Main River is [Schweinfurt](#), a town heavily damaged during [World War II](#). You'd never guess it today, the Gothic Rathaus, St. Johann church, *Stadtmauer* and St. Salvator Church are just perfect.

Which is why I've chosen to end my Steigerwald journey right here — right up until the last leaf changes color deciduous trees. Good thing there's a campground for me to stay at. ;-)