

Thale -- From The Witches' Dance Floor To Heaven

There are places in Germany that are pretty famous because of their history, just as well as some are infamous. Then there are places that are well-known thanks to its natural beauty. Thale is famous for it all.

Thale lies along the beautiful [Harz Mountains](#), a place that was once home to the Monastery Wendhusen. It's the oldest of its kind in all of [Saxony-Anhalt](#) coming from the 7th/8th century (A.D) Carolingian days and remained open for 800 years until it was closed around 1540. The beautiful 18th century Evangelical Church of St. Andrea's overlooks the rustic ruins.

But, one of the most beautiful of all the churches is the St. Petrikerche. From the looks of it you'd never guess this charming church was only built at the turn of the 20th century.

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Follow up with a visit to the *Hüttenmuseum*, learning about iron smelting. There's also an old windmill that will make a great snapshot and don't forget to stop by the *Hotel Zehnpfund* that was once the largest summer hotel in the entire country.

Inasmuch as there is beauty with Thale's buildings, you'd be hard pressed to find anything more beautiful than the outlying countryside. The town starts what is known as the Bodetal, a seriously protected valley region. For that reason alone, hiking, biking, rafting, or anything else off the beaten path is not allowed. Don't worry about missing anything, because the well-traveled paths wind and twist along the ravine for kilometers — shaded by old oak and sycamore trees.

At the Bode Gorge (think green craggy granite mountainsides) is the famous *Hexentanzplatz*, or Witches' Dance Floor, with its outdoor theater. When you cross by cable car you'll think this

plateau was created straight from the heavens and was once used by an old Saxon cult and is decorated with both witch and devil statues.

It really wouldn't matter if the whole place was decorated with statues of the tooth fairy or Santa Claus, this place is nothing short of gorgeous.