

Upper Swabian Baroque Route -- Stunning Religious Architecture

When you think of Europe as a whole the most often thought about time period is often the Middle Ages. A period of history often romanticized despite years of war, plague, witch hunts, and religious prosecution.

Then along came the Baroque period, a new beginning of art, culture, and architecture starting around the late 16th century ending about two centuries later.

Along the 500km long Upper Swabian Baroque Route, or *Oberschwäbische Barockstrasse*, from [Ulm](#) to [Lake Constance](#), you'll see the best of this architectural style. A style that was encouraged by the Catholic Church, a style that inspired such Baroque composers as Handel, Vivaldi, and none other than Johann Sebastian Bach.

The Start Of The Upper Swabian Baroque Route

The Upper Swabian Baroque Route is divided between the Main and the spur routes known as the Western, Southern, and Eastern Routes. We'll start at Ulm, the beginning of the Main Route, if you don't mind. Follow this route to see the very best of churches, to castles, and everything in between.

Ulm, birthplace of Albert Einstein. I know he was born long after the Baroque period — but, young Albert grew up in the vicinity of Ulm's Botanical Garden, the half-timbered crooked house, and the tallest Gothic spires (161 meters) in the world.

Following along your next biggest town on the Upper Swabian Baroque Route is [Blaubeuren](#), where you'll meet up with the [German Framework Road](#). The Kloster Blaubeuren is a grand example of Baroque stylings — while the rest of the town has plenty of framework houses and a Prehistoric Museum.

[Erbach \(Donau\)](#) is your next town with not one, but two Baroque churches. The older Sts. Cosmas & Danian was built in 1711 and St. Martin fifty-six years later. If you like castles, there is the Renaissance Schloss Erbach.

Despite being so TOTALLY German, Oberdischingen has many houses in the French Baroque style and a Baroque Catholic Church known as the Swabian Pantheon. French Baroque, Italian Baroque, doesn't matter — you'll know you're in Germany during Oberdischingen's Oktoberfest. Prost!

Not all the town on the Upper Swabian Baroque Route are filled to the brim in the sightseeing

department. But, if you don't stop — you might find something that tickles your fancy.

Gamerschwang has both a castle and church, earning it a stop on this route. As well as the Bar Wendelin Chapel (built 1696) in Nasgenstadt.

[Ehingen](#) has quite a bit to see, so plan accordingly. A lot of activity takes place on the Ehinger Square, where you'll find the *Rathaus* (Town Hall) and St. Blaise Church. There's also the Baroque Castle Mochental, a Fashion Museum, a Roman Museum, and a Brewery Museum.

Over in [Riedlingen](#), you want to see the village of Zell. Not only will you find the elaborate Baroque Castle Zwiefaltendorf, but also a Local History Museum, and a hanging garden. But, you'll also meet up again with the Framework Road, meaning there are lots of framework houses to boot.

Yes, I know the Castle Zwiefaltendorf is technically in Riedlingen; and not in the next town of Zwiefalten. Here is the Cathedral of Our Lady, a former Abbey that's now a center for psychiatry, and the Wimsener Cave for anyone brave enough to explore it.

Again we're getting into technicalities. The next town is Dürrenwaldstetten, but that's a village in the town of Langenenslingen. Whatever you call it, there are castle ruins (three to be exact), the Baroque Stauffenberg House (built 1728), and the extravagant Baroque St. Jacob Church.

Oh, we're back to Albert Einstein again in Bad Buchau. Albert's parents lived here in this mud & mineral spa town before he was born. Treat yourself to some spa services and a visit to the Stone Age Museum before moving on to Ingoldingen-Muttensweiler and its Baroque Parish Church.

Oh, cheers, another "Bad" town! [Bad Schussenried](#) has more than just spas. It has a beer stein museum, Pilgrimage Museum, Carriage Museum, and an outdoor "museum" of Swabian peasant houses, complete with thatched roofs. The Gate House at the monastery is your look into Baroque architecture, as well as the Library Hall with its elaborate carvings and paintings.

[Aulendorf](#) is a great spa resort town — perhaps why it's on the [Swabian Spa Route](#). Aulendorf's castle is a museum and its Catholic St. Martin Church has found a way to tastefully integrate architecture from the Gothic to Classicism periods all under one roof.

Ebenweiler might be on the Upper Swabian Baroque Route, but its the 15,000 year old lake that you'll remember the most. Take a dip, then head to Reute where you'll see the Baroque frescoes and gallery at the Klosterberg.

[Bad Waldsee](#) is downright awesome! Its pedestrian zone is a fantastic place to shop & eat, its City Lake a great place to swim, and its Church Treasury Museum a fine place to sightsee. Who care that the *Rathaus* and *Gasthof Zum Hirschen* aren't Baroque — they're timber framed buildings, and they're gorgeous!

Most visitors to Baidt come to see the Baroque former Abbey Church of St. John the Baptist. The rest of them come for the annual Wine Festival!

In [Weingarten](#) you'll see one of the largest Baroque basilicas north of the [Alps](#) — the Basilica of St. Martin, which is also the town's landmark. You've also got castle ruins and a City Museum, too.

Over in [Ravensburg](#) (and its villages) you've got quite a bit to see. In Ravensburg proper, there's the church of St. Jodok, the St. Christina Church, a Buddhist Center, and its City Tower & Gates.

In Ravensburg's village of Obereschach there's a local history museum, Baroque St. John the Baptist, and the medieval Monastery Weissenau (built 1145). Gornhofen has the St. Walburga Church, and in Weissenau there's the Baroque Church Sts. Peter & Paul.

Your next town on the Upper Swabian Baroque Route is just as busy as the one before. [Markdorf](#) has a Bishop's Castle, a 13th century Hexenturm, and a late 17th century Baroque Hospital of Sts. Peter & Paul.

Oh grand, you've reached [Lake Constance](#) when you arrive in [Friedrichshafen](#). The Baroque Church of St. Nicholas earned it its right to be on the Upper Swabian Baroque Route — but treat yourself to a boat ride first!

Another town on the Bodensee is Eriskirch, where the Siberian Iris in the town's Nature Center will be the most memorable part of your visit here.

In [Langenargen](#), you've still got Lake Constance — as well as a marina, its landmark Castle Montfort, and the Baroque St. Martin Church (1718). If you're here in the summer, stay for the many summer concerts that are always going on.

It might be easy to forget that you're on the Upper Swabian Baroque Route when you arrive in [Tettngang](#). Why? Because of the Hops Museum, that looks at 150 years of hops growing in the region. Oh, do I have to spell it out? H-O-P-S equals beer! Beer. Baroque. Easy to get confused — now, where'd I put my pint?

Seriously, Tettngang is a Baroque lovers dream. There's the New Palace, the Loreto Chapel, the St. Anne's Chapel; and on the 1st weekend of July there's the Montfort Festival (yes, more beer!).

Over in [Wangen im Allgäu](#), there are the ruins of Neuravensburg, a local history museum, the St. Martin Church, and the town's landmark, the *Ravensburger Tor*. If you only get to see one thing — make it the *Rathaus*, originally built at the turn of the 15th/16th century, then rebuilt in the Baroque style in 1719.

Would you believe there are still plenty of towns left on the Upper Swabian Baroque Route?

[Argenbühl](#) is next up with a local history museum, Ratzenried Castle, and a Baroque Church.

Over in [Isny im Allgäu](#) there's a winter sports museum, historic *Rathaus*, Art Hall in the Palace, and original medieval church of Sts. James & George was rebuilt in the lavish Baroque style.

[Kißlegg](#) started as a Roman village. Now it's a haven for hikers and cyclists with its trails and paths. History and culture lovers will appreciate the Old Castle with its Baroque interior and the New Castle is Baroque as well.

Wolfegg also has a castle and its St. Catherine Church is considered to be one of the most beautiful Baroque churches in all of Germany.

Bergatreute has two Baroque churches to offer travelers. The Parish & Pilgrimage church of Sts. Philip & James was built in 1730 and the St. Georg Chapel in 1718.

Perhaps you've heard of [Bad Wurzach](#)? Oh sure, you've got the Baroque Schloss Bad Wurzach (which was used a WWII POW camp for French officers); but, it once had a leper colony and is now famous for its Alpaca Farm.

Over in Rot an der Rot, you've got the Monastery Church of St. Verena to see — and the cemetery church of St. Johann (built 1737).

[Ochsenhausen](#) has an Imperial Abbey. Think of a grandiose Abbey Church on steroids. ;-) It started out as a Romanesque Church, then took on Gothic features, and then redone in a Baroque style.

Ummendorf also has a Baroque church. St. John might have been built in 1805 — but its Madonna dates to 1450. The town also has a castle with a Baroque church.

[Biberach an der Riß](#) does deserve its place on the Upper Swabian Baroque Route, but the half-timbered houses on the Marktplatz (including the *Rathaus* built in 1503) steal the show. There's also a Film & Cinema Museum and a Russian Cemetery, showing that Biberach has more to it than just its architecture.

Gutzenzell-Hürbel also has an Imperial Abbey. But, what it's most famous for is the Baroque Nativity scene that decorates the town from Christmas to Candlemas (February 2).

[Laupheim](#) is a pretty active town with quite a bit to see & do. Yes, it has a Baroque church (Sts. Peter & Paul), a Baroque Rathaus & Granery (built 1778), and the Kleinlauheim — once a castle, it's now a police station and art gallery. When you've had your fill of this world, look to the heavens at Laupenheim's Planetarium.

There's yet another Imperial Abbey over in Maselheim. The abbey also has its own pond and mill — they make a great photo-op! There's also a Railway Museum and the Burg Schlossberg to see, too.

Your next town is Illerkirchberg. Well, more specifically Oberkirchberg and Unterkirchberg with their Baroque churches.

The only place left on the Upper Swabian Baroque Route is the Monastery Wiblingen, just outside the town of Ulm (again!). This was once a medieval abbey (built 1093) and visited by Pope John Paul II. It was famous before that, for housing a Holy Cross relic — but its flamboyant, ostentatious, ornate Library Hall and Pulpit are truly what this route is all about.

Aren't you glad you came see the Upper Swabian Baroque Route?

Upper Swabian Baroque Route Web Site

Here is an official site about the [Upper Swabian Baroque Route](#).