

The Way Of St. James -- Jakobsweg

The Way Of St. James pilgrimage route a.k.a. St. James' Way, or *Jakobsweg* in German, poses a bit of a problem. Every pilgrimage to a sacred destination starts pretty much from your front door.

So, what do you do when you find yourself visiting in [Germany](#), wanting to walk or bicycle along this most famous pilgrimage route? Where do you start? Where do you go? How do I get to Santiago de Compostela in Spain when I'm out in the middle of "somewhere" in Germany?

Isn't it a good thing I'm here to help? :-)

For a comprehensive overview, visit this German Web site listing [the Ways of St. James through Germany](#).

Thousands of travelers from the east of Europe had to travel through Germany to reach Spain. There are many "feeder" routes heading west through the country to get you towards France and Switzerland, then on to your final stop.

Unlike some other [scenic routes in Germany](#), the St. James' Way doesn't follow one single but several routes taken by St. James. Legend tells that his remains were brought by ship and buried in Northern Spain — so, this route more follows the "followers."

One of the most famous (and beautiful) routes travels through [South Germany](#), through [Swabia](#) in [Bavaria](#), ending at [Lake Constance](#) at the Swiss border (then continuing on through Austria, Swiss, and France).

Along this portion of the Way of St. James, you'll find abbeys, monasteries, churches, castles, festivals, gorgeous natural countryside, other scenic routes, and the friendliest people. Jakobus, as he's also called in German, would have been proud to travel along such a route; and you're going to love it.

Most pilgrims traveling this route get a “pilgrim pass,” kind of like a passport that many churches “stamp” along the way. So, grab yours and let’s go! :-)

Way Of St. James — Part 29 — Augsburg Trail

The Swabian portion of the St. James’ Way starts in Oettingen. Many pilgrims and visitors come to see its Local History Museum, Brewery Museum (this is Bavaria — don’t be shocked), the St. Sebastian Church (a pilgrimage church) and the St. Jacob Church. Again, James in German is Jakob or Jakobus, so expect many churches dedicated to the saint.

When you arrive in Harburg the St. James’ Way meets up with the [Romantic Road](#). A little history, a little romance, sounds like a good start, no?

Harburg is chocked full of history with its 11th century Castle Harburg. Too bad the castle only holds its Castle Celebration only every other year. Get lots of snapshots along the Stone Bridge, then go see Harburg’s St. Barbara Church and its 18th century synagogue. You can only get pictures of the old synagogue from the outside — it’s now someone’s house.

Your next town of [Donauwörth](#) is also on the Romantic Road. In addition to having its own set of castle ruins (Burg zu Wörth), it has the *Kloster Heilig Kreuz* (Monastery Holy Cross), a beautiful medieval city gate called the *Riedertor*, and its Munster Church’s bells play *Salve Regina* (you’ll find the church on the Reichstraße). Besides, it also has one of the largest all-organic Farmer’s Markets in Germany. Did I forget to mention that you’ll also find great food along this part of the *Jakobsweg*?

Leaving Donauwörth will be hard, but you got to keep trekking on! When you arrive in Biberbach make sure you get your “passport” stamped at the Sts. Jakobus & Laurentius & Holy Cross Pilgrimage Church. Did you know that Mozart himself played at this church as a kid? Pretty cool, huh?

[Augsburg](#), your next halt, is going to be huge compared to tiny Biberbach; and there’s a lot to see. You might want to give yourself a few days here before deciding which part of the route you want to take since the St. James Way splits after Augsburg.

The town’s landmark is its Church of St. Peter, and many travelers like to see the St. Jacob Evangelical Church and the Fuggerei Cathedral, as well.

Don’t leave before visiting the Jewish Culture Museum, the Roman reliefs, and the Crystal Palace.

The latter isn't a palace at all .. it's a museum & school.

A hot air balloon ride can be a real treat, too. So if you get the chance to do it, take it!

Choices. Choices. Which way to go?

Way Of St. James — Part 29a

After leaving Augsburg you can head toward Reinhartshofen, a village of only 350 people and part of the town of [Großaitingen](#). Naturally, a visit to its church dedicated to St. Jacob is in order.

Then move on to Türkheim with its eight (yes, 8) churches. Its *Kleines Schloss* (Little Castle) was built in 1695. It now is a cafe featuring many art exhibits. The *Grosses Schloss* (you guessed it, Big Castle) is more than a hundred years older housing the New Town Hall and Local History Museum; and its Baroque Castle Garden are just stunning. Since you haven't left Bavaria yet, you may want to enjoy a beer on the Hauptstraße with lots of shops and restaurants.

[Bad Wörishofen](#) is pretty special and meets up with the [Swabian Spa Route](#). Kneipp got his start here, so after walking or biking your way this far, enjoy a spa treatment or a round on one of the 2 18-hole golf courses. Don't sneak out before visiting Kloster Wörishofen, though, and the early 16th century St. Justina Church.

Way Of St. James — Part 29b

The other route you can follow takes you to picturesque places like Kirchheim in Schwaben. Its ancient *Fuggerschloss* from the 16th century and the unique artwork in its *Zedernsaal* is just amazing. Plus, I just love the numerous churches and chapels in this town, particularly the Maria Hilf pilgrimage church (also from the 16th century). Remember to capture photos of the historical *Rathaus* and its lovely yellow facade.

You'll also love the next stop, [Memmingen](#). Here you'll find a 15th century Carthusian Monastery and an 18th century Benedictine Monastery as well as an informative Farmhouse Museum with exhibits on rural life in these parts.

Way Of St. James — The Remainder Of Path 29

Both sections of the 29th portion of the *Jakobsweg* meet up in [Bad Grönenbach](#) and up with the Swabian Spa Route AND the [Upper Swabian Baroque Route](#). In addition to all the spa services, most people come to see the 12th century Church of Sts. Philippus & Jakobus as well as the ruins of the 11th century Castle Rothstein.

Now, I know you've walked and bicycled more than half of this 165km route, but when you get to Buchenberg you're going to want to do some more. There are countless walking paths and cycling trails through this part of Swabia; and the tourist information center will help you every step of the way. For some fun play a game of miniature golf or swim in the town's municipal swimming pool. Oh, and it's FREE! :-)

If you want to time your trip along the Way of St. James right, you might want to do it towards the end of August, when the Cheese and Gourmet Festival takes place in gorgeous [Lindenberg im Allgäu](#). Besides filling your head & heart with history (like a visit to Church of Sts. Peter & Paul will do), you can fill your tummy with all sorts of delicious goodies from all over Germany, Switzerland, and other parts of Europe.

Now that you're well-fed, you're off towards [Lindau am Bodensee](#), an island in Lake Constance near the Austrian and Swiss borders. Lindau was once part of the [Holy Roman Empire](#), the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, and it's the start (or end) of the [German Alpine Road](#). The town is connected to the mainland by rail and bridge, making getting back and forth quite easy.

While you're here check out the gorgeous harbor, the 12th century St. Stephen Church, the *Münster Unserer Lieben Frau* (a former monastery church), its historic *Rathaus* (Town Hall), and the *Magenturm* (Stomach Tower, oops!).

Also on the Bodensee (and STILL on the Way of St. James) is Nonnenhorn, an air health resort municipality. You can bike to a beat of a different drummer and try following along the Bodensee Cycle Track for a while or try Nordic Walking. You might as well enjoy Lake Constance while you're at it with sailing, windsurfing, or even better... charter a yacht!

The Way Of St. James — Part 30 — Munich Trail

Another interesting part of the Jakobsweg is when you start off in Munich and decide to travel along the 30th part of the route, the so-called Munich Trail.

Lechbruck am See is one of the towns you'll come across here — one with loads of cycle paths and walking trails. For a bit of fun, try the Alpine Slide, where you come careening down the hillside on a fiberglass track on a "sled." Oh yeah, it's FUN and not for the faint of heart!

All right, now that I got all that out of my system it's back to the historical and spiritual side of the St. James Way, which you'll do in [Marktoberdorf](#). Besides being real close to [Neuschwanstein Castle](#), visit the St. Martin Church, originally built in 750 A.D. St. Martin's is the oldest of all of Marktoberdorf's churches, with the Women's Chapel (built 1475), Kloster Alban (1465), and Sts. Michael & Joseph (18th century).

But, it's the 17th century St. Johannes church that's the biggest draw to along this route. You'll

find many mothers still coming here today to pray for their sick children. Say a prayer for them before moving on to the last town on the Way of St. James.

[Kempten \(Allgäu\)](#) is the last town before the route moves westward out of Germany. Plus, there's more than 2,000 years of history here including an Archaeological Park and Roman Museum. And there are ruins of Burghalde to see, too.

Other Paths Of The Way Of St. James

I'm sorry our time together on this epic journey is at an end.

Still, I hope you're inspired to continue your way toward Santiago de Compostela and follow some of the other numerous Ways of St. James in Germany that go through the [Rhineland](#), the [Palatinate](#), Westphalia, as well as parts of [Central](#), [East](#) and [North Germany](#).

Again, for a more comprehensive overview, here's a Web site (in German) listing [the Ways of St. James through Germany](#).

With all that hiking, praying and photographing, remember to get your spiritual "passport" stamped. ;-)