

Wetterau -- Healing Waters And Tasty Apple Wine

From its Neolithic settlements to its 20th-century fame as the place in which Elvis Presley spent his military service, Germany's Wetterau (Wetter Valley) is a region which welcomes vacationers of all interests.

Tucked between the volcanic ridges of the [Vogelsberg Mountains](#) and the vineyard-garlanded slopes of the [Taunus Mountains](#), the Wetterau is a fertile flatland through which meanders the Nidda River. The mineral-rich waters of the Wetterau have made it a magnet for people seeking relief from physical and emotional ills at its many well-known spas.

None of these spas, though, deserve a place on your vacation itinerary more than [Bad Nauheim](#). Situated 450 feet above sea level on the slopes of the Taunus Mountains, Bad Nauheim is renowned for its spas, especially among people suffering from heart and nerve disorders.

Take an afternoon stroll along the Bad Nauheim Historical Trail to enjoy Art Nouveau architecture of its Spa and Garden District. Bad Nauheim is also where Elvis Presley lived while in the US Army in the 1950s.

Don't leave without a trip to the top of Johannisburg Mountain where a spectacular view of Bad Nauheim awaits. Stop in at the mountain top observation tower in the steeple of the Church of St. John, dating back to 779. Treat yourself to a glass of wine at the same café where Austrian empress Sissi stopped for refreshment before heading back down the mountain!

Just 10.5 km (6 miles) north of Bad Nauheim are the haunting ruins of Münzenberg Castle, where from the arcades of the main level you'll see the plains of Wetterau stretching away to the south.

The Castle was constructed in stages between the 12th and 16th centuries. As old as it is, however, it is a relative newcomer when compared to the Neolithic village (between 6000 and 5000 B.C.) which once stood on the site of Bruchenbrücken, a suburb of Wetterau's capital [Friedberg \(Hesse\)](#).

Friedberg is another place to vacation if you're an Elvis Presley fan, because portions of his film "G.I. Blues" were shot there at the Ray Barracks which housed his unit, the 3rd Armored Division.

Even more impressive than its connection to Elvis, however, is Friedberg's connection to its past: the 54m (177 feet) high tower of the Friedberg Castle. This tower, known as Adolf's Tower, is the oldest preserved section of the Castle and one of the largest historical towers in all of Germany.

The Castle houses a museum with an outstanding exhibit of 18th century clocks and faience for which Friedberg was famous. Come in July for the Friedberg Summer Festival!

The Wetterau region has much to offer nature enthusiasts. Stretching between the Wetterau and the [Lahn](#) and [Main](#) Rivers is the Hochtaunus, [Hesse](#)'s 2nd largest nature park. The evergreen-blanketed slopes of the Feldberg, the canoeing opportunities on the Lahn, and the hiking and cross-country skiing trails criss-crossing the Hochtaunus will keep the most ardent outdoorsmen occupied!

There are plenty of campsites and barbecue facilities. If you succumb to overexertion, don't worry — the Hochtaunus is encircled by many of the Wetterau's spas!

However you decide to spend your vacation in the Wetterau, make sure it includes lots of meals washed down with the region's famous "Stöffche." A 10 to 12-proof apple wine, it's produced from any of the more than 200 (!) varieties of apples grown here. With quaint names like "sheep's nose" and "bean apple," these apples are not meant for eating, but small growers blend and ferment their juices according to centuries-old formulas. You can tell which taverns sell apple wine by the green wreaths hanging on their doors!

Mineral waters, mountain trails, apple wine, and ancient ruins — Wetterau has them all!