

Zeitz Memorializes The Old Days With Words And Coffins

Zeitz started out as CiCi, but the town didn't let a silly little name stop it from growing up into a classy historical stopover.

The town works hard to make the most of its background and keep everything accessible. Entrance fees all over town were really reasonable, too, so there is no reason not to have a close look at all the attractions.

Start at the bottom and work your way up. :-)

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The first thing to see is Underground Zeitz, a massive network of tunnels under the main square and old town. It started out as underground canal ground and beer storage in the Middle Ages, but just kept expanding into a little warren of hidey-holes. A group got together and did some safety work and opened it as a tourist attraction in 1992. It's both cool and cool — you'll want a jacket in the winter for sure but in the summer it's a good break from the heat.

Next, hit the coffins. You can see 13 tin coffins from the Dukes of Moritz in the crypt at the Peter and Paul Cathedral. The cathedral is part of the Moritz Castle complex, which was the home of the Dukes, best known as the founders of Saxony-Zeitz. Now the coffins, crypt, cathedral and castle are a massive museum complex open to the public year-round.

Back at street level, throw an eye over the public square in front of the Michaelis Church. It doesn't look like a hot spot now, but plaques and memorials honor the Signal Fire of Zeitz, which burned here. It's a bit macabre — the Signal Fire of Zeitz was Oskar Brüsewitz, a Lutheran priest who lit himself on fire here in 1976 to protest East German Communism. Although he died (horribly!), his

death is now viewed as a key early step toward the mass protests that led to the 1990 [German reunification](#).

Moving up to table height, go on into Michaelis Church to see an original print of Martin Luther's 95 Theses. These things are rare! Even if the religious aspect doesn't do anything for you, the church is part of the [Romanesque Road](#) that figure-eights through Saxony and you'll want to see it for the architecture.

Finally, head to the City Hall Tower to get a total view of Zeitz. For just 1 Euro, you can tour the tower and have a broad view of the countryside. It'll open your eyes to all the things you can do when you come down from the tower. There are parks and hiking trails, an old town to explore, and fields of grapes.

If you are really lucky it will be the Zeitz WineFest when you are there — if not, be sure to have a bottle of the local stuff anyway. They've been hiding it underground in the tunnels and keeping it quiet for years, but what better way to honor the history of the place than with a generous toast to the past?