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From God's Garden to Europe's Samba capital

By German News

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"I climb up to Saint Vitas of Staffelstein and see the countryside surrounding the River Main in front of me." When visiting the Upper Main Valley - Coburg Region it is very easy to understand and relate to Viktor von Scheffel's enthusiasm for the Franconian region and countryside that is expressed so wonderfully in his "Frankenlied" (Franconian song').

When approaching from the south you get a fantastic view of the Upper Main Valley: The baroque gem that is the Banz Monastery and the Rococo Vierzehnheiligen pilgrimage basilica are located on both sides of the beautiful valley between Adam Riese's birthplace of Bad Staffelstein and Lichtenfels, the home to the German basket-making industry.

It is certainly not surprising that this valley is known affectionately as "God's Garden". The unique "Upper Main Musical Summer" series of concerts take place in many of the area's architectural masterpieces.

A visit would not be complete without a walk up Staffelberg hill, where the Franconian countryside really does quite literally "lie at one's feet"... From this point on it is already possible to see the Veste Coburg fortress, known as the "Franconian Crown", which is yet another of the region's highlights.

However, while on the journey to Coburg there are many charming and attractive towns with wonderful half-timbered buildings, such as Sesslach, Burgkunstadt, Altenkunstadt, Marktzeuln and Weismain, and idyllic landscapes, like the Kleinziegenfelder Valley, that are well worth visiting.

Roughly 20kms to the north of Lichtenfels, Coburg is located among some delightful and hilly countryside, and unlike many towns of a similar size (Coburg has a population of roughly 42,000) this former seat of the Dukes of Coburg possesses an abundance of works of art, historical monuments, castles and palaces that truly outstrips its size.

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Many of these are thanks to the Dukes of the former duchy of Saxe–Coburg–Gotha which, through its marriage policy, established links with almost all the European royal families.

Now Coburg is regarded as the "Samba Capital" of Europe due to its hosting of the International Samba Festival every July.

Furthermore, the town has a truly diverse cultural programme that ranges from the classical to the modern, including operas, operettas, revues, ballets and plays, which take place in both the magnificent State Theatre (Landestheater) and St Moriz Church, the main church of the town's Protestant community and where Martin Luther once preached. There are also regular open–air concerts on Coburg's Palace Square.

The whole Coburg region is home to many castles and palaces. Callenberg Castle, Rosenau Castle and Tambach Palace, to name just three, are worth visiting.

Where the basket–making trade is the dominant industry in the Lichtenfels area, the doll–making, toy, and glass–painting industries are very much at home in the Coburg region.

The W Goebel porcelain factory where the world–famous M I Hummel figurines are made also ought not to be missed.

The region is home to numerous museums that are both a testament to history and the products of these traditional trades, such as Europe's only wickerwork museum in Michelau, the doll museum in Coburg, the German Toy Industry Museum in Neustadt bei Coburg, the M I Hummel information centre and porcelain museum at the Goebel factory in Roedental, and the Old Christmas Factory with its historical Christmas museum located in Neustadt bei Coburg.

In addition, there are a number of arts and crafts markets that take place every year, such as the arts and crafts market in the old sheep farm in Ahorn at Whitsun and the famous basket market in Lichtenfels in September.

The International Doll Festival in Neustadt bei Coburg is a delight for children and adults alike.

For those wanting to have an active holiday, the region has a lot to offer. You can go rambling, go cycling, go in–line skating, play golf, go climbing or go sailing.

A visit to one of the region's thermal baths would also be a wonderful and relaxing extra to any holiday. There's the warmest saltwater spa at the Upper Main Thermal Springs in Bad Staffelstein or the Bad Rodach thermal spring, the only thermal baths to be home to a singing lifeguard.

Northern Bavaria's largest deer park and the Museum of Hunting and Fishing in Tambach, the Sea Star Aquarium, the palm house and the Natural History Museum in Coburg are not simply for lovers of nature and wildlife alone.

Along with the many museums, the numerous arts and crafts markets and traditional events, such as

decorating the fountains and wells for Easter, church fetes, Christmas markets, and shooting festivals all give a valuable insight into traditional customs and local history.

Shopping is also a delight and an experience not to be missed in this region. From weekly markets, arts and crafts markets, and flea markets to modern stores and factory outlets at world-famous firms, there truly is something for everybody here.

Culinary variety, local breweries and wine tasting, camping holidays, youth hostelling, or staying in a 4-star hotel are all an essential part of the package this region has to offer.

Do you have any further questions?

The Touristboard is always happy to be at your service and they will be glad to help you with any arrangements for your holiday in this region.

Further information from Upper Main Valley - Coburg Region Tourist Information, Kronacher Str. 30,

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A Beginners Guide To Garden Bridges

By Charles & Susan Truett

Just because you dont have huge, elaborate gardens does not mean you cant accentuate what you do have with garden bridges. Garden bridges could be just what you need to turn those mediocre garden areas into something quite splendid.

Garden bridges can add a touch of country or formal design to a garden. Small garden bridges are easy to find. There are many garden bridges that you can find in garden centers or home improvement centers. One of the best places to find small garden bridges may be online. There are lots of sites that have many ideas for small garden bridges.

If you are good with a hammer and nails you may even be able to make your own garden bridge. Plans are available at building stores and at online sites. You will find many choices for garden bridges at these online sites and you can also see photos of many different bridge styles.

A garden bridge can be a big benefit for your garden space. A small garden bridge will look attractive in a smaller garden and draw attention to a specific area.

You can choose the right small garden bridge if you do a little planning ahead of time. If you have a smaller garden you will want a smaller garden bridge. Look at the space you have and decide where a bridge would fit in. Consider more than one area and then choose your favorite.

There are some lovely gardens that are small in size but large in beauty because garden bridges have been added in just the right places.

We have a large number of styles and varieties of garden bridges available online. For more information and to learn more about

, visit:



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