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Travel To Germany: The Pulse Of European History

By Frank Johnson

Germany has long been a mover and shaker of European history, creating waves in time for the

rest of the continent to ride out. From Charlemagne and Otto von Bismarck to Nazism and the Cold War, Germany has become the epicenter of cutting-edge culture and music, and centuries of tradition and fine arts. The juxtaposition of medieval towns against ultra-modern industrialism is a fascinating reality to experience.

Thriving Urban Centers of Germany The capital city of Berlin is by far the most dynamic and diverse metropolis for the German traveler. Despite reunification projects since the Wall came down in 1989, the city is still very much divided between the cosmopolitan chic of the West and the tattered Communist remains of the East. The Stasi Museum, located in East Berlin, is home to the former State Security Service. The intelligence body spied on and badgered citizens throughout the Communist era from this building. The Brandenburger Tor is a monumental building built in 1792 as one of the city's 14 gates. The history of this landmark is tied directly with the enclosing of West Germany from the East as it was essentially barricaded in by the Berlin Wall.

In addition to the other popular urban destinations of Munich and Frankfurt, Aachen (also known as Aix-la-Chapelle) should not be missed on a German visit. It is considered the most international of cities in Germany, situated close to the Belgian and Netherlands borders. Many citizens and travelers enjoy regular access to both border nations. The main draw is the Aachen Dom (Aachen Cathedral), which is the oldest landmark in Germany. Emperor Charlemagne had the chapel constructed over 1200 years ago and Holy Roman Emperors were coroneted here for nearly 600 years. The cathedral is also alleged to possess Christ's loincloth as part of its collection.

Fables and Fairytales The German landscape is still comparable to your favorite fairytale or Robin Hood adventure. Castles in the sky preside over the rich green forests where Hansel and Gretel ventured to meet their witch. The Black Forest (Schwarzwald) is famous for its intense evergreen canopy, vast outdoor activities and secluded get-a-ways. It also happens to be where Nobel Prize winner Hermann Hesse spent much of his life living and writing. The Maulbronn monastery, situated in the forest's north end, is a UNESCO World Heritage sight that has been carefully preserved. The entire wooded expanse is dotted with medieval and farm towns and is fairly easy to navigate by train.

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The notorious 19th century Bavarian king, Ludwig II (Ludwig Friedrich Wilhelm), left his personal legend all over the German countryside in the form of extravagantly ornate castles. Schloss Neuschwanstein is Ludwig's (and Germany's) most famous construction, particularly because he contracted a stage designer rather than an architect to do the job. Although the monstrosity was never actually finished, visitors may enjoy concerts in the castle's centerpiece, Minstrel's Hall, every September.

Along Germany's southwest border, The Rhine Valley stretches as a monument to the country's timeless culture and love affair with art, wine, food and beer. The Middle Rhine Valley (also a World Heritage sight) is the most popular segment, studded with medieval and gothic towns and wineries that hold their own festivals annually. Additionally, WWII has left its distinct mark throughout the region despite the incredible restoration efforts undertaken over the years.

Social revolutions, wars and a fair share of domestic turmoil combined with the legacy of the Holy Roman Empire and the split of the Protestant Church all make Germany unmistakably unique and internationally modern. Travel Germany and discover that it's not all about the Beer Gardens!

For more information on travel to German and other regions in Europe, and discount airfare to Germany, visit

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German Castles -- 4 of the most incredible ones - Part I

By Marcus Hochstadt

German Castles -- 4 of the most incredible ones - Part I by Marcus Hochstadt

We have a long history here in Germany and very medieval castles also. Tens of thousands of tourists come to Germany day in and day out just to see and feel the "charisma" of our German castles.

I will explain you 4 of my favourites and a little bit of their history. If you plan to travel to Germany, you might like to know them and to feel its charisma too. ;-) These 4 castles are located in South Germany, so you do not have to travel hundreds of kilometres/miles to see each of them. By the way, most of our German castles are located in South Germany.

The first one I describe to you is the Heidelberg castle. It is really big and has a secret stairway to walk up to it. Very few people know that way, most of the people go up by the 'hill train'. I mean, you can do that too, but imagine how incredible it is, when you walk up the more than 300 stairs (each stair has its number on it!) and see all the old houses around you, WOW!

Heidelberg itself has a strong history too and you see that on all the houses and the extremely expensive residential areas. Very famous people live in Heidelberg, such as Steffi Graf and famous Scientists. You should also walk through the, and now I'll give you a insider secret, 'Philosophenweg'

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(Way of Philosophs). You may ask the people out there where exactly this way is, but however when you walk up that way, you have an really awesome, and I mean really awesome view to the Heidelberg castle and Heidelberg itself and its river (Neckar).

Not far away from Heidelberg (approx. 10km) is a small town called Schwetzingen (yes, I live in this town and I love it!). The special thing here is, that this town has just 22,500 residents, but also a huge castle! When you visit German castles you will realize, that some of them not so big, but beautiful too. The castle of Schwetzingen is not just beautiful, it's awesome and huge! The city itself spends all of the entrance fees (only 2,50 EUR per day) into this incredible castle, and you see that at each corner stone, plant and bloom.

The Schwetzingen castle is almost as big as the city itself! :-)

Its history goes back to Baroque, Rococo and Classicism. It's still apparent today that the irregular complex of the Schwetzingen castle in essence dates back to a medieval castle altered in the Renaissance period.

At the end of your castle visit you absolutely must go to one of the irresistible cafés and restaurants in front of the castle – at the 'Schlossplatz' (castle place). There are seven (and much deeper in and around the city) of them and you will find people of all ages there, and you easily come in contact with them. They are really communicative. Most of the young people are able to speak English. More about

this amazing town you'll find on

.

My site isn't perfect yet, but it grows day after day and I work really hard on it to give you the highest valuable free insider tips for your travel to Germany.

I hope you enjoyed the first part of my special report of 2 awesome German castles. Watch out for the second part with the other 2. I will post it shortly.

Also for further insider tips go to my website. I finished the creation of my monthly free special report. In this report I will describe the rest of our TOP 40 German castles and its histories. You can subscribe to it at

www.smart-travel-germany.com/smart-travelogy-germ.html

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I appreciate you!

Marcus Hochstadt

www.smart-travel-germany.com

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Marcus Hochstadt travels extensively to countries, continents and Germany itself as a sales manager and entrepreneur since more than 14 years. He knows in almost each German city the points of REAL interest. Watch out for his free monthly special report with more valuable insider tips at

www.smart-travel-germany.com/smart-travelogy-germ.html.

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German Castles — 4 of the most incredible ones — Part II

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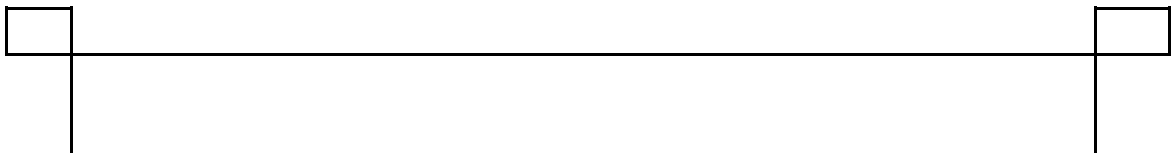
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