

# Saxony-Anhalt



Ask a Bavarian or Berliner about Saxony-Anhalt and they'll likely talk about the timeworn (and largely outdated) stereotypes: the industrial legacy, the slag heaps, the high unemployment and the architectural sins committed by GDR town planners. But ask a local about their state, and they'll wax lyrical about its treasures. There'll be talk about taking a gondola ride through the gentle splendours of Wörlitz Park. They'll be proud of the whimsy of the Hundertwasser buildings in Magdeburg and Lutherstadt Wittenberg. They'll encourage you to get on your bike and explore the grandeur of the Elbe River. And they'll toast you with a glass of bubbly made from grapes grown on the sunny slopes around Freyburg.

In the 20 years since reunification, Saxony-Anhalt has gone from humdrum to, well, not quite hip but certainly more happening than its reputation would suggest. Open your eyes and you'll find deep wellsprings of beauty, ingenuity and historical magnitude. After all, Otto I, the first Holy Roman Emperor, is buried in Magdeburg, Martin Luther kick-started the Reformation in Wittenberg and, centuries later, the Bauhaus school revolutionised modern design and architecture from its base in Dessau during its most creative period.

Saxony-Anhalt may not quite have the pulling power of other states but it still packs a punch. Don't just travel through on your way to somewhere else. Lose your preconceptions, unleash your curiosity and you'll discover unique places that'll still resonate with you long after you're back home.

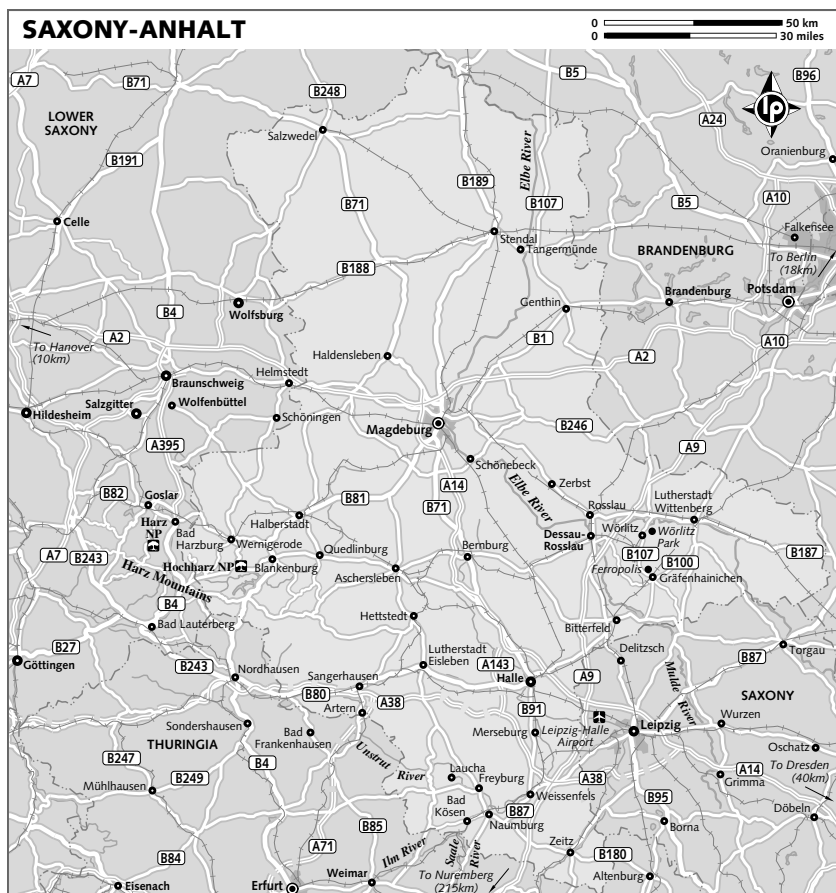
## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Grand Visions** Study the origins of modernist architecture by touring Dessau's refurbished Bauhaus gems (p224)
- **Sweet Dreams** Spend the night inside cult architect Hundertwasser's wacky Magdeburg building, Grüne Zitadelle (p219)
- **River Rides** Soak up the mystique of one of Germany's grandest rivers while pedalling along the Elbe River Bike Trail (p228)
- **Pious Peregrinations** Channel Martin Luther while walking in his footsteps in Eisleben (p236) and Wittenberg (p229)
- **Grape Escape** Sample the local product while hopping between small wine estates around Freyburg (p239).
- **Offbeat Journey** Float high above the Elbe River in one of the world's strangest bridges near Magdeburg (p221)



■ POPULATION: 2.41 MILLION

■ AREA: 20,446 SQ KM



## Information

For advance planning, consult the website maintained by the state tourist office at [www.sachsen-anhalt-tourismus.de](http://www.sachsen-anhalt-tourismus.de), which comes with a room booking function.

## Getting Around

Trains are supplemented by local bus networks and an efficient road system. There are two good-value discount train tickets available in Saxony-Anhalt. The **Sachsen-Anhalt-Ticket** (€28) entitles groups of up to five people to one day of unlimited public transport within the state from 9am to 3am the following day (midnight to 3am the following day on weekends). It is valid in 2nd class on RE, RB and S-Bahn trains as well as buses and trams. The

version for solo travellers costs €19. Another good deal is the **Hopper-Ticket** (€6) which is valid for a day return to any town within 50km of your starting point. All tickets cost €2 more if bought from a train station agent instead of a vending machine.

## MAGDEBURG

☎ 0391 / pop 230,000

There's no denying that much of Magdeburg is aesthetically challenged, thanks to WWII bombs and socialist city planners in love with wide boulevards and prefab concrete apartment blocks, the so-called *Plattenbauten*. But don't let this deter you: the capital of Saxony-Anhalt has plenty of surprises in store. This is, after all, one of