



Central Germany

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Best Places to Eat

- » Rattenfängerhaus (p538)
- » Zwiesel (p543)
- » Jo Hanns (p550)
- » Turmschänke (p557)
- » Osteria da Salvatore (p593)

Best Places to Stay

- » Schlosshotel Münchhausen (p538)
- » Opera Hostel (p542)
- » Hotel auf der Wartburg (p557)
- » Hotel Gothisches Haus (p570)
- » Grüne Zitadelle (p589)

Why Go?

Central Germany consists of parts of former East Germany, the Harz Mountains and some of northern Germany. The region is very much a cultural heartland, taking in towns like Weimar (famous for Germany's figures from the Enlightenment), Erfurt, Lutherstadt Eisleben and Lutherstadt Wittenberg. The latter two cities earned their 'Luther' prefixes because in these places the religious reformer Martin Luther was born and died (Eisleben) or he ushered in the Reformation from there (Wittenberg). During the Reformation, Luther went into hiding in Eisenach's Wartburg castle. The region has some great landscapes, with the bucolic Thuringian Forest – best known for its excellent hiking trails – the picturesque riverside vineyards of the Saale-Unstrut region (famous for its sparkling and red wines) and the Harz Mountains (brimming with spa towns). The Harz is also known for its excellent cross-country skiing and hiking in mixed deciduous and conifer forests.

When to Go

Spring or summer is the best time, because the museums and sights have long opening hours, the leafless landscapes lose their brown tones and burst back to life, and the hiking and cycling are at their finest. An exception is the Harz, where cross-country skiing or hikes on skis are popular in winter. The Saale-Unstrut wine region, the Harz and the Thuringian Forest are picturesque and colourful in autumn if the weather plays along, and for anyone dressed for conditions, hiking here can be invigorating on a snappy winter's day under blue skies and upon frozen ground.

Central Germany Highlights

1 Spend an hour chasing the water as it cascades down the slope from Kassel's towering **Herkules statue** (p532)

2 Study the origins of modernist architecture by touring Dessau's **Bauhaus** (p584) gems

3 Hike to the top of the highest mountain in the Harz, the **Brocken** (p572), and soak up the kitsch mythology of the region

4 Explore the mining history of the Harz region in Goslar or visit the town's medieval **Kaiserpfalz** (p565) residence

5 Walk in the footsteps of Martin Luther in **Eisleben** (p594) and **Wittenberg** (p578)

6 Sample the local product while hopping between small wine estates around **Freyburg** (p563)

7 Check out the medieval musical instruments at Jörg Dahms' Lutherstadt Wittenberg **workshop** (p582) or visit Halle's **Beatles Museum** (p592)

