



Frankfurt & Southern Rhineland

Includes »

Frankfurt am Main.....	371
Wiesbaden.....	401
Mainz.....	407
Heidelberg & Around ...	415
German Wine Route.....	431
The Romantic Rhine Valley.....	434
The Moselle Valley.....	446
Trier.....	451
Saarland.....	456

Best Places to Eat

- » Adolf Wagner (p390)
- » Kleinmarkthalle (p389)
- » Zur Kanzel (p409)
- » Zur Herrenmühle (p420)
- » Zum Stiefel (p458)

Best Places to Stay

- » Fleming's Hotel (p386)
- » Hip Hotel (p419)
- » Arthotel (p419)
- » Deidesheimer Hof (p432)
- » Hotel Bellevue (p443)

Why Go?

Frankfurt is best known as a banking powerhouse, trade-fair venue and air hub, but ask the residents of Germany's most cosmopolitan city what they like about living there and they'll mention the excellent quality of life, flowery parkland, laid-back cafes and pulsating nightlife. Just an hour west – past the cathedral city of Mainz, where Gutenberg invented printing – flows the Romantic Rhine, whose storied castles and snug wine villages have drawn artists and tourists since the early 19th century. Vineyards also stretch along the dramatic hillsides above the serpentine Moselle River and, just north of Alsace (France), along the German Wine Route – in both areas, crisp rieslings can all be sampled in a multitude of ambience-laden wine taverns. For sheer romance, though, it's hard to beat the ancient university city of Heidelberg, where something is always brewing – beer, of course, but also deep thoughts and culture both high and popular.

When to Go

Frankfurt's many charms can be enjoyed at any time of the year, but you'll pay a fortune for accommodation if your visit coincides with a big trade fair – see the Frankfurt section for further advice. The Moselle and the Rhine are particularly popular from May to August and very quiet – almost dead, in fact – from November to March, except in places that have Christmas markets in December. Along the German Wine Route – Germany's warmest region – village wine festivals are held on weekends from March to mid-November.

FEDERAL STATES

This chapter covers parts of four German states:

- » **Hesse** (Hessen) – Frankfurt, Wiesbaden, Rüdeshheim
- » **Baden-Württemberg** – Heidelberg, Mannheim
- » **Rhineland-Palatinate** – Romantic Rhine, Moselle, German Wine Road, Speyer, Worms
- » **Saarland** – Saarbrücken

Need to Know

All of Frankfurt's museums are closed on Monday except:

- » Goethe-Haus (p378)
- » Senckenberg Museum (p381)
- » Explora (p381)

Advance Planning

- » During Frankfurt's major trade fairs, arrange your accommodation well in advance. Rooms are *much* cheaper outside the city.
- » If a trade fair's in town, book restaurants ahead.
- » Check with the Deidesheim tourist office (p433) for details on Weinfeste (wine festivals) in German Wine Route villages.

Resources

- » **Frankfurt Tourist Office** (www.frankfurt-tourismus.de)
- » **Romantic Rhine** (www.welterbe-mittelrheintal.de)
- » **Cycling Routes** (www.radwanderland.de)

Cycling Paradise

Delightful long-distance bike trails (www.radwanderland.de and www.radroutenplaner.hessen.de) – many following de-commissioned rail lines, with their mellow gradients – can be found along the Rhine, the Moselle, the German Wine Route and in the Saarland. Almost all the cities and towns mentioned in this chapter (Saarbrücken is an exception) have bike rental options, listed under Getting Around.

Tourist offices can supply you with cycling maps that include elevation charts, and can outline your public transport options (eg so you can catch a ride up the hill and cycle back).

Bicycles can be taken aboard all trains for no charge except before 9am from Monday to Friday, when you need a special ticket, and for a small charge on passenger boats.

TRAIN DISCOUNTS

Various day passes often work out costing *much* less than standard one-way fares, especially for groups:

- » **Baden-Württemberg-Ticket** For travel in the Heidelberg area. Same prices and conditions as the Rheinland-Pfalz-Ticket.
- » **Hessenticket** (1 day €31) Allows a group of up to five people travelling together to take regional trains (those designated RB, RE and IRE, ie any trains except D, IC, EC or ICE) anywhere within the German federal state of Hesse plus Mainz and Worms any time after 9am (all day on Saturday, Sunday and holidays) – an incredible deal!
- » **Rheinland-Pfalz-Ticket** (1 day for 1 person €21, additional person €4) Valid from 9am to 3am the following day (all day on weekends and holidays) for up to five people travelling together in both Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland, plus adjacent parts of Hesse (eg Wiesbaden) and Baden-Württemberg (eg Mannheim). Parents and grandparents can bring along their own children or grandchildren under age 15 for free.

Jewish Sites

In the Middle Ages, the Rhineland was home to the most illustrious Jewish communities in Ashkenaz (the Hebrew name for Germany). The brilliant Talmudic scholar Rashi (Raschi; Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaqi, 1040–1105), whose commentaries are still considered indispensable, studied in Worms and Mainz. These days, Speyer and Worms have some of Europe's most important medieval Jewish sites.

Most towns and villages along the Romantic Rhine and the Moselle River had Jewish communities from the Middle Ages until 1942. Vestiges include cemeteries, alleys called 'Judengasse', repurposed synagogue buildings and commemorative plaques.