



Saxony

POP 4 MILLION / AREA 18,413 SQ KM

Includes ➔

Dresden	141
Around Dresden	155
Saxon Switzerland	158
Leipzig	161
Chemnitz	173
Görlitz	175
Zittau	180

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Restaurant Genuss-Atelier (p152)
- ➔ VINO e Cultura (p178)
- ➔ Restaurant Vincenz Richter (p158)
- ➔ Stadtpfeiffer (p171)
- ➔ Auerbachs Keller (p171)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Hotel Börse (p178)
- ➔ Steigenberger Grandhotel Handelshof (p170)
- ➔ Hotel Schloss Eckberg (p151)
- ➔ Burg Altrathen (p159)
- ➔ Ferdinands Homestay (p160)

Why Go?

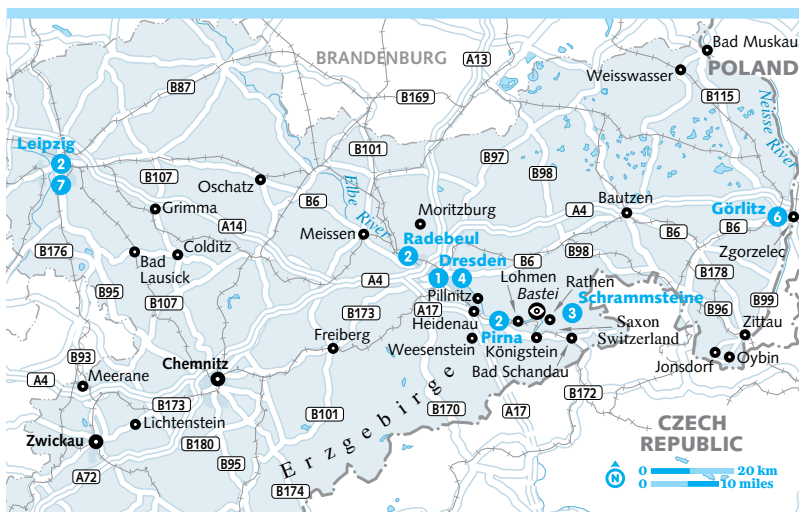
Saxony has an enormous amount to offer anyone interested in history, music, art, mountain scenery, castles and cobbled-street market towns, and its warm and welcoming people, stellar opera houses and deeply entrenched love of culture will win over anyone who takes the time to explore this often-overlooked corner of Germany.

Many heavyweights have shaped Saxony's cultural landscape: Bach, Canaletto, Goethe, Luther and Wagner among them, while Dresden's Semperoper and Leipzig's Gewandhaus have for centuries been among the world's finest musical venues. Today both of Saxony's biggest cities also offer impressive (and great value) music, art and entertainment activities, which ensure a steady flow of young creatives from all over Germany and beyond.

Many visitors skip Saxony and head straight to Berlin for their fix of Eastern Germany, missing Saxony's unique charms and character (not to mention an entirely different history). If you take the time to come here, you'll quickly understand how multifaceted, progressive and fascinating Saxony can be.

When to Go

The cities are fun in the summer when life moves outdoors, festivals are in full swing and you can boat or cycle along the Elbe River. Thanks to lots of world-class museums and performance venues, Dresden is also a fine destination in winter, especially in December during the famous Christmas market (Striezelmarkt). Avoid Leipzig during the springtime trade-fair crunch, especially in March and April. The Bachfest in June draws scores of visitors. The trails and rock walls in Saxon Switzerland are busiest in summer and autumn, particularly at the weekend.



Saxony Highlights

- 1 Taking in the stunning baroque silhouette of Dresden's Altstadt, with the remarkable **Residenzschloss** (p142) and **Frauenkirche** (p142)
- 2 Travelling back in time to the GDR at museums in **Leipzig** (p164), **Pirna** (p156) and **Radebeul** (p156)
- 3 Clambering up the **Schrammsteine** (p161) for gobsmacking panoramas of the Saxon Switzerland and the Elbe
- 4 Donning sunglasses to view the dazzling treasures at Dresden's **Grünes Gewölbe** (p142)
- 5 Marvelling at the architecture of **Görlitz** (p176), one of Germany's most attractive cities
- 6 Treating your ears to a concert at Leipzig's storied **Gewandhausorchester** (p172)

DRESDEN

☑ 0351 / POP 512,000

There are few city silhouettes more striking than Dresden's. The classic view from the Elbe's northern bank takes in spires, towers and domes belonging to palaces, churches and stately buildings, and indeed it's hard to believe that the city was all but wiped off the map by Allied bombings in 1945.

Dresden's cultural heyday came under the 18th-century reign of Augustus the Strong (August der Starke) and his son Augustus III, who produced many of Dresden's iconic buildings, including the Zwinger and the Frauenkirche. While the devastating 1945 allied firestorm levelled most of these treasures, their contents were safely removed before the bombings and now take pride of place in Dresden's rebuilt museums.

The city has had a few tough years of late, however. In 2014, a populist protest move-

ment called PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West) was founded here and quickly became a nationwide phenomenon. But although the city, once known as the 'Florence of the North', gave birth to this anti-Islamic movement, the overwhelming majority of Dresden's residents do not agree with its message. It's hard to find a single museum, cultural institute or university here that isn't bedecked with large signs declaring support for multiculturalism, welcoming migrants and generally subverting the PEGIDA message, which itself seems to have lost public support in the intervening period. Dresden and its surroundings may have been nicknamed 'the valley of the clueless' under communism (due to locals not being able to pick up West German TV), but its public institutions now proclaim themselves '*für ein weltoffenes Dresden*' ('for a Dresden open to the world'). Take some time to get to know this fascinating, contradictory city.