



Stuttgart & the Black Forest

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Best Places to Eat

- » Irma la Douce (p221)
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Best Places to Stay

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Why Go?

If one word could sum up Germany's southwesternmost region, it would be inventive. Baden-Württemberg gave the world relativity (Einstein), DNA (Miescher) and the astronomical telescope (Kepler). It was here that Bosch invented the spark plug; Gottlieb Daimler, the gas engine; and Count Ferdinand, the zeppelin. And where would we be without black forest gateau, cuckoo clocks and the ultimate beer food, the pretzel?

Beyond the high-tech, urbanite pleasures of 21st-century Stuttgart lies a region still ripe for discovery. On the city fringes, country lanes roll to vineyards and lordly baroque palaces, spa towns and castles steeped in medieval myth. Swinging south, the Black Forest (*Schwarzwald* in German) looks every inch the Grimm fairy-tale blueprint. Hills rise steep and wooded above church steeples, half-timbered villages and a crochet of tightly woven valleys. It is a perfectly etched picture of sylvan beauty, a landscape refreshingly oblivious to time and trends.

When to Go

Snow dusts the heights from January to late February and pre-Lenten *Fasnacht* brings carnival shenanigans to the region's towns and villages. Enjoy cool forest hikes, riverside bike rides, splashy fun on Lake Constance and open-air festivals galore during summer. From late September to October the golden autumn days can be spent rambling in woods, mushrooming and snuggling up in Black Forest farmhouses.

HAVE YOUR CAKE

True, there's more to the Black Forest than gâteau but try saying that after a cherry-chocolate-cream fest at Café Schäfer in Triberg, guardian of the original 1915 recipe.

Need to Know

- » Many museums close on Mondays.
- » Family in tow? *Ferienwohnungen* (holiday apartments) are often a better deal than hotels. Tourist offices have lists.
- » Save on train fares with the good-value Baden-Württemberg Ticket.

Spa Time

- » **Friedrichsbad** (p238) A palatial 19th-century spa for a Roman-style scrub-a-dub-dub.
- » **Sanitas Spa** (p258) Broad forest views, few crowds, luscious treatments. Bliss.
- » **Badeparadies** (p257) Palms, lagoons and Caribbean cocktails lift rainy-day moods.

Resources

- » **Schwarzwaldverein** (www.schwarzwaldverein.de)
- » **Farmstays** (www.bauernhofurlaub.de)
- » **Baden-Württemberg Tourism** (www.tourism-bw.com)
- » **Local news and weather** (www.swr.de)

Outdoor Adventures

Oh, we have nothing but fresh air, plenty of forest and peace and quiet, the self-effacing locals tell you with a shrug. One whiff of that cold piny air and a glimpse of those emerald forested hills and you'll be itching to grab your walking boots or cross-country skis and strike into the wilderness of the Black Forest. Great waterways like Lake Constance and the Danube invite languid days spent exploring by bike or kayak.

Baden-Württemberg practically coined the word 'wanderlust' as the founding father of the Schwarzwaldverein (www.schwarzwaldverein.de), whose well-marked paths criss-cross the darkest depths of the Black Forest.

DRIVE TIME

The Schwarzwald (Black Forest) may be a forest but it sure is a big'un and you'll need a car to reach its out-of-the-way corners.

Schwarzwald-Hochstrasse (Black Forest Hwy; www.schwarzwaldhochstrasse.de) Swoon over views of the mist-wreathed Vosges Mountains, heather-flecked forests and glacial lakes like Mummelsee on this high-altitude road, meandering 60km from Baden-Baden to Freudenstadt on the B500.

Badische Weinstrasse (Baden Wine Rd; www.deutsche-weinstrassen.de) From Baden-Baden to Lörrach, this 160km route corkscrews through the vineyards of Ortenau, Kaiserstuhl, Tuniberg and Markgräflerland.

Schwarzwald-Tälerstrasse (Black Forest Valley Rd) What scenery! Twisting 100km from Rastatt to Alpirsbach, this road dips into the forest-cloaked hills and half-timbered towns of the Murg and Kinzig valleys.

Deutsche Uhrenstrasse (German Clock Rd; www.deutscheuhrenstrasse.de) A 320km loop starting in Villingen-Schwenningen that revolves around the story of clockmaking in the Black Forest. Stops include Furtwangen and cuckoo-crazy Triberg.

Grüne Strasse (Green Rd; www.gruene-strasse.de) Linking the Black Forest with the Rhine Valley and French Vosges, this 160km route zips through Kirchzarten, Freiburg, Breisach, Colmar and Münster.

Discount Passes

Check into almost any hotel in Baden-Württemberg, pay the nominal *Kurtaxe* (holiday tax) and you automatically receive the money-saving **Gästekarte** (Guest Card), often entitling you to free entry to local swimming pools and attractions, plus hefty discounts on everything from bike hire and spas to ski lifts and boat trips. Versions with the **Konus** symbol offer free use of public transport.

Most tourist offices in the Black Forest sell the three-day **SchwarzwaldCard** for admission to around 150 attractions. For details, visit www.blackforest-tourism.com.