Munich, Bavaria & the Black Forest

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Southern Germany Highlights

This itinerary takes in the best of the region in a whistle-stop tour of southern Germany's must-sees. You could spend months exploring the region but 10 days is just enough to tick off the essentials.

Kick off your southern odyssey in Munich where three days is barely enough time to sample the Bavarian capital's art and beer. A short hop north by train brings you to Nuremberg, the bustling capital of Franconia and a major draw for fans of both dark tourism and dark beer. Another train, another historic city, this time university town Würzburg well known for its wines and the famous prince-bishop's residence. You’re now at the northern terminus of the 350km-long Romantic Road. The most engaging stop along the route is Rothenburg ob der Tauber, a labyrinth of medieval streets and lanes with heaps of sugary architecture. The Romantic Road ends at the gates of Schloss Neuschwanstein, Bavarian King Ludwig II’s fairy-tale pad and one of the world’s most iconic 19th-century follies. Stop off at Lindau on the shores of Lake Constance en route to Freiburg in the southern Black Forest, where you can follow a tour of the Münster with a slab of the famous local gateau.
The Alps are one of the definite highlights of Bavaria and almost every visitor makes at least one trip to these famous peaks. This itinerary includes the best stop-offs and includes everything from lakes in the foothills to a train ride to the top of the highest peak. This itinerary can be tackled as a point-to-point trip or as day trips from Munich; the German Alps are easily reachable by train from there. Beginning in Munich, you'll need at least three days to cover the essential viewing in this vibrant metropolis, perhaps reserving a bit of time for a spot of shopping and to visit some of the city’s lesser known sights such as the Olympiapark and BMW Welt. If there's time, gobsmackingly beautiful Starnberger See is an S-Bahn ride away. Pretty Oberammergau, famous for its once-a-decade passion play, is just over two hours (with changes) on the train from Munich’s Hauptbahnhof and makes a superb base for visiting King Ludwig II’s Schloss Linderhof, an easy going 12km hike. Then it’s time to stand on the roof of Germany: the Zugspitze above Garmisch-Partenkirchen, the Bundesrepublik’s highest peak. If you don’t have your own wheels you’ll have to backtrack all the way to Munich to reach the spa town of Bad Tölz, home to Alpamare, the region’s best water park. Heading east, more train connections bring you to the Chiemsee in no time. Water sports are one of the big draws here, though most come for another of Ludwig II’s palaces, Schloss Herrenchiemsee, set on an island (the Herreninsel) in the lake and accessible by ferry from the town of Prien. After a day of messing around on the wasser (water) it’s back into the mountains, this time the ranges around Berchtesgaden in Germany’s extreme southeastern tip. Some intriguing Nazi history, particularly Hitler’s mountain perch, the Eagle’s Nest, now a seasonal restaurant, draws many visitors. For an equally photogenic escapade, take one of the electric boats from Berchtesgaden along the stunningly picturesque Königssee, surrounded by the Berchtesgaden National Park. From Berchtesgaden it’s a short bus ride into Austria and a day or two of Sound of Music–mania in achingly beautiful Salzburg.
This zigzagging canter through Germany’s southwest is one for those who like a varied time when on their travels – the route is a mix of cuckoo clocks and state-of-the art luxury car museums, half-timbered villages and the big-city vibe of Stuttgart.

Begin with a couple of days exploring the galleries, stately plazas and vibrant nightlife of regional capital Stuttgart. High on your agenda should be the city’s regal heart, Schlossplatz, the Staatsgalerie’s art treasures and evenings spent sampling local rieslings in a Weinstube (wine tavern) or hanging out in Theodor-Heuss-Strasse’s lounge bars. Car fans should race to the space-age Mercedes-Benz and Porsche museums. On day three, head west to Baden-Baden, a swish art-nouveau spa town picturesquely nestled at the foot of the Black Forest’s spruce-cloaked hills. Here you can wallow in thermal waters, saunter through the sculpture-speckled Lichtentaler Allee gardens and try your luck in the casino. Day four takes you south along the serpentine Schwarzwald-Hochstrasse, or B500, with tremendous forest and mountain panoramas at every bend. Stop to glimpse Germany’s largest square in Freudenstadt on your way to the curving Kinzigtal, the prettiest valley in this neck of the woods, with its orchards, vineyards and cluster of half-timbered villages. Your fifth day takes you to the Black Forest’s most storied town, Triberg, where Germany’s highest waterfall flows, the world’s biggest cuckoo clock calls, and Claus Schäfer bakes the best Black Forest gateau using the original 1915 recipe. Work off the cake with a walk or cross-country ski in the wooded heights of Martinskapelle or Stöcklewaldturm. A scenic hour’s drive from Triberg brings you to the sunny university city of Freiburg, close to the French border. Spend the day absorbing its easygoing flair in the Altstadt’s quaint lanes, watched over by a monster of a medieval minster. Wind out your final day by the lake. Swinging east brings you to forest-rimmed Titisee en route to the watery expanse of Lake Constance, Central Europe’s third largest lake, flanked by quaint villages, vineyards, wetlands and beaches. An afternoon in Konstanz is just long enough to get a taste of this Roman-rooted city, where the historic alleys of the Altstadt wend down to a relaxed lakefront promenade.
Franconia has a quite different feel to it than southern Bavaria and this itinerary gives a taste of what the region is all about. The lively capital of Franconia, Nuremberg has bags to see and do – including the Nuremberg trials courtroom, the Germanisches Nationalmuseum and the Deutsche Bahn Railway Museum – and an embarrassment of eateries to choose from when you return from exploring the region. A close second in Franconia’s pecking order is Unesco-listed Bamberg, a confusion of ancient bridges, winding cobbled streets and riverside cottages, the air perfumed by numerous breweries producing the town’s unique Rauchbier (smoked beer). An hour’s train ride brings you to Bayreuth, famous for its annual Wagner Festival but a pleasant place to stroll any time of year. Around 100km north of Nuremberg, Coburg is memorable for its fortress, its British Royal family connections and the longest sausages you’ll ever eat served in the smallest bread buns. Round off your time in Franconia with a hike, bike or canoe trip (requiring more time) through the glorious Naturpark Altmühltal.

Germany’s most popular tourist route winds its way for 350km through Bavaria’s western reaches.

The Romantic Road begins at Würzburg where two days are enough to tour the impressive Baroque Residenz and sample the region’s wines. From here carve your way south to magical Rothenburg ob der Tauber where you can lose yourself in the tangle of medieval lanes and celebrate Christmas every day. Your next destination is quaint little Dinkelsbühl, a medieval gem ringed by a complete set of town walls. More medieval defences ring Nördlingen, a less touristy but equally attractive stopover. Then set aside some time to check out the storybook castle guarding the half-timbered village of Harburg, and to stroll through the Donauwörth before hitting the energetic city of Augsburg, the Romantic Road’s biggest city with countless attractions. Many a church graces the Romantic Road but, to Augsburg’s south, the one packing the mightiest punch is the luminous Wieskirche, a true baroque masterpiece. Contemplate King Ludwig II’s flights of fancy at his whimsical castle, Schloss Neuschwanstein, where the route comes to a fittingly fairy-tale climax.

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Map Legend

Sights
- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours
- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkelling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

Sleeping
- Sleeping
- Camping

Eating
- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife
- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment
- Entertainment

Shopping
- Shopping

Information
- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

Geographic
- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Population
- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Transport
- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- S-Bahn/S-train/Subway station
- Taxi
- T-bane/Tunnelbana station
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Tube station
- U-Bahn/Underground station
- Other Transport

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book

Routes
- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries
- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography
- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas
- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove
OUR STORY
A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that’s all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, Across Asia on the Cheap. Within a week they’d sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony’s belief that ‘a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse’.

OUR WRITERS

Kerry Christiani
Stuttgart & the Black Forest, Salzburg & Around

Having lived for six years in the Black Forest, Kerry returned to this neck of the woods (her second home) to write her chapters. Summer hikes in the forest, bike rides on Lake Constance and going on the trail of Mozart and Maria in Salzburg kept her busy for this edition. She tweets @kerrychristiani and lists her latest work at www.kerrychristiani.com.

Marc Di Duca
Munich, Bavaria

A well-established travel-guide author, Marc has explored many corners of Germany over the last 25 years, but it’s to the quirky variety and friendliness of Bavaria that he returns most willingly. When not hiking Alpine valleys, eating snowballs in Rothenburg ob der Tauber or brewery hopping in Bamberg, he can be found in Sandwich, Kent, where he lives with his wife, Tanya, and their two sons.

Read more about Kerry at: https://auth.lonelyplanet.com/profiles/Kerry Christiani

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