

Romantic Road

Route 6 5 Stops

The [Romantic Road](#) is less about getting cozy with a special someone and more about the finer indulgences of life: art, festivals, good food, fine wine, palaces, castles, cobbled streets, and well-preserved beauty. On this 250-mile trip from Würzburg to Füssen, your job is simply to enjoy.



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Stop 1 on Romantic Road

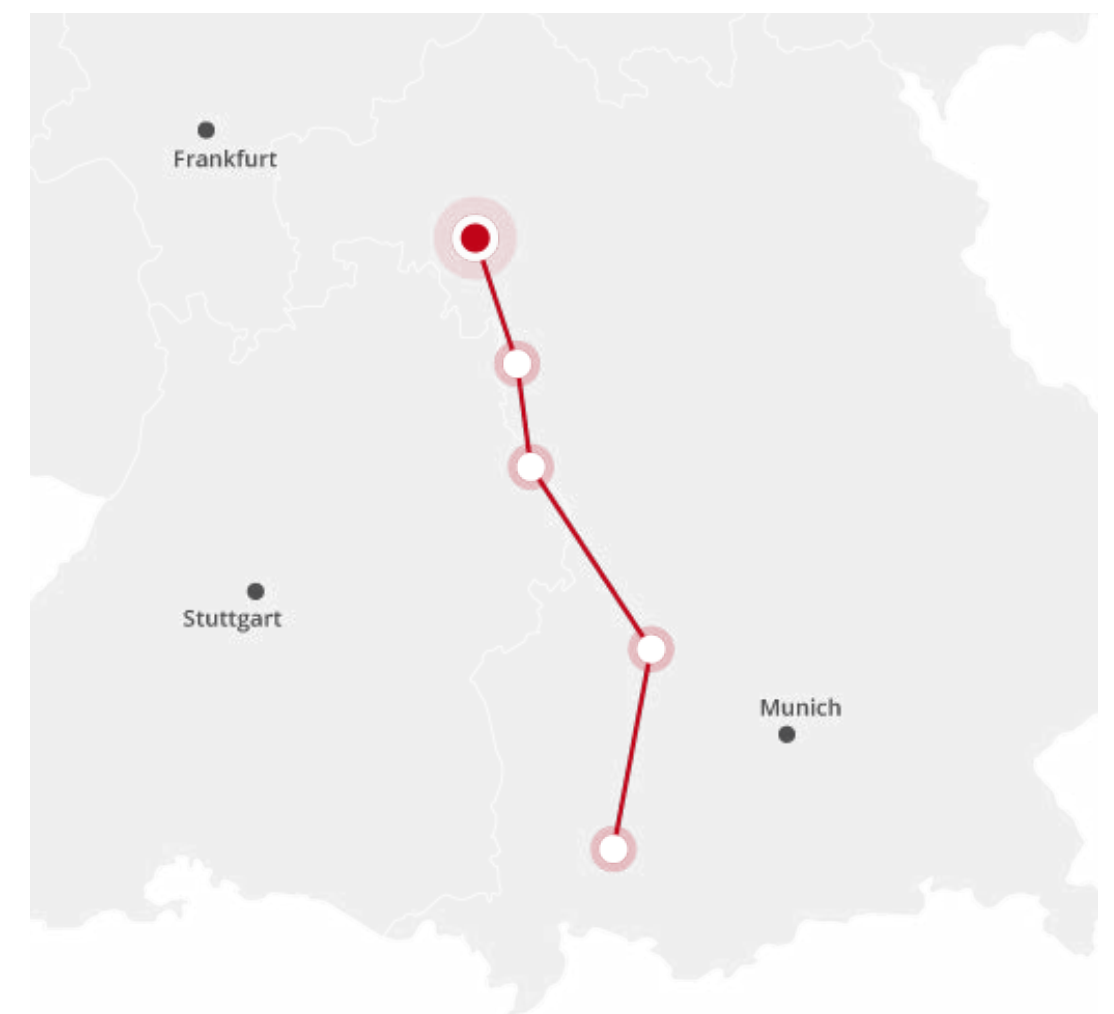
Würzburg Residenz

Credit: Photo: Shutterstock/Scirocco340

Würzburg Residenz is one of the most important Baroque palaces in Europe. Built for Prince-Bishop Johann Philipp Franz von Schönborn by the (subsequently) renowned architect Balthasar Neumann, its exterior—created by leading architects from Germany and France but also artists, sculptors, and woodcarvers from Italy—was constructed between 1720 and 1744, with the interior completed in 1780.

Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1981, its many highlights include the White, Imperial, and Garden Halls; the Mirror Cabinet; and the grand staircase and frescoed ceiling by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, the most-touted fresco painter of the 18th century.

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Stop 2 on Romantic Road

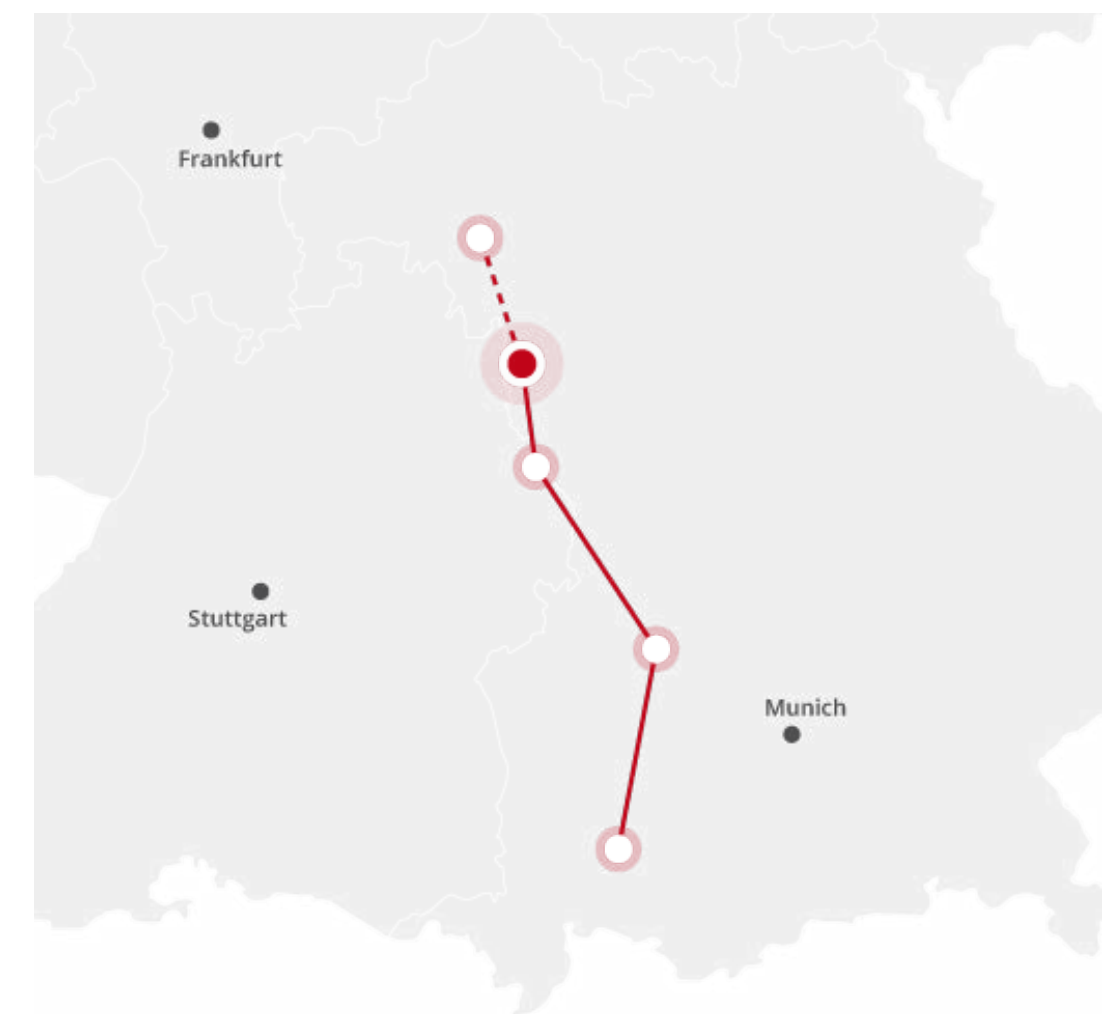
Rothenburg ob der Tauber

Credit: Photo: Shutterstock/Boris Stroujko

One of the distinctive highlights of the Romantic Road in terms of towns—along with Dinkelsbühl and Nördlingen to the south—is Rothenburg ob der Tauber. Its medieval walls, dating from the 1100s, contain a slew of beautiful half-timbered buildings and cobbled alleyways. Well-preserved gatehouses and towers, like the medieval Town Hall, turn historic views into memorable panoramas.

St. Jakobskirche, which rises dramatically over the city, is home to numerous invaluable treasures, like the Holy Blood Altar by Tilman Riemenschneider. The Imperial City Museum, located in a former Dominican monastery, hosts the impressive Baumann Foundation, which tells the history of weapons in Europe from the Stone Age up to the 19th century.

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Stop 3 on Romantic Road

Dinkelsbühl

This former imperial town has an idyllic setting in the lovely Wörnitz Valley, about an hour west of Nuremberg. A little less touristy than some of the other Romantic Road towns, it has some major draws—including the Weinmarkt, with its cobbled streets, quaint gabled houses, and 15th-century Deutsches Haus. Book a room there if you can: Once the residence of the Counts of Drechsel-Deufstetten, the Deutsches Haus is now a hotel and restaurant. Its intricately carved facade of the planets and gods is still stunning, hundreds of years later.

Don't miss the gothic St. George's Church, constructed in the 15th century. It has a treasure trove of artwork and interior stylings, including six altars and a tabernacle each some 600 years old.

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Credit: Photo: © GNTB/Thomas Linkel



Stop 4 on Romantic Road

Fuggerei, Augsburg

Credit: Photo: © GNTB/Francesco Carovillano

One of Bavaria's oldest cities, Augsburg is also one of its most charming, thanks largely to its UNESCO-listed town center and its network of waterways. With over 500 bridges of differing shapes and sizes, it puts even Venice to shame.

While you should definitely wander the waterways, you might be here to see the "Fuggerei," the oldest social housing complex in the world, built between 1514 and 1523. Located near the Rathausplatz, the handsome array of vine-clad houses, with their colorful tiles and window shutters, still accommodate around 150 people who can't afford normal rented accommodation. Even today, they pay less than a euro per month.

Note: The Fugger and Welser Museum offers more details about the origins and development of the Fugger family, once the world's richest.

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Stop 5 on Romantic Road

Neuschwanstein Castle

Credit: Photo: © GNTB/Francesco Carovillano

If there's one German castle that takes the tourist cake, it's this one. Inspired by the flamboyant-for-the-times Wartburg Castle and his former palace at Hohenschwangau, Ludwig II demanded Neuschwanstein be built to his dramatic tastes. But the king of Bavaria wouldn't get the chance to enjoy his fairytale: Construction began in 1867 and finished abruptly in 1886 when Ludwig died in mysterious circumstances on Lake Starnberg. Only 14 of the proposed 200+ rooms were completed, and many remain unfinished to this day.

The castle—in Füssen, on the border with Austria—is now one of Germany's most-visited sites, thanks to its spectacular construction, well-maintained and elaborately decorated rooms, and famously scenic bridge. The Disney logo doesn't hurt, either.

Tip: Linderhof Palace, another dazzling Ludwig residence, is less than 10 miles away; Chiemsee—one of Germany's most scenic lakes, about two hours distant—is home to yet another unfinished Ludwig showpiece, Herrenchiemsee Palace.

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