

German Avenues Route

Route 2 5 Stops

From the tiptop of the country at the Baltic Sea all the way down to Lake Constance, the [German Avenues Route](#) connects tree-lined paths, bucolic scenery, glittering lakes, forested trails, stunning castles, and postcard towns. Don't take this one too fast—the Avenues Route is all about slowing down and soaking it in.



in paid partnership with

Germany
Simply inspiring



Stop 1 on German Avenues Route

Rügen

Photo: Shutterstock/ricok

Germany's Baltic coastline might not be on the international visitor list, but it's hugely popular with German tourists, and for good reason. A string of pleasant seaside towns with generous beaches and a laid-back atmosphere lacking the clueless crowds? Yes, please. We'll take two.

One of the main hotspots here is Rügen, Germany's largest island, which lies on the eastern edge of the coast towards the Polish border. Spanning some 350 square miles, it has an abundance of sand, quaint fishing villages, and national parks with chalky cliffs. Major events like the Störtebeker Festival open-air theatre show, in Ralswiek, take place here as well, and the 200-year-old Putbus Theater is as regal as they come.

Note: A 100-year-old narrow-gauge railway called "Raging Roland" connects many of the island's resorts.

[Click here for more info](#)



Stop 2 on German Avenues Route

Bauhaus at Dessau

Photo:Staatskanzlei Sachsen-Anhalt/Michael Deutsch

Dessau is all but synonymous with the Bauhaus school of design, which really hit its stride when it operated from Dessau between 1925 and 1932. All three Bauhaus directors—Walter Gropius, Hannes Meyer, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe—left their architectural mark on the buildings here, which are now regarded as iconic 20th-century standouts.

Aside from the main building, designed by Gropius, visitors can view the Masters' Houses, the Dessau-Törten Housing Estate, the Kornhaus, House Fieger, the Steel House, and the Employment Office. The complex has enjoyed UNESCO status since 1996 and still draws architects, designers, artists, and students from the world over.

[Click here for more info](#)



Stop 3 on German Avenues Route

Wartburg Castle

Photo: GNTB/Francesco Carovillano

Wartburg Castle, perched some 1,300 feet above Eisenach in Thuringia, was the very first German castle to be designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site (1999). It's famous for a laundry list of things: hosting Martin Luther while he translated the New Testament into German; as the home of Saint Elisabeth; the setting of the fabled Battle of the Bards, a tale immortalized by Richard Wagner in his opera *Tannhäuser*; and the site of the 1817 Wartburg Festival, which celebrated the achievements of the Reformation and the Battle of Leipzig.

Most of its current exterior dates to 19th-century reconstructions, but the Great Hall still carries traces of 12th-century Romanesque architecture. Catch a summer concert or other event here, including the popular Christmas market.

Note: The hall's art collection contains paintings by Lucas Cranach and sculptures by Tilman Riemenschneider.

[Click here for more info](#)



Germany
Simply inspiring



Stop 4 on German Avenues Route

Rennsteig Trail, Thuringia Forest

Photo: GNTB/Francesco Carovillano

The Avenues Route is so named for its roads lined with a dazzling variety of trees—linden, oak, maple, and chestnut, as well as slim birches and giant beeches. But, as they don't quite say, you've got to get out of the car to see the forest. The route is also chock full of natural areas perfect for hiking, with Tolkien-esque names to seal the deal.

Case in point: The 104-mile Rennsteig Trail through the Thuringia Forest is Germany's oldest (700 years!) and arguably its best. Coniferous and mixed forests, mountain meadows, emerald woodlands, narrow gorges, and surprisingly steep climbs keep hikers busy, and there's no better way to immerse yourself in the soul of the region.

[Click here for more info](#)



Stop 5 on German Avenues Route

Freudenstadt to Reichenau

Photo: GNTB/Francesco Carovillano

This stretch of the Avenues Route, through the scenic state of Baden-Württemberg, is particularly peppered with highlights. If you're a fan of castles and architecture, there's the mighty Hohenzollern Castle nestled in the Swabian Alb; the fairytale-worthy Lichtenstein Castle overlooking the Echaz Valley; the Romanesque Alpirsbach Monastery; and the Baroque monastery of Zwiefalten. For true history buffs, there's some fascinating reconstructed Stone Age and Bronze Age pile dwellings at Unteruhldingen, based on originals from 4,000-850 BCE.

For something livelier, the nearby university town of Tübingen has plenty of restaurants, bars, and shops, as does Konstanz, the largest town on the lake of the same name. The real finale is in the lake, of course: the striking Reichenau Island, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that, despite covering less than two square miles, features several historic spots—including the traces of a Benedictine monastery founded in 724.

[Click here for more info](#)

