

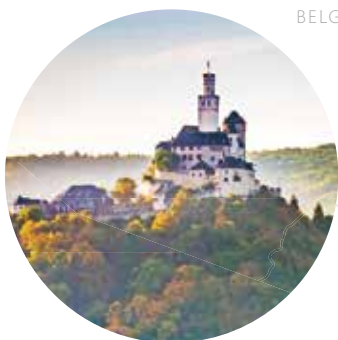
SPEND a pre-hike day in **Bonn** exploring the city's world-class museums, including the Beethoven House

GERMANY

BELGIUM

HIKE up to the Marksburg in **Braubach** – perhaps Germany's most picture-perfect medieval castle

TRY one of the region's many fine-dining restaurants, such as Yunico in Bonn or Da Vinci in Koblenz



RIDE the sesselbahn (chairlift) up from **Boppard** for a great view of the "bendiest bend on the Rhine"

LUXEMBOURG

TAKE a break to wander through the attractive vineyards near **Rüdesheim am Rhein**

Wiesbaden

19

Rheinsteig

LOCATION Germany **START/FINISH** Bonn/Wiesbaden **DISTANCE** 320 km (199 miles) **TIME** 21 days **DIFFICULTY** Moderate; some steep sections
INFORMATION www.rheinsteig.de

Explore some of Germany's most appealing landscapes on this epic hike. The north-to-south trail leads through forest-covered hills, sun-soaked vineyards and chocolate-box villages.

One of Europe's longest rivers, the Rhine meanders majestically through Germany, from Bodensee to the border with the Netherlands. The Rheinsteig hiking trail may only take in a quarter of the river's length, but its terraced vineyards, volcanic hills and storybook towns make it one of the more scenic stretches.

Your journey begins in Bonn, the birthplace of Beethoven and erstwhile capital of West Germany. Starting in the city's historic market square, the trail crosses the river before winding southwards into the Siebengebirge, a range of undulating hills with sweeping vistas of the river below. For the best vantage point, hop on the Drachenfelsbahn cog railway up to the old castle ruins.

The path continues through wild woodland and flower-filled meadows to Linz am Rhein, with its colourful, half-timbered houses. From here, it's just a short hop on to Bad Hönningen, famed for both its hot springs and its cool wineries, before the path diverts away from the river and into the foothills of the Westerwald.

You'll soon rejoin the Rhine on the road to Koblenz. Take time to explore this cultural capital's rich Roman history and colossal hilltop forts. Ready to go? Simply follow the Rhine south – through thick forests and lush vineyards, via medieval castles and Gothic churches – until you reach the charming city of Wiesbaden. As one of Europe's oldest spa towns, it's a perfect place to sooth your aching muscles and toast the end of an epic adventure.



another way

Don't have three weeks? There are plenty of shorter walks along the way, whether you prefer a three-day hike from Bonn to Linz or a half-day circular walk around the pretty town of Vallendar.