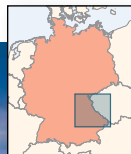


Chapter 6

6

FRANCONIA AND THE GERMAN DANUBE

Updated by
Joseph Reaney



WELCOME TO FRANCONIA AND THE GERMAN DANUBE

TOP REASONS TO GO

★ **Vierzehnheiligen:** South of Coburg, this church's swirling rococo decoration earned it the nickname "God's Ballroom."

★ **Bamberg's**

Altstadt: Bamberg may be a UNESCO World Heritage Site, but it's also a vibrant town—the center of German brewing—living very much in the present.

★ **Nuremberg's Kaiserburg:**

Holy Roman emperors once resided in the vast complex of this imperial castle, which has fabulous views over the entire city.

★ **Regensburg's Steinerne**

Brücke: The 12th-century Stone Bridge was considered an amazing feat of engineering in its time.

★ **Kloster Weltenburg:**

Stop for an abbey-brewed beer in the courtyard of this riverside monastery, southwest of Regensburg.

★ **Passau's organ concerts:**

You can listen to the mighty sound the 17,774 pipes of Dom St. Stephan's organ create at weekday concerts.

Franconia divides northern and southern Germany. Sitting in the northeastern corner of Bavaria, it is defined by two rivers: the Main, which snakes around Coburg, Bayreuth, and Bamberg; and the Danube, which flows directly through Regensburg and Passau. Its capital is Nuremberg.

1 Coburg. The seat of the Saxe-Coburg-Gotha dynasty, whose members included Albert (husband of Victoria).

2 Bamberg. Built on seven hills, the Altstadt (Old Town) is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

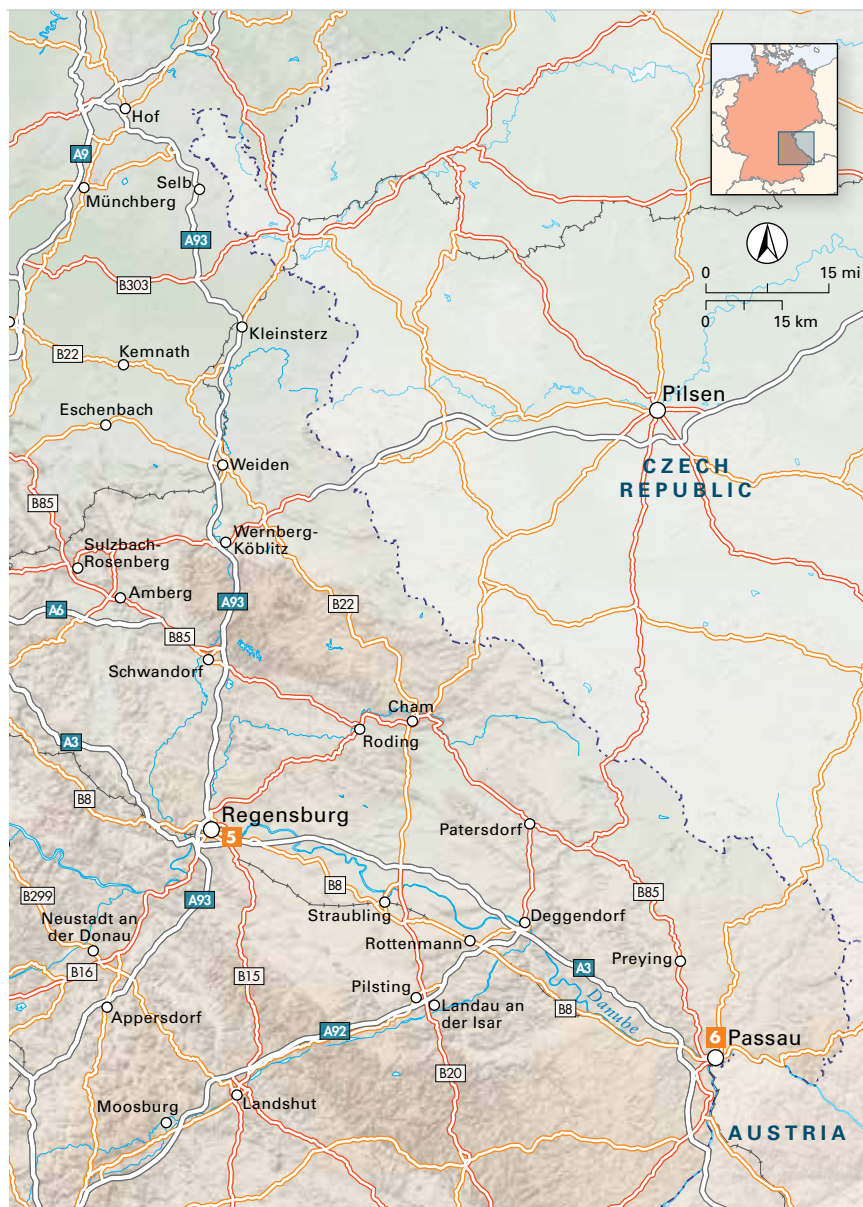
3 Bayreuth. Famous for its music and, in particular, its most famous resident: Richard Wagner.

4 Nuremberg (Nürnberg). Franconia's main city is full of history, from medieval city walls to Nazi parade grounds.

5 Regensburg. Discover a magnificent cathedral and medieval stone bridge that survived World War II.

6 Passau. The charming Old Town stands uniquely at the confluence of three rivers.





GERMANY'S CHRISTMAS MARKETS



Few places in the world do Christmas as well as Germany. The country's festive markets, sparkling with white fairy lights and rich with the smells of gingerbread and mulled wine, are marvelous traditional expressions of yuletide cheer.

Following a centuries-old tradition, thousands of *Weihnachtsmärkte* spring up outside town halls and in village squares across the country each year, their stalls brimming with ornate tree decorations and handmade pralines. Elegant rather than kitsch, the markets last the duration of Advent—the four weeks leading up to Christmas Eve—and draw festive crowds to their bustling lanes, where charcoal grills sizzle with sausages and the aroma of cinnamon and spices waft from warm ovens. Among the handcrafted angels and fairies, kids munch on candy apples and ride old-fashioned carousels while their parents shop for stocking stuffers and toast the season with steaming mugs of *Glühwein* and hot chocolate.

GLÜHWEIN

The name for hot spiced wine literally means “glowing wine” and a few cups of it will definitely add some color to your cheeks. It can be made from mulled red (the more popular) or white wine. *Glühwein* can be fortified with a *Schuss*, or shot of schnapps. *Feuerzangenbowle*, a supercharged version, is made by burning a rum-soaked sugar cone that drips caramelized sugar into the wine.

Dating from the late Middle Ages, Christmas markets began as a way to provide people with winter supplies; families came for the sugary treats and Christmas shopping. Now a bit more touristy, a visit to a traditional Christmas market is still a quintessential German experience.

The most famous markets are in **Nuremberg** and **Dresden**, each drawing more than 2 million visitors every year. While these provide the essential market experience, it's well worth visiting a market in a smaller town to soak in some local flavor. **Erfurt's** market, set on the Cathedral Square, is the most picturesque. **Berlin's** immigrant communities offer themed markets on weekends, most notably the Hannu-mas Market at the Jewish Museum or the Finnish Christmas Market in Tempelhof. The best time to visit is during the week when the crowds are the smallest; locals tend to visit the markets with their friends and family in early evening.

Each market has its own specialties—gingerbread in Nuremberg and stollen in Dresden—but the thread through them all is candied almonds, warm chestnuts, and local sausages. Be sure to pair your snacks with a cup of hot spiced wine, which is served in small



mugs that make great souvenirs. The wine varies from region to region, and special hot white wine is a trendy alternative. Other drinks include a warm egg punch, hot chocolate, and warm berry juices for children.

TIPS FOR VISITING

Always ask for local goods. Craftspeople from the Erzgebirge or the village of Seiffen in Saxony produce some of the finest smoking-man incense burners, nativity scenes, candle pyramids, glass balls, and advent stars.

Think about how you're getting your purchases home. A few vendors will ship your purchases for you, but plan some extra baggage space and purchase some bubble wrap.

Dress warmly and wear comfortable shoes. All markets are outside, and even the smallest requires walking.

Bring some small bills and coins. This will make food and wine transactions faster. Plastic dishes and cups require a deposit, which is refunded to you when you return the items. While many market vendors take credit cards, it isn't always guaranteed—and particularly not at food stalls.



All that is left of the huge, ancient kingdom of the Franks is the region known today as Franconia, stretching from the Bohemian Forest on the Czech border to the outskirts of Frankfurt. The Franks were not only tough warriors but also hard workers, sharp tradespeople, and burghers with a good political nose and a penchant for wine. It was only in the early 19th century, following Napoléon's conquest of what is now southern Germany, that the area was incorporated into northern Bavaria.

Although more closely related to neighboring Thuringia, this historic homeland of the Franks is now begrudgingly part of Bavaria. Towns such as Bayreuth, Coburg, and Bamberg are practically places of cultural pilgrimage. Rebuilt Nuremberg (Nürnberg in German) is the epitome of German medieval beauty, though its name recalls both the Third Reich's huge rallies at the Zeppelin Field and its henchmen's trials held in the city between 1945 and 1950.

Its long and rich history, its landscapes and leisure activities (including skiing, golfing, hiking, and cycling), and its gastronomic specialties place it high on the enjoyment scale and keep it popular with tourists. Franconia is especially famous for its wine and for the fact that it's home to more than half of Germany's breweries.

MAJOR REGIONS

In **Northern Franconia**, three major German cultural centers lie within close proximity. Coburg has links to royal dynasties throughout Europe, including (most famously) that of England. Bamberg is the beer capital of Germany. And Bayreuth and its connection to composer Richard Wagner have made it a place of musical pilgrimage for Wagner fans from all over the world.

Nuremberg is Franconia's most important city and one of the most historic in Germany. There's plenty to see and do, and if you're here during the Christmas season, the Christkindlesmarkt here is Europe's largest.

South of here lies the **German Danube**. The famous 2,988-km-long (1,857-mile-long) river originates in Germany's Black Forest and flows through 10 countries. While

initially an unremarkable stream when passing through cities such as Ulm, that all changes at Kelheim, just west of Regensburg, where the Main–Donau Canal (completed in 1992) brings big river barges all the way from the North Sea. The river grows dramatically in Regensburg, where the ancient Steinerne Brücke (Stone Bridge) needs 15 spans of 30–48 feet each to bridge the water. In the university town of Passau, two more rivers join the waters of the Danube before Europe's longest river continues into Austria and beyond, eventually emptying into the Black Sea.

Planning

Getting Here and Around

AIR

The nearest major international airport serving Franconia and the German Danube is Munich, around 50 km (31 miles) south of the region. Within Franconia, Nuremberg's airport (📍 *airport-nuernberg.de*) is served mainly by regional carriers, though there are a handful of European connections (mostly seasonal).

CAR

Franconia is served by five main autobahns: A7 from Hamburg, A3 from Cologne and Frankfurt, A81 from Stuttgart, A6 from Heilbronn, and A9 from Munich. Nuremberg is 167 km (104 miles) north of Munich and 222 km (138 miles) southeast of Frankfurt. Regensburg and Passau are reached by way of the A3 from Nuremberg.

CRUISE

Whether you choose a one-hour, one-week, or the complete Danube experience, cruising Europe's historical waterway is a never-to-be-forgotten experience. On the map, the sheer length of the Danube is daunting at best; of the river's 2,848-km (1,770-mile) length, more

than 2,400 km (1,500 miles) is navigable and the river flows through some of Europe's most important cities. You can head to major boating hubs, like Passau, Vienna, and Budapest or through historical stretches from Ulm to Regensburg.

The most interesting time to cruise the Danube is during the summer, when the river bustles with passenger and commercial traffic. When the leaves start to change the river is awash in a sea of color, making autumn the most picturesque time to cruise. Many companies offer Christmas market tours from Nuremberg to Regensburg, Passau, Vienna, and Budapest. Spring is the least optimal time to go as the river often floods. You can board cruises from Passau, Regensburg, and Nuremberg among others with companies like Viking River Cruises, Uniworld, Tauck, and AMA Waterways.

Donauschiffahrt Wurm & Noe

BOAT TOURS | This cruise line offers a half-dozen day cruises through Franconia and the German Danube. With departures from Passau and Regensburg, boats travel to destinations up and down the Danube, especially to Valhalla. Multi-day cruises run all the way to Austria (Linz and Vienna), Slovakia (Bratislava), and Hungary (Budapest). ✉ *Höllg. 26, Passau* ☎ 851/929–292 🌐 *donauschiffahrt.eu*.

Regensburger Personen-Schiffahrt Klinger

BOAT TOURS | With departures from Regensburg, Klinger serves the Danube basin with short excursions and longer trips. The highlight of the fleet is a medieval wooden cargo ship, rebuilt with the modern conveniences. ✉ *Thundorfer Str., Regensburg* ☎ 941/52104 🌐 *schiffahrt-klinger.de*.

TRAIN

Franconia has one of southern Germany's most extensive train networks, and almost every town is connected by train. Nuremberg is the regional hub

and a stop on the high-speed InterCity Express (ICE) north-south routes. There are hourly trains from Munich direct to Nuremberg. Regular InterCity services connect Nuremberg and Regensburg with Frankfurt and other major German cities. Trains run hourly from Frankfurt to Nuremberg, and there are also hourly trains from Munich to Regensburg.

Some InterCity Express trains stop in Bamberg, about midway between Berlin and Munich. Local trains from Nuremberg connect with Bayreuth and areas of southern Franconia. Regensburg and Passau are on the ICE line from Nuremberg to Vienna.

Hotels

Make reservations well in advance for hotels in all the larger towns and cities if you plan to visit anytime between June and September. During the Nuremberg Toy Fair at the beginning of February, rooms are at a premium. If you're visiting Bayreuth during the annual Wagner Festival in July and August, make your reservations the moment after you secure your tickets in the December ballot, as rooms go fast. Remember, too, that during the festival prices can be double the normal rates.

Planning Your Time

When exploring Franconia, it's best to base yourself in one or two cities, and take day trips to the others. For the north of the region, Bamberg is the most central base; explore around here by car or train. For the south, you could stay in Nuremberg and make the trip downstream to Regensburg and/or Passau by boat, returning by train.

Restaurants

Many restaurants in the rural parts of this region serve hot meals only between 11:30 am and 2 pm, and from 6 to 9 pm.

■ **TIP** → **"Durchgehend warme Küche"** means that hot meals are also served between lunch and dinner.

⇒ Prices in dining reviews are the average cost of a main course at dinner, or if dinner is not served, at lunch. Prices in hotel reviews are the lowest cost of a standard double room in high season.

What It Costs in Euros

\$	\$\$	\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$
RESTAURANTS			
under €15	€15–€25	€26–€35	over €35
HOTELS			
under €100	€100–€175	€176–€225	over €225

Visitor Information

CONTACTS **Franconia Tourist Board.**

✉ *Nürnberg* ☎ 0911/941–510 🌐 *franken-tourismus.de*.

When to Go

Summer is the best time to explore Franconia, though spring and fall are also fine when the weather cooperates. Avoid the cold and wet months from November to March; many hotels and restaurants close, and no matter how pretty, many towns do seem quite dreary. There's one exception: Nuremberg in December, when it's home to one of Germany's largest and loveliest Christmas markets. Unless you plan on attending the Wagner Festival in Bayreuth, it's best to avoid this city in July and August.

Coburg

106 km (66 miles) northeast of Würzburg,
105 km (65 miles) north of Nuremberg.

Coburg is a surprisingly little-known treasure in Northern Franconia. Founded in the 11th century, Coburg remained in the possession of the dukes of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha until 1918; the current duke still lives here. The remarkable Saxe-Coburg dynasty established itself as something of a royal stud farm, providing a seemingly inexhaustible supply of blue-blood marriage partners to ruling houses the length and breadth of Europe. The most famous of these royal mates was Prince Albert (1819–61), who married the English Queen Victoria, after which she gained special renown in Coburg. Their numerous children, married off to other kings, queens, and emperors, helped to spread the tried-and-tested Saxe-Coburg influence even farther afield. Despite all the history that sweats from each sandstone ashlar, Coburg is a modern and bustling town.

GETTING HERE AND AROUND

It takes a little more than an hour to drive to Coburg from Nuremberg, via the A73. It's a similar amount of time on the regional train service, which runs regularly throughout the day and costs from €15 one way. From Würzburg, it's a 1¼-hour drive on the A7, A70, and B303, or a 1½-hour train via Bamberg.

VISITOR INFORMATION

CONTACTS **Tourismus Coburg.** ✉ *Herrng. 2, Coburg* ☎ *09561/898-000* 🌐 *coburg-marketing.de*.

WHEN TO GO

In 1994 organizers Rolf Beyersdorf and Christof Pilarzyk had, in their own words, a “crazy idea” for SAMBA-Festival that has since become a huge three-day festival with more than 3,000 *sambistas*. This weekend bacchanal, with food, drink, and dancing, is held in mid-July. 🌐 *samba-festival.de*

Sights

Kloster Banz (Banz Abbey)

RELIGIOUS BUILDING | This enormous abbey, which some call the “holy mountain of Bavaria,” sits majestically on the west bank of the Main river, 20 km (12½ miles) south of Coburg. There has been a monastery here since 1069, but the present buildings date from the end of the 17th century. The highlight of the complex is the elaborate, free-to-visit Klosterkirche (Abbey Church), the work of architect Leonard Dientzenhofer and his brother, the stuccoist Johann Dientzenhofer (1663–1726), though Balthasar Neumann later contributed a good deal of work. Concerts are occasionally held in the church, including some by members of the renowned Bamberger Symphoniker. Also here is the Museum Kloster Banz, with its permanent exhibitions on the history of the monastery. End your stay with refreshments in the Klosterschänke beer garden outside the gate. ☒ *Kloster-Banz-Str. 1, Bad Staffelstein* ➔ 20 km (12½ miles) south of Coburg ☎ *09573/3370* 🆓 *Free; Museum €4.*

Marktplatz (Market Square)

PLAZA/SQUARE | A statue of Prince Albert, Victoria's high-minded consort, is surrounded by gracious Renaissance and baroque buildings in Coburg's beautiful Marktplatz. The 16th century Stadthaus, former seat of the local dukes, is the most imposing structure here, with a forest of ornate gables and spires projecting from its well-proportioned facade. Opposite is the ornate, four-story Rathaus (Town Hall) which, in January 1931, held the dubious honor of being the first public building in Germany to fly the swastika flag. For a lighter perspective, look for the figure on top of the building's tympanum (the triangular section with the clock); this is the Bratwurstmännla, whose 31-centimeter-long (12-inches) staff is said to be the official length against which the town's famous bratwürsts are measured. These tasty sausages, roasted

on pinecone fires, are available on the market square. ☒ *Coburg*.

Schloss Callenberg

CASTLE/PALACE | Perched on a hill 5 km (3 miles) northwest of Coburg, this was, until 1231, the main castle of the Knights of Callenberg. In the 16th century it was taken over by the Dukes of Coburg and from 1842 it served as the summer residence of the hereditary Coburg prince and later Duke Ernst II. It holds a number of important collections, including the Herzoglicher Kunstbesitz (the Ducal Art Collection, complete with portraits of the Dukes of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha and precious baroque, Empire, and Biedermeier furniture) and the Schützenmuseum (the museum of the German Rifle Association, featuring antiques from the history of shooting—but very little information in English). There are three ways to reach the castle from Coburg: by car (10 minutes), by bus (5 minutes to Beirsdorf, then a 25-minute walk), or by foot (55 minutes). ☒ *Callenberger Str. 1, Coburg* ➔ 5 km (3 miles) northwest of Coburg ☎ 09561/55150 🌐 *schloss-callenberg.com* 📄 €8 🕒 Closed Mon.–Wed.

Schloss Ehrenburg

CASTLE/PALACE | Prince Albert spent much of his childhood in this ducal palace in the heart of Coburg. Built in the mid-16th century, it has been greatly altered over the years, principally following a fire in the early 19th century. Duke Ernst I invited Karl Friedrich Schinkel from Berlin to redo the palace in the then-popular neo-Gothic style. Some of the original Renaissance features were kept. The rooms of the castle are quite special, especially those upstairs, where the ceilings are heavily decorated with stucco and the floors have wonderful patterns of various woods. The Hall of Giants is named for the larger-than-life caryatids that support the ceiling; the favorite sight downstairs is Queen Victoria's flush toilet, which was the first one installed in Germany. Here,

too, the ceiling is worth noting for its playful, gentle stuccowork. ☒ *Schlosspl. 1, Coburg* ☎ 09561/80880 🌐 *schloesser-coburg.de* 📄 €5; combined ticket with *Schloss Rosenau* €8 🕒 Closed Mon.

Schloss Rosenau

CASTLE/PALACE | Near the village of Rödenal, 9 km (5½ miles) northeast of Coburg, the 550-year-old Schloss Rosenau sits in all its neo-Gothic glory in the midst of an English-style park. Prince Albert was born here in 1819, and one room is devoted entirely to Albert and his queen, Victoria. Much of the castle furniture was made especially for the Saxe-Coburg family by noted Viennese craftsmen. In the garden's Orangerie is the Museum für Modernes Glas (Museum of Modern Glass), which displays nearly 40 years' worth of glass sculptures (dating from 1950 to 1990) that provide an interesting juxtaposition with the venerable architecture of the castle itself. To get here, either drive 15 minutes from Coburg via Neustadter Str. or catch a 10-minute bus to Rödenal then walk the last mile. ☒ *Rosenau 1, Rödenal* ➔ 9 km (5½ miles) northeast of Coburg ☎ 09563/308410 🌐 *schloesser-coburg.de* 📄 €5; combined ticket with *Schloss Ehrenburg* €8 🕒 Closed Mon.

★ Veste Coburg

CASTLE/PALACE | This fortress, one of the largest and most impressive in the country, is Coburg's main attraction. The brooding bulk of the castle guards the town atop a 1,484-foot hill. Construction began around 1055, but with progressive rebuilding and remodeling, the predominantly late Gothic–early Renaissance edifice bears little resemblance to the original crude fortress. Seek out the elaborate 17th-century Jagdintarsien-Zimmer (Hunting Marquetry Room), home to some of the finest woodwork in southern Germany, as well as the room where Martin Luther lived for six months in 1530 while he observed the goings-on of the Augsburg Diet.

Today, much of the castle is given over to two exceptional museums. The first is the Kunstsammlungen, an impressive art collection with works by Dürer, Hans Holbein, and Riemenschneider, among others, as well as furniture, historical weapons, and coins. The second is the Europäisches Museum für Modernes Glas, a vast and valuable antique glass collection, with most exhibits from the baroque age, along with some modern ceramics. ✉ *Festungshof, Coburg* ☎ 09561/8790 🌐 *kunstsammlungen-coburg.de* 💶 €9 *Kunstsammlungen*; €6 *Europäisches Museum für Modernes Glas* ☺ Closed Mon. in Nov.–Mar.

★ Vierzehnheiligen

CHURCH | On the edge of Bad Staffelstein, 21 km (13 miles) southeast of Coburg, stands this tall, elegant, yellow-sandstone edifice whose interior represents one of the great examples of rococo decoration. The church was built by Balthasar Neumann (architect of the Residenz at Würzburg) between 1743 and 1772 to commemorate a vision of Christ and 14 saints—*vierzehn Heiligen*—that appeared to a shepherd in 1445. The interior, known as “God’s Ballroom,” is supported by 14 columns. In the middle of the church is the *Gnadenaltar* (Mercy Altar) featuring the 14 saints. Thanks to clever play with light and color, including the fanciful gold-and-blue trimmings, the dizzying interior seems to be in perpetual motion. Guided tours of the church are given on request; a donation is expected. The easiest way here from Coburg is by car (20 minutes), though the road leading to the church is often closed at weekends so you may have to walk the last half mile. Alternatively, take a 20-minute train to Lichtenfels, then a 10-minute bus to the church. ✉ *Vierzehnheiligen 2, Bad Staffelstein* ➔ 21 km (13 miles) southeast of Coburg ☎ 09571/95080 🌐 *vierzehnheiligen.de*.

Restaurants

Brauhaus Stadt

\$\$ | **GERMAN** | Brewing traditional craft Veste beer in the heart of Coburg, this small brewery, which is part of the larger Brauhaus Coburg, is just the place for massive portions of roasted meat and other Franconian specialties. As for the accompanying beer, you can pour it fresh yourself from the taps at the table. **Known for:** incredible pork knuckle; traditional Franconian cuisine; good craft beer. 💵 *Average main:* €19 ✉ *Mauer 2, Coburg* ☎ 09561/705–9192 🌐 *brauhaus-coburg.de* ☺ No lunch.

★ Empanadas de la Nonna

\$ | **ARGENTINE** | Perhaps the best quick snack option in Coburg, this cozy little Argentinian-Colombian cafe serves all manner of empanadas (both meat and vegetarian options), along with sandwiches, Spanish omelettes and sweet treats. The coffee is good, too—as is the Quilmes beer. **Known for:** delicious “carne” and “verdura” empanadas; traditional alfajor sweets with dulce de leche; unfailingly friendly service. 💵 *Average main:* €3 ✉ *Judengasse 7, Coburg* ☎ 0176/205–44–773 🌐 *facebook.com/empanadascoburg* ☺ Closed Sun.–Mon.

Hotels

Goldene Rose

\$ | **HOTEL** | One of the region’s oldest accommodation options, this simple but pleasant inn with modern rooms and a popular summer beer garden is in a small village about 5 km (3 miles) southeast of Coburg. **Pros:** family-run; very good value; large parking lot behind the hotel. **Cons:** in a small village (you’ll need a car); front rooms over beer garden can be noisy; rooms plainly decorated. 💵 *Rooms from:* €78 ✉ *Coburgerstr. 31, Coburg* ➔ 5 km (3 miles) southeast of Coburg ☎ 09560/92250 🌐 *goldene-rose.de* 🚗 13 rooms 🌞 Free Breakfast.

Hotel Goldene Traube

\$ | **HOTEL** | In the heart of Coburg, this fine, historical property dates from 1756, though there has been a hotel on this site since 1586. **Pros:** welcoming and spacious lobby; generous breakfast; center of town. **Cons:** traffic noise in front rooms; stairs up to the lobby; breakfast costs extra. 📞 *Rooms from: €90* 📧 *Am Viktoriabrunnen 2, Coburg* ☎ *09561/8760* 🌐 *www.dormero.de/hotel-coburg* 🚗 *68 rooms* 🍷 *No Meals.*

Shopping

Wilhelm Feyler

FOOD & DRINK | Coburg is full of culinary delights, and none is more famous than its *Schmätzchen* (honey gingerbread) and *Elisenlebkuchen* (almond gingerbread cake). Pick up home-baked versions, including vegan and gluten-free varieties, at this 130-year-old bakery. 📧 *Rosengasse 6-8, Coburg* ☎ *09561/80480* 🌐 *www.feyler-lebkuchen.de* ☺ *Closed Sun.*

Bamberg

52 km (32 miles) south of Coburg, 60 km (37 miles) north of Nuremberg.

Sitting majestically on seven hills above the Regnitz River, the entire Altstadt area of this beautiful, historic town is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It's a must-see because few towns in Germany survived the war with as little damage as Bamberg, and its canals and bridges make it a joy to stroll. Although it exploded onto the European political scene as the capital of the Holy Roman Empire under Emperor Heinrich II, its idyllic Old Town, with winding cobblestone streets, contains one of the best-preserved collections of early-medieval half-timber structures in Europe, dominated by the cathedral, consecrated in 1237.

Favorite Places



Joseph Reaney: One of things I love most about Germany is its wide variety of beers, from *schwarzbier* (black lager) to *hefeweizen* (unfiltered wheat beer). In Franconia, I'll seek out the local gem: *rauchbier* (smoked beer). A specialty of Bamberg's Spezial and Schlenkerla breweries, you can learn about its history (and sample it) at the Franconian Brewery Museum—the former Benedictine brewery of Kloster Michelsberg.

Bamberg can be divided into three main parts. The hilly *Bergstadt* lies to the west of the Regnitz and is the spiritual center of Bamberg, with the cathedral and palace overlooked by the enormous monastery. The *Inselstadt*, on an island in the river, is the civic and shopping center of Bamberg, where middle-class burghers established the city's trading posts—and Grüner Markt. And the *Gartenstadt*, on the northeastern edge of the city, is the garden center of Bamberg, with its farms and orchards supplying the city's markets and breweries.

GETTING HERE AND AROUND

Traveling to Bamberg by train from Coburg takes about 30 minutes. It's around 45 minutes from Nuremberg, two hours from Munich, and (a very worthwhile) five hours from Berlin. Bamberg's train station is a 20- to 40-minute walk from all the main attractions. By car from Coburg, it's 35 minutes straight down the A73 autobahn; from Nuremberg, it's 45 minutes up.

Eating Well in Franconia



Franconia is known for its good and filling food and for its simple and atmospheric *Gasthäuser*. Pork is a staple, served either as *Schweinsbraten* (a plain roast) or with *Knödel* (dumplings made from bread or potatoes). The specialties in Nuremberg, Coburg, and Regensburg are the *Bratwürste*—short spiced sausages. The Nuremberg variety is known all over Germany; they are even on the menu on the ICE trains. You can have them grilled or heated in a stock of onions and wine (*Blaue Zipfel*). *Bratwürste* are traditionally served in denominations of 3, 6, or 8 with sauerkraut and potato salad or dark bread.

On the sweet side, try the *Dampfnudel*, a tasty and filling sweet yeast-dough dumpling. *Nürnberger Lebkuchen* is a kind of gingerbread that is usually eaten at Christmastime and is loved all over Germany. A true purist swears

by *Elisenlebkuchen*, which are made with no flour. Both *Lebkuchen* and the small *Bratwürste* are protected under German law and are only “legal” when made in or around Nuremberg.

Not to be missed are Franconia’s liquid refreshments from both the grape and the grain. Franconian wines, usually white and sold in distinctive flat bottles called *Bocksbeutel*, are renowned for their special bouquet; Silvaner is the traditional grape. The region has the largest concentration of local breweries in the world (Bamberg alone has nine, Bayreuth seven), producing a wide range of brews, the most distinctive of which is the dark, smoky *Rauchbier* and the even darker and stronger *Schwärzla*. Then there’s Kulmbach’s *Doppelbock Kulminator 28*, which takes nine months to brew and has an alcohol content of 12%.

TOURS

Bamberg Tourismus recommends the iTour City Guide app, which offers a GPS-guided audio city tour for €4.49. In-person guided tours are offered every Saturday in July and August (€11); meet outside Tourist Information Center at 2:30 pm.

Personenschiffahrt Kropf

BOAT TOURS | Boats leave every day, March through October, for 80-minute cruises on the Regnitz River and the Main–Donau Canal. There are four sailings a day on Mondays and Tuesdays, and six Wednesday to Sunday. ✉ *Kapuzinerstr. 5, Bamberg* ☎ 0951/26679 🌐 *personenschiffahrt-bamberg.de* 💰 €13 🕒 *Closed mid–Nov.–mid–Mar.*

VISITOR INFORMATION

CONTACTS **Bamberg Tourismus**. ✉ *Geyerswörthstr. 5, Bamberg* ☎ 0951/297–6200 🌐 *bamberg.info*.



Alte Hofhaltung

HISTORIC DISTRICT | Dating from the 11th century, the oldest building complex in the city, the *Castrum Babenberg*, was once the seat of the ruling prince-bishops of Bamberg. The *Hofhaltung* was like a royal estate, with storage, workshops and anything else essential to supplying the court. When the prince-bishop moved into the baroque New Residence, the *Hofhaltung* served as a library, offices, and council chambers. The original buildings were renovated in the 16th century. The interior courtyard is like stepping back into the Middle Ages, with large

half-timber houses covered in boxed geraniums. Inside the main sandstone building is the *Katharinenkapelle*, a small 12th-century gothic chapel. Today, the complex houses the Bamberg Historical Museum and the courtyard hosts festivals and concerts. ✉ *Dompl., Bamberg* ☎ 0951/871-142 🌐 museum.bamberg.de/historisches-museum 📄 Free, Museum €8.

★ **Altes Rathaus** (*Old Town Hall*)

NOTABLE BUILDING | At Bamberg's historic core, the Altes Rathaus is tucked snugly on a small island in the Regnitz. To the west of the river is the so-called Bishops' Town; to the east, Burghers' Town. The citizens of Bamberg built this extravagantly decorated building on an artificial island when the bishop of Bamberg refused to give the city the land for a town hall. Industrious citizens quickly realized that the river was a tax haven as it wasn't claimed by anyone as property. The two bridges symbolically connect the spiritual side of Bamberg to the civic center. The outward appearance of the building is deceiving and gives the impression that the half-timbered section and the facade were built separately. The entire building is half-timbered, but the city plastered over the entire building in the 18th century and covered it with trompe-l'oeil frescos. For now, it's a building to be admired from the outside only, as ongoing restoration means the interior (including the Ludwig Collection of Meissen porcelain) is closed for the foreseeable future. ✉ *Obere Brücke 1, Bamberg*.

Bamberger Dom (*Bamberg Cathedral*)

CHURCH | Bamberg's great cathedral is a unique building that tells not only the town's story but that of Germany as well. The first building here was begun by Heinrich II in 1003, and it was in this partially completed cathedral that he was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 1012. In 1237 it was destroyed by fire, and replaced by the present, cross-shaped,

late Romanesque–early Gothic building. The building is a copy of 12th century version of St. Peters in Rome. The dominant features are the four massive towers at each corner, just like the older St. Peters.

Heading into the dark interior, you'll find a striking collection of monuments and art treasures. The most famous piece is the Bamberger Reiter (Bamberg Horseman), an equestrian statue carved—no one knows by whom—around 1230 and thought to be an allegory of chivalrous virtue or a representation of King Stephen of Hungary. Compare it with the mass of carved figures huddled in the tympana above the church portals. In the center of the nave, you'll find another masterpiece, the massive tomb of Heinrich and his wife, Kunigunde. It's the work of Tilman Riemenschneider.

Pope Clement II is also buried in the cathedral, in an imposing tomb beneath the high altar; he's the only pope buried north of the Alps. Throughout summer, organ concerts are given Saturday at noon in the Dom. Call for program details. ✉ *Dompl., Bamberg* 🌐 bamberg-er-dom.de.

Diözesanmuseum (*Diocesan Museum*)

CULTURAL MUSEUM | Directly adjacent to the Bamberg Dom, this museum contains one of many nails and splinters of wood reputed to be from the true cross of Jesus. The “star-spangled” cloak stitched with gold, given to Emperor Heinrich II by an Italian prince, is among the finest items displayed. More macabre exhibits in this rich ecclesiastical collection are the elaborately mounted skulls of Heinrich and Kunigunde. The building itself was designed by Balthasar Neumann (1687–1753), the architect of *Vierzehnheiligen*, and constructed between 1730 and 1733. ✉ *Dompl. 5, Bamberg* ☎ 0951/502-2502 🌐 dioezesanmuseum-bamberg.de 📄 €7 🕒 Closed Wed.

Fränkisches Brauereimuseum (Franconian Brewery Museum)

BREWERY | Once a Benedictine abbey, the Michelsberg Monastery has been gazing over Bamberg since 1015. Due to renovation work, the monastery's lovely Church of St. Michael is closed to the public until at least 2025, but it's still worth the long climb up to the abbey for this excellent brewery museum. Brewing has taken place on this site since at least the 12th century, and a downloadable audio guide will talk you through exhibits showcasing every step of the process, from the making of malt to the marketing of beer. You'll also learn why the local brew is notably smoky—and why almost all beers used to be. For a post-museum taste of Bamberg's beer culture, head down to one of the many pubs and brewhouses on the riverside Sandstrasse. 📧 *Michelsberg 10f, Bamberg* 📞 0951/53016 🌐 *brauereimuseum.de* 🚗 €4 🕒 Closed Mon.–Tues. and Nov.–Mar.

Maximiliansplatz

PLAZA/SQUARE | Stroll aimlessly around *Inselstadt*, admiring its original half-timber houses, and you'll soon find yourself in the pedestrianized Maximiliansplatz: the city's largest and most important town square. *Maxplatz*, as it's known by the locals, is home to several notable landmarks, including the baroque *Neues Rathaus* (New Town Hall) and the *Maximiliansbrunnen* (Maximilian Fountain), dedicated to Bamberg's patron saint Heinrich II. But the square is perhaps best known for its markets: the daily *Grüner Markt*, where you can shop for local produce, and the annual *Weihnachtsmarkt* (Christmas market). If you're in town for the latter, pick up a traditional *Zwetschgenmännla*, a human figure made from plums, dates and walnuts, which makes for a unique souvenir. 📧 *Bamberg*.

Neue Residenz (New Residence)

CASTLE/PALACE | This glittering baroque palace was once the home of the

prince-electors after they moved here from the *Alten Hofhaltung*. In the 18th century Lothar Franz von Schönborn—called *der Quadratischer* (the Cube) by Bambergers as he was reportedly as wide as he was tall—planned to extend the immense palace even further. On the corner of Obere Karolinenstrasse, the timbered bonding was intentionally left unfinished so that another wing could be added. Financial difficulties and the eventual secularization of Bavarian religious building cut short these plans. The most memorable room in the palace is the *Kaisersaal* (Throne Room), complete with elaborate stucco work. The impressive over-dimensional ceiling frescoes of German Emperors give the impression of looking into heaven. The rose garden behind the Neue Residenz provides an aromatic and romantic spot for a stroll with a view of Bamberg's roofscape. You have to take a German-language tour to see the Residenz itself and this is the only way to see the actual apartments. You can visit the rose garden and the *Staatsbibliothek* (library) at any time during opening hours; there's a lovely café here too. 📧 *Dompl. 8, Bamberg* 📞 0951/519–390 🌐 *residenz-bamberg.de* 🚗 €6.

Obere Pfarre

CHURCH | Bamberg's wealthy burghers built no fewer than 50 churches. The Church of Our Lady, known simply as the Obere Pfarre (Upper Parish), dates back to around 1325 and is unusual because the exterior is entirely Gothic, while the interior is heavily baroque. The grand choir, which lacks any windows, was added much later. An odd squarish box tops the church tower; this watchman's post was placed there to keep the tower smaller than the neighboring cathedral, thus avoiding a medieval scandal. Note the slanted floor, which allowed crowds of pilgrims to see the object of their veneration, a 14th-century Madonna. Don't miss the *Ascension of Mary* by Tinoretto at the rear of the church. Around



Bamberg's Altes Rathaus is perched precariously on an artificial island in the middle of the Regnitz River.

Christmas, the Obere Pfarre is the site of the city's greatest Nativity scene. Avoid the church during services, unless you've come to worship. ☒ *Frauenpl. 1, Bamberg.*

Restaurants

Klee Hof in der Gaertnerstadt

\$\$\$ | **MODERN EUROPEAN** | If sausages and sauerkraut are getting a bit tedious, head towards the Gartenstadt for some healthier options. This family-run restaurant, part of the Hotel Europa, combines local Franconian ingredients and produce with a modern and international flair. **Known for:** fresh local produce; vegetarian and vegan options (try the creamy mushroom noodles); great location in the Gartenstadt. ☎ *Average main: €24* ☒ *Hotel Europa Bamberg, Untere Königstr. 6, Bamberg* ☎ 0951/21713 🌐 www.hotel-europa-bamberg.de/restaurant ☺ *Closed Sun.–Mon. No lunch.*

Klosterbräu

\$\$ | **GERMAN** | This massive old stone-and-half-timber house has been standing since 1533, making it Bamberg's oldest brewpub. The cuisine is simple, filling, and tasty, with items including *schäuferla* (pig shoulder) with dumplings and sauerkraut, and Jägerschnitzel ("Hunter's Schnitzel") with mushroom cream sauce. **Known for:** superb Braunbier (the city's most famous); no-frills brewhouse cuisine; great outdoor seating options in summer. ☎ *Average main: €16* ☒ *Obere Mühlbrücke 1-3, Bamberg* ☎ 0951/52265 🌐 klosterbraeu.de ☺ *Closed Mon.–Tues. No lunch Wed.–Fri.*

Schlenkerla

\$\$ | **GERMAN** | Set in the middle of Old Town, this tavern has been serving beer inside an ancient half-timber house since 1405. The food is standard German brewhouse fare—think bratwurst, beef brisket, or pork shoulder, all drowning in beer sauce—but the real reason to come here is to sample the *Aecht Schenkerla Rauchbier*, a dark beer brewed with

smoked malt. **Known for:** excellent Rauchbier (though an acquired taste); traditional atmosphere and food; always busy so expect queues to get in.  **Average main:** €16  *Dominikanerstr. 6, Bamberg*  951/56050  *schlenkerla.de*  *No credit cards.*

Hotels

★ **Hotel Nepomuk**

 **B&B/INN** | This half-timber house, which seems to float over the river Regnitz, is one of the city's most beautiful waterfront properties. **Pros:** great river views; superb breakfast in the elegant restaurant; centrally located. **Cons:** rooms lacking a little personality; pedestrian-only street means no on-site parking; the river can be disturbingly noisy.  **Rooms from:** €157  *Obere Mühlbrücke 9, Bamberg*  951/98420  *hotel-nepomuk.de*  23 rooms  *No Meals.*

Hotel Messerschmitt

 **HOTEL** | Willy Messerschmitt (of fighter aircraft fame) grew up in this beautiful late-baroque house, and today its steep-eave, green-shuttered, stucco exterior gives way to a hotel filled with luxuriously spacious rooms. **Pros:** massive breakfast with regional produce (costs extra); air-conditioning throughout (a rarity in Germany); new gym due to open in 2025. **Cons:** the property's age shows in places; front rooms can be noisy; no dinner currently available.  **Rooms from:** €144  *Lange Str. 41, Bamberg*  951/297-800  *hotel-messerschmitt.de*  67 rooms  *No Meals.*

Nightlife

WINE BARS

Weinstube Nüsslein

WINE BAR | Not everything in Bamberg is smoky beer; Franconia also produces some of Germany's finest wines. This small traditional wine bar below the cathedral has an extensive wine list. They don't serve food, but if you bring

your own German *Brotzeit*, an evening meal of bread, cheese, cold cuts, and pickles, they will provide you with dishes and cutlery.  *Lugbank 1, Bamberg*  951/58014  *Closed Sun.*

Performing Arts

Bamberg Symphony Orchestra (*Sinfonie an der Regnitz*)

CONCERTS | Bamberg's own world-class resident symphony orchestra, the Bamberger Symphoniker, plays in the Konzerthalle Bamberg.  *Konzerthalle Bamberg, Müssstr. 1, Bamberg*  951/964-7200  *bamberger-symphoniker.de.*

Capella Antiqua Bambergensis

MUSIC | The city's first-class ensemble, Capella Antiqua Bambergensis, specializes in ancient music featuring lute, harp, hurdy gurdy, and other early instruments. They perform (in medieval costume) at several venues in town.  *Bergstr. 4, Bamberg*  9505/806-0606  *capella-antiqua.de.*

★ **E.T.A. Hoffmann Theater**

OPERA | Opera and operettas are performed at this impressive glass-fronted theater from September through July.  *E.T.A.-Hoffmann-Pl. 1, Bamberg*  951/873-056  *theater-bamberg.de.*

Shopping

If you are visiting around the festive season, keep an eye out for "Christmas cribs," a Bamberg specialty. Check the tourism website for the locations of nativity scenes and descriptions.

Café am Dom

CANDY | For an edible souvenir, take home handmade chocolates like the only-in-Bamberg Rauchbier truffles made with Schlenkerla smoked beer. This café also has a roomy seating area to take a load off while you nibble on a delicious pastry.  *Ringleinsg. 2, Bamberg*  951/519-290  *cafeamdom.de.*

Magnus Klee

STATIONERY | This paper and stationery store also sells nativity scenes, called *Krippen* in German, of all different shapes and sizes, including wood carved and with fabric clothes. ☒ *Obstmarkt 2, Bamberg* ☎ 0951/26037.

Bayreuth

64 km (40 miles) east of Bamberg, 82 km (51 miles) northeast of Nuremberg.

The small town of Bayreuth (pronounced “bye- roit”) became an important site of the European enlightenment due to the efforts of Princess Wilhemine of Prussia. After becoming Margravine of Bayreuth in 1731, Wilhelmine devoured books, wrote plays and operas (which she directed and acted in), and had art buildings constructed, transforming much of the town—and bringing it perilously close to bankruptcy in the process. Much like her brother, King Friedrich the Great of Prussia, she surrounded herself with the intellectuals of the time and even courted Voltaire.

A hundred years later, Bayreuth owes its modern fame to the music giant Richard Wagner (1813–83). The 19th-century composer, musical revolutionary, ultra-nationalist, and unintentional Nazi poster child finally settled here in 1870 after a lifetime of exile in Switzerland and Italy, in part drawn by the work of Wilhemine. Wagner’s vision to transform her opera house into a great theater was limited by its small size, so he subsequently built his masterpiece, the Festspielhaus, as a suitable setting for his grand operas on Germanic mythological themes. The city’s annual Wagner Festival dates to 1876 and brings droves of Wagner fans, who push prices sky-high, fill hotels to bursting, and earn themselves much-sought-after social kudos in the process. The festival is held from late July until late August, so unless you plan to visit the town

Apfelweibla



As you peruse the shops in Bamberg’s Altstadt, you may notice an apple-like face that adorns jewelry and housewares. This is the *Apfelweibla*, a whimsical doorknob depicting an elderly woman’s face. The *Apfelweibla* inspired E. T. A. Hoffmann’s novella *The Golden Pot*, and it’s said that rubbing it will bring you good luck. A replica of the doorknob can be found at ☒ *Eisgrube 14*, while the original is on display at the Museum of History at *Domplatz*.

specifically for it, this is the time to stay away.

GETTING HERE AND AROUND

To reach Bayreuth from Bamberg by car, head east on the A70, then south on the B85; the journey should take about 50 minutes. From Nuremberg, head northeast of the A9 (the Nuremberg–Berlin autobahn) for just over an hour. Direct trains from both Bamberg and Nuremberg take in the region of one hour and costs about €13 one-way. Once in town, Bayreuth is easily explored on foot, and you can even follow the Wagner walking trail between many of the town’s main attractions.

VISITOR INFORMATION

CONTACTS Bayreuth Marketing &

Tourismus. ☒ *Opernstr. 22, Bayreuth*

☎ 0921/88588 🌐 *bayreuth-tourismus.de*.



Sights

★ Altes Schloss Eremitage

(Hermitage Old Palace)

CASTLE/PALACE | This palace east of the city makes an appealing departure from the sonorous and austere Wagnerian mood of much of the town. It’s an early 18th-century palace, built as a summer



The torch-bearing figure of Apollo on his chariot adorns the Sonnentempel (Sun Temple) of Bayreuth's Neues Schloss.

retreat and remodeled in 1740 by the Margravine Wilhelmine, sister of Frederick the Great of Prussia. Although her taste is not much in evidence in the drab exterior, the interior is alive with light and color, displaying her guiding hand in every elegant line. The extraordinary Japanischer Saal (Japanese Room), filled with Asian treasures and chinoiserie furniture, is the finest room. Look out for the decidedly Western-looking Emperor; it's a depiction of Wilhelmine. Guided tours of the palace interiors, which are only in German but come with an English-language leaflet, take place every 45 minutes and last around the same amount of time; prepare to get slightly wet shoes in the enjoyable grotto waterworks. The palace's park and gardens—partly formal, partly natural, and filled with follies and fountains—make for pleasant, idle strolling. ✉ *Eremitagestr. 4, Bayreuth* ➦ 5 km (3 miles) east of Bayreuth ☎ 0921/7596-937 🌐 schloesser.bayern.de 🏠 *Schloss* €4.50; park free ☺ Closed mid-Oct.–Mar.

Festspielhaus (Festival Theater)

PERFORMANCE VENUE | The interior of this high temple of the Wagner cult—where performances take place only during the annual Wagner Festival—is surprisingly plain. The spartan look, including wooden seats with no upholstery and relatively unadorned walls, is explained partly by Wagner's desire to achieve perfect acoustics, while the enormous stage is necessary to hold the huge casts required for Wagner's largest operas. The theater is only accessible during festival performances or by guided tour—at 2 pm daily except during festival season, with additional tour times at weekends and throughout spring and autumn; however, the only English-language tours are at 1 pm Saturday from April through October. To attend the festival performances, you'll need to register and apply for tickets in the December prior to the festival. You can explore the memorial park and gardens for free at any time. ✉ *Festspielhügel 1–2, Bayreuth* ☎ 0921/88588 for tours, 0921/78780 🌐 bayreuther-festspiele.de 🏠 *Tours* €10

🕒 No tours Jun.–Aug. No English-language tours Jan.–Mar.

Maisel's Bier-Erlebniswelt

(Maisel's Beer Experience World) **BREWERY** | Learn about the traditional Franconian art of brewing and cutting-edge craft techniques at this great little museum. The Maisel brewery opened on this exact spot in 1887 and is still run by the fourth generation of Maisel brothers, though the actual brewing is now done at the larger, neighboring site. Today, this brick building is given over to exhibitions on the history of brewing, including old tools and machinery, as well as windows into the working brewery next door. After learning the facts on a self-guided tour (bring your phone to download the guide app), head to the museum's pub-restaurant or beer garden to quaff a cool, freshly tapped Bavarian *Weissbier* (wheat beer), or opt for a "Tasting-Board" of some of their more experimental Maisel & Friends craft brews. ✉ *Andreas-Maisel-Weg 1, Bayreuth* ☎ 0921/401-234 🌐 *www.maiselandfriends.com* 💰 €14.

Markgräflisches Opernhaus (Margravian Opera House)

PERFORMANCE VENUE | In 1745 Margravine Wilhelmine commissioned the Italian architects Giuseppe and Carlo Bibiena to build this rococo jewel, sumptuously decorated in gold and blue, with Apollo and the nine Muses cavorting across the baroque frescoed ceiling. It was this delicate 500-seat theater that originally drew Wagner to Bayreuth; he felt that it might prove a suitable setting for his own operas, before realizing the limitations of its size, so he built the Festspielhaus instead. Ultimately, it has become a wonderful setting for the concerts and operas of Bayreuth's "other" musical festivals, which the theater hosts throughout the year. English-language tours take place daily at 12:30 pm (German at 3 pm) ✉ *Opernstr. 14, Bayreuth*

☎ 0921/759-6922 🌐 *www.schloesser.bayern.de* 💰 €8 (€12 inc. *Neues Schloss*).

Neues Schloss (New Palace)

CASTLE/PALACE | Like many of the most impressive sights in Bayreuth, this glamorous 18th-century palace was built by the Margravine Wilhelmine, a woman of enormous energy and decided tastes. Her distinctive touch is evident throughout the palace, which was rebuilt when a mysterious fire conveniently destroyed parts of the original one. Anyone with a taste for the wilder flights of rococo decoration will love it. Some rooms have been given over to one of Europe's finest collections of faience pottery. Most of the state rooms can be visited freely, but you'll need to join the guided tour (German-language only) to see the Italian Palace. ✉ *Ludwigstr. 21, Bayreuth* ☎ 0921/759-6921 🌐 *schloesser.bayern.de* 💰 From €5.50 (€12 inc. *Markgräflisches Opernhaus*).

★ Richard Wagner Museum

HISTORIC HOME | Richard Wagner's one-time home, "*Wahnfried*," built by the composer in 1874, is now the centerpiece of this fine museum. It's a fairly austere neoclassical building whose name, "peace from madness," was well earned. Wagner lived here with his wife Cosima, daughter of pianist Franz Liszt, and they were both laid to rest here; look for Wagner's simple gravestone in the garden (behind the fountain), with another nearby for his beloved dogs Marke and Russ. A bust of King Ludwig II of Bavaria, the "Fairy-Tale King" who gave Wagner so much financial support, stands before the entrance to the house.

Inside, the exhibits are generously spread across three floors, with information in German but summary boards provided in English. Highlights include his piano, multimedia displays of various opera performances, and the original scores of such masterpieces as *Parsifal*, *Tristan und Isolde*, and *Der Fliegende Holländer*. In the buildings flanking the



Wagner and German Romanticism

Understanding Wagner

Born in 1813, Richard Wagner is one of modern Germany's most iconic composers. His music, which is best understood in its simple message of national glory and destiny, contributed greatly to the feeling of pan-Germanism that united Germany under the Prussian crown in 1871. However, his overtly nationalistic themes and blatant anti-Semitism also makes his music a bit controversial, as it easily dovetails into the ideology of the Nazi movement and Adolf Hitler. Despite Wagner's participation in left-wing politics, he was exiled from Dresden for supporting German unification, and Hitler adored Wagner and saw him as the embodiment of his own vision for the German people. The Nazis easily manipulated Wagner's focus on the cult of the leader and the glories of victory that are prevalent in his works *Lohengrin* and *Parsifal*. Wagner's most famous composition is the four-opera cycle *The Ring of the Nibelung* (aka *Ring Cycle*). Wagner is brilliant and the music is magically inspired, but is forever tarnished by the Nazis' love for his work.

Wagner Today

In 1870 Wagner visited the city of Bayreuth with the intention of transforming the existing Opera House to fit his needs. The *Markgräflisches Opernhaus* was too small for his grandiose dreams and in 1871 Wagner began construction of the Festspielhaus, an opera house that would only perform Wagner's own operas. The performance space opened its doors in 1876 with a production of *Das Rheingold* and the first full performance of the four-part *Ring Cycle*. The Festspielhaus continues to showcase Wagner's works during the annual Bayreuther Festspiel, a pilgrimage site for die-hard Wagner fans. It can be a challenge to secure tickets (which are sold on a first-come, first-served basis), but don't fret if you miss out: almost all German opera and symphony companies perform Wagner's works throughout the year. The best places to see Wagner's longer works are at Berlin's State Opera; the National Theater in Weimar; the Gewandhaus Orchestra and Opera in Leipzig; and Munich's Bavarian State Opera.

main house, you'll find a collection of production costumes, exhibits on Wagner's son (and fellow composer) Siegfried, and an excellent little café. The little house where Franz Liszt lived and died is right next door, and you can visit with a combination-ticket that's just €1 more than the regular entrance fee. ✉ *Richard-Wagner-Str. 48, Bayreuth* ☎ 0921/757-2816 🌐 wagnermuseum.de 📞 €10 (€11 inc. Franz-Liszt-Museum) 🕒 Closed Mon., except Jul. and Aug.



Restaurants

Oskar

\$\$ | GERMAN | A traditional German pub with a summer terrace that spills out across Maximilianstrasse, this popular place specializes in high-quality Franconian fare, from roast venison with dumplings and cabbage to grilled pikeperch with potato risotto. Look out for seasonal specialties, too, such as strawberry and white asparagus salad. **Known for:** fresh Franconian produce; hearty breakfasts served until 11 am; good veggie options including cheese spätzle. 📊 Average

main: €18 ☒ Maximilianstr. 33, Bayreuth
☎ 0921/516-0553 🌐 oskar-bayreuth.de.

★ RoxyBurger

\$ | **BURGER** | At first glance, this restaurant doesn't look particularly promising—a small part of a large cinema complex on the edge of town, with an uninviting terrace overlooking a busy street—but the fact remains: this is the best burger joint in Bayreuth. The beef patties are excellent, and there are topping options galore, from the classic (like cheddar and bacon) to the adventurous (like goat's cheese and fig sauce). **Known for:** superb burgers and sweet potato fries; good choice of beers and wines; uninspiring interior overlooking busy street. ☎ *Average main: €13* ☒ Cineplex Bayreuth, Hindenburgstr. 2, Bayreuth ☎ 0921/761750 🌐 www.roxyburger.de.

Wolffenzacher

\$\$\$ | **GERMAN** | This self-described “Franconian nostalgic inn” harks back to the 17th century, when the local *Wirtshaus* (inn-pub) was the meeting place for everyone from the mayor's scribes to the local carpenters. Beer and hearty traditional food (with a hint of Mediterranean influence) are shared at wooden tables either in the rustic interior or out in the shady beer garden. **Known for:** rustic ambience; traditional beer garden; expensive for pub food. ☎ *Average main: €23* ☒ Badstr. 1, Bayreuth ☎ 0921/64552 🌐 www.wolffenzacher.de ☺ Closed Tues. and Wed. No lunch Mon. and Thurs. from mid-Sept.–May.

🏨 Hotels

★ Goldener Anker

\$\$\$\$ | **HOTEL** | There's no doubt about it: this grande dame-turned-boutique hotel is *the* place to stay in Bayreuth. **Pros:** historic property favored by Richard Strauss and Mark Twain; great breakfast with homemade jams and curds; owned by the same family since the 1600s. **Cons:** no elevator (for obvious reasons);

old fixtures and fittings can be a bit creaky; evening meals only by reservation. ☎ *Rooms from: €268* ☒ Opernstr. 6, Bayreuth ☎ 0921/787-7740 🌐 anker-bayreuth.de ➡ 35 rooms 🌞 Free Breakfast.

Hotel Lohmühle

\$\$\$ | **HOTEL** | The old part of this eye-catching hotel is in Bayreuth's only half-timber house, a former sawmill by a stream, just a two-minute walk from the town center. **Pros:** pleasant rustic setting close to town; reasonable prices (though expect a festival-time hike); excellent restaurant offers candlelight dinners. **Cons:** no elevator in the main building; front rooms let in traffic noise; spotty internet in some rooms. ☎ *Rooms from: €140* ☒ Badstr. 37, Bayreuth ☎ 0921/53060 🌐 hotel-lohmuehle.de ➡ 42 rooms 🌞 Free Breakfast.

🎭 Performing Arts

Markgräfliches Opernhaus (Margravian Opera House)

OPERA | If you don't get Wagner Festival tickets, console yourself with visits to the exquisite 18th-century opera house. In May the *Fränkische Festwochen* (Franconian Festival Weeks) take the stage with works of Wagner, of course, but also Paganini and Mozart. ☒ Opernstr. 14, Bayreuth ☎ 0921/759-6922 🌐 www.schloesser.bayern.de.

Wagner Festival

OPERA | Opera lovers swear that there are few more intense operatic experiences than the annual Wagner Festival in Bayreuth. The festival is held in July and August, but you'll need to start planning your trip around 9 months in advance. First, register on the website of the Bayreuther Festspiele Kartenbüro (🌐 ticketshop.bayreuther-festspiele.de/en). Then, on 1 December the year before your desired festival visit, all registered users will receive a notification that the booking system is open. A maximum of eight tickets can be purchased per

performance on a first-come, first-served basis; these tickets are hotly contested, so don't make any travel or accommodation arrangements until you're sure you have them. If you manage to get tickets, try to book your hotel accommodation as soon as possible; Bayreuth rooms sell out fast, so you may even need to stay outside the city. For those who are unsuccessful, there's a box office open on the day of each performance where you can buy returned tickets, but don't rely on being able to secure tickets this way. ✉ *Festspielhaus, Festspielhügel 1–2, Bayreuth* ☎ 0921/78780 🌐 *bayreuther-festspiele.de*.

Nuremberg (Nürnberg)

82 km (51 miles) southwest of Bayreuth.

With a recorded history stretching back to 1050, Franconia's main city is among the most historic in all of Germany; the core of the Old Town, through which the Pegnitz River flows, is still surrounded by its original medieval walls. Year-round floodlighting adds to the misty brooding romance of the moats, sturdy gateways, and watchtowers.

Nuremberg has always taken a leading role in German affairs. It was here, for example, that the Emperor traditionally held the first Diet, the deliberative body of the Holy Roman Empire. Centuries later, Hitler used Nuremberg to stage the most grandiose Nazi rallies.

As a major intersection on the medieval trade routes, Nuremberg became a wealthy town where the arts and sciences flourished. Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), the first indisputable genius of the Renaissance in Germany, was born here. He married in 1509 and bought a house in the city where he lived and worked for the rest of his life. Other leading Nuremberg artists of the Renaissance include painter Michael Wolgemut (a teacher of Dürer), stonecutter Adam Kraft, and the

brass founder Peter Vischer. The tradition of the Meistersinger also flourished here in the 16th century, thanks to the high standard set by the local cobbler Hans Sachs (1494–1576). The Meistersinger were poets and musicians who turned songwriting into a special craft, with a wealth of rules and regulations. They were celebrated three centuries later by Wagner in his opera *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.

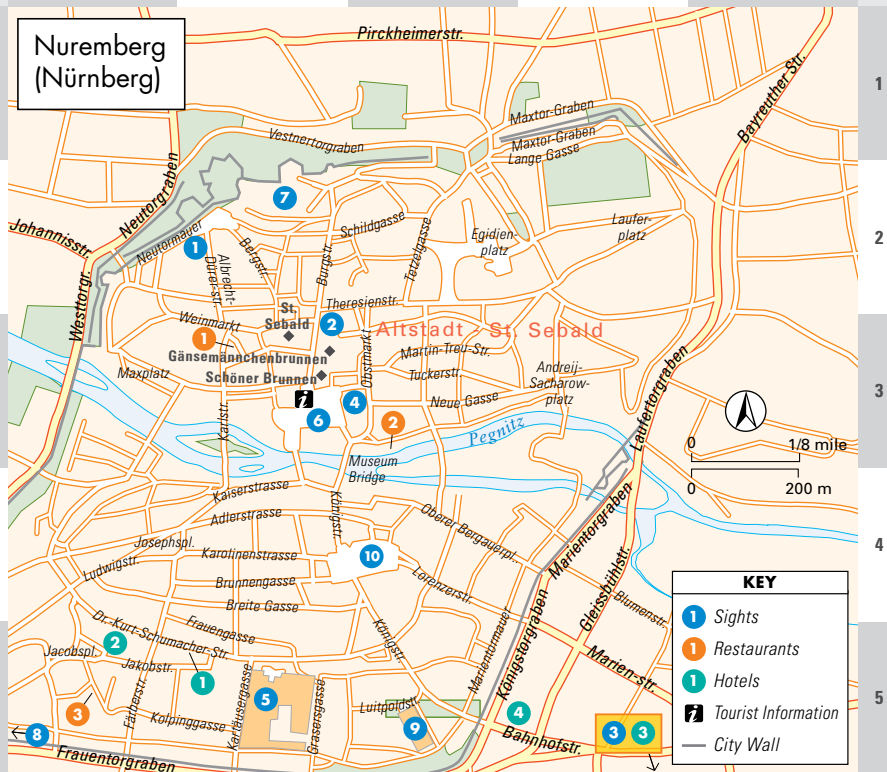
The Thirty Years' War (1618–48) and the shift to sea routes for transportation led to a period of decline, which ended only in the early 19th century when the first railroad opened in Nuremberg.

After World War II, and with a sense of historical justice, Nuremberg in rubble was the site of the Allies' war trials, where top-ranking Nazis were charged with—and almost without exception convicted of—crimes against humanity. The rebuilding of Nuremberg after the war was virtually a miracle, considering the 90% destruction of the Old Town.

Among a great host of inventions associated with the city, the most significant are the pocket watch, gun casting, the clarinet, and the geographic globe. Among Nuremberg's famous products are *Bratwürste*, *Lebkuchen* (gingerbread of sorts), and Faber-Castell pencils.

GETTING HERE AND AROUND

Nuremberg is centrally located and well connected, an hour north of Munich and two hours east of Frankfurt by train. With the extension of Germany's high-speed rail network, Nuremberg can even be done as a day-trip from Berlin (3 hours each way) and Leipzig (2 hours each way). Five autobahns meet here: A3 Düsseldorf–Passau, A6 Mannheim–Nuremberg, A9 Potsdam–München, A73 Coburg–Feucht, and B8 (four lanes near Nuremberg) Würzburg–Regensburg. If coming from Bayreuth, you'll take the A9; it's just over an hour's drive.



Sights

- 1 Albrecht-Dürer-Haus... B2
- 2 Altes Rathaus B3
- 3 Dokumentationszentrum Reichsparteitagsgelände D5
- 4 Frauenkirche C3
- 5 Germanisches Nationalmuseum B5
- 6 Hauptmarkt..... B3
- 7 Kaiserburg Nürnberg... B2
- 8 Memorium Nürnberger Prozesse A5
- 9 Neues Museum..... C5
- 10 St. Lorenz Kirche..... C4

Restaurants

- 1 Essigbrätlein B3
- 2 Restaurant Heilig-Geist-Spital C3
- 3 Zum Gulden Stern A5

Hotels

- 1 Adina Apartment Hotel Nuremberg B5
- 2 Das Steichele A5
- 3 Landgasthof Hotel Gentner D5
- 4 Le Méridien Grand Hotel Nuremberg D5

Nuremberg's surprisingly compact city center is easily explored on foot. All of the downtown historical sites, restaurants, and hotels are within easy walking distance from each other. Nuremberg's fantastic bus, trolley, or subway system will help you venture out to the Nazi sites farther afield. Information about city transportation is available at the VGN-KundenCenter at the main train station.

CONTACTS VGN-KundenCenter. ☎ *Nürnberg Hauptbahnhof, Bahnhofspl. 9, Nürnberg* 🌐 *vgn.de*.

FESTIVALS

By far the most famous local festival is the **Christkindlesmarkt** (🌐 *christkindlesmarkt.de*), an enormous pre-Christmas fair that runs on the town's cobblestone main square beneath the wonderful Frauenkirche from the Friday before Advent to Christmas Eve. Renowned for its food, particularly *Nürnberger Bratwurstchen*, tasty little pork and marjoram sausages, and *Lebkuchen*, gingerbread made with cinnamon and honey, the market is also famed for its little figures made out of prunes called *Nürnberger Zwetschgenmännla* (Nuremberg Prune People). One of the highlights is the candle procession, held every second Thursday of the market season, during which thousands of children parade through the city streets.

From May through July, classical-music concerts are given in the Rittersaal of the **Kaiserburg** (🌐 *www.kaiserburg-nuernberg.de*).

Nuremberg holds this annual **Summer Festival** (🌐 *festivalsummer-nuernberg.de*) from May through July, with more than 200 events. Its international organ festival in June and July is regarded as Europe's finest.

TIMING

You'll need a full day to walk around Nuremberg's Old Town, two if you wish to take more time at its fascinating

museums and churches. Most of the major sights are within a few minutes' walk of each other. The Kaiserburg is a must-visit on any trip to Nuremberg. Plan at least half a day for the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, which is just inside the city walls near the main station. Add another half day to visit the Nazi Party Rally Grounds.

TOURS

Nuremberg Guide Association

WALKING TOURS | An English-language walking tour through the Old Town departs from the Tourist Information am Hauptmarkt at 2 pm, Friday through Monday. Tours last approximately 90 minutes and cover all the essential Old Town sights, with some interesting commentary. ☎ *Hauptmarkt, Nürnberg* ☎ *0170/1411-223* 🌐 *nuernberg-tours.de* 💶 €15.

Underground Nuremberg

FOOD AND DRINK TOURS | Nuremberg's natural caves provide the perfect location to brew and store beer. Beer aficionados can get a deeper look at Nuremberg's brewing history with a tour into the cellars offered by Historische Felsengänge. The English-language tour, available at 11:10 am every Saturday and Sunday, explores 800 years of brewing history and ends with a taste of local beer at a craft brewery. ☎ *Bergstr. 19, Nürnberg* ☎ *0911/244-9859* 🌐 *historische-felsengaeenge.de* 💶 €13 🕒 Weekends only.

VISITOR INFORMATION

CONTACTS Tourist Information am

Hauptmarkt. ☎ *Hauptmarkt 18, Nürnberg* ☎ *0911/23360* 🌐 *tourismus.nuernberg.de*.



Albrecht-Dürer-Haus

(*Albrecht Dürer House*)

HISTORIC HOME | The great painter Albrecht Dürer lived in this beautifully preserved late-medieval house, typical of the prosperous merchants' homes that once filled Nuremberg, from 1509 until his death in



Outside the Germanisches Nationalmuseum is the “Way of Human Rights,” an outdoor sculpture consisting of 30 columns inscribed with the articles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

1528. Today, its four stories stand as a testament to his talent. Dürer enriched German art with Renaissance elements, but he was more than a painter, raising the woodcut (a notoriously difficult medium) to new heights of technical sophistication, combining great skill with a haunting, immensely detailed drawing style and complex, allegorical subject matter. While most of the works on display are print copies, with the originals in art galleries across Germany and beyond, they retain their allure: seek out his atmospheric self-portraits. Upstairs, printing techniques using the old press are demonstrated in the studio, and there’s an interesting exhibition on Dürer-inspired body art. At 2 pm every Saturday, a guide role-playing Agnes Dürer, the artist’s wife, provides English-language tours of the house. ✉ *Albrecht-Dürer-Str. 39, Nürnberg* ☎ 0911/231-2568 🌐 *museen.nuernberg.de/lochgefaengnisse* 🎫 €7.50; €4 tour 🗓 Closed Mon.

Altes Rathaus (Old Town Hall)

GOVERNMENT BUILDING | A 1944 bombing destroyed the Rathausplatz’s original Town Hall, which was completed in 1332. This post-war reconstruction has the feel of an Italian palazzo from outside, but maintains Gothic elements in its city council chamber. More importantly for visitors, it still incorporates the intact medieval dungeons, consisting of 12 small rooms and one large torture chamber. The *Lochgefängnis* (the Nuremberg Hole), shows the gruesome applications of medieval law, and can be accessed on hourly public tours (check the website for English-language timings). On the southeastern side of the Altes Rathaus stands the easily missed Gänsemännchenbrunnen (Gooseman’s Fountain), a Renaissance bronze fountain that was cast in 1550, and a work of rare elegance and great technical sophistication. ✉ *Rathauspl. 2, Nürnberg* ☎ 0911/2310 🌐 *museen.nuernberg.de/lochgefaengnisse* 🎫 €10 *dungeon tour.*

Dokumentationszentrum Reichsparteitagsgelände (Documentation Center Nazi Party Rally Grounds)

HISTORIC SIGHT | Set within the never-finished Kongresshalle (Congress Hall) on the southeastern outskirts of the city, this museum documents the political, social, and architectural history of the Nazi Party. Sobering exhibits help to illuminate the whys and hows of Hitler's rise to power during the unstable period after World War I and the end of the democratic Weimar Republic. It's one of the few museums that documents how the Third Reich's propaganda machine influenced the masses. The permanent exhibition is in the process of being remodelled and expanded, and expected to reopen in late 2025—until then, a still-sizable interim exhibit explores the rise of the Nazi Party and their Nuremberg rallies, the wartime use of the Zeppelin Field as a POW camp, and the current uses of the old rally grounds for concerts (including an annual rock festival). To get to the Documentation Center, take bus 36 from Burgstrasse to the Doku-Zentrum stop, or drive and park in the small, unmonitored (but free) parking lot. ✉ *Bayernstr. 110, Nürnberg* ☎ 0911/231-7538 🌐 *museums.nuernberg.de/documentation-center* 🚶 Interim exhibit €6.

Frauenkirche (Church of Our Lady)

CHURCH | Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV commissioned the late-Gothic Frauenkirche in 1350, and it was built on the site of a synagogue that burned to the ground during the 1349 pogrom. The modern tabernacle, designed to look like a Torah scroll as a memorial to that despicable act, was built beneath the main altar in 1991. The church's main attraction is the Männleinlaufen, a clock dating from 1509, which is set into its facade. The clock is one of those colorful mechanical marvels at which Germans have long excelled; every day at noon, the seven electors of the Holy Roman Empire glide out of the clock to bow to Emperor Charles IV before sliding back

undercover. It's worth scheduling your morning to catch the display. ✉ *Hauptmarkt 14, Nürnberg* ☎ 0911/206560 🌐 *frauenkirche-nuernberg.de*.

★ Germanisches Nationalmuseum (German National Museum)

HISTORY MUSEUM | You could spend a lifetime exploring the largest and greatest ethnological museum in Germany. This vast museum showcases the country's cultural and scientific achievements, ethnic background, and storied history. Housed in a former Carthusian monastery, complete with cloisters and monastic outbuilding, the complex effectively melds the ancient with modern extensions, giving the impression that Germany is moving forward by examining its past. The exhibition begins outside, with the tall, sleek pillars of the Strasse der Menschenrechte (Street of Human Rights), designed by Israeli artist Dani Karavan. Thirty columns are inscribed with the articles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. There are few aspects of German culture, from the Stone Age to the 19th century, that are not covered by the museum, and quantity and quality are evenly matched. One highlight is the superb collection of Renaissance German paintings (with Dürer, Cranach, and Altdorfer well represented); look out for the remarkable 1702 painting *Gemäldegalerie* (Picture Gallery) by Johann Michael Bretschneider, which incorporates hundreds of small, individual, fictional artworks. Others may prefer the exquisite medieval ecclesiastical exhibits—manuscripts, altarpieces, statuary, stained glass, jewel-encrusted reliquaries—the collections of arms and armor, or the scientific instruments including beautiful globes and astrolabes. ✉ *Kartäuserg. 1, Nürnberg* ☎ 0911/13310 🌐 *gnm.de* 🚶 €10 ☺ Closed Mon.

Hauptmarkt (Main Market)

PLAZA/SQUARE | Nuremberg's central market square was once the city's Jewish Quarter. In 1349, Emperor Charles IV



Climb to the top of Nuremberg's Kaiserburg (Imperial Castle) for wonderful views of the city.

instigated a pogrom that left the Jewish Quarter in flames and more than 500 dead. He razed the ruins and resettled the remaining Jews so he could build this square. Towering over the northwestern corner, Schöner Brunnen (Beautiful Fountain) looks as though it should be on the summit of some lofty cathedral. Carved around the year 1400, the elegant 60-foot-high Gothic fountain is adorned with 40 figures arranged in tiers—prophets, saints, local noblemen, electors, Julius Caesar, and Alexander the Great. A golden ring set into the railing is said to bring good luck to those who touch it. A market still operates here on weekdays, with its colorful stands piled high with produce, fruit, bread, homemade cheeses and sausages, sweets, and anything else you might need for a snack or picnic. This square is also the site of the famous Christkindlesmarkt. ✉ *Hauptmarkt, Nürnberg.*

★ **Kaiserburg Nürnberg** (*Imperial Castle of Nuremberg*)

CASTLE/PALACE | The city's most famous attraction is a grand yet playful collection of buildings standing just inside the city walls was once the residence of the Holy Roman Emperor. In 1945, almost the entire structure was reduced to rubble, though it's difficult to imagine once you see the thorough restoration.

This vast complex comprises three groups of buildings. Visits begin in the ancient, least-damaged western section, still with its original oak beams, painted ceilings, and sparse interiors. Explore the Romanesque Doppelkappelle (Double Chapel)—the upper chapel, larger and more ornate than the lower one, is where the emperor and his family worshipped—the Rittersaal (Knights' Hall) and the Kaisersaal (Throne Room). The Kaiserburg Museum displays ancient armors, with exhibits on horsemanship in the imperial era. Cross the Äusserer Berghof (Outer Courtyard) and climb the Sinwell Turm (Sinwell Tower) for spectacular city views.

In the center of the complex lies the Burggrafenburg (Castellan's Castle). Dating from around 1050, this is the oldest part of the Kaiserburg, with a craggy old pentagonal tower and the bailiff's house. To the north and northeast lie the Reichsstädtische Bauten (Imperial City Buildings), including the 15th century Kaiserstallung (Imperial Stables), built as a granary and now a popular youth hostel. ☒ *Burg 17, Nürnberg* ☎ 0911/2446-590 🌐 *kaiserburg-nuernberg.de* 🚶 €9.

★ **Memorium Nürnberger Prozesse** (Memorium Nuremberg Trials)

HISTORIC SIGHT | History was made in this quiet corner of Nuremberg, when the International Military Tribunal put 22 Nazi leaders and six German organizations on trial here between November 1945 and October 1946. The renowned Nuremberg trials, as they came to be known, took place in the *Landgericht* (Regional Court) in Courtroom 600 and resulted in 11 death sentences, among other convictions. Since the courtroom was decommissioned in 2020, it has become a popular, if harrowing, visitor attraction, with an audiovisual installation showing clips from the historic trials. An exhibition reveals more about the defendants and their crimes, the full trial process, and the impact of the Nuremberg Trials on international criminal law. ☒ *Bärenschanzstr. 72, Nürnberg* ☎ 0911/2312-8614 🌐 *museums.nuernberg.de/memorium-nuremberg-trials* 🚶 €7.50 🕒 Closed Tues. 📺 *Bärenschanze*.

Neues Museum (New Museum)

ART MUSEUM | A refreshingly modern attraction in the heart of town, the Neues Museum is devoted to international design since the mid-20th century. The building itself is a work of art, with its mix of traditional pink-sandstone ashlars and flowing glass edifice achieving the perfect synthesis between old and new, while its interior is all cool stone floors and white walls, with a ramp that slowly spirals up through the gallery. Inside,

extraordinary things await, including an extensive collection of Gerhard Richter's eclectic works, along with thought-provoking temporary exhibits. English language information can be a little patchy, but the expressive paintings, sculptures, photography, and video installations usually speak for themselves. ☒ *Luitpoldstr. 5, Nürnberg* ☎ 0911/240-2069 🌐 *nmn.de* 🚶 €7 🕒 Closed Mon.

St. Lorenz Kirche (St. Lawrence Church)
CHURCH | In a city with several striking churches, St. Lorenz is considered by many to be the most beautiful of all. Construction began around 1250 and was completed around 225 years later. Two towers flank the main entrance, which is covered with a forest of carvings. In the lofty interior, note the eye-catching works by sculptors Adam Kraft and Veit Stoss: in particular, seek out Kraft's great stone tabernacle, to the left of the high altar, and Stoss's *Annunciation*, suspended on a metal chain and facing the altar. There are many other carvings throughout the building, testimony to the artistic wealth of late-medieval Nuremberg. ☒ *Lorenzer Pl. 1, Nürnberg* 🌐 *www.lorenzkirche.de*.

🍴 Restaurants

★ **Essigbrätlein**

\$\$\$\$ | **MODERN EUROPEAN** | The oldest restaurant in Nuremberg, built in 1550 as a meeting place for the city's wine merchants, is also the city's finest dining establishment. Today its tiny but elegant period interior caters to the distinguishing gourmet, with vegetarian-centered dishes (such as the signature beetroot with caraway caramel) that make the most of local Franconian produce. For dinner, you can opt for anything between four and seven courses (from €180 to €210, with wine pairings or soft drink accompaniments extra), or you can come for a (relatively) lighter four- or five-course lunch. ■ **TIP→ Don't be put off if the restaurant looks closed—just ring the bell and a friendly receptionist will help you.** Known

for: multicourse lunch and dinner menus; new German cuisine with a strong focus on vegetables; perfect wine pairings.

📞 *Average main:* €130 📍 *Weinmarkt 3, Nürnberg* ☎ *0911/225-131* 🌐 *essigbrae-tlein.de* ☺ *Closed Sun.–Tues.*

Restaurant Heilig-Geist-Spital

\$\$ | **GERMAN** | Heavy wood furnishings, hearty German food, and an extensive wine list (with more than 100 wines) make this enormous old wine tavern a popular spot. Built as the refectory of the city hospital, the building's 650-year-long history is visible throughout. **Known for:** delicious bratwursts and grilled meats; two-person specials including fondue; river views from some of the alcoves.

📞 *Average main:* €18 📍 *Spitalg. 16, Nürnberg* ☎ *0911/221-761* 🌐 *heilig-geist-spital.de*

★ Zum Gulden Stern

\$ | **GERMAN** | **FAMILY** | Established in 1419 and the oldest bratwurst restaurant in the world, this Historische Bratwurstküche (Historic Bratwurst Kitchen) should be your first stop for trying the city's most famous delicacy. After all, it's here that the city council decided upon the official size and weight of the Nürnberger bratwurst; the sausages must be small enough to fit through a medieval keyhole, enabling old-time pub owners to sell them after hours. **Known for:** fresh bratwurst grilled on a beech-wood fire; interior with medieval vibes; dark and wheat beers on draft. 📞 *Average main:* €10 📍 *Zirkelschmiedsg. 26, Nürnberg* ☎ *0911/205-9288* 🌐 *bratwurstkueche.de*

Hotels

Adina Apartment Hotel Nuremberg

\$\$ | **APARTMENT** | **FAMILY** | Offering a comfortable stay in the heart of the city, these inviting open-plan apartments feature king-size beds, spacious living rooms, smart, modern bathrooms, and fully equipped kitchen units (complete with fridge, microwave, dishwasher, and

more). **Pros:** large apartments with ovens and washer-dryers; all-night snack bar (with frozen pizzas) by reception; rooftop terrace offers gorgeous city views. **Cons:** some may find understated decor a little uninspired; parking is €25 a night and space is limited; breakfast costs extra (but you can make your own). 📞 *Rooms from:* €120 📍 *Dr.-Kurt-Schumacher-Str. 1-7, Nürnberg* ☎ *0911/477350* 🌐 *www.adinahotels.com/nuremberg* ➡ *138 apartments* 🍷 *No Meals.*

Das Steichele

\$\$ | **HOTEL** | An 18th-century bakery has been skillfully converted into this comfortable “hotel und weinrestaurant,” located on a quiet street of the old walled town and managed by the same family for four generations. **Pros:** rustic Franconian charm; good central location; wine tastings galore. **Cons:** small rooms and lobby; some rooms show their age; slightly patchy Wi-Fi. 📞 *Rooms from:* €119 📍 *Knorrstr. 2–8, Nürnberg* ☎ *0911/202-280* 🌐 *steichele.de* ➡ *48 rooms* 🍷 *Free Breakfast.*

★ Landgasthof Hotel Gentner

\$\$ | **HOTEL** | For a quiet, peaceful, and luxurious stay within easy reach of city attractions, this charming suburban hotel—with its spacious bedrooms, modern fitness and wellness area, and superb breakfast buffet—fits the bill. **Pros:** home to one of Germany's best restaurants; free parking 3 minutes off the highway; peaceful forest walks start down the street. **Cons:** you'll need a car to stay here (or a real love of walking); no tea or coffee in the rooms; restaurant closed on Sundays. 📞 *Rooms from:* €139 📍 *Bregenzer Str. 31, Nürnberg* ☎ *0911/80070* 🌐 *landgasthof-hotel-gentner.de* ➡ *52 rooms* 🍷 *No Meals.*

Le Méridien Grand Hotel Nuremberg

\$\$ | **HOTEL** | Standing proud across the square from the central train station, this stately building has played host to kings, politicians, and celebrities since opening its doors in 1896. **Pros:** luxurious option

with an impressive lobby; excellent Belle Époque-style restaurant; surprisingly good value. **Cons:** on a busy city-center road; rooms are a little business-bland; access from station via underpass is tricky with luggage.  **Rooms from:** €135  *Bahnhofstr. 1-3, Nürnberg*  0911/23220  *www.marriott.com*  190 rooms  *No Meals.*

Nightlife

★ **Hausbrauerei Altstadtthof**

BREWPUBS | This atmospheric brewery and distillery is the place to come for a one-of-a-kind local tipple. You can see the copper kettles where the brewery's superb *Rotbier* (red beer) is made, as well as sampling the locally produced single-malt whisky, organic gin, and malt liqueur.  *Bergstr. 19, Nürnberg*  911/244-9859  *hausbrauerei-altstadtthof.de.*

Tucher-Bräu am Opernhaus

BREWPUBS | This popular inn at the heart of Nuremberg is the go-to place for big sporting (particularly soccer) events, thanks to its large beer garden with big screen. The house-brewed beer is good and the food's very tasty, too.  *Am Kartäusertor 1, Nürnberg*  0911/4777-9480  *wirtshaus-oper.de.*

Shopping

★ **Handwerkerhof**

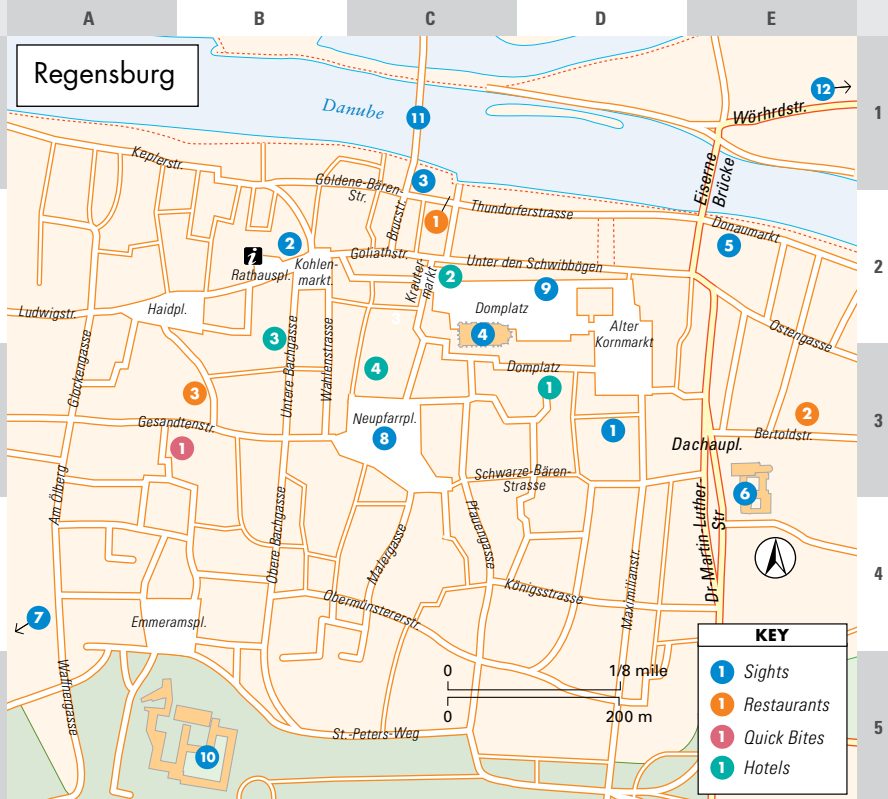
CRAFTS | Step into this "medieval mall," in the tower at the Old Town gate (Am Königstor), and you'll think you're back in the Middle Ages. Craftspeople are busy at work turning out the kind of handiwork that has been produced in Nuremberg for centuries: pewter, glassware, basketwork, wood carvings, and, of course, toys. There are plenty of drinking and eating options, too.  *Königstraße 82, Nürnberg*  *handwerkerhof.de.*

Regensburg

110 km (68 miles) southeast of Nuremberg.

Regensburg's story begins with the Celts around 500 BC. In AD 179, as an original marble inscription in the Historisches Museum proclaims, it became a Roman military post called *Castra Regina*. The Porta Praetoria, or gateway, built by the Romans, remains in the Old Town, and whenever you see huge ashlar incorporated into buildings, you are looking at bits of the old Roman settlement. When Bavarian tribes migrated to the area in the 6th century, they occupied what remained of the Roman town and, apparently on the basis of its Latin name, called it Regensburg. Anglo-Saxon missionaries led by St. Boniface in 739 made the town a bishopric before heading down the Danube to convert heathens in even farther-flung lands. Charlemagne, first of the Holy Roman emperors, arrived at the end of the 8th century and incorporated Regensburg into his burgeoning domain. Regensburg benefited from the fact that the Danube wasn't navigable to the west, and thus it was able to control trade as goods traveled between Germany and Central Europe.

By the Middle Ages Regensburg had become a political, economic, and intellectual center. For many centuries it was the most important city in southeast Germany, serving as the seat of the Perpetual Imperial Diet from 1663 until 1806, when Napoléon ordered the dismantling of the Holy Roman Empire. Today, having escaped World War II with no major damage, this well-preserved city is famous for having a pub or cafe on every corner. Students from the university fill the restaurants, and locals tend to their daily shopping and run errands in the inner city, where small shops and stores have managed to keep international consumer chains out. While the city is a popular river-cruise stop, few visitors to Bavaria venture this far off the well-trodden tourist trails.



Sights

- 1 Alte Kapelle D3
- 2 Altes Rathaus B2
- 3 Brückturm-Museum.....C1
- 4 Dom St. Peter C2
- 5 Haus der Bayerischen Geschichte E2
- 6 Historisches Museum... E3
- 7 Kloster Weltenburg..... A4
- 8 Neupfarrplatz C3
- 9 Porta Praetoria..... D2
- 10 Schloss Emmeram..... B5
- 11 Steinerne Brücke C1
- 12 Walhalla E1

Restaurants

- 1 Historische Wurstkuchl C2
- 2 Leerer Beutel..... E3
- 3 Restaurant Roter Hahn by Maximilian Schmidt B3

Quick Bites

- 1 Anna Liebt Brod und Kaffee B3

Hotels

- 1 ACHAT Hotel Regensburg Herzog am Dom..... D3
- 2 Bischofshof am Dom.... C2
- 3 Grand Hotel Orphée B2
- 4 Münchner Hof..... C3

GETTING HERE AND AROUND

Regensburg is at the intersection of the A3 and A93. A good day-trip from Nuremberg, it's just over an hour by car and even less by train. From the south, Munich is less than 90 minutes' drive away.

The city itself is compact, with its Old Town center only about one square mile. All of its attractions lie on the south side of the Danube, so you won't have to cross it more than once—and then only to admire the city from the north bank.

TOURS

English-language guided walking tours are conducted May through September and during the Christmas markets, Wednesday and Saturday at 1:30 pm. They cost €12 and begin at the tourist office.

Personenschiffahrt Klinger

BOAT TOURS | All boats depart from the Steinerne Brücke, and the most popular excursions are boat trips to Ludwig I's imposing Greek-style Doric temple of Walhalla. There are daily sailings at 10:30 am and 2 pm to Walhalla from Easter through October. The round trip takes three hours, including about an hour to explore the temple. Don't bother with the trip upriver from Regensburg to Kelheim, unless connecting to a Weltenburg cruise. ☒ *Thundorfstr. 6, Regensburg* ☎ 0941/52104 🌐 schiffahrtklinger.de 📄 From €14 ☺ No sailings Nov.–Easter.

VISITOR INFORMATION

CONTACTS Regensburg Tourismus. ☒ *Altes Rathaus, Rathauspl. 4, Regensburg* ☎ 0941/507-4410 🌐 tourismus.regensburg.de.



Alte Kapelle (Old Chapel)

CHURCH | Erected by the Carolingian order in the 9th century, the sober exterior of the Kollegiatstift unserer Lieben Frau zur alten Kapelle (Basilica of the Nativity of Our Lady Regensburg)—widely known

as simply Alte Kapelle (Old Chapel)—gives way to a joyously gilded interior. Step inside to discover rococo treasures galore, including extravagant concoctions of sinuous gilt stucco, rich marble, and giddy frescoes, with the whole place illuminated by light pouring in from the upper windows. ☒ *Alter Kornmarkt 8, Regensburg* 🌐 www.alte-kapelle.de.

Altes Rathaus (Old Town Hall)

GOVERNMENT BUILDING | The picture-book complex of medieval half-timber buildings, with windows large and small adorned with flower boxes, is one of the best-preserved town halls in the country—and one of the most historically important. Built in the 13th century, when Regensburg was elevated to the status of a Free Imperial City, the imposing Gothic Reichssaal (Imperial Hall) was where the Perpetual Imperial Diet met from 1663 to 1806. This parliament of sorts consisted of the emperor, the electors (seven or eight), the princes (about 50), and the burghers, who assembled to discuss and determine the affairs of the far-reaching German lands of the Holy Roman Empire.

Visit the sumptuously appointed Reichssaal on a guided tour (English-language tours daily at 2 pm) to see its remarkable early-15th-century wood ceiling, as well as its decorative tapestries, flags, and heraldic designs. The tour also includes a visit to the neighboring Ratssaal (Council Room), where the electors met for their consultations, and the cellar's torture chamber (*Fragstatt*; Questioning Room) and execution room (*Armesünderstübchen*; Poor Sinners' Room); any prisoner who withstood three degrees of questioning without confessing was deemed innocent and released—a very medieval notion of justice. ☒ *Rathauspl. 1, Regensburg* ☎ 0941/507-3442 **Tours** 🌐 tourismus.regensburg.de 📄 €7.50 ☺ No English tour mid-Jan.–Feb.



Regensburg's Dom St. Peter is an excellent example of the French Gothic style.

Brückturm-Museum

(Bridge Tower Museum)

HISTORY MUSEUM | With its tiny windows, weathered tiles, and pink plaster, this bridge tower has stood at the southern end of the city's famous Stone Bridge for more than 370 years—and for the past 25 of them, it's been home to Regensburg's tiniest museum. Step inside to discover an array of items relating to the construction and development of the bridge, or to simply take in the gorgeous views over the Regensburg roof landscape. The brooding building with a massive roof to the left of the Brückturm is an old salt warehouse. ✉ *Steinerne Brücke, Weisse-Lamm-G. 1, Regensburg*
☎ 0941/507-5888 🌐 www.donau-schiffahrtsmuseum-regensburg.de 💶 €2
🕒 Closed Nov.–Mar.

Dom St. Peter (St. Peter's Cathedral)

CHURCH | Regensburg's transcendent cathedral, modeled on the airy, powerful lines of French Gothic architecture, is something of a rarity this far south in Germany. Begun in the 13th century, it

stands on the site of a much earlier Carolingian church and can hold a remarkable 6,000 people, three times the population of Regensburg when building began (though only a fraction of the population when it was finally finished by Ludwig I of Bavaria almost 600 years later).

Before heading into the Dom, take time to admire the intricate and frothy carvings of its facade. Inside, the glowing 14th-century stained glass in the choir and exquisitely detailed statues of Gabriel and the Virgin in the crossing (the intersection of the nave and the transepts) are among the church's outstanding features. Don't miss the small octagonal chapel, all sturdy grace and massive walls, built by Italian masons from the mid-12th century; you can barely make out the faded remains of stylized 11th-century frescoes on its ancient walls. And consider visiting the Domschatz (Cathedral Treasury) to see valuables dating back to the 11th century, including some vestments and monstrances still used during special services; it's under renovation but should

reopen September 2025. ☒ *Dompl. 5, Regensburg* ☎ 0941/597-1662 🌐 *dom-platz-5.de* 🚶 Free; Tours €8-10.

★ Haus der Bayerischen Geschichte (House of Bavarian History)

HISTORY MUSEUM | Opened in 2019 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Free State of Bavaria (which was in 2018, but who's counting?), this vast riverside museum walks visitors through the checkered history of the region, from the medieval Kingdom of Bohemia right up to the present day (and future). The tone is a little up-and-down—in the midst of a section on brutal Nazi rule, there's an exhibit about Karl Valentin's comedy film *Flug Zum Mond* (Flight to the Moon)—but there are fascinating deep-dives into Bavarian culture and clothing, the extravagance of Ludwig II, the 1972 Summer Olympics, the booming automotive industry, and, of course, Bayern Munich soccer club. German speakers will enjoy the collected audio snippets of spoken Bavarian alongside other German dialects. ☒ *Donaumarkt 1, Regensburg* ☎ 0941/598510 🌐 *www.museum.bayern* 🚶 €7 ☺ Closed Mon.

Historisches Museum

HISTORY MUSEUM | The municipal museum vividly relates the cultural history of Regensburg. It's one of the highlights of the city, both for its unusual and beautiful setting—a former Gothic monastery—and for its wide-ranging collections, from Roman artifacts to Renaissance tapestries and remains from Regensburg's 16th-century Jewish ghetto. The most significant exhibits are the paintings by Albrecht Altdorfer (1480–1538), a native of Regensburg and, along with Cranach, Grünewald, and Dürer, one of the leading painters of the German Renaissance. Altdorfer's work has the same sense of heightened reality found in that of his contemporaries, in which the lessons of Italian painting are used to produce an emotional rather than a rational effect; his drawings of Regensburg's old

synagogue, exhibited here, are priceless documents. ☒ *Dachaupl. 2–4, Regensburg* ☎ 0941/507-2448 🌐 *regensburg.de/museen/die-museen/historisches-museum* 🚶 €5 ☺ Closed Mon.

★ Kloster Weltenburg (Weltenburg Abbey)

ABBAY | FAMILY | Southwest of Regensburg, on the bank of the Danube, stands one of Germany's most spectacular Benedictine abbeys. Constructed between 1716 and 1718, it's commonly regarded as the masterpiece of brothers Cosmas Damian and Egid Quirin Asam, whose extraordinary composition of lavish polished marble, highly wrought statuary, and stucco figures dancing along curving walls is the epitome of Bavarian baroque. Look above the high altar, where a bronze equestrian statue of St. George is dispatching a winged dragon with his flamelike sword.

No Bavarian monastery is complete without a brewery, and Klosterbrauerei Weltenburg serves up excellent frothy beers and hearty German food. You can also buy bottles of beer to go. Kids will gravitate to the riverside beach, which is perfect for skimming stones (beware bathers!)

The most dramatic approach to the abbey is by river from Kelheim, 10 km (6 miles) downstream, where boats wind between towering limestone cliffs that rise above tree-lined riverbanks. There are several departures a day mid-March through October (€11.50 single; €19.50 return). You can also drive, but expect a 2-km (1¼-mile) round-trip walk from the parking lot (€4.50; cash only) to the abbey. ☒ *Asamstr. 32, Kelheim* ➔ 33 km (20½ miles) southwest of Regensburg 🌐 *kloster-weltenburg.de* 🚶 Free.

Neupfarrplatz

PLAZA/SQUARE | Prior to 1519, this oversized square was once the heart of the Jewish ghetto. The Neupfarrkirche (New Parish Church) here, built as a pilgrimage

church, was given to the Protestants, hence its bare-bones interior. In the late 1990s, excavation work on the square uncovered well-kept cellars and, to the west of the church, the old synagogue, including the foundations of its Romanesque predecessor. Archaeologists salvaged the few items they could from the old stones. Recovered items were carefully restored and are on exhibit in the Historisches Museum. Only one small underground area to the south of the church, the Document, accommodates viewing of the foundations. In a former cellar, surrounded by the original walls, visitors can watch a short video reconstructing life in the old Jewish ghetto. Over the old synagogue, the Israeli artist Dani Karavan designed a stylized plaza where people can sit and meet. ☒ *Neupfarpl. 1, Regensburg* 📄 *Document €8.*

Porta Praetoria

RUINS | Built in AD 179 under the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, this is one of only two preserved Roman gates north of the Alps (the other is the Porta Nigra in Trier). A rough-hewn limestone gate, it originally served as the northern wall of the Roman legionary camp *Castra Regina*. Today, the most visible remaining sections are the exposed archway and the neighboring tower on Unter den Schwibbögen street, but if you look through the grille on the gate's east side, you'll also see a section of the original Roman road, about 10 feet below today's street level. ☒ *Unter den Schwibbögen 2, Regensburg.*

Schloss Emmeram (Emmeram Palace)

CASTLE/PALACE | Formerly a Benedictine monastery, this is the ancestral home of the princely Thurn und Taxis family, which made its fortune after being granted the right to carry official and private mail throughout the empire ruled by Emperor Maximilian I (1493–1519) and by Philip I, King of Spain. Their horn still symbolizes the post office in several European countries.

A guided tour (English audio guide available) of the State Rooms includes the splendid ballroom and throne room, allowing you to witness the setting of courtly life in the 19th century, as well as visit to the fine Kreuzgang (cloister) of the former abbey. Without a tour, but for a small fee, you can visit the Princely Treasury, home to carefully selected items displaying fine craftsmanship—be it dueling pistols, a plain marshal's staff, a boudoir, or a snuffbox—and the Carriage Museum, home to the family's coaches, carriages, and related items. Also on the grounds is the Basilika St. Emmeram (the family church), with foundations dating to the 7th and 8th centuries and a richly decorated 18th-century baroque interior. The church also contains the graves of the 7th-century martyred Regensburg bishop Emmeram and the 10th-century saint Wolfgang. ☒ *Emmeramspl. 5, Regensburg* 📄 *thurnundtaxis.de* 🚗 *Tour of State Rooms and Cloister €17; Treasury and Carriage Museum €5; Church free* 🕒 *Closed mid-Nov.–mid-Mar.*

★ Steinerne Brücke (Stone Bridge)

BRIDGE | This impressive medieval bridge resting on massive stone pontoons is Regensburg's most celebrated sight. It was completed in 1146 and was rightfully considered a miraculous piece of engineering at the time. As the only crossing point over the Danube for miles, it effectively cemented Regensburg's control over trade. The significance of the little statue on the bridge is a mystery, but the figure seems to be a witness to the legendary rivalry between the master builders of the bridge and those of the Dom. ☒ *Regensburg.*

Walhalla

MONUMENT | East of Regensburg, this mammoth monument is a none-too-subtle expression of 19th-century pan-Germanic nationalism. In Norse mythology, Valhalla was where the god Odin received the souls of dead heroes, and when Ludwig I erected this neoclassical



The Golden Gate Bridge may be better known today, but the 12th-century Steinerner Brücke (Stone Bridge) was its match in terms of engineering ingenuity and importance in its day.

Parthenon-style temple in 1840, it was to honor German heroes from ages past (more recent additions include busts of Albert Einstein and Sophie Scholl). The expanses of costly marble are evidence of both the financial resources and the craftsmanship at Ludwig's command.

Walhalla may be kitschy, but the fantastic view it affords over the Danube and the countryside is worth the trip alone. You can either drive here (parking's €2.50 for two hours) or, every day between late April and early October, take a charming two-hour boat ride from the Steinerner Brücke in Regensburg. Opt for a round-trip on the Swarovski-decorated Crystal Queen and Crystal Princess ships (€19.50 return), and prepare for a climb up 358 marble steps from the river to the temple. ☒ *Walhallastr. 48, Donaustauf* ↗ 10 km (6 miles) east of Regensburg 🌐 www.walhalla-regensburg.de 📞 €4.50.

🍴 Restaurants

★ Historische Würstkuchl

\$\$ | GERMAN | If there's one city food experience you shouldn't miss, it's the succulent, charcoal-grilled *Regensburger* sausages at this 500-year-old "sausage kitchen." The small, homemade pork-ham *würstchen*, available in portions of six, eight or 10, are served with the restaurant's own cellar-fermented sauerkraut and signature Würstkuchl mustard.

Known for: best Regensburger sausages in town; good choice of beers; expensive and touristy but still popular with locals.

📍 *Average main: €16* ☒ *Thundorferstr. 3, Regensburg* ☎ 0941/466210 🌐 wurstkuchl.de ☺ No dinner.

Leerer Beutel

\$\$\$ | ITALIAN | FAMILY | Expect high-quality Italian cuisine with the occasional Spanish influence at this historic restaurant: think beef cheeks in red wine sauce with fried pimientos, or black risotto with grilled garlic prawns and aioli. The charming interior is all rough wooden

beams, pristine white tablecloths, and painting-covered walls, with evening meals often accompanied by live jazz.

Known for: rustic yet upmarket ambience; reliable Italian classics with the odd Spanish twist; hosts regular concerts and exhibitions. *Average main:* €24 *Ber-oldstr. 9, Regensburg* 0941/58997 *leerer-beutel.de* *Closed Sun. No lunch Sat.*

★ **Restaurant Roter Hahn by Maximilian Schmidt**

| **MODERN EUROPEAN** | The city's finest fine-dining option sees Michelin-starred chef Maximilian Schmidt focus on a fusion of European (especially French, German, and Scandinavian) and Asian cuisines. Choose between a three-, five- and eight-course evening tasting menu featuring inventive, seasonal creations like pike perch with fermented paprika and *chawanmushi* (egg custard) with bacon, or come for a good-value (and considerably cheaper) three- or four-course lunch. **Known for:** vegetarian menus available (and vegan on request); expert wine pairings with each menu.; creative dishes beautifully presented. *Average main:* €155 *Rote-Hahnen-G. 10, Regensburg* 0941/595-090 *roter-hahn.com* *Closed Sun.–Tues. No lunch Wed.–Thurs.*

Coffee and Quick Bites

At about three o'clock in the afternoon, many Germans head to their favorite *Konditorei*, a pastry shop, to enjoy a cup of coffee and a slice of cake. Regensburg, often jokingly called Italy's northernmost city, is littered with fine corner pubs and cafés. Any of the cafés around the Cathedral are worth a break for coffee and cake in the afternoon.

Anna Liebt Brod und Kaffee

| **BAKERY** | In a city famous for its cafés, Anna is a safe chain of high-quality bakeries in Regensburg and one of the best places for coffee and cake in the

afternoon. Breakfast under the vaulted ceilings is pleasant, as are the sandwiches to go. **Known for:** decent coffee; good sandwiches to go; handcrafted bread.

Average main: €10 *Gesandtenstr. 5, Regensburg* 0941/206-0230 *anna-cafe.de* *No dinner.*

Hotels

For a rich city, Regensburg is surprisingly low on real luxury accommodation. So make your choice: a spacious, air-conditioned, international-brand hotel like Novotel, Holiday Inn, or Ibis on the edge of town, or a more characterful (though almost certainly more cramped) option in the heart of the Old Town. Most of our recommendations fall into the latter category.

★ **ACHAT Hotel Regensburg Herzog am Dom**

| **HOTEL** | This historic hotel's central location—sandwiched between the Alte Kapelle and Dom St. Peter, attached to the city's best beer garden, and within 10 minutes' walk of all Regensburg's other big-ticket attractions—is what makes it such a draw. **Pros:** history dating back to the 11th century; air-con in all rooms (a city-center rarity); Presidential Suite may be Regensburg's best room. **Cons:** red-carpeted corridors lack flair; back rooms get beer garden noise until late; breakfast is good but not always included. *Rooms from:* €171 *Domplatz 3, Regensburg* 0941/584000 *achat-hotels.com/hotels/regensburg-herzog-am-dom* 40 rooms *No Meals.*

Bischofshof am Dom

| **HOTEL** | This is one of Germany's most historic hostelries, a former bishop's palace where you can sleep in a suite that includes part of a Roman gateway. **Pros:** historic building; light and airy lobby is a nice place to relax; courtyard beer garden. **Cons:** restaurant not up to hotel's standards; no air-conditioning; standard singles and doubles a little old-fashioned. *Rooms from:* €171 *Krauterermarkt*

3, Regensburg ☎ 0941/58460 🌐 hotel-bischofshof.de ➡ 87 rooms 🍷 Free Breakfast.

★ Grand Hotel Orphée

\$\$ | HOTEL | Bringing a touch of French flair to the heart of Bavaria, this beautiful grand hotel is set within a former baroque palazzo. **Pros:** tastefully appointed rooms with historic touches; excellent restaurant (try the crepes); great town center location. **Cons:** paid parking (though €8.50 for 24 hrs is good); front rooms are noisy; separate properties confusing. 📍 Rooms from: €175 ☎ Untere Bachg. 8, Regensburg ☎ 0941/596-020 🌐 hotel-orphee.de ➡ 33 rooms 🍷 Free Breakfast.

Münchner Hof

\$\$ | HOTEL | This small and stylish side-street hotel provides top service at a good price, right around the corner from the Neupfarplatz and at the heart of the AltstadtQuartier. **Pros:** modern rooms with historic features; great location in the heart of town; 24-hour reception. **Cons:** hard-to-find the entrance on narrow street; no parking (unload outside then use a nearby garage); some rooms have thin walls. 📍 Rooms from: €135 ☎ Tändlerg. 9, Regensburg ☎ 0941/58440 🌐 muenchner-hof.de ➡ 51 rooms 🍷 No Meals.

🍷 Nightlife

★ Weltenburger am Dom

BEER GARDENS | Not only the city's best beer garden (tucked away in a courtyard behind the ACHAT Hotel), Weltenburg am Dom also serves the city's best beer: a selection of brews, varying from pale gold to jet black, from the nearby Klosterbrauerei Weltenburg—the world's oldest monastery brewery. Even if the weather's bad, you can still enjoy them in the cozy, wood-beamed interior. Feeling peckish? Opt for the exceptional *Bockbier Schnitzel*; tenderized pork with a mustard pretzel bread, slathered in beer sauce

and covered in crispy onions. ☎ Dom-pl. 3, Regensburg ☎ 0941/5861-460 🌐 www.weltenburger-am-dom.de.

Spitalgarten

BEER GARDENS | As you cross the Stone Bridge from the center of Regensburg, you'll spot this inviting beer garden on the northern shore of the river. There's nowhere better for people-watching while sinking a house-brewed beer (choose between the light, dark, and wheat beers, or get a taster of all three). The food isn't bad, either, and there are regular live music events. ☎ St.-Katharinen-Pl. 1, Regensburg ☎ 0941/84774 🌐 www.spitalgarten.de.

🛍 Shopping

The winding alleyways of the Altstadt are packed with boutiques, ateliers, jewelers, and other small shops offering a vast array of arts and crafts. You may also want to visit the Neupfarplatz market (Monday through Saturday 9–4), where you can buy regional specialties such as *Radi* (juicy radish roots), which locals wash down with a glass of wheat beer. *Der Hutmacher* is the best place in Bavaria to get a traditional hat; it's across the square from Dom St. Peter and has been owned by the same family for five generations.

Passau

119 km (74 miles) southeast of Regensburg, 228 km (111 miles) southeast of Nuremberg, 169 km (105 miles) northeast of Munich.

Flanking the borders of Austria and the Czech Republic, Passau dates back more than 2,500 years. Originally settled by the Celts, then by the Romans, it later passed into the possession of prince-bishops whose domains stretched into present-day Hungary. In 752 a monk named Boniface founded the diocese of

Passau, which at its height would be the largest church subdivision in the entire Holy Roman Empire.

Three major rivers meet in Passau—the Ilz from the north, the Danube from the west, and the Inn from the south. This enabled Passau to become incredibly wealthy, trading in salt, grain, and wine. Wedged between the Inn and the Danube, the Old Town is a maze of narrow cobblestone streets lined with beautifully preserved burgher and patrician houses and riddled with churches. The cobblestoned Altstadt is a joy to explore and many of the streets are pedestrianized. It's easy to get lost, but that's what makes it fun.

In the summer, Passau fills with cruise visitors, but none of them spends the night, so things are quieter in the evening.

GETTING HERE AND AROUND

Passau is on the A3 autobahn from Nuremberg, via Regensburg, to Vienna. It's a 1½-hour drive from Regensburg, or an hour by train. From Munich, it's around 2¼ hours by either mode of transport.

FESTIVALS

In the weeks before Christmas, a traditional market spreads through the old city in the shadow of Dom St. Stephan. Although often overshadowed by larger markets in Nuremberg or Dresden, Passau's Christkindmarkt (🌐 passauer-christkindmarkt.de) is less touristy and offers a more authentic experience with vendors from Czechia, Germany, and Austria.

Passau is the cultural center of Lower Bavaria. Its **Europäische Wochen** (🌐 ew-passau.de) festival—featuring everything from opera to pantomime—is a major event on the European music calendar. The festival runs from mid-June to July or early August and is held in venues all over the city.

VISITOR INFORMATION

CONTACTS Tourist-Information Passau.

✉ Rathauspl. 2, Passau ☎ 0851/396-610
🌐 tourismus.passau.de.



Domplatz (Cathedral Square)

PLAZA/SQUARE | This large square in front of the Dom stands on the earliest-settled part of the city. In addition to the cathedral, it's bordered by a host of sturdy 17th- and 18th-century buildings, including the Alte Residenz, the former bishop's palace and now a courthouse. The neoclassical statue at the center of the square is Bavarian King Maximilian I, who watches over the Christmas market in December. ☒ *Passau.*

★ Dom St. Stephan

(*St. Stephen's Cathedral*)

CHURCH | Situated at the eastern end of the Domplatz, this cathedral rises high above the city, making it Passau's most visible landmark. A baptismal church stood here in the 6th century, and 200 years later, when Passau became a bishop's seat, the first basilica was built. It was dedicated to St. Stephen and became the original mother church of St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna. A fire reduced the medieval basilica to ruins in 1662; it was then rebuilt by Italian master architect Carlo Lurago. What you see today is the largest baroque basilica north of the Alps, complete with an octagonal dome and flanking towers. Little in its marble- and stucco-encrusted interior reminds you of Germany, and much proclaims the exuberance of Rome. Beneath the dome is the largest church organ assembly in the world. Built between 1924 and 1928 and enlarged in 1979–80, it claims no fewer than 17,774 pipes and 233 stops. The church also houses the most powerful bell chimes in southern Germany. ☒ *Dompl., Passau*
☎ 0851/3930 🌐 bistum-passau.de
🎫 *Free; Organ concerts €10.*

★ Dreiflüsseck (Three Rivers Corner)

VIEWPOINT | Walk to the eastern tip of the Altstadt and look straight out at the wide waters ahead. You are standing at the confluence of three rivers: the Inn (on





Did You Know?

Passau is known as the Bavarian Venice, or "Dreiflüssestadt" (City of Three Rivers), because it is located at the confluence of three rivers: the Ilz from the north, the Danube from the west, and the Inn from the south.

your right), the Danube (on your left), and the Ilz (behind you on the left; the small outlet on the other side of the Danube). It's always interesting to witness the jostling flows and currents, but it's particularly impressive on a sunny day, when you can clearly see the different water colors mingling together; the navy-black Ilz flowing into the blue-brown Danube, before meeting the aqua-green Ilz. This point also marks the western end of the Innkai, a pleasant riverside path that leads past the striking 13th-century Schaiblingsturm. It's a far more relaxing experience than the bustling Danube promenade. ☒ Ort 19, Passau.

Glasmuseum Passau

ART MUSEUM | The world's most comprehensive collection of European glass is housed in the historic Wilder Mann complex. The proud history of glassmaking in Central Europe—centered on Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic—is captured in more than 30,000 items, half of which are on display at any one time across the 35 rooms. Opened in 1985 by (rather randomly) Neil Armstrong, the museum is home to everything from beautiful baroque creations to eye-catching art deco pieces. ☒ Schrottg. 2, Passau ☎ 0851/35071 🌐 glasmuseum.de 💰 €8.

Museum am Dom (Cathedral Treasury and Diocesan Museum)

HISTORY MUSEUM | Step inside the beautiful Neue Residenz, through the stately baroque entrance revealing a magnificent staircase—a scintillating study in marble, fresco, and stucco—and you'll find this excellent cathedral museum. It's home to one of Bavaria's largest collections of religious treasures—the legacy of Passau's rich episcopal history—along with a baroque book collection, colorful frescoes, and antique furnishings. ☒ Residenzpl. 8, Passau ☎ 0851/393-3331 🌐 bistum-passau.de 💰 €2 ☺ Closed Sun.

Rathaus (Town Hall)

GOVERNMENT BUILDING | Passau's looming 14th-century town hall sits like a vast

Venetian merchant's house on a small square (called, logically, Rathausplatz) fronting the Danube. The building was once home to a wealthy German merchant, before being declared the seat of city government after a 1298 uprising. Today it holds two council chambers, home to wall paintings depicting scenes from local history and legend, though it's not currently possible to visit these interiors. Even if you don't see the Rathaus, you'll probably hear it, as the tower is home to Bavaria's largest glockenspiel, which plays daily at 11:30 am and 2:30 pm. ☒ Rathauspl. 2, Passau ☎ 0851/3960 🌐 tourism.passau.de/discover-passau/sights/town-hall.

Römermuseum Kastell Boiotro (Roman Museum Castle Boiotro)

HISTORY MUSEUM | While excavating a 17th-century pilgrimage church, archaeologists uncovered a stout Roman fortress with five defence towers and walls more than 12 feet thick. The Roman citadel Boiotro was discovered on a hill known as the Mariahilfberg on the south bank of the river Inn, with its Roman well still plentiful and fresh. Pottery, lead figures, and other artifacts from the area are housed in this museum at the edge of the site. ☒ Ledererg. 43, Passau ☎ 0851/34769 🌐 www.stadtarchaeologie.de/museum 💰 €4 ☺ Closed Mon.

★ Veste Oberhaus

(Upper House Stronghold)

CASTLE/PALACE | The powerful fortress and summer castle, commissioned by Bishop Ulrich II in 1219, protects Passau from an impregnable site across the river from the Rathaus. Today, the Veste Oberhaus is Passau's most important museum, containing exhibits that illustrate the city's 2,000-year history. From the terrace of its café-restaurant (open Easter–October), there's a magnificent view of Passau and the convergence of the three rivers. The fortress is a steep, 15-minute walk from Rathausplatz; there's also a parking lot. ☒ Oberhaus 125, Passau

☎ 0851/396–800 🌐 oberhausmuseum.de 🚗 €5 ☺ Closed mid.–Nov.–mid.Mar (except festive period).



Restaurants

Hacklberger Bräustüberl

\$\$ | **GERMAN** | Shaded by magnificent old trees, this brewery's enormous beer garden (which can seat more than 1,000) is a popular stop for sipping a summer-time Hacklberger beer, while tucking into a plate of sausages or the pumpkin-seed breaded roast chicken. **Known for:** house-brewed beer since 1618; simple Bavarian brewhouse food; enormous beer garden that moves inside in winter. 📍 *Average main: €16* ☒ *Bräuhauspl. 7, Passau* ☎ 0851/58382 🌐 hacklberger-braeustueberl.de ☺ Closed Mon.

Heilig-Geist-Stiftsschenke

\$\$\$ | **GERMAN** | For atmospheric dining, this 14th-century monastery-turned-wine cellar is a must. In summer you can eat beneath chestnut trees; in winter seek out the warmth of the vaulted, dark-paneled dining rooms. **Known for:** fish from the Stift's own ponds; wine from the Stift's own vineyards; traditional regional cuisine. 📍 *Average main: €23* ☒ *Heilig-geistg. 4, Passau* ☎ 0851/2607 🌐 stiftskeller-passau.de ☺ Closed Wed.–Thu.

Peschl-Terrasse

\$ | **GERMAN** | The beer you sip on the high, sunny terrace overlooking the Danube is brought fresh from Peschl's own brewery below which, along with this traditional Bavarian restaurant, has been owned by the same family since 1855. Expect hearty Bavarian cuisine, from schnitzels to steaks. **Known for:** solid traditional cuisine; tasty homemade beer; river views from the terrace. 📍 *Average main: €14* ☒ *Rosstränke 4, Passau* ☎ 0851/2489 🌐 facebook.com/peschl.terrasse.



Hotels

Hotel König

\$\$ | **HOTEL** | **FAMILY** | It may only have been built in 1984, but this charming little hotel with its salmon-pink facade blends in successfully with the graceful Italian-style buildings either side of it. **Pros:** some rooms have impressive river views; most rooms are spacious; incredible service and breakfast. **Cons:** no on-site restaurant; street and river noise in the mornings; some rooms are a little small. 📍 *Rooms from: €155* ☒ *Untere Donaulände 1, Passau* ☎ 0851/3850 🌐 hotel-koenig.de 🚗 41 rooms 🏠 Free Breakfast.

Hotel Wilder Mann

\$\$ | **HOTEL** | Passau's most historic hotel, which faces the town hall on the waterfront market square, dates from the 11th century. **Pros:** historic hotel in the center of town; better rooms offer lovely square and river views; on-site glass museum admission included. **Cons:** some rooms are a bit small; no restaurant or bar; short breakfast hours (8–10 am) can be limiting. 📍 *Rooms from: €100* ☒ *Schrottg. 2, Passau* ☎ 0851/35071 🌐 wilder-mann.com 🚗 49 rooms 🏠 No Meals.



Activities

Halser Ilzschleife (Hals Ilz Loop)

HIKING & WALKING | Situated 2 km (1¼ miles) upriver from Passau, Hals is a charming little town-turned-city suburb that sits on an s-shaped double meander in the river Ilz. It's also the starting point for the region's best hiking, as the surrounding Halser Ilzschleife nature reserve is crisscrossed with easy hiking trails, with obligatory refreshment stops, as well as two ruined castles. Get to the area by foot, bus, or car, then follow the easy, 5-km (3-mile), one-hour trail back to the center of Passau. You can pick up a map of hiking trails in Passau's tourist information center. ☒ *Hals, Passau.*