

UPPER RHINE valley

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Landau & Germersheim - the sociable ones

Tradition and a disposition towards innovation are combined with a large dose of joie de vivre in these two former fortress towns of Landau and Germersheim. Embedded in the unique winegrowing landscape of the northern Upper Rhine Valley both towns are certainly well worth a trip. Landau, which is close to the French border, is one of the largest wine-producing communities in Germany and lies at the heart of the endless winegrowing landscape that can be found along the *Southern Wine Route*. Germersheim captivates with its exposed position on the Rhine and a mixture of historic monuments and pristine nature experiences.

Landau - the garden town

On account of its generous parks this is the name under which this former fortress- and now university town has come to be known by. In 2014 the fourth Garden Show conducted by the federal state of Rhineland-Palatinate will open its gates to visitors from near and far. Almost every architectural style from the past centuries is represented in Landau - be it the Patrician buildings from the Late Middle Ages that can be found around the town hall, the *Altes Kaufhaus* (old merchant's house), the *Augustinian cloister*, the *collegiate church* or the *Festhalle* (festival hall), one of the most important art deco festival- and theatre buildings in south-western Germany.



People from all age groups mix and mingle in the street-side cafés and wine taverns that can be found in the town's centre. At the market, which takes place twice a week, local farmers attract their customers with regional specialities - vegetables, herbs, fruit, but also meat, sausages, fish and cheese. Of course in autumn the sweet chestnut - locally known as *Keschde* - can also be found here in all its variations. Besides asparagus and wine it is *the* regional attraction for gourmets.

In Landau the sociable life takes place outdoors during all seasons. In spring the festivities begin with the *Maimarkt* - a combination of travelling amusement park and trade fair, followed by the *Landau Summer* with its live music performances in the streets and places, the *Festival of the Federweisser* - celebrating the delicious fermenting new wine - with its traditional music, the *Autumn Fair* with its Ferris wheel and amusements for the whole family. Wine enthusiasts come together for the wine-days of the Southern Wine Route, which traditionally take place during the weekend following the Feast of Corpus Christi, in the Frank-Loebchen Haus and the old merchant's house to talk shop about the latest vintages offered by the 90 or so winemakers from the region - and to generously sample them as well. The *Kunsthawerkliche Thomas Nast Nikolausmarkt* - the Handicraft Thomas Nast Christmas market - is one of the most beautiful Christmas markets far and wide: potters, goldsmiths,

painters, wood turners, basket weavers and puppet makers vie with the wood cutters, artisan blacksmiths and weavers for the favour of the audience. The patron Thomas Nast was born in Landau and later emigrated - as did so many people from the Palatinate - to the United States of America. He then became famous as a caricaturist - and the creator of the now classic image of Santa Claus!



Germersheim - liveable and loveable

This district town which is so steeped in history emanates a youthful charm - although it was founded more than two thousand years ago. It used to be a garrison town, nowadays it is home to the renowned faculties for linguistics and cultural studies of the Johannes-Gutenberg University in Mainz. As a business location with a high degree of recreational value and cultural life it is not only a touristic destination, but also interesting for investors. The convenient location of this once Roman military outpost on the Rhine is favourable for its development: with Germany's second largest inland container port and ideal connections to the nationwide transportation system the town of Germersheim has achieved a growing economical importance in the last few years.

The impressive, painstakingly restored *fortifications* are still proof to the important role that the town used to play during its times as the site of an Imperial castle, official residence of the Electoral Palatinate and subsequently garrison town. Today the fortifications are readily accessible to everyone and are home to museums such as the unique *German Road and Transportation Museum*, parts of the university and the *municipal Music School*. During the annual *Germersheim Cultural Summer Festival* tradition, arts and culture can be found combined in all parts of the town.



The region - history and pure joie de vivre



In the southern Palatinate one encounters history wherever one goes. Who would have thought that the English King Richard Cœur de Lion was imprisoned here? To be more precise: he was held captive in the impressive *Kaiserburg Trifels*, the elegant royal fortification from the Staufer period that lies above the village of Annweiler. The castle was also the treasury of the Homan Roman Empire of German Nations: nowadays copies of the precious Imperial Regalia - the Imperial Crown, Sword and Orb - can be admired within these walls. The exhibition *Macht & Mythos* (power & myth) explains how they came to be such mythical items. The Bavarian King Ludwig I. - yes, Bavaria used to hold possession over a part of the Palatinate - kept

along Roman patterns and fulfilled his vision of a summer residence in the style of the Pompeii villas through the palace *Schloss Villa Ludwigshöhe*. The Bavarian kings had to leave - and now a permanent exhibition of the works of impressionist painter Max Slevogt, who also chose the Palatinate as a home, are on show here. More traces of the Romans can be discovered in the Terra-Sigillata-Museum in Rheinzabern.

Here the “Roman porcelain”, a fine red pottery, can be admired alongside other treasures from the period. And Roman history comes alive during a trip on board the Navis Lusoria, a reconstructed Roman river patrol boat.



Hikers, ramblers and bicycle riders will find lots of challenges among the *Pfälzerwald*, *Bienwald* and vineyard routes or in the unique *trekking camps*. There are countless ways to discover the region surrounding these two sociable towns! With Mother Nature providing such excellent ingredients it comes as no wonder that cellars and kitchens only offer the best. Be it on occasion of the blossoming almond trees, the harvest of asparagus, Keschde or grapes, or the advent season - it's a season for gourmets the whole year around. No matter if wine tavern, town square, cosy inn or gourmet restaurant - they all use regional produce! Of course this also applies to the Palatinate's wine, which tastes especially good when you get it directly from the local winemakers.





The Upper Rhine Valley

The beautiful Upper Rhine Valley is located in the heart of Europe, where the Rhine connects France, Germany and Switzerland. With an area of more than 21.000 km² the region is almost as large as Tuscany, and has the same centuries-old tradition of attracting tourists who love art, culture and fine cuisine. The Upper Rhine Valley is a compact region of versatile scenery and culturally of extraordinary diversity with many charming towns and villages on both sides of the Rhine. The economically prosperous region with its six million inhabitants is within easy reach and offers its visitors a lot of everything.

It never takes more than ten minutes to get from one highlight to another. Famous for its short and mild winters and pleasing summer temperatures from April to October, the region is one of the most beautiful and fertile landscapes in Europe: The markets, vineyards and sophisticated restaurants as good as gold for gourmets; the Gothic cathedrals in Freiburg, Basel and Strasbourg, medieval castles and the countless museums with art collections ranging through history make it a MUST for art connoisseurs; the unique landscape is a paradise for golfers, hikers and ramblers, swimmers, bikers and outdoor fans. Some eighteen million overnight stays each year - of which many guests are returning visitors - confirm the region's outstanding appeal to tourism.

For further detailed information:

Web: www.upperrhinevalley.com; **Email:** urv@fwtm.freiburg.de; **Phone :** +49 (0)761 3881 1211



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Text: Gisela Graf

Pictures: Hans Kohl

Press Contact regional: Gisela Graf Graf Communications contact@gisela-graf.com

Press Contact national: Margarete Schwind Schwindkommunikation ms@schwindkommunikation.de

Press Contact international: Hans Kohl Reiko PR hans@reiko.org.uk