



# Central Germany





## Central Germany

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## Central Germany

I first saw castles along the Rhine unexpectedly in 1979 while on a train journey from Munich to Amsterdam. Counting castles going by on the hilltops was a unique and thrilling experience, so it was inevitable that I would return.

I had a brief look again at the beginning of a 2005 trip to Europe, just long enough to cruise on the Rhine a bit and take some pictures.

The first part of this central Germany trip focused directly on the Rhine and its tributaries. I signed up for Astrid Baur's *River Castles Tour: The German Rivers Rhine, Moselle, Neckar and Main and their Castles*.

The castles and almost everything else here were older than in Bavaria which I had visited earlier, and the area had an enormously rich history. Plus striking scenery, and fine white wines.

I had a chance to explore Frankfurt a bit on my own while passing through, and I've added some of those photos.

My Castles tour experiences eventually led to a role helping with the website of [www.EuropeanCastlesTours.com](http://www.EuropeanCastlesTours.com), Astrid Baur's tours company, but what's posted here are my own photos.

– Bruce McKay

# Central Germany



Photos are presented here in the sequence of the *River Castles Tour*, which started and ended in Frankfurt. My own explorations of Frankfurt are at the end.

The tour route went west through Rüdesheim and used Boppard as a home base for trips along the Rhine and Moselle Rivers. The final days of the tour swung south to Heidelberg and then back up through Rothenburg and Würzburg.





**Rüdesheim**  
Rhine Valley

Rüdesheim is at the southern end of the portion of the Upper Middle Rhine that is on the UNESCO World Heritage list.





Rüdesheim

Rüdesheim's main street





Rüdesheim

The Drosselgasse shopping lane is a major attraction.





Rüdesheim

Drosselgasse can be busy.





**Rüdesheim**

**A cable car runs up to the  
Niederwald Monument.**





**Rüdesheim**

The cable car ride takes  
10 minutes and climbs 666 feet.





**Rüdesheim**

Looking south, back over  
Rüdesheim and the Rhine.





**Rüdesheim**

The Niederwald monument, with its statue of Germania, commemorates the establishment of the German Empire in 1871.





Rüdesheim

View from the Niederwald monument





Rüdesheim

Typical Rhine excursion boat





**Rüdesheim**

**Vineyards on the hills  
at Rüdesheim.**





**Rüdesheim**

The Rhine Valley is Germany's  
major wine-producing region ...





**Rüdesheim**

**... famous for its Riesling wines.**





Rhine Valley

We go cruising down the  
Rhine from Rüdesheim.





**Rhine Valley**

**Germania, protecting the vines**





Rhine Valley

Village of Assmannshausen





Rhine Valley

Assmannshausen





**Rhine Valley**

**Heimburg Castle (1290) at Bacharach  
overlooks commercial shipping traffic.**





Rhine Valley

A riverside restaurant patio at Kaub





**Rhine Valley**

**Mauseturm, near Bingen (~968 AD), was the toll booth of a greedy Bishop who met his fate there at the hands of a plague of mice.**





**Rhine Valley**

**Ruine Ehrenfels, near Rüdesheim, dates from 1210 A.D.  
The castles start going by on the hills ...**





Rhine Valley

... very frequently.  
Burg Rheinstein, near Trechtingshausen, 13th century.





Rhine Valley

Burg Rheichenstein, near  
Trechtingshausen, 11th century.





**Rhine Valley**

**Burg Sooneck, near  
Niederheimbach, 1000 A.D.**





**Rhine Valley**

**Heimburg, at Bacharach,  
1290 A.D.**





**Rhine Valley**

**Burg Stahleck, at Bacharach,  
12th century.**





**Rhine Valley**

**Pfalzgrafenstein, a mid-river  
toll castle near Kaub, 1326**





Rhine Valley

Burg Gutenfels,  
at Kaub, 1220





Rhine Valley

Burg Gutenfels





Rhine Valley

Schönburg, at Oberwesel,  
12th century





Rhine Valley

Schönburg





Rhine Valley

Fortification tower  
at Oberwesel





## Rhine Valley

The Lorelei Rock, at a treacherous point in the Rhine, was said to be the home of a beautiful maiden who lured sailors to their deaths with alluring singing.





Rhine Valley

Modern Lorelei maiden





Rhine Valley

Burg Katz,  
St. Goarshausen, 1360





**St. Goar**  
Rhine Valley

St. Goar is the home of Burg Rheinfels,  
the region's largest castle.





St. Goar

Rheinfels Castle on the hill overlooks the town.





**Burg Rheinfels**  
St. Goar

Rheinfels was built in 1245.





## **Burg Rheinfels**

Rheinfels withstood a French siege in 1692,  
but the French army destroyed the castle in 1797.





**Burg Rheinfels**

**Off on a tour of Burg Rheinfels**





**Burg Rheinfels**

A Rheinfels guide explains  
the castle's history.





**Burg Rheinfels**





**Burg Rheinfels**





**Burg Rheinfels**





**Burg Rheinfels**

St. Goar and the Rhine River  
as seen from Burg Rheinfels





**Burg Rheinfels**

Burg Katz, on the hill above St. Goarshausen,  
as seen from Burg Rheinfels





**Burg Rheinfels**

The railway tracks and  
highway follow the Rhine.





**Burg Rheinfels**

A restored portion of Rheinfels  
is home for one night.





**Burg Rheinfels**

**The view from my hotel room**





**Marksburg**  
Rhine Valley

The Marksburg at Braubach is the only Rhine castle that was never destroyed. It has survived for over 700 years.





## Marksburg

The Marksburg evolved  
from a 12th century start.





**Marksburg**

Off on a tour of the Marksburg





**Marksburg**

A guide explains the design of armor from various periods.





**Marksburg**

Reading and work areas were constructed at window openings.





**Marksburg**

The castle's cannons could  
reach across the Rhine.





**Marksburg**

**Looking south on the Rhine**





**Marksburg**

**Looking north**





**Koblenz**  
Rhine & Moselle

The Moselle River (centre) joins the Rhine River (from the left) in Koblenz at what is known as “the German Corner”.





**Koblenz**

The German Corner was settled as early as the Middle Stone Age (9000 B.C.).





**Koblenz**

**A monument to Emperor William I  
dominates the German Corner.**





**Ehrenbreitstein**  
Koblenz

The Ehrenbreitstein fortress  
guards the German Corner.





**Ehrenbreitstein**

Ehrenbreitstein was built by  
Prussia between 1817 and 1832.





**Ehrenbreitstein**

Ehrenbreitstein is strategically positioned above the Rhine ...





**Ehrenbreitstein**

... guarding river and land  
transportation routes.





**Ehrenbreitstein**

Ehrenbreitstein was the largest military fortress in Europe except for Gibraltar.





## Ehrenbreitstein

Ehrenbreitstein's design is a masterpiece of military architecture, but it was never attacked.





**Ehrenbreitstein**

Ehrenbreitstein's unique architecture saved it from destruction after WW I.





**Cologne**  
**Rhine River**

Cologne is the oldest major city in Germany.  
It was first named by the Romans in 50 A.D.





## Cologne

The Dom (Cathedral) is Cologne's distinctive symbol. Construction began in 1248.





**Cologne**

The Dom was not  
completed until 1880.





**Cologne**

The Dom is the largest Gothic church in Northern Europe.





**Burg Eltz**  
Moselle Valley

Burg Eltz is a medieval castle in the hills  
above a tributary to the Moselle River.





**Burg Eltz**

Burg Eltz was first documented  
in 1157, 850 years ago.





**Burg Eltz**

Political influence saved it  
from destruction in 1688.





## **Burg Eltz**

**The castle is still owned by a branch of the same family that lived there in the 12th century, 33 generations ago.**





## Burg Eltz

The interior of the castle was segmented to accommodate three branches of the family.





**Cochem**  
Moselle River

**Cochem Castle overlooks the town of  
Cochem and its riverside Promenade.**





**Cochem**

**Cochem Castle was built around 1000 A.D.  
but was destroyed by the French in 1689.**





**Trier**  
**Moselle River**

Trier is the oldest city in Germany, founded by the Romans in 16 B.C. Construction of fortifications began in 180 A.D.





**Trier**

The Porta Nigra (Black Gate) today is the largest Roman city gate north of the Alps.





**Trier**

The Konstantin Basilika is the largest surviving single-room structure from Roman times.





## Konstantin-Basilika

Evangelische Kirche  
zum Erlöser  
UNESCO-Welterbe seit 1986

*Basilica of Constantine  
Protestant Salvator-Church  
UNESCO World Heritage Site  
since 1986*

*Basilique de Constantin  
Église protestante du Sauveur,  
Patrimoine mondial  
de l'UNESCO depuis 1986*

Trier

The Basilika was built in 310 A.D. by  
the Roman Emperor Constantine.





**Trier**

**The Electoral Palace dates from 1615.**





**Trier**

The Baroque Palace Gardens were inspired by Italian garden design concepts.





**Heidelberg**  
**Neckar River**

The Celts settled around Heidelberg about 800 B.C.  
The Romans established a camp here around 80 A.D.





**Heidelberg**

**The stone Alte Brücke (Old Bridge)  
was built between 1786 and 1788.**





**Heidelberg**

The southern gate end of the Alte Brücke was part of the city wall.





**Heidelberg**

**Heidelberg Castle overlooks the city from 260 feet up the hill.**





**Heidelberg**

**Wars brought repeated  
destructions of the Castle.**





**Heidelberg**

The castle was first destroyed in 1622 during the 30 Years' War between Protestants and Catholics.





**Heidelberg**

The French blew up part of it in 1689, but were forced to retreat.





**Heidelberg**

In 1693 the French destroyed the town  
and demolished the castle with mines.





**Heidelberg**

**Reconstruction started in 1697.**





Neckar Valley

Eberbach, on the Castle Road  
from Heidelberg to Rothenburg





Neckar Valley

En route to Rothenburg





**Rothenburg  
ob der Tauber**

**Rothenburg is a well-preserved  
16th century walled town.**





**Rothenburg**

You can walk around the  
entire wall circling the city.





**Rothenburg**

You can climb to the top  
of one of the towers.





**Rothenburg**

Most of the enclosed city  
is a pedestrian zone.





Rothenburg





Rothenburg





**Rothenburg**

The white part of the Rathaus (Town Hall)  
was built between 1250 and 1400.





**Rothenburg**

**Rothenburg Marktplatz  
(Market Square)**





**Rothenburg**

**St. Jakobs Lutheran Church,  
built 1311 - 1471**





**Würzburg**  
Main River

**On the Romantic  
Road to Würzburg**





**Würzburg**

**Fortress Marienberg has  
a notorious history.**





**Würzburg**

**The Würzburg Residenz complex was built by two Prince-Bishops to demonstrate their wealth.**





**Würzburg**

**The Residenz was built between 1720 and 1744 and embellished by the most prominent European artists.**





Würzburg

Residenz Court Gardens





Würzburg

Residenz Court Gardens





Würzburg

Next it's back to Frankfurt.





**Frankfurt**  
Main River

Frankfurt, from the observation  
deck of the Maintower skyscraper





**Frankfurt**

**The Main River is a  
busy freight route.**





**Frankfurt**

Sparkasse bank on the left,  
Deutsche Bank twin towers on the right





**Frankfurt**

**The Old Opera House,  
rebuilt 1976 - 1981**





**Frankfurt**

**Eschenheim Tower, 1428,  
part of the original city wall**





**Frankfurt**

**St. Catherine's Church,  
built 1678 - 1681**





**Frankfurt**

Left up to right: St. Paul's Church, the reconstructed Römerburg city centre, and the Old Nikolai Church, opened in 1290





**Frankfurt**

The Römerberg square has been the home of Frankfurt's city government since 1405.





Frankfurt

Römerberg





**Frankfurt**

**Old Nikolai Church,  
first mentioned in 1264**





**Frankfurt**

**Customs Tower, where  
harbour fees were collected**





**Frankfurt**

**The Iron Bridge for  
pedestrians, 1869**





## Frankfurt Airport

Frankfurt Airport is the third busiest in Europe, and a surprisingly interesting sightseeing destination.





## Frankfurt Airport

For €6 you can take an Airport Sightseeing Tour on buses which go out onto the airfield.





**Frankfurt Airport**

**We meet a big Boeing 747 ...**





**Frankfurt Airport** ... and the picture taking begins.





**Frankfurt Airport**

**Mostly we meet Lufthansa Airbuses.**





**Frankfurt Airport**

**Up close.**





**Frankfurt Airport**    The one is getting ready to leave.





**Frankfurt Airport**    I'll be going soon too.



< End >



**Central Germany**