

Southern Germany

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Southern Germany

The main event on my first extended trip to Europe was Astrid Baur's Bavarian Castles Tour: King Ludwig II's Castles and the Bavarian Lakes.

I was interested in the opportunity to see inside Neuschwanstein and the other castles, had a great time, and returned for another of Astrid's Castles tours in northern Germany. I was back in the south on a third trip to Germny and had a chance to re-visit some locations and to explore Munich a bit on my own.

The castles are indeed impressive, but they have stiff competition from the Bavarian countryside, the picturesque towns and villages, and the mountains.

My initial Castles tour eventually led to a role helping with Astrid Baur's website at www.EuropeanCastlesTours.com, but I've limited what's posted here to my original photos from my own trips.

As in most castles and palaces in Europe now, photography is not permitted inside King Ludwig's castles. I've included a few images from commercial sources, each noted as such.

Bruce McKay

Southern Germany



Home base for the full duration of the *Bavarian Castles Tour* is at Hopfen am See, just north of Füssen.

The sequence of day trips varies depending on the weather.

Pictures are presented here grouped by subject rather than chronologically.



Hopfen am See

This village just north of Füssen and the Austrian border will be home base for the Bavarian Castles Tour.



Hopfen am See

We'll be staying at the Landhaus Kössel, a Bavarian country inn that prides itself in welcoming its guests as friends, not tourists.









Hopfen am See No Surfing! As if.



Hopfen am See The coun

The countryside around Hopfen is gorgeous, and relentlessly green.



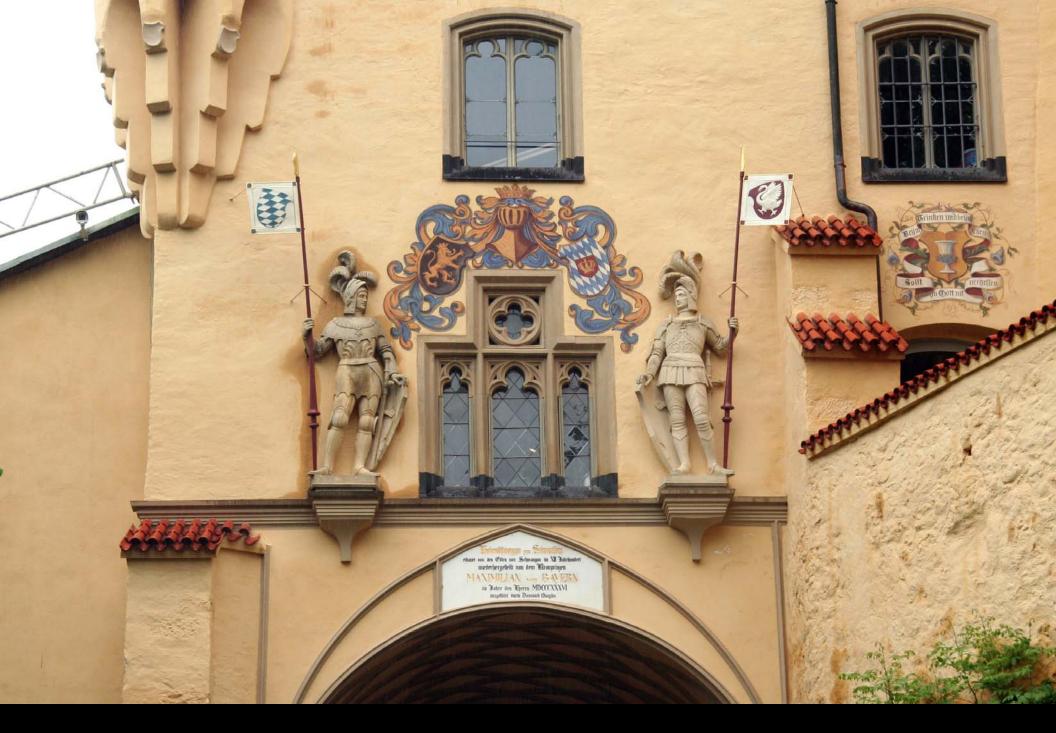
Hohenschwangau Castles explorations begin at the village of Hohenschwangau, just east of Füssen.



Hohenschwangau Hohenschwangau Castle towers over the village and the neighbouring lakes.



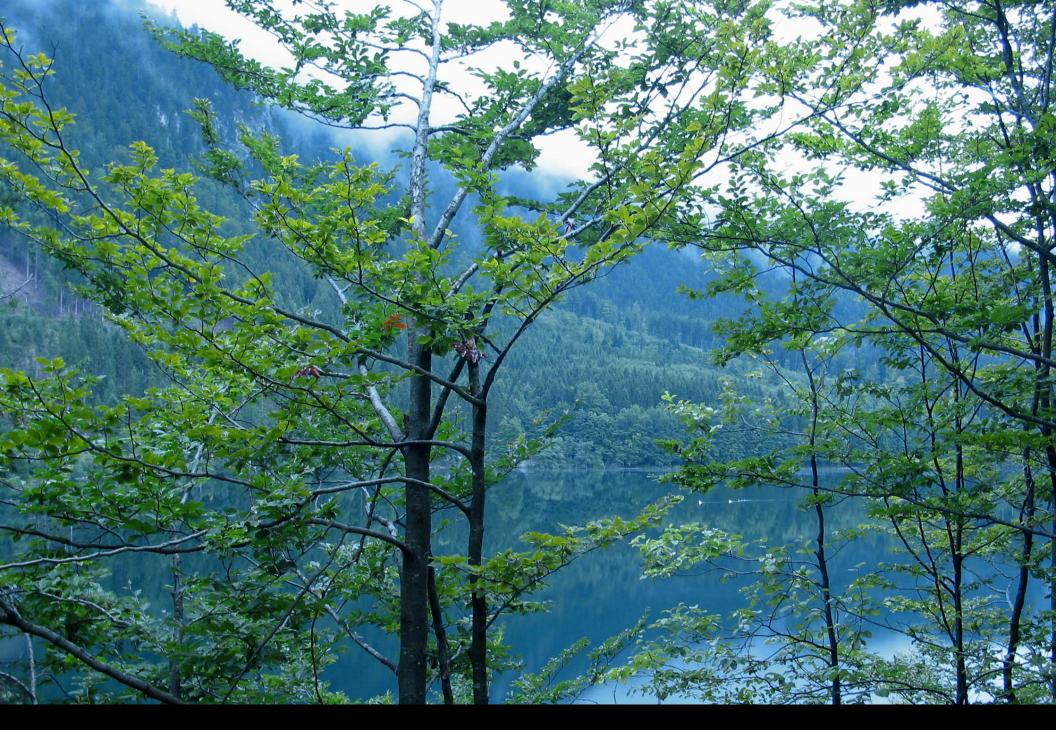
Hohenschwangau This castle was King Ludwig II's boyhood home.



Hohenschwangau

Hohenschwangau was built by Ludwig's father between 1833 and 1837.





Hohenschwangau Ludwig learned to swim in nearby Lake Alpsee.



Neuschwanstein, perched high atop Swan Rock opposite Hohenschwangau, was the first of King Ludwig's own castles.



Neuschwanstein, seen from the Mary's Bridge vantage point.



Neuschwanstein was built between 1869 and 1886.

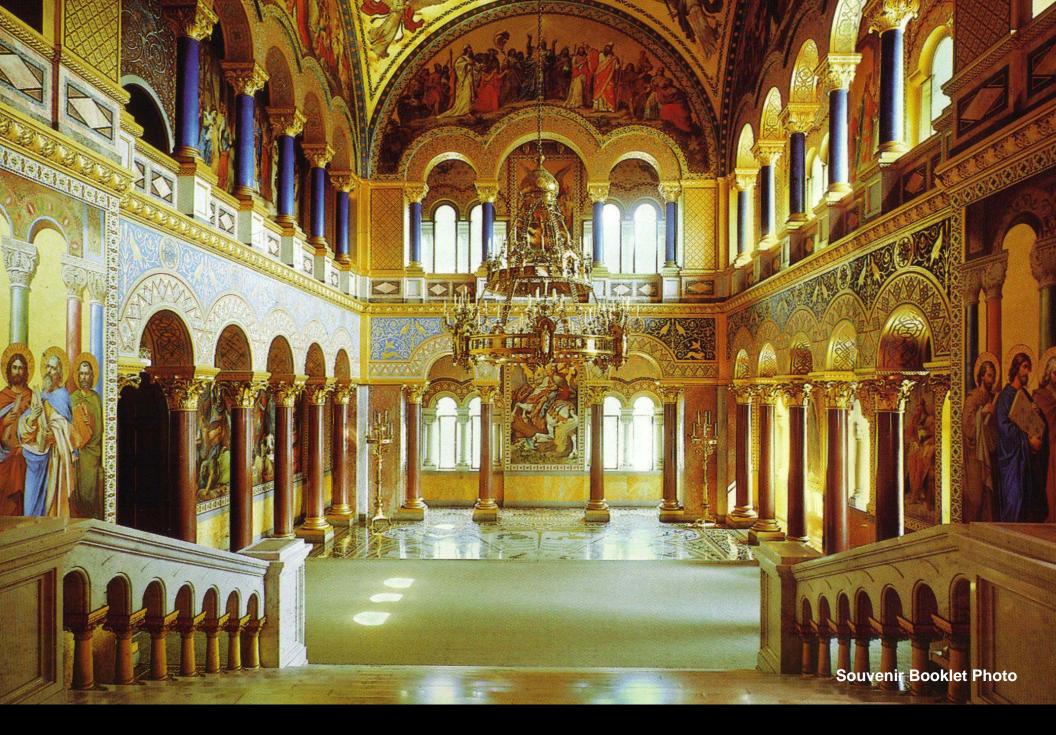


Neuschwanstein was designed by Christian Jank, a theatrical set designer.





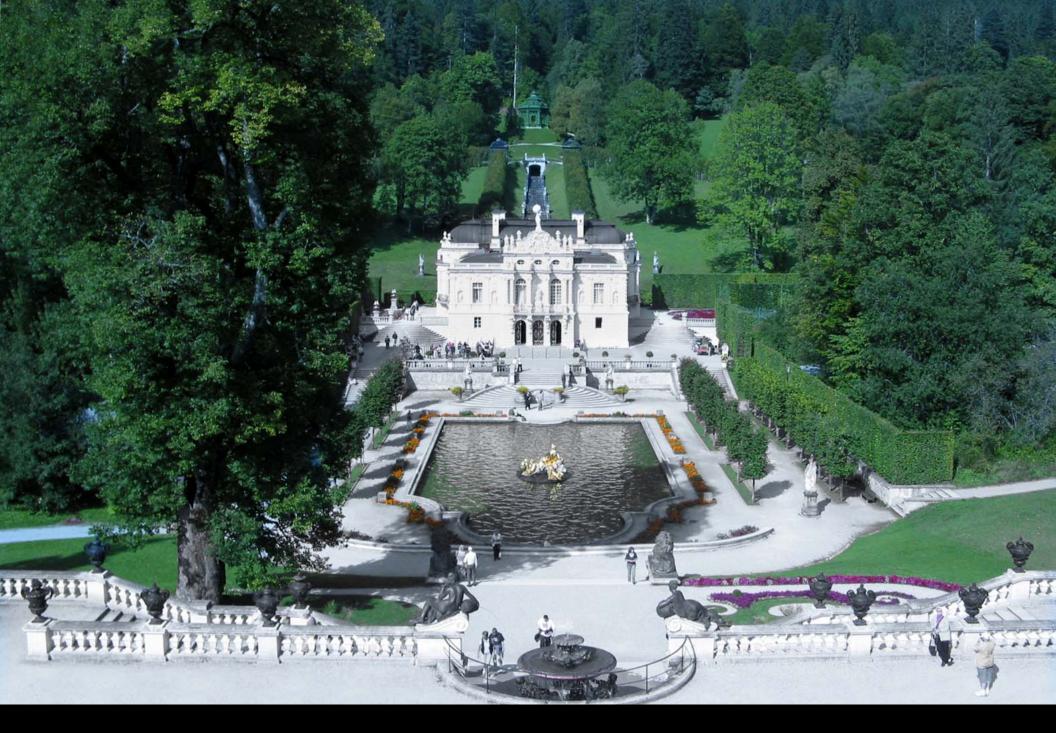
Neuschwanstein Neuschwanstein inspired the Disney castles.







Neuschwanstein Neuschwanstein remains uncompleted.



Linderhof Linderhof, Ludwig's second castle, was built between 1870 and 1879.



Linderhof

Linderhof is set in a remote valley between Füssen and Oberammergau.



Linderhof

Linderhof was built in an elaborate rococo style.



Linderhof Linderhof was Ludwig's favourite residence.



Linderhof

The Southern Terraced Hill is crowned by the classical Venus temple.



Linderhof

Audience Chamber





Linderhof's Eastern Flower Beds, with Venus and Adonis as centrepiece Linderhof



Linderhof The Grotto is an artificially constructed cave up in the hills above Linderhof.



Linderhof The Grotto recreates the Venusberg Mountain from Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. Electric lighting was new technology in the 1870s.



Herrenchiemsee Palace, Ludwig's third major project, was hidden on an island in Chiemsee, Bavaria's largest lake.



Herrenchiemsee was inspired by Versailles, and was Ludwig's most expensive project.



The central Royal Palace was built between 1878 and 1885.



The formal gardens feature many fountains and statues, both in the classical style ...



... and in the fantastic style of romanticism favoured by King Ludwig.

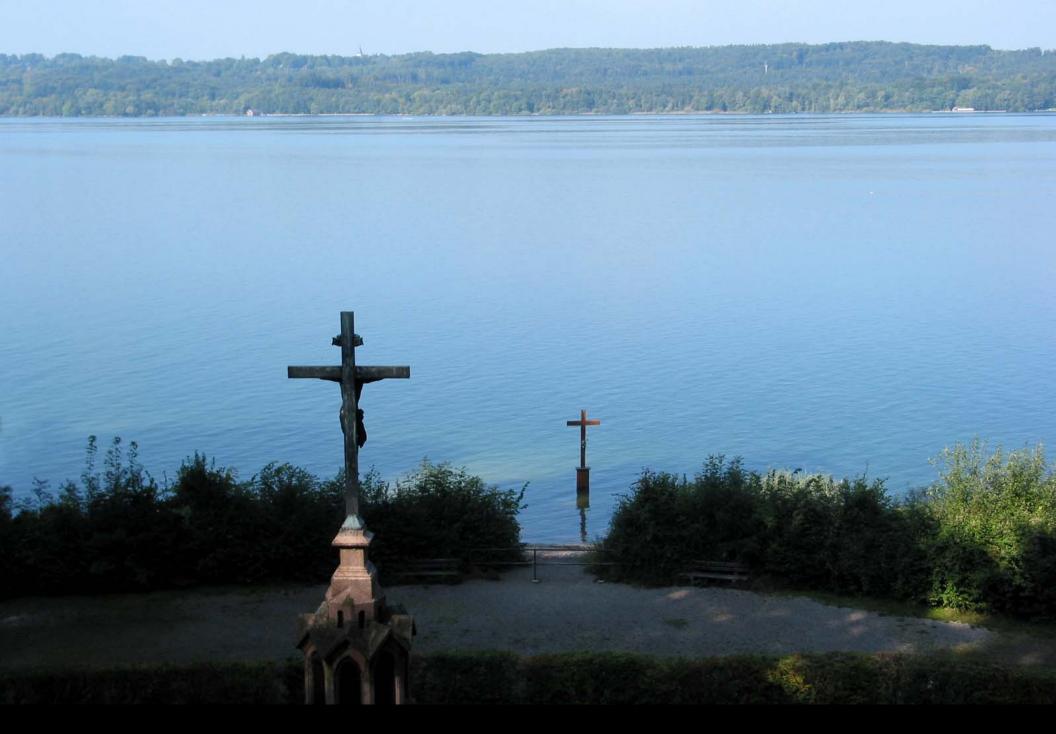


This stairway was copied from Versailles, which Ludwig admired enormously.





Ludwig spent only a few days at Herrenchiemsee, in September 1885.



Lake Starnberg

A cross in Lake Starnberg marks the location where Ludwig's body was found on June 13, 1886, under suspicious circumstances.



Lake Starnberg

Ludwig Votivchapel, near where the body was found.



The village of Oberammergau is a 30 mile (48 km) drive east from Füssen.



Oberammergau is famous for the frescoes on its buildings ...



... and for the Passion Play it stages every ten years.



Oberammergau is also noted for its wood carvings ...





Bad Tölz

Bad Tölz is a town of about 18,000 about half way between Füssen and Lake Chiemsee.



Bad Tölz

The main street is pedestrian-only after the early-morning deliveries.



Bad Tölz

Bad Tölz architecture also features the painted decorations of the region.



Wieskirche, the Pilgrimage Church of Wies, was built in the country in the foothills of the Alps between 1745 and 1754.



Wieskirche, sometimes called the Church in the Meadow, was added to the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites in 1983.



Wieskirche is an oval rococo church, with an interior decorated with frescoes and elaborate stuccowork.



The Church in the Meadow actually has a real meadow, with horses.



Andechs Monastery Andechs Monastery is place of pilgrimage and a business which supports the Abbey of St. Boniface in Munich.



Andechs Monastery

Parts of the Abbey church date from the 15th century. It was remodelled in Baroque style in 1712.



Andechs Monastery The monastery operates a large organic farming business, a famous brewery, and beer gardens for tourists.



Nymphenburg Nymphenburg Palace in Munich, the Summer Residence of the Bavarian royal family, was begun in 1664.





Nymphenburg continues to be a home and office for the head of the house of Wittelsbach.



The Court Stables are part of a grand circle of buildings.



The grand parterre is the central feature of the 200 hectare / 490 acre Nymphenburg park.



Nymphenburg Palace's façade was redesigned in 1716 and again in 1826.



Nymphenburg's Great Hall is used by the Bavarian royal family for major receptions.



The Marstallmuseum (Carriage Museum) houses many of Ludwig's elaborate carriages.



Central Munich

Ludwigstrasse, with the Residenz on the left, the arched Field Marshall's Hall centre, and the Theatrine Church centre-right.



Central Munich

The Propylaea is a gate at the west side of Königsplatz, a square created in 1816 at the command of King Ludwig II's grandfather.



Central Munich

Nationaltheater München is the home base for the Bavarian State Opera and the Bavarian State Ballet.



Central Munich

The Rathaus (City Hall) at Marienplatz (Mary's Square), the central square in the centre of Munich.



Central Munich

The Rathaus Glockenspiel re-enacts two stories from the 16th century three times daily.



Central Munich

The Hofbräuhaus is probably the world's most famous beer hall.



The Munich Residenz is the former royal place of the Bavarian monarchs in the centre of Munich.



One of ten courtyards in the Residenz complex, the largest city palace in Germany.



The Hall of Antiquities (1568-1571) is the largest Renaissance hall north of the Alps.







The Royal Regalia of Bavaria (1804) in the Munich Residenz Treasury



Olympic Park

Munich's Olympic Park was constructed for the 1972 Summer Olympics.



Olympic Park

The Olympic Tower houses telecommunications facilities, a revolving restaurant, and an observation platform.



Olympic Park

The Olympic Stadium holds about 70,000. It is still used for athletic competitions and hosts pop music concerts.



Olympic Park BMW is the Olympic Park's nearest neighbour.



Olympic Park Munich as seen from the Olympic Tower



Allianz Arena

Munich's major football teams have moved to a new stadium further north.





Allianz Arena

The Allianz Arena can hold almost 70,000 spectators.



Allianz Arena

Interesting guided tours are conducted frequently.



Allianz Arena The guided tours include a visit to the locker room of the famous *Bayern München* football club.



We're off on a day-long Castles excursion to Bodensee (Lake Constance).



Lindau is an ancient walled city on a near-shore island in eastern Lake Constance.



The age of Lindau's city walls is not clear, but remains of an early Roman settlement have been found here.





Lindau was first mentioned in writing in 882, and narrow streets speak to its age.



The decorated rear of City Hall, built between 1422 and 1436



Lindau is near the meeting point of the Austrian, German, and Swiss borders, and has a busy harbour.

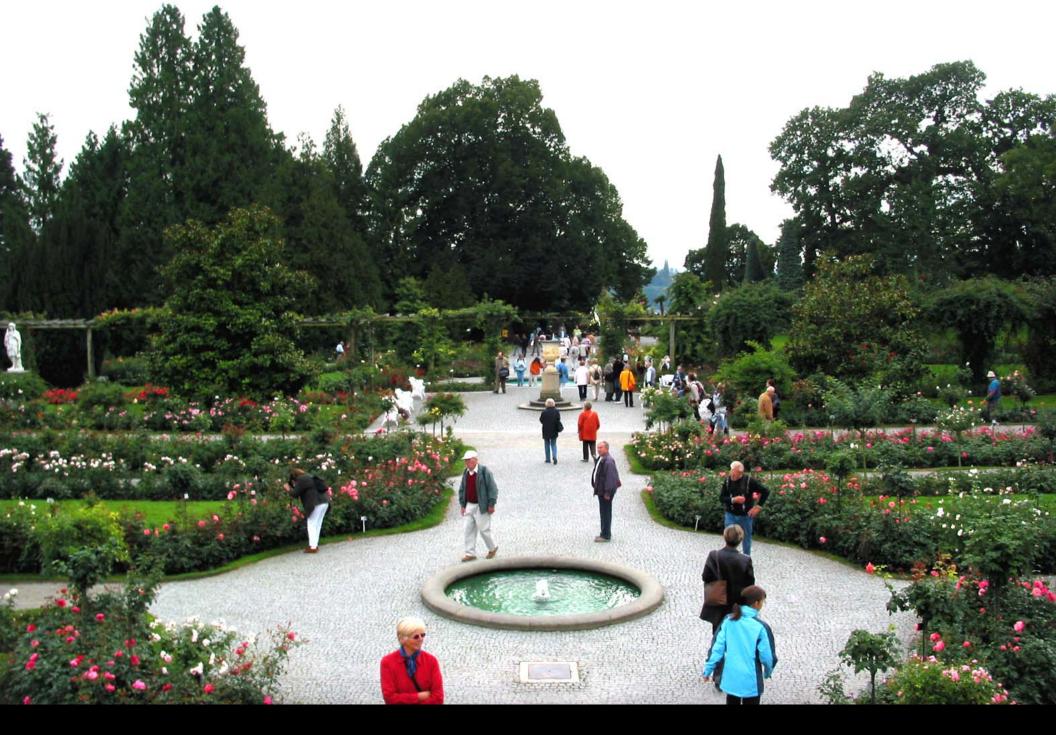






Mainau Grand Duke I

Grand Duke Frederick I of Baden purchased the 45 hectare / 111 acre island in 1853 and built a summer palace.



Mainau

Frederick also created an arboretum for exotic species and began the island's extensive gardens.



Mainau

Mainau is a paradise for plant enthusiasts because even tropical flowers grow in the mild climate of the lake.



Ownership of Mainau passed to the Swedish royal family which created a foundation for its continuance in 1974.



Mainau

Mainau's designers and gardeners create dramatic floral sculptures.



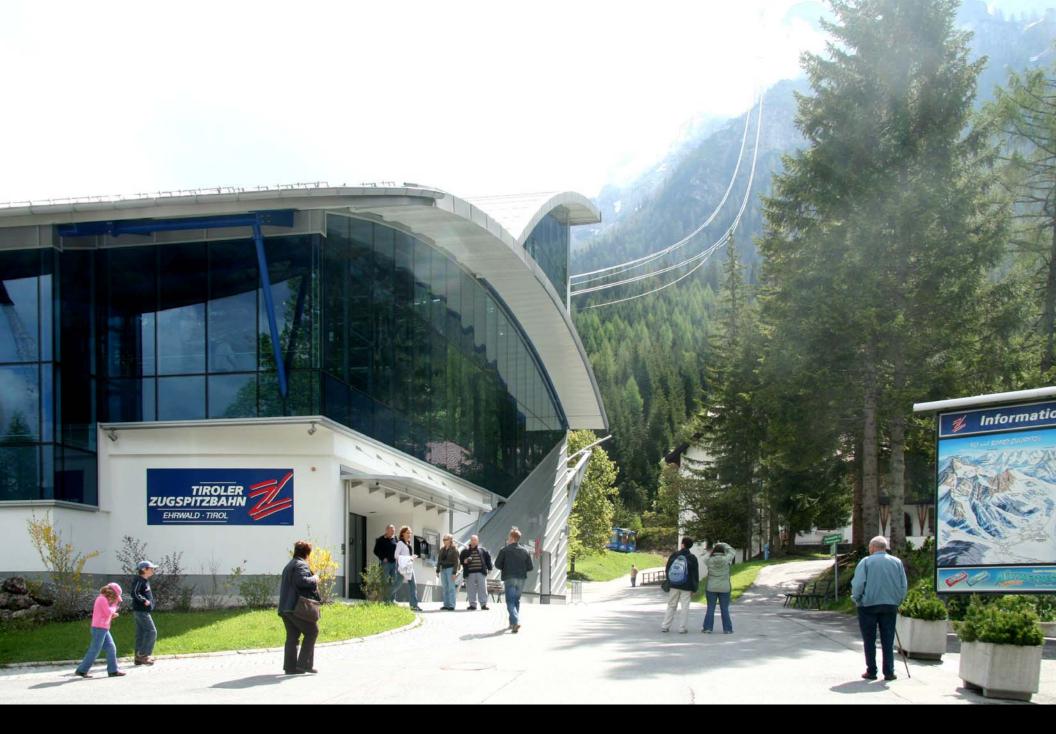
Mainau employs 350 gardeners and support staff during the flowering season.



Mainau

Mainau includes gardens, sculptures, park land, a children's zoo, and a playground.





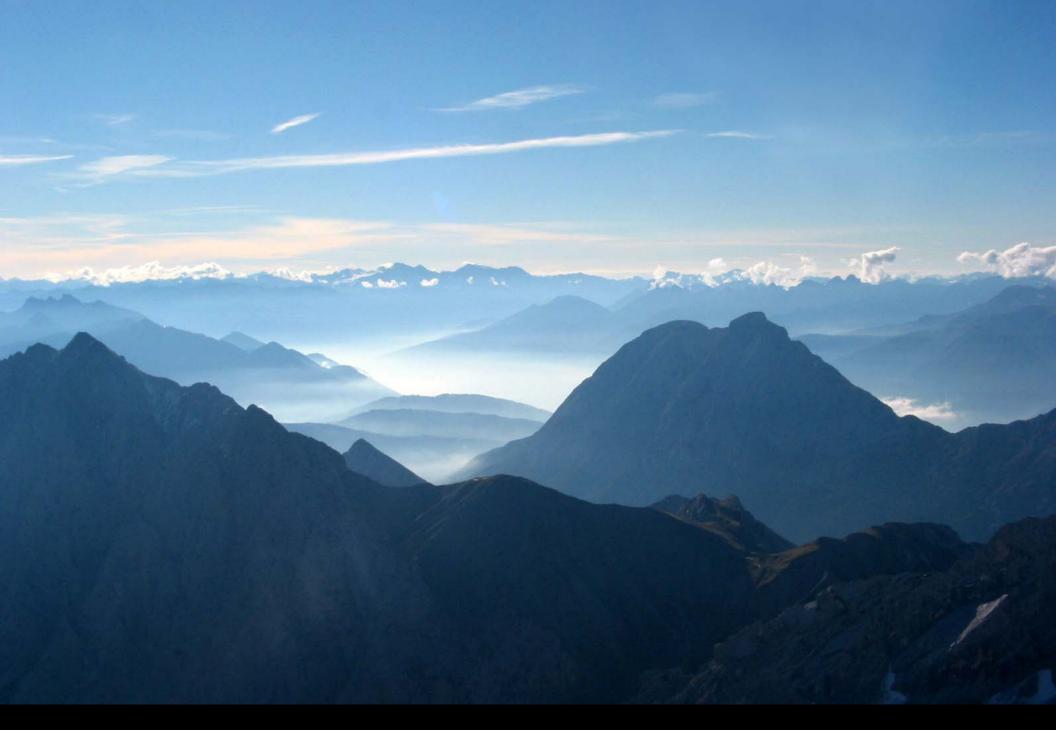
Now we're off to the top of Mount Zugspitze, Germany's highest mountain.



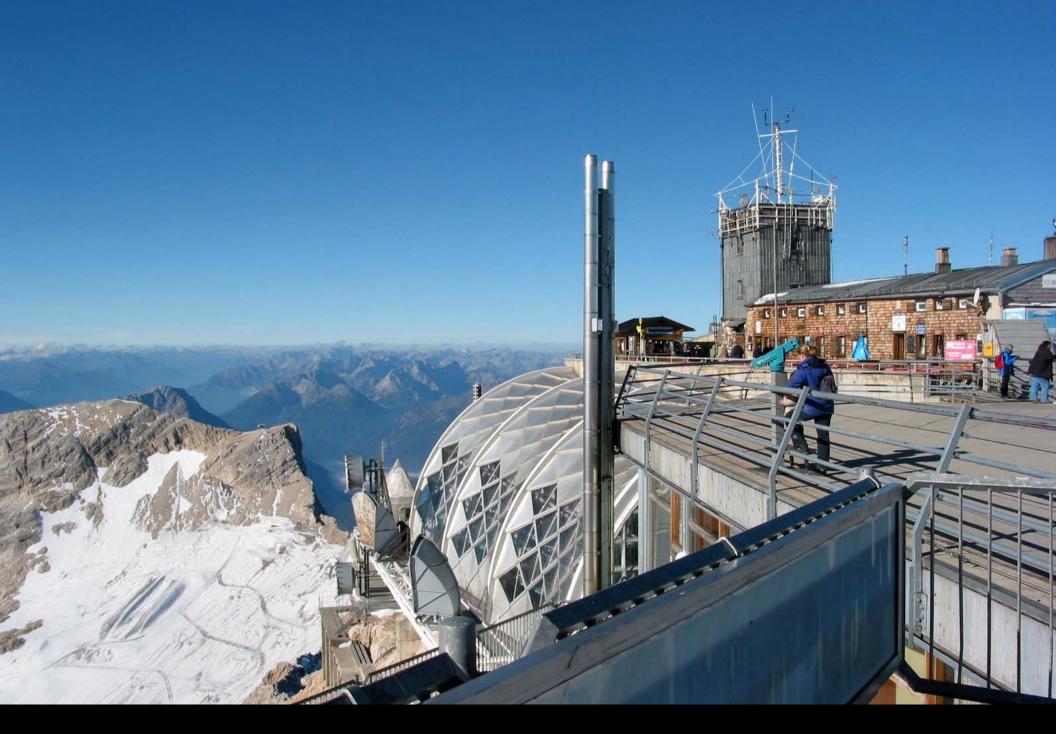
The cable car travels up 1.7 km / 1.1 miles to the top in 10 minutes.



Zugspitze's elevation is 9,718 feet / 2,962 metres.



Mount Zugspitze Zugspitze offers breathtaking views of the Alps.



The summit buildings straddle the border between Germany and Austria.



Mount Zugspitze The c

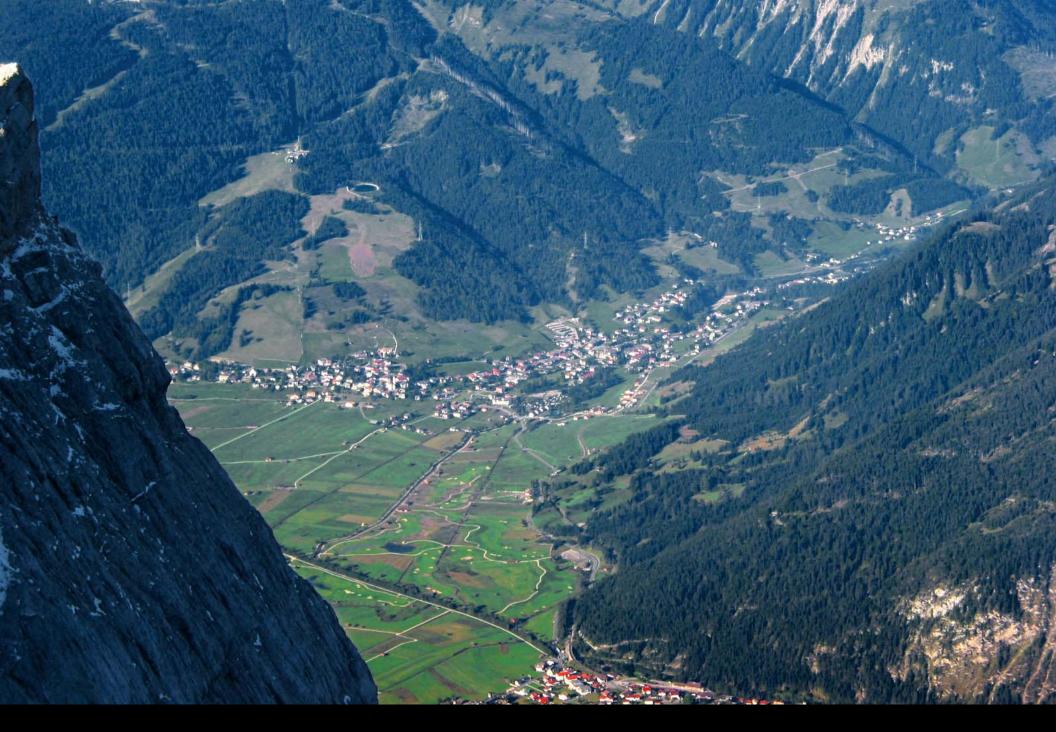
The comfortable Panorama restaurant at the summit

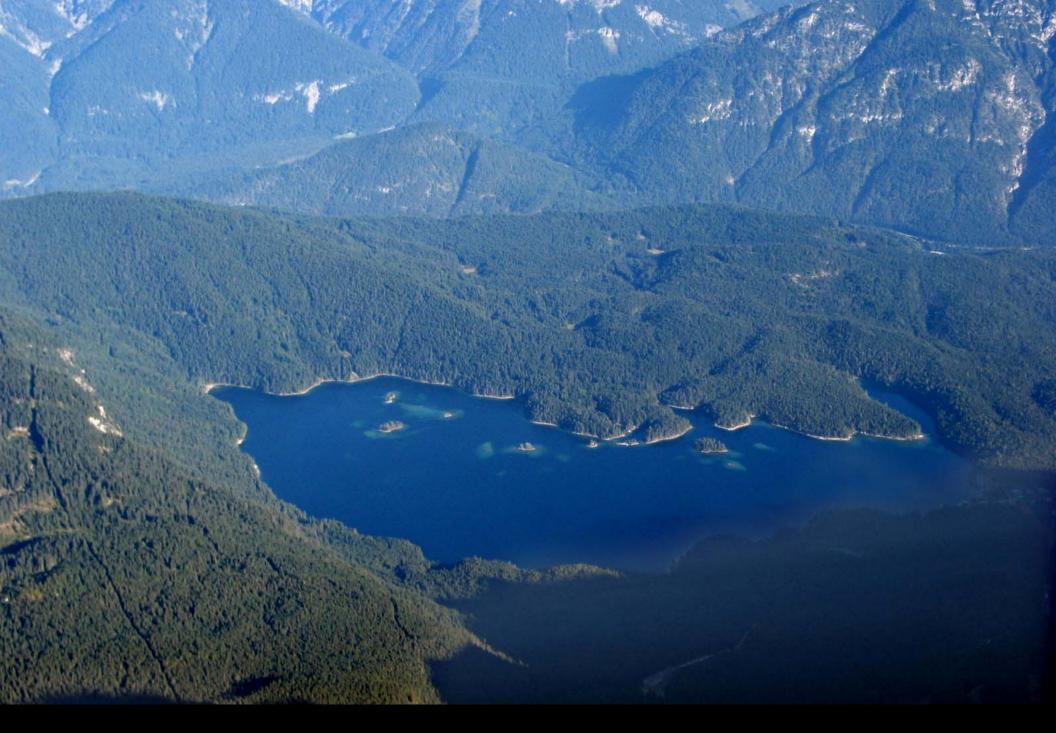


Mount Zugspitze On a clear day you can see four countries – Germany, Austria, Italy, and Switzerland.



Mount Zugspitze Ehrwald lies at the southern base of the Zugspitze, in the Austria's North Tyrol.







Headed back down.
What a finish to Bavarian explorations!

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