

BEST OF GERMANY IN 13 DAYS

Sun, Aug 25, 2024 through Fri, Sep 06, 2024



DAY 1

Welcome to Germany

Sun, Aug 25, 2024

We'll meet at 4 p.m. at our hotel in Hamburg for a "Welcome to Germany" meeting. Then we'll take a neighborhood walk to get a feel for this prosperous, progressive city and get acquainted over dinner together.

Light walking: 2–4 miles throughout the day on mostly level terrain. No bus. Sleep in Hamburg.

DAY 2

Hamburg's Old Town and Harbor

Mon, Aug 26, 2024

Today we'll begin with a walking tour of the historic core of Hamburg, including the resilient St. Nicholas Church Memorial, where we'll learn about "Operation Gomorrah" — the allied firebombing campaign that devastated the city in 1943. Then we'll stroll through historic Speicherstadt to the stunning new Elbphilharmonie concert hall and hop aboard a boat to see the city's massive modern harbor. When we return shore-side we'll set you free for the afternoon to explore more of this impressive port city.

Moderate walking: 2–6 miles throughout the day with some hills and stairs. Boat: 1 hour. No bus. Sleep in Hamburg.

DAY 3

Fairytale Germany

Tue, Aug 27, 2024

Today we'll take off for Lower Saxony, driving through the countryside and half-timbered villages, where the Brothers Grimm did much of the fairytale research that inspired a thousand legends. We'll share lunch together before we settle into the historic town of Münster, where in 1648 a first-of-its-kind peace treaty was signed to end the Thirty Years War. Your evening is free to explore Münster's Old Town with its cobbled streets, lovely gabled buildings, and lively restaurant scene.

Moderate walking: 2–6 miles throughout the day with some hills and stairs. Bus: 3 hours. Sleep in Münster.

DAY 4

Cologne and the Romantic Rhine

Wed, Aug 28, 2024

This morning we'll head straight for the single most-visited site in all of Germany: Cologne Cathedral. You'll appreciate why as our local guide takes us exploring through northern Europe's most massive Gothic church. Then we'll continue on to the Rhine Valley and our charming riverside village, where we'll have dinner together.

Light walking: 2–4 miles throughout the day on mostly level terrain. Bus: 6 hours. Sleep in the Rhine Valley.

DAY 5

Rhine Castles and River Cruise

Thu, Aug 29, 2024

We'll begin our day in St. Goar, where we'll

hike up the hill to tour the mighty medieval Rheinfels Castle and enjoy its commanding view of the Rhine Valley. Then we'll board a boat for a relaxing Rhine River cruise, passing picturesque villages, vineyards, and feudal castles. After disembarking in Bacharach, we'll take a walking tour of the village with an entertaining local guide, followed by free time. Tonight you'll be free for dinner to feast like a feudal lord.

Strenuous walking: 2–8 miles throughout the day with lots of hills, stairs, and uneven terrain. Boat: 1 hour. Bus: ½ hour. Sleep in the Rhine Valley.

DAY 6

Medieval Rothenburg

Fri, Aug 30, 2024

This morning we'll continue our journey to Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Germany's best-preserved medieval town. After an orientation to town, the afternoon is yours to see the best woodcarving in Germany (Riemenschneider's altarpiece), walk the medieval wall, tour the Medieval Crime and Punishment Museum, or hunt down the best apple strudel in town. This evening we'll tag along on the Night Watchman's tour.

Moderate walking: 2–6 miles throughout the day with some hills and stairs. Bus: 3 hours. Sleep in Rothenburg.

DAY 7

Dachau & Historic Bavaria

Sat, Aug 31, 2024

Today we'll journey further into the romantic heart of Germany to Bavaria's largest city, Munich. On our way, we'll pay our respects at Dachau, the infamous Concentration Camp Memorial, and learn powerful lessons of the Holocaust and World War II. After free-time for reflection and lunch, a short drive brings us to Munich's historic Old Town. This evening,

we'll get a behind-the-scenes look at the city's history and traditions on a walking tour before capping the day with a hearty "Welcome to Bavaria" dinner together.

Moderate walking: 2–6 miles throughout the day with some hills and stairs. Bus: 4 hours. Sleep in Munich.

DAY 8

Free Day in Munich

Sun, Sep 01, 2024

The day is all yours to stroll around Germany's most livable city. Your guide will provide an orientation for the many fun adventures you can choose. Immerse yourself in the city's art from Baroque Theater to Wittelsbach palaces to several world-class museums, rent a bike to pedal the car-free paths along the English Garden and Isar River, or simply enjoy the lively Bavarian atmosphere, a frothy mug, and a big pretzel at one of the city's many beer halls or outdoor Biergartens.

Light to strenuous walking (your choice). No bus. Sleep in Munich.

DAY 9

In the Footsteps of Luther

Mon, Sep 02, 2024

Today we'll say "Auf Wiedersehen" to Munich and transport ourselves back to the 16th century in the heart of Germany's "Luther Country." After checking into our hotel in Erfurt, we'll take a historic walking tour through Erfurt's half-timbered old town. We'll follow in the footsteps of Martin Luther as he became a priest in Erfurt's cathedral and later a monk in its monastery. We'll also learn about the town's historic Jewish population before sitting down to share the day's insights over a hearty dinner together.

Moderate walking: 2–6 miles throughout the day with some hills and stairs. Bus: 5 hours. Sleep in Erfurt.

DAY 10

Road to Reformation

Tue, Sep 03, 2024

This morning we'll venture outside of Erfurt to visit the captivating Wartburg Castle, where Martin Luther hid away in a small room and translated the New

Testament into modern German. After our tour of Wartburg, we will return to Erfurt where you will have the rest of your afternoon and evening to wander through the picturesque pedestrian zone and market square.

Moderate walking: 2–6 miles throughout the day with some hills and stairs. Bus: 2 hours. Sleep in Erfurt.

DAY 11

Baroque Dresden and Dynamic Berlin

Wed, Sep 04, 2024

Our final driving day begins with a stop in the city of Dresden, where a local guide will take us on a walking tour of this delightfully Baroque city, reborn from the ashes of World War II. Its star is the inspiring Frauenkirche, destroyed in the firestorms of 1945 and rebuilt with donations from around the world. Arriving in Berlin this afternoon, we'll get oriented to our neighborhood and the city's public transportation system before free time and dinner on your own.

Moderate walking: 2–8 miles throughout the day with lots of hills, stairs, and uneven terrain. Bus: 4 hours. Sleep in Berlin.

DAY 12

Berlin's Historic Heart

Thu, Sep 05, 2024

We'll begin our day with a fascinating walking tour through the historic heart of Berlin, including Unter den Linden, the Brandenburg Gate, the Reichstag, Checkpoint Charlie, and memorials to the earth-shaking events and sacrifices of the past century. This evening we'll have our last dinner together, sharing travel memories and toasting new friends. Prost!

Strenuous walking: 2–8 miles throughout the day with lots of hills, stairs, and uneven terrain. No bus. Sleep in Berlin.

DAY 13

Tour Over After Breakfast

Fri, Sep 06, 2024

Breakfast is provided, but there are no group activities today. It's a breeze to reach Berlin's airport by shuttle, S-bahn

train, bus, or taxi. You'll have easy connections to home, or on to other points in Europe. Auf Wiedersehen!