

## Places of interest in and around Bensheim

There are many unique sights in our town: The vibrant pedestrian zone with its lovingly restored timber framed houses and former noble house or the town museum. The oldest timber framed house of the region is situated in an adjacent road: the Walderdorffer Hof, today a rustic wine tavern. The building of the former noble house was completed in 1470.

In the suburb of Auerbach, which is also a climatic spa, you can find the grand walls of Auerbach Castle, which was built around 1230 by the Count of Katzenelnbogen, and the country park Fürstenlager, former summer residence of the Counts of Hessen and the later Grand Dukes of Hessen and Rhine. All buildings, which were essential for a princely summer residence, like the manor house, prince and lady house, pastry kitchen, linen house, guards and coach house are still nearly in their original state since over 200 years. In the wonderful country park you can find trees from all continents of the world, the oldest redwood tree in Germany grows on the "Herrenwiese".



(Auerbach Castle, copyright: Thomas Neu)

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### Guided tours of the town

*Public tours of the old town from March to October.*

In the months from March to October, there is the possibility to take part in expert guided tours to get to know the historical town centre, with its old timber framed houses and period features.

<b>Dates:</b>	every first and third Saturday of the month from March to October
<b>Begin:</b>	11.00 am
<b>Meeting point:</b>	Bürgerwehrbrunnen
<b>Cost:</b>	2.00 € per person

Tickets for the tour of the old town are available at the tourist information office or directly from the tour guide.

### Tours of the old town for groups

Other dates for guided tours can also be arranged. It costs 40.00 € (including administrative charges) for a group of 15

people, each further member of the group costs 2.00 €. Our tourist information office will help you with any queries!

Groups which are interested in a guided tour of the town are requested to register beforehand to help us organise the tour better.

### **Historical tour of Bensheim**

23 historical places from the market fountain (Marktbrunnen) to the red tower (Roter Turm), Hohenecker Hof and Marienhaus to the Fraa-vun-Bensem-Brunnen, the historical guided tour offers interesting information about Bensheim. Take a look, go out and take part in an active journey through time to the historic town of Bensheim. Printed brochures can be found in the display box at the Alten Faktorei, the tourist information office or here to download as a pdf file in English and German.

[Historical Tour of Bensheim \(pdf\)](#)

### **Public guided tours around the ruins of the Auerbacher Castle**

When Auerbach Castle was built in the early 13th century, it was the most important castle in the county of Katzenelnbogen until Count Philipp the Elder made several constructional changes in 1479. In the following years, all weapons were withdrawn and transported to a Hessian fort in Rüsselsheim. The castle was completely unarmed and was captured in 1634 during the thirty year war and was destroyed in 1674 during a plundering war by the Sun King Louis XIV. The tour shows the history and uses of Auerbach Castle. The breathtaking view from the towers over the Bergstrasse, Odenwald and across the Rhine Valley compensates for the climb up and back down.

<b>Dates:</b>	every 2nd Saturday of the month between the months of May and September
<b>Begin:</b>	02.00 pm
<b>Meeting point:</b>	at the bridge
<b>Costs:</b>	2.00 € per person

Tickets for a tour of the castle are available at the tourist information office or directly from the tour guide. Tours of the castle can also be booked at other times. This costs 40.00 € for a group of up to 15 people (including administrative charges) plus 2.00 € for each further member of the group. Our tourist information centre will help you with any queries!

We request groups which are interested in a guided tour to register beforehand to allow us to plan efficiently.

### **Guided tours through the country park Fürstenlager in Bensheim-Auerbach**

The lords and grand dukes of Hesse-Darmstadt commissioned the "Fürstenlager" in Auerbach around 1790 as a summer residence. The simple, village-like site is situated in an idyllic tributary valley at the foothills of the Odenwald on the Bergstrasse, arranged around the mineral spring. The buildings around the Manor house include the guest house, prince and lady house, the guard and coach houses have been kept almost completely in their original state. They are situated within 25 hectares of country park where there are also exotic plants and trees to investigate, for example the oldest redwood tree in Germany.

Please note: guided tours of the country park can only be organised through the administration there (Tel.: 06251/93460)

## Destinations

Not only Bensheim itself guarantees an interesting and diverse stay, a visit to the surrounding area is also well worth it:

### [Lorsch](#): (approx. 5 km)

The former Lorsch Abbey is a unique example of Carolingian renaissance art with its famous “Königshalle” (king's hall) built around 800AD. This building has been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. The Nibelung hall in the old town hall of Lorsch is also worth seeing with its murals showing the history of the abbey and the Nibelung legend, as well as the museum centre with its various exhibits and alternating displays including the tobacco museum.

### Felsenmeer in [Lautertal-Reichenbach](#): (approx. 7 km)

A visit to the Felsenmeer (sea of rocks) in Lautertal Reichenbach is fascinating for every visitor, a bizarre hilly landscape of blocks of stone, caused by erosion over thousands of years. A large pillar of rock, which can still be seen today, is a witness to roman stonemasons' work there.

Further information can be found [here](#).

### [Nature park Bergstrasse-Odenwald](#):

For our nature loving visitors, there is a good network of well-mapped trails in the Nature park Bergstrasse-Odenwald, with many look-out towers and picnic areas available all year round.

### [Heppenheim](#): (approx. 5 km)

The neighbouring district town of Heppenheim is also inviting with its many well preserved timber framed buildings. A stroll through the town centre of the over 1200 year old town, which is home to the cathedral of the Bergstrasse, St. Peter, and of course, an obligatory walk around the Starkenburg castle which thrones over Heppenheim from the hills above.

### [Worms](#): (approx. 20 km)

Visitors are often following trails of German and European history in this town related to the Nibelung legend and Martin Luther. Countless sights dominate the townscape: the romantic cathedral, St. Peterwith, its baroque high altar from Balthasar Neumann, the oldest Jewish cemetery in Europe, the former Jewish section of the old town with synagogue and the Luther monument, which is the largest reformation monument in the world.

### [Darmstadt](#): (approx. 25 km)

The town of sciences and art nouveau awaits you with its individual artists' colony on the Mathildenhöhe. The Hessian state museum, the castle museum, the Hessian state archive, the grand duke porcelain museum and much more are at home here where the former grand duke reigned (until 1998).

### [Heidelberg](#): (approx. 35 km)

Heidelberg Castle is world renowned, also the university and the picturesque and historical old town. You shouldn't miss a walk along the well-known "philosopher's path" or a boat trip into the Neckar valley.

### **Zwingenberg: (approx. 5 km)**

Zwingenberg, the oldest town on the Bergstrasse is worth paying a visit to see its historic old town with many timber framed houses and the well preserved "Scheuergasse" where you can find the museum of local history. A walk up to the Melibokus, the highest mountain in the Bergstrasse at 517 m, is enjoyable on a fine day, as is a walk through the woodland surrounding the climatic spa of Bensheim-Auerbach. From the top of the Melibokus tower, there is a breathtaking view.

### **Weinheim: (approx. 20 km)**

There is much to see in the town with two castles. The market place offers mediterranean flair, the old Gerberbach quarter or Burg Windeck and Wachenburg. The "green mile" in the heart of the city with the Schlosspark (castle garden), Exotenwald (exotic woods) and the show garden Hermannshof are well worth a visit and offer young and old the chance to relax and unwind. The diverse cultural offerings and lively nightlife offer plenty of entertainment.

### **Melibokus (approx. 10 km to the highest point)**

The 517 m high Melibokus is a visible landmark of the Bergstrasse between Darmstadt and Heidelberg. It is well known near and far, especially in spring because of the fruit trees which come into flower early and the mild climate.

As the highest elevation between the Odenwald and the Hessian Ried, the Melibokus is a popular destination with walkers and mountain bikers, who can enjoy the views into the Odenwald and the Rhine plains.

In the Nature Park Bergstrasse-Odenwald there is a good network of signposted trails as well as numerous car parks which make the landmark mountain of the Bergstrasse accessible for everybody.

The towns at the foot of Melibokus are easy to reach and inviting with their old town centres, their characteristic historic timber framed houses and their cosy restaurants and pubs.

At the peak of the Melibokus stands a 22m viewing tower. It was inaugurated in September 1966 and replaced the wooden tower which was built in 1772 and was destroyed by the Deutsche Wehrmacht during the last two days of World War II.

It is possible to quench your thirst and satisfy your hunger after the climb, thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Pelecharz who are in charge of the cosy restaurant at the top.

The restaurant is open on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays from 11:00am until dusk.

The viewing tower can be climbed for a small fee during this time.

Visits can be organised for school classes and other groups outside of the normal opening hours with prior registration.

The Melibokus tower and the other buildings on the site are maintained by the committee „Melibokusturmverein e.V.

Bensheim" which was founded in November 1961. Members of the committee include local communities, service companies, local businesses and private individuals.

The committee office is in the Town Hall of Bensheim and can be contacted by calling 06251 / 14 279 for any inquiries or suggestions.