



Magical palaces and castles along the Romantic Road

- More than 22 palaces and castles along Germany's most popular holiday route
- Weikersheim: Renaissance palace with a baroque garden
- Wertheim: Ruined stone castle from the Middle Ages

Magnificent stately homes, powerful fortresses, and the dreams of monarchs embodied in stone – more than 22 palaces and castles are strung along the Romantic Road and each one tells its own particular story. In addition to Schloss Neuschwanstein in Schwangau at one end, the dream destination of many tourists per se, there are very many different buildings to discover along the route from the Alps to the River Main. Whether it's Wittelsbach Castle in Friedberg with its treasure chamber full of precious clocks, Harburg Castle presiding on a steep rugged rock, or the baroque castle of the princes of Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst – all the monuments plunge their visitors deep into the past.

A special experience for people of all generations is a brief visit to **Weikersheim Palace and Garden**. This magnificent edifice, which has a triangular floor plan, was frozen in time for decades. This means that it is uniquely preserved and offers visitors an authentic glimpse of a bygone age. Masked balls, jousting tournaments, hunting parties and sumptuous banquets – a guided tour of the palace provides an insight into courtly life and the festivities that were lavishly celebrated around 1600. Those who walk along the walls in the 40-metre-long Knight's Hall will encounter many three-dimensional animals that almost jump out of the wall, including the famous elephant of Weikersheim,. A further unusual exhibit is the elaborate clock, a technical masterpiece from 1747. It not only shows the time, but also the month and day, phase of the moon and zodiac sign, and it brings angels and other figures to life.

Wertheim Castle, less elaborate and whimsical, but all the more mighty for that, is one of the largest ruined stone castles in Southern Germany. On a guided tour of this 12th-century construction, visitors will learn, among other things, that when defending the castle in the past, straw bales were attached to iron rings on the tower's parapet, in order to soften the impact of incoming cannonballs. The ramparts – massive walls, five metres thick, with three round tower-like fortifications – were a major advance for the fortification of a castle in those days. Watchmen used to look out for attackers from the castle keep, a tower that was formerly roofed. Nowadays visitors can enjoy the view of the mediaeval town of Wertheim, on the confluence of the Rivers Main and Tauber.

Further information on the castles and palaces along the Romantic Road can be found on the internet at: www.romantischestrassen.de.

Photo: Invitation to the past: the palaces and castles on the Romantic Road.

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