

## Who

We are Christine and Leland Walker and love to travel. Whether it's in the United States or internationally, we travel by cruise ship, train, or pulling our little Winnebago trailer. We would love to share our adventures with you.



## Why

For our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we spent 7 nights traveling the Romantic Road in Germany. It's like stepping back in time to a fairytale land full of castles, palaces, unspoiled villages of half-timbered buildings, walled cities and towers; some are even available for overnight rentals. Even though the route is short by US standards, the equivalent of driving from St. Louis to Chicago, you can easily spend a week or more seeing the sites.

For us it ticks all the boxes, shopping, history, wineries, breweries, art, food, churches, and more.

The Romantic Road is a 220-mile/354-km byway through southern Germany's rolling vineyards and well-preserved medieval and traditional villages, with a climactic end of the road which leads you to Fussen and Neuschwanstein castle at the foothill of the German Alps.

I have read several stories about how the "Romantic Road" was developed and marketed. After WW II, Germany was desperate to rebuild a tourism industry. The first visitors were friends and family of soldiers based in the area. The route was developed in 1950. The Romantic Road winds its way through Franconias wine and Bavarias beer country. There are 29 stops

discussed in many guide books, blogs and vlogs to fill your days. I would suggest beginning in Würzburg and ending in Fussen where fairytale castles steal the show, but it doesn't make the rest of the journey any less impressive.

The Romantic Road is 75 miles/ 121 km southeast of Frankfurt's main airport and 100 miles/161 KM southwest of Munich's airport. It's possible to fly into or out of each city to complete the route.

We flew into Frankfurt nonstop from our home near St. Louis, MO and spent the first night there. We ventured off the road to spend one night at Weltenburg Abbey Brewery. You can easily customize the trip around your interests. Very hot when we were there, especially with no AC in many buildings.



## One Week Itinerary For Romantic Road

**Day One. Arrive in Frankfurt, pick up rental car at airport .**

If time allows, visit some of the sites listed for Frankfurt grab lunch at the market, then drive 1-1/2 hours to **Würzburg**.

Check into hotel **Hotel Zum Winzermannle** ( small elevator, no AC, no fridge) has great location just a couple blocks from the bridge. We found street parking a few blocks away. If necessary you can find cheaper parking garages on east bank of the river.

- Download Rick Steves self-guided tour of Old Main Bridge
- Get Romantic Road guide map from the Tourist Information center in the Falkenhouse (10-6)
- Wurzburg residence (9 pp) a must-see site along the Romantic Road.



We purchased our tickets in person and joined the 3 pm English guided tour. You must leave bags in locker near restroom, photos are allowed. Afterwards grab your belongings from the locker and walk through the garden exit at the North end and walk 1 minute to Staatlicher Hofkeller to enjoy a glass of wine.

We walked to dinner at Burgerspital Winery where we sat in a beautiful courtyard, but the food was only OK. I would choose somewhere else to eat.

When we were there (September 9th 2023) a street festival was underway where beer vendors (deposit required for the glass), food stalls and live music filled the sidewalks around the Falkenhouse and fountain near bridge.

We walked the very lively cobblestone bridge, full of people and music, with two wine stands. It's the "place to be" in the evening.





## Day 2. Creglingen

Wake up early and watch the sun rise on the bridge, walk to end of bridge and take a selfie, then grab breakfast at the small bakery or café.

Check out and head to the start of the Romantic Road (We had a difficult time finding the start of the road.)

Our first stop was in **Tauberbishsheim** (30 minute drive). I would skip this stop unless you want to kill time until **Distelhauser Brauhaus** (Brewhouse) opens at noon for lunch.

Drive to the **Stuppach** parish church **Maria Kronung** 7 kilometers south of Bad Mergentheim to see Stuppach Mary - Stuppacher Madonna painted in 1519.



After picking up the key for the **Schlosserturm** (Locksmith Tower) and arranging with the innkeeper your breakfast time (8.50 E pp) for the next morning, head to **Solymar Thermel spa**. They have a co-ed changing room with individual cubicles or separate mens/women's shower areas, lockers are available. The second floor is clothing optional. We treated ourselves to massages and spent a few hours enjoying the different pools.



We did a bit of backtracking between the church and getting the key from the Tauber Lodge for the **Schlosserturm - Locksmiths Tower** and back to Bad Mergentheim (Solymar Therme spa), but the experience of staying in the tower and the breakfast the next morning was well worth it.



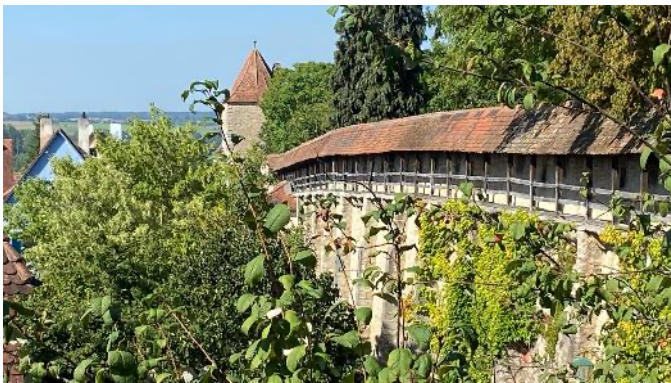
We grabbed groceries from a near-by supermarket and spent the rest of the evening enjoying the tower room. Staying in the tower felt like I was living in a fairy tale. Climb the covered steep narrow stairs up the half-timbered limestone rustic structure, where upon opening the door you walk into a quaint, cozy interior, with a bright and airy bedroom with exposed beams. The main floor bedroom had another steep narrow staircase leading to a sitting room with television and kitchenette. There was bathroom with shower on the second floor as well. I loved all the details like the blue wall paper with birds on the staircase wall and all the differently shaped windows and exposed stone walls. I would not recommend staying here if you have mobility issues climbing stairs.

Get plenty of rest because tomorrow will be a busy day.



### Day 3: Rothenburg ob der Tauber (30 minutes)

Head to Tauber Lodge for breakfast, served on a patio overlooking the garden with beehives and bees buzzing about. Each table is set with individual bowls, plates, jars and towers of jams, butter, honey, yogurt, fruit, cold cuts, cheeses, pastries, breads etc. Instagram, Tik Tok, Pinterest worthy! Your host will ask if you would like bacon and how to prepare your eggs. There is a small boutique at the lodge.



After breakfast drive 3 minutes to Herrgottskirche a “must see” IMO. After paying the 4 euro fee we entered the church to marvel at a masterpiece by Tilman Riemenschneider a wooden carving of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven. Make sure to stroll through the churchyard and seek out the gargoyle reliefs and look up to see the whimsical downspouts. So much imagination, goes into the details on the buildings

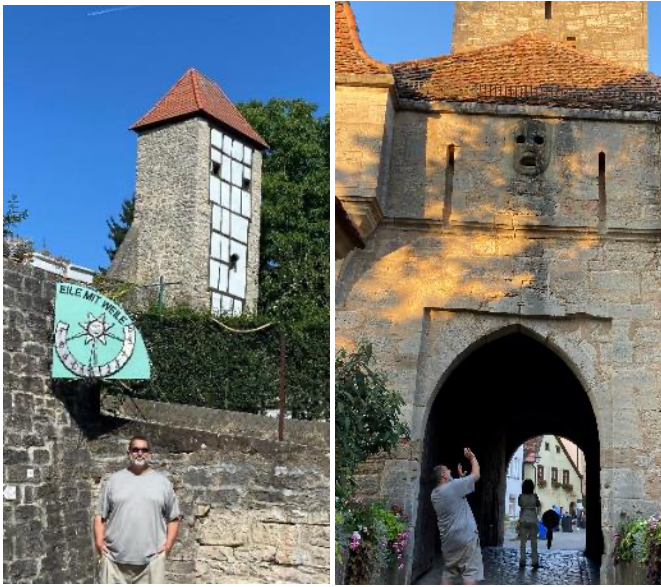
..



After the church, we drove 12 minutes to **Rottingen**, first settled in the 5th century, to walk the 2km trail dotted with 25 unique sundials. Parking is available across the river from Weinbau Bach Rottingen (looked like a great place for lunch, but they were closed for a private event) (RV camping available as well ) The sundial from guidebook is located in the parking lot near a large weeping willow tree. Grab a map from the side wall of the Rathaus. Make sure you walk past the “Snail Tower” (this would be another option for an overnight stay if unable to stay at the Schlosserturm).







These types of structures must have been the inspiration for fairytales.

You could have lunch near Rathaus (city hall). We ate at Rottinger Burgerstube. The street was lined with bright primary colored umbrellas and tables with people enjoying a long leisurely meal. The food was good, but try and eat outside if the weather is warm. We ate inside but it was so hot we could hardly eat. We had mushroom soup and shared chicken schnitzle with spaetzle. It is well worth the stop but if I only had one night to stay in **Rothenburg** I would consider skipping **Rottingen**. I really enjoyed our half day we spent here.

Leaving Rottingen we headed south toward **Rothenburg**, making a pitstop at Gold Ochen Brauerei (Brewery). They had one style beer at the family-run brewery, restaurant and farm. They have excellent ratings but only prepare one dish for dinner. The restaurateur did not speak English, the only word he could think of to tell us what was on the menu was "Bambi". Sometimes all you need is one word to get your point across.



The restaurant inside was clean with a rustic courtyard and communal tables surrounded by the barns and farm equipment. Overall I am glad we stopped, my husband loves to visit breweries and he doesn't complain much when we go shopping. It was not a touristy place like the large Anheuser Busch brewery we are used to in St. Louis. It was a great place to people watch: older gentlemen chewing the fat while enjoying a pint of the local beer, young men arriving on motorcycles for lunch, couples in vintage convertibles out for a drive. One word of warning. Have you ever driven through the countryside passing livestock farms as you go! That same aroma is present at the brewery. Taking that into consideration and the fact that I am not an adventurous eater, we chose to eat elsewhere.

When leaving the brewery you will have an amazing view of **Rothenburg**. There is a pullout on the left where you can stop and snap a few pics. We arrived in the picturesque medieval walled city of **Rothenburg**, one of the Crown Jewels of the Romantic Road, around 3 for check-in at **Romantik Hotel Markstrum and Restaurant**. There are signs saying no cars allowed inside the walled city, however if you are staying overnight you can drive in to drop off your belongings. Ask the innkeeper where you should park or opt for valet parking. The owner of the hotel (Lilo and her husband) are wonderful hosts. We had a lovely conversation with her and she gave us a room upgrade from a standard room to a deluxe suite.



IF POSSIBLE TO ADD A DAY ONTO YOUR TRIP I WOULD SPEND ANOTHER NIGHT IN ROTHENBURG.

Drop your bags in the room and get lost on the narrow cobblestone streets of this storybook village filled with colorful half-timbered buildings. You can climb the stairs to the walkway on the fortified city wall. We walked to St. Jacobs church to view another Tilman carving. You can watch the hourly bell tower reenactment about the thirty-year war while enjoying a cold beverage from one of the many restaurants in the city square. Photo op during golden hour at the fountain in front of the famous apothecary. We had dinner at the hotel, good food and met two other couples from the US celebrating their 25 wedding anniversaries as well. We spent the evening wandering the town and taking photos at the famous Plonlein. We grabbed an ice cream while waiting for the Night Watchmen tour, which met at 8 pm at the market square in front of city hall for this “must do” in Rothenburg.





## Day 4 Rothenburg to Nordlingen (1 hour 15 minutes)

Wake up in the fairy tale city and have breakfast (13.50 euros pp) at the hotel, then head out to Kathe Wolfhardts Christmas shoppe to obtain tickets for the Christmas tree museum. You can do some souvenir shopping, visit the torture museum, and walk along the other half of the fortified wall. Wander in one of the many bakeries and grab a sandwich or pastry to enjoy or skip lunch and have a sundae at D'Isep ice cream shop. This is another must.

We did not see any storks in the large nest on the hotel roof. I was very disappointed. I enjoy seeing animals in their natural habitats whether it's whales in Alaska or Blue Footed Boobies in Mexico . So, I was really hoping to see the majestic White Stork native to Germany. They migrate over 1000 km each winter to Africa and faithfully return to their large rooftop nests perched on tall metal platforms. Think Bald Eagle Nests.



Head toward **Dinkelsbuhl**. We did not stop so we could go to **Furst Wallerstein Brauhaus**. Driving through the parking lot we realized it was just a brewery with no tasting room or beer garden. A gentleman came up to the car and we used hand gestures for drinking to get our point across that we wanted to try the beer. The gentlemen did not speak English but was very helpful and found someone that did. She suggested we stop at Netto Discount Market, which we did and they had a large variety of bottled beer and Leland was like a kid in a candy shop. The beer was cheap less than one Euro per bottle.

It is a 75 minute drive from Rothenburg to **Nordlingen**. So, you could spend longer in Rothenburg or at one of the other towns along the way. We arrived in Nordlingen in time for check in at **Hotel - Cafe Altreuter** (\$96, no AC, frig or elevator). Breakfast buffet in cafe, parking across the street next to church.

We shared a piece of delicious apple pie, then wandered around the city and walked the intact medieval wall. There are very charming apartments for elderly citizens that butt up to the wall. You can climb the 300 plus stairs to the top of St George church tower named Daniel.



We walked along the wall and stopped in a church where we met a gentleman hiking the Camino Way. We had a drink at a small Irish pub and then headed to **Escape-Pizzeria Firenze** for amazing lasagna, where we had our best meal in Germany.



While sitting outside we saw storks flying over which was a highlight for me. We walked through the town square and saw several more storks in their large nests on the roof of city hall. We headed back to the room and joined our neighbors on the adjoining balconies. They were visiting from Canada, he was born in Nordlingen and came back to visit family. While sitting on the balcony we could hear the storks clicking and the night watchman's half hour cry stating "All's Well".



I really enjoyed our stop here but if you have other activities on your to-do list you could stay somewhere farther on the Romantic Road. But I would not skip eating at Escape-Pizzeria Firenze.



## Day 5. Nordlingen to Donauwörth to Füssen, (35 minutes from Schwangau) King Ludwig castles and the end of the Romantic Road (1 hour 45 minutes)

We enjoyed a traditional breakfast at the hotel's cafe.

Making our way farther south we stopped in the town of **Donauwörth** at the confluence of the Wörnitz and Danube rivers. Kirche Hl. Kreuz-the Church of the Holy Cross, a rococo style church. This church was another not to be missed highlight. The crypt chapel is the home to a wood fragment from The Cross that Jesus was crucified on. We met a lovely elderly woman in the church yard that spoke to us in German. We said we only spoke English and she explained she learned English to help her son when he was in grade school. She wanted to make sure we knew about the piece of Christ's cross and told us that it had been in Donauwörth for 1000 years. She explained to us that she was there to clean the graves of her mother, grandmother and aunts buried there. She told us that the day the city was bombed her mother stayed home for school sick and her two aunts that went to school that day had died.



From here we ventured off the Romantic Road. To keep your one week itinerary, continue on to **Füssen** to complete the Romantic Road. It just ends abruptly. We expected to see a sign stating end of the Romantic Road. We did not visit the castles this trip since we had toured them in 2018. I would advise purchasing your tickets online before leaving home.

From the parking lot it is a 35 minute uphill hike to the castle. We opted for the horse drawn carriage ride. I can't think of a better way to arrive at a castle. The Neuschwanstein castle and the boyhood home of King Ludwig castle Hohenschwangau should not be missed. They do not allow photography inside.

Allow time to hike to the Marienbrücke bridge for views of the castle and lake. We shared lunch of paprika chicken and spaetzle at Restaurant Cafe Kainz. It was very good and Leland enjoyed a König Ludwig Dunkel. We did not have a hotel booked for this night and tried three hotels before we found **Hotel Hanselewirt Landgasthof**. The only room she had left was a triple and she insisted I see the view of the castle from the room, which was magnificent. The room was basic but clean with a fridge. The temperature was cooler so the lack of AC was not an issue. I would consider booking a room before you leaving home so you don't waste precious time searching.

We spent the evening at Kongiliche Kristall thermal spa with swim up bar, we had earned it. We enjoyed the view of the castles from the outdoor pool and had dinner at the spa, which was set up similar to Solymar Therme, shower dressing rooms, 2nd floor clothing optional pools, wrist band for your purchases. We had curry wurst and goulash and it was the second best meal we had while in Germany.

## Day 6 Schwangau/hotel to Wieskirche (25 minutes) then on to Munich (1 hour 20 minutes)

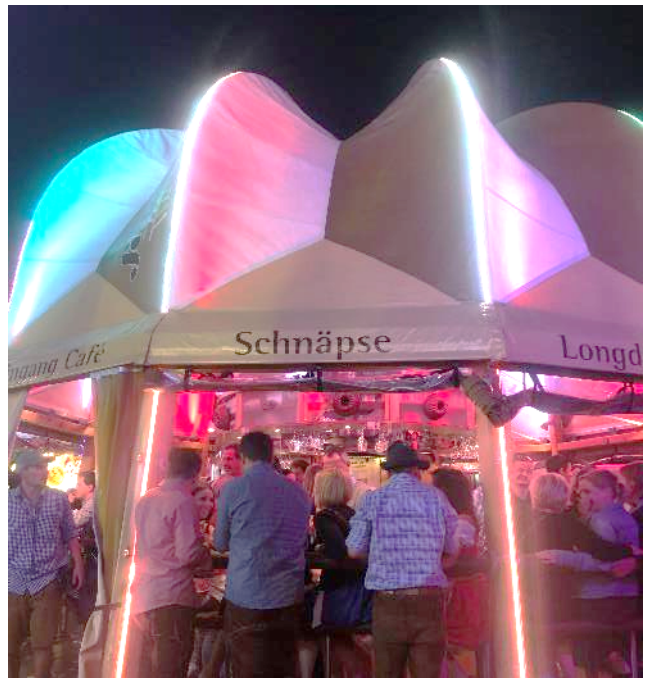
Have breakfast at the hotel's large breakfast buffet. Check out and head 25 minutes to Wieskirche - Pilgrimage Church of Wies. We were unable to visit the church on our last trip so this was a must stop for us. It's a UNESCO World Heritage site done in Bavarian rococo style, located in a green field in the Alpine countryside. The ceiling is covered with frescoes.

We met a couple, she was German and he was from North County about 30 minutes from where we live. We took photos for each other and talked about what a small world it is. Drive 1 hour and 10 minutes to Munich and check into **Hotel Bavaria**. If your room is not ready they should be able to store your luggage.



*Ratskeller, Munich*

There are numerous sites to see in Munich. We went to a flea market on the grounds of the Olympic village, which is something I enjoy doing. Our first trip to Germany was during Oktoberfest. We did not purchase tickets to any tents, we just looked for a table of friendly faces and offered to buy them a round of drinks. By the time we arrived at the fairgrounds everyone was a few liters in. You will only be served drinks if you are at a table unless you are just there for the overall fair atmosphere. We went to the Paulaner tent, Schnapsee bundt pan shaped tent known for schnapps. I had a pistachio schnapps. It was delicious.



We went to another tent that was having a private event, so at the side door we paid the guard 20 euros each and went in with no problem. We just acted like we belonged and did not speak so we wouldn't give ourselves away. This is one perk of traveling in a small group. Make sure you get a rotisserie chicken from Heinz Wurst Hühnergraterei Heimer and Brenner stall on fairgrounds.



## Day 7 Depart for home from Munich

We flew home on Icelandic Air and added a stopover in Iceland. I highly recommend if you are able to extend your vacation. Allow plenty of time to get through security and Global Blue (to get duty-free taxes returned).



## WHAT SHOULD YOU SEE?

Every city, town and village has the cutest half-timbered buildings draped with flowers. Timber framing “post - and- beam” construction is a traditional style of building with heavy timbers. If the structural frame of load-bearing timbers are left exposed it is referred to as half-timbered with the infill between the timbers used as a decorative effect. When I think of Germany these are the types of building I envision.

Look for White Storks and their nests on buildings a symbol of prosperity and fertility. Listen for their loud clicking sound made when they rapidly open and close their mouths.

Frankfurt am Main. If possible to extend your vacation I would consider staying in Frankfurt.

Frankfurt Cathedral - Frankfurter Dom ( a stones throw from the hotel we stayed at). A Roman Catholic Gothic church constructed in the 14 and 15 centuries on a foundation from the 7th century and is dedicated to Saint Bartholomew. A relic of St. Bartholomew’s skull is enshrined in the central altar. The church was destroyed by fire and rebuilt in 1867. During WW II air raids destroyed the largest half-timbered historical center in Germany. More than a thousand buildings were destroyed, and even though the church suffered severe damage it was the only building standing in the old downtown after the air raids.



Walk around the old town historic city center (Altstadt).

Luxury shopping - Gucci, Louis Vuitton

Kleinmarkthalle - Traditional large indoor markets hall selling fruits, veggie, freshly baked breads, pastries, pretzels, meats, spices, flowers etc. You could have lunch here and try the schnitzel with green sauce or a sausage before starting you journey to Wurzburg. This is an activity that I like to do in cities.

Bavernmarkt Konstale wache - On Thursdays vendors set up theirs stalls, selling beer, wine, apple wine, sausages, rotisserie chickens. It was a hub of activity, filled with people enjoying food and drinks after a hard days work. This is where we shared a table with a gentlemen in his 70’s where we spent the next couple hours learning about how his family was able to cross over into west Germany just before the “wall” separated Germany and families. He said his parents on Sundays would take him to the “wall” and hold him up so he could see his grandparents.

Wurzburg, pronounced Verts-boorg

Get Romantic Road guide map from Tourist Information at Falkenhouse 10-6

Enjoy glass of wine at Hofkeller walking distance to the Wurzburg Residence

Old Main Bridge ( Alte Mainbrucke) pedestrian only bridge.

In the evening, Walk the Old Main bridge enjoy music, a glass of wine and people watch

Get up early and walk the bridge to watch the sun rise, walk to the end of the bridge take a selfie grab a bite to eat at the bakery or cafe at the end of the bridge.

\*Marienberg Fortress. The Renaissance and Baroque style castle sits high on a hill on the left bank of the Main river surrounded by vineyards overlooking Wurzburg and houses 2 museums. For 5 centuries it served as the home for the prince-bishops. Was heavily damaged during the war and was fully rebuilt in 1990.

Wurzburg Residence 9-6 we took the 3 o’clock English tour. A German Baroque style palace was completed in 1780. This UNESCO world heritage site is one of the most beautiful baroque style palaces in Germany. Tiepolio frescoed the staircase and walls of the imperial hall. The way the artists combined the frescos and stucco made the paintings seems life like.

After Tauberbischofsheiu there are numerous wayside shrines and statues of saints and houses decorated with

depictions of Mary. This is the center of the Madonna Country.

\*Kullsheim is famous for its fountains and wine. There are many vineyards in this area.

Stuppach Parish Church 7 kilometers south of Bad Mergentheim, home to one of the most famous paintings of the Middle Ages. Stuppach Mary was painted in 1519 by Mathis Nithardt. The majority of churches we stopped at even if they were closed had glass partitions just inside so you could still view the church and art.

Bad Mergentheim Solymar thermal spa. A Bitter-salt spring found in 1826 by a shepherd is home to Solymar thermal spa. Enjoy an afternoon soaking in various mineral pool and spa treatment. Food and beverages served on site. When you check in they will give you a wrist band that you can use to make purchase. The second floor is clothing optional.

Herrgottskirche - Chapel of Our Lord Between 1505 and 1510 famed carver Tilman Riemenschneider was commissioned to create an altar. This is one of his most exquisite works depicting the assumption of the Virgin Mary. To me it's so moving to see a piece of art where it was meant to be not in a sterile museum.

Rothenburg ob der Tauber. This must be Germany's most perfect city.

Get lost walking along the narrow cobbled streets between half-timbered houses draped with flowers spilling out of their window boxes. Climb up and walk along the intact medieval walled city. This is a great way to see the city and the red tiled roofs of the quaint colorfully painted houses. Look for the shells as you walk the city and let them lead you to St. Jakobus church and the medieval gothic altar piece carved by the artist Tilman Riemenschneider.

Look for the shells on the sidewalk near the Plonlein. The scallop shell is a symbol used to guide pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago. Shells can be painted or printed on sidewalks, walls, etc. helping pilgrims navigate the many routes to Santiago de Compostela. The scallop shell is associated with St. James, the patron saint of pilgrims. His grave is in Santiago de Compostela and has been a pilgrimage since the Middle Ages. We have seen these shells in many cities in Europe. The Weltenburg Abbey is along this route.

Kathe Wohlfahrt is an enormous Christmas decoration shop filled with twinkling glittering show rooms and tourists. This was a quick in and out for us. The line to pay wound its way around the store, it will give you flashbacks to Black Friday sale lines, and maybe I'm getting cynical but I am tired of getting holiday decorations in and out of storage each year. However, I would like to see the Christmas tree museum. You must purchase your ticket from the Kathe Wohlfahrt shop and we didn't want to wait in line to purchase the ticket. If this is high on your bucket list to visit, I would suggest arriving when the store opens and make a bee line through the maze of a store to obtain your ticket. Snap a few pictures with the vintage car in front of the store.



Take a journey back in time with Hans Georg Baumgartners Night Watchman tour, though touristy this is a "must do". This medieval night watchman will take you on an hour-long walking tour, no reservations required. Meet at 8 pm in the market square in front of the town hall, 9 euros cash only.

Plonlein Rothenburgs most Instagramable photo op. Women have full on photo shoots here so arrive early and come back late for your pics. A half-timbered 18th century building made famous in the 19th century by poets and artists that started visiting Rothenburg.

The Meistertrunk Show at the top of every hour - Bell tower clock reenactment of a contest during the thirty years war where the mayor was challenged to drink a 3.25 liter tankard of wine in one go which he did and the city was spared.



Tourist information Center town square ask about 2pm walking tour. We started with tour but was basically the same as the night watchman tour. We ditched the tour and opted for ice cream.

\*Climb bell tower for rewarding view of city.

\*The Medieval Crime Museum a look back at the evolution of crime and punishment .

Marion Apothecary half-timbered building in the town square featuring statue of the Virgin Mary. Great photo op. It has been operating as a pharmacy since 1812 and has remained in the same family for 5 generations.



Georgsbrunnen - fountain (in front of Marion Apotocary). Replica of this fountain in Epcots Germany pavilion.

\*Dinkelsbuhl

St. George Church

Lion Fountain

Look for storks/nests on town gates as you drive through. We didn't see any.

Little has changed over the last three hundred years including the encircling city walls and defensive towers. The city of Nordlingen was built on a meteor crater. This city was featured in Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory. Charlie, grandpa and Willy Wonka fly over when the Wonkavator crashes through glass ceiling in the Gene Wilder version. It is a much smaller version of Rothenburg, very walkable. There are more buildings here in need of TLC but still worth the stop.



St. Georges Church - Climb the 300 plus steps to the top of Daniels tower for amazing views of the city. Pay the 4 euro fee. Once you have climbed the stairs before being allowed to marvel at the city below.

Night watchman announces "all's well" every half hour from 10 to midnight.

Tanzhaus a magnificent half-timbered gable with three stories each of its three stories protruding far out beyond the one below it. Was once a cloth-traders market.

\*Rieskrater Museum dedicated to the meteor which collided with Earth 15 million years ago and made the crater creating Nordlingen . The geological formations are similar to the craters of the moon and since Apollo 14 astronauts complete their training here.

Donauworth

Heilig-Kreuz-Kirche - Built in 1717 with a 240 foot tall rococo cupola. Notice the stucco reliefs framing the ceilings frescos. Continue past the wrought-iron grill grave of Maria Duchess of Brabant, follow the steps down into the crypt chapel, marvel at the luxurious stucco ceiling. In front of you will be two artistic wrought-iron grills protecting two altars, the altar on the

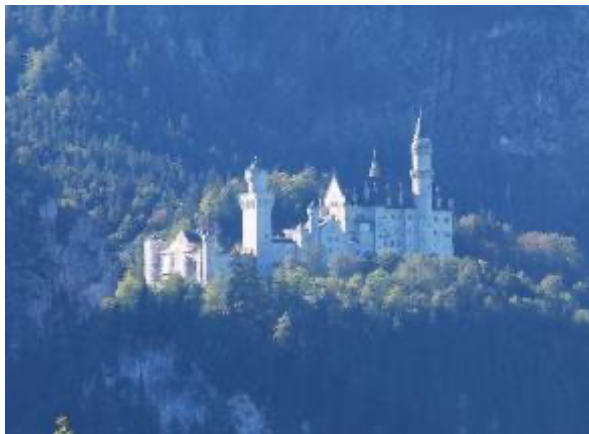
left holds an elaborate 16th century baroque frame containing pieces of Christ's cross.

\*Fuggerei the oldest alms house the world. In 1516 a wealthy family endowed the 147 small apartments. The inhabitants must be poor, of blameless behavior, catholic and pray three times a day for the founder. Annual rent of 1.88 Euros.

\*Andechs Monastery home to a piece of the crown of thorns.

\*Landsberg am Lech Landsberg prison where Hitler served 5 years for treason and wrote Mein Kampf.

Castles The inspiration for Disney's fantasyland Cinderella's castle .



Hohenschwangau King Ludwig II boyhood home. Completed in 1837

Neuschwanstein Romantic style castle. Construction began in 1869 and completed in 1886 after King Ludwigs death. 1.5 million visitors tour the castle every year.

Marienbrücke pedestrian only bridge built over a cliff in 1845 to view the castles.

Königliche Kristall thermal spa, similar set up to Solymar Therme, great way to celebrate finishing the Romantic Road with views of the castle from the outdoor pool complete with indoor swim-up bar.

Octoberfest held in mid to late September to the first Sunday in October at the Theresienwiese - Theresas Meadow named in honor of King Ludwigs I wife Theresa. The first Octoberfest was held in 1810 to celebrate the marriage of Prince Ludwig and Princess Therese. Now more than 6 million visitors a year take part in celebrating Bavarian culture featuring a beer festival and carnival. October 12 1810 King Ludwig



## Where should you stay?

Most hotels are not staffed 24/7 like here in the states, so if you are going to arrive after hours make sure you email/call the hotel to arrange the pick of your key. Some have lock boxes that you can access after hours. You will be given two keys, one for the entrance to the hotel and one for your room.

Wurzburg: **Hotel Zum Winzermannle**. (\$110 per night ) great location. Small elevator, no fridge or AC.

Creglingen: **Creglingen Castle tower** (\$97.32 per night). Breakfast additional fee at the lodge, parking lot in front of tower. Spend the night in a 14th century locksmiths tower, one of three remaining mediaeval fortifications. This holiday apartment was once home to the city messenger. Kitchenette with fridge but no AC.

Rottingen: **Snail Tower** (instead of Creglingen)

Rothenburg ob de Tauber. **Romantik Markstrum** (\$230.57 per night) A 13th century half-timbered building adjacent to the Markus tower. On the roof is a storks nest. This hotel has been in the same family for 5 generations. Traditional hotel with modern rooms. No AC or fridge.

Kelheim: We stayed at **Weltenburg Abbey (\$144)**, stop over in the city of your choice. No fridge in room or AC, but shared kitchen with “honesty” fridge.

Schwangau: **Hanselewirt Landgasth (\$129 triple room)**. We stayed in Room #7 which had clear view of castles at night, but the next morning they were hidden by cloud cover, parking across the street. Fridge but no AC.

Munich: **Hotel Bavaria Boutique Hotel**, (\$144) breakfast included. Modern hotel AC, elevator, wonderful breads and pastries, on-site parking. Excellent location if attending Oktoberfest.

## What and where to eat?

ALWAYS EAT THE BREAD – it is delicious.

Pretzel is Brez'n in German.

Kasespatzle is German mac and cheese.

Schweinshaxe is pork knuckle, the most popular Bavarian dish.

WURZBURG and region Franconian wine

Hofkeller wine tasting

Mullerback bakery

\*Cafehaus Bruckenback cafe

Holy Cross Brewing Society Coffee

Burgerspital-Weinstuben. We had dinner and drinks here would go elsewhere next time.

Distelhausen Brauhaus. 12-9 potato soup with pretzel dumplings, pork schnitzel with potato salad

Gold Ochsen Brewery The road through town runs right into the courtyard of the brewery/restaurant, street parking available.

Rottinger Burgerstube

Romantik Hotel Markstrum open air courtyard in center of hotel. We shared the creamy vegetable soup and pork tenderloin with potato pancakes . Lee had the house beer. Food was very good.

Elscafe D'isep for ice cream sundae.



Brot & Zeit Bakery or one of a dozen bakeries in town Schneeball. Even though I did not care for the pastry I feel I would have missed out if I did not try one. Stacked on towering pedestal in bakery windows they look so beautiful tempting you to step inside and purchase a few. We tried the plain powdered sugar one and a chocolate covered ball of dough. I wanted to love them, I really did. Made from pie crust but somehow not flakey like I'm used to, they were dry and crumbly. Needless to say they ended up in the garbage which makes me feel guilty knowing how time consuming it is making a pie crust from scratch. Purchase just one small

ball and chalk it up as an experience. I hope you love them.

Paula's Biergarten Hugo a spritzer made with Prosecco, elderflower syrup or liquor (St. Germaine), seltzer, mint leaves and lime. This is my new favorite drink, perfect for a warm summer day enjoyed on a patio. The people next to us ordered a salad and flatbread that smelled amazing.

Zur Hoell meaning "to hell" is housed in a tavern that dates back to 900. Cash only. Great wine selection consider stopping here if you could not stop at wineries along the way. We had dinner here our second night. I don't remember what we had for dinner but it wasn't anything special. I would choose to eat at the hotel or even Paula's Biergarten. Reservations encouraged. We did not have reservations but arrived at opening time and were seated quickly.

Netto Discount Market - great selection of bottled beer.

Nordlingen Escape - Pizzeria Firenze amazing lasagna

Apple pie or other dessert from hotel/cafe

Near Castle Restaurant Cafe Kainz - Paprika chicken and spatzel Konig Ludwig Dunkel

Munich Oktoberfest

Heinz Wurst Huhnergraterie Heimer and Brenner stand at Oktoberfest rotisserie chicken. It was the best rotisserie chicken we have ever had. Both nights we went to Oktoberfest we purchased a chicken to take back to our room.

Schnapse bundt pan shaped tent

Chicken paprikash with spaetzle - pan seared chicken with a tomato paprika sauce (chicken stock, onions, garlic, tomato paste and paprika) served with spaetzle (egg noodles). We had this dish in Rottingen and at the cafe near the castles.

Kongiliche Kristall spa Leland ordered the curry wurst and enjoyed it, I ordered a burger and goulash. Goulash was amazing skip, the burger. I had a red wine spritz that was very tasty. Order drinks from the swim up bar.

Every place we ordered soup it was very good.

## How do you get around?

We chose to see the Romantic Road by car and picked up our rental at the airport in Frankfurt and drop off at the airport in Munich. There are a number of connecting cycle paths away from the main roads that make it possible to bike or hike and there are services you can hire to transfer your belongings from city to city. BikeTours.com.

Guidebook: Four days of hiking the Romantic Road This is Germany! <https://westwards.de/>

## Festivals

Wurzburg wine parade last week of August

Rothenburg wine festival takes place mid-August

Many of these cities have Christmas markets

Oktoberfest

## Tips

Medications that need to be re-refrigerated take along a small soft sided cooler (with luggage tag) with reusable ice packs. Ask hotel to store in the hotel fridge if you don't need access to it after they store it for you. Most rooms do not have a mini fridge. Make sure someone will be there when you check out so you can retrieve it.

We do not have international drivers license and had no issues.

Your US issued handicap placard is valid and we were told that you do not have to pay for street parking.

Take photo of car and license plate so you don't forget what your rental car looks like.

Parking Disc or Clock Disc. Has an adjustable time dial. When arriving at a parking spot that requires a parking disc, set the disc to the nearest half hour of your arrival. There should be posted street signs that indicate how long you can park.

Pump gas first then pay.

If needed ask hotel if they do laundry

Download off line maps.

Bring reusable grocery bag and a couple zip lock bags

Strike up a conversation with a local



Not many places have bags of ice. We paid 4.50 Euros for a 2 lb bag.



Review meaning of street signs before your trip and learn German spelling of cities. Munich – München



Pump first then pay inside for gas.

Parking Disc



You can usually find public restrooms near the Rathaus (city hall).

## Guide book recommendations that you should skip.

Kathe Wohlfahrt is an enormous Christmas decoration shop filled with twinkling glittering show rooms and tourists. This was a quick in and out for us. the line to pay wound its way around the store, it will give you flashbacks to Black Friday sale lines, and maybe I'm getting cynical but I am tired of getting holiday decorations in and out of storage each year.

Schneeball a dessert made from shortcut pastry rolled out and cut into strips with a pie cutter placed into a snowball-making tool called a Schneeballeneisen and fried and sprinkled with confectioners sugar or chocolate.



Criminal Museum - we chose to skip this museum and wander the streets. The couple we met from Reno did visit the museum, thumbs up from her thumbs, down from him.

Anneliese Friese, The Friese Shop highly overrated gift shop.

## What do the guide books miss?

Weltenburg Abbey and zum Kuclbauer Brewery

## SIDE TRIPS

FRANKFURT possible add on night before heading to Würzburg.

Hotel Am Dom. Parking near cathedral and easy access to subway. 13 euros pp for subway pass for 24 hours.

Frankfurt Cathedral heavily damaged, but the only building not leveled during the war located in the Domplatz area.

FreBgass. "Grazing Street"

Wurst sausages - The ancestor to our hotdogs a frankfurters, white sausages, knackwurst etc.

Apple wine (Apfelwein) hard cider made from sour-tart tasting apples. Apple wine is traditionally served in a Bembel a pitcher made of salt glazed stoneware grey in color with cobalt blue decorations. The apple wine glasses (gerippte) are clear glass with hatched diamond shaped patterns that helps you grip it after you have had a few.

Pork schnitzel (pork loin pounded thin, breaded and pan fried) with green sauce (grüne Soße) Legend has it that this herbaceous sour cream sauce originated in the orient and it was brought to Europe by the Romans more than 2000 years ago.

Schweinsbaxe - pork knuckle tender juicy pork on the bone wrapped in crispy crackling skin served with potato dumplings and red cabbage

Frankfurt (OPTIONAL) **Paulner am Dom.** (129 per night) Drop bags off at hotel then park at the parking garage for the Cathedral. Great location, a stones throw away from the Frankfurt Cathedral (Dom). Easy access to the subway.

Wandered the streets of Frankfurt

Dinner Apfelwein Solzer. Lee had pork knuckle (crispy skin) in dark beer sauce with sauerkraut and mashed potatoes, I had the Pork schnitzel with green sauce (herbaceous sauce). We both enjoyed our meals. I did not care for Lees pork knuckle. The skin was very crispy and was presented on the bone. I tried the apple wine /Apfelwein (I didn't care for the apple wine it was tart and dry).



Bauernmärkten Konstablerwache. Thursday night farmers market. Several vineyards, local breweries and food vendors set up stalls.

### Our departure from the romantic road

We departed the Romantic Road in Donauwörth and drove 55 miles to zum Kuchlbauer brewery, passing acres of hops fields. There is plenty of on-site parking near the gift shop where you purchase your 20 euros per person tour ticket. The ticket includes access to the Friedensreich Hundertwasser art museum. The artist is known as an opponent of "the straight line" and it is evident in the architecture of the brewery. It is right out of a Dr. Seuss book. The tours are in German, they offer one English tour per day but they have pamphlets in English that explain the brewing process and history of the brewery. Our English speaking tour guide was so concerned we would feel left out she would explain everything in German and run back to explain everything to us in English. The 70-meter gold onion domed observation tower decorated with colorful mosaics and stained glass can only be explored during the guided tour. The tour ended in the beer garden where you can redeem your token for a beer and pretzel. They brew several styles of beer and Leland enjoyed the ones he had and the traditional pretzels were good as well.

We continued through sleepy little villages to **Weltenburg Abbey**, just 15 minutes away, our detour from the Romantic Road.

A Benedictine monastic abbey that has been brewing beer on the banks of the Danube river since (144 includes breakfast, elevator, no AC). Park outside the gate along the river. The sun-drenched large beer garden courtyard was full of people enjoying a cold beer. I did not care for our lunch of roast beef, potato dumplings and coleslaw. If staying in the guest house and a picky eater like me; bring along something to eat. Leland enjoyed a few of the beers including the Kloster Barock Dunkel, their World Cup beer winner. We



skipped the visitor center and museum. But don't miss out on the opportunity to marvel at the art and architecture of St. George church, completed in 1739. The church is dimly lit to draw your attention up to the ceiling frescos of swirling spirals leading to heaven that are lined with celestial figures. Above the altar is St. George on horseback protecting a princess by slaying a dragon. I purchased a green rosary for Leland's upcoming confirmation in the Catholic faith.

Purchase your ticket outside the abbey gate for an hour-long round trip ferry ride up the Danube. This narrow part of the river is lined by 200-foot tall limestone bluffs. Table service is available for light snacks and we enjoyed a drink on the top deck of the open-air boat. The audio track points out notable sites along the way such as Liberation Hall and a series of metal rings in the stone mountain-face once used to pull boats upstream. We disembarked and headed back to the church for evening vespers, the day trippers had left and only a dozen or so overnight guests remained. We headed to the honesty kitchen to grab a beer/cola before heading to our modest room with an amazing view of the river.

The next morning we enjoyed a typical European breakfast, then headed back to the Romantic Road and continued the journey to Schwangau to find overnight lodging and enjoy the spa. We finished out the Romantic Road the following morning to start a new adventure in Switzerland.

Personen Schifffahrt ferry [www.schifffahrt-kelheim.de](http://www.schifffahrt-kelheim.de)

Dauchau concentration camp



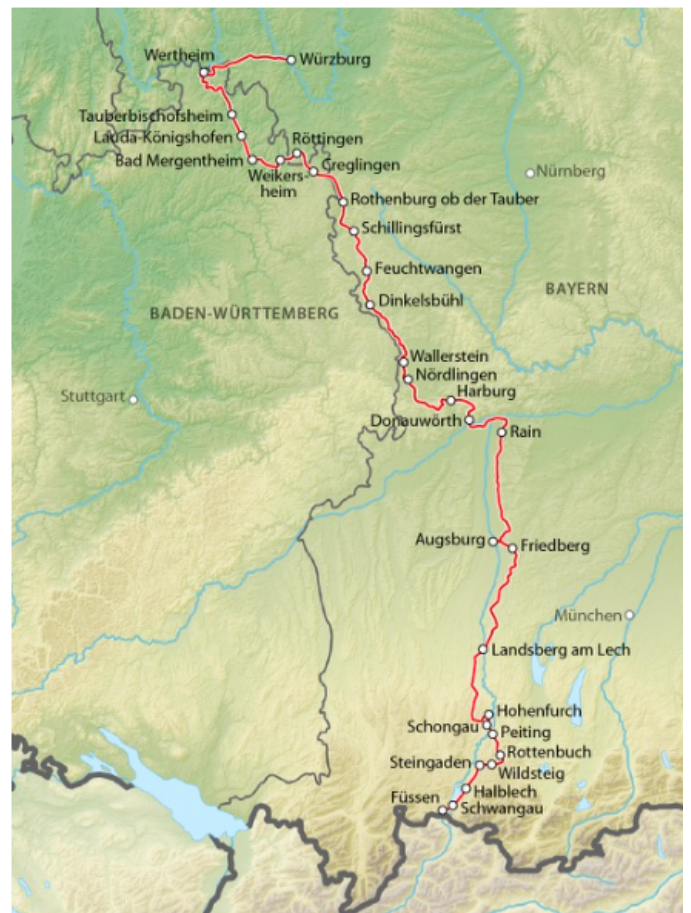
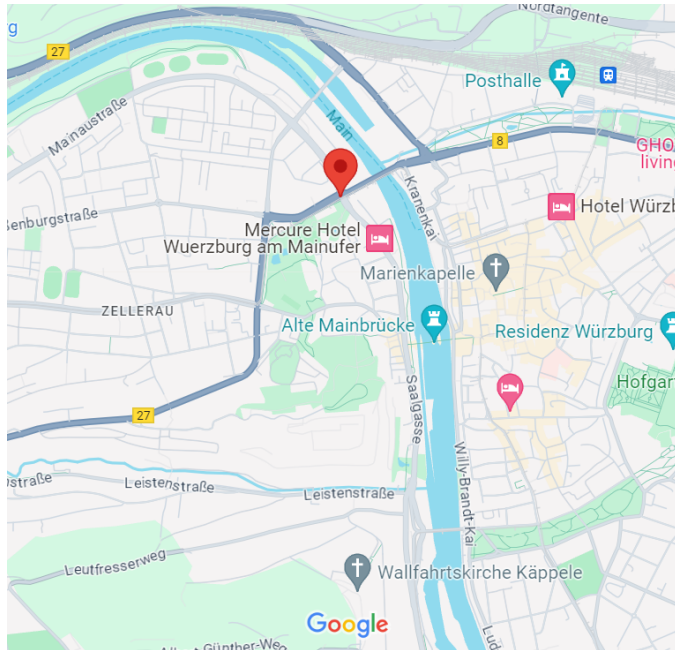
*Brauerei (Brewery) zum Kuchlbauer GmbH & Co.*







Where we started the Romantic Road



What surprised us the most?