

Bavaria



The largest state in Germany, Bavaria (Bayern) is well endowed with natural riches: snowy Alpine peaks, rushing streams and velvety forests that stir the romantic soul. Bolstering Bavarian pride yet more is a wealth of historic buildings, arguably Germany's best art museums, and an economy bigger than Sweden's.

Staunchly conservative, but with a flair for innovation, Bavarians see themselves as separate from the rest of Germany. They still pine for an odd 19th-century monarch, Ludwig II, whose opulent palaces draw millions of visitors each year. Traditions are relished and earthy, and lederhosen-clad men still exist, quaffing frothy steins of beer to the strains of an oompah band. But Bavaria actually embraces three peoples – the Bavarians, Franconians and Swabians.

The old banking powerhouse, Augsburg, lies in Swabia. To the north the fabulous bishops' cities of Nuremberg, Bamberg and Würzburg are part of Franconia, where locals don't regard themselves as Bavarian. In the east, the Danube flows past the medieval stronghold of Regensburg towards the Italianate Passau, close to the rugged wilderness of the Bavarian Forest.

The most popular route through Bavaria is the Romantic Road, a trail of walled towns and ancient watchtowers culminating in the world's most famous castle, the sugary Neuschwanstein in the Bavarian Alps. The mountains have first-class resorts for hiking and skiing, incredible scenery and a wealth of beautiful frescoed villages.

But Munich is Bavaria's real heart and soul. It's a stylish metropolis, a vortex of art and culture, yet a relaxed place that manages to combine Alpine air with Mediterranean joie de vivre. Wherever you go, be prepared for oceans of beer served with legendary, thigh-slapping hospitality.

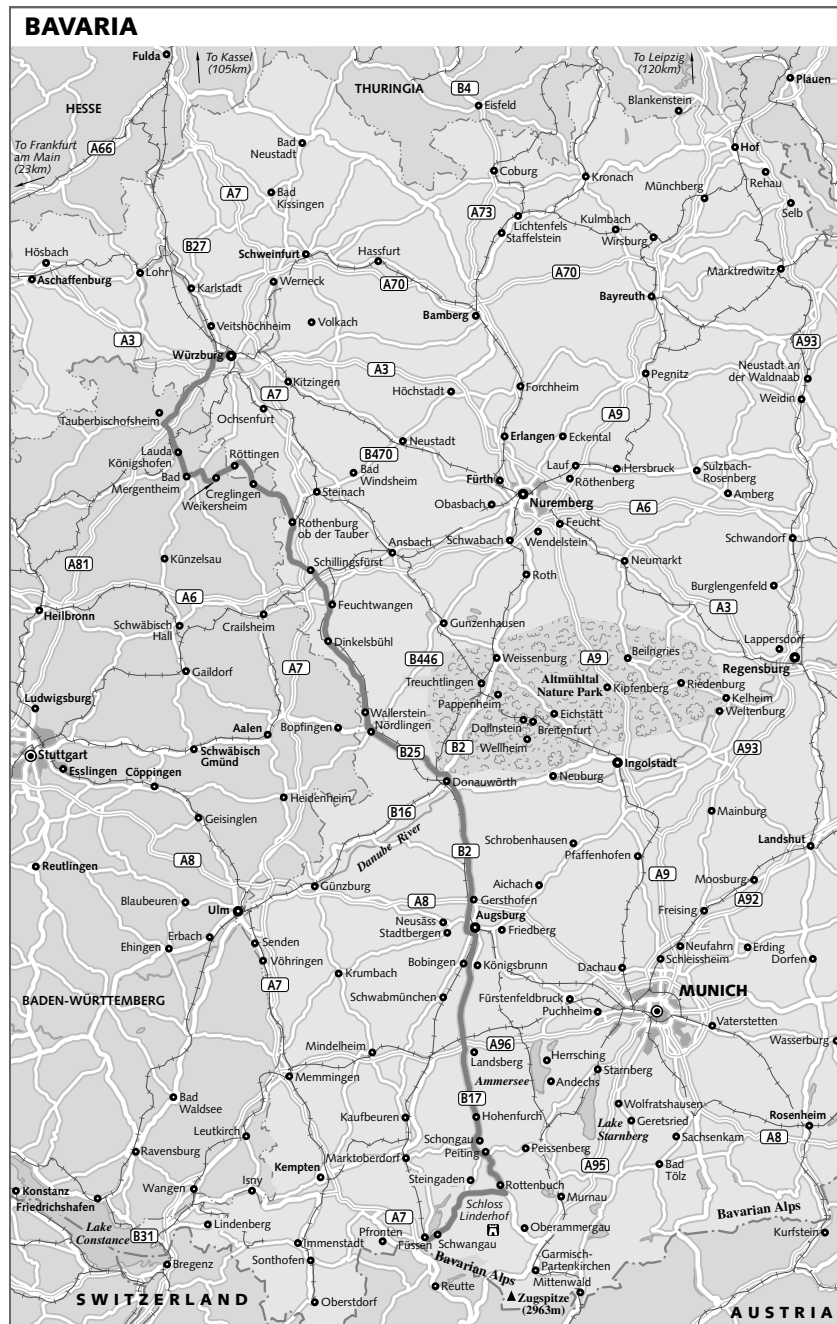
HIGHLIGHTS

- **Green Escape** Explore the wonders of Altmühltal Nature Park (p371)
- **Legal Speed** Stoke your adrenaline on the Zugspitze (p346)
- **Karl's Place** Revel in the Carolingian charm of Regensburg (p378)
- **Bishop's Bastion** Wander the Venetian-style canals of Bamberg (p364)
- **Out of Thin Air** Soar to the Eagle's Nest (p351) in Berchtesgaden
- **Experience Delusions of Grandeur** Go castle-mad at Schloss Linderhof (p349)



■ POPULATION: 10.7 MILLION

■ AREA:



History

For centuries Bavaria was ruled as a duchy in the Holy Roman Empire, a patchwork of nations that extended from Italy to the North Sea. In the early 19th century, a conquering Napoleon annexed Bavaria, elevated it to the rank of kingdom and doubled its size. The fledgling nation became the object of power struggles between Prussia and Austria and, in 1871, was brought into the German Reich by Bismarck.

Bavaria was the only German state that refused to ratify the Basic Law (Germany's near-constitution) following WWII. Instead, Bavaria's leaders opted to return to its prewar status as a 'free state', and drafted their own constitution. Almost ever since, the *Land* (state) has been ruled by the Christlich-Soziale Union (CSU), the arch-conservative party that is peculiar to Bavaria. Its dominance of a single *Land's* politics is unique in postwar Germany. Its sister party, the CDU, operates in the rest of the country by mutual agreement.

Getting There & Around

Munich is Bavaria's main transport hub, second only to Frankfurt in flight and rail connections. Rail service in Munich is exemplary, as it is in all major German cities, and this is also true throughout much of Bavaria. Air links are much less extensive (see p754 for more information).

In deepest Bavaria, a car will allow you more flexibility in your travel plans, otherwise you may have to rely on buses. Trips along the Romantic Road are done by tour bus, although again a car is a better idea.

If you're travelling in a group, or can assemble one, you can make enormous savings with the **Bayern-Ticket** (€25). This allows up to five adults unlimited travel on one weekday from 9am to 3am. It's good for 2nd-class rail travel across Bavaria (regional trains only, no ICs or ICEs) as well as all public transport.

Accommodation

DJH youth hostels in Bavaria will now accept guests aged over 26 (who will pay a €4 surcharge), although priority is still given to younger travellers. In some areas a new breed of independent, all-age hostels offer a nice alternative.

Bavaria's parks are generally open to free camping. Parks such as the Altmühltal Nature

Park restrict camping to designated areas, for a small fee. Be sure to follow the local code of ethics and common decency, and pack up everything you brought along – litter, bottles, cans – and bury human waste before you leave.

Bavaria for Children

Kinderland Bavaria is a classification system for family-friendly sights, hotels, leisure facilities, museums and camp sites. For more information, go to www.kinderland.by.

MUNICH

☎ 089 / pop 1.28 million

Pulsing with prosperity and *Gemütlichkeit* (cosiness), Munich (München) revels in its own contradictions. Folklore and age-old traditions exist side by side with sleek BMWs, designer boutiques and high-powered industry. Its museums include world-class collections of artistic masterpieces, and its music and cultural scenes give Berlin a run for its money.

Despite all its sophistication, Munich retains a touch of provincialism that visitors find charming. The people's attitude is one of live-and-let-live – and Münchener will be the first to admit that their 'metropolis' is little more than a *Weltdorf*, a world village. During Oktoberfest representatives of the entire planet turn out to toast the town.

HISTORY

It was Benedictine monks, drawn by fertile farmland and the closeness to Catholic Italy, who settled in what is now Munich. The city derives its name from the medieval *Munichen*, or monks. In 1158, the Imperial Diet in Augsburg sanctioned the rule of Heinrich der Löwe, and Munich the city was born.

In 1240, the city passed to the House of Wittelsbach, who would govern Munich (as well as Bavaria) until the 20th century. Munich prospered as a salt-trading centre but was hit hard by the plague in 1349. The epidemic subsided only after 150 years, whereupon the relieved *Schäffler* (coopers) initiated a ritualistic dance to remind burghers of their good fortune. The *Schäfflertanz* is performed every seven years but it is re-enacted daily by the little figures on the city's *Glockenspiel* (carillon) on Marienplatz.

By the 19th century an explosion of monument-building gave Munich its spectacular architecture and wide Italianate avenues. Things got out of hand after King Ludwig II ascended the throne in 1864, as spending for his grandiose projects (such as Neuschwanstein Palace) bankrupted the royal house and threatened the government's coffers. Ironically, today they are the biggest money-spinners of Bavaria's tourism industry.

Munich has seen many turbulent times but last century was particularly rough. WWI practically starved the city to death, the Nazis first rose to prominence here and next world war nearly wiped the city off the map. The 1972 Olympic Games began as a celebration of a new democratic Germany, but ended in tragedy when 17 people were killed in a terrorist hostage-taking incident. In 2006 the city won a brighter place in sporting history, when it hosted the opening game of the FIFA World Cup.

Today, Munich's claim to being the 'secret capital' of Germany is alive and well. The city is recognised for its high living standards, with the most millionaires per capita after Hamburg, and for a haute couture that rivals Paris and Milan.

ORIENTATION

The Hauptbahnhof (central train station) is less than 1km west of Marienplatz, the heart of the historic Altstadt (old town). To get there, walk east on Bayerstrasse to Karlsplatz, then take Neuhauser Strasse – Munich's main shopping street – to Marienplatz.

North of Marienplatz is the Residenz (the former royal palace), packed with museums and theatres, and Odeonsplatz with the landmark Theatinerkirche St Kajetan. To the east of Marienplatz is the Platzl quarter, with its traditional pubs and restaurants such as the Hofbräuhaus. Hipper bars and venues are south of the square in the Gärtnerplatzviertel quarter, which, along with the Glockenbachviertel west of here, is the centre of Munich's gay and lesbian scene. The Isar River flows through the eastern part of the city from south to north.

Munich is divided into various districts, each with their own distinct character. Schwabing, north of the Altstadt, is home to Munich's university and a host of cafés and restaurants. East of Schwabing is the Englischer Garten (English Garden), one of

Europe's largest city parks. North of Schwabing, the main attraction is the Olympiapark, site of the 1972 Olympic Games, and further north again the BMW Museum.

East of the Altstadt is the district of Haidhausen, a trendy neighbourhood packed with pubs. South and west of the Altstadt, and near the Hauptbahnhof, is Ludwigsvorstadt – a half-seedy, half-lively area packed with shops, restaurants and hotels. The Westend, further west, bristles with renovated houses, hip cafés and wine bars, all near the Theresienwiese, the meadow where Oktoberfest is held.

North of here is cosmopolitan Neuhausen, a more residential area that's home to **Schloss Nymphenburg** (Nymphenburg Palace) with its lovely gardens a little further northwest. Munich's airport is almost 36km northeast of the city.

INFORMATION

Bookshops

Geobuch (Map p292; ☎ 265 030; Rosental 6) Best travel bookshop in town.

Hugendubel (☎ 01803-484 484); Marienplatz (Map p292); Karlsplatz (Map p292) National chain with tons of English-language books.

Max&Milan (Map p292; ☎ 260 3320; Ickstattstrasse 2) The city's best gay bookshop.

Words' Worth Books (Map p295; ☎ 280 9141; Schellingstrasse 21a) Great selection of English-language books.

Cultural Centres

Amerika Haus (Map p296; ☎ 552 5370; Karolinenplatz 3)

British Council (Map p292; ☎ 2060 3310; Herzog-Heine-Strasse 7) Recorded telephone message listing cultural events and activities.

Goethe-Institut (Map p292; ☎ 551 9030; Sonnenstrasse 25)

Institut Français (Map p295; ☎ 286 6280; Kaulbachstrasse 13)

Discount Cards

Munich Welcome Card (1/3 days €7.50/17.50; 3-day card for up to 5 adults €25.50) Unlimited public transport and up to 50% discount on 30 museums and attractions.

Emergency

Ambulance (☎ 192 22)

Fire (☎ 112)

Police (Map p292; ☎ 110; Arnulfstrasse 1) Police station right beside the Hauptbahnhof.

Internet Access

The city libraries (*Stadtbibliotheken*, below) have cheap access, but there may be queues.

Cyberice-C@fe (Map p295; ☎ 3407 6955; Feilitzschstrasse 15; per 30min €2.50; ☎ 11am-1am) In an ice-cream parlour near the Englischer Garten.

easyInternetCafe (Map p292; Bahnhofplatz 1; per hr €1.50-3.50; ☎ 7.30am-11.45pm) Over 400 terminals and demand-driven rates.

Munich Internet Service Center (Map p292; ☎ 2070 2737; Tal 31; per 30min €1; ☎ 24hr) 60 terminals plus services like printing and CD burning.

Times Square Online Bistro (Map p292; ☎ 5126 2600; Bayerstrasse 10a; per 5min €0.50; ☎ 7am-1am) In the Hauptbahnhof, south side.

Internet Resources

Munich Tourist Office (www.munich-tourist.de)

Munich's official website.

Munichfound (www.munichfound.de) Munich's expat magazine.

Laundry

Laundries can be difficult to find. Typical costs are €2.50 to €4 per load, plus about €0.50 for 10 to 15 minutes' dryer time.

City-SB Waschcenter (Map p292; Paul-Heise Strasse 21; ☎ 7am-11pm)

Der Wunderbare Waschsalon (Map p296; Theresienstrasse 134; ☎ 6am-midnight) The best laundry close to the centre.

Schnell und Sauber (Map p296; Landshuterallee 77; ☎ 24hr) In Neuhausen.

Left Luggage

Gepäckaufbewahrung (Map p292; ☎ 1308 3468; Hauptbahnhof; per piece €4; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 8am-6pm Sun) A staffed storage room, located in the north part of the station's main hall.

Lockers (Map p292; Hauptbahnhof; per 24hr €2-4; ☎ 4am-12.30am) In the main hall of the station and opposite tracks 16, 24 and 28-36.

Libraries

Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Bavarian State Library, Map p295; ☎ 286 380; Ludwigstrasse 16; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri Sep-Jul, 10am-5pm Aug, reading hall 8am-midnight Mon-Sat)

Stadtbücherei (City library; ☎ 10:30am-7pm Mon-Fri) Haidhausen (Map p294; ☎ 4809 8316; Rosenheimer Strasse 5); Schwabing (Map p295; ☎ 336 013; Hohenzollernstrasse 16); Westend (Map p292; ☎ 507 109; Schrenkstrasse 8)

Universitätsbibliothek (Map p295; ☎ 2180 2428; Geschwister-Scholl-Platz 1; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Thu, 9am-5pm Fri)

Media

Abendzeitung Light broadsheet that, despite the name, has a morning delivery.

Münchner Merkur The city's arch-conservative daily.

Süddeutsche Zeitung Widely read regional paper with a liberal streak. Monday's edition has a New York Times supplement in English.

tz Local tabloid similar to the saucy Bild-Zeitung, Germany's biggest-selling paper.

Medical Services

The US and UK consulates can provide lists of English-speaking doctors on request. Most pharmacies have employees who speak passable English, but there are several designated as 'international', with staff fluent in English.

Ärztlicher Bereitschaftsdienst (☎ 01805 191 212; ☎ 24hr) Emergency medical service.

Bahnhofs-Apotheke (Map p292; ☎ 555 830; Bahnhofplatz 7)

Ludwigs-Apotheke (Map p292; ☎ 260 3021; Neuhauser Strasse 11) English-speaking pharmacy.

Money

ATMs are available throughout the city; a few key ones are listed below.

American Express (Map p292; ☎ 2289 1387; Neuhauser Strasse 47)

Citibank (Map p292; ☎ 236 6310; Rosental 10)

Deutsche Bank (Map p292; Marienplatz)

Reisebank (Map p292; Hauptbahnhof; ☎ 7am-10pm) EurAide's newsletter the Inside Track gets you a 50% reduction on commissions at this branch.

Sparkasse (Map p292; Sparkassenstrasse 2)

Post

Post office Hauptbahnhof (Map p292; Bahnhofplatz 1; ☎ 7.30am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat, closed Sun)

Post office Altstadt (Map p292; Residenzstrasse 2; ☎ 8am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-12.30pm Sat, closed Sun)

Tourist Information

EurAide (Map p292; ☎ 593 889; www.euraide.de; Room 3, platform 11, Hauptbahnhof; ☎ 7.45am-noon & 1-6pm Jun-Oct, 7.45am-12.45pm & 2-6pm Jun-Oct; 8am-noon & 1-4pm Mon-Fri Nov-May) The office makes reservations, sells tickets for DB trains and a variety of tours, and finds rooms (€3 per booking). EurAide's free newsletter, the Inside Track, is packed with practical info about the city and surroundings, and gives discounts on money changing (see above).

Jugendinformationszentrum (Youth Information Centre; Map p292; ☎ 5141 0660; Paul-Heise-Strasse 22; ☎ noon-6pm Mon-Fri, to 8pm Thu) A wide range of information for young visitors.

Tourist Office Hauptbahnhof (Map p292; ☎ 2339 6500; Bahnhofplatz 2; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun); Marienplatz (Map p292; ☎ 2339 6500; Neues Rathaus; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat) The room-finding service is free, or you can book in person by calling ☎ 2333 0236/37.

Travel Agencies

EurAide is the best place to go with complicated rail pass inquiries, or to book train travel in Germany and elsewhere in Europe.

Atlas Reisen (Map p292; ☎ 269 072; www.atlas-reisen.de; Kaufingerstrasse 1-5) In the Kaufhof department store.

Travel Overland (Map p295; ☎ 01805-276 370; www.travel-overland.de; Barer Strasse 73)

Universities

Munich is home to about 87,000 students. The biggest universities are listed below.

Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (Map p295; ☎ 218 00; www.uni-muenchen.de; Geschwister-Scholl-Platz 1) Runs German-language courses for foreigners throughout the year.

Technische Universität München (Map p296; ☎ 289 01; Arcisstrasse 21) Renowned faculties of science, engineering and medicine.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

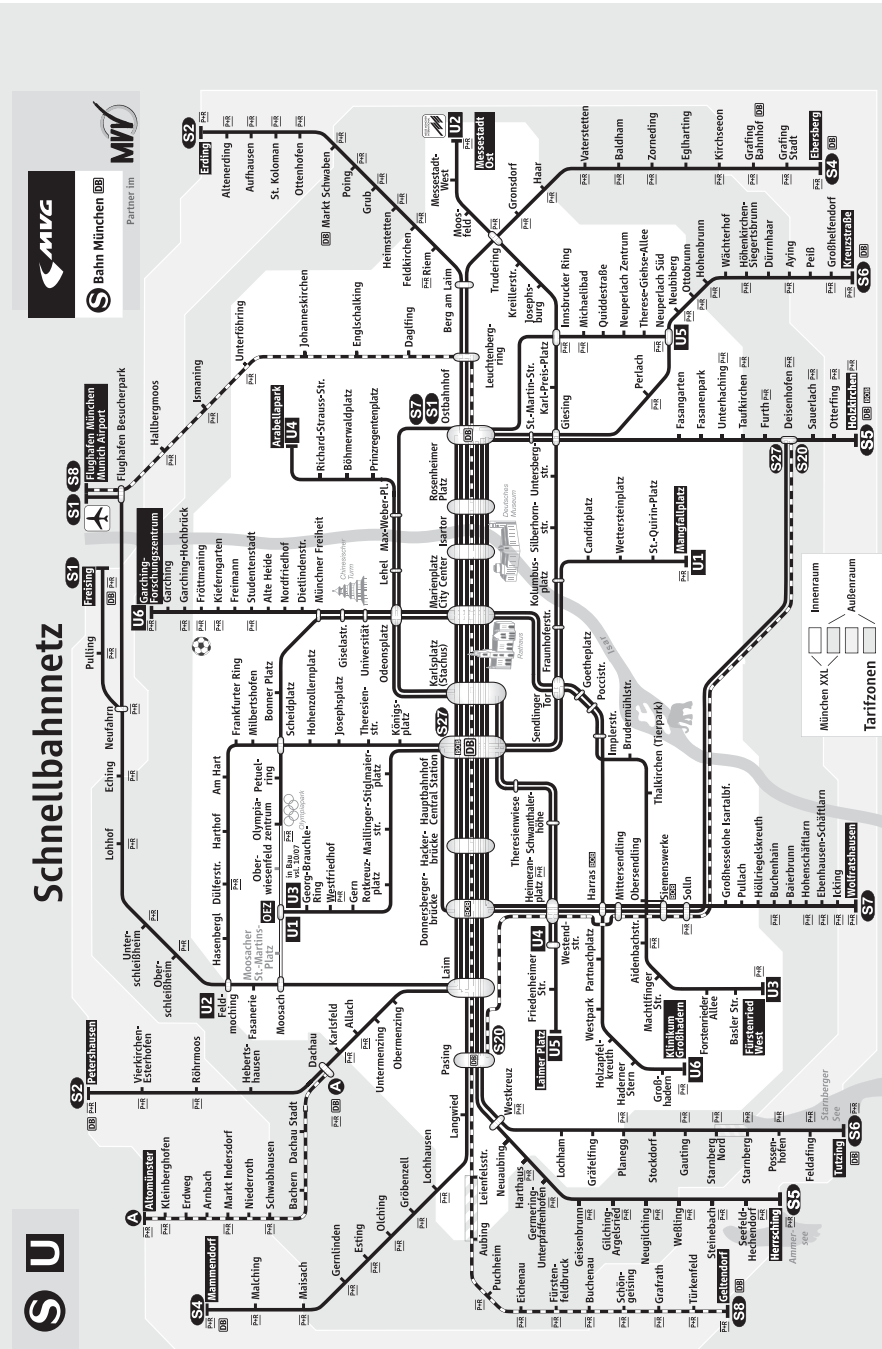
During Oktoberfest crime and staggering drunks are major problems, especially at the southern end of the Hauptbahnhof. It's no joke: drunk people in a crowd trying to get home can get violent, and there are dozens of assault cases every year. Leave early or stay very cautious, if not sober, yourself.

The Föhn (pronounced 'foon') is a weather-related annoyance peculiar to southern Germany. Static-charged wind from the south brings exquisite views clear to the Alps and an area of dense pressure that sits on the city. Visiting filmmaker Ingmar Bergman wrote that the Föhn makes 'nice dogs bite, and cats spew lightning'. Müncheners claim that it simply makes them cranky.

SIGHTS

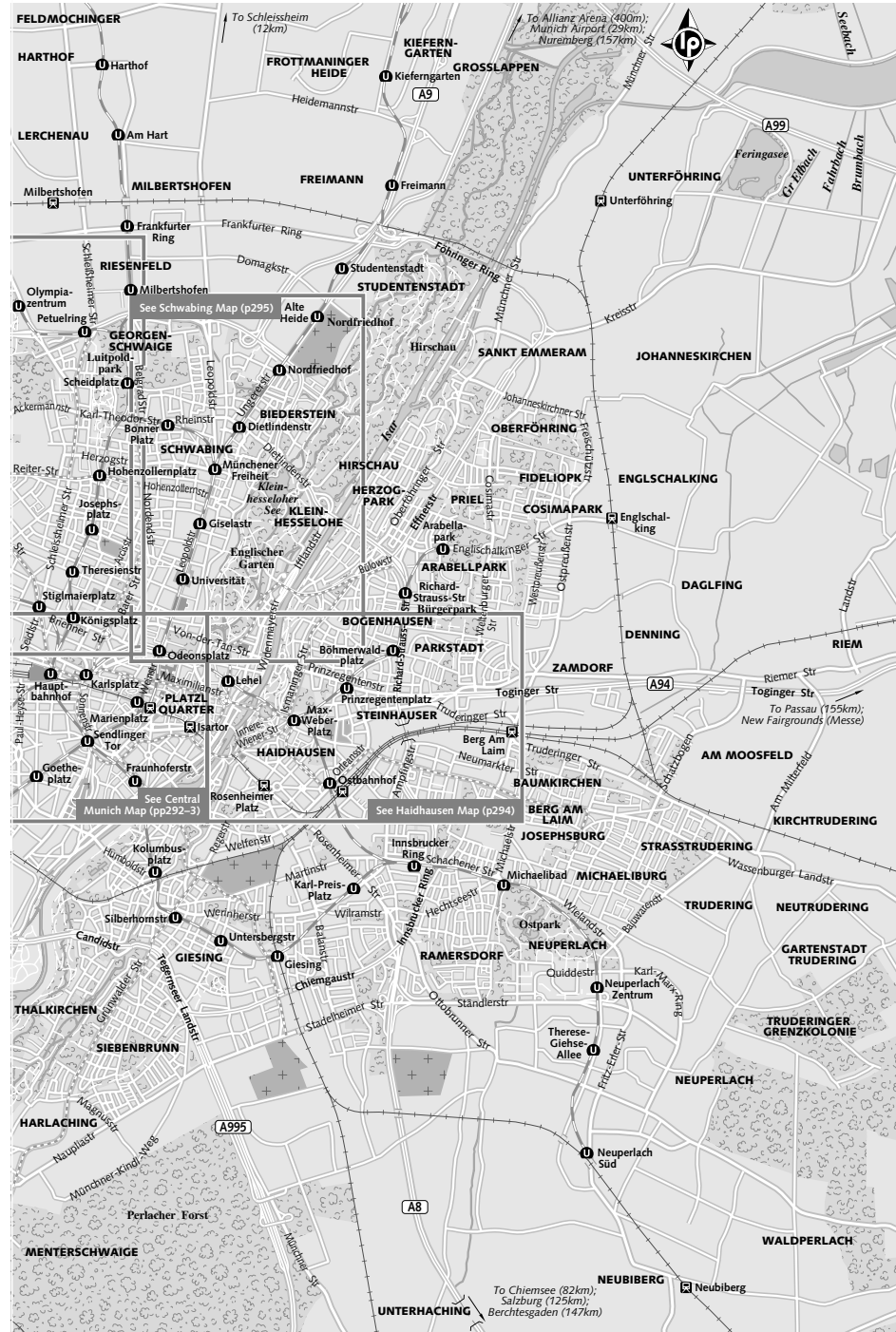
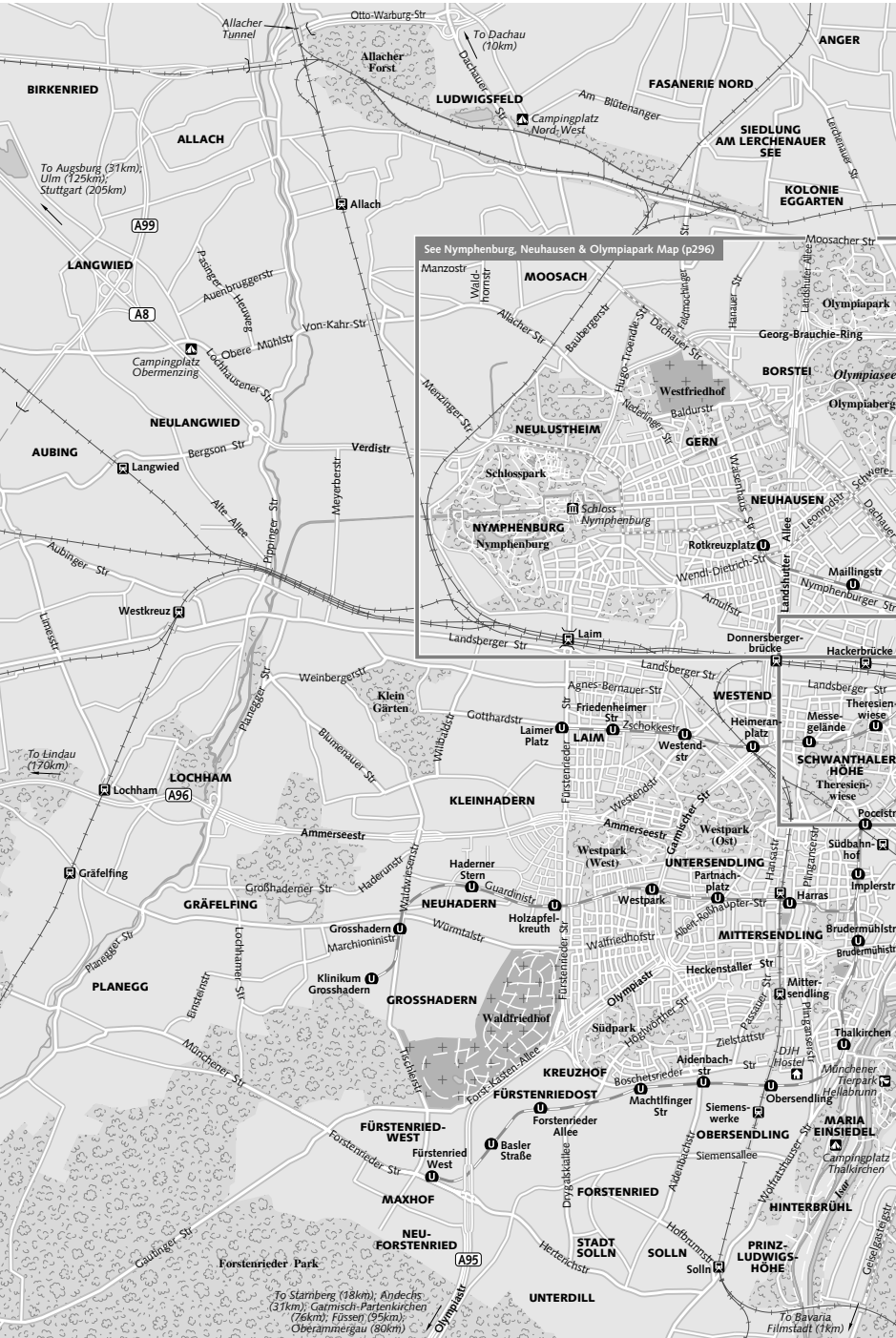
Munich's major sights are clustered around the Altstadt, with the main museum district near the Residenz. However, it will take another day or two to discover the delights of Bohemian Schwabing, the sprawling Englischer Garten, and trendy Haidhausen to the east. North-west of the Altstadt you'll find cosmopolitan

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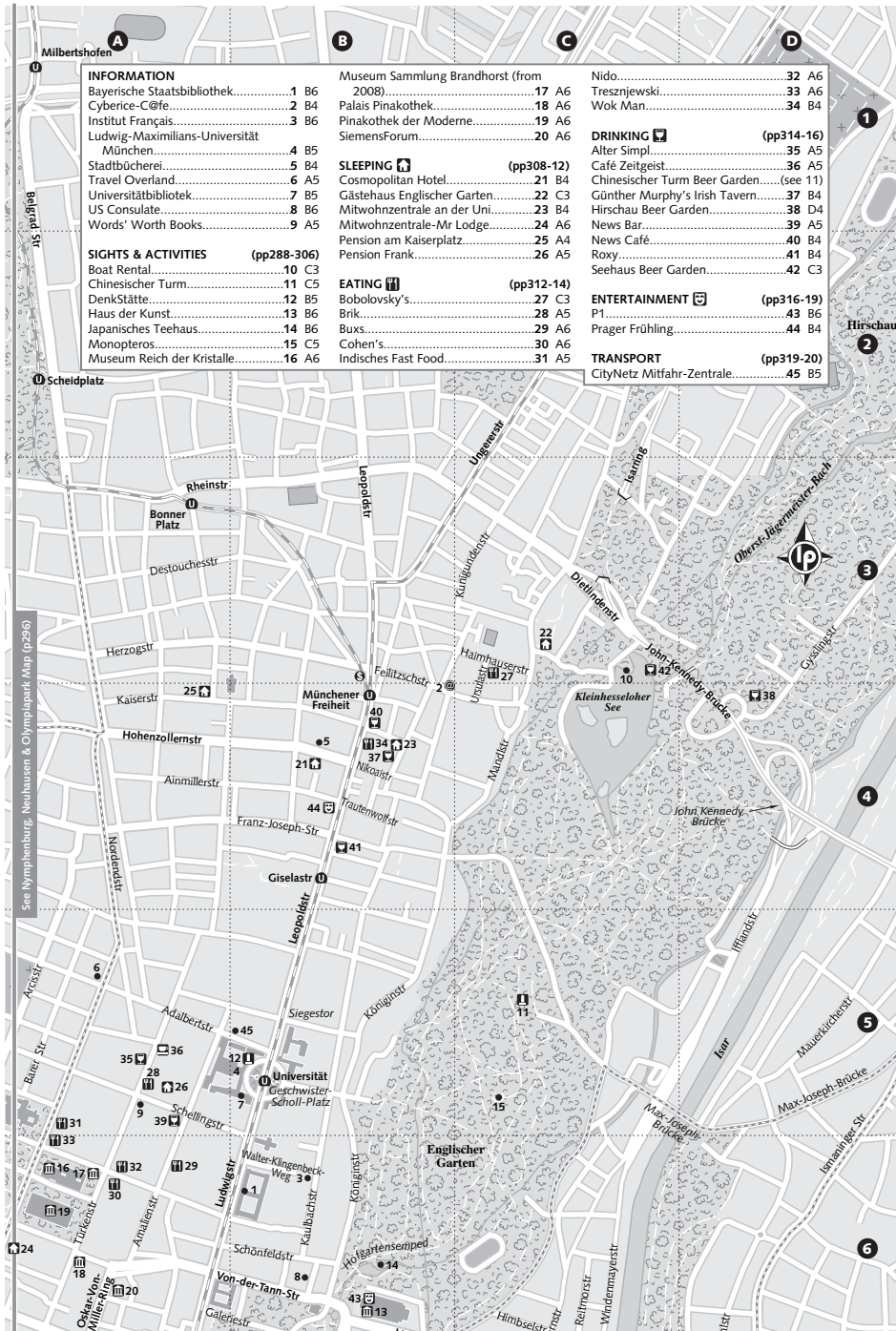
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this powerful display taps a vast pool of photographs, propaganda posters, Gestapo uniforms, underground resistance papers and letters from concentration camp victims.

MÜNCHNER JÜDISCHES MUSEUM

Slated to open in early 2007, the **Münchner Jüdisches Museum** (Munich Jewish Museum; Map p292; ☎ 2332 8198; St Jakobsplatz 1; admission free; ☎ 10am-6pm, closed Mon) is a major effort to come to terms with one of the city's most sinister chapters. Housed in a modernist glass cube that integrates a new synagogue and community centre, the exhibit aims to show – in a balanced, sensitive fashion – the Jewish place in Munich's cultural landscape over the ages, from medieval times through to the horrors of the Third Reich and today's slow regeneration. The site is near that of the Romanesque synagogue that was razed by the Nazis in 1938.

HOFBRÄUHAUS

No visit to Munich would be complete without a visit to the **Hofbräuhaus** (see p314), Bavaria's most celebrated beer hall. The writhing hordes of tourists tend to overshadow the fabulous interior, where dainty twirled flowers adorn the medieval vaults. The ballroom upstairs was the site of the first large meeting of the National Socialist Party on 20 February 1920.

BIER & OKTOBERFESTMUSEUM

Located in a 14th-century timber-framed house, the cute little **Bier & Oktoberfestmuseum** (Map p292; ☎ 2423 1607; Sterneckerstrasse 2; adult/concession €4/2.50; ☎ 1-5pm Tue-Sat) provides a potted history of Germany's national drink and favourite drink-up. Pore over old brewing vats, historic photos and some of the earliest Oktoberfest regalia. The earthy pub is open 5pm to midnight (closed Monday).

Max-Joseph-Platz

Munich's most glamorous shopping street, Maximilianstrasse, begins at **Max-Joseph-Platz** (Map p292), home to some of the city's most beloved edifices. Among them is the grandiose **Nationaltheater**, home to the Bavarian State Opera and the granddaddy of them all – the **Residenz**. The square centres on a statue of **Max I Joseph**, the Bavarian king who proclaimed Germany's first constitution in 1818.

At the southern end of the square is the **old central post office** with a frescoed Italianate arcade.

RESIDENZ

On the north side of Max-Joseph-Platz looms the oldest section of the **Residenz** (Map p292), the huge palace that housed Bavarian rulers from 1385 to 1918. Statues of **two lions** guard the gates to the palace on Residenzstrasse; rubbing one of their shields is said to bring you wealth. The northern wings open into several interior courtyards – the Emperor, the Apothecary and the Fountain – as well as two smaller ones, Chapel and King's Tract.

Residenzmuseum

The Wittelsbachs' amazing treasures, as well as the trappings of their lifestyles, are on display at the **Residenzmuseum** (Map p292; ☎ 290 671; enter from Max-Josephs-Platz 3; adult/under 18yr with parents/concession €6/free/5, combiticket with Schatzkammer €9/8/free; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr–mid-Oct, 9am-8pm Thu, 10am-4pm mid-Oct–Mar). The museum has roughly 130 rooms, and is so large that it's divided into two sections – one open in the morning, one in the afternoon. You can see it all with a free audio-guide.

The enclosed Grotto Court, one of the first places you'll see when you enter, features the wonderful **Perseusbrunnen** (Perseus Fountain). Next door is the famous **Antiquarium**, a lavishly ornamented barrel vault, smothered in frescoes and built to house the Wittelsbachs' huge antique collection. Other highlights include the **Ancestral Gallery**, with portraits of the rulers of Bavaria including the great conqueror Charlemagne; the **Schlachtensäle** (Battle Halls); the **Porcelain Chambers**, containing 19th-century porcelain from Berlin, Meissen and Nymphenburg; and the **Asian Collections**, with precious Chinese and Japanese porcelain, tapestries and jewellery.

One of Europe's finest rococo stages, the **Cuvillies-Theater**, hosted the opening performance of Mozart's opera *Idomeneo*. Designed by Belgian architect François Cuvillies, the sumptuous interior is closed for renovations until late 2008.

Schatzkammer der Residenz

The Residenzmuseum entrance also leads to the **Schatzkammer der Residenz** (Residence Treasury; Map p292; ☎ 290 671; enter from Max-Joseph-Platz 3; adult/concession/under 18 with parents €6/5/free; ☎ 9am-6pm, 9am-8pm Thu). It exhibits an Aladdin's cave of baubles and precious objects. Included among the mind-boggling treasures are portable altars, the pearl-studded golden cross of Queen

Gisela of Hungary, a cup from Mannheim carved out of bloodstone, and 'exotic handicrafts' from Turkey, Iran, Mexico and India. It's well worth the entry price.

Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst

German explorers of the Near East brought back treasures that made their way into **Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst** (Egyptian Art Museum; Map p292; ☎ 298 546, enter from Hofgartenstrasse 1; adult/concession €5/4; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Fri, also 7-9pm Tue, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun). The excellent collection dates from the Old, Middle and New Kingdoms (2670–1075 BC).

Odeonsplatz to Karlsplatz

The elongated square called Odeonsplatz (Map p292) was the site of the so-called Beer Hall Putsch (revolt) by the Nazis in 1923, which landed Hitler in jail. At its southern end looms the **Feldherrnhalle** (Field Marshals' Hall). The statues under its Italian-style arches are of pre-20th-century military heroes Johann von Tilly and Carl Philipp von Wrede, both cast from the copper of melted-down cannon.

The imposing baroque church swelling up on the west side is the **Theatinerkirche St Kajetan** (Map p292; Theatinerstrasse 22), built in the 17th century to commemorate the birth of Prince Max Emanuel. Its massive twin towers flanking a giant cupola are a landmark of Munich's skyline. Inside, the intensely ornate high dome stands above the **Fürstengruft** (royal crypt), containing the remains of Wittelsbach family members. Opposite and a bit to the north, a neoclassical gate leads the way to the former **Hofgarten** (Royal Gardens).

On Theatinerstrasse you'll find the entrance to the **Fünf Höfe** (Map p292), a chic shopping complex that embraces five courtyards. The sleek glass-and-steel passages are lined with upscale designers, cafés and gift shops (see p319). The building also houses the **Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung** (☎ 224 412; Theatinerstrasse 8; adult/child €6/3, Mon half price; ☎ 10am-8pm), a modern gallery renowned for quality cross-genre exhibits.

Munich's main shopping drag is Kaufinger Strasse, which becomes Neuhauser Strasse in the west. Along it, the **Michaelskirche** (St Michael's Church; Map p292) is worth visiting for its ceiling alone, a 20m-wide barrel-vaulted expanse that's remarkable for the absence of supports. The crypt contains the tombs of some members of the Wittelsbach

family, including the humble final resting place of castle-mad King Ludwig II. The façade shows the triumph of Catholicism over Protestantism: up above is Christ holding a golden Earth, while a bronze archangel Michael is shown in combat with the devil.

Neuhauser Strasse culminates in Karlsplatz, punctuated by the medieval **Karlstor** (Map p292), the western gate and perimeter of the Altstadt, and an enormous modern fountain, a favourite meeting point. About 250m north of Karlsplatz stands another fountain, the bombastic **Wittelsbacher Brunnen** (Map p292) that displays the power of water with some powerful mythical figures.

FRAUENKIRCHE

Visible from just about anywhere in the Altstadt, the twin copper onion domes of the **Frauenkirche** (Church of Our Lady; Map p292) can also be found on Munich's official emblem. In contrast to its red-brick Gothic exterior, the interior is a soaring passage of light. The tomb of Ludwig the Bavarian, guarded by knights and noblemen, can be found in the choir. Near the door, look for the footprint cast in the pavement; according to legend, the devil lost a bet with the architect and stamped out in a huff. The 98m-tall south **tower** (adult/concession €3/1.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat Apr-Oct) affords excellent views – on clear days as far as the Alps.

ASAMKIRCHE

Near the **Sendlinger Tor**, a 14th-century gate, you'll come upon the pint-sized St Johann Nepomuk church, better known as the **Asamkirche** (Map p292; Sendlinger Strasse 62). It was designed and built in the 18th century as a private chapel by the Asam brothers, who lived next door. The jaw-dropping interior shows a harmonious unity of architecture, painting and sculpture, with scarcely a single unembellished surface. As you enter note the golden skeleton of Death trying to cut the string of Life.

More of the younger Asam's masterful frescoes can be viewed in the ornate **Damenstiftskirche** (Map p292; Damenstiftstrasse 1) just north of Sendlinger Strasse.

Königsplatz & Around

Northwest of the Altstadt is **Königsplatz** (Map p296), a Greek Revivalist square created under King Ludwig I. It is anchored by the

Doric-columned **Propyläen** gateway and orbited by three museums. A short walk to the north you'll find the Kunstareal (literally 'Art Area'), home to Munich's three major art museums, the **Pinakothek** (www.pinakothek.de). To get there, take the U2 or tram 27.

ALTE PINAKOTHEK

A treasure-trove full of the works of Old European Masters awaits visitors in the **Alte Pinakothek** (Map p296; ☎ 2380 5216; Barer Strasse 27, enter from Theresienstrasse; adult/child €5/3.50, Sun €1; ☹ 10am-5pm, to 8pm Tue, closed Mon). Housed in a neoclassical temple built by King Ludwig I, it is one of the most important collections in the world.

Nearly all the paintings were collected or commissioned by Wittelsbach rulers over the centuries. The strongest section is **Old German Masters**: the four church fathers by Michael Pacher stands out, as does Lucas Cranach the Elder's *Crucifixion* (1503), an emotional rendition of the suffering Jesus.

Another key room is the so-called **Dürersaal** upstairs. Here hangs Albrecht Dürer's famous Christ-like *Self-Portrait* (about 1500), showing the gaze of an artist brimming with self-confidence. His final major work, *The Four Apostles*, depicts John, Peter, Paul and Mark as rather humble men, in keeping with ideas post-Reformation.

There is a choice bunch of **Old Dutch Masters**, including an altarpiece by Rogier van der

Weyden called *The Adoration of the Magi*, plus *The Seven Joys of Mary* by Hans Memling, *Danae* by Jan Gossaert and *The Land of Cockayne* by Pieter Bruegel the Elder.

Rubens fans have reason to rejoice. At 6m in height, his *Large Last Judgement* (1617) was so big that court architect Leo van Klenze had to design the hall around the canvas. One of his most memorable portraits is *Hélène Fourment* (1631), a youthful beauty who was the ageing Rubens' second wife. Other Flemish 17th-century artists represented include Anthonis van Dyck and Rembrandt, with his intensely emotional *Passion Cycle*.

Free audio-guides with taped commentary about 90 works in four languages, including English, are available in the lobby.

NEUE PINAKOTHEK

Picking up where the Alte Pinakothek leaves off, the **Neue Pinakothek** (Map p296; ☎ 2380 5195; Barer Strasse 29; adult/child €5/3.50, Sun €1; ☹ 10am-5pm, to 8pm Wed, closed Tue) contains an extensive collection of 18th- to early-20th-century paintings and sculpture, from rococo to *Jugendstil* (Art Nouveau).

The core of the exhibit is 19th-century German art from the private stock of King Ludwig I, who had nearly 400 paintings when he died in 1868. An entire room is dedicated to Hans Marées (1837-87), whose country scenes are infused with a touch of sentimentality.

Munich society painters Wilhelm von Kaulbach and Karl von Piloty are given due time, reflecting a renewed interest in German history in the late 19th century. The king had a special affinity for the 'Roman Germans', a group of neo-Classicalists centred around Johann Koch who favoured Italian landscapes.

The most memorable canvases include those by Romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich, such as his *Riesengebirge Landscape with Rising Mist*. Like these landscapes, the works of English portraitist Thomas Gainsborough display a high emotionalism and ominous mood.

Other masters on display with a high recognition value include Edgar Degas, Gauguin, Manet and Van Gogh, one of whose *Sunflowers* (1888) is on display.

Fans of off-beat classics will enjoy Walter Crane's *The Seeds of Neptune*, with watery steeds galloping on incoming waves, and Goya's chilling kitchen still-life, *Plucked Turkey*.

PINAKOTHEK DER MODERNE

Opened in 2002 after six years of construction, **Pinakothek der Moderne** (Map p295; ☎ 2380 5360; Barer Strasse 40; adult/child €9/5, Sun €1; ☹ 10am-5pm Tue-Wed, Sat & Sun, to 8pm Thu & Fri, closed Mon) is Germany's biggest collection of modern art. The spectacular interior is dominated by a huge eye-like dome, spreading natural light throughout the soft white galleries over four floors.

The museum pools several collections under a single roof: a survey of 20th-century art, plus design, sculpture, photography and video. A variety of sources were tapped, including the Bavarian royal family and the State Graphics Collection of 400,000 drawings, prints and engravings.

There are oils and prints by household names such as Picasso, Dali, Klee, Kandinsky and Warhol, mostly lesser-known works that will be fresh to many visitors. A piece likely to become a signature work is Joseph Beuys' *End of the 20th Century*, comprising 21 columns of basalt strewn about an otherwise blank chamber.

The basement covers the evolution of design from the industrial revolution to today. VW Beetles, Eames chairs and early Apple Macs stand alongside more obscure items such as AEG's latest electric kettles in 1909.

In early 2008 a new collection of 'modern classics', the **Museum Sammlung Brandhorst** (Map

p296; ☎ 2380 5118), will open its doors in a sleek new building next door.

PALAIS PINAKOTHEK

The latest addition to the Pinakothek family is the **Palais Pinakothek** (Map p295; ☎ 2380 5284; Türkenstrasse 4), which organises art-related events such as thematic walks and workshops for both kids and adults. The schedule and admission fees vary, but there's usually something going on Sunday afternoons.

SIEMENSFORUM

Southeast of the Pinakotheks is the **Siemens-Forum** (Map p295; ☎ 6363 2660; Oskar-von-Miller-Ring 20; admission free; ☹ 9am-5pm, closed Sat). It's a fun, hands-on kind of place, with five floors of promotional exhibits on electronics and microelectronics, ranging from the telegraph to the PC.

LENBACHHAUS

Leading late-19th-century painter Franz von Lenbach used his considerable fortune to construct a residence in Munich in the 1880s. His widow sold it to the city and threw in a bunch of his works as part of the deal. Today this villa houses the **Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus** (Map p296; ☎ 2333 2000; Luisenstrasse 33; adult/concession €6/3; ☹ 10am-6pm, closed Mon). It features a staggering range of 19th-century masterpieces by German masters such as Franz Marc and Wassily Kandinsky, leading members of *Der Blaue Reiter* (Blue Rider) movement.

OTHER MUSEUMS

Munich's oldest museum is the **Glyptothek** (Map p296; ☎ 286 100; Königsplatz 3; adult/concession €3.50/2.50, Sun €1, combined with Antikensammlungen €5.50/3.50; ☹ 10am-5pm, 10am-8pm Tue & Thu). Like all the buildings on Königsplatz, Glyptothek is a piece of Greek fantasy. Classical busts, portraits of Roman kings and sculptures from a Greek temple in Aegina are among its prize exhibits.

One of Germany's best antiquities collections is housed in the **Antikensammlungen** (Map p296; ☎ 598 359; Königsplatz 1; adult/concession €3.50/2.50, €1 Sun; ☹ 10am-5pm, 10am-8pm Tue & Thu). It features vases, gold and silver jewellery and ornaments, bronze work, and Greek and Roman sculptures and statues.

The **Museum Reich der Kristalle** (Map p295; ☎ 2394 4312; Theresienstrasse 41; adult/concession €3/1.50; ☹ 1-5pm Tue-Sat, 10am-5pm Sun) has a truly

BEST OF THE ALTE PINAKOTHEK

We asked Reinhold Baumstark, director of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen (Bavarian State Painting Collections), to name his five favourite paintings in the Alte Pinakothek. His answers are below:

- *The Battle of Issus* by Alexander Altdorfer (1529): 'Altdorfer showed what no human could see and what only the artist's vision could make possible: a view halfway across the world, over a huge battlefield and the entire Mediterranean to Egypt.'
- *Christ Crowned with Thorns* by Titian (c 1570): 'Titian shows us the picture of God's tortured son: artistically exaggerated but immediately moving. The influence of his use of light and colour extends to the modern era.'
- *Rubens and Isabella Brant in a Honeysuckle Bower* by Rubens (c 1609): 'Rubens' twin portrait is a personal dedication to his wife; more than just a portrait, it displays warmth, trust and optimism.'
- *The Deposition* by Rembrandt (1633): 'Rembrandt portrays a highly dramatic event but also – the first time by any artist – the body of Christ in almost painful realism. Rembrandt's likeness under the cross gives us the consolation that man is capable of mercy.'
- *Portrait of Madame de Pompadour* by Francois Boucher (1756): 'Madame Pompadour demonstrates the splendour and sophisticated lifestyle of rococo.'

THE WHITE ROSE

Open resistance to the Nazis was rare during the Third Reich; after 1933, intimidation and the instant 'justice' of the Gestapo and SS served as powerful disincentives. One of the few groups to rebel was the ill-fated Weisse Rose (White Rose), led by Munich University students Hans and Sophie Scholl.

The White Rose began operating in 1942, its members stealing around at night to smear slogans like 'Freedom!' and 'Down With Hitler!'. Soon they printed anti-Nazi leaflets reporting on the mass extermination of the Jews and other Nazi atrocities. One read: 'We shall not be silent – we are your guilty conscience. The White Rose will not leave you in peace.'

In February 1943, Hans and Sophie were caught distributing leaflets at the university. Together with their best friend, Christian Probst, the Scholls were arrested and charged with treason. After a summary trial, all three were found guilty and beheaded the same afternoon. Their extraordinary courage inspired the award-winning film *Sophie Scholl – Die Letzten Tage* (Sophie Scholl – The Final Days, 2005).

A memorial exhibit to the White Rose, **DenkStätte** (Map p295; ☎ 2180 3053; Geschwister-Scholl-Platz 1; admission free; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, 10am-9pm Thu), located within Ludwig-Maximilian-Universität. .

dazzling collection of crystals. A large Russian emerald, meteorite fragments from Kansas and diamonds are also among the museum's most prized possessions.

Englischer Garten & Around

The **Englischer Garten** (English Garden; Map p295) is one of Europe's most monumental city parks – bigger even than London's Hyde Park or New York's Central Park. It was laid out in the late 18th century by an American-born physicist, Benjamin Thompson, an advisor to the Bavarian government and at one time its war minister. There are no English flower beds, but it's a great place for strolling, drinking, paddle-boating and even surfing (see p306), conveniently located between the Isar River and the Schwabing district. In balmy weather you'll see hundreds of naked sunbathers in the park, with their jackets, ties and dresses stacked neatly beside them.

Several follies lend the park a playful charm. The **Chinesischer Turm** (Chinese Tower), now in the centre of the city's best-known beer garden, dates back to 1789. Just south of here is the heavily photographed **Monopteros**, a faux Greek temple with pearly white columns. The **Japanisches Teehaus** (Japanese Teahouse) was built during the 1972 Olympics, and holds authentic tea ceremonies every second and fourth weekend in summer at 3pm, 4pm and 5pm. You can also rent a paddle-boat and navigate the **Kleinhesseloher See**, a picturesque little lake.

On the southern edge of the garden, the monolithic **Haus der Kunst** (House of Art; Map p295;

☎ 2112 7113; Prinzregentenstrasse 1; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Sun, to 10pm Thu) was once a Nazi gallery that ridiculed so-called 'degenerate' art. Today it holds high-calibre shows of paintings, photography and modern art exhibitions.

BAYERISCHES NATIONALMUSEUM

Off the southeastern corner of the Englischer Garten is a highlight of Munich's museum scene, the **Bayerisches Nationalmuseum** (Bavarian National Museum; Map p294; ☎ 211 2401; Prinzregentenstrasse 3; adult/concession €3/2, Sun €1; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun, 10am-8pm Thu). It's chock-full of exhibits illustrating the art, folklore and cultural history of southern Germany, and Bavaria in particular.

The ground floor has treasures from the early Middle Ages to the rococo period, including evocative sculptures by Erasmus Grasser and Tilman Riemenschneider, two of the greatest artists of the era. Upstairs are 19th-century highlights including Nymphenburg porcelain, precious glass and an exquisite collection of *Jugendstil* (Art Deco) items. Also here is a celebrated collection of coats from the 17th to the 19th centuries.

To get there take U4 to Lehel, tram 17 or bus 100.

ARCHÄOLOGISCHE STAATSSAMMLUNG

You can trace the settlement of Bavaria from the Stone Age to the early Middle Ages at the **Archäologische Staatssammlung** (Map p294; ☎ 211 2402; Lerchenfeldstrasse 2; adult/concession €4.50/2.50, Sun free; ☎ 9am-4.30pm, closed Mon), which is behind the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum. The

exhibit features objects from Celtic, Roman and Germanic civilisations, including the well-preserved body of a ritually sacrificed young girl.

Olympiapark & Around

More than three decades after the Olympic Games for which it was built, the **Olympiapark** (Map p296) is still an integral part of life in the city. The centrepieces are the 290m Olympiaturm and the massive undulating 'tented' roof covering the west side of the Olympic Stadium, hall and swimming centre.

Today the complex is open as a collection of public facilities. The grounds are the site of celebrations, concerts, fireworks displays and professional sporting events throughout the year. Both the swimming hall and ice-skating rink are open to the public. There's an **Info Pavilion** (☎ 3067 2414; www.olympiapark-muenchen.de; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat) at the **Olympia-Eissportzentrum** (ice-skating rink; ☎ open skating sessions 10am-noon & 1.30-4pm Mon-Fri, 8-10.30pm Wed-Sun).

Wandering around the grounds is free but you'll have to pay to see inside the **Olympia-Stadion** (Olympic Stadium; adult/children €2/1; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Oct-mid-Apr, 8.30am-6pm mid-Apr-Sep, closed event days). You can take the one-hour **Soccer Tour** (adult/concession €5/3.50; ☎ Apr-Oct), which visits the Olympic Stadium, VIP area and locker rooms, or the 90-minute **Adventure Tour** (adult/concession €7/5), which covers the entire Olympiapark both on foot and in a little train. When the

MUNICH'S OLYMPIC TRAGEDY

The 1972 Summer Olympics presented Munich with a historic chance. It was the first time the country would host the prestigious sporting event since 1936, when the Games were held in Berlin under Hitler. The motto was the 'Happy Games', and the emblem was a blue solar 'Bright Sun'. The city built a shiny Olympic Park, which included the tent-like plexiglass canopies that, at the time, were revolutionary in design. It was the perfect opportunity to present a new, democratic Germany full of pride and optimism.

In the final week of the Olympics, however, members of the Palestinian terrorist group 'Black September' killed two Israeli athletes and took nine others hostage at the Olympic Village, demanding the release of political prisoners and escape aircraft. During a failed rescue attempt by German security forces at Fürstenfeldbrück, a military base west of Munich, all of the hostages and most of the terrorists were killed. The competition was suspended briefly before Avery Brundage, the International Olympic Committee president, famously declared 'the Games must go on'. The bloody incident cast a pall over the entire Olympics and sporting events in Germany for years to follow.

The events are chronicled in an Oscar-winning documentary, *One Day in September* (2000) by Kevin McDonald, as well as in Steven Spielberg's historical fictional account, *Munich* (2005). The killings prompted German security to rethink its methods and create the elite counter-terrorist unit, GSG 9.

weather's good you can enjoy stunning views of the city from the top of the **Olympiaturm** (Olympic Tower; adult/concession €4/2.50; ☎ 9am-midnight, last trip 11.30pm), which houses a restaurant and an unexpected display of rock-music memorabilia (free with tower ticket).

Kids will particularly enjoy the park's latest attraction, **SeaLife** (☎ 450 000; adult/child 3-14 yr €12.50/9.50; ☎ 10am-7pm). Reef sharks, moray eels and magical sea horses are among the 10,000 creatures on display, all presented in realistic aquaria with recessed glass viewing ports. Tunnel walkways lead you right through some tanks – the next best thing to scuba diving.

BMW MUSEUM

Near the Olympiaturm stands the temporary **BMW Museum** (Map p296; ☎ 3822 5625; www.bmw-welt.de; Petuelring 130; adult/concession €2/1.50; ☎ 10am-10pm, last entry 9.15pm). You can see highlights from its splendid car and motorcycle collection parked in a globe-like tent. Free tours of the assembly line (in German and English) are run at the **BMW factory** (Map p296; ☎ 3822 3306).

From summer 2007, exhibits will move into a sleek, newly revamped museum at the company headquarters to the east, underneath the famous towers shaped like automobile pistons. Visitors will also be able to take tours of the firm's architectural showpiece, the cloud-shaped **BMW Welt**, a car delivery and events centre just north of the Olympiapark.

South of the Altstadt DEUTSCHES MUSEUM

You can spend days wandering the **Deutsches Museum** (Map p294; ☎ 217 91; www.deutsches-museum.de; Museumsinsel 1; adult/concession/family €8.50/7/17, children under 6yr free; ☎ 9am-5pm), said to be the world's largest science and technology museum. This vast museum is on an island southeast of Isartor (Isar Gate) and features just about anything ever invented. There are loads of interactive displays (including glass blowing and paper making), model coal and salt mines, and wonderful sections on musical instruments, caves, geodesy, micro-electronics and astronomy. Demonstrations take place throughout the day; a popular one is in the power hall where a staff member is raised in the insulated Faraday Cage and zapped with a 220,000V bolt of lightning.

West of the Altstadt THERESIENWIESE

About 1.5km west of the old town, the Theresienwiese (Theresa Meadow) is the site of the annual Oktoberfest (below). At the far western end of the meadow looms

the classical **Ruhmeshalle** (Hall of Fame; admission free), an open gallery of famous Bavarians whose busts adorn the wall like hunting trophies. The hall curls horseshoe-like around the green-tinted **Bavaria statue** (Map p292; adult/under 18yr with parents/concession €2.50/free/1.50; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-4pm Tue-Sun). Climb up to the head cavity to get a great view of the 'Wies'n', as the locals call the festival grounds. Generations of visitors have perched on the inside of Bavaria's cast-iron lips to peer out of her hollow eyes at the crowds below.

VERKEHRZENTRUM

Sheltered in a historic trade fair hall, the **Verkehrszentrum** (Transport & Mobility Centre; Map p292; ☎ 217 9529; Thersienhöhe 14a; adult/child €2.50/1.50; ☎ 9am-5pm Fri-Wed, 9am-8pm Thu) features some fascinating exhibits, with hands-on displays about pioneering research and famous inventions, plus cars, boats and trains, and the history of car racing. In 2006, the museum opened a new section showing the Deutsche Museum's entire vehicle collection, ranging from the first motorcars to high-speed ICE trains.

OKTOBERFEST

It all started as an elaborate wedding toast – and turned into the world's biggest collective drink-up. In October 1810 the future king, Bavarian Crown Prince Ludwig I, married Princess Therese, and the newlyweds threw an enormous party at the city gates, complete with a horse race. The next year Ludwig's fun-loving subjects came back for more. The festival was extended and, to fend off autumn, was moved forward to September. As the years drew on the racehorses were dropped and sometimes the party had to be cancelled, but the institution called Oktoberfest was here to stay.

Nearly two centuries later, this 16-day extravaganza draws over six million visitors a year to celebrate a marriage of good cheer and outright debauchery. A special beer is brewed for the occasion (Wies'n-bier), which is dark and strong. Munichers spend the day at the office in Lederhosen and Dirndl in order to hit the festival right after work. It is Bavaria's largest tourist draw, generating about €1 billion in business. No admission is charged, but most of the fun costs something.

On the meadow called Theresienwiese (Wies'n for short), a little city is erected, consisting of beer tents, amusements and rides – just what drinkers need after several frothy ones! The action kicks off with the Brewer's Parade at 11am on the first day of the festival. The parade begins at Sonnenstrasse and winds its way to the fairgrounds via Schwanthalerstrasse. At noon, the lord mayor stands before the thirsty crowds at Theresienwiese and, with due pomp, slams a wooden tap into a cask of beer. As the beer gushes out, the mayor exclaims, *O'zapft ist's!* (It's tapped!). The next day resembles the opening of the Olympics, as a young woman on horseback leads a parade of costumed participants from all over the world.

Hotels book out very quickly and prices skyrocket, so reserve accommodation as early as you can (like a year in advance). The festival is a 15-minute walk southwest of the Hauptbahnhof, and is served by its own U-Bahn station 'Theresienwiese'. Trams and buses have signs reading 'Zur Festwiese' (literally 'to the Festival Meadow').

Schloss Nymphenburg

The amazing **Schloss Nymphenburg** (Map p296; ☎ 179 080; combined ticket to everything except Marstall-museum adult/concession €10/8) and its lavish gardens sprawl about 5km northwest of the Altstadt. Begun in 1664 as a villa for Electress Adelaide of Savoy, the palace and gardens were expanded over the next century to create the royal family's summer residence. To get there take tram 17 or bus 51 from Karlsplatz.

SCHLOSS

The primary palace building (adult/concession €5/4; ☎ 9am-6pm, 9am-8pm Thu) consists of a main villa and two wings. The rooms are all sumptuous, but one of the most majestic is the **Schönheitengalerie** (Gallery of Beauties), in the southern wing, formerly the apartments of Queen Caroline. It's now the home of 38 portraits of beautiful women chosen by an admiring King Ludwig I. The most famous is of Helene Sedlmayr, the daughter of a shoemaker, wearing a lavish frock the king gave her for the sitting. Here you'll also find Ludwig's beautiful but notorious lover, Lola Montez, whose antics spelled the king's downfall.

Also in the south wing are the coaches and riding gear of the royal families, suitably displayed in the **Marstallmuseum** (adult/concession €2.50/2; ☎ 9am-6pm Fri-Wed, 9am-8pm Thu). Ludwig II's over-the-top sleigh, fitted with oil lamps for his nocturnal outings, is not to be missed. The 1st floor features a collection of porcelain made by the legendary Nymphenburger Manufaktur and a shop.

The north wing is occupied by the **Museum Mensch und Natur** (Museum of Humankind and Nature; adult/under 15yr with parents/concession €2.50/free/1.50; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun). This is a fun place to bring children for its interactive (if aged) displays on the animal kingdom, planet earth and the mysteries of the human body (German only).

GARDENS & OUTBUILDINGS

The royal gardens take the form of a magnificently sculpted English-style park. They contain a number of intriguing buildings, including the **Amalienburg** (adult/concession €2/1; ☎ 9am-6pm Fri-Wed, 9am-8pm Thu), a small hunting lodge with a large domed central room; the **Pagodenburg** Chinese teahouse; and the **Badenburg** (adult/concession €2/1; ☎ 9am-6pm, 9am-8pm Thu) sauna and bathing house.

Other Sights

MÜNCHENER TIERPARK HELLABRUNN

About 5000 animals are housed in Munich's 'geo-zoo' (one with distinct sections dividing animals by continents). The **Münchener Tierpark Hellabrunn** (Map pp290-1; ☎ 625 080; Tierparkstrasse 30; adult/concession €9/6; ☎ 8am-6pm Apr-Sep, 9am-5pm Oct-Mar), to the south of the city, was one of the first of its kind. The sprawling, well-maintained grounds boast some impressive rhinos, elephants, deer and gazelles. It's absolutely worth the admission if only to gain access to the petting zoo, full of cuddly sheep, deer and lambs. To get there take the U3 to Thalkirchen or bus 52 from Marienplatz.

ALLIANZ ARENA

Sporting and architecture fans alike should take a side trip to the northern Munich suburb of Fröttmaning to see Munich's sparkling new football stadium – already a historic site after hosting the opening game of the World Cup 2006. Nicknamed the 'life belt' and 'rubber boat' (*Schlauchboot*), the state-of-the-art, €340 million **Allianz Arena** has walls made of inflatable cushions that can be individually lit to match the jerseys of the host team – be it local sides FC Bayern München and TSV 1860 München (who share the stadium) or the national team. Take a **tour** (☎ 01805 555 101; adult/child 7-12yr €8/4; ☎ at 11am, 1pm, 3pm & 5pm) of the stadium but expect to queue in summer. To get there take U6 to Fröttmaning.

BAVARIA FILMSTADT

One of Germany's most important movie studios is the **Bavaria Filmstadt** (Map pp290-1; ☎ 6499 2304; Bavariafilmplatz 7; adult/concession €10/7; ☎ tours 9am-4pm, 1pm in English) in the southern suburb of Geiselgasteig. The top-grossing German film of all-time, *Das Boot*, was among the classics shot here, but today's German audience is more interested in sets of the family soap, *Marienhof*. Crash-and-burn stunt shows (€8) take place at noon, 1.30pm and 3pm in summer (noon only in other periods). To get there take the S2 to Silberhornstrasse, then tram 25 to Bavariafilmplatz.

ACTIVITIES

Munich makes a perfect base for outdoor exploits. For information about hiking and climbing, contact the Munich chapter of the **Deutscher Alpenverein** (German Alpine Club; Map p292; ☎ 551 7000; Bayerstrasse 21) near the Hauptbahnhof.

Boating

Take your sweetie out for a leisurely spin at the Kleinhesseloher (Kleinhesseloher Lake; Map p295) in the Englischer Garten (p302), where rowing and pedal boats can be rented for around €7 per half-hour for up to four people. You can also hire boats at the Olympiapark (p303).

Cycling

Munich is an excellent place for cycling. Pumped full of bracing Alpine air and a network of leafy paths, the Englischer Garten is a good place to start a day's tour.

Radius Tours & Bikes (Map p292; ☎ 596 113; www.radiusmunich.com; at the end of track 32 in the Hauptbahnhof; ☎ 10am to 6pm mid-Apr–mid-Oct) hires out bikes for €3 per hour or €14 per day, with a €50 deposit. Staff speak English and are happy to provide tips and advice on touring around Munich.

Mike's Bike Tours (Map p292; ☎ 2554 3988; www.mikesbiketours.com; tour €24; ☎ Mar–mid-Nov) offers guided bike tours of the city. Their point of contact is **Discover Bavaria** (Map p292; cnr Brauhausstrasse & Hochbrückenstrasse). The standard four-hour tour is an easy ride with a 45-minute break at a beer garden.

Tours leave from the archway of the Altes Rathaus on Marienplatz (in front of the Toy Museum).

Surfing

At the southern tip of the Englischer Garten (Map p294) is an artificial 'permanent wave' in a frigid arm of the Isar, where crowds gather to watch surfers in thermal suits practise their moves.

Swimming

The authorities warn grimly against bathing in the crystalline Isar River, but plenty of Münchener can't resist. On warm days the pebbly islets in the riverbed are lined with natives seeking a healthy glow; tanlines are optional.

Munich also has many swimming pools to cool your desires. The **Olympia-Schwimmhalle** (Map p296; ☎ 3067 2290; Olympiapark; adult/child €3/2.50; ☎ 7am–11pm) has long laps, while the spectacular **Müllersches Volksbad** (Map p294; ☎ 2361 3434; Rosenheimer Strasse 1; adult/child €2.90/2.30; ☎ 7.30am–11pm) harks back to the turn of the 20th century. To get there take tram 18 from Karlsplatz.

WALKING TOUR

WALK FACTS

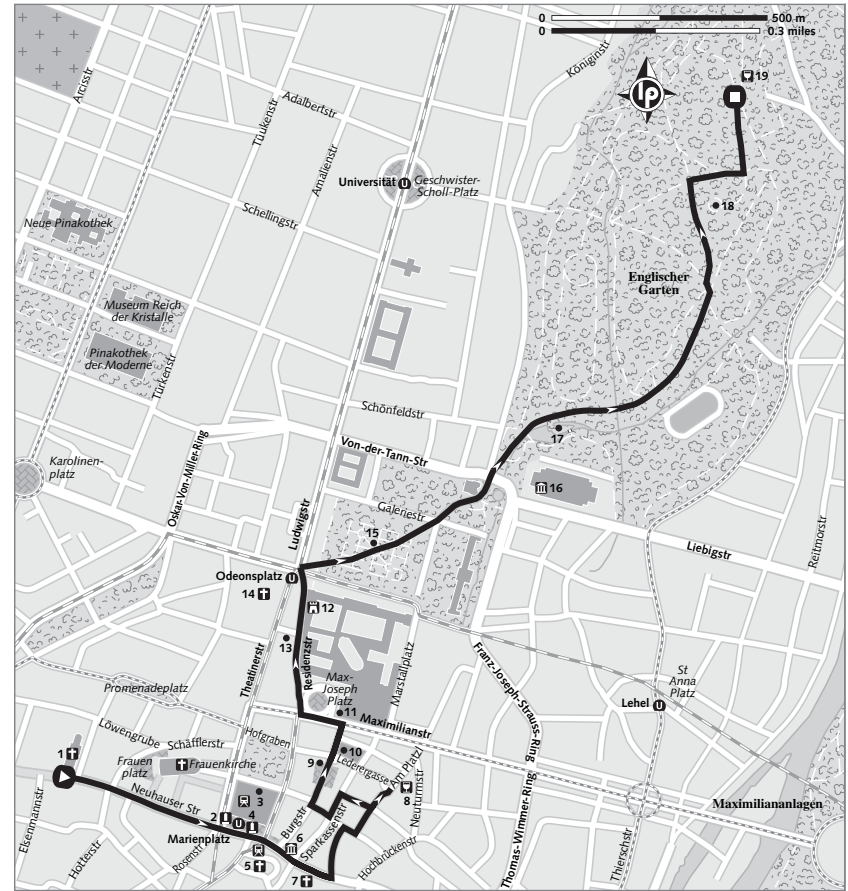
Start Michaelskirche
Finish Chinesischer Turm
Distance 5km
Duration 2½ hours

This 5km Altstadt circuit (Map p307) takes in the key sights in Munich's historic centre and the Englischer Garten. If you include visits to all the museums and churches mentioned here, you've got a two-day itinerary on your hands.

Commence at the **Michaelskirche (1)**, a richly ornamented church with barrel vaults, and the final resting place of King Ludwig II. Proceed east along Sendlinger Strasse, the main shopping drag, passing by the Frauenkirche, Munich's landmark church. The way opens into Marienplatz, the old town square, punctuated by the **Mariensäule (2)**; Mary Column) in front of the neo-Gothic **Neues Rathaus (3)**; New Town Hall). The blue-bottomed **Fischbrunnen (4)**; Fish Fountain) gushes peacefully near the entrance. The steeple of **St Peterskirche (5)**; Church of St Peter) affords a great vista of the old town, including the **Altes Rathaus (6)**; Old Town Hall), now home to a toy museum. To see amazing Asam frescoes, peek inside **Heiliggeistkirche (7)**; Church of the Holy Spirit).

Head east on Im Tal, taking a left into Maderbräustrasse to Orlandostrasse, site of the **Hofbräuhaus (8)**, the celebrated beer hall. Then zigzag through the backstreets – west on Münzstrasse, left into Sparkassenstrasse and then into the alley Ledererstrasse. At Burgstrasse, turn right into the courtyard of the **Alter Hof (9)**, the Wittelsbach's early residence in Munich. Exit north and proceed along Hofgraben, past the former **Münzhof (10)**; mint). The street opens into the grand Maximilianstrasse and Max-Joseph-Platz, address of the grand **Nationaltheater (11)** and fine opera. A treasure-filled palace and museum, the **Residenz (12)** was the seat of the Wittelsbach rulers for over four centuries.

Stroll north on Residenzstrasse to reach Odeonsplatz, site of the Nazis' first lunge at power. Here looms the **Feldherrnhalle (13)**; Field Marshals' Hall), a hulking shrine to war heroes. The bombastic, mustard-yellow **Theatinerkirche St Kajetan (14)**, contains the Wittelsbachs' family



crypt. The tour heads into green territory from here, starting with the neoclassical **Hofgarten (15)**; Royal Gardens). Cross it diagonally and go through the underpass to enter the Englischer Garten. Proceed north past the sinister-looking **Haus der Kunst (16)**, a gallery and onetime forum for Nazi art propaganda. The leafy route winds past the ceremonial **Japanisches Teehaus (17)**; Japanese Teahouse) and into avast meadow popular with frisbee experts and nude sunbathers. A little hill with a classical folly, the **Monopteros (18)** completes the leisurely scene. At the end of the tour you can plod down in the beer garden alongside the curious, multitiered **Chinesischer Turm (19)**; Chinese Tower) where an oompah band belts out traditional tunes.

MUNICH FOR CHILDREN

Munich is a great city for children. Many of the museums have hands-on exhibits to play with, the zoo is stunning, and there are plenty of parks and children's theatre events.

You can safely leave the little ones at **München Kindl** (Map p292; ☎ 2423 1600; www.muenchnerkindlgruppe.de; Burgstrasse 6; per hr €7, 1st hr free; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Fri, 10am–4pm Sat). Kids aged 18 months to 10 years old are welcome in this toy-filled childcare centre near Marienplatz.

Sure-fire hits include the **Hellabrunn Zoo** (p305), which has a huge petting section and an aviary, and **SeaLife** (p303), an entertaining aquarium in the Olympiapark. The **Deutsches Museum** (p304) has lots of interactive science exhibits and a reconstructed coal mine.

The darling puppet collection in the **Stadt-museum** (p297) includes a stage with regular performances. Older children will enjoy the fiery stunt show at **Bavaria Filmstadt** (p305).

Other entertainment for children includes the following:

Münchner Theater für Kinder (Map p296; ☎ 593 858; Dachauer Strasse 46) Children's performances year-round.

Münchner Marionettentheater (Map p292; ☎ 265 712; Blumenstrasse 32) Munich's main puppet theatre often shows Mozart's musical plays.

Circus Krone (Map p296; ☎ 545 8000; Zirkus-Krone-Strasse 1-6; 🗓 Dec-Apr) An enduring favourite and venerable Munich tradition.

TOURS

Original Munich Walks (Map p292; ☎ 5502 9374; www.radiusmunich.com) offers a variety of excellent walks starting from the Hauptbahnhof, track 32. The two-hour **City Walk** (adults/child under 14yr €10/5; 🗓 10am May-Aug) takes you through the heart of the city and provides good historical background and architectural information. The **Third Reich Tour** (adults/child under 14yr €10/9.50; 🗓 at 3pm Apr-Oct) visits all major sites associated with the growth of the Nazi movement.

Not to be confused with the above, **Munich Walk Tours** (☎ 2070 2736; www.munichwalktours.de) offer a **Beer & Brewery Tour** (adults/under 26yr €17/15; 🗓 at 6.15pm May–mid-Sep). Tours depart from under the Glockenspiel on Marienplatz (Map p292).

Free three-hour guided tours of the Altstadt are offered by **New Munich Tours** (☎ 0176-2330 2959; www.newmunich.com; 🗓 at 10.45am May–mid-Sep) and leave from the Siegestsäule column on Marienplatz.

Münchner Stadtrundfahrten (☎ 5490 7560; www.msr-muc.de; A&O Touristik, Arnulfstrasse 8; adult/child €11/6) bus tours (one hour, eight tours daily) around Munich leave from the Hertie department store opposite the Hauptbahnhof (Map p292).

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Munich always has something to celebrate. The list below gives just a few of the highlights; for more details check www.muenchen-tourist.de.

January/February

Fasching A six-week carnival beginning on 7 January with all kinds of merriment, including costume parades and fancy-dress balls.

February/March

Starkbierzeit Potent spring beers, traditional dancing and stone-lifting contests. The Löwenbräukeller (p315) is the place to experience it all.

April

Frühlingsfest Theresienwiese (Map p292) fills with beer tents and amusements for the Spring Festival, a two-week mini-Oktoberfest.

May

Maidult A traditional fair on Mariahilfplatz (Map p294), with crafts, antiques and amusement rides.

June/July

Filmfest München (www.filmfest-muenchen.de) World premieres of international and independent films.

Jakobidult Summer fair on Mariahilfplatz much like the Maidult.

Opera Festival (☎ 2185 1021; www.bayerische.staatsoper.de) A month-long festival of opera concluding on 31 July with Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.

Tollwood Festival (☎ 383 8500; www.tollwood.de) A world culture gala with nightly music concerts at the Olympiapark (Map p296).

October

Oktoberfest (www.oktoberfest.de) A legendary beer-swilling party running from mid-September to the first Sunday in October. Held on the Theresienwiese (Map p292).

November/December

Christkindmarkt (www.christkindmarkt.de) A traditional Christmas market on Marienplatz (Map p292).

SLEEPING

Room rates in Munich tend to be high, and skyrocket during Oktoberfest. Book well ahead to avoid disappointment.

Traditional hostels exist, but overall the new hotel-hostels offer a more attractive deal for budget travellers, especially those around the Hauptbahnhof. This area has many *pen-sions* and hotels of varying quality; some are grotty but the standard is improving in leaps and bounds. The Altstadt has the most top-end hotels.

Around the Hauptbahnhof

BUDGET

A&O City Hotel (Map p292; ☎ 4523 5760; www.aohostels.com.de; Bayerstrasse 75; dm €12, d €32-80; 🗓) On a busy street near the main train station, the A&O teeters between simple hotel and fancy

hostel. Settle into a bunk in the 14-person 'Easy Dorm', or there are plenty of singles and doubles. Rooms are smallish but clean, and all have en suite shower and toilet, satellite TV and a hairdryer.

Euro Palace Station Hostel (Map p292; ☎ 5525 210; www.easypalace.de; Schützenstrasse 7; dm €19.90, s €29-49, d €44-69; 🗓) For quarters with a vintage flair try this hostel, based in an aging hotel. Styles run the gamut, from a '50s brass bed to a rustic oak from the disco era. Only seven of the 55 rooms are dorms (sleeping four to six); the rest are singles and doubles available in three categories of comfort – most being spacious, quiet and facing an inner courtyard.

Wombat's (Map p292; ☎ 5998 9180; www.wombats-hostels.de; Senefelderstrasse 1; dm €12-22, d €29-31; 🗓) This stylish little hostel-hotel has a great location right by the train station. All rooms (dorms and doubles only) have Ikea-style furniture, pleasing colours and en suite showers and toilets. Most of the 14 doubles are sunny and have a large balcony facing an inner courtyard.

Euro Youth Hotel (Map p292; ☎ 5990 8811; www.euro-youth-hotel.de; Senefelderstrasse 5; dm/s/d €17.50/38/48; 🗓) A large, well-run hostel in a great old building that oozes history with every dangling chandelier and creaky staircase. It has two 20-bed dorms with tightly placed bunk beds as well as snug private rooms.

Hotel Jedermann (☎ 543 240; www.hotel-jedermann.de; Bayerstrasse 95; s €49-99, d €67-149; 🗓) This renovated hotel with English-speaking staff is excellent value, with small but quite comfortable rooms. There's a wide range of prices and room options; ones with showers but shared toilet cost from €57 to €86.

Meininger's (Map p292; ☎ 6663 6100; www.meininger-hostels.de; Landsbergerstrasse 20; dm/s/d €19/49/78; 🗓) About 800m west of the Hauptbahnhof, this energetic hostel-hotel on the doorstep of the Augustiner brewery has interiors and facilities similar to Wombat's, but also a rooftop terrace and underground parking. Take tram 18 or 19 to Holzapfelstrasse.

MIDRANGE

Hotel Belle Blue (Map p292; ☎ 550 6260; www.hotel-belleblue.com; Schillerstrasse 21; s from €75, d from €89; 🗓) This chic little hotel employs subtle, attractive colour schemes and tasteful furnishings to great effect. The bathrooms are a hit, with their glass cubicle showers, underfloor heating and designer fixtures. All

this lets you overlook the fact that the rooms are a little snug.

Creatif Hotel Elephant (Map p292; ☎ 555 785; www.creatifelephanthotel.com; Lämmerstrasse 6; s €65-149, d €85-189; 🗓) This sparkling new hotel offers a range of simple rooms with bright, trendy décor and good room facilities, like hairdryers and even faxes. It is family run and the service is extremely friendly, with a big welcome for children.

Alpen Hotel (Map p292; ☎ 559 300; www.alpenhotel-muenchen.de; Adolf-Kolping-Strasse 14; s €75-135, d €95-195; 🗓) This place manages to merge seamlessly the atmosphere of an Alpine inn with a boutique hotel. The newer rooms are as sleek as a catwalk, but many have a countrified loo (No 35 has a big four-poster bed). The salon features a cosy fireplace with a portrait of Sisi over the mantle.

Hotel Hotelissimo (Map p292; ☎ 557 855; Schillerstrasse 4; www.hotelissimo.com; s €69-119, d €98-149; 🗓) An extreme makeover has catapulted this family-run hotel from shabby to chic, while keeping it a stone's throw from the main train station. The cheery décor reflects a real appreciation for design, colour and fabrics.

Also recommended:

Hotel Schweiz (Map p292; ☎ 543 6960; www.hotel-schweitz.de; Goethestrasse 26; s €70-90, d €90-165; 🗓) Bright but cosy hotel with maple-wood furniture, a small wellness area and an open-air terrace.

Hotel Bristol (Map p292; ☎ 5951 5154; www.bristol-muc.com; Pettenkofer Strasse 2; s €59-199, d €79-249; 🗓) Comfy, well-furnished rooms with friendly service and generous breakfast.

TOP END

Anna Hotel (Map p292; ☎ 599 940; www.annahotel.de; Schützenstrasse 1; s from €145, d from €165; 🗓) Take a top location, add a generous dose of style and trendiness and you've got one killer designer hotel. The classy Donghia furniture is dressed in gold, black and burgundy fabrics so rich you want to run your hands over them, while the sensuous bathrooms feature a gushing 'rainforest' shower.

Dorint Sofitel (Map p292; ☎ 599 480; www.dorint.com; Bayernstrasse 12; r €155-425; 🗓) The brilliantly restored Renaissance façade of the former Royal Bavarian Post Office contains a jewel that satisfies all cravings for luxury. The 396 rooms and suites are a cocktail of style, surprise lighting effects and supreme comfort.

Altstadt & Around**MIDRANGE**

Hotel Blauer Bock (Map p292; ☎ 231 780; www.hotelblauerbock.de; Sebastiansplatz 9; s €41-60, d €71-109; (P) (X) (S)) This hotel once provided beds for Benedictine monks and coachmen for the grain market nearby. It's comfy, familiar and spacious, and front rooms overlook the Schrannehalle, a blink away from the Viktualienmarkt.

Hotel Alcron (Map p292; ☎ 228 3511; Ledererstrasse 13; www.hotel-alcron.de; s €60-70, d €80-95; (X) (S)) This quaint hotel is ideally located just stumbling distance from the Hofbräuhaus. A wonderful spiral wooden staircase leads up to the small simple rooms, with traditional furnishings and comfortable beds to sleep off any excesses.

TOP END

Bayerischer Hof (Map p292; ☎ 212 00; www.bayerischerhof.de; Promenadeplatz 2-6; s €223-254, d €302-442; (P) (X) (S) (S)) Room doors fold away into the stucco mouldings at the Hof, one of the grande dames of the Munich hotel trade. It boasts a supercentral location, a pool and a jazz club. Marble, antiques and oil paintings abound, and you can dine till you drop at any one of the three fabulous restaurants. Rates include a champagne breakfast. There's wheelchair access.

Kempinski Vier Jahreszeiten München (Map p292; ☎ 212 50; www.kempinski-vierjahreszeiten.de; Maximilianstrasse 17; s from €205, d €230-390; (P) (X) (S) (S)) This illustrious hotel has a grand façade featuring statues of the managers, the four seasons and four continents. The rooms don't have as many amenities as you'd think, but the suites are palatial and the rooftop pool is an incredible blue-sky swim.

THE AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Two fabulous and distinctly individual hotels in Munich just cry out to be visited.

Cortiina (Map p292; ☎ 242 2490; www.cortiina.com; Ledererstrasse 8; s/d/ste €146/186/286 (P) (X) (S) (S)) This stunning, modern hotel is a great place for anyone looking for stylish elegance without the antiques. The design is chic and minimalist without losing any comfort. Dark wood and low lighting run throughout the hotel, while the bedrooms are lined with oak panelling, have parquet floors and individual furnishings, as well as glass-encased bathrooms lined with Jura stone.

Opera-Garni (Map p294; ☎ 5210 4940; www.hotel-opera.de; Annastrasse 10; r €185-265, ste €275-355; (X) (S)) Step inside the Opera and you'll step back in time. This charming hotel is pure old-world elegance and refinement. Breakfast is served in the garden between graceful statues, and the sumptuous rooms are stunningly decorated with individual combinations of rich colours and fabrics, antiques, chandeliers and Persian carpets.

Schwabing**BUDGET**

Pension Frank (Map p295; ☎ 281 451; www.pension-frank.de; Schellingstrasse 24; s €40-45, d €50-60) Large rooms and a convivial atmosphere make this small *pension* a popular choice with young backpackers and school groups. Rooms (all with shared bathroom) have lovely wrought-iron beds; there is a small collection of English novels and a communal kitchen.

Pension am Kaiserplatz (Map p295; ☎ 349 190; fax 339 316; Kaiserplatz 12; s €31-47, d €49-59) The façade of this Jugendstil villa is a throwback to more romantic times, when Schwabing was a vortex of art and culture. The rooms (just 10, all with hall bathrooms) are lovingly decorated with a family touch, and breakfast is delivered to your door by the congenial host herself.

MIDRANGE

Gästehaus Englischer Garten (Map p295; ☎ 383 9410; www.hotelenglischergarten.de; Liebergesellstrasse 8; s €68-180, d €68-180; (P)) Just steps away from the Englischer Garten, this cosy *pension* occupies a graceful old mill with a private garden for breakfast (€9 extra) on warm summer mornings. Most of the antique-filled rooms have en suite bath and TV.

TOP END

Cosmopolitan Hotel (Map p295; ☎ 383 810; www.cosmopolitan-hotel.de; Hohenzollern Strasse 5; s €110-170, d €120-200; (P) (X)) The Cosmopolitan is a modern hotel that has comfortable and tastefully furnished rooms, plenty of dark wood and subtle lighting. It's ideally located for access to Schwabing's nightlife, and is recommended as a good place for party animals to get their beauty sleep.

Nymphenburg, Neuhausen & Around**BUDGET**

DJH hostel (Map p296; ☎ 131 156; www.djh.de; Wendl-Dietrich-Strasse 20; dm under/over 26yr €23.40/27.40; (S) closed Dec; (X)) The Jugendherberge München is the most central DJH hostel, in Neuhausen northwest of the Altstadt. Relatively loud and busy, it's also popular and friendly. There's a restaurant, a garden, bikes for hire, and no curfew. Take the U1 to Rotkreuzplatz.

Hotel Flora (Map p296; ☎ 597 067; www.hotel-flora.de; Karlstrasse 49; s €45-60, d €65-80; (S)) This is a quiet, simple hotel in a venerable complex with good-value rooms, including quads (€88), that are an ideal setup for families. Rates include breakfast. It's just a 5-minute walk north of the Hauptbahnhof.

Other recommendations:

Campingplatz Nord-West (Map pp290-1; ☎ 150 6936; www.campingplatz-nord-west.de; Auf den Schrederwiesen 3; tent €3.80-7.50, car/person €3.20/4.70) Pleasant camp site about 2km from Olympiapark and within walking distance of three swimming lakes.

Campingplatz Obermenzing (Map pp290-1; ☎ 811 2235; www.campingplatz-muenchen.de; Lochhausener Strasse 59; car & tent/person €6.50/4.50; (S) mid-Mar–Oct) Parklike camp site in western Munich with coin laundry and small store.

MIDRANGE

Hotel Laimer Hof (Map p296; ☎ 1780 380; www.laimerhof.de; Laimer Strasse 40; s/d from €69/89; (P)) Run by possibly the nicest couple on the planet, this cute little villa – a listed monument incidentally – has a relaxed country feel, despite being just five minutes' walk from Schloss Nymphenburg. Of the 23 rooms, those on the upper floors have the most character and best views.

Westend & Ludwigsvorstadt**BUDGET**

Easy Palace (Map p292; ☎ 558 7970; www.easypalace.de; Mozartstrasse 4; dm/s/d €16.90/29/50; (P) (S)) Converted from a hotel, this hostel has a good range of facilities, from pool tables to bike hire and luggage storage. The rooms are fairly simple, but comfy, and the management is friendly.

Pension Westfalia (Map p292; ☎ 530 377; www.pension-westfalia.de; Mozartstrasse 23; s €35-55, d €50-78; (S)) This stately four-storey villa stands just off the Oktoberfest meadow with a bull's-eye view of the Bavaria statue. Outside the beer festival this cosy, family-run *pension* is

a peaceful base for sightseeing. The comfy, modern rooms are all reached by lift, and most have private bathrooms.

MIDRANGE

Hotel-Pension Mariandl (Map p292; ☎ 534 108; www.mariandl.com; Goethestrasse 51; s €60-75, d €70-110) Old-world charm, huge rooms with high ceilings and oriel windows make this neo-Gothic mansion a real treat. The downstairs restaurant (Café am Beethovenplatz; p312 and p317) has live jazz or classical music nightly at 8pm. Children are welcome.

Hotel Umland (Map p292; ☎ 543 350; www.hotel-uhland.de; Umlandstrasse 1; s €64-135, d €77-180; (P) (X) (S)) Just east of the Theresienwiese you'll find this lovely Art Nouveau villa with a relaxed atmosphere and English-speaking staff. The large, comfy rooms (some with a tiny balcony), quaint garden and good service make it an enduring favourite with visitors. The waterbed room is popular.

Southwest of the City**BUDGET**

DJH hostel (Map pp290-1; ☎ 723 6550/60; www.djh.de; Miesingstrasse 4; dm under/over 26yr €23.40/27.40; (P) (X)) Still fairly accessible to the centre, the modern Jugendgästehaus München is southwest of the Altstadt in the suburb of Thalkirchen. There's no curfew. Take the U-Bahn to Thalkirchen and then follow the signs.

Campingplatz Thalkirchen (Map pp290-1; ☎ 7243 0808; www.camping.muenchen.de; Zentralländstrasse 49; tent €3-4, car €4.30, person €4.50-8.10; (S) mid-Mar–Oct) This is the closest camp site to the city centre but can get very crowded. It's scenically located on the Isar River, 5km southwest of the city centre. Take the U3 to Thalkirchen and then bus 57, or it's a 15-minute walk.

Long-Term Rentals

If you're planning to stay in Munich for a month or longer, you might consider renting through a Mitwohonzentrale (flat-sharing agency, p737). Accommodation can be anything from rooms in shared student flats to furnished apartments.

Generally speaking, a room in a flat costs about €330 to €500 per month, while a one-bedroom apartment ranges from €450 to €750. Commission (up to one month's rent), VAT (19%) and, in some cases, a deposit must be added to the rent.

Agencies to try include the following:

City Mitwohzentrale (Map p292; ☎ 194 30; www.mitwohzentrale.de; Lämmerstrasse 4)

Mitwohzentrale an der Uni (Map p295; ☎ 286 6060; www.mwz-munich.de; Fendstrasse 6)

Mitwohzentrale – Mr. Lodge (Map p295; ☎ 340 8230; www.mrlodge.de; Barer Strasse 32)

EATING

Cafés & Bistros

Trachtenvogl (Map p292; ☎ 201 5160; Reichenbachstrasse 47; snacks €3-6) A send-up of the Black Forest, complete with cuckoo clock and braying elk, this warped little café-lounge has good sandwiches, cakes and 30 different kinds of hot chocolate (cold if you like). It takes reservations for chocolate fondue, served Sundays after 8pm.

Woerners (Map p292; ☎ 265 231; Marienplatz 1; dishes €3-15) Two cafés merge into one here: the outdoor Café am Dom on the ground floor, giving some of the best seating on the square, and Café Reber upstairs – a Munich institution, with parquet floors, crystal chandeliers and a long, long history.

Creperie Bernard Bernard (Map p294; ☎ 480 1173; Innere-Wiener-Strasse 32; crepes €5-9; ☎ dinner Mon-Sat) The best crepes in town can be found at this small place that serves up delicious savouries oozing goat's cheese or shrimp, and lavish desserts dripping with the finest French chocolate.

Café Voilà (Map p294; ☎ 489 1654; Wörthstrasse 5; mains €5-10) High stucco ceilings, giant mirrors and large windows make this café a great place for watching the world go by. It's buzzing for breakfast and later in the day for fairly priced baguettes, burgers and interesting vegetarian dishes.

Brik (Map p295; ☎ 2899 6630; Schellingstrasse 24; sushi €5-10) This slick Japanese-style café, bar and lounge is a temple of minimalism with delicious sushi snacks. The crowd is as discerning as the sophisticated cocktail list.

Café am Beethovenplatz (Map p292; ☎ 5440 4348; Goethestrasse 51; mains €5-11) This relaxed café with a musical theme has high ceilings, chandeliers and a cultivated atmosphere. The breakfast selections are named after famous composers; the divine evening meals are accompanied by live jazz or classical music.

Dukatz im Literaturhaus (Map p292; ☎ 291 9600; Salvatorplatz 1; mains €5-22) A stomping ground for the chic and the intellectual, the Dukatz serves up designer sandwiches and latte mac-

chiato in its café section, and stratospherically priced but impressive mains in its restaurant.

Nido (Map p295; ☎ 2880 6103; Theresienstrasse 40; mains €6-8) This popular place is a trendy spot with lots of brushed aluminium and big picture windows. They serve a small menu of simple Italian-influenced dishes and a large dose of unpretentious cool.

Wasserwerk (Map p294; ☎ 4890 0020; Wolfgangstrasse 19; mains €6-15; ☎ dinner only) This quirky bistro – strewn with ducts, pipes and wheels – plays up the waterworks theme to marvellous effect. Expect a consistently delicious range of quality international cuisine.

Bobolovsky's (Map p295; ☎ 297 363; Ursulastrasse 10; mains €7-10) The varied menu at this bustling bistro includes all the old favourites, such as fajitas, *quesadillas* and chilli. Portions are very generous and on weekdays this place takes the happy-hour concept to new lengths, with incredibly cheap deals on breakfast, lunch and cocktails.

Tresznjewski (Map p295; ☎ 282 349; www.tresznjewski.de; Theresienstrasse 72; mains €8-12) This classy brasserie has daring artworks and waiters in full-length aprons. Its hip clientele come for breakfast and, later, a flexible menu ranging from delectable pastas and sandwiches to burgers and *Bratwurst*.

Nage & Saugé (Map p294; ☎ 298 803; Mariannenstrasse 2) This hip little Italo-café is packed every night with young, creative souls who snuggle up to the candlelit tables for the 'Ente Elvis' pasta, *saltimbocca* or a sublime cocktail. It's tucked away in a side street in Lehel, so quiet you wonder if it's still within the city limits.

Café Zeitgeist (Map p295; ☎ 2865 9873; Türkenstrasse 74) Simply a perfect spot to pore over coffee and cake to watch, from a shady courtyard, the steady flow of students and trendoids pulsing along Türkenstrasse.

Quick Eats

Throughout the city, branches of **Vinzenzmurr** (Map p292; Sendlinger Str 38 & Sonnenstr 8; ☎ 8.15am-6pm) offer the quintessential fast-food experience, with hot buffets and prepared meals. Favourites like *Weisswurst* (white veal sausage), *Leberkäse im Semmel* (a spicy meatloaf sandwich) or *Schweinebraten mit Knödel* (roast pork with dumplings) are among the best lunch deals in town. Salad bars provide some lightweight relief.

South of the Hauptbahnhof, hone in on the street window of **Ristorante Ca'doro** (Map p292; Bayerstrasse; pizza slices from €2). To the north of the train station, **Stop & Soup** (Map p292; Dachauer Strasse 25; snacks €1.50-4; ☎ Mon-Fri) has soups, casseroles and salads. Opposite Karlsplatz, on the ground floor of the Kaufhof department store (Karlsplatz 21), are three good options: a **Müller bakery**, **Nordsee** seafood and **Grillpfanne** for sausages (Map p292). All three are open from 9.30am to 8pm, Monday to Saturday, and snacks cost around €2 to €5.

Another good spot, just north of the Frauenkirche, is **Münchner Suppenküche** (Map p292; Schäfflerstrasse 7; dishes €3-6; ☎ closed Sun), a self-service souper serving chicken casseroles, chilli con carne and other filling classics.

Schwabing has lots of cheap places to eat, including **Wok Man** (Map p295; Leopoldstrasse 68; mains €4.50-6), which dishes up a good selection of decent Chinese food.

For cheap Indian food try **Indisches Fast Food** (Map p295; Barer Strasse 46; mains €5-8) near the Neue Pinakothek, where fragrant Basmati rice accompanies the tasty Indian standards.

Restaurants

ASIAN

Sushi & Soul (Map p292; ☎ 201 0992; Klenzestrasse 21; mains €8-18) This stylish joint charms with soft lighting and a long central table that points dramatically towards the backlit open kitchen. But one thing's for sure – the sushi is fabulous. During the long-standing and popular happy hour (6pm to 8pm) a multicourse Bento palette of sushi, not to mention all the cocktails, is half-price. Reservations are a must.

Shida (Map p292; ☎ 269 336; Klenzestrasse 32; mains €9-16) Shida's excellent Thai food and intimate atmosphere are justly famous and perennially popular. It's about the size of a shoe box but packs a mean punch in the food stakes. Reservations are essential.

Punjabi (Map p294; ☎ 2554 2424; Zweibrückenstrasse 15; mains €5.50-7.50) Excellent, tasty Indian specialties, from veggie samosas to fiery curries and tandooris cooked in a traditional clay oven. Top it off with a baked banana served with honey and grated coconut, and waddle home.

BAVARIAN & GERMAN

Weisses Bräuhaus (Map p292; ☎ 2299 875; Im Tal 10; mains €7-15) The *Weisswurst* (veal sausage) served here sets the city's standard. The upstairs dining hall and the locals who frequent

it are as authentic as they come. People come for the excellent Bavarian fare, the house's own Schneider Weissbier, and for the creative treatment of innards.

Fraunhofer (Map p292; ☎ 266 460; Fraunhoferstrasse 9; mains €6-12) This bustling restaurant is a homely place where the olde-worlde atmosphere and décor (featuring mounted animal heads and a portrait of Ludwig II) contrasts with the menu. Its fresh takes on classical fare draw a hip, intergenerational crowd.

Unionsbräu Haidhausen (Map p294; ☎ 477 677; Einsteinstrasse 42; mains €6-14) Dried hops dangle from the ceiling of this sophisticated brewpub that caters to business types at lunchtime and a more rollicking crew after dark. There's a jazz club in the basement (Jazzclub Unterfahrt im Einstein, p317).

Other recommendations:

Wirtshaus in der Au (Map p294; ☎ 448 1400;

Lilienstrasse 51; mains €8-16) Creative Bavarian cuisine in an unpretentious setting.

Hundskugel (Map p292; ☎ 264 272; Hotterstrasse 18; mains €10-18) Munich's oldest restaurant, founded in 1440, feels a bit like an old-fashioned doll's house.

FRENCH & INTERNATIONAL

Rue des Halles (Map p294; ☎ 485 675; Steinstrasse 18; mains €19-28) The gourmet French cuisine draws a high-octane crowd to this designer restaurant near the Kulturzentrum Gasteig. Count on about €80 for a three-course meal, including a glass of wine.

Königsquelle (Map p292; ☎ 220 071; Baaderplatz 2; mains €11-20) This local restaurant has long been a Munich institution for its attentive service, consistently excellent food and dark, well-stocked hardwood bar. The dishes are straightforward but expertly prepared, from Wiener schnitzel to boiled beef tips to spinach ravioli, proving you can do wonders with a few good ingredients.

GREEK

Taverna Paros (Map p294; ☎ 470 2995; Kirchenstrasse 21; mains €8-18) The simple wooden tables and photos of earthy Greek islanders belie the sophistication of this splendid little eatery. You can cut the lamb roast stuffed with feta cheese with your fork.

ITALIAN

Café Osteria La Vecchia Masseria (Map p292; ☎ 550 9090; Mathildenstrasse 3; mains €5-15) This is one of the best Italian places in Munich, loud but

unquestionably romantic. Earthy wood tables, antique tin buckets, baskets and clothing irons conjure up the ambience of an Italian farmhouse. The chef comes out to greet customers in his trademark straw hat.

Hippocampus (Map p294; ☎ 475 855; Mühlbauerstrasse 5; mains €15-28) One of Munich's top restaurants, this trendy, upmarket Italian temple right near the Prinzregententheater serves a great range of Italian specials. It has a stylish interior, romantic ambience and celebrity clientele.

Also recommended:

Il Mulino (Map p296; ☎ 523 3335; Görrestrasse 1; pizzas €5-17) Classy neighbourhood eatery in Neuhausen, with a leafy beer garden.

La Fiorentina (Map p292; ☎ 534 185; Goethestrasse 41; mains €7.50-12) Cosy hang-out with Tuscan country cooking and mouth-watering pizzas.

JEWISH

Cohen's (Map p295; ☎ 280 9545; Theresienstrasse 31; mains €9-15; ☎ dinner Sun-Fri) Tucked away in a quiet courtyard, this brightly lit, refined eatery serves up big portions of German-Eastern European dishes that change with the seasons. Specials include *Königsberger Klopse* (veal dumplings in caper sauce), Hungarian lamb goulash and gefilte fish. Every Friday evening there's live klezmer music.

LATIN AMERICAN

Joe Peña's (Map p292; ☎ 226 463; Buttermelcherstrasse 17; mains €10-17) This festive cantina-style restaurant is regarded as Munich's best Tex-Mex place and can get very crowded, especially during happy hour (5pm to 8pm). The food's tasty but calibrated to Germanic tastes.

VEGETARIAN

Buxs (Map p292; ☎ 291 9550; Frauenstrasse 9; dishes €2 per 100g; ☎ closed Sat evening & Sun) One of Munich's few outposts of veggie culture, this bright self-service place serves 40-plus varieties of soups, salads and antipasti – not to mention the glorious smoothies and desserts.

Zerwirk (Map p292; ☎ 2323 9191; Ledererstrasse 3; mains €5-12; ☎ closed Sun) Through a twist of fate the Zerwirk, once a purveyor of wild game, now houses one of Munich's few vegan restaurants. Dishes like pasta carbonara, tofu fennel or *rucola* chili are served in elegant minimalist surrounds in the 2nd-floor dining rooms. Downstairs, the vaulted chambers are thrown open every weekend for club nights.

Prinz Myschkin (Map p292; ☎ 265 596; www.prinzmyschkin.com; Hackenstrasse 2; mains €8-16.50; ☎ closed Sun) Considered by many to be Munich's best vegetarian restaurant, this spacious, trendy haunt has an impressive Italian- and Asian-influenced menu, including some macrobiotic choices. If you just want a light snack, half-portions are available.

Self-Catering

At Viktualienmarkt (Map p292), south of Marienplatz, deep-pocketed travellers can put together a gourmet picnic of breads, cheeses and salad to take off to a beer garden or the Englischer Garten. The basement of the Kaufhof (Map p292) department store on Karlsplatz has a more upmarket selection, plus goodies like fresh cheeses, superb sliced meats and a good bakery.

For a world-class selection of deli goods try the legendary **Alois Dallmayr** (Map p292; ☎ 01805 006 522; Dienenstrasse 14), with a raft of exotic foods from every corner of the earth.

DRINKING

Not surprisingly, beer drinking is an integral part of Munich's nightlife. Germans in general each drink an average of 114L of the amber liquid per year, but Bavarians average some 170L!

Beer Halls & Gardens

One of the finer ways to sample Bavaria's best brews is in the local beer halls and gardens. People come here primarily to drink, and although food may be served it is generally an afterthought – for food options at beer halls, see the boxed text, p316. A few places still allow you to bring along a picnic lunch and just buy the beer, but in most cases outside food is forbidden.

Most places listed here are either gardens or gardens-cum-restaurants; almost all open from 10am to at least 10pm. Even in the touristy places, be careful not to sit at the *Stammtisch*, a table reserved for regulars (there will be a brass plaque).

You sometimes have to pay a *Pfand* (deposit) for the glasses (usually €2.50). Beer costs €5 to €6.50 per litre.

ALTSTADT

Hofbräuhaus (Map p292; ☎ 221 676; Am Platz 9) This is certainly the best-known and most celebrated beer hall in Bavaria, but apart from a few local

yokels you'll be in the company of tourists. A live band is condemned to play Bavarian folk music most of the day.

Augustiner-Grossgaststätte (Map p292; ☎ 5519 9257; Neuhauser Strasse 27) This sprawling place has a less raucous atmosphere and better food. Altogether it's a much more authentic example of an old-style Munich beer hall, complete with secluded courtyards and hunting trophies.

Braunauer Hof (Map p292; ☎ 223 613; Frauenstrasse 42) This pleasantly warped beer garden has a hedge maze, a bizarre wall mural and a golden bull that's illuminated at night.

ENGLISCHER GARTEN

There are three beer gardens in the park (Map p295).

The **Chinesischer Turm** (☎ 383 8730; Englischer Garten 3) is an institution known to every Münchener from an early age. This popular watering hole derives extra atmosphere from a classic Chinese pagoda and entertainment by a good-time oompah band (in an upper floor of the tower, fenced in like the Blues Brothers).

The other two beer gardens are better suited for families and sweethearts: **Hirschau** (☎ 369 942; Gyslingstrasse 15) and **Seehaus** (☎ 381 6130, Kleinhesselohe 3) are both on the shores of the park's glistening ponds.

NEUHAUSEN

Augustiner Keller (☎ 594 393; Arnulfstrasse 52) Every year this enormous leafy beer garden, about 500m west of the Hauptbahnhof, buzzes with activity from the first hint of springtime. It's a beautiful spot with a laid-back atmosphere ideal for leisurely drinking.

Löwenbräukeller (Map p296; ☎ 526 021; Nymphenburger Strasse 2) This enormous beer hall is a local fixture for its regular Bavarian music and heel-slapping dances. During the Starkbierzeit (the springtime 'strong beer season'), the famous stone-lifting contests are held here. There's a beer garden that rambles round the entire complex. Interestingly, the house brew, Löwenbräu, has a larger following abroad than in Germany.

Hirschgarten (Map p296; ☎ 172 591; Hirschgartenallee 1) Locals and savvy visitors flock to the Hirschgarten, just south of Schloss Nymphenburg. This quaint country beer garden has deer wandering just the other side of the fence. To get there take the S-Bahn to Laim.

Haidhausen

Hofbräukeller (Map p294; ☎ 448 7376; Innere Wiener Strasse 19) Not to be confused with its better-known cousin in the city centre, this sprawling, very atmospheric restaurant-cum-beer garden retains an early 20th century air. Locals in *Tracht* (traditional costume) come here to guzzle big mugs of foaming beer alongside the regular specials of roast pork (€5).

Bars & Pubs

ALTSTADT & AROUND

Alter Siml (Map p295; ☎ 272 3083; Türkenstrasse 57; mains €5 to €13) This watering hole has good jazz, a reasonable menu and an art-house vibe. Thomas Mann and Hermann Hesse were among the writers and artists that used to meet here in the early 20th century.

Dreigroschenkeller (Map p294; ☎ 489 0290; Lilienstrasse 2) Cosy and labyrinthine, this cellar pub has rooms based upon Bertolt Brecht's *Die Dreigroschenoper* (The Three-penny Opera), ranging from a prison cell to a red satiny salon. There's great beer and wine, and an extensive menu (mostly hearty German stuff).

Jodlerwirt (Map p292; ☎ 8922 1249; Altenhofstrasse 4; ☎ from 6pm Tue-Sat) One of Munich's earthiest pubs has an accordion-playing host and stand-up comic who spread good cheer in yodelling sessions at the upstairs bar. By the end of the evening you'll find yourself locked arm-in-arm with complete strangers.

Other recommendations:

Baader Café (Map p292; ☎ 201 0638; Baaderstrasse 47) A literary think-and-drink place with a high celebrity quotient and possibly the best Sunday brunch in town.

Pacific Times (Map p292; ☎ 2023 9470; Baaderstrasse 28) Trendy joint decked out in dark wood and wicker chairs to attract the beautiful people.

Schwabing

If you want a variety of hip bars within spitting distance of each other, then Leopoldstrasse is for you.

Roxy (Map p295; ☎ 349 292; Leopoldstrasse 48) The place to talent spot and people watch, this slick bar attracts a designer crowd keen to hang out, look good and sip cocktails. By day it offers surprisingly good food at decent prices.

News Bar (Map p295; ☎ 281 787; Amalienstrasse 55; mains €5-10). This trendy café has a great selection of magazines and newspapers (including English ones) for sale. It's an ideal spot for brunch or a lazy morning poring over a paper.

News Café (Map p295; ☎ 3838 0600; Leopoldstrasse 74) Not just another news-bar clone, the plush leather seating, rows of glowing red lamps and African-inspired art make this hip joint a great place to hang out. It serves light food and a multitude of cocktails.

Irish Pubs

Munich has a huge Irish expat population; if you're out looking for friendly, English-speaking people, you're in luck. Most of the pubs have live music at least once a week and cluster in Schwabing.

Günther Murphy's Irish Tavern (Map p295; ☎ 398 911; Nikolaistrasse 9a) One of the most popular Irish pubs in Munich, this cellar bar is usually packed to the gills with a good mix of locals, expats and tourists.

Molly Malone's (Map p294; ☎ 688 7510; Kellerstrasse 21) This award-winning Irish pub is a better bet if you'd like a quiet drink or a decent conversation. It's famous for its authentic fish and chips and has over 100 types of whiskey on hand.

ENTERTAINMENT

Munich's entertainment scene will keep you busy. Apart from discos, pubs and beer halls, try not to miss the city's excellent classical, jazz and opera venues.

Listings

Go Muenchen (www.gomuenchen.com; €3) What's-on guide to the city including exhibitions, concerts etc.

In München (www.in-muenchen.de; free) The best source of information; available free at bars, restaurants and ticket outlets.

München im... (free) Excellent A-to-Z pocket-sized booklet of almost everything the city has to offer.

Münchner Stadtmagazin (€2.50) Complete guide to the city's bars, discos, clubs, concerts and nightlife in general.

Munich Found (www.munichfound.de; €2.50) English-language city magazine with somewhat useful listings.

Tickets

Tickets to entertainment venues and sports events are available at official ticket outlets (*Kartenvorverkauf*).

Kartenvorverkauf Karlsplatz (Map p292; ☎ 5450 6060); Marienplatz (Map p292; ☎ 264 640) Branches all over the city and kiosks in these U-Bahn stations.

München Ticket (Map p292; www.muenchenticket.de; Neues Rathaus; ☎ 5481 8181)

Cinemas

For information about screenings check any of the Munich listings publications. Admission usually ranges from €6.50 to €8.50, though one day, usually Monday or Tuesday, is 'Kinotag' with reduced prices. Non-German films in mainstream cinemas are almost always dubbed. Films showing in the original language with subtitles are labelled 'OmU' (Original mit Untertiteln); those without subtitles are 'OV' or 'OF' (Originalversion or Originalfassung). **Amerika Haus** (p287) shows undubbed films, as do the following movie theatres:

Atlantis (Map p292; ☎ 555 152; Schwanthalerstrasse 2) **Cinema** (Map p296; ☎ 555 255; Nymphenburger Strasse 31) The pick of the bunch: comfy and modern, with great balcony seats, ice cream and salty popcorn (not a given).

City & Atelier (Map p292; ☎ 591 918; Sonnenstrasse 12)

Filmuseum (Map p292; ☎ 2332 4150; St-Jakobs-Platz 1) In the Stadtmuseum.

Museum-Lichtspiele (Map p294; ☎ 482 403; Lilienstrasse 2)

Clubs

Munich has a thriving club scene with something to suit most tastes. Bouncers are notoriously rude and 'discerning', so dress to kill (or look, as locals say, *schicki-micki*) and keep your cool. The cover prices for discos vary but average between €4 and €10.

Kultfabrik (Map p294; www.kultfabrik.de; Grafingerstrasse, Haidhausen) and **Optimolwerke** (Map p294; www.optimolwerke.de; Grafingerstrasse, Haidhausen) are back-to-back villages of pubs, bars and clubs – nearly 40 in total. They're a party animal's mecca, where you can roam from an '80s disco to hip-hop, trance and heavy metal venues. The latest 'in' spot is **Drei Türme** (☎ 4502 8817; ☎ 9pm-4am Tue, 10pm-6am Wed, Fri & Sat), a chic living-room club disguised as a Hollywood castle and lit by a forest of glass-fibre tubes. If you're an aficionado of Russian pop try **Kalinka** (☎ 4090 7260; ☎ 10pm-5am Fri, 10pm-9am Sat), a trendy place decked out with lots of red velvet, dancing girls and a giant bust of Lenin. Other options include **Milch & Bar** (☎ 4502 8818; ☎ 10pm-6am Sun-Thu, 10pm-9am Fri-Sat), a more mainstream choice catering to disco divas; and the padded crimson **Living4** (☎ 4900 1260; ☎ 10pm-4am Tue-Thu, 10pm-6am Fri-Sat), playing a good mix of hip hop, Latin and house. To get there take U5 to the Ostbahnhof.

Muffatwerk (Map p294; ☎ 4587 5075; www.muffatwerk.de; Zellstrasse 4) This is another big complex that holds large concerts and, in summer, an open-air disco on Friday with drum 'n' bass, acid jazz and hip-hop (it's always crowded, so expect queues). Its new club, **Ampere** (☎ 10pm-5am Fri or Sat) is a bastion of retro-flavoured cool.

P1 (Map p295; ☎ 294 252; Prinzregentenstrasse 1) P1 is a bit of a Munich institution and is still the see-and-be-seen place for the city's wannabes, with extremely choosy and effective bouncers, snooty staff and the occasional celebrity.

Registrator (Map p292; ☎ 2388 7758; Blumenstrasse 4) No mistake, the dusty halls and '60s panelling

of this old city building have the charm of an off-location. The humour isn't lost on the (mostly 20s) crowd, who come for a diet of African beats, shock rock and indie pop.

Live Music

CLASSICAL

Philharmonie im Gasteig (Map p294; ☎ 480 980; www.gasteig.de; Rosenheimer Strasse 5) As home to the city's Philharmonic Orchestra, Munich's premier high-brow cultural venue has a packed schedule. The Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks (Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra) is also based here, and performs on Sundays throughout the year.

Nationaltheater (Map p292; ☎ box office 2185 1920; www.staatstheater.bayern.de; Max-Joseph-Platz 2) The Bayerische Staatsoper (Bavarian State Opera) performs here. Its prestigious opera festival takes place in July. You can buy tickets at regular outlets or at the box office.

Staatstheater am Gärtnerplatz (Map p292; ☎ 2185 1960; www.staatstheater-am-gaetnerplatz.de; Gärtnerplatz 3) This venue has occasional classical concerts, but opera, operetta, jazz, ballet and musicals also feature.

JAZZ

Munich has a very hot jazz scene.

Jazzclub Unterfahrt im Einstein (Map p294; ☎ 448 2794; Einsteinstrasse 42) This is perhaps the best-known place in town, with live music from 9pm and regular international acts. Sunday nights feature an open jam session.

Jazzbar Vogler (Map p292; ☎ 294 662; Rumfordstrasse 17; ☎ Tue-Sun) Conceived as a 'cultural living room' by ex-journalist Vogler, this intimate little club has grown into one of the city's top jazz venues. The musicians are some of Munich's baddest cats.

Prager Frühling (Map p295; ☎ 260 3021; Leopoldstrasse 27; ☎ Wed-Sun) The programme at this indie club with the orange '70s décor is always turbo-charged. Wednesdays are a climax of funky, unfettered jazz for the dance-mad. Concerts begin at 9pm and then, around midnight, DJs take over with soulful grooves.

Also recommended:

Night Club Bar (Map p292; ☎ 212 0994; Promenadeplatz 2-6) Intimate club in the Hotel Bayerischer Hof where you can catch top talent almost nightly.

Café am Beethovenplatz (Map p292; ☎ 5440 4348; Goethestrasse 51) Atmospheric café with live music most weekdays and a piano brunch every Sunday.

AND THERE'S FOOD, TOO

In beer gardens, tables laid with a cloth and utensils are reserved for people ordering food. If you're only planning a serious drinking session, or if you have brought along a picnic, don't sit there.

If you do decide to order food, you'll find very similar menus at all beer gardens. Typical dishes include roast chicken (about €9 for a half), spare ribs (about €11.50, and probably not worth it), huge pretzels (about €3) and Bavarian specialities such as *Schweinebraten* and schnitzel (€9 to €12).

Radi is a huge, mild radish that's eaten with beer; you can buy prepared radish for about €4.50. Or, buy a radish at the market and a *Radimesser* at any department store, stick it down in the centre and twist the handle round and round, creating a radish spiral. If you do it yourself, smother the cut end of the radish with salt until it weeps to reduce the bitterness – and increases your thirst!

Obatzda (oh-batsdah) is Bavarian for 'mixed up'. This cream cheese-like speciality is made of butter, ripe Camembert, onion and caraway (about €4 to €6). Spread it on *Brez'n* (a pretzel) or bread.

Another speciality is *Leberkäs* (liver cheese), which is nothing to do with liver or cheese but is instead a type of meatloaf that gets its name from its shape. It's usually eaten with sweet mustard and soft pretzels.

GAY & LESBIAN MUNICH

Munich has a strong gay and lesbian community and the best listings can be found in the German-language **Rosa Seiten** (Pink Pages, €3.50) or **Our Munich** (free), a monthly guide to gay and lesbian life in the city. You can pick up both at the **Weissblauer Gay Shop** (Map p296; ☎ 522 352; Theresienstrasse 130). Another good bet for information is the website www.munich-cruising.de.

Information and support for gay men and lesbians is available through the following places:

Schwules Kommunikations und Kulturzentrum ('the Sub'; Map p292; ☎ 260 3056; ☎ counselling 194 46; Müllerstrasse 43; 🕒 7-11pm, counselling 7-10pm Mon-Fri)

LeTra/Lesbentelefon (Map p292; ☎ 725 4272; Angertorstrasse 3; 🕒 2.30-5pm Mon & Wed, 10.30am-1pm Tue)

Bars & Cafés

Nightlife is centred in the so-called 'Bermuda Triangle' formed by Sendlinger Tor, Gärtnerplatz and Fraunhoferstrasse. Hans-Sachs-Strasse is the latest hotspot.

Morizz (Map p292; ☎ 201 6776; Klenzstrasse 43) The premiere hang-out for pretty faces, Morizz resembles an Art Deco Paris bar with red leather armchairs and plenty of mirrors. The service is impeccable, the food's good and the wine and whisky list will keep everyone happy. It's quiet early in the evening but livens up as the night wears on.

Deutsche Eiche (Map p292; ☎ 231 1660; Reichenbachstrasse 13) A Munich institution, this was once film maker Rainer Werner Fassbinder's favourite hang-out. It's still a popular spot and packs in a mixed crowd for its comfort food, fast service and classy hotel rooms (see below).

Peter & Paul (Map p292; ☎ 5454 0780; Sonnenstrasse 19) Tucked away in a rear courtyard, this groovy café-lounge with the comic-book colours is a welcome change from the baroque angels of its predecessor. Its liberal clientele comes as much for the fresh sushi as the latest prospects on the courtyard patio.

Also recommended are **Cabaret Mrs Henderson** (Map p292; ☎ 263 469; Müllerstrasse 2), a trans-vestite and cabaret club where Freddie Mercury made his last video, and **Nil** (Map p292; ☎ 265 545; Hans-Sach-Strasse 2), whose octagonal bar attracts a young fun-loving crowd and a handful of faded German stars.

Accommodation

See www.munich-cruising.de for additional listings.

Deutsche Eiche (Map p292; ☎ 231 1660; www.deutsche-eiche.com; Reichenbachstrasse 13; s €70-85, d €95-100; 📍) This 150-year-old Munich institution was once saved from the wrecker's ball by German film director Rainer Fassbinder. Its modern rooms are fully equipped and there's a big sauna and roof terrace.

Pension Eulenspiegel (Map p292; ☎ 266 678; www.pensioneulenspiegel.de; Müllerstrasse 43a; s €49-69, d €79-99; 📍) Recently done over with a designer's touch, this small, cosy guesthouse lies in a quiet courtyard of Munich's gay district. There are only eight rooms, all with showers but they share a toilet.

ROCK

Large rock concerts are staged at the Olympia-park, or at venues listed under Clubs (p317). The **Brunnenhof der Residenz** (Map p292; ☎ 936 093; Residenzstrasse 1) hosts open-air performances ranging from rock, jazz and swing to classical and opera in stunning surroundings.

Theatre

Munich has a lively theatre scene. The two biggest companies are the Bayerisches Staatsschauspiel and the Münchener Kammerspiele.

The **Bayerisches Staatsschauspiel** (☎ tickets 2185 1940) performs at the **Residenztheater** (Map p292; Max-Joseph-Platz 1) and at the **Theater im Marstall** (Map p292; Marstallplatz) behind the Nationaltheater.

Münchener Kammerspiele (Map p292; ☎ 2333 7000; Maximilianstrasse 26-28) This theatre stages large-scale productions of serious drama by German writers or foreign playwrights whose works are translated into German.

Deutsches Theater (Map p292; ☎ 5523 4444; Schwantalerstrasse 13) Munich's answer to London's

West End has touring road shows (usually popular musicals like *Grease*) perform here.

Kulturzentrum Gasteig (Map p294; ☎ 480 980; Rosenheimer Strasse 5) This is a major cultural centre with theatre, classical music and other special events held in its several halls, with their excellent acoustics.

Other venues include the **Prinzregententheater** (Map p294; ☎ 2185 2959; Prinzregentenplatz 12) and the **Kleine Komödie am Max II** (Map p294; ☎ 221 859; Maximilianstrasse 47), which shows lightweight comedy.

SHOPPING

Fashionistas with flexible credit should head for Maximilianstrasse, Theatinerstrasse, Residenzstrasse and Briener Strasse. For high street shops and department stores try the pedestrian area around Marienplatz, Neuhauser Strasse and Kaufingerstrasse. For streetwear, head for the indie boutiques around Gärtnerplatz, Glockenplatz, Schwabing and Haidhausen. Beer steins and *Mass* (1L tankard) glasses are available at all the department stores and the beer halls themselves.

Ludwig Beck (Map p292; ☎ 2423 1575; Marienplatz 11) Munich's most venerable department store has some chic but reasonably priced clothes, a large CD shop, a trendy coffee bar and restaurant.

Christkindlmarkt (Christmas market; Map p294; Marienhilfplatz) Held in December, this is a well-stocked fulfiller of traditional dreams. Crèche scenes, 'smoking figures' carved in the Erzgebirge and spicy-sweet Lebkuchen are some of the favourites.

Foto-Video Sauter (Map p292; ☎ 551 5040; Sonnenstrasse 26) A good stock of all the top names fills the shelves at this photo emporium. Good deals can be had on Leica cameras and binoculars.

Loden-Frey (Map p292; ☎ 210 390; Maffeistrasse 5-7) Loden-Frey stocks a wide range of traditional Bavarian wear. Expect to pay at least €200 for a good leather jacket, lederhosen or a women's dirndl.

Manufactum (Map p292; ☎ 2424 3669; Kardinal-Faulhaber-Strasse 5) In the exclusive Fünf Höfe mall, Manufactum specialises in hits of ageless German design. Look out for Bauhaus lamps, Porsche pepper mills and 4711 Kölnisch Wasser.

Porzellan Manufaktur Nymphenburg (Map p296; ☎ 1791 9710; Schloss Nymphenburg; 🕒 10am-5pm Mon-Fri) It has made fine porcelain for Bavarian

royals and quite a few commoners since being founded in 1747. They also have an outlet in the Fünf Höfe shopping passage (Map p292).

Schuh Seibel (Map p292; ☎ 2601 7237; Reichenbachstrasse 8) Yes, Birkenstocks really *are* cheaper here. A major stocker of the brand, this place also offers the convenience of home shipment.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Munich's **international airport** (MUC; ☎ 089-975 00; www.munich-airport.de) is second in importance only to Frankfurt for international and domestic flights. There's direct service to/from many key destinations including London, Paris, Rome, New York, Sydney and all major German cities.

Airlines flying to Munich are Air France, British Airways, Delta Airlines, easyJet, Germanwings, Lufthansa and Scandinavian Airlines. For contact details, see p754.

Bus

Munich is a stop for **Busabout** (www.busabout.com) on circular routes that take in Amsterdam, Berlin, Paris, Prague, Rome and Vienna, among other cities (also see p758).

Europabus (see p763) links Munich to the Romantic Road. For details of fares and timetables inquire at EurAide (see p288) or **DTG** (Map p292; ☎ 8898 9513; www.deutsche-touring.de; Hirtenstrasse 14) near the Hauptbahnhof; it's the vendor for Deutsche Touring and Eurolines buses.

BEX BerlinLinienBus (☎ 01801-546 436; www.berlinlinienbus.de) runs daily buses between Berlin and Munich (one-way/return €44/81, 9½ hours), via Ingolstadt, Nuremberg, Bayreuth and Leipzig. It picks up from the north side of the Hauptbahnhof. There are big reductions on one-way fares for passengers aged under 26 or over 60.

A&O Touristik (Map p292; ☎ 591 504; Arnulfstrasse 8) is a vendor for Graylines touring buses and Gulliver's cross-country coaches.

Car & Motorcycle

Munich has autobahns radiating on all sides. Take the A9 to Nuremberg, the A92/A3 to Passau, the A8 to Salzburg, the A95 to Garmisch-Partenkirchen and the A8 to Ulm or Stuttgart.

For roads information, try **ADAC** (German Auto Association; Map p292; ☎ 5491 7234; www.adac.de; Sendlinger-Tor-Platz 9).

All major car-hire companies have offices at the airport and/or the 2nd level of Munich's Hauptbahnhof, including **Hertz** (☎ 01805-333 535; 🕒 24hr booking; office 7am-9pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat-Sun), **Avis** (☎ 550 2251; 🕒 7am-9pm) and **Europcar** (☎ 549 0240; 🕒 8am-6pm).

For shared rides, consider using one of Germany's *Mitfahrzentralen* (ride-share agencies), whose fares are considerably cheaper than by rail or coach. The **ADM-Mitfahrzentrale** (Map p292; ☎ 194 40; www.mitfahrzentrale.de; Lämmerstrasse 6; 🕒 8am-8pm Mon-Sat) is conveniently near the Hauptbahnhof. **CityNetz Mitfahrzentrale** (Map p295; ☎ 194 44; www.citynetz-mitfahrzentrale.de; Adalbertstrasse 6) in Schwabing has a good online booking function.

Train

Train services to and from Munich are excellent. There are swift connections every one to two hours to all major German cities as well as frequent services (often nondirect) to European destinations such as Vienna (five hours, €68), Prague (six to eight hours, €79) and Zürich (four hours, €59). Prices vary according to demand and the class of train.

There are direct links to Berlin (€96, six hours) and Hamburg (€115, six hours). Trains to Frankfurt often require a change in Mannheim or Nuremberg (€61, 3¼ hours).

Prague extension passes (add-on tickets to Eurail and German rail passes) are sold at the rail-pass counters in the Reisezentrum at the Hauptbahnhof, or through EurAide (p288).

GETTING AROUND

Central Munich is compact enough for exploring on foot. In order to get to the outlying suburbs, make use of the efficient public transport system.

To/From the Airport

Munich's **Flughafen Franz-Josef Strauss** (www.munich-airport.de) is connected by the S1 and S8 to the Hauptbahnhof – €9 with a single ticket or €8 if using eight strips of a *Streifenkarte* (see right). The trip takes about 40 minutes and runs every 20 minutes from around 3.30am until midnight.

The Lufthansa Airport Bus travels at 20-minute intervals from Arnulfstrasse near the Hauptbahnhof (one-way/return €9.50/15, 40 minutes) between 5.10am and 8.08pm. A taxi from the airport to the Altstadt costs about €55.

Car & Motorcycle

It's not worth driving in the city centre; many streets are pedestrian-only, ticket enforcement is Orwellian and parking is a nightmare. The tourist office map shows city car parks, which generally cost about €1.50 to €2.50 per hour.

Public Transport

Getting around is easy on Munich's excellent public transport network (MVV). The system is zone-based, and most places of interest to visitors (except Dachau and the airport) are within the 'blue' inner-zone (Innenraum).

Tickets are valid for the S-Bahn, U-Bahn, trams and buses, but must be time-stamped in the machines at station entrances and aboard buses and trams before use. Failure to validate a ticket puts you at the mercy of ticket inspectors (usually plain-clothed) who possess admirable efficiency when it comes to handing out fines.

Short rides (four bus or tram stops; two U-Bahn or S-Bahn stops) cost €1.10, while longer trips cost €2.20. It's cheaper to buy a strip-card of 10 tickets called a *Streifenkarte* for €10.50, and stamp one strip per adult on rides of two or less tram or U-Bahn stops, two strips for longer journeys.

Some of the other deals on offer are the following:

Tageskarten (day passes) One day (individual/up to 5 people €4.80/8.50); Three day (individual/up to 5 people €11.80/20) Valid for the inner zone only.

IsarCard Wochenkarte (€15.10) Weekly pass covering all four zones, valid Monday till noon the following Monday; if you buy later, it's still only good until next Monday.

Rail passes are also valid on S-Bahn trains. A bicycle pass costs €2.50 and is valid all day except during rush hour (6am to 9am and 4pm to 6pm Monday to Friday), when bikes are banned.

The U-Bahn ceases operation around 12.30am on weekdays and 1.30am at weekends, but a network of night buses (Nachtbusse) still operates. Pick up the latest route and time schedule from any tourist office.

Taxi

Taxis cost €2.90 at flagfall, plus a per-kilometre price of €1.25 to €1.60. For a radio-dispatched taxi, ring ☎ 216 10 or ☎ 194 10. Taxi ranks are indicated on the city's tourist map.

AROUND MUNICH

DACHAU CONCENTRATION CAMP MEMORIAL

The way to freedom is to follow one's orders; exhibit honesty, orderliness, cleanliness, sobriety, truthfulness, the ability to sacrifice and love of the Fatherland.

Inscription from the roof of the concentration camp at Dachau

Dachau was the Nazis' first concentration camp, built by Heinrich Himmler in March 1933 to house political prisoners. All in all it 'processed' more than 200,000 inmates, killing at least 32,000, and is now a haunting memorial. Expect to spend two to three hours here to fully absorb the exhibits.

The **memorial** (☎ 669 970; www.kz-gedenkstaette-dachau.de; Alte Römerstrasse 75; admission free; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Sun) is in the northeastern corner of Dachau. A 22-minute English-language documentary runs at 11.30am and 3.30pm. Note that children under 12 may find the experience too disturbing.

You enter the compound through the **Jourhaus**, originally the only entrance. Set in wrought iron, the chilling slogan 'Arbeit Macht Frei' (Work Sets You Free) hits you at the gate.

First stop is the **Documentary Exhibit**, with photographs and models of the camp, its officers and prisoners, and of horrifying 'scientific experiments' carried out by Nazi doctors. Other exhibits include a whipping block, a chart showing the system of prisoner categories (Jews, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Poles, Roma and other 'asocial' types) and documents on the persecution of 'degenerate' authors banned by the party.

Outside, in the former roll call square, is the **International Memorial** (1968), inscribed in English, French, Yiddish, German and Russian, which reads 'Never Again'. Behind the exhibit building, the **bunker** was the notorious camp prison where inmates were tortured. Executions took place in the prison yard.

Inmates were housed in large barracks, now demolished, which used to line the main road north of the roll-call square. In the camp's northwestern corner is the **crematorium** and gas chamber, disguised as a shower room but never used. Several religious shrines are nearby.

Tours

Dachauer Forum (☎ 996 880; €3; 🕒 2pm Tue-Sun May-Sep; 1pm Thu, Sat & Sun Oct-Apr) Tours (2½ hours) by dedicated volunteers in English, departing from the main hall. There are also half-hour introductions (€1.50) at 1pm Tuesday to Sunday May to October, and Thursday, Saturday and Sunday November to April.

Radius Tours & Bikes (Map p292; ☎ 089-5502 9374; www.radiusmunich.com; adult/concession €19/7.50;

🕒 9.15am & 12.30pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, also 11.30 Jun-Sep; 12.40pm Nov-Mar; 5hr) Five-hour English-language tours leave from opposite track 32 in the Hauptbahnhof. They include public transport from Munich. Book ahead.

Self-guided Audio Tour (adult/child €3/2) Covers the history, key buildings and the exhibits (up to 2 hours). Available from the ticket desk.

Getting There & Away

The S2 makes the journey from Munich Hauptbahnhof to Dachau Hauptbahnhof in 22 minutes. You'll need a two-zone ticket (€6.60, or four strips of a *Streifenkarte*), including the bus connection. From here change to local bus 726. By car, follow Dachauer Strasse straight out to Dachau and follow the KZ-Gedenkstätte signs.

SCHLEISSHEIM

☎ 089 / pop 5700

The northern Munich suburb of Schleissheim is worth a visit for its three palaces and the aviation museum.

The crown jewel of the palatial trio is the **Neues Schloss Schleissheim** (☎ 315 8720; Max-Emanuel-Platz 1; adult/under 15 yr/concession €4/free/3; 🕒 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Oct-Mar, closed Mon). Modelled after Versailles, this pompous pile was dreamed up by prince-elector Max Emanuel in 1701. Inside, you'll be treated to stylish period furniture and a vaulted ceiling smothered in frescoes by the prolific Cosmas Damian Asam. The palace is surrounded by an impressive manicured park that's ideal for picnics.

Nearby, the **Altes Schloss Schleissheim** (☎ 315 5272; Maximilianshof 1; adult/concession €3/2; 🕒 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Oct-Mar, closed Mon) is only a shadow of its former Renaissance self. It houses exhibits on religious festivals and Prussian culture. On a little island at the eastern end of the Schlosspark stands **Schloss Lustheim** (☎ 315 8720; adult/concession €3/2; 🕒 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Oct-Mar, closed Mon), featuring the finest collection of Meissen porcelain after Dresden's Zwinger museum.

Near the palaces you'll find **Flugwerft Schleissheim** (☎ 315 7140; Efferstrasse 18; adult/concession €3.50/2.50; ☎ 9am-5pm), the aviation branch of the Deutsches Museum (p304). Displays are housed in three historical buildings – the command, the tower and the construction hall – as well as a new hall, and include about 60 planes and helicopters, plus hang-gliders, engines and flight simulators.

To get to Schleissheim take the S1 (in the direction of Freising) to Oberschleissheim. It's about a 15-minute walk from the station along Mittenheimer Strasse towards the palaces. By car, take Leopoldstrasse north until it becomes Ingolstadter Strasse. Then take the A99 to the Neuherberg exit, at the south end of the airstrip.

STARNBERG

☎ 08151 / pop 22,000

Once a royal retreat, and still popular with politicians, celebrities and the merely moneyed, Starnberger See is a fast and easy option to get out onto the water and away from the urban bustle of Munich.

The town of Starnberg, at the northern end of the lake, is the heart of the Fünf-Seen-Land (Five-Lakes-District). Besides Lake Starnberg the district comprises the Ammersee and the much smaller Pilsensee, Wörthsee and Wesslinger See. Swimming, yachting and windsurfing are popular activities on all lakes.

The district **tourist office** (☎ 906 00; www.sta5.de; Wittelsbacherstrasse 2c, Starnberg; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri & 9am-1pm Sat May-mid-Oct) has a room-finding service.

Lake Starnberg is best known as the place where King Ludwig II drowned (see the boxed text, p344). The spot where his body was found, in the town of Berg on the eastern shore, is now marked with a memorial cross in the shallows, near the Votivkapelle. To get there, take bus 961 from Starnberg.

From Easter Sunday to mid-October, **Bayerische-Seen-Schiffahrt** (☎ 8061) runs boat services from Starnberg to the other lake towns, as well as 60-, 90- and 180-minute tours (€7.50/9.60/14.50 respectively). Its docks are behind the S-Bahn station. Boats pass by five palaces as well as the Ludwig II cross.

You can also take the ferry south to the **Buchheim Museum** (☎ 08158 997 060; Bernried; adult/child €8.50/3.50; combined boat & museum ticket €16;

☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Fri Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Tue-Fri Nov-Mar). The museum has a fascinating collection of expressionist art and German modern art, as well as folklore and ethnological exhibits from around the world.

If you'd rather get around the lake yourself, you can hire bikes at **Bike It** (☎ 746 430; Maximilianstrasse 4, Starnberg; per day €15-20). **Paul Dechant** (☎ 08151-121 06; Bootshaus 2), near the train station, has rowing, pedal and electric-powered boats for €11 per hour.

Starnberg is 30 minutes by S-Bahn (S6) from Munich (two zones or four strips of a *Streifenkarte*). To get to Starnberg by car from Munich, take the autobahn A95 and drive about 20km southwest.

ANDECHS

Founded in the 10th century, the lovely hill-top monastery of **Andechs** (☎ 08152-3760; admission free; ☎ 8am-7pm Apr-Sep, 8am-5pm Oct-Mar) has long been a place of pilgrimage, although more visitors come to slurp the Benedictines' fabled beers.

The church owns two relics of enormous importance: branches that are thought to come from Christ's crown of thorns, and a victory cross of Charlemagne, whose army overran much of Western Europe in the 9th century. In the Holy Chapel the votive candles, some of them over 1m tall, are among Germany's oldest. The remains of Carl Orff, the composer of *Carmina Burana*, are interred here as well.

The nearby **Braustüberl** is the monks' beer hall and garden. There are six varieties of beer on offer, from the rich and velvety Doppelbock dark to the fresh unfiltered Weissbier. The place is often so overrun by tourists that it's easy to forget you're in a religious institution, pious as your love for the brew may well be. Summer weekends can get insanely busy.

Andechs is served three times daily (but only twice on Sunday) by bus from the S-Bahn station in Starnberg Nord (S6; €8.80, 35 minutes) and the one in Herrsching (S5; €2.20, 10 minutes). The last bus going from Andechs to Herrsching leaves at 6.40pm; the last bus to Starnberg leaves at 4.43pm.

If you're travelling by car from Starnberg, it's best to take Andechser Strasse west and drive 15km (it's well signposted). Herrsching lies another 5km further to the west, via Seefeldler Strasse.

Bad Tölz

☎ 08041 / pop 17,500

Bad Tölz is a spa town in a stunningly beautiful location. The gentle inclines provide a delightful spot for its attractive, frescoed houses and the quaint shops of the old town. Munich residents flock here to enjoy the ultramodern swimming complex, Alpine slide and rafting trips down the Isar River. Bad Tölz is also the gateway to the Tölzer Land region and its emerald-green lakes, the Walchensee and the Kochelsee.

Every year on 6 November, its residents pay homage to the patron saint of horses, Leonhard. The famous **Leonhardifahrt** is a pilgrimage up to the Leonhardi chapel on Kalvarienberg, where townsfolk dress up in traditional costume and ride dozens of garlanded horsecarts to the strains of brass bands.

Bad Tölz' **tourist office** (☎ 786 70; www.bad-toelz.de; Max-Höfler-Platz 1; ☎ 9am-noon Mon-Sat & 2-5.30pm Mon-Fri) can book accommodation and organise tours.

Altstadt

Cobble-stoned and car-free, the **Marktstrasse** is flanked by statuesque townhouses with overhanging eaves that look twice as high on the sloping street. The **Heimatmuseum** (☎ 504 688; Marktstrasse 48; adult/concession €2/1; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-4pm, closed Mon) touches on practically all aspects of local culture and history, with a good collection of painted armoires (the so-called Tölzer Kisten), beer steins, folkloric garments and some pretty odd religious items.

In a side alley a few steps south of Marktstrasse, through Kirchgasse, is the **Pfarrkirche Maria Himmelfahrt** (Church of the Assumption; ☎ 761 260; Frauenfreithof), a late Gothic three-nave hall church with brilliantly painted glass and an expressive floating Madonna. Wandering down Marktstrasse, you'll soon spot the baroque **Franziskanerkirche** (Franciscan Church; ☎ 769 60; Franziskanergasse 1) across the Isar. Surrounded by lovely gardens, its blanched interior is enlivened by several beautiful altars.

Above the town, on Kalvarienberg, looms Bad Tölz' landmark, the twin-towered **Kalvarienbergkirche** (Cavalry Church). This enormous baroque church stands side-by-side with the petite **Leonhardikapelle** (Leonhardi Chapel; 1718), the destination of the Leonhardi pilgrimage.

Alpamare

In the spa section of town, west of the Isar River, you'll find the fantastic water complex **Alpamare** (☎ 509 991; www.alpamare.de; Ludwigstrasse 14; 4hr pass adult/child €25/19, day pass €31/21; ☎ 9am-10pm). This huge centre has heated indoor and outdoor mineral pools, a wave and surfing pool, a series of wicked waterslides (including Germany's longest, the 330m-long Alpabob-Wildwasser), saunas, solariums and its own hotel. There's a bus stop on Wilhelmstrasse nearby, served almost hourly from the Hauptbahnhof, which is 3km away.

Blomberg

Southwest of Bad Tölz, the **Blomberg** (1248m) is a family-friendly mountain that has a natural toboggan track in winter, plus easy hiking and a fun Alpine slide in summer.

Unless you're walking, getting up the hill involves a chairlift ride aboard the **Blombergbahn** (☎ 3726; top station return adult/child €7/3, midway one-way €2; ☎ 9am-5pm May-Oct, 9am-4pm Nov-Apr weather permitting). Over 1km long, the fibreglass **Alpine slide** snakes down the mountain from the middle station. You zip down through the 17 hairpin bends on little wheeled bobsleds with a joystick to control braking. You can achieve speeds of up to 50km/h but if you do, chances are you'll ram the rider ahead of you or fly clean off the track. A long-sleeved shirt and jeans provide a little protection.

Riding up to the midway station and sliding down costs €3.50 per adult (€3 concession), with discounts for multiple trips. In winter, a day pass good for skiing or the toboggan track costs €14 per adult (€12 concession), and sleds can be hired for €8 per day.

Getting There & Away

Bad Tölz has hourly train connections with Munich (€8.10, one hour) on the private **Bayerische Oberlandbahn** (BOB; ☎ 08024-997 171; www.bayerischeoberlandbahn.de). The trains depart from the Munich Hauptbahnhof. Alternatively, take the S2 from central Munich to Holzkirchen, then change to the BOB.

CHIEMSEE

☎ 08051 / elev 518m

The Bavarian Sea, as Chiemsee is affectionately known, is a haven for stressed-out city dwellers and anyone on the grand palace tour. Most visitors come to see King Ludwig II's homage to Versailles – Schloss

Herrenchiemsee – but the lake's natural beauty and water sports are as much reasons for its popularity.

The towns of Prien am Chiemsee and, about 5km south, Bernau am Chiemsee (both on the Munich–Salzburg rail line) are perfect bases for exploring the lake. Of the two towns, Prien is the larger and more commercial.

Information

All tourist offices have free web terminals for brief walk-in use.

Bernau tourist office (☎ 986 80; www.bernau-am-chiemsee.de; Aschauer Strasse 10)

Chiemsee Info-Center (☎ 965 550; www.chiemsee.de; ☎ 9am–7pm Mon–Fri, 10am–4pm Sat & Sun) On the southern lakeshore, near the Bernau-Felden autobahn exit. Information for the whole area.

Prien tourist office (☎ 690 50; www.tourismus.prien.de; Alte Rathausstrasse 11)

Sights

SCHLOSS HERRENCHIEMSEE

The island Herreninsel in the Chiemsee is home to a fantastical palace spawned by Ludwig II's warped imagination: **Schloss Herrenchiemsee** (☎ 688 70; www.herren-chiemsee.de; adult/under 18yr/concession €7/free/6; ☎ tours continuously 9am–5pm Apr–mid-Oct, 9.40am–4.14pm mid-Oct–Mar). Begun in 1878, it was never intended as a residence but as a homage to absolutist monarchy, as epitomised by Ludwig's hero, the French Sun King, Louis XIV. Ludwig spent only 10 days here and even then was rarely seen, preferring to read at night and sleep all day.

The palace is both a knock-off and an attempt to upstage Versailles, with larger

and more lavishly decorated rooms. Ludwig managed to spend more money on this palace than on Neuschwanstein (p342) and Linderhof (p349) combined. When cash ran out in 1885, one year before his death, 50 rooms remained unfinished.

The rooms that were completed outdo each other in opulence. The vast **Gesandtentrepp** (Ambassador Staircase), a double staircase leading to a frescoed gallery and topped by a glass roof, is the first visual knock-out on the guided tour, but that fades in comparison to the stunning **Grosse Spiegelgalerie** (Great Hall of Mirrors). This tunnel of light runs the length of the garden (98m, or 10m longer than that in Versailles). It sports 52 candelabra and 33 great glass chandeliers with 7000 candles, which took 70 servants half an hour to light. In late July it becomes a superb venue for classical concerts.

The **Paradeschlafzimmer** (State Bedroom) features a canopied bed perching altarlike on a pedestal behind a golden balustrade. This was the heart of the palace, where morning and evening audiences were held. It is the king's bedroom, the **Kleines Blaues Schlafzimmer** (Little Blue Bedroom), that really takes the cake. The decoration is sickly sweet, encrusted with gilded stucco and wildly extravagant carvings. The room is bathed in a soft blue light emanating from a glass globe at the foot of the bed. It supposedly took 18 months for a technician to perfect the lamp to the king's satisfaction.

Admission to the palace also entitles you to a spin around the **König-Ludwig II-Museum**, where you can see the king's christening and coronation robes, more blueprints of megalomaniac buildings and his death mask.

WORTH THE TRIP

While he was annexing Bavaria, Napoleon is said to have introduced a recipe for a tender, red-wine marinated beef fillet called *boeuf à la mode* – known in Germany as *Sauerbraten*. The Bavarians ejected the little emperor but kept their love of French cuisine. A great place to savour it and the crisp Alpine surrounds is **Auberge Moar-Alm** (☎ 08021-5520; www.moar-alm.de; Holzkirchner Strasse 14, Sachsenkam; mains €18–24, 3-course meals €25–38; ☎ Wed–Mon). This handsome chalet about 10km north of Bad Tölz, just off the main B13, occupies a magnificent spot – a grassy moraine girded by velvety pastures with a panorama of the snow-capped Karwendel mountains. The cuisine is just as breathtaking. Managed by Christine Roberts, a lifelong Francophile and one of Germany's top chefs, the kitchen swings between a Mediterranean brio (excellent fish and seafood dishes) and hearty, cockle-warming dishes from the north of France in winter. Local farmers provide most of the classy ingredients, but the fresh goat's cheese and snails come from *la belle France*, as do most of the fine wines. The warm, congenial hosts also offer cooking courses and baby-sitting for guests. Reservations are advised.

To get to the palace take the ferry from Prien-Stock (€5.90 return, 15 to 20 minutes) or from Bernau-Felden (€7.50, 25 minutes, May to October). From the boat landing on Herreninsel, it's about a 20-minute walk through lovely gardens to the palace. The palace tour, offered in German or English, takes 30 minutes.

FRAUENINSEL

This island is home to the **Frauenwörth Abbey**, founded in the late 8th century and one of the oldest nunneries in Bavaria. The 10th-century abbey church, whose freestanding campanile sports a distinctive onion-dome top (11th century), is worth a visit. Opposite the church is the AD 860 Carolingian **Torhalle** (☎ 08054-72 56; admission €1.50; ☎ 10am–6pm May–Oct). It houses medieval objets d'art, sculpture and changing exhibits of regional paintings from the 18th to the 20th centuries.

Return ferry fare, including a stop at Herreninsel, is €7 from Prien-Stock and €7.50 from Bernau-Felden.

Activities

The swimming beaches at Chieming and Gstadt (both free) are the easiest to reach, on the lake's eastern and northern shores respectively. A variety of boats are available for hire at many beaches, for €5 to €20 per hour. In Prien, **Bootsverleih Stöffl** (☎ 2000; Seestrasse 64) has two-seater paddleboats for €5 per hour and electric boats for €9 to €19.

The futuristic-looking glass roof by the harbour in Prien-Stock shelters **Prienavera** (☎ 609 570; Seestrasse 120; 4hr pass adult/concession €7.90/3.50, day pass €9.90/5.50; ☎ seasonal, usually 10am–9pm). This popular pool complex has an enormous wellness area, water slides and a restaurant.

Sleeping

The tourist offices can set up **private rooms** (per person from €18) in town and in farmhouses.

Panorama Camping Harras (☎ 904 60; www.camping-harras.de; per person/tent/car €5.40/3/1.60) This camp site is scenically located on a peninsula with its own private beach, catamaran and surfboard hire. The restaurant has a delightful lakeside terrace.

DJH hostel (☎ 687 70; www.djh.de; Carl-Braun-Strasse 66; dm under/over 26yr €17.80/21.80; ☎ closed Dec–Jan) Prien's hostel organises lots of activities and has an environmental study centre for young

people. It's in a bucolic spot, a 15-minute walk from the Hauptbahnhof.

Hotel Garni Möwe (☎ 5004; www.hotel-garni-moewe.de; Seepromenade 111, Prien; s €45–60, d €64–86; ☎) This traditional Bavarian hotel right on the lakefront is excellent value, especially the loft rooms. It has its own bike and boat hire, plus a fitness centre, and the large garden is perfect for travellers with children.

Hotel Bonnschlössl (☎ 890 11; www.alter-wirt-bernaud.de; Kirchplatz 9, Bernau; s €44–72, d €72–104; ☎) Built in 1477, this pocket-sized palace hotel with the faux-turrets once belonged to the Bavarian royal court. Rooms are stylish and packed with amenities, and there's a wonderful terrace with rambling garden.

Eating

Badehaus (☎ 970 300; Rasthausstrasse 11, Bernau; mains €6–16) Near the Chiemsee Info-Center and the lakeshore, this contemporary beer hall and garden has quirky décor and gourmet fare enjoyed by a mix of locals and visitors. A special attraction is the 'beer bath', a glass tub filled (sometimes) with a mix of beer and water.

Der Alte Wirt (☎ 890 11; Kirchplatz 9, Bernau; mains €7–16, brotzeit €4–9; ☎ closed Mon) For great Bavarian cuisine with swift service, drop by this listed monument, a massive half-timbered inn with five centuries of history. The Leberkäs is clearly the star of the menu, but the meat and fish dishes are uniformly excellent.

Westernacher am See (☎ 4722; Seestrasse 115, Prien; mains €8–16) This lakeside dining haven has a multiple personality, with a cosy restaurant, cocktail bar, café, beer garden and glassed-in winter terrace. Its speciality is modern twists on old Bavarian favourites. They also have spacious double rooms (€88) with a splendid view of the Chiemsee.

Getting There & Around

Prien and Bernau are served by hourly trains from Munich (€13.40, one hour). Hourly bus 9505 connects the two lake towns.

Local buses run from Prien Bahnhof to the harbour in Stock. You can also take the historic Chiemseebahn (1887), the world's oldest narrow-gauge **steam train** (one-way/return €2/3; ☎ May–Sep).

Ferries operated by **Chiemsee Schifffahrt** (☎ 6090; www.chiemsee-schifffahrt.de; Seestrasse 108) ply the lake every hour with stops at Herreninsel, Fraueninsel, Sebruck and Chieming

on a schedule that changes seasonally. You can circumnavigate the entire lake and make all these stops (getting off and catching the next ferry that comes your way) for €9.80. Children aged six to 15 get a 50% discount.

Radsport Reischenböck (☎ 4631; Bahnhofplatz 6, Prien) hires out city/mountain bikes for €8/15 per day.

THE ROMANTIC ROAD

Two million people ply the **Romantische Strasse** (Romantic Road) every year, making it by far the most popular of Germany's holiday routes. That means lots of signs in English and Japanese, tourist coaches and kitsch galore. For the most part the trail rolls through pleasant, if not spectacular, landscape that links some of the most picturesque towns in Bavaria and the eastern fringes of Baden-Württemberg.

Despite the hordes of visitors, it's worth falling for the sales pitch – you won't be alone, but you certainly won't be disappointed. For the best trip, pick and choose your destinations carefully, or risk an overdose of the incredible medieval architecture.

Orientation & Information

The Romantic Road runs north-south through western Bavaria, covering 420km between Würzburg and Füssen near the Austrian border. It goes through more than two dozen cities and towns, including Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Dinkelsbühl and Augsburg.

Each town en route has its own local tourist office, in addition to the central **Romantic Road tourist office** (☎ 09851-902 71; www.romantischestrasse.de; Marktplatz) in Dinkelsbühl.

Getting There & Away

Though Frankfurt is the most popular gateway for the Romantic Road, Munich is a good choice as well, especially if you decide to take the bus (see also right).

BICYCLE

With its gentle gradients and bucolic flavour between towns, the Romantic Road is ideal for the holidaying cyclist. Bikes can be hired at many train stations; tourist offices keep lists of bicycle-friendly hotels that permit storage. Ask for a copy of *Radwandern*, a German-language booklet of maps and route suggestions.

BUS

Half a dozen daily buses connect Füssen and Garmisch-Partenkirchen (€8.70, all via Neuschwanstein and most also via Schloss Linderhof). There are also several connections between Füssen and Oberstdorf (via Pfronen or the Tirolean town of Reutte).

BerlinLinienBus (☎ 030-861 9331; www.berlinlinienbus.de) runs buses between Berlin and Rothenburg (one-way/return €46/73, seven hours).

Deutsche Touring's Europabus (☎ 01805-790 303; www.deutsche-touring.com) operates a daily Castle Road coach service between Heidelberg and Rothenburg (one-way/return, 3½ hours €34.90/48.80).

TRAIN

To start at the southern end, take the hourly train link from Munich to Füssen (€19.80, two hours). Rothenburg is linked by train to Würzburg (€10, one hour), Munich (from €37, three hours), Nördlingen (€23, 2½ hours) and Augsburg (€24, 2½ hours), with several changes needed to reach some destinations.

There are regional trains from Nuremberg Hauptbahnhof to Rothenburg (€8.30; 1½ to two hours) several times a day.

Getting Around

BUS

It is possible to do this route using train connections or local buses, but it's complicated, tedious and slow. The ideal way to travel is by car, though many foreign travellers prefer to take the Deutsche Touring's Europabus, seven hours), which can get incredibly crowded in summer. From April to October, Europabus runs one coach daily in each direction between Frankfurt and Füssen (for Neuschwanstein); the entire journey takes about 12 hours. There's no charge for breaking the journey and continuing the next day. Also see p763.

Reservations & Fares

Tickets are available for short segments of the trip, and reservations are only necessary during peak-season weekends. Reservations can be made through travel agents, **Deutsche Touring** (☎ 01805-790 303; www.deutsche-touring.com), **EurAide** (☎ 089-59 38 89; www.euraide.de) in Munich, and Deutsche Bahn's Reisezentrum offices in the train stations.

The most heavily travelled circuits – along with the one-way and return fares from Frankfurt – are listed below.

Destination	Cost (one-way/return)
Augsburg	€59.80/83.70
Füssen	€79.40/111.20
Munich	€98.80/138.40
Nördlingen	€47.70/66.70
Rothenburg ob der Tauber	€34.70/48.60
Würzburg	€21.90/30.70

The following are the fares from Munich.

Destination	Cost (one-way/return)
Augsburg	€40/56.10
Nördlingen	€52.20/73.10
Rothenburg ob der Tauber	€65.20/91.20
Würzburg	€78/109.10

Luggage (per piece €2) and bicycles (per 12/30 stops €9/15) cost extra. Students, children, pensioners and rail-pass holders qualify for discounts of between 10% and 60%.

WÜRZBURG

☎ 0931 / pop 131,000

'If I could choose my place of birth I would consider Würzburg,' wrote author Hermann Hesse, and it's not difficult to see why. This scenic town straddles the Main River and is renowned for its art, architecture and delicate wines. Its historic buildings shine again today, having been carefully reconstructed from wartime damage after 1945.

Würzburg was a Franconia duchy when, in 686, three Irish missionaries tried to persuade Duke Gosbert to convert, and ditch his wife. Gosbert was mulling it over when his wife had the three bumped off. When the murders were discovered decades later, the martyrs became saints and Würzburg was made a pilgrimage city, and, in 742, a bishopric.

For centuries the resident prince-bishops wielded enormous power and wealth, and the city grew in opulence under their rule. Their crowning glory is the Residenz, one of the finest baroque structures in Germany and a Unesco World Heritage Site.

Orientation

Würzburg's centre is compact and, perhaps by more than accident, shaped like a bishop's

mitre. The Hauptbahnhof and bus station are at the northern end of the Altstadt. The main shopping street, Kaiserstrasse, runs south from here into the town centre. The Main River forms the western boundary of the Altstadt; the fortress is located on the west bank, with other key sights to the east.

Information

BOOKSHOPS

Hugendubel (☎ 354 040; Schmalzmarkt 12) Good stock of English-language titles.

DISCOUNT CARDS

Welcome Card (per 7 days €2) Available from tourist offices; gives reduced admission prices to main sights and tours.

EMERGENCY

Ambulance (☎ 192 22)

Ärztliche Notfallpraxis (Medical Emergency Practice; ☎ 322 833; Domerschulstrasse 1)

INTERNET ACCESS

N@city (☎ 3041 9494; Sanderstrasse 27, per 10min €0.60; ☎ 10am-midnight) Big state-of-the-art internet café.

Stadtbücherei (City Library; ☎ 373 294; Falkenhaus am Markt; per 20min €1) In the same building as the tourist office.

LAUNDRY

SB Waschsalon (☎ 416 773; Frankfurter Strasse 13a; per load €4)

MONEY

Deutsche Bank (Juliuspromenade 66)

POST

Post office (Bahnhofplatz 2 & Paradeplatz)

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourist office Marktplatz (☎ 372 335; Falkenhaus; www.wuerzburg.de; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun Apr-Dec, 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat Jan-Mar); **Am Congress Centrum** (☎ 372 335; Am Congress Centrum; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Thu, 8am-1pm Fri)

TRAVEL AGENCIES

STA Travel (☎ 521 76; Zwingler 6)

Sights

RESIDENZ

A symbol of wealth and prestige for the Würzburg bishops, the **Residenz** (☎ 355 170; Balthasar-Neumann-Promenade; adult/concession €5/4; ☎ 9am-6pm

WÜRZBURG

	A	B	C	D
1	INFORMATION	Lusamgärtlein.....(see 15)	EATING	
	Ärztliche Notfallpraxis.....1 B5	Mainfränkisches Museum.....(see 11)	Backöfele.....26 B5	
	Deutsche Bank.....2 B4	Martin-von-Wagner Museum.....(see 17)	Bürgerspital Weinstuben.....27 C4	
	Hugendubel.....3 B5	Museum am Dom.....13 B5	Juliussspital.....28 B4	
	N@city.....4 B6	Museum im Kulturspeicher.....14 A3	Kiliansbäck.....29 C3	
	Post Office.....5 C5	Neumünster.....15 B5	Le Clochard Bistro.....30 B5	
	Post Office.....6 C3	Rathaus.....16 B5	Mosquito Cantina.....31 A4	
	STA Travel.....7 B6	Residenz.....17 C5	Natur-Feinkostladen.....32 B6	
	Stadtbücherei.....(see 9)	Röntgen Gedächtnisstätte.....18 B3	Uni-Café.....33 B5	
	Tourist Office Am Congress Centrum.....8 A4	Schiffstouristik Kurth & Schiebe.....(see 12)		
	Tourist Office Falkenhaus.....9 B4	Weingut Juliussspital.....(see 28)		
2	SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES	SLEEPING	DRINKING	
	Bürgerspital Weingut.....(see 27)	Babelfish.....19 D3	MUCK.....34 B6	
	Dom St Kilian.....10 B5	DJH Hostel.....20 A6	Pleicher Hof.....35 A3	
	Domschatz.....(see 13)	Hotel Dortmunder Hof.....21 B4	Standard.....36 B4	
	Festung Marienberg.....11 A6	Hotel Rebstock.....22 B5	TRANSPORT	
	Fürstenbaumuseum.....(see 11)	Hotel Residence.....23 A4	Boat docks.....37 A4	
	Haus des Frankenweins.....12 A4	Hotel zum Winzermännle.....24 B5	Fahrradstation.....38 C3	
	Hofkirche.....(see 17)	Pension Spehnkuch.....25 B3	Main Bus Station.....39 C3	
			Mitfahrzentrale.....40 C3	

Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Nov-Mar; English-language tours 11am & 3pm), is one of the most important and beautiful palaces in southern Germany.

Almost immediately upon entering you'll see the brilliant **grand staircase** come into view on the left. Miraculously, the vaulted ceiling survived the war intact and Tiepolo's magnificent fresco *The Four Continents* (1750-53) – said to be the world's largest above a staircase – dazzles in all its glory. Look closely to see Balthasar Neumann, architect of the Residenz, perched smugly on a cannon.

For opulence, the bishops' imperial apartments rivalled those of kings. The **Kaisersaal** (Imperial Hall) is a combination of marble, gold stucco and more incredible frescoes. The **Spiegelsaal** (Hall of Mirrors) is the most memorable, with gilded stucco dripping from the ceiling and walls lined with glass-like panels. In the building's southern wing is the magnificent **Hofkirche** (Court Church; admission free), an early example of Neumann's penchant for spatial illusions. The side wings of the altar are decorated with paintings by Tiepolo.

Next to the church, the **Martin-von-Wagner Museum** (☎ 312 288; admission free; closed Mon) shows the whimsical works of court sculptor Peter Wagner. The museum backs onto the spectacular French- and English-style gardens of the **Hofgarten** (dawn-dusk).

FESTUNG MARIENBERG

On the Main's left bank, the **Festung Marienberg** (Marienberg fortress) has presided over Würzburg since the city's prince-bishops commissioned a 'new' castle in 1201. It was only ever taken once, by Swedish troops in the Thirty Years' War. The lovely walk up from the river via the vine-covered hill takes 20 minutes, or bus 9 will take you there from the central bus station.

The fortress' residential wing now holds the **Fürstenbaumuseum** (☎ 438 38; adult/concession €2.50/2; 9am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-mid-Oct; 10am-4pm Tue-Sun mid-Oct-Mar), the city's history museum. A highlight is a huge tapestry showing the entire family of Julius Echter von Mespelbrunn, a wealthy duke-bishop who refashioned the inner fortress as a Renaissance at the end of the 17th century. The baroque Zeughaus (armoury) houses the **Mainfränkisches Museum** (☎ 205 940; adult/concession €3/1.50, combined ticket for both museums €4/2.50; 10am-7pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct; 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar). It has a world-famous collection of works by master sculptor Tilman Rie-

menschneider, and in the Kelterhalle, where grapes once fermented, there's an exhibit on winemaking.

CHURCHES

In the Altstadt, the perfectly symmetrical **Neumünster** (7am-6pm) stands on the site where the ill-fated missionaries met their maker. The baroque interior has busts of the three martyrs (the three Irish missionaries – Kilian, Coloman and Totnan) on the high altar and the tomb of St Kilian in the crypt. The north exit leads to the lovely **Lusamgärtlein** with the grave of Walther von der Vogelweide, one of Germany's most famous minstrels. Even today wreaths of flowers are regularly laid on his tomb.

On the same square is **Dom St Kilian** (St Kilian Cathedral), rebuilt in a hotchpotch of modern, baroque and Romanesque styles after significant damage during WWII. Of note are the prince-bishops' tombstones on the pillars; the two in red marble in the left aisle are by Riemenschneider.

MUSEUM AM DOM & DOMSCHATZ

Würzburg's newest museum is in a beautiful building by the cathedral. The **Museum am Dom** (☎ 386 261; Domerschulstrasse 2; adult/concession €3.50/2.50 combined ticket with Domschatz €4.50; 10am-6pm Apr-Oct; 10am-5pm Nov-Mar, closed Mon) houses a collection of modern art on Christian themes. Works of international renown by Joseph Beuys, Otto Dix and Käthe Kollwitz are on display, as well as masterpieces of the Romantic, Gothic and baroque periods.

At the Würzburger **Domschatz** (Cathedral Treasury; ☎ 385 6600; Plattnerstrasse; adult/student €2/1.50; 2-5pm Tue-Sun) you can wander through a rich display of church artefacts from the 11th century to the present.

MUSEUM IM KULTURSPICHER

In a born-again historic granary right on the Main River you'll find the **Museum im Kulturspeicher** (☎ 322 250; Veitshöchheimer Strasse 5; adult/concession €3.50/2; 1-6pm Tue, 11am-6pm Wed, 11am-7pm Thu, 11am-6pm Sat & Sun). This fascinating museum has choice artworks from the 19th to the 21st centuries, with an emphasis on German impressionism, neorealism and contemporary art. It also houses the post-1945 constructivist art of the Peter C Ruppert Collection, a challenging assembly of computer art, sculpture, paintings and photographs.

RÖNTGEN GEDÄCHTNISSTÄTTE

Würzburg's most famous modern scion is Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen, discoverer of the X-ray. The **Röntgen Gedächtnisstätte** (Röntgen Museum; ☎ 351 1103; Röntgenring 8; admission free; ☹ 9am-4pm Mon-Thu, 9am-3pm Fri) is a tribute to his life and work.

Tours

Schiffstouristik Kurth & Schiebe (☎ 585 73; Alter Kranen; €9) offers quickie river cruises (40 minutes) to the wine-growing town of Veitshöchheim.

The tourist office runs 1½-hour English-language **guided tours** (adult/child €5/3; ☹ 11am & 3pm, May-Oct) departing from Falkenhaus. You can also borrow an audio-guide with a recorded tour (€5) of all the major sights.

Würzburg is the centre of the Franconian wine industry, and you can sample some of the area's finest vintages on any of the following tours of the historic wine cellars. (reservations are advised).

Bürgerspital Weingut (☎ 350 3403; Theaterstrasse 19; tours €5; ☹ tours 2pm Sat Mar-Oct) At the Bürgerspital Weinstuben; includes a small bottle of wine.

Haus des Frankenweins (☎ 390 1111; Kranenkai 1) Wine sampling and sales.

Weingut Juliusspital (☎ 393 1400; Juliuspromenade 19; tours €5; ☹ tours 3pm Fri Apr-Nov, in German) In the splendid complex with the Juliusspital wine-bar.

Festivals & Events

For full details check www.wuerzburg.de.

Africa-Festival Europe's largest festival of black music (tickets from the tourist office), held in late May and early June.

Mozart Festival (☎ tickets 373 336) The Residenz is the ultimate backdrop for this series of classical concerts, held in late May/early June.

Sleeping

The toll-free 24-hour room reservation hotline is ☎ 0800-194 1408.

BUDGET

Camping Kanu Club (☎ 725 36; Mergentheimer Strasse 13b; per person/tent €2.50) The closest camp site to the town centre. Take tram 3 or 5 to the Judenhühlweg stop, which is on its doorstep.

DJH hostel (☎ 425 90; www.djh.de; Burkarder Strasse 44; dm under/over 26yr €20.30/24.30) At the foot of the fortress, this well-equipped hostel has room for 254 warm bodies in three- to eight-bed dorms. Take tram 3 or 5 to Ludwigsbrücke, then it's a five-minute walk north along the river. Has wheel-chair access.

Babelfish (☎ 304 0430; www.babelfish-hostel.de; Pymstrasse 3; dm €16-24, d €45-60; ☎ ☹) Operated by two fun-loving locals, this cute all-ages hostel, with wheelchair access, offers a good deal for independent travellers. Rooms are spacious and have Ikea-style bunk beds and cheery colours. Free internet access, kitchen and washing facilities are some of the perks. The name comes from a creature in Douglas Adams' novel *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*.

Pension Spehnhuch (☎ 547 52; www.pension-spehnhuch.de; Röntgenring 7; s €29-33, d €52-60) Rooms are no-frills and snug, but they're clean. There's also English-speaking staff and a sunny breakfast room.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

Hotel zum Winzermännle (☎ 541 56; www.winzermannle.de; Domstrasse 32; s €56-70, d €86-100) This former winery was rebuilt in its original style after the war by the same charming family. Rooms in the front are cavernous and equipped with TVs and telephones. It's right in the pedestrian zone with parking nearby.

Hotel Dortmunder Hof (☎ 561 63; www.dortmunder-hof.de; Innerer Graben 22; s €40-65, d €70-100) In a handy position two blocks from the Markt, this cycling-friendly hotel is in a pretty lemon-coloured building with clean, comfy rooms including cable TV. Parking can be arranged close by.

Hotel Residenz (☎ 535 46; www.wuerzburg-hotel.de; Juliuspromenade 1; s €63-74, d €83-105; ☎) With comely dormer windows and royal-hued interiors, this charming hotel, replete with all the trimmings, is a short walk from the river, congress centre and the city's main sights.

Hotel Rebstock (☎ 309 30; www.rebstock.com; Neubaustasse 7; s €96-139, d €163-220; ☎) Class, hospitality and a touch of nostalgia are the characteristics of this family-run hotel, one of Würzburg's best snooze temples. Meticulously restored, this rococo mansion has superbly furnished rooms and amenities galore. The warm ambience recalls the south of France.

Eating

For a town of its size, Würzburg has a bewildering array of enticing pubs, beer gardens, cafés and restaurants, with plenty of student hang-outs among them.

Backöfele (☎ 590 59; Ursulinergasse 2; mains €7-18) For romantic atmosphere, it's hard to

beat this rustic restaurant set around a pretty courtyard. The menu features innovative twists on traditional game, steak and fish dishes. Marbled slabs of meat are grilled over the wood oven.

Bürgerspital Weinstuben (☎ 352 880; Theaterstrasse 19; mains €7-10; ☹ closed Aug) The cosy nooks of this labyrinthine medieval place are among Würzburg's most popular eating and drinking spots. Choose from a broad selection of Franconian wines and wonderful regional dishes, including *Mostsuppe*, a tasty wine soup.

Juliusspital (☎ 352 880; Juliuspromenade 19; mains €7-10; ☹ closed Aug) This attractive *Weinstube* (traditional wine bar) features fabulous Franconian delicacies. The Juliusspital was first founded as a hospital in 1576 by Julius Echter von Mespelbrunn, whose name pops up everywhere in Würzburg. The basement has a cave-like bakery with a clutch of tables.

Le Clochard Bistro (☎ 129 07; Neubaustasse 20; dishes €4-8) This trendy hang-out for bright young things has a French-influenced menu and a host of divine sweet and savoury crepes to choose from.

Mosquito Cantina (☎ 510 22; Karmelitenstrasse 31; mains €8-14; ☹ dinner only) This popular Mexican restaurant does a booming biz in stuffed tacos, grilled fajitas and some good vegetarian dishes. Relaxed in the early evening, the meal crowd is gradually replaced by the pre-club set later on.

Uni-Café (☎ 156 72; Neubaustasse 2; snacks €3-7) This is a hugely popular student hang-out on the lively Neubaustasse strip. It has two floors of chilled-out clientele who come for the cheap snacks, cool music and – most of all – some fun.

Natur-Feinkostladen (Sanderstrasse 2a; dishes from €2.50) Come here for wholesome snacks and healthy fare, such as grain burgers; this place also runs the specialist grocery right next door.

Kiliansbäck (Kaiserstrasse 20) South of the Hauptbahnhof this bakery is a good bet for cheap snack specials and tasty goodies.

Drinking & Entertainment

The town's monthly listing magazine is *Fritz* (in German).

MUCK (☎ 465 1144; Sanderstrasse 29) This fun place has loads of board games to while away the hours. One of the earliest openers in town, and serving a mean breakfast from 7am, the

café morphs into something of an informal party after nightfall.

Schützenhof beer garden (☎ 724 22; Mainleitenweg 48) For a drink with sun and a bucolic view, head for this delightful beer garden about 500m south of the Käppele chapel on the east bank of the Main. The main ingredients are ultra-fresh – listen for the farmyard animals protesting to the rear – and the beer (try the Balthasar Neumann) is served with a donkey-shaped *Brezel*.

Standard (☎ 465 1144, 511 40; Oberthuerstr 11a) Beneath a corrugated-iron ceiling and stainless-steel fans are newspaper racks, art and soulful jazz, with focaccias and pasta on the menu. Downstairs there's a second, dimly lit bar where bands and DJs perform a couple of times a week.

Pleicher Hof (☎ 970 70; Pleichertorstrasse 30; ☹ café 5.30pm-1am Tue-Sat, bar 9.30pm-4am Wed, Fri & Sat) This cool café spreads Med-style vibes during the evening, with light meals and coffees being the favoured fare. In the cellar music bar the agenda goes for the jugular, with heavy garage, funk and amped-up student parties.

Autonomes Kulturzentrum Würzburg (AKW; ☎ 417 800; Frankfurter Strasse 87; ☹ Thu-Sat, pub only Sun) There's little this 1880s brewery complex doesn't do. Inside you'll find artists' studios, a small indie theatre, a disco and a split-level bar with squashy sofas to sink into. Alternative bands play regularly, and in summer there's a bustling beer garden. Take tram 2 to the Siebold-Museum stop.

Getting There & Away

There are frequent train connections to Frankfurt (€24, 1½ hours), Bamberg (from €15.50, 1½ hours) and Nuremberg (€20, one hour) as well as Rothenburg ob der Tauber (€10, one hour).

The Romantic Road Europabus stops at the main bus station next to the Hauptbahnhof.

Getting Around

Würzburg is best seen on foot, but you can also take buses and trams for €1.10 (for short journeys) or €2 (for regular journeys); the cheaper ticket will do for trips in town. Day passes are €4; passes bought on a Saturday can also be used on Sunday. For a taxi call ☎ 194 10.

Bicycle-hire shops include the **Fahrradstation** (☎ 574 45; Hauptbahnhof; bikes per day €8; ☹ closed Sun & Mon).

ASCHAFFENBURG

☎ 06021 / pop 68,500

The cobbled lanes and half-timbered houses of this charming town make a good day trip from Würzburg or Frankfurt. In style terms it's more Hessian than Bavarian, but King Ludwig II was so chuffed with the mild climate he dubbed Aschaffenburg the 'Bavarian Nice'.

The **tourist office** (☎ 395 800; www.aschaffenburg.de; Schlossplatz 1; ☞ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat) runs 90-minute guided walks (€3.50) on Saturdays at 2pm from April to October.

Aschaffenburg's most spectacular draw is the magnificent Renaissance **Schloss Johannisburg**, the summer residence of the Mainz archbishops. Today it is home to the **Schlossmuseum** (☎ 386 570; Schlossplatz 4; adult/concession €4/3, combined ticket with Pompejanum €6/5; ☞ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar). The modest interior has the usual oil paintings and period furniture, but the true highlight is the collection of architectural cork models depicting landmarks from ancient Rome.

Behind the beautiful palace garden is the **Pompejanum** (☎ 386 570; adult/child €4/free; ☞ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep). Built for King Ludwig I, this replica of a Pompeian villa comes complete with frescoes, mosaics and Roman antiquities.

From there, follow Schlossgasse into the Altstadt. On Stiftsplatz you'll come upon the **Stiftskirche**. This has its origins in the 10th century, but is now an oddly skewed but impressive mix of Romanesque, Gothic and baroque styles. The attached **Stiftsmuseum** (☎ 330 463; adult/concession €2.50/1.50; ☞ 11am-5pm Tue-Sun) is home to some intriguing relics and paintings.

Three kilometres west of town lies the **Park Schönbusch**, a shady 18th-century expanse dotted with ornamental ponds and follies, and the **Schlösschen** (☎ 386 570; Kleine Schönbuschallee 1; tours adult/concession €3/2; ☞ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep), a country retreat of the archbishops. The hourly tours are in German.

Hearty Franconian fare can be found at the tiny **Schlossgass' 16** (☎ 123 13; Schlossgasse 16; mains €7-14) wine tavern, and **Wirtshaus Zum Fegerer** (☎ 156 46; Schlossgasse 14; mains €8-15), a charming inn with courtyard dining.

Trains to and from Würzburg (€17, one hour) and Frankfurt (€11, 30 minutes) operate at least hourly. The A3 autobahn runs right past town.

ROTHENBURG OB DER TAUBER

☎ 09861 / pop 12,000

A well-polished gem from the Middle Ages, Rothenburg ob der Tauber (meaning 'above the Tauber River') is the main tourist stop along the Romantic Road. With its web of cobbled lanes, higgledy-piggledy houses and towered walls, the town is impossibly charming. Preservation orders here are the strictest in Germany – and at times it feels like a medieval theme park – but all's forgiven in the evenings, when the yellow lamplight casts its spell long after the last tour buses have left.

Orientation

The **Hauptbahnhof** is a 10-minute walk east of the Altstadt along Ansbacher Strasse. The main shopping drag is Schmiedgasse, which runs south to Plönlein, a scenic fork in the road anchored by a half-timbered ochre cottage and gurgling fountain that's become Rothenburg's unofficial emblem.

Information

Dresdner Bank (Galgengasse 23)

Post office Altstadt (Milchmarkt 5); Bahnhof (Zentro mall, Bahnhofstrasse 15)

Rothenburger Reisebüro (☎ 4611; Hauptbahnhof) Travel agency.

Tourist office (☎ 404 800; www.rothenburg.de; Marktplatz 2; ☞ 9am-noon & 1-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat & Sun May-Oct, 9am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat Nov-Mar) There is an electronic room-booking board in the foyer, which is always open, plus internet.

Volksbank (Marktplatz) To the right of the tourist office.

Wäscherei Then (☎ 2775; Johannitergasse 9; per load €3.50) Laundry.

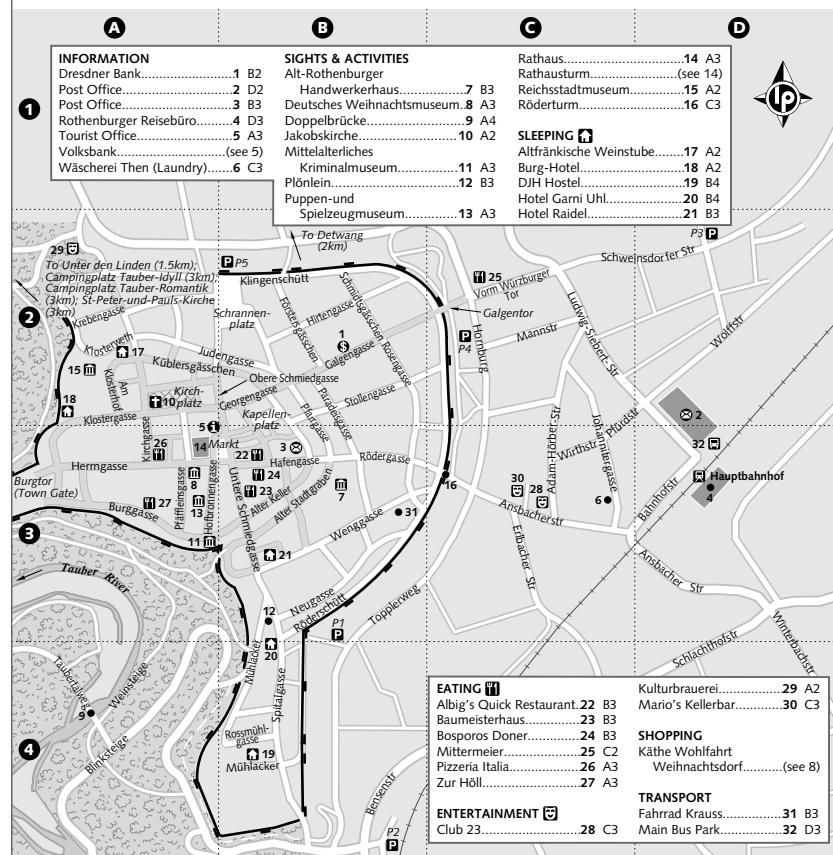
Sights

The **Rathaus** (town hall) on the Markt was begun in Gothic style in the 14th century, and completed during the Renaissance. The 220-step viewing platform of the **Rathausturm** (adult/concession €1/0.50; ☞ 9.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-5pm Apr-Oct, noon-3pm Dec) provides majestic views of the Tauber.

North of the Marktplatz, the glorious Gothic **Jakobskirche** (☎ 700 60; Klingengasse 1; adult/concession €1.50/0.50, during services free; ☞ 9am-5.30pm Apr-Oct, 10am-noon & 2-4pm Nov-Mar) is Rothenburg's major place of pilgrimage. The main draw is the carved **Heilig Blut Altar** (Holy Blood Altar), set on a raised platform at the western end of the nave. It depicts the Last Supper with Judas, unusually, at the centre, receiving bread

ROTHENBURG OB DER TAUBER

0 200 m
0 0.1 miles



from Christ. The rock crystal inside is said to contain a drop of Christ's blood.

Brutal implements of torture and punishment from medieval times are on display at the fascinating **Mittelalterliches Kriminalmuseum** (Medieval Crime Museum; ☎ 5359; Burggasse 3; adult/concession €3.50/2.30; ☞ 9.30am-6pm Apr-Oct, 2-4pm Nov & Jan-Feb, 10am-4pm Mar & Dec). Displays include chastity belts, masks of disgrace for gossips, a cage for errant bakers, a neck brace for quarrelsome women and a beer-barrel pen for drunks. The exhibits (also explained in English) are so popular that the museum was recently expanded.

The intact city walls form a ring around the city. You can walk 2.5km of the wall and get good city views from the eastern tower,

Röderturm (Rödergasse; adult/child €1.50/1; ☞ 9am-5pm). It's staffed by volunteers and often closed. For the most impressive views, though, go to the west side of town, where a sweeping view of the Tauber Valley includes the **Doppelbrücke**, a double-decker bridge. Also visible is the head of a trail that leads down the valley and over to the lovely Romanesque **St-Peter-und-Pauls-Kirche** (☎ 5524; Detwang; adult/child €1/0.50; ☞ 8.30am-noon & 1.30-5pm Apr-Oct; 10am-noon & 2-4pm Nov-Mar, closed Mon) which contains another stunning Riemenschneider altar. There's a beer garden (Unter den Linden) about halfway along the trail.

The city's showcase of local art, culture and history is the **Reichsstadtmuseum** (Imperial City Museum; ☎ 939 043; Klosterhof 5; adult/child €3/2; ☞ 10am-5pm Apr-Oct, 1-4pm Nov-Mar), which is housed in a

former convent. Highlights include the superb *Rothenburger Passion* (1494) by Martinus Schwarz, and the convent rooms themselves, including a 14th-century kitchen. The **gardens** are ideal for a quiet stroll.

The **Alt-Rothenburger Handwerkerhaus** (☎ 942 80; Alter Stadtgraben 26; adult/child €2.20/1.60; ☹ 11am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct, 2-4pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun Nov & Dec) reconstructs the working and social life of Rothenburg's medieval citizens. For the nostalgic, the **Puppen-und Spielzeugmuseum** (Doll & Toy Museum; ☎ 7330; Hofbronnengasse 13; adult/child €4/1.50; ☹ 9.30am-6pm Mar-Dec, 11am-5pm Jan-Feb) has an amazing collection of doll's houses, teddy bears and toy carousels. Also worth a visit is the **Deutsches Weihnachtsmuseum** (German Christmas Museum; ☎ 409 365; Herrngasse 1; adult/child €4/2; ☹ 10am-5.30pm late Apr-Dec, weekends only Jan-early Apr), which depicts various Christmas customs as they developed through the ages.

Tours

The tourist office runs 90-minute walking tours (€6, in English) at 2pm from April to October. Every evening a lantern-toting *Nachtwächter* (night watchman) dressed in traditional costume leads an entertaining tour of the Altstadt; English tours (€6) meet at the Rathaus at 8pm, German tours (€5) head off at 9.30pm.

Festivals & Events

The **Historisches Festspiel 'Der Meistertrunk'** (see the boxed text, opposite) takes place each year on Whitsuntide, with parades, dances and a medieval market. The highlight, though, is the re-enactment of the mythical Meistertrunk story.

The Meistertrunk play itself is performed three more times: once during the **Reichsstadt-Festtage** in early September, when the entire city's history is re-enacted in the streets, and twice during the Rothenburger Herbst, an autumn celebration in October.

The **Historischer Schäfertanz** (Historical Shepherds' Dance), featuring colourfully dressed couples, takes places on Marktplatz several times between April and October.

The **Weihnacht-Reiterlmarkt** (Christmas Market, opposite) in Rothenburg is one of the most romantic in Germany. It takes place each year around the central Marktplatz from late November until 22 December.

Sleeping

Accommodation in Rothenburg is surprisingly good value. The tourist office has an

electronic room reservation board in the foyer. The 24-hour booking hotline is ☎ 194 12.

DJH hostel (☎ 941 60; www.djh.de; Mühlacker 1; dm under/over 26yr €19/23; ☑) Rothenburg's hostel is housed in two enormous old buildings in the south of town. It's nicely renovated, extremely well equipped and very popular, so book in advance.

Altfränkische Weinstube (☎ 6404; www.romanticroad.com/altfrankenische-weinstube; Am Klosterhof 7; s €48, d €55-65; ☑) Tucked away in a quiet side street near the Reichsstadtmuseum, this enchanting inn has atmosphere-laden rooms, all with bathtubs and most with four-poster or canopied beds. The restaurant (open for dinner only) serves up good regional fare with a dollop of medieval cheer.

Burg-Hotel (☎ 948 90; www.burghotel.rothenburg.de; Klostergasse 1-3; r €90-170; ☑) The best views in town are from this charming hotel, built right into the town fortifications. All 15 rooms have private sitting areas, and there's an elegant guest lounge with an antique baby grand piano. If it's romance you're after, this is it.

Hotel Raidel (☎ 3115; www.romanticroad.com/raidel; Wenggasse 3; s with/without bathroom €39/19 d €49/39; ☑) An utter delight, with 500-year-old exposed beams studded with wooden nails, quaint wallpapering and pastel sheets, as well as musical instruments for the guests to play. The cosy breakfast room has an original copper boiler.

Hotel Garni Uhl (☎ 4895; www.hotel-uhl.de; Plönlein 8; s €65-85, d €98-120; ☑) A quiet family-run hotel with spacious rooms, all of which have recently had a face lift.

In the suburb of Detwang, about 2km north of the Altstadt by car (or a pleasant 3km walk along the Tauber River), you'll find two camping grounds situated in an idyllic natural setting. **Campingplatz Tauber-Idyll** (☎ 3177; Camping-Tauber-Idyll@online.de; Detwang 28a) and **Campingplatz Tauber-Romantik** (☎ 6191; info@camping-tauberromanik.de; Detwang 39) both charge around €4.50 per person and €4 for a tent, and open Easter to late October.

Eating

Rothenburg's most obvious speciality is *Schneeballen*, balls of sweet dough dipped in cinnamon or sugar, which is available all over town.

Zur Höll (☎ 4229; Burggasse 8; dishes €5-15) This medieval wine tavern, with an appreciation for slow food, is in the town's oldest original

DRINK AND YE SHALL BE FREE

In 1631 the Thirty Years' War – pitching Catholics against Protestants – reached the gates of Rothenburg ob der Tauber. Catholic General Tilly and 60,000 of his troops besieged the Protestant market town and demanded its surrender. The town resisted but couldn't stave off the onslaught of marauding soldiers, and the mayor and other town dignitaries were captured and sentenced to death.

And that's pretty much where the story ends and the legend begins. As the tale goes, Rothenburg's town council tried to save Tilly's bloodthirstiness by presenting him with a mug of wine fit for a giant. Tilly, after taking a sip or two, presented the men with an unusual challenge, saying: 'If one of you has the courage to step forward and down this mug of wine in one gulp, then I shall spare the town and the lives of the councilmen!' Mayor Georg Nusch accepted – and succeeded! And that's why you can still wander through Rothenburg's wonderful medieval lanes today.

It's pretty much accepted that Tilly was really placated with hard cash. Nevertheless, local poet Adam Hörber couldn't resist turning the tale of the *Meistertrunk* into a play, which since 1881 has been performed every Whitsuntide (Pentecost), the seventh Sunday after Easter. It's also re-enacted several times daily by the clock figures on the tourist office building.

building that dates back to the year 900. The menu of regional specialties is limited but refined, though it's the wine that people really come for.

Baumeisterhaus (☎ 947 00; Obere Schmiedgasse 3; mains €8-20) This traditional German inn is one of the town's most atmospheric, and that's saying something. The woody dining area is set around a beautiful vine-clad courtyard and bristles with old hunting relics. The daily menu has a wealth of fine traditional fare.

Mittermeier (☎ 945 40; Vorm Würzburger Tor; mains €18-26) The kitchen dynamo at this classy establishment serve top-notch Michelin-starred cuisine in five settings, including a black-and-white tiled 'Temple', an alfresco terrace and a barrel-shaped wine cellar. The artistic chefs rely on locally harvested produce, and the wine list (400-plus varieties) is among Franconia's best.

Pizzeria Italia (☎ 2225; Herrngasse 8; mains €4-14) This is a better-than-average pizza joint, run by friendly people. It's a great place to sit out on the street in summer and just people watch.

Also recommended:

Bosporos Doner (☎ 934 716; Hafengasse 2; dishes €3-6) For delicious kebabs and Middle Eastern goodies.

Albig's Quick Restaurant (Hafengasse 3; dishes €1.50-7) For schnitzels, burgers and hospitality like at your grandparents'.

Entertainment

Based in a historic old brewery with faux turrets, **Kulturbrauerei** (☎ 919 26; Mergentheimer Strasse 1; ☹ Fri-Sun 2-8pm) stages any and every-

thing from cutting-edge art exhibits to jazz and indie pop concerts.

Rothenburg isn't exactly a party town but **Club 23** (☎ 3686; Ansbacher Strasse 1; ☹ Wed-Sat) has been throwing dance parties since the disco era. In a little passage of bars and dives nearby, **Mario's Kellerbar** (☎ 0173-167 0415; Ansbacherstrasse 15) has amped up R&B and hip-hop.

Shopping

Christmas reigns eternal at **Käthe Wohlfahrt Weihnachtsdorf** (☎ 4090; Herrngasse 1), with its mind-boggling assortment of Yuletide decorations and ornaments. Many of the items are handcrafted with amazing skill and imagination, and prices are accordingly high.

Getting There & Away

There are frequent trains to Würzburg (€10, one hour) but travel to and from Munich (from €40, three hours) may require several changes. The Europabus stops in the main bus park at the Hauptbahnhof. The A7 autobahn runs right past town.

Getting Around

The city has five car parks right outside the walls; P5 and the lower part of P4, both in the northeast, are free. The town centre is closed to nonresident vehicles from 11am to 4pm and 7pm to 5am weekdays, and all day at weekends; hotel guests are exempt.

Some hotels have bicycle hire, or try **Fahrrad Krauss** (☎ 3495; Wenggasse 42; per half-day/day €4/8). Horse-drawn carriage rides of 25 to 30 minutes cost about €6 per person, but you can

haggle for a better price. You can catch these carriages from the Markt, or hail them down throughout town. Call ☎ 4405 for taxis.

DINKELSBÜHL

☎ 09851 / pop 12,000

Dinkelsbühl, another colourful medieval town, proudly traces its roots to a royal residence founded by Carolingian kings in the 8th century. The whole town is immaculately preserved, having been spared destruction in the Thirty Years' War and WWII, and has a far less contrived feel than its more famous neighbour Rothenburg. For a good overall impression of the town, walk along the fortified walls with their 18 towers and four gates.

Orientation & Information

The Altstadt is five minutes' walk west of the Busbahnhof (bus station), via the town gate called Wörnitzer Tor. The **tourist office** (☎ 902 40; www.dinkelsbuehl.de; Marktplatz; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat, 10am-1pm Sun Apr-Oct, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri & 10am-1pm Sat Nov-Mar) is located on Marktplatz. Here you'll also find the central **Romantic Road tourist office** (☎ 902 71; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm & 2-4pm Sat, 9am-noon Sun Apr-Oct). The post office and police station are located next to the bus station.

Sights

Weinmarkt, the main square, is lined by a row of splendid Renaissance mansions. The corner building is the step-gabled **Ratshertrinkstube**, which hosted Emperor Karl V and King Gustav Adolf of Sweden long before it became today's tourist office.

Standing sentry over Weinmarkt is **Münster St Georg** (Marktplatz; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-6pm), one of southern Germany's purest late Gothic hall churches. Rather austere from the outside, the interior stuns with an incredible fan-vaulted ceiling. A curiosity is the **Pretzel Window** donated by the bakers' guild, in the upper section of the last window in the right aisle.

If you follow Martin Luther King Strasse north past the Schranne, you'll reach the **Spi-talanlage**. Founded in 1280 as a hospital, this is now a seniors' residence and home to the Historisches Museum.

Just outside the western town gate, the **Museum of the 3rd Dimension** (☎ 6336; Nördlinger Tor; adult/concession €5.50/4.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Apr-Oct, 11am-4pm Sat & Sun Nov-Mar) has three floors of holographic images, stereoscopes and 3D imagery.

Opened just a few years ago, the displays already conjure up a feeling of nostalgia.

Tours

Altstadt walking tours (€2.50, one hour) leave from Münster St Georg at 2.30pm and 8.30pm from mid-April to October (2.30pm Saturday November to March). There's also a free tour (in German) with the lamp-toting night watchman at 9pm mid-April to October (Saturday only in winter).

Festivals & Events

In the third week of July, Dinkelsbühl celebrates the 10-day **Kinderzeche** (Children's Festival; www.kinderzeche.de), commemorating how, in the Thirty Years' War, the town's children persuaded the invading Swedish troops to spare the town from ransacking. The festivities include a pageant, re-enactments in the festival hall, lots of music and other entertainment.

Sleeping & Eating

The tourist office can help find private rooms from €30.

DJH hostel (☎ 9509; www.djh.de; Koppengasse 10; dm €14.20; ☎ closed Nov-Feb) Dinkelsbühl's hostel in the western Altstadt occupies a beautifully restored 15th-century granary with doll's house qualities.

DCC-Campingplatz Romantische Strasse (☎ 7817; www.campingpark-dinkelsbuehl.de; Kobeltsmühle 2; per tent/person €8.50/4) This camping ground is set on the shores of a swimmable lake just 300m northeast of Wörnitzer Tor.

Gasthof Goldenes Lamm (☎ 2267; www.goldenes.de; s €35-41, d €57-67) This relaxed family-run inn has pleasant rooms at the top of a creaky staircase, and a funky rooftop garden deck with plump sofas. The attached restaurant serves up Franconian-Swabian specialities, including some vegetarian choices.

Dinkelsbühler Kunststuben (☎ 6750; www.kunst-stuben.de; Segringer Strasse 52; s €50, d €55-80) No room is the same in this snug bohemian B&B where guests receive personal attention. The whole place drips with charm and character, and the lovely inner courtyard is perfect for relaxing in warm weather.

Deutsches Haus (☎ 6058; www.deutsches-haus-dkb.de; Weinmarkt 3; s €90-115, d €110-130) This historic building plays games with visitors, thanks to an illusion created by its 13th-century architects: it looks straight but is actually off-kilter. Inside, rooms are superbly equipped with a

baroque flourish, and the formal restaurant serves game and fish prepared according to age-old recipes.

Weib's Brauhaus (☎ 579 490; Untere Schmiedgasse 13; dishes €3-11) A female brewmaster presides over the copper vats at this lively restaurant-pub. The menu is traditional and features the house brew, including the popular *Weib's Töpfle* (woman's pot) of pork and deep-fried mashed potatoes.

Café Extrablatt (☎ 2297; Weinmarkt 10; dishes €4-12) This trendy bistro with a beautiful garden serves big breakfasts, invigorating salads and reams of regional specialities. Menus are designed like newspapers, and Hollywood posters and knick-knacks provide added charm.

Getting There & Around

Dinkelsbühl is not served by trains. Regional buses to and from Rothenburg (€8.60, one hour) and to Nördlingen (€6.30, 40 minutes) stop at the Busbahnhof. The Europabus stops right in the Altstadt at Schweinemarkt.

The tourist office hires out bicycles for €3.60 per day. The Altstadt is closed to vehicles from noon to 6pm on Sunday, Easter to October.

NÖRDLINGEN

☎ 09081 / pop 20,000

About 70km northwest of Augsburg, the charming medieval town of Nördlingen lies within the Ries Basin, a huge crater created by a meteorite more than 15 million years ago. The crater – some 25km in diameter – is one of the best preserved on earth, and was used by US astronauts to train for the first moon landing. The 14th-century walls, all original, follow the crater's rim and are almost perfectly circular. The city sees relatively few tourists and manages to retain an air of authenticity, a relief after some of the Romantic Road's worst excesses.

Orientation & Information

St Georgskirche is the heart of circular Nördlingen. From here, five main roads radiate towards the 12 town gates, which are completely intact. The Hauptbahnhof, which embraces the main post office, is outside the walls and just southeast of the centre. You can circumnavigate the entire town in about an hour by taking the sentry walk (free) on top of its covered old walls.

Stadtbibliothek (☎ 843 00; Marktplatz 2a; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Wed, 2-6.30pm Thu, 10am-1pm Sat) Internet access for €0.50 per 15 minutes.

Tourist office (☎ 841 16; www.noerdingen.de; Marktplatz 2; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Thu, 9am-4.30pm Fri, 9.30am-1pm Sat Easter-early Nov, Mon-Fri only mid-Nov-Easter) Sells the Museums card (€5.80) for free admission to three historical museums and the Daniel tower.

Sights

ST GEORGSKIRCHE

The massive late Gothic **St Georgskirche** is one of the largest in southern Germany. Its high altar and the intricate pulpit (1499) are worth a look, but the real draw is the 90m **Daniel Tower** (adult/concession €1.75/1; ☎ 9am-7pm Apr-Oct, 9am-5pm Nov-Mar). Only from the tower can you appreciate Nördlingen's shape and the gentle landscape of the Ries crater. The watchman, who actually lives up here, sounds out the watch every half-hour from 10pm to midnight.

RIESKRATER MUSEUM

Situated in an ancient barn, the **Rieskrater Museum** (☎ 273 8220; Eugene-Shoemaker-Platz 1; adult/concession €3/1.80; ☎ 10am-noon & 1.30-4.30pm Tue-Sun) explores the formation of meteorite craters and the consequences of such violent collisions with Earth. Rocks, including a genuine moon rock (on permanent loan from NASA), fossils and other geological displays shed light on the mystery of meteors.

BAYERISCHES EISENBAHMUSEUM

One of Germany's largest collections of classic steam trains can be found at the **Bayerisches Eisenbahnmuseum** (Bavarian Railway Museum; ☎ 09083-340; www.bayerisches-eisenbahnmuseum.de; Am Hohen Weg; adult/child €4/2; ☎ noon-4pm Tue-Sat, 10am-5pm Sun). Its 100 nostalgic vehicles range from sleek high-speed engines for transporting passengers to cute little railyard shunters. An old-time locomotive puffs its way to Dinkelsbühl (adult/child €18/12, two hours return) every Sunday from June to August. The museum is located right behind the Hauptbahnhof.

OTHER MUSEUMS

The **Stadtmuseum** (☎ 273 8230; Vordere Gerbergasse 1; adult/concession €3/1.50; ☎ 10.30am-4.30pm Tue-Sun Mar-early Nov) features costumes and displays on local history. More enlightening is the exhibit on the history of the old town walls and fortifications at the **Stadtmauermuseum** (☎ 9180; Löpsinger Torturm; admission €1; ☎ 10am-4.30pm Apr-Oct).

Tours

The tourist office runs hour-long German-language walking tours (€3, under 12 free) at 2pm from Easter to October, and at 8.30pm from mid-May to mid-September.

Festivals & Events

The largest annual celebration is the 14-day **Nördlinger Pfingstmesse** at Whitsuntide/Pentecost. It's an exhibition of regional traders, with a huge market featuring beer tents, food stalls and entertainment.

Sleeping & Eating

Jugend & Familiengästehaus (☎ 842 984; www.culture lounge.at; Bleichgraben 3a; s/d €26/52; 📺) Located in the heart of town, this shiny, new 170-bed hostel is spacious and modern. There are two- to four-bed rooms, ideal for couples or families. Facilities include sauna, café with web terminals and even a small cinema. You'll need to show an official youth hostel card.

Hotel Altreuter (☎ 4319; hotel-café-altreuter@nordschwaben.de; Marktplatz 11; s €33-45, d €48-64) The air is delectably sweet at this pert hotel above a café and *Konditorei* (baked goods shop). Its attractive, renovated rooms have TVs, and there's a public parking area in front of the hotel.

Kaiserhof Hotel Sonne (☎ 5067; www.kaiserhof-hotel-sonne.de; Marktplatz 3; s €55-65, d €75-120; 📺) Nordlingen's top hotel has hosted a procession of emperors and their entourage since 1405. Rooms tastefully mix traditional charm with modern comforts, and there's an atmospheric regional restaurant and cellar wine bar.

Café Radlos (☎ 5040; Löpsinger Strasse 8; mains €5-11; 📺 closed Tue) This, the hippest and most entertaining café in town, serves a good range of international cuisine and some creative veggie options. Slinky jazz sets a mellow tone for surfing the net (€2 per 30 minutes) or just enjoying a drink in the beer garden.

La Fontana (☎ 211 021; Bei den Kornschranken 2; mains €4.30-11.50; 📺 closed Mon) This stylish Italian eatery occupies a vast 1602 barn house, the Kornschranken. You'll find tasty pasta and pizza as well as Mediterranean dishes, and a market hall selling farm-fresh meats, cheeses and produce sits under the same blood-red roof.

Getting There & Around

There are hourly trains to Munich (€20.20, two hours) and regular services to Augsburg (€11.70, one hour) and Stuttgart (€17.60,

two hours). The Europabus stops at the Rathaus. The regional VGN bus 501 goes to Dinkelsbühl and Feuchtwangen.

There are free car parks at all five city gates. You can hire bicycles at **Radsport Böckle** (☎ 801 040; Reimlinger Strasse 19) from €8 per day.

AUGSBURG

☎ 0821 / pop 270,000

One of the oldest cities in Germany, Augsburg has been shaped by Romans, bankers, traders and medieval artisans. It was founded by the stepchildren of Roman emperor Augustus over 2000 years ago, and during the Middle Ages it became an economic powerhouse. Europe's most influential merchant families, the Fuggers and the Welsers, lent money to kings and countries from Augsburg.

Reminders of this golden era can be seen in the Renaissance and baroque façades of the palaces and patrician houses dotted around town. Bavaria's third-largest city has a relaxed attitude and strolling the leafy streets is a real pleasure. An easy day trip from Munich, it's a good accommodation option during Oktoberfest and an ideal base for exploring the Romantic Road.

Orientation

The Hauptbahnhof is at the western end of Bahnhofstrasse, which runs into Fuggerstrasse at Königsplatz, the city's main bus transfer point. The heart of the Altstadt is Rathausplatz, reached on foot from Königsplatz up Annastrasse.

Information

Banks with ATMs are clustered around the main train station and along Bahnhofstrasse.

Buchhandlung Rieger & Kranzfelder (☎ 517 880; Maximilianstrasse 36, Fugger Stadtpalast) Bookshop with lots of English-language titles.

Easy Internet Café (☎ 508 1878; Bahnhofstrasse 29; per hr €1; 📺 7am-midnight Mon-Fri, 8am-midnight Sat, 10am-midnight Sun) Cheapest surfing option in town.

Fernweh (☎ 155 035; Dominikanergasse 10) STA Travel representative.

Post office (Hauptbahnhof)

Rotes Kreuz (Red Cross; ☎ 192 22) For a doctor or ambulance.

Tourist office (☎ 502 2070; www.augsburg-tourismus.de; Rathausplatz; 📺 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Nov-Mar, 10am-4pm Sat, 10am-2pm Sun) A €2 booking fee applies for room reservations.

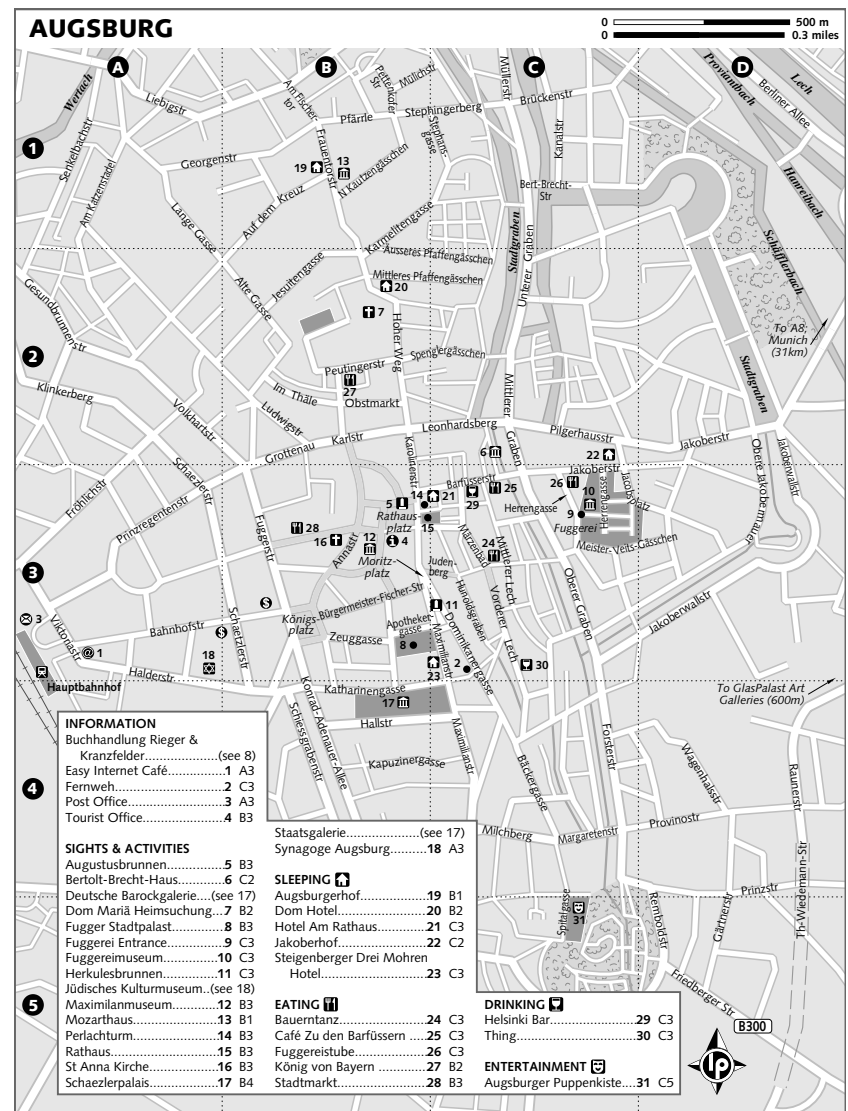
Sights

RATHAUSPLATZ

This square at the city's heart is dominated by the twin onion-dome spires of the Renaissance **Rathaus** (Town Hall; 1615-20). Its roof is crowned by a 4m pine cone, Augsburg's emblem and an ancient fertility symbol. Inside, the star attraction is the meticulously restored

Goldener Saal (Golden Hall; ☎ 324 9196; Rathausplatz; admission €1; 📺 10am-6pm), the main meeting hall. It is a dazzling space canopied by a gilded and coffered ceiling, interspersed with frescoes.

For a city panorama, climb the **Perlachturm** (Perlach Tower; ☎ 502 070; Rathausplatz; adult/concession €1/0.50; 📺 10am-6pm May-Oct, 2-7pm Sat & Sun Dec) next to the *platz*.



DOM MARIÄ HEIMSUCHUNG

North of Rathausplatz you'll find the cathedral, **Dom Mariä Heimsuchung** (Hoher Weg; ☎ 10.15am-6pm Mon-Sat) which dates back to the 10th century. Over the years many alterations have been made here, including the addition of the 14th-century bronze doors with their Old Testament scenes. The oldest section is the crypt underneath the west choir, which features a Romanesque Madonna. Other treasures include medieval frescoes, the *Weingartner Altar* by Hans Holbein the Elder, and – dating from the 12th century – the *Prophets' Windows* (depicting Daniel, Jonah, Hosea and Moses), some of the oldest stained-glass windows in Germany.

ST ANNA KIRCHE

The rather plain-looking **St Anna Kirche** (Church of St Anna; Im Annahof 2; ☎ 10am-noon & 3-5pm Tue-Sat, noon-6pm Sun) contains a bevy of treasures as well as the sumptuous **Fuggerkapelle**, where Jacob Fugger and his brothers lie buried, and the lavishly frescoed **Goldschmiedekapelle** (Goldsmiths' Chapel; 1420). The church played an important role during the Reformation. In 1518 Martin Luther, in town to defend his beliefs before the papal legate, stayed at what was then a Carmelite monastery. His rooms have been turned into the **Lutherstiege**, a small museum about the Reformation.

FUGGEREI

Built to provide homes for poor Catholics, the **Fuggerei** (☎ 319 8810; adult/child €2/1; ☎ 8am-8pm Apr-Oct, 9am-6pm Nov-Mar) is one of the oldest welfare settlements in the world. Jacob Fugger financed the project in the 16th century and it is still home to several hundred people. Many of the 52 apartments have been modernised but the exterior is pretty much unchanged, with the original bellpulls beside each door. For centuries the rent has remained at one Rhenish Gilder (€0.88) per year, plus utilities and three daily prayers. The Fugger Foundation isn't as flush as it once was, however, and in 2006 first began to charge admission to the complex.

To see how Fuggerei residents lived in the past, visit the **Fuggereimuseum** (☎ 450 3770; Mittlere Gasse 13; free with Fuggerei admission; ☎ 9am-8pm Mar-Oct, 9am-6pm Nov-Apr).

MAXIMILIANSTRASSE

Only the richest merchant families could afford to live on this grand boulevard, which

is so wide you might mistake it in parts for a square. The former residence of Jakob Fugger, the **Fugger Stadtpalast**, is at 36–38. It embraces the **Damenhof** (Ladies' Court), a gorgeous Italian Renaissance-style inner courtyard. A nearby rococo palace, the **Schaetzlerpalais** (☎ 324 4117; Maximilianstrasse 56; adult/concession €3/1.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) was built for a wealthy banker between 1765 and 1770, and today houses the **Deutsche Barockgalerie** (German Baroque Gallery) and the **Staatsgalerie** (Bavarian State Gallery). The pièce de résistance is the 23m-long ballroom – a riot of carved decorations, stucco and mirrors, all topped off with a kinetic ceiling fresco.

MAXIMILIANMUSEUM

This restored patrician's house (1546) is home to the **Maximilianmuseum** (☎ 324 4125; Philippine-Welser Strasse 24; adult/child €3/1.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun), which traces the cultural and municipal history of Augsburg. It also has a large exhibition of gold and silver work from baroque and rococo masters. A second floor displays sculptures and architectural models.

GLASPALAST ART GALLERIES

The **GlasPalast** (☎ 324 4155; Beim Glaspalast 1; admission varies; ☎ 10am-9pm Tue, 10am-5pm Wed-Sun) is an industrial monument made of iron, concrete and glass that houses two new art galleries. The **H2 Zentrum für Gegenwartskunst** (Center of Contemporary Art) is a cutting-edge gallery, while the **Staatsgalerie Moderne Kunst** (State Gallery of Modern Art), which shows American highlights of the genre from after 1950, is an offshoot of Munich's Pinakothek der Moderne. Its public art library is open during visiting hours. Also look out for guided tours, concerts and films.

BERTOLT BRECHT HAUS

Fans of the *Threepenny Opera* will enjoy the **Bertolt-Brecht-Haus** (☎ 324 2779; Am Rain 7; adult/concession €1.50/1; ☎ 10am-4pm Wed-Sun), the birthplace of the famous playwright and poet. Brecht's work was banned by the Nazis for his communist leanings and he was later shunned by West Germans for the same reason (see boxed text about Brecht, p66).

SYNAGOGUE

About 300m east of the main train station, as you head towards the Altstadt you'll come to the **Synagoge Augsburg**, an Art Nouveau temple

built between 1914 and 1917. Inside is the excellent **Jüdisches Kulturmuseum** (Jewish Cultural Museum; ☎ 513 658; Halderstrasse 8; adult/concession €2/1.50; ☎ 9am-4pm Tue-Fri, 10am-5pm Sun), with exhibitions on Jewish life in the region, Germany and Central Europe.

Tours

Guided walking tours (adult/child €7/5; ☎ Apr-Oct, Sat only Nov-Mar) in English and German leave from the Rathaus at 2pm.

Sleeping

Jakoberhof (☎ 510 030; www.jakoberhof.de; Jakoberstrasse 41; s €39-49, d €54-64; ☎) One of the best-value options in town is this simple place near the Fuggerei. Rooms have few frills, but are bright and airy with modern bathrooms, and your hosts are congenial sorts.

Dom Hotel (☎ 343 930; www.domhotel-augsburg.de; Frauentorstrasse 8; s €64-105, d €74-125; ☎) This charming hotel with spacious, tastefully decorated rooms is excellent value. The smaller attic rooms have beamed ceilings and great views. Guests have free use of the garden, pool and sauna, and children are welcome.

Augsburger Hof (☎ 343 050; www.augsburger-hof.de; Auf dem Kreuz 2; s €78-105, d €88-130; ☎) The high-priced rooms open onto the courtyard at this pretty window-boxed hotel. All are thoughtfully furnished with high-class linens, and have cable TV and phones. It's near the Mozarthaus, an easy walk north of the Dom.

Hotel am Rathaus (☎ 346 490; www.hotel-am-rathaus-augsburg.de; Am Hinteren Perlachberg 1; s €90, d €90-110; ☎) As central as it gets, and moments away from Rathausplatz, this boutique hotel has fresh neutral décor and a sunny little breakfast room. The trendy Italian restaurant is surprisingly good.

Steigenberger Drei Mohren Hotel (☎ 503 60; www.augsburg.steigenberger.de; Maximilianstrasse 40; s/d €115/150; ☎) This landmark hotel, with luxurious décor, is a stunning place where both Mozart and Goethe have stayed. Marble bathrooms, original art and a beautiful garden terrace are among the elegant touches.

Eating

In the evening, Maximilianstrasse is the place to hang out, with cafés overflowing onto the pavements and plenty of young things watching the world go by.

RESTAURANTS

Café zu den Barfüßern (☎ 450 4966; Barfüßnerstrasse 10; dishes €2-6) A few steps down from the street through a covered passageway bring you out into the sun at this pretty canal-side café. It serves homemade cakes and pastries, as well as a limited daily lunch menu.

König von Bayern (☎ 349 7990; Johannisgasse 4; mains €5-9) This beautiful, secluded restaurant and beer garden are great places to sit and relax. The food is traditional, but lighter than usual. Try the *Brauerfladen*, a kind of thin-crust pizza covered with anything from smoked salmon to broccoli and melted cheese.

Also recommended: **Bauerntanz** (☎ 153 644; Bauerntanzgässchen 1; mains €8-16) A local favourite serving big portions of creative Swabian and Bavarian food.

Fuggereistube (☎ 308 70; Jakoberstrasse 26; mains €10-20) Vintage 1970s hunting-lodge décor, with Bavarian food and good service.

QUICK EATS

There are lots of cheap places to eat or buy snacks on Bahnhofstrasse. The local **Stadtmarkt** (btwn Fuggerstrasse & Annastrasse; ☎ 7am-6pm Mon-Fri, 7am-2pm Sat) is a snacker's fantasy. Besides fresh produce, bread and meat, you'll find dozens of stand-up eateries serving everything from Thai and Bavarian to Greek.

Drinking

Helsinki Bar (☎ 372 90; Barfüßnerstrasse 4; dishes €3-7) A café by day and a bar by night, this place attracts the beautiful people, intent on hanging out in an alternative venue with cool Nordic fare and slick furnishings.

Thing (☎ 395 05; Vorderer Lech 45) Augsburg's coolest beer garden is an institution that often gets crowded in the evenings.

Entertainment

The celebrated **Augsburger Puppenkiste** (☎ 434 440; www.augsburger-puppenkiste.de; Spitalgasse 15; afternoon shows €7.50-9.50, evening shows €13-18; ☎ 3pm & 7.30pm Wed, Fri-Sun) holds performances of modern and classic fairy tales that are so endearing, and the sets and costumes so fantastically elaborate, that even non-German speakers will enjoy a show. Advance reservations are advised.

Getting There & Away

Nonstop regional trains run hourly between Augsburg and Munich (€10, 45 minutes) and

every other hour to Nuremberg (€20.80, 1¾ hours). ICE (InterCity Express) trains travel to Würzburg (€41, two hours) and Regensburg (€21.20, 2¼ hours).

The Romantic Road Europabus stops at the Hauptbahnhof. Augsburg is just off the A8 autobahn northwest of Munich.

Getting Around

Most journeys within town on the bus and tram network cost €1.10; longer trips to the outlying suburbs are €2. A 24-hour ticket costs €5 and is good for up to three adults.

FÜSSEN & SCHWANGAU

☎ 08362 / pop 17,700

The last stops on the Romantic Road are Füssen, a small town nestled between towering Alpine peaks, and Schwangau, a village about 4km further east. Together they form the Königswinkel (Royal Corner), home to Germany's biggest tourist attractions: Ludwig II's fantasy castles Neuschwanstein and Hohenschwangau. If you still haven't learned enough about his highness after those, book a seat at the extravagant musical *Ludwig 2*, performed in a custom-built theatre on the Forggensee.

Orientation & Information

Schwangau and the castles are about 4km east of Füssen via the B17 (Münchener Strasse).

Füssen tourist office (☎ 938 50; www.fuessen.de; Kaiser-Maximilian-Platz 1; ☎ 8am-12.30pm & 1.30-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat May-Oct, 9am-5pm Mon-Sat Nov-Apr) A three-minute walk west from the train and bus station.

Schwangau tourist office (☎ 819 80; www.schwangau.de; Münchener Strasse 2; ☎ 8am-12.30pm & 1.30-5pm)

Sights

CASTLES

Schloss Neuschwanstein

Appearing through the mountain-tops like a misty mirage is the world's most famous castle, and the model for Disney's citadel, **Schloss Neuschwanstein** (☎ 930 830; adult/concession €9/8, with Hohenschwangau €17/15; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Oct-Mar).

Ludwig planned this castle himself, with the help of a stage designer rather than an architect, and it provides a fascinating glimpse into the king's state of mind. Built as a romantic medieval castle, it was started in 1869 and, like so many of Ludwig's grand schemes, was never

finished. For all the money spent on it, the king spent just over 170 days in residence.

Ludwig imagined his palace as a giant stage to recreate the world of Germanic mythology in the operatic works of Richard Wagner. Its centrepiece is the lavish **Sängersaal** (Minstrels' Hall), created to feed the king's obsession with Wagner and medieval knights. Wall frescoes in the hall depict scenes from the opera *Tannhäuser*. Concerts are held here every September.

Other completed sections include **Ludwig's bedroom**, dominated by a huge Gothic-style bed crowned with intricately carved spires; a gaudy artificial grotto (another nod to *Tannhäuser*); and the Byzantine **Thronsaal** (Throne Room) with a great mosaic floor and a chandelier shaped like a giant crown.

The wooded hills framing the castle make for some wonderful walks. For the postcard view of Neuschwanstein and the plains beyond, walk 10 minutes up to **Marienbrücke** (Mary's Bridge), which spans the spectacular Pöllat Gorge over a waterfall just above the castle.

Schloss Hohenschwangau

Ludwig spent his formative years at the sun-yellow **Schloss Hohenschwangau** (☎ 930 830; adult/concession €9/, with Neuschwanstein €17/15; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Oct-Mar). His father, Maximilian II, rebuilt this palace in a neo-Gothic style from 12th-century ruins left by Schwangau knights. It's much less ostentatious than Neuschwanstein, however, and today has a distinct lived-in feeling. After his father died, Ludwig's main alteration was having stars, illuminated with hidden oil-lamps, painted on the ceiling of his bedroom.

Here Ludwig first met Wagner, and the **Hohenstaufensaal** room features a square piano where the hard-up composer would entertain Ludwig with excerpts from his latest oeuvre. Some rooms have frescoes from German history and legend (including the story of the Swan Knight, Lohengrin).

Tickets & Tours

Both castles must be seen on guided tours (in German or English), which last about 35 minutes. Tickets are available only from the **Ticket Centre** (☎ 930 830; www.ticket-center-hohenschwangau.de; Alpenseestrasse 12) at the foot of the castles. In summer it's advisable to come as early as 8.30am to ensure you get a ticket.

It's a steep 30- to 40-minute walk between the castles, though you can shell out €5 for a horse-drawn carriage ride, which is only slightly faster.

If you're pressed for time, consider going on an organised tour. **EurAide** (p288; www.euraide.de) runs tours to Neuschwanstein and Linderhof with a brief stop in Oberammergau (adult/child €47/24, plus castle admission).

ALTSTADT FÜSSEN

Füssen's compact historical centre is a tangle of lanes lorded over by the **Hohe Schloss**, a late Gothic confection and one-time retreat of the bishops of Augsburg. The inner courtyard is a masterpiece of illusionary architecture dating back to 1499; you'll do a double take before realising that the gables, oriels and windows are not quite as they seem. The north wing of the palace contains the **Staatsgalerie im Hohen Schloss** (☎ 903 164; Magnusplatz 10; adult/concession €2.50/2, with Städtische Gemäldegalerie €3) with regional paintings and sculpture from the 15th and 16th centuries. The **Städtische Gemäldegalerie** (City Paintings Gallery) below is a showcase of 19th-century artists.

Below the Hohen Schloss, integrated into the former Abbey of St Mang, is the **Museum Füssen** (☎ 903 146; Lechhalde 3; adult/child under 14 €2.50/free; ☎ 10am-4pm Apr-Oct, 1-4pm Nov-Mar, closed Mon). Füssen's heyday as a 16th-century violin-making centre is recalled here, and you can view the abbey's festive baroque rooms, Romanesque cloister and the St Anna Kapelle (AD 830).

TEGELBERGBAHN

For fabulous views of the Alps and the Forggensee, take this **cable car** (☎ 983 60; one-way/return €9.50/16; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Jul-Oct, 9am-5pm Nov-Jun) to the top of the Tegelberg (1707m), a prime launch point for hang-gliders and parasailers. From here it's a wonderful hike down to the castles (two to three hours; follow the signs to Königsschlösser). To get to the valley station, take RVO bus 73 or 78 from the Bahnhof in Füssen, or from the Schwangau village centre.

Sleeping

Accommodation in the area is surprisingly good value and the tourist offices can find private rooms from €18 per person.

House LA (☎ 1607 366; www.house-la.de; Welfenstrasse 39, Füssen; dm €17) A 15-minute walk west of the

train station, this newly opened 13-bed hostel has rooms that are spacious, renovated and comfy, and some come with balconies. Breakfast is served on the rear patio with mountain views. The owner will pick you up from the station if you call.

Pension Kössler (☎ 4069; www.pension-koessler.de; Zalinger Strasse 1, Füssen; s €30-33, d €60-66; ☎) This small *pension* with a friendly atmosphere offers outstanding value. Rooms are simple but comfortable and have private bathroom, TV, phone and balcony – some overlook the attractive garden.

Hotel zum Hechten (☎ 916 00; www.hotel-hechten.com; Ritterstrasse 6, Füssen; s €45-55, d €74-84; ☎) This is one of Füssen's oldest hotels and a barrel of fun. Public areas are traditional in style but the bedrooms (such as No 44) are bright and modern. The owner has decorated the restaurant in campy Ludwig II colours. Children are welcome.

Hotel Weinbauer (☎ 9860; www.hotel-weinbauer.de; Füssener Strasse 3, Schwangau; s/d €40/80) Large, bright rooms, decorated in contemporary styles and with a decent range of amenities, make this friendly hotel a winner. The frescoed restaurant downstairs (mains €8 to €16) opens onto a pretty garden.

Hotel Sonne (☎ 9080; www.hotel-sonne.de; Reichenstrasse 37, Füssen; r €99-129; ☎) Traditional-looking from outside, this Altstadt hotel has undergone a designer facelift within. Rooms have quality leather chairs, red-gold royal carpets and fancy flat-screen TVs, not to mention some kickin' bathroom fittings.

Campers should head for the following modern lakeside camp sites:

Campingplatz Bannwaldsee (☎ 930 00; www.camping-bannwaldsee.de; Münchner Strasse 151, Schwangau; per site/person €7/6.80)

Campingplatz Brunnen am Forggensee (☎ 8273; www.camping-brunnen.de; Seestrasse 81, Schwangau; per site/person €8/9.50)

Eating

Kulturcafé (☎ 924 924; Lechhalde 1, Füssen; mains €5-13) This sophisticated little eatery at the rear of the Rathaus is perfect for a wholesome snack, an art exhibition or a jazz concert... sometimes all at once. The tables in the old monastery gardens afford beautiful views high above the river.

Franziskaner Stüberl (☎ 371 24; Kemptener Strasse 1, Füssen; mains €7.50-12.50; ☎) closed Thu) This quaint restaurant specialises in *Schweinshaxe* (pork

LUDWIG II, THE FAIRY-TALE KING

Every year on 13 June, a stirring ceremony takes place in Berg, on the eastern shore of Lake Starnberg. A small boat quietly glides towards a cross just offshore and a plain wreath is fastened to its front. The sound of a single trumpet cuts the silence as the boat returns from this solemn ritual in honour of the most beloved king ever to rule Bavaria – Ludwig II.

The cross marks the spot where Ludwig died under mysterious circumstances in 1886. His early death capped the life of a man at odds with the harsh realities of a modern world no longer in need of a romantic and idealistic monarch.

Prinz Otto Ludwig Friedrich Wilhelm was a sensitive soul, fascinated by romantic epics, architecture and music, but his parents, Maximilian II and Marie, took little interest in his musings and he suffered a lonely and joyless childhood. In 1864, at 18 years old, the prince became king. He was briefly engaged to the sister of Elisabeth (Sisi), the Austrian empress, but as a rule he preferred the company of men. He also worshipped composer Richard Wagner, whose Bayreuth opera house was built with Ludwig's funds.

Ludwig was an enthusiastic leader initially, but Bavaria's days as a sovereign state were numbered, and he became a puppet king after the creation of the German Reich in 1871 (which had its advantages, as Bismarck gave Ludwig a hefty allowance). Ludwig now withdrew completely to drink, draw castle plans and view concerts and operas in private. His obsession with French culture and the Sun King, Louis XIV, inspired the fantastical palaces of Neuschwanstein, Linderhof and Herrenchiemsee – lavish projects that spelt his undoing.

Contrary to popular belief, though, it was only Ludwig's purse – and not the state treasury – that was being bankrupted. However, by 1886 his ever-growing mountain of debt and erratic behaviour was perceived as a threat to the natural order of things. The king, it seemed, needed to be 'managed'.

In January 1886, several ministers and relatives arranged a hasty psychiatric test that diagnosed Ludwig as mentally unfit to rule. That June he was removed to Schloss Berg on Lake Starnberg. One evening the dejected bachelor and his doctor took a lakeside walk and were found several hours later, drowned in just a few feet of water.

No-one knows with certainty what happened that night. There was no eyewitness or any proper criminal investigation. The circumstantial evidence was conflicting and incomplete. Reports and documents were tampered with, destroyed or lost. Conspiracy theories abound. That summer the authorities opened Neuschwanstein to the public to help pay off Ludwig's huge debts. King Ludwig II was dead, but the myth was just being born.

knuckle) and schnitzel, prepared in more varieties than you can shake a leg at. Non-carnivores go for the excellent *Kässpätzle* (rolled cheese noodles) and the huge salads.

Pizzeria San Marco (☎ 813 39; Füssener Strasse 6, Schwangau; mains €5-16) This cosy place decorated in a rustic Italian style serves up a good range of interesting pizzas and pastas as well as healthy salads and other Mediterranean fare.

Snack options include the local **Nordsee** (Reichenstrasse 40) and **Vinzenmurr** (Reichenstrasse 35), both in Füssen.

Entertainment

He's back! After a brief hiatus, the tragic story of King Ludwig II's life again unfolds in music, sound and special effects on the western shore of the Forggensee. **Ludwig 2** (☎ 01805-131 132; www.ludwig2musical.com; tickets

€15-100) is part fantasy, part history and all monumental spectacle. Sung in German with English supertitles, it takes place nightly and on weekend afternoons on the largest revolving stage in Germany. The name is a poke at the first production, which couldn't meet costs. You can take a one-hour **backstage tour** (€7/3.50; ☎ 3pm & 4pm Tue-Fri, 11am & noon Sat & Sun), which shows the secrets behind the spectacle.

Getting There & Away

If you want to 'do' the royal castles on a day trip from Munich (€19.80, two hours) you'll need to start early. The first train leaves Munich at 4.57am, getting to Füssen at 7.24am. Later trains depart at roughly 10 minutes to the hour, but always check schedules before you go.

Getting Around

RVO bus 78 goes to the castles from Füssen Bahnhof and Schwangau village centre (€3.30 return), stopping also at the Tegelbergbahn valley station. Taxis to the castles are about €10.

With the Alps on one side and the lake-filled plains on the other, the area around Füssen is a cyclist's paradise. You can hire two-wheelers at the **Radsport Zacherl** (3292; Kemp-tenerstrasse 19, Füssen; per day €8).

AROUND FÜSSEN

Known as 'Wies' for short, the **Wieskirche** (☎ 8862-932 930; www.wieskirche.de; Steingaden) is one of Bavaria's best-known baroque churches and a Unesco-listed heritage site. About a million visitors a year flock to see its pride and joy, the monumental work of the legendary artist-brothers, Dominikus and Johann Baptist Zimmermann.

In 1730, a farmer in Steingaden, about 30km northeast of Füssen, witnessed the miracle of his Christ statue crying. So many pilgrims poured into the town that the local abbot commissioned a new church to house the weepy work. Inside, gleaming white pillars are topped by gold capital stones and swirling decorations; the pastel ceiling fresco celebrates Christ's resurrection. Not even the constant deluge of visitors can detract from these charms.

From Füssen regional RVO bus 72 or 73 makes the journey up to six times daily (one-way/return €4.80/8). The Europabus also makes a brief stop at the Wieskirche. By car, take the B17 northeast and turn right (east) at Steingaden.

BAVARIAN ALPS

Stretching west from Germany's remote southeastern corner to the Allgäu region near Lake Constance, the Bavarian Alps (Bayerische Alpen) form a stunningly beautiful natural divide along the Austrian border. The ranges further south are higher, but these mountains shoot up from the foothills so abruptly that the impact is all the more dramatic.

The region is dotted with quaint frescoed villages, spas and health retreats and has a wealth of outdoor possibilities for skiing, snowboarding, hiking, canoeing and para-

gliding – much of it year-round. The ski season lasts from about late December until April, while summer activities stretch from late May to November.

One of the largest resorts in the area is Garmisch-Partenkirchen, one of Munich's favourite getaway spots. Other noteworthy bases are Berchtesgaden, Füssen and Oberstdorf.

Most of the resorts have plenty of reasonably priced accommodation, though some places levy a surcharge (usually about €3) for stays of less than two or three days in peak seasons. Most resorts also charge a *Kurtaxe* (less than €2) for overnight stays, but this entitles you to certain perks, like free tours, a city bus service and entry to special events.

Getting Around

Buses are the most efficient method of public transport in the alpine area; there are few direct train routes between main centres. If you're driving, sometimes a short cut via Austria works out to be quicker (such as between Garmisch-Partenkirchen and Füssen or Oberstdorf).

Regional passes on RVO buses (www.rvo-bus.de) give unlimited travel on the upper-Bavarian bus network (a weekly pass is between €9.60 and €50, depending on distance covered). Buy them directly from the bus driver.

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN

☎ 08821 / pop 27,000

A favourite haunt for outdoor enthusiasts and moneyed socialites, the resort of Garmisch-Partenkirchen is blessed with a fabled setting a stone's throw from the Alps. To say you were 'skiing in Garmisch' has a fashionable ring. The area offers some of the best skiing in the land, including runs on Germany's highest peak, the Zugspitze (2964m). The towns of Garmisch and Partenkirchen were merged for the 1936 Winter Olympics, and to this day host international skiing events. In 2011 the Alpine World Skiing Championships will be held here for the first time since 1978, with cameras trained on the breakneck pistes and dizzying ski ramp at the town's impressive Olympia Skistadion (winter-sports stadium).

Garmisch-Partenkirchen also makes a handy base for excursions to Ludwig II's palaces, including nearby Schloss Linderhof and the lesser-known Jagdschloss Schachen.

Orientation

The train tracks that divide the two towns culminate at the Hauptbahnhof. From here, turn west on St-Martin-Strasse to get to Garmisch, or east on Bahnhofstrasse to reach Partenkirchen. From the Hauptbahnhof the centre of Garmisch is about 500m away, the centre of Partenkirchen about 1km.

Information

Hypo-Vereinsbank (Am Kurpark 13) There's another branch in the train station.

Hobis Cyber Café (☎ 2727; Zugspitzstrasse 2; per 15min €1; ☎ 6am-6pm Mon-Fri, 6am-noon Sat, 8-11am Sun) Internet access in the garden atrium of a bustling bakery.

Klinikum (☎ 770; Auenstrasse 6) Full-service hospital.

Post office (Bahnhofplatz)

Presse + Buch (☎ 4400; Hauptbahnhof) International papers and mags.

Tourist office (☎ 180 700; www.garmisch-partenkirchen.de; Richard-Strauss-Platz 1, Garmisch; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-noon Sun)

Sights & Activities

ZUGSPITZE

Views from the top of Germany are literally breathtaking, especially during *Föhn* weather when they extend into four countries. Skiing and hiking are the main activities here. To get to the top, you can walk (right), or take a cogwheel train or a cable car.

The **Zugspitzbahn** (the cogwheel train) has its own station right behind the Hauptbahnhof. From here it chugs along the mountain base to the Eibsee, a forest lake, then winds its way through a mountain tunnel up to the Schneeferner Glacier (2600m). From there a cable car makes the final ascent to the summit.

Alternatively, the **Eibsee-Seilbahn**, a steep cable car, sways and swings its way straight up to the summit from the Eibsee lake in about 10 minutes – it's not for the faint-hearted! Most people go up on the train and take the cable car back down, but it works just as well the other way around.

Whichever route you take, the entire trip costs €37/23 per adult/child in winter and €45/31.50 in summer. Winter rates include a day ski-pass.

Expect serious crowds at peak times in winter and through much of the summer. Skiers may find it easier, but slower, to schlep their gear up on the train, which offers exterior ski-holders.

SKIING

Garmisch has three ski fields: the Zugspitze plateau (2964m), the Classic Ski Area (Alpspitze, 2050m; Hausberg, 1340m; Kreuzeck, 1651m; day pass adult/child €29.50/19) and the Eckbauer (1236m; day pass €18/15). A Happy Ski Card (three-day minimum, adult/child €85.50/51.50) covers all three ski areas, plus three other ski areas around the Zugspitze, including Mittenwald. Local buses serve all the valley stations.

Cross-country ski trails run along the main valleys, including a long section from Garmisch to Mittenwald; call ☎ 797 979 for a weather or snow report.

For ski hire and courses try the following: **Flori Wörndle** (☎ 583 00; www.skischule-woerndle.de; Alpspitze & Hausberg)

Sport Total (☎ 1425; www.agentursporttotal.de; Marienplatz 18) Also organises paragliding, mountain biking, rafting and ballooning.

HIKING

Garmisch-Partenkirchen is prime hiking territory. Mountain guides are at the tourist office on Monday and Thursday between 4pm and 6pm to give help and information to hikers. Brochures and maps are also available with route suggestions for all levels.

Hiking to the **Zugspitze summit** is only possible in summer and is recommended only for those with experience of mountaineering. Another popular route is to King Ludwig II's hunting lodge, **Jagdschloss Schachen** (☎ 2996; admission €2.50, child under 14yr free; ☎ Jun-Oct), which can be reached via the Partnachklamm (below) in about a four-hour hike. A plain wooden hut from the outside, the interior is surprisingly magnificent; the **Moorish Room** is something straight out of the *Arabian Nights*.

For guided hikes and courses contact the following:

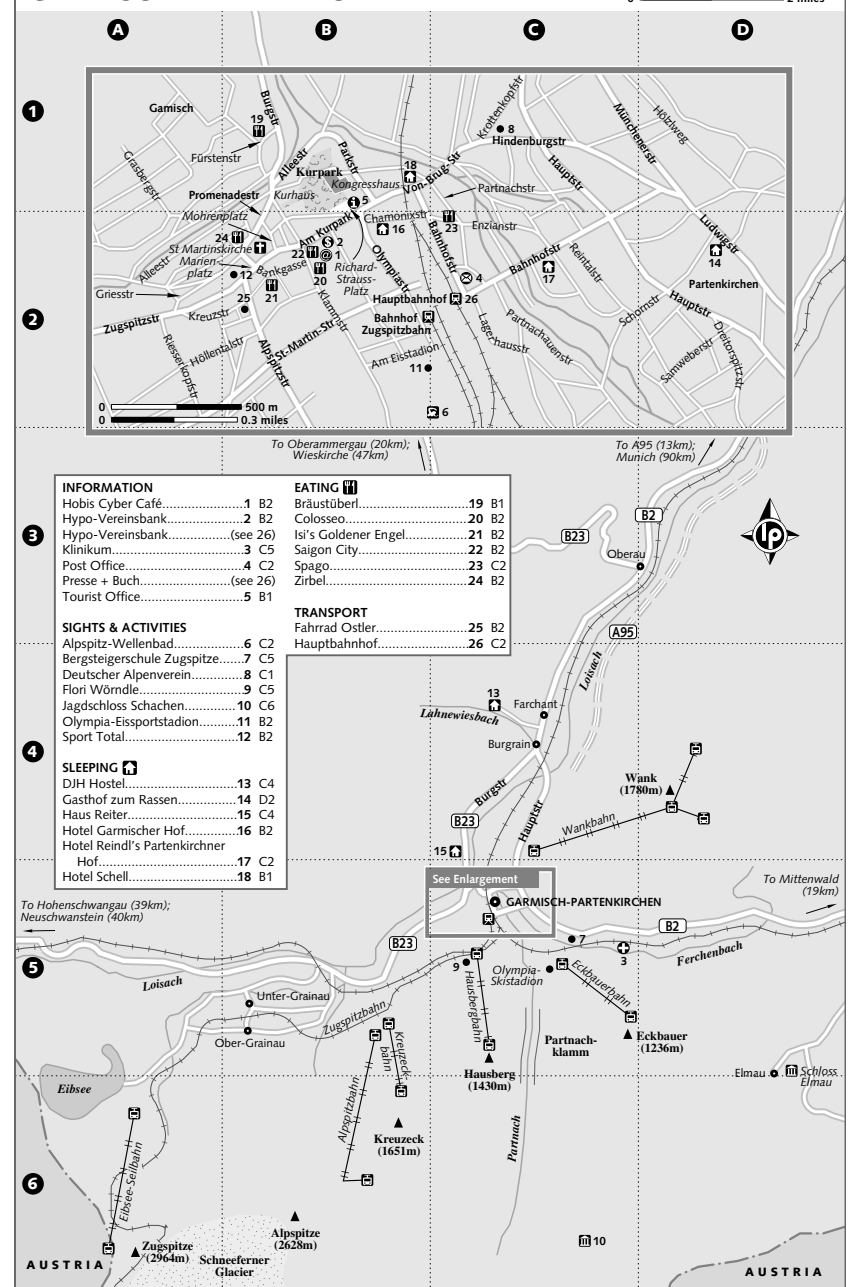
Bergsteigerschule Zugspitze (☎ 589 99; www.bergsteigerschule-zugspitze.de; Am Gudiberg 7)

Deutscher Alpenverein (☎ 2701; www.alpenverein-ga-pa.de; Hindenburgstrasse 38)

PARTNACHKLAMM

One of the area's main tourist attractions is the beautiful **Partnachklamm** (☎ 3167; adult/child €2/1), a narrow 700m-long gorge with walls rising up to 80m. A circular walk hewn from the rock takes you through the gorge, which is really spectacular in winter when you can walk beneath curtains of icicles and frozen waterfalls.

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN



Sleeping

There is an outdoor room-reservation board at the tourist office and a 24-hour reservation hotline (☎ 194 12).

DJH hostel (☎ 2980; www.djh.de; Jochstrasse 10; dm under/over 26yr €21.50/25.50; (P) ☒ ☑) The standards at this smartly revamped hostel are as good at some chain hotels. Rooms have Ikea-style furnishings and fruity colour schemes, and an Alpine stream gurgles right past the building.

Hotel Schell (☎ 9575; www.hotel-schell.de; Partnachstrasse 3; s €35-50, d €65-90; (P) ☒ ☑) This traditional Alpine home has built up a returning clientele with friendly service and spotless, good-value rooms. It's close to the Hauptbahnhof but very quiet, and children and adults alike will enjoy the garden.

Gasthof Zum Rassen (☎ 2089; www.gasthof-rassen.de; Ludwigstrasse 45; s €32-53, d €52-90; (P) ☒ ☑) In this beautifully frescoed 14th-century building, the bright, modern rooms provide quite a contrast with the traditional décor of the public areas. A former brewery, the massive event hall houses the oldest folk theatre in Bavaria.

Hotel Garmischer Hof (☎ 9110; www.garmischer-hof.de; Chamoniinstrasse 10; s €58-80, d €90-132; (P) ☒ ☑) Generations of athletes, artists and outdoor enthusiasts have stayed at this refined chateau, property of the Seiwald family since 1928. Tasteful and cosy are the rooms, many with incredible Alpine views. All of them have cable TV, direct-dial phones and safes. Breakfast is served in the vaulted café-restaurant with a garden terrace.

Reindl's Partenkirchner Hof (☎ 08821-943 870; www.reindls.de; Bahnhofstrasse 15; s €73-95, d €106-150, ste €132-294; (P) ☒ ☑ ☑) It doesn't get much better than this: an elegant, three-winged luxury hotel stacked with perks, a wine bar and a top-notch gourmet restaurant. Its very comfortable rooms have touches of royalty and splendid mountain views. Most celebrities visiting Garmisch-Partenkirchen end up here.

Another recommendation is **Haus Reiter** (☎ 2223; www.reiter-gap.com; Burgstrasse 55; s €20-30, d €40-60; (P) ☒ ☑), a chalet-style guesthouse with modern rooms and a garden.

Eating

Isi's Goldener Engel (☎ 948 757; Bankgasse 5; mains €9-17) This local favourite has hunting-lodge décor that blends frescoes, stag heads and a gilded stucco ceiling. The huge menu ranges

from simple schnitzel to game dishes, though the best deal is the generous lunch special.

Spago (☎ 966 555; Partnachstrasse 50; mains €6-8) This trendy café-bistro off the main drag serves up light fare like salads, crepes and pastas. The slick design, outdoor seating and international menu tend to draw a local clientele.

Colosseo (☎ 528 09; Klamstrasse 7; mains €6-18) The Roman sculptures, chirpy waiters and mountain views make this upstairs pizzeria a sure winner. The menu includes excellent pastas and pizzas as well as delicious fish and meat dishes, all for takeaway if you like.

Bräustüberl (☎ 2312; Fürstenstrasse 23; mains €6-16) This place, a bit outside the centre, is quintessentially Bavarian, complete with enormous enamel coal-burning stove and dirndl-clad waitresses. The dining room is to the right, the beer hall (with more ambience) is to the left.

Other recommendations:

Zirbel (☎ 7671; Promenadestrasse 2; meals €7-17) Relaxed, tunnel-shaped pub serving snacks and small meals.

Saigon City (☎ 969 315; Am Kurpark 17a; mains €5-11; ☒ closed Sun) Simple Vietnamese diner serving crispy duck, egg noodles and seafood.

Getting There & Around

Garmisch-Partenkirchen is serviced by hourly trains from Munich (€15.50, 1½ hours), and special packages combine the return trip with a Zugspitze day ski pass. RVO bus 9606 travels to Füssen, with stops at Oberammergau, the Wieskirche and the castles at Neuschwanstein and Hohenschwangau. The A95 from Munich is the direct road route.

Bus tickets cost €1.30 for journeys in town. For bike hire try **Fahrrad Ostler** (☎ 3362; Kreuzstrasse 1; per day/week from €10/40).

AROUND GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN Oberammergau

☎ 08822 / pop 5400

A study in piety, kitsch and bucolic art, Oberammergau, some 20km north of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, is renowned the world over for its epic Passion Play. Set in a wide valley surrounded by forest and mountains, the village is undeniably beautiful. It's packed with traditional painted houses, wood-carving shops and awestruck tourists.

The **tourist office** (☎ 923 10; www.oberammergau.de; Eugen-Papst-Strasse 9a; ☒: 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat, 1-5pm Sun mid-Jun-mid-Oct, 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-noon Sat mid-Oct-mid-Jun) can help find accommodation.

A blend of opera, ritual and Hollywood epic, the **Passion Play** has been performed every decade since the 17th century as a collective thank-you for being spared the plague. Townspeople sew costumes and grow beards for their roles, and half the village takes part. The next performances are in 2010. Tours of the **Passionstheater** (☎ 923 10; Passionswiese 1; tours adult/concession €2.50/1.50; ☒: tours 9.30am-5pm May-Oct, 10am-4pm Nov-Apr) include a peek at the costumes and sets. In the years between Passion Plays, spectacular opera events are held monthly from July to September; ask at the tourist office for details.

The town's other claim to fame is **Lüftmalerei**, the eye-popping house façades painted in an illusionist style. Images usually have a religious flavour, but some also show hilarious beer-hall scenes or fairy-tale motifs, like *Hansel & Gretel* at Ettaler Strasse No 41, or *Little Red Riding Hood* down the road at No 48. The pick of the crop is the amazing **Pilatushaus** (☎ 923 10; Ludwig-Thoma-Strasse 10; admission free; ☒: 1-6pm Mon-Fri May-Oct), whose painted columns snap into 3D as you approach. It contains a gallery and several workshops.

Oberammergau is also known for its intricate **woodcarvings**. Workshops abound around town, churning out everything from corkscrews to life-sized saints and nativity scenes. Some amazing examples can be seen in the little parish cemetery on Pfarrplatz and in the **Oberammergau Museum** (☎ 941 36; Dorfstrasse 8; adult/child €3/1; ☒: 10am-5pm Tue-Sun).

You can stay at the **DJH hostel** (☎ 4114; www.djh.de; Malensteinweg 10; dm under/over 26yr €16/20) or the **Hotel Böld** (☎ 9120; www.hotel-boeld.de; König-Ludwig-Strasse 10; s €60-68, d €78-105; (P) ☒ ☑), a towering chalet of a hotel that neatly pairs traditional touches with a fine wellness area.

Hourly trains connect Munich with Oberammergau (change at Murnau, €14.70, 1½ hours). RVO bus 9606 goes to Garmisch-Partenkirchen and Füssen almost hourly.

Schloss Linderhof

A pocket-sized trove of weird treasures, **Schloss Linderhof** (☎ 08822-920 30; adult/concession Apr-Sep €7/6, Oct-Mar €6/5; ☒: 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Oct-Mar) was Ludwig II's smallest but most sumptuous palace. Finished in 1878, the palace hugs a steep hillside in a fantasy landscape of French gardens, fountains and follies. The reclusive king used the palace as a retreat and

hardly ever received visitors here. Like Herrenchiemsee (p324), Linderhof was inspired by Versailles and dedicated to Louis XIV, the French 'sun king'.

Linderhof's myth-laden, jewel-encrusted rooms are a monument to the king's excesses that so unsettled the governors in Munich. The **private bedroom** is the largest room, heavily ornamented and anchored by an enormous 108-candle crystal chandelier weighing 500kg. An artificial waterfall, built to cool the room in summer, cascades just outside the window. The **dining room** reflects the king's fetish for privacy and inventions. The king ate from a mechanised dining board, whimsically labelled 'Table, Lay Yourself', that sank through the floor so that his servants could replenish it without being seen.

The gardens and outbuildings, open April to October, are as fascinating as the castle itself. The highlight is the oriental-style **Moorish Kiosk**, where Ludwig, dressed in oriental garb, would preside over nightly entertainment from a peacock throne. Underwater light dances on the stalactites at the **Venus Grotto**, an artificial cave inspired by a stage set for Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. Now sadly empty, Ludwig's fantastic conch-shaped boat is moored by the shore.

Linderhof is about 13km west of Oberammergau and 26km northwest of Garmisch-Partenkirchen. Bus 9622 travels to Linderhof from Oberammergau several times a day, while RVO 9606 comes from Garmisch-Partenkirchen (€7, 1½ hours). If you're driving, parking costs €2.

Mittenwald

☎ 08823 / pop 8300

Nestled in a cul-de-sac under snow-capped peaks, the valley town of **Mittenwald**, 20km southeast of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, is the most natural spot imaginable for a resort. Known far and wide for its master violin-makers, the citizens of this dozy little place seem almost bemused by its popularity. The air is ridiculously clean, and on the main street the loudest noise is a babbling brook.

The **tourist office** (☎ 339 81; www.mittenwald.de; Dammkarstrasse 3; ☒: 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat, 10am-noon Sun May-Sep) has details of excellent hiking and cycling routes. Popular hikes with cable-car access will take you up the granddaddy Alpstizze (2628m), as well as the Wank, Mt Karwendel and the Wettersteinspitze. Return tickets to Karwendel, which boasts

Germany's second-highest cable-car route, cost €21 per adult and €12 per child.

The Karwendel ski field has one of the longest runs (7km) in Germany, but it is primarily for hotdoggers and freestyle pros. Day ski passes to the nearby Kranzberg ski fields, the best all-round option, cost €21 per adult and €14 per child. For equipment hire and ski/snowboard instruction contact the **Erste Skischule Mittenwald** (☎ 3582; www.skischule-mittenwald.de; Bahnhofspatz).

Other special events include **Fasnacht** (carnival) held in late February or early March, where locals in traditional masks handed down through families over centuries mix old rituals with new in an attempt to drive out winter.

The town gem, **Hotel-Gasthof Alpenrose** (☎ 927 00; www.alpenrose-mittenwald.de; Obermarkt 1; s €21-44, d €46-85; (P)) has cosy, old-style rooms, a cute, backwoods restaurant and live Bavarian music almost nightly. For gourmet fare, subtle sauces and flaming desserts, head to **Restaurant Arnspitze** (☎ 2425; Innsbrucker Strasse 68; mains €16-23; ☎ closed Tue).

Mittenwald is served by hourly trains from Garmisch-Partenkirchen (€3.40, 20 minutes), Munich (€18, 1½ hours) and Innsbruck, across the border in Austria, (€8.90, one hour).

RVO bus 9605 connects Mittenwald with Garmisch-Partenkirchen (30 minutes) several times a day.

OBERSTDORF

☎ 08322 / pop 11,000

Spectacularly situated in the western Alps, the Allgäu region feels like a long, long way from the rest of Bavaria, both in its cuisine (more *Spätzle* noodles than dumplings) and the dialect, which is closer to the Swabian of Baden-Württemberg. Allgäu's chief draw is the car-free resort of Oberstdorf, a major skiing centre a short hop from Austria.

The **tourist office** (☎ 7000; www.oberstdorf.de; Marktplatz 7; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-noon Sat) and its **branch office** (☎ 700 217; Bahnhof; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat, 9am-6pm Sun May-Oct, 9am-noon & 2-6pm Nov-Apr) can help with finding accommodation.

Like Garmisch, Oberstdorf is surrounded by towering peaks and offers superb hiking. For an exhilarating day walk, ride the Nebelhorn **cable car** (adult/child €18.50/8.50) to the upper station, then hike down via the **Gaisalpseen**, two lovely alpine lakes (six hours).

In-the-know skiers value the resort for its friendliness, lower prices and less-crowded pistes. The village is surrounded by 70km of groomed cross-country trails and three ski fields: the **Nebelhorn** (day/half-day passes €30/25.50), **Fellhorn/Kanzelwand** (day/half-day passes €32/27) and **Söllereck** (day/half-day passes €24/19.50). Ski passes good at all areas for one/two/three days cost €33/64/81.

For ski hire and tuition, try **Neue Skischule** (☎ 2737; www.neue-skischule-oberstdorf.de; Oststrasse 39), with outlets at the valley stations of the Nebelhorn and Söllereck lifts.

The **Eislaufzentrum Oberstdorf** (☎ 915 130), behind the Nebelhorn cable-car station, is the biggest ice-skating complex in Germany, with three separate rinks.

Sleeping & Eating

Oberstdorf is chock-full of private guest-houses, but some owners may be reluctant to rent rooms for just one night, especially during high season.

DJH hostel (☎ 2225; www.djh.de; Kornau 8; dm under/over 26yr €17.30/21.20; ☎ Jan-mid-Nov) A relaxed chalet-type hostel with commanding views of the Allgäu Alps and very cool staff. Take the Kleinwalsertal bus to the Reute stop; it's in the suburb Kornau, near the Söllereck chairlift.

Hotel Sonnenheim (☎ 809 980; www.sonnenheim-oberstdorf.com; Waltenbergstrasse 6; s €24-35, d €48-90; (P) ☎ (P)) This spacious and traditional hotel, a few minutes' walk east of the centre, has an intimate, hospitable feel. The nicer rooms have terraces with big sun shades, and facilities include a solarium.

Filser Kur-und Ferienhotel (☎ 7080; www.filserhotel.de; Freibergstrasse 15; s €81-104, d €81-112; (P) ☎ (P)) This is one of many luxurious – but good-value – health resorts in the area, with sparkling facilities, including fitness rooms, pool and sauna. Rooms are stylishly decorated with modern simplicity and some elegant traditional touches. There's wheelchair access.

Mohren (☎ 9120; Marktplatz 6; mains €7-19; ☎ closed Mon) Right in the heart of town, this upscale restaurant has elegant striped chairs beneath a mirrored ceiling. The house speciality is mountain hay, employed in dishes from cream of hay soup to hay-flower sorbet with lemon balm.

Bella Italia (☎ 606 425; Sonthofener Strasse 19; mains €5-9; ☎ closed Mon) This earthy Italian eatery just outside the centre does some of the best pizzas in town, with incredibly tasty chewy crusts

and generous toppings. Big-band tunes are piped into the dining area, which has a fine Alpine view.

Getting There & Away

There are some direct trains from Munich (€24.60, 2½ hours) and more with a change in Immenstadt. RVO buses 81 and 9718 go several times daily between Oberstdorf and Füssen (one-way/return €9/15.70, two hours).

BERCHTESGADEN & BERCHTESGADENER LAND

☎ 08652 / pop 7700

Steeped in myth and legend, Berchtesgadener Land enjoys a natural beauty so abundant that it's almost preternatural. A tale has it that angels, charged with handing out the Earth's wonders, were startled by God's order to hurry up and dropped them all here. Framed by six formidable mountain ranges and home to Germany's second-highest mountain, the Watzmann (2713m), the dreamy fir-lined valleys are filled with gurgling streams and peaceful Alpine villages.

Much of the terrain is protected by law within the Berchtesgaden National Park, home to the pristine Königssee, perhaps Germany's most photogenic lake. Outdoor activities, notably hiking, are plentiful. The mountain-top Eagle's Nest, a lodge built for Hitler, is a major drawcard, as is the Dokumentation Obersalzberg, a museum that chronicles the region's dark Nazi past. The area's wartime legacy is never far below the surface, as demonstrated by the prolonged debate over the propriety of building the Hotel Intercontinental on the nearby site of the Platterhof, once a Nazi 'people's hotel'. The prospect of drawing more luxury cash to the area outweighed the local council's qualms about erasing part of a key historical site, and the new hotel complex was finally unveiled in 2004.

Information

The Hauptbahnhof is also the bus station.

Hypovereinsbank (Weihnachtsschützenplatz 2½)

Internet Stadl (☎ 690 556; Königssee Strasse 2; per 15min €1.50; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat, closed Wed morning & Sun) Coin-operated, high-speed internet access.

Nationalpark office (☎ 643 43; www.nationalpark-berchtesgaden.de; Franziskanerplatz 7, Berchtesgaden; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat) For hiking information.

Post Office (cnr Angergasse & Ludwig-Ganghofer-Strasse)

Tourist office (☎ 9670; www.berchtesgadener.de; Königssee Strasse 2; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-1pm & 2-6pm Sun May-mid-Oct, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat mid-Oct-Apr) Has a free room-booking service and an electronic room-reservation board outside.

Sights

DOKUMENTATION OBERSALZBERG

This should be the first stop on any tour of Berchtesgadener Land. A quiet mountain retreat 3km east of Berchtesgaden, Obersalzberg became the southern headquarters of Hitler's government. The fascinating **Dokumentation Obersalzberg** (☎ 947 960; Salzbergstrasse 41; adult/child under 16 €2.50/free; ☎ 9am-5pm Apr-Oct, 10am-3pm Tue-Sun Nov-Apr) leaves few stones unturned. The forced takeover of the area, the construction of the compound and the daily life of the Nazi elite are documented, and all facets of the Nazi terror regime – Hitler's near-mythical appeal, his racial politics, the resistance movement and the death camps – are covered in extraordinary depth. A section of the underground bunker network is open for touring. To get there take bus 838 from the Hauptbahnhof.

EAGLE'S NEST

Berchtesgaden's most sinister draw is Mt Kehlstein, a sheer-sided peak at Obersalzberg where Martin Bormann, a key henchman of Hitler's, engaged 3000 workers to build a diplomatic meeting-house for the Führer's 50th birthday. Perched at 1834m, the innocent-looking lodge (called Kehlsteinhaus in German) occupies one of the world's most breathtaking spots. Ironically, Hitler is said to have suffered from vertigo and rarely enjoyed the spectacular views himself.

From mid-May to October, the **Eagle's Nest** is open to visitors. To get there, drive or take bus 849 (€3.50 return) from the Hauptbahnhof to the Kehlstein bus departure area. From here the road is closed to private traffic and you must take a special **bus** (www.kehlsteinhaus.de; adult/child €13/12; ☎ 7.20am-4pm) up the mountain (35 minutes). The final 124m stretch to the summit is in a luxurious, brass-clad lift (elevator). The Eagle's Nest now houses a restaurant that donates profits to charity.

SALZBERGWERK

Once a major producer of 'white gold', Berchtesgaden has thrown open its **salt mines** (☎ 600 20; adult/concession €12.90/7.50; ☎ 9am-5pm May-mid-Oct, 12.30-3.30pm Mon-Sat mid-Oct-Apr) for

fun-filled tours (90 minutes). Visitors don traditional miners' gear and slip down a wooden slide into the depths of the mine. Down below, the highlights include mysteriously glowing salt grottoes and the crossing of a 100m-long subterranean salt lake on a wooden raft.

KÖNIGSSEE

Crossing the beautiful, emerald-green **Königssee** is an unforgettable experience. Framed by steep mountain walls just 5km south of Berchtesgaden, it's the country's highest lake (603m) with clear waters shimmering into fjord-like depths. Electric boat tours (adult/child €11/5, two hours) operate year-round to **St Bartholomä**, a quaint onion-domed chapel on the western shore. At some point, the boat will stop while

the captain plays a **Flügelhorn** towards the amazing **Echo Wall** – the melody will bounce seven times. About an hour's hike from the dock at St Bartholomä is the **Eiskapelle** (Ice Chapel), where an ice dome grows every winter to heights of over 200m. In late summer the ice melts and the water tunnels a huge opening in the solid ice.

Activities

HIKING

The wilds of the 210-sq-km Berchtesgaden National Park offer some of the best hiking in Germany. A good introduction is a 2km path up from St Bartholomä beside the Königssee to the notorious Watzmann-Ostwand, where scores of mountaineers have met their deaths.

Another popular hike goes from the southern end of the Königssee to the Obersee. For details of hiking routes visit the Nationalpark office (p351).

SKIING

The **Jenner-Königssee area** (☎ 958 10; daily passes adult/child €24/13.50) at Königssee is the biggest, most varied of five local ski fields. For equipment hire and courses, try **Skischule Treff-Aktiv** (☎ 667 10; www.treffaktiv.de; Jennerbahnstrasse 19, Schönau).

WATZMANN THERME

Berchtesgaden's thermal wellness and fun **pool complex** (☎ 946 40; Bergwerkstrasse 54; tickets per 2/4/12hr €8.30/10.80/€15.30; ☎ 10am-10pm) has several indoor and outdoor pools with various hydro-therapeutic treatment stations, a sauna and fabulous Alpine views.

Tours

An excellent way to experience the creepy legacy of the Obersalzberg area, including the Eagle's Nest and the underground bunker system, is a four-hour guided tour with **Eagle's Nest Tours** (☎ 649 71; www.eagles-nest-tours.com; adult/child €40/30; ☎ 1.30pm mid-May–Oct). Buses depart from the tourist office and reservations are advised, although a second service runs at 8.30am on request.

Sleeping

Berchtesgaden has plenty of private rooms from €25 per person; check with the tourist office about availability.

DJH hostel (☎ 943 70; www.djh.de; Gebirgsjägerstrasse 52; dm under/over 26yr €6.10/21.10; ☎ closed Nov-late Dec)

This 360-bed hostel is situated in the suburb of Strub, and has great views of Mt Watzmann, but has a 10pm curfew. It's a 25-minute walk from the Hauptbahnhof or a short journey on bus 9539.

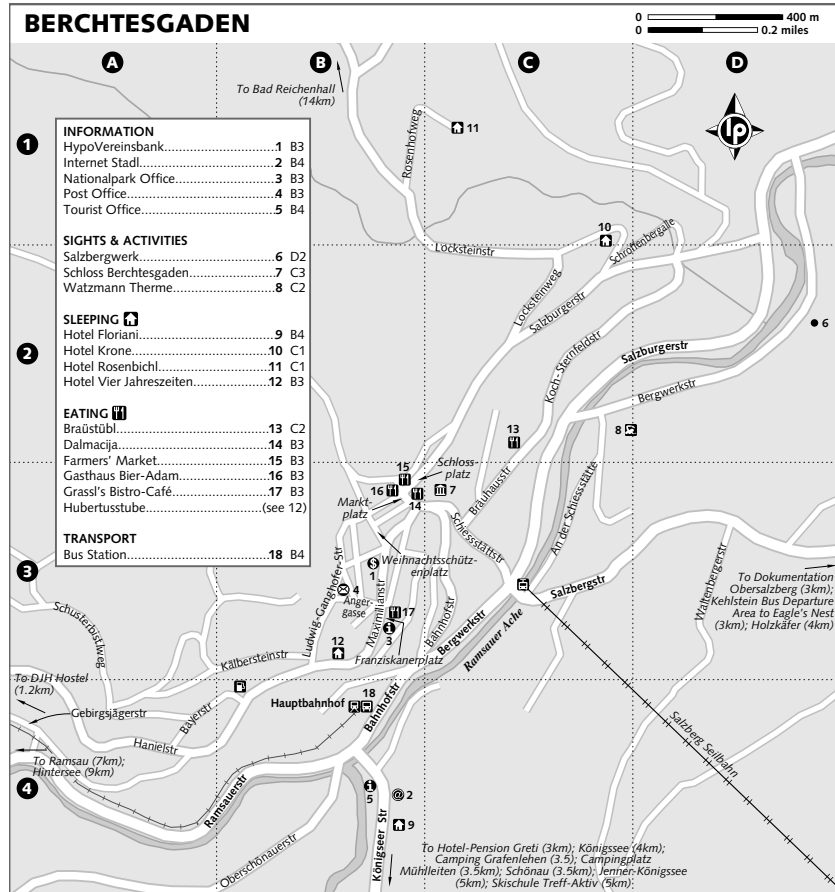
Hotel Floriani (☎ 660 11; www.hotel-floriani.de; Königsseer Strasse 37; s €35-43, d €46-66; ☎) This incredibly friendly and English-speaking *pension* is just past the tourist office and within walking distance of the station. The comfortable, modern rooms are great value and some have spacious balconies. There are also a couple of reasonably priced apartments.

Hotel-Pension Greti (☎ 946 50; www.pension-greti.de; Waldhauserstrasse 20, Schönau; s €34-37, d €58-68; ☎) Warm and welcoming, and just a 15-minute walk from the Königssee, all of Greti's rooms are in a well-appointed country style with balconies. The cellar bar is perfect for winding down post-piste.

Hotel Krone (☎ 946 00; Am Rad 5; www.hotel-krone-berchtesgaden.de; s €35-48, d €70-96; ☎) This family-run English-speaking gem, a short walk from the town centre, has fine views of the valley and the Alps beyond. Lodge-style rooms are generously sized, with carved wooden ceilings, niches and bedsteads. The sunny terrace is perfect for breakfast.

Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten (☎ 9520; www.berchtesgaden.com/vier-jahreszeiten; Maximilianstrasse 20; s €49-72, d €79-138; ☎) For a glimpse of Berchtesgaden's storied past, stay at this traditional Alpine lodge where Bavarian royalty once entertained. Rooms have panoramic views of the mountains and the in-house restaurant couldn't be more atmospheric.

Hotel Rosenbichl (☎ 944 00; www.hotel-rosenbichl.de; Rosenhofweg 24; d €88-148; ☎) This



HITLER'S MOUNTAIN RETREAT

Of all the German towns tainted by the Third Reich, Berchtesgaden has a burden heavier than most. Hitler fell in love with nearby Obersalzberg in the 1920s, and bought a small country home, later enlarged into the imposing Berghof.

After seizing power in 1933, Hitler established a part-time headquarters here and brought much of the party brass with him. They bought, or often confiscated, large tracts of land and tore down farmhouses to erect a 7ft-high barbed-wire fence. Obersalzberg was sealed off as the fortified southern headquarters of the NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers' Party). In 1938, British prime minister Neville Chamberlain visited for negotiations (later continued in Munich) which led to the infamous promise of 'peace in our time' at the expense of the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Little is left of Hitler's Alpine fortress today. In the final days of WWII, the Royal Air Force levelled much of Obersalzberg, though the Eagle's Nest, Hitler's mountain-top eyrie, was left strangely unscathed. The historical twist and turns are dissected at an impressive exhibit called Dokumentation Obersalzberg (p351).

comfortable wellness hotel in the middle of the protected nature zone offers exceptional value. The rooms are spacious, modern and packed with perks, while guests enjoy a sauna, whirlpool, solarium and fitness area.

The nicest camping grounds are near the Königssee in Schönau. **Campingplatz Mühlleiten** (☎ 4584; www.camping-muehlleiten.de; Königsseer Strasse 70; site/person €6/5.20) and **Camping Grafenlehen** (☎ 4140; www.camping-grafenlehen.de; Königsseerfussweg 71; site/person €6/5.20) are the best bets.

Eating

Weekly farmer's markets that sell meats, cheese and produce are held at Marktplatz every Friday morning between April and October.

Bräustübl (☎ 1423; Bräuhausstrasse 13; mains €5-16, Brotzeit €3.50-9) Come to this 19th-century brewery for organic schnitzel and classy salads, served in a pretty inner courtyard tucked away in a quiet spot. In summer, the beer-hall stage is witness to a heel-whacking Bavarian stage show every Saturday night.

Hubertusstube (☎ 9520; Maximilianstrasse 20; mains €10-22) Part of the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten, this restaurant offers rich pickings such as roasted brook trout or sauté of venison, plus there's a choice vegetarian menu. The dining areas have excellent views of the mountains.

Holzkäfer (☎ 621 07; Buchenhöhe 40; dishes €4-9; ☎ dinner only, closed Tue) This funky log-cabin restaurant in the hills around Obersalzberg is a great spot for a night out with fun-loving locals. Crammed with antlers, carvings and backwood oddities, it's known for its tender pork roasts, dark beers and list of Franconian wines. There's wheelchair access.

Other possibilities:

Gasthaus Bier-Adam (☎ 2390; Markt 22; mains €5-18) Cheerful place with a good range of traditional fare and nonsmoking room.

Dalmacija (☎ 976 027; Marktplatz 5; dishes €5-7) Pizzas, pastas and a whiff of the Balkans in a bistro-café teeming with young patrons.

Getting There & Away

From Munich, the quickest train link involves a change at Freilassing (€25.20, three hours). There are direct trains from Salzburg (€7.60, one hour), although RVO bus 840 (one-way/return €6.40/4.80) makes the trip in about 45 minutes and has more departures. Berchtesgaden is south of the Munich-Salzburg A8 autobahn.

Getting Around

The various communities of Berchtesgadener Land are well connected by **RVO bus** (www.rvo-bus.de). To get to the Königssee, take bus 9541 or 9542 from the Hauptbahnhof. Bus 9538 goes up the Obersalzberg. For a taxi call ☎ 4041.

FRANCONIA

In the northern part of Bavaria, the lovely rolling hills of Franconia are home to delicate wines, stunning parks and the meanders of the slow-moving Main River. Franconians see themselves as a breed apart from the brash extroverts of Upper Bavaria further south, and offer refreshingly low-key hospitality.

In the northwest, the region's wine-growers produce some exceptional wines sold in a distinctive teardrop-shaped bottle, the *Bocksbeutel*. For outdoor enthusiasts, the Altmühltal Nature Park offers wonderful hiking, biking and canoeing. But it is Franconia's old royalty and incredible cities – Nuremberg, Bamberg and Würzburg – that draw the most interest.

NUREMBERG

☎ 0911 / pop 493,000

Nuremberg (Nürnberg), Bavaria's second-largest city, is a vibrant place where the night-life is intense and the beer is as dark as coffee. The city is one of Bavaria's biggest draws and is alive with visitors during summer and the spectacular Christmas market.

For centuries Nuremberg was the unofficial capital of the Holy Roman Empire and the preferred residence of German kings, who kept their crown jewels here. Rich and stuffed with comely architecture, it was also a magnet for famous artists like Albrecht Dürer, a native son. 'Nuremberg shines throughout Germany like a sun among the moon and stars,' gushed Martin Luther. In the 19th century the city was at the heart of the industrial revolution in Germany.

The Nazis saw in Nuremberg a perfect stage for their activities. It was here that the fanatical party rallies were held, the boycott of Jewish businesses began and the infamous Nuremberg Laws outlawing Jewish citizenship were enacted. On 2 January 1945, Allied bombers reduced the city to rubble and 6000 people were killed.

After WWII the city was chosen as the site of the War Crimes Tribunal, now known as the Nuremberg Trials. Later, the painstaking reconstruction – using the original stone – of almost all the city's main buildings, including the castle and old churches in the Altstadt, have returned the city to some of its former glory.

Orientation

Most major sights are within the Altstadt. The Hauptbahnhof is just outside the old city walls to the southeast. From here, pedestrian Königstrasse runs to the city centre, where the shallow Pegnitz River flows from east to west.

About 4km southeast of the centre is the enormous Reichsparteitagsgelände, the Nazi rally grounds also known as Luitpoldhain. The courthouse where the Nuremberg Trials were held is just off the Altstadt.

Information

BOOKSHOPS

Buchhandlung Edelmann (☎ 992 060; Kornmarkt 8) Travel section upstairs and some English-language novels downstairs.

Schmitt & Hahn (☎ 2146 711; Hauptbahnhof; ☎ 5.30am-11pm) Full selection of international press and a decent section of current paperbacks for those travelling light.

CULTURAL CENTRES

Amerika Haus (☎ 230 690; Gleissbühlstrasse 13) Impressive range of cultural and artistic programmes each month.

EMERGENCY

Ambulance (☎ 192 22)

INTERNET ACCESS

Netzkultur (☎ 211 0782; Färberstrasse 11, 3rd fl; per hr €3; ☎ 10am-1am Mon-Sat)

LAUNDRY

Schnell und Sauber (☎ 180 9400; per load €4; ☎ 6am-midnight) East (Sulzbacher Strasse 86; tram 8 to Deichslerstrasse); South (Allersberger Strasse 89; tram 4, 7 or 9 to Schweiggerstrasse); West (Schwabacher Strasse 86; U2 to St Leonhard)

MEDICAL SERVICES

Full-service hospitals close to the Altstadt: **Poliklinik** (☎ 192 92; Kesslerplatz 5) **Unfallklinik Dr Erler** (☎ 272 80; Kontumazgarten 4-18)

MONEY

Commerzbank (Königstrasse 21)
Hypovereinsbank (Königstrasse 3)
Reisebank (Hauptbahnhof)

POST

Main post office (Bahnhofplatz 1)

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourist offices (☎ 233 60; www.tourismus.nuernberg.de) Königstrasse (Königstrasse 93; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat); Hauptmarkt (Hauptmarkt 18; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sun May-Sep, 9am-7pm Mon-Sat & 10am-7pm during Christkindlesmarkt) Staff sell the Nürnberg + Fürth Card (€18), good for two days of unlimited public transport and admission to most museums and attractions in both cities.

TRAVEL AGENCIES

Prärrer Reisen (☎ 929 760; Gostenhofer Hauptstrasse 27) Good all-round travel agency with a last-minute ticket desk at the airport.

Sights

HAUPTMARKT

This bustling square in the heart of the Altstadt is the site of markets and in particular the famous Christkindlesmarkt (Christmas Market). The ornate Gothic **Pfarrkirche Unsere Liebe Frau** (1350-58), better known as the Frauenkirche, was built as a repository for the crown jewels of Charles IV who, fearing theft, sent them instead to Prague for safekeeping. Beneath the clock the seven electoral princes march around Charles IV every day at noon.

Standing like a space probe on the north-west corner of the square is the 19m **Schöner Brunnen** (Beautiful Fountain). A replica of the late 14th-century original, it is a stunning golden vision of 40 electors, prophets, Jewish and Christian heroes and other allegorical figures. The first version, made of badly eroded sandstone, stands in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum. On the market side hangs a seamless **golden ring**, polished bright by millions of hands. A local superstition has it that if you turn it three times, your wish will come true.

ALTES RATHAUS & ST SEBALDUSKIRCHE

Beneath the Altes Rathaus (1616-22), a hulk of a building with lovely Renaissance-style interiors, you'll find the gory **Lochgefängnis** (Medieval Dungeons; ☎ 231 2690; Rathausplatz; tours adult/

concession €2/1; ☎ 10am-4.30pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct; 10am-4.30pm Tue-Fri Nov-Mar, daily during Christkindlesmarkt). The 12 small cells and torture chamber must seen on a guided tour (held every half-hour) and might easily put you off lunch.

Opposite the Altes Rathaus stands the 13th-century **St Sebalduskirche**, which is Nuremberg's oldest church. Check out the ornate carvings that are over the **Bridal Doorway** to the north, and depict the Wise and Foolish Virgins. Inside the church, the highlight is the bronze shrine of **St Sebald**, which is a Gothic and Renaissance masterpiece that took its maker, Peter Vischer the Elder, as well as his two sons, more than 11 years to complete. Vischer is in it too, sporting a skullcap.

STADTMUSEUM FEMBOHAUS

Set in an ornate 16th-century merchant house, the **Fembo House Municipal Museum** (☎ 231 2595; Burgstrasse 15; adult/concession €4/2 for Noricama or general exhibit, both €6/3; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun). Highlights of this entertaining overview include the restored historic rooms of this 16th-century merchant house and a flashy multimedia show, Noricama, which journeys through 950 years of Nuremberg's history.

FELSENGÄNGE

Under the **Albrecht Dürer Monument** on Albrecht-Dürer-Platz are four storeys of chilly corridors through the **Felsen-gänge** (☎ 227 066; adult/concession €4/3; ☎ tours at 11am, 1pm, 3pm & 5pm, 3-person minimum). Bur-

rowed into the sandstone in the 14th century to house a brewery and beer cellar, it also served as an air-raid shelter during WWII. The tunnels, which can only be seen on a tour, can get pretty chilly so take a jacket.

TIERGÄRTNERPLATZ

Framed by charming half-timbered houses, the **Tiergärtnerort** is a square tower from the 16th century. The long, dark passage underneath gives a suitable impression of the city's walls, in places up to 6m thick. On the square stands the beautiful late Gothic half-timbered **Pilatushaus**, owned by a wealthy maker of armour for kings and nobles. In front is Jürgen Goetz' bronze sculpture *Der Hase – Hommage à Dürer* (The Hare – A Tribute to Dürer, 1984). This nod to Dürer's watercolour original, called *Junger Feldhase* (1502), shows the dire results of tampering with nature.

A few steps further east is the **Historischer Kunstbunker** (☎ 227 066; Obere Schmiedgasse 52; tours adult/concession €4.50/3.50; ☎ tours 3pm Apr-Oct & Dec, Sat & Sun only Jan-Mar & Nov), a climate-controlled bomb shelter used to protect key artworks during WWII. Works were kept here by Albrecht Dürer, sculptor Veit Stoss and Martin Behaim, the maker of a bafflingly accurate 15th century globe. Tickets are available only from brewpub **Hausbrauerei Altstadtthof** (Burgstrasse 19).

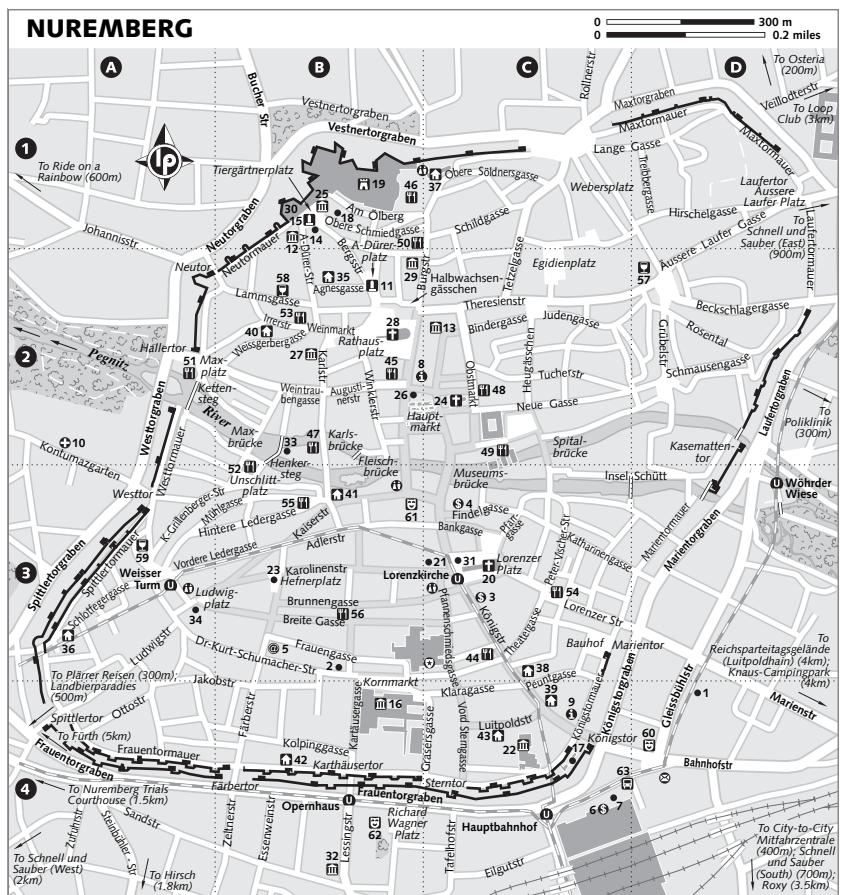
KAISERBURG

A must-see is the humungous **Kaiserburg** (Imperial Castle; ☎ 244 6590; Burg; adult/concession incl museum €6/5, well & tower only €3/2; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Oct-Mar). Construction began here during the Hohenstaufen reign in the 12th century, and dragged on 400 years. The complex embraces the Kaiser's living quarters, a Romanesque chapel, the Imperial and Knights' Halls and the **Sinwellturm** (Sinwell Tower; 113 steps). There's also the amazing **Tiefer Brunnen** (Deep Well; 48m-deep), which still yields drinking water.

The **Kaiserburg Museum** (☎ 200 9540; Burg; adult/concession €5/4) chronicles the history of the castle and sheds light on medieval defence techniques. The grassy knoll in the southeast corner of the castle gardens is **Am Ölberg**, a great spot to sit and gaze out over the city's rooftops.

ALBRECHT-DÜRER-HAUS

Germany's most famous Renaissance draughtsman, Dürer lived and worked at the **Albrecht-Dürer-Haus** (☎ 231 2568; Albrecht-Dürer-Strasse 39; adult/concession €5/2.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun, 10am-8pm Thu) from 1509 till his death in 1528. Several of his graphic works are on display, and a multimedia version of Agnes, his wife, takes visitors through the master's recreated workshop.



INFORMATION		Lochgefängnisse.....(see 13)	EATING
Amerika Haus.....	1 D4	Lorenzkirche.....	20 C3
Buchhandlung Edelmann.....	2 B3	Nassauer Haus.....	21 C3
Commerzbank.....	3 C3	Neues Museum.....	22 C4
Hypovereinsbank.....	4 C3	Peter-Henlein-Brunnen.....	23 B3
Netzkultur.....	5 B3	Pfarrkirche Unsere Liebe	
Reisebank.....	6 C4	Frau.....	24 C2
Schmitt & Hahn.....	7 C4	Pilatushaus.....	25 B1
Tourist Office - Hauptmarkt.....	8 B2	Schöner Brunnen.....	26 B2
Tourist Office - Königstrasse.....	9 C4	Spielzeugmuseum.....	27 B2
Unfallklinik Dr Erler.....	10 A2	St Sebalduskirche.....	28 B2
		Stadtmuseum	
		Fembohaus.....	29 B2
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES		Tiergärtnerort.....	30 B1
Albrecht Dürer		Tugendbrunnen.....	31 C3
Monument.....	11 B2	Verkehrsmuseum.....	32 B4
Albrecht-Dürer-Haus.....	12 B1	Weinstadel.....	33 B2
Altes Rathaus.....	13 C2	Weisser Turm.....	34 A3
Brauerei Altstadtthof.....	14 B1		
Der Hase (The Hare)		SLEEPING	
Sculpture.....	15 B1	Agneshof.....	35 B2
Ehekarussell Brunnen.....(see 34)		Am Jakobsmarkt.....	36 A3
Felsengänge.....(see 11)		DJH Hotel.....	37 C1
Gemsisches		Hotel Deutscher Kaiser.....	38 C3
Nationalmuseum.....	16 B4	Hotel Drei Raben.....	39 C4
Handwerkerhof.....	17 C4	Hotel Elch.....	40 B2
Historischer Kunstbunker.....	18 B1	Hotel Lucas.....	41 B3
Kaiserburg.....	19 B1	Lette 'm Sleep.....	42 B4
Kaiserburg Museum.....(see 19)		Probst-Garni Hotel.....	43 C4
		Barfüsser Kleines Brauhaus.....	44 C3
		Bratwurstglöcklein im	
		Handwerkerhof.....(see 17)	
		Bratwursthäusle.....	45 B2
		Burgwächter.....	46 B1
		Café am Trödelmarkt.....	47 B2
		Enchilada.....	48 C2
		Heilig-Geist-Spital.....	49 C2
		Hütt'n.....	50 B1
		Kettensteg.....	51 A2
		Naturkostladen Lotos.....	52 B3
		Prison St Michel.....	53 B2
		Souptopia.....	54 C3
		Sushi to Go.....	55 B3
		Wok Man.....	56 B3
		DRINKING	
		Meisengeige.....	57 D2
		Saigon Bar.....	58 B2
		Treibhaus.....	59 A3
		ENTERTAINMENT	
		BA Hotel.....	60 D4
		Mach 1.....	61 B3
		Städtische Bühnen.....	62 B4
		TRANSPORT	
		BEX BerlinLinienBus stop.....	63 C4

BAVARIA

BAVARIA

SPIELZEUGMUSEUM

The **Spiegelzeugmuseum** (Toy Museum; ☎ 231 3164; Karlstrasse 13-15; adult/concession €5/2.50; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun) exhibits playthings from many periods – from wooden ships and paper figures to electric trains and computer games. Kids and parents will love the play area.

WEINSTADL & HENKERSTEG

On the north side of the Pegnitz, near the Karlsbrücke, is the impressive half-timbered **Weinstadel**, an old wine depot with two half-timbered stories jutting out over the Pegnitz. It has had a storied life, ranging from lepers' refuge to student dorm. Crossing the river is the covered wooden **Henkersteg** (Hangman's Bridge), built to keep the hangman's exposure to disease at a minimum.

EHEKARUSSELL BRUNNEN

At the foot of the fortified **Weisser Turm** (White Tower) stands the amazing **Ehekarussell Brunnen** (Marriage Roundabout), a metallic fountain with six interpretations of marriage (from first love to quarrel to death-do-us-part) all based on a verse by Hans Sachs, the medieval cobbler-poet. The artist, Jürgen Weber, faced a storm of criticism when the fountain was unveiled in 1984. On Hefnersplatz, the townsfolk had fewer quibbles with another modern fountain, the **Peter-Henlein-Brunnen** dedicated to the 16th-century tinkerer who is credited with making the first pocket watch.

LORENZKIRCHE

Lorenzer Platz is dedicated to one of the church's first archivists, St Lawrence, a revered Catholic saint. Nuremberg's Catholics were once split into competing factions, one north and the other south of the river; the latter made a statement with **Lorenzkirche** (Church of St Lawrence), a massive 15th-century church crammed with artistic treasures. Highlights include the stained-glass windows (including a Rosetta window 9m in diameter) and Veit Stoss' *Engelsgruss* (Annunciation), a wooden carving with life-size figures suspended above the high altar.

The **Tugendbrunnen** (Fountain of Virtues), on the north side of the church, shows the seven ladies proudly spouting water from their breasts in the shadow of a figure of Justice.

REICHSPARTEITAGSGELÄNDE

The black-and-white images of ecstatic Nazi supporters hailing their Führer were filmed in Nuremberg. This orchestrated propaganda began as early as 1927, but after 1933 Hitler opted for a purpose-built venue, the **Reichsparteitagsgelände** (Nazi Party Rally Grounds). Much of the outsized grounds was destroyed during Allied bombing raids, but enough is left to get a sense of the megalomania behind it.

At the northwestern edge was the **Luitpoldarena**, designed for mass SS and SA parades. The area is now a park. South of here, the half-built **Kongresshalle** (Congress Hall) was meant to outdo Rome's Colosseum in both scale and style.

To put the grounds into a historical context, visit the **Dokumentationszentrum** (Documentation Centre; ☎ 231 7538; Bayernstrasse 110; adult/student €5/2.50; 🕒 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun) in the north wing of the Kongresshalle. A stunning walkway of glass cuts diagonally through the complex, ending with an interior view of the congress hall. Inside, the exhibit *Fascination and Terror* examines the rise of the NSDAP, the Hitler cult, the party rallies and the Nuremberg Trials. Don't miss it.

East of the Kongresshalle, across the artificial Dutzendteich (Dozen Ponds), is the **Zeppelinfeld**, fronted by a 350m-long grandstand, the **Zeppelintribüne**, where most of the big Nazi parades, rallies and events took place. Sporting events and rock concerts take place here now, although this rehabilitation is still hotly disputed.

The grounds are bisected by the 60m-wide **Grosse Strasse** (Great Road), which culminates, 2km south, at the **Märzfeld** (March Field), which was planned as military exercise grounds. West of the Grosse Strasse was to have been the **Deutsches Stadion** with a seating capacity of 400,000. Things never got beyond the first excavation, and the hole filled with groundwater – today's Silbersee.

To get to the grounds, take tram 4 to Dutzendteich or tram 9 to Luitpoldhain. Both trams pass the Hauptbahnhof.

NUREMBERG TRIALS COURTHOUSE

Nazi war criminals were tried for crimes against peace and humanity in the **Schwurgerichtssaal 600** (Courtroom 600; ☎ 231 5421; Fürther Strasse 110; adult/concession €2.50/1.25; 🕒 tours 1-4pm hourly Sat & Sun). The Allies chose Nuremberg for obvious symbolic reasons. In addition,

the building was easily accessible and one of few such complexes to survive the war intact.

Held in 1945–46, the trials resulted in the conviction and sentencing of 22 Nazi leaders and 150 underlings, and the execution of dozens. Among those condemned to death were Joachim von Ribbentrop, Alfred Rosenberg, Wilhelm Frick and Julius Streicher. Hermann Göring, the Reich's field marshal, cheated the hangman by taking cyanide in his cell hours before his scheduled execution.

To get there take the U1 to Bärenschanze.

GERMANISCHES NATIONALMUSEUM

One of the most important museums of German culture, the **Germanisches Nationalmuseum** (☎ 133 10; Kartäusergasse 1; adult/concession €5/4; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, 10am-9pm Wed) is strangely underrated. It features an archaeological collection, arms and armour, musical and scientific instruments and toys – but the jewel in its crown is the **art section**. This varied exhibit not only boasts exquisite paintings, but also sculpture, historical garments, porcelain and glass objects. The display is due to expand in 2007, when the original hall is reopened after a lengthy revamp.

Dürer's work is featured prominently. It affords insight into the artist's enormous prestige at the Holy Roman court; his commissions included portraits for emperors Charlemagne and Sigimund, whose faces appeared on the doors of the imperial chambers. The artist's celebrated *Hercules Slaying the Stymphalian Birds* confirms his superb grasp of anatomical detail and a flash of mischief (Dürer put his own facial features on the Greek hero). The many other gems include Albrecht Altdorfer's *Victory of Charlemagne over the Avars near Regensburg*, whose impossible detail tests the human eye. Large, lavishly coloured parchments abound, such as Valchenborch's *Crossing of the Red Sea*.

Pick up an audio-guide (€1.50) as few labels are in English. Free guided tours in English take place at 2pm on the first and third Sunday of each month (normal admission is still charged).

At the street leading to the museum, the **Way of Human Rights** is a row of symbolic white concrete pillars (and one oak tree) bearing the 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Each pillar is inscribed in German and, in succession, the language of a

people whose rights have been violated. The oak represents the languages not explicitly mentioned.

VERKEHRSMUSEUM

Nuremberg's impressive **Verkehrsmuseum** (☎ 0180-444 22 33; Lessingstrasse 6; adult/concession €3/2; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Sun) combines two exhibits under one roof: one about the **Deutsche Bahn** (German Railways) and one about **Kommunikation**. The former is an entertaining display that explores the history of Germany's legendary rail system. You'll see the country's first engine, the *Adler*, which ran from Nuremberg to nearby Fürth in 1852. Other fine specimens include Ludwig II's gilded carriage (dubbed the 'rolling Neuschwanstein' for its starry ceiling fresco and lavish decoration) and Bismarck's sober quarters for official visits. A highlight is the hourly demonstration of one of Germany's largest model railways, run by a controller at a huge console of blinking lights and switches. The upstairs section covers the evolution of the postal system, but apart from some elaborate delivery coaches, isn't terribly riveting.

NEUES MUSEUM

Housed in a spectacular building with an all-glass façade, the **Neues Museum** (☎ 240 2010; Luitpoldstrasse 5; adult/concession €3.50/2.50; 🕒 10am-8pm Tue-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun) has the suitable panache of a museum devoted to art and design. The upper floor displays contemporary art (mostly abstracts) while the lower showcases the major developments in design since 1945. For a free peek at the exhibits, just stand in the courtyard outside.

HANDWERKERHOF

A re-creation of a crafts quarter of old Nuremberg, the Handwerkerhof is a self-contained tourist trap by the Königstor. It's about as quaint as a hammer on your thumbnail, but if you're cashed up you may find some decent merchandise.

JÜDISCHES MUSEUM FRANKEN IN FÜRTH

A quick U-Bahn ride away in the neighbouring town of Fürth is the **Jüdisches Museum Franken in Fürth** (Frankish Jewish Museum; ☎ 770 577; Königstrasse 89; adult/concession €3/2; 🕒 10am-5pm Wed-Sun, 10am-8pm Tue). Fürth once had the largest Jewish congregation of any city in southern Germany, and this museum, housed in a handsomely

restored building, chronicles the history of Jewish life in the region from the Middle Ages to today. To reach the museum, you take the U1 to the Rathaus stop in Fürth.

Walking Tour

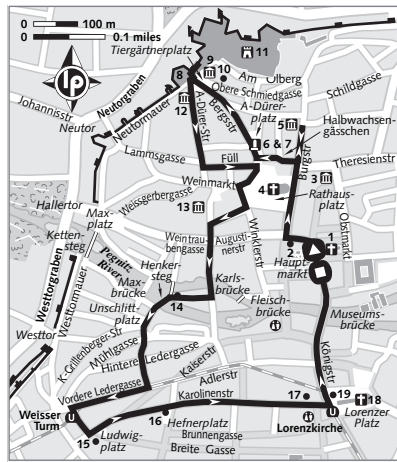
WALK FACTS

Start Hauptmarkt
Finish Hauptmarkt
Distance 2.5km
Duration 2 hours

This circuit covers the main sights of the historic city over a leisurely 2.5km walk. With visits to all the museums and attractions listed, it could take the best part of two days.

The tour starts on **Hauptmarkt**, the main square. At the eastern end is the ornate Gothic **Pfarrkirche Unsere Liebe Frau (1)**, or Frauenkirche. The clock's figures spring into action every day at noon. The **Schöner Brunnen (2)**; Beautiful Fountain) rises up from the cobblestones like a misplaced spire. Walk north to the Altes Rathaus, the old town hall with its **Lochgefängnisse (3)**, the medieval dungeons. Opposite stands the 13th-century **Sebalduskirche (4)**, with an exterior smothered in religious sculptures and a bronze shrine of St Sebald inside. Just up Burgstrasse, the **Fembo House Municipal Museum (5)** covers the highs and lows of Nuremberg's past with a multimedia show. Backtrack south to Halbwachsendgässchen and turn right into Albrecht-Dürer-Platz and a dignified statue of the great painter, the **Albrecht Dürer Monument (6)**. Directly beneath are the **Felsengänge (7)**, tunnels once used as an old beer cellar and an air-raid shelter.

Moving up Bergstrasse, you'll reach the massive **Tiergärtnerort (8)**, a 16th century tower. Nearby is the comely, half-timbered **Pilatushaus (9)** and a strange, glassy-eyed hared dedicated to master Dürer. A few steps east is the **Historischer Kunstbunker (10)** where precious art was stored in WWII. Looming over the scene is the **Kaiserburg (11)**, the castle of medieval knights with imperial chambers. Go south to the **Albrecht-Dürer-Haus (12)** where the Renaissance genius lived and worked. Continue south along Albrecht-Dürer-Strasse, turn left on Füll and skirt the back of Sebalduskirche to Karlstrasse, where you'll reach the **Spielzeugmuseum (13)**, with masses of amusing toys.



Cross the Karlsbrücke to enjoy a view of the **Weinstadel (14)**, an old wine depot overlooking the river. Continue across the Henkersteg (Hangman's Bridge) and wend your way south to Vordere Ledergasse, which leads west to the amazing **Ehekarussell Brunnen (15)**, with its outrageous views on marriage. Head east on Ludwigsplatz past the **Peter-Henlein-Brunnen (16)**, with a statue of the first watch-maker, and proceed along Karolinenstrasse to reach the city's oldest house, **Nassauer Haus (17)** at No 2, and the massive **Lorenzkirche (18)**, a 15th-century tabernacle with a suspended carving of the Annunciation. The **Tugendbrunnen (19)**, a fountain of the seven Virtues, is on the north side of the church.

Continuing north up Königstrasse will return you to the Hauptmarkt, your starting point.

Tours

The tourist office runs English-language **Old Town walking tours** (adult/child under 14yr €8/free; ☎ 1pm May-Oct & Dec), which include admission to Kaiserburg. Tours leave from the Hauptmarkt branch and take 2½ hours.

Other organised tours include the following: **History for Everyone** (☎ 307 360; adult/concession €5/3.50; ☎ 2pm Sat & Sun, Sun only Dec-Mar; 2hr) Intriguing two-hour tours of the Nazi rally grounds by a nonprofit association, in English. Meet at Luitpoldhain, the terminus of tram 9, 4km to the east.

Nachtwächterin (☎ 997 207; tours €6; ☎ 9pm Mar-Sep, 7pm Oct-Dec) Night watchman tours, in German; meets at Hauptmarkt.

Festivals & Events

From late November to Christmas Eve, the Hauptmarkt is taken over by the most famous **Christkindlesmarkt** (Christmas Market) in Germany. Scores of colourful stalls selling mulled wine, spirits, roast sausages and trinkets fill the square as the smell of *Lebkuchen* (large, soft, spicy biscuits) wafts overhead.

Sleeping

Accommodation gets tight and rates rocket during the Christmas market and toy fair (trade only) in late January to early February. At other times, cheap rooms can be found, especially if you book ahead.

BUDGET

Knaus-Campingpark 'Am Dutzendteich' (☎ 981 2717; knaus.camp.nbg@freenet.de; Hans-Kalb-Strasse 56; per tent/person €2/5) A camping ground near the lakes in the Volkspark, southeast of the city centre. Take the U1 to Messezentrum, then walk about a kilometre.

Lette 'm sleep (☎ 992 8128; www.backpackers.de; Frauentormauer 42; dm €16-20, d €44-52, linen €3; ☎) A backpacker favourite, this independent hostel is conveniently located within the old town wall, just five minutes from the Hauptbahnhof. It's a great place to meet fellow travellers, with a cosy common room, kitchen, bar and free web access, and the hosts are a mine of local information. The many options include dorms, doubles and apartments.

DJH hostel (☎ 230 9360; www.djh.de; Burg 2; dm under/over 26yr €20.70/24.70) In the former castle stables, this excellent, spotless hostel has 317 beds in bright airy dorms, as well as a piano and table tennis. It's about a 20-minute walk north of the Hauptbahnhof.

Probst-Garni Hotel (☎ 203 433; fax 205 93 36; Luitpoldstrasse 9; s €42-51, d €57-67) A pleasant, family-run outfit in the old centre, with spacious modern quarters, as clean as a new pin. All 34 rooms are on the third floor and are nicely removed from the bustle at street level. Rooms with bathrooms have TVs, and there are a couple of smaller, cheaper rooms with shared bath.

MIDRANGE

Hotel Lucas (☎ 227 845; www.hotel-lucas.de; Kaiserstrasse 22; s €65-105, d €90-125; ☎) This boutique hotel in the heart of the city offers excellent value and service. There are refined touches throughout, like exposed beams and moveable bed frames that instantly convert two singles

into a double bed. The nicer rooms jut out over the rushing waters of the Regnitz, just upstairs from the pleasant café.

Hotel Drei Raben (☎ 274 380; www.hotel-drei-raben.de; Königstrasse 63; s €50-170, d €80-170; ☎) This designer hotel builds upon the legend of three ravens perched on the building's chimney stack, who tell each other stories from Nuremberg lore. Each of the 21 rooms uses its style and humour and to tell a particular tale – from the life of Dürer to the history of the locomotive. The FC Nürnberg room features a foosball table-cum-writing desk. Staff are delightful.

Hotel Deutscher Kaiser (☎ 242 660; www.deutscher-kaiser-hotel.de; Königstrasse 55; s €70-138, d €98-178; ☎) A grand sandstone staircase leads to ornately decorated rooms in this 1880s-built hotel in the Altstadt. The 'Kaiser' rooms are slightly dearer but superior to the standard doubles, with bidets in the bathrooms, brocaded curtains and carved bedsteads. The elegant reading room is a gem.

Hotel Elch (☎ 249 2980; www.hotel-elch.de; Irnerstrasse 9; s €65, d €85; ☎) This friendly hotel, based in a 14th-century half-timbered house near the Kaiserburg, has small but comfy rooms up a narrow medieval staircase. Breakfast is served in the quaint woody restaurant, the Schnitzelria, which does a good line in Franconian beers and, yes, schnitzel.

Am Jakobsmarkt (☎ 200 70; www.hotel-am-jakobsmarkt.de; Schottengasse 5; s €79-125, d €103-179; ☎) Choose from contemporary or traditional rooms at this well-run hotel, reached via a tiny courtyard near the Spittlerort. Unexpected extras include a sauna, solarium and fitness room.

TOP END

Agneshof (☎ 214 440; www.agneshof-nuernberg.de; Agnesgasse 10; s €90-175, d €112-225; ☎) The Agneshof is a real pleasure – an oasis of calm with an upbeat artsy air, top-notch facilities and elegant modern rooms. If you feel like some pampering, try the whirlpool and in-house health treatments. The comfy Kaiser suites offer unparalleled views of the castle. There's also wheelchair access.

Eating RESTAURANTS

Barfüsser Kleines Brauhaus (☎ 204 242; Königstrasse 60; mains €6-13) Munch on hearty Franconian specialities among the copper vats, enamel

advertising plaques and oodles of knickknacks in this atmospheric old grain warehouse, where you can practically lose yourself in the cavernous vaulted cellar. Serious quaffers go for the *Eichenholzfüsschen*, a 5L oak-wood keg of beer.

Café am Trödelmarkt (☎ 208 877; Trödelmarkt; dishes €3.50-11) A gorgeous spot on a sunny day, this café is an excellent choice for breakfast or lunch. It overlooks the covered Henkersteg bridge and offers creative salads, filled baguettes and a bevy of seasonal dishes, such as pike-perch grilled fresh off the hook.

Hütt'n (☎ 201 9881; Burgstrasse 19; mains €8-12) This local haunt is perpetually overflowing with admirers of *Krustenschäufele* (roast pork with crackling, dumplings and sauerkraut salad) so be prepared to queue. There's also a near-endless supply of schnapps.

Burgwächter (☎ 222 126; Am Ölberg 10; mains €5.50-12) In the shadow of the castle, this is a great place, with a terraced beer garden and terrific city views. The prime steaks and grilled cuts will please carnivores but there are also homemade filled pastas and salads.

Kettensteg (☎ 221 081; Maxplatz 35; mains €6.50-15) This leafy restaurant is Nuremberg's best open-air option away from the crowds. It offers a modern twist on Franconian fare, serving traditional dishes with a waistline-friendly approach.

Enchilada (☎ 244 8498; Obstmarkt 5; mains €8-12) This Mexican haunt with faux adobe walls does generous taco platters, burritos and nachos in a candlelit setting. Later on, the cocktail lists come out for the patrons flowing in from the Hauptmarkt nearby.

Prison St Michel (☎ 221 191; Irrestrasse 2-4; mains €7-20; ☎ dinner) This is one of Nuremberg's elegant gourmet restaurants, with the evening's fresh cuts displayed in the window. It's noted for its excellent sole and dorade, as well as choice cuts of prime beef; try the Chateaubriand and lamb filets. It's great for an intimate, romantic night out in a quiet street near the castle.

Also recommended:

Heilig-Geist-Spital (☎ 221 761; Spitalgasse 12; mains €7.50-19) Classic Nuremberg restaurant with an extensive wine list.

Landbierparadies (☎ 287 86 73; Rothenburger Strasse 26; mains €4.50-6.50; ☎ evenings) Pork roast and a wellspring of beers from deepest Franconia.

Osteria (☎ 558 283; Pirkheimer Strasse 116; mains €6-12) Boisterous hole-in-the-wall serving big tasty pizzas that dwarf your plate.

QUICK EATS

Naturkostladen Lotos (☎ 266 180; Untere Kreuzgasse; dishes €2-7) The organic fare at this health-food shop will go some way towards unclogging those arteries – try the lentil crème, spinach soup or veggie pizza. The fresh bread and cheese counter is a treasure chest of picnic supplies.

Souptopia (☎ 240 6697; Lorenzer Strasse 27; soups €2.50-5; ☎ closed Sun) These homemade soups, made fresh daily and backed up by a good choice of sandwiches, salads and other veggie options, are a real winner.

Sushi to Go (☎ 242 5143; Hintere Ledergasse 2; mains €6-15; ☎ noon-2pm & 6-8pm) This Californian-style sushi bar in a former Bavarian pub has great deals, such as a 'Bento' – miso soup, three pieces of sushi, a spring roll and chicken teriyaki for €9.45. They do great business with takeaway customers.

Wok Man (☎ 240 6697; Lorenzer Strasse 27; soups €2.50-5; ☎ closed Sun) This is a decent, self-service Chinese fast-food place in the pedestrian zone, with spring rolls and large platters of chow mein.

NUREMBERG SAUSAGES

There's hot competition between Regensburg and Nuremberg over whose sausages are the best; the latter's are certainly more famous. Sample them for yourself at the following places.

Bratwursthäusle (☎ 227 695; Rathausplatz 1; dishes €5.80-12; ☎ closed Sun) Cooked over a flaming beechwood grill, the little links sold at this rustic inn arguably set the standards for *Rostbratwürste* across the land. You can dine in the timbered restaurant or on the terrace with views of the Hauptmarkt.

Bratwurstglöcklein im Handwerkerhof (☎ 227 625; Handwerkerhof; dishes €3-7) Despite its location in the kitsch Handwerkerhof, the sausages here are good. *Drie in a Weckla* (three links in a roll) will cost you loose change.

Drinking

Saigon Bar (☎ 244 8657; Lammgasse 8; ☎ from 9pm Thu-Sun) A worthy last gasp to any night out, the Saigon is the quintessential late-night bar for steel-livered Nurembergers. The poison of choice is a *caipirinha*, prepared with smashed limes, brown sugar, crushed ice and white Pitú rum, just like they do it in Rio.

Treibhaus (☎ 223 041; Karl-Grillenberger-Strasse 28) Well off the path of most visitors, this

bustling, smoky café is a Nuremberg institution. It serves breakfast till evening and drinks into the wee hours to students and weary shoppers.

Meisengeige (☎ 208 283; Am Laufer Schlagturm 3) This comfortable hole-in-the-wall bar draws an intense crowd of film intellectuals thanks to the tiny indie cinema next door.

Entertainment

The excellent **Plärer** (www.plaerrer.de; €2), available at newsstands throughout the city, is the best source of information for events around town. Otherwise try the free **Doppelpunkt** (www.doppelpunkt.de), a monthly listings magazine found in bars, restaurants and the tourist office.

CLUBS

BA Hotel (☎ 237 30 51; Bahnhofstrasse 5; ☎ Wed-Sat) A play on its predecessor, the opulent Bavarian American Hotel, this smart new club-lounge features house music spun by top-flight DJs in retro surrounds. The spacious layout includes a cool lounge area, two bars and a ballroom, with plenty of corners for couples to edge into.

Loop Club (☎ 686 767; Klingenhofstrasse 52; ☎ Thu-Sat) With three dance areas and a languid chill-out zone with lounge music, this place attracts a more mature crowd. Every Thursday is 50-Cent night, a collective send-up with cheap mixed drinks flowing to the sound of '80s hits and karaoke. Take the U2 to Herrnhütte, turn right and it's a five-minute walk.

Hirsch (☎ 429 414; Vogelweierstrasse 66) This converted factory south of the centre has live alternative music almost daily, as well as theme nights and a summer beer garden. Take the U1 to Frankenstrasse.

Mach1 (☎ 203 030; Kaiserstrasse 1-9; cover €4-8; ☎ Thu-Sat) This legendary dance temple has been around for decades but still holds a spell over fashion victims. Line up and be mustered.

CINEMA

Roxy (☎ 488 40; Julius-Lossmann-Strasse 116) This cinema shows first-run films in the original English version, a rarity in Nuremberg. Take tram 8 to the Südfriedhof stop.

THEATRE & CLASSICAL MUSIC

Nuremberg's magnificent **Städtische Bühnen** (Municipal Theatres; Richard-Wagner-Platz 2; www.staats

theater-nuernberg.de) serves up an impressive mix of dramatic arts. The renovated Art Nouveau opera house presents opera, ballet and readings, while the Kammerspiele offers a varied programme of classical and contemporary plays. Tickets are available at the box office or by calling ☎ 231 3808. The Nürnberger Philharmoniker also performs here.

Getting There & Away

Nuremberg airport (☎ 937 00), 7km north of the centre, is served by regional and international carriers, including Lufthansa, Air Berlin and Air France.

Trains run hourly to/from Frankfurt (€39, 2½ hours) and Munich (€41, 1½ to two hours). There are direct connections several times daily to Berlin (€77, five to 6½ hours) and Vienna (€96, 5½ hours), while a few slow trains also go to Prague (€42, six hours).

BerlinLinien buses leave for Berlin daily at 12.10pm (standard one-way €39, four hours). They leave from the Hauptbahnhof.

There's a ride-share service **CityToCity Mitfahrzentrale** (☎ 194 40; www.citytocity.de; Hummelsteiner Weg 12; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1.30pm Sat) right behind the south exit of the Hauptbahnhof.

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

U-Bahn 2 runs every few minutes from Hauptbahnhof to the airport (€1.80, 12 minutes). A taxi to/from the airport will cost you about €15.

BICYCLE

The tourist office sells the ADFC's *Fahrrad Stadtplan* (€4.50), a detailed map of the city and surrounding area. It also hands out a list of bicycle-friendly hotels in town that will store bicycles for travellers. For bike hire try **Ride on a Rainbow** (☎ 397 337; Adam-Kraft-Strasse 55; per day €10-18).

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The best transport around the Altstadt is at the end of your legs. Tickets on the VGN bus, tram and U-Bahn/S-Bahn networks cost €1.40/1.80 per short/long ride. A day pass costs €3.60. Saturday passes are valid all weekend.

TAXI

The starting rate for a **taxi ride** (☎ 194 10) is €2.50.

ERLANGEN

☎ 09131 / pop 103,000

Erlangen, about 24km north Nuremberg, gained the vaunted status of a religious haven when Huguenots expelled from France settled here in the late 17th century. The town has quaint streets, a lovely palace garden and – unbeknownst to most visitors – a first-class botanical garden. Siemens, the electronics giant, is a major employer. Around Pentecost the **Erlanger Bergkirchweih**, a popular folk and beer festival, takes over the Burgberg for 12 days.

Orientation & Information

Hugenottenplatz is a short walk east of Bahnhofplatz, from where the pedestrianised Hauptstrasse leads north to Schlossplatz and the prettiest parts of the Altstadt. The **tourist office** (☎ 895 10; www.ekm-erlangen.de; Carreé am Rathausplatz; ☎ 8.30am–5pm Mon–Thu, 8.30am–3pm Fri) is 1km south of the train station.

Sights & Activities

The pretty **Schloss** (a city palace, now home to the university administration) has a manicured Schlossgarten leading off to the rear. The striking, weathered sandstone fountain, the **Hugenottenbrunnen**, depicts the refugees at the bottom and a leading city elder at the top – surprise.

The adjacent **Botanischer Garten** (Botanical Garden; ☎ 852 2669; admission free; ☎ 8am–5.30pm Mon–Fri Apr–Oct, 8am–3pm Mon–Fri Nov–Mar) is a hidden delight, with an exquisite set of dim, moss-lined greenhouses. Expect to find dense, fragrant rainforests, mini-biotopes with birds and fish, and paths with vines from Brazilian guava trees hanging in your face. Open-air concerts take place on the grounds.

Eating

Alter Simpl (☎ 256 26; Bohlenplatz 2; mains €6–12; ☎ closed Sat eve & Sun) On a square just off Friedrichstrasse, this congenial, labyrinthine place is decorated in a rustic style with a great outdoor seating area. Try one of the hearty meat specials grilled over beechwood.

Tio (☎ 817 191; Südliche Stadtmauerstrasse 1a; mains €6–14) Over two striking levels of polished concrete, glass and steel, this trendy blue-lit bistro has smart, contemporary cuisine and good-value pizzas and salads.

A bustling **farmers market** (Marktplatz) is held daily. It overflows with produce and crackling-fresh snack options.

Getting There & Away

Regional trains to Nuremberg leave several times hourly (€3.40, 20 minutes).

BAMBERG

☎ 0951 / pop 71,000

It's difficult not to be impressed by Bamberg, clearly one of Germany's most beautiful cities. With a majestic centre, wonderful cathedral and superb palaces, this Unesco-listed place was built by archbishops on seven hills, earning it the sobriquet of 'Franconian Rome'.

Miraculously, Bamberg emerged from WWII with hardly a scratch, and most of the city's finest buildings are originals. Pristine examples of architecture from the Romanesque era onwards have survived, and a genuine charm and romance pervade the city. Bamberg is also justly famous for its beer; there are 10 breweries in town and another 80 or so in the vicinity.

Orientation

Two waterways bisect the city: the Main-Danube Canal, just south of the Hauptbahnhof, and the Regnitz River, which flows through the town centre. The city's bus hub, the Zentral-Omnibus Bahnhof (ZOB) is on Promenadestrasse, just off Schönleinsplatz.

Information

Bamberg Card (per 48hr €8) Provides admission to city attractions, use of city buses and a walking tour. It's available from the tourist office.

Citibank (Schönleinsplatz)

Hübscher (☎ 982 250; Grüner Markt 16; internet per 15min €1; ☎ 9am–7pm Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm Sat) Large bookshop with English-language titles and web access upstairs.

Post office (Promenadestrasse & Ludwigstrasse 25)

Tourist office (☎ 871 161; www.bamberg.info; Geyserswörthstrasse 3; ☎ 9.30am–6pm Mon–Fri, 9.30am–2.30pm Sat, 9.30am–2.30pm Sun Apr–Dec)

Sights

ALTSTADT

Bamberg's main appeal lies in its sheer number of fine historic buildings, their jumble of styles and the paucity of modern eyesores. Most attractions are sprinkled along the Regnitz River, but the town's incredibly statuesque **Altes Rathaus** is actually on it, perched on twin bridges like a ship in dry dock (note the cherub's leg sticking out from the fresco on the east side). To the northwest are the charming half-timbered homes of **Klein Venedig**

(Little Venice), complete with punts, canals and river docks.

DOM

Bamberg's princely and ecclesiastical roots are felt strongest around Domplatz on the southern bank of the Regnitz. The dominant structure is the soaring **cathedral** (Dom), which is the outcome of a Romanesque-Gothic duel fought by church architects after the original edifice burnt down (twice) in the 12th century. Politics dictated the final floor plan, which was altered each winter during 20 years of building. The interior is renowned for its fine acoustics, and from May to October free 30-minute organ concerts take place at noon on Saturday.

The pillars have the original light hues of Franconian sandstone thanks to Ludwig I, who in the 19th century ordered the removal of all postmedieval decoration. Traces of the bright 13th-century reliefs can still be seen in the choir. Look out for the **Lächelnde Engel** (Smiling Angel) in the north aisle, who smirkingly hands the martyr's crown to the headless St Denis. In the west choir is the marble tomb of **Pope Clemens II**, the only papal burial spot north of the Alps.

The star turn, however, and Bamberg's enduring mystery, is the statue of the **Bamberger Reiter**, a chivalric king-knight on a steed. Nobody knows for sure who he is, but one leading theory points towards Konrad III, the Hohenstaufen king buried in the cathedral. The Nazis seized on the heroic medieval image as a symbol of Aryan perfection.

Outside, an intriguing feature is the **Prince's Portal**, which shows Christ in an ornate sculpture of the Last Judgment. On the south side of the Dom, in a separate building off the cloisters, is the **Diözesan Museum** (☎ 502 316; Domplatz 5; adult/concession €3/2; ☎ 10am–5pm Tue–Sun). Top ranking among its ecclesiastical treasures goes to Heinrich II's Blue Coat of Stars, kept not far from the pontifical knee-socks of Clemens II.

AROUND DOMPLATZ

Northwest of the Dom is the **Alte Hofhaltung** (old court hall), a former prince-bishops' palace that contains the **Historisches Museum** (☎ 871 142; Domplatz 7; adult/concession €2.10/1.50; ☎ 9am–5pm Tue–Sun May–Oct). Its highlights include a model of the fantastic pilgrimage church Vierzehnheiligen (p371) and the Bamberger

Götzen, ancient stone sculptures found in the region.

Across the square, you'll spot the stately **Neue Residenz** (☎ 519 390; Domplatz 8; adult/concession €4/3; ☎ 9am–6pm Apr–Sep, 10am–4pm Oct–Mar), a huge episcopal palace. You can shuffle through 40-odd rooms, such as the elaborately decorated Kaisersaal (Imperial Hall), where the ceiling is smothered in a complex allegorical fresco. The **Rosengarten** (Rose Garden) behind the palace has fabulous views over the red-tiled roofs of the Altstadt.

MICHAELSBERG

Above Domplatz, at the top of Michaelsberg, is the Benedictine **Kloster St Michael**, a former monastery and now an aged person's home. The monastery church is a must-see, both for its baroque art and the meticulous depictions of nearly 600 medicinal plants and flowers on the vaulted ceiling. The manicured garden terrace boasts a splendid city panorama.

Also up here is the **Fränkisches Brauerei museum** (Franconian Brewery Museum; ☎ 530 16; Michaelsberg 10f; adult/concession €2/1.50; ☎ 1–5pm Wed–Sun Apr–Oct). Exhibits show plaster(ed) dummies of monks, who began brewing their Benedictiner Dunkel beer as early as 1122.

Tours

German-language guided **walking tours** (adult/child €5/3.50; ☎ 10.30am & 2pm Mon–Sat, 2pm Sun Apr–Oct; 2pm Mon–Sat, 11am Sun Nov–Mar) depart from the tourist office. You can also borrow an audio-guide (€5) from the tourist office.

Sleeping

To book a room (from about €40/60 for singles/doubles) through the room reservations hotline, call ☎ 297 6310.

DJH hostel (☎ 339 09; www.djh.de; Oberer Leinritt 70; dm under/over 26yr €17.20/21.20, d €36.50; ☎ closed mid-Dec–Jan) About 2km from the Altstadt, this hostel has a terrific location on a slow-moving part of the Regnitz, in a former boathouse that's more like a hunting lodge. Take bus 18 to Rodelbahn.

Campingplatz Insel (☎ 563 20; www.campinginsel.de; Am Campingplatz 1; tents €3.50–7, adult/car €3.90/3.50) This well-equipped place, in a tranquil spot right on the river, is the sole camping option. Take bus 18 to Campingplatz.

Ambiente Klein Venedig (☎ 221 14; www.unterkunft-ferienwohnung-bamberg.de; Fischerei 31; s/d €37/55; P) If you want quiet upstairs rooms

with an apartment quality, overlooking the Regnitz River, congenial English-speaking hosts and a big dollop of atmosphere...look no further.

Brauereigasthof Fässla (☎ 265 16; www.faessler.de; Obere Königstrasse 19-21; s/d €37/55; P) Those with more than a passing interest in the local brews should try this atmospheric guesthouse, where snug but modern rooms are just up the stairs from the pub and covered courtyard. Chairs in the popular restaurant are embossed with the Fässla logo, a gnome rolling a beer barrel.

Barockhotel am Dom (☎ 9540 31; www.barockhotel.de; Vorderer Bach 4; s/d €65/91; P X) The sugary façade, a sceptre's swipe from the Dom, gives a hint of the baroque heritage and original

details within. Rooms have sweeping views of the cathedral or over the roofs of the Altstadt, and breakfast is served in a 14th-century vault.

Hotel Sankt Nepomuk (☎ 6984 20; www.hotel-nepomuk.de; Obere Mühlbrücke 9; s/d €80/120; P) This classy but family-friendly place is located in an A-framed former mill right on the Regnitz. It has rustic rooms, a superb gourmet restaurant on the premises and bicycles for hire.

Hotel Residenzschloss (☎ 609 10; www.residenzschloss.com; Untere Sandstrasse 32; s/d €130/165; P X) Opposite the concert hall, one of Bamberg's best hotels occupies a historic former hospital. Its swanky furnishings, from the Roman-style steam bath to the flashy piano bar, have little in common with institutional care.

Eating

Grüner Markt, the main shopping drag, has a daily produce market and a number of fast-food options.

Bolero (☎ 509 0290; Judenstrasse 7-9; tapas €2.80, mains €5-16; ☎ dinner) This sprawling and atmospheric place has tapas galore, served at wooden tables illuminated by candlelight. It's a popular spot and often full of happy diners.

Messerschmidt (☎ 297 800; Lange Strasse 41; mains €10-22) In the house where plane engineer Willy Messerschmidt was born, this stylish gourmet eatery oozes old-world tradition, with dark woods, white linens and formal service. Above the ornate exterior is a charming alfresco terrace overlooking a pretty park, and there's an attached wine tavern with a more relaxed atmosphere.

Klosterbräu (☎ 522 65; Obere Mühlbrücke 3; mains €5-11; ☎ closed Mon) This beautiful half-timbered brewery is Bamberg's oldest. It draws a youthful clientele who wash down the filling slabs of meat and dumplings with its excellent range of beers.

Wirtshaus zum Schlenkerla (☎ 560 60; Dominikanerstrasse 6; dishes €3.50-9.50; ☎ closed Tue) A local legend that's known nationwide, this dark, rustic 16th-century restaurant with long wooden tables serves tasty Franconian specialties and its own superb *Rauchbier*, poured straight from the oak barrel.

Spezial-Keller (☎ 548 87; Sternwartstrasse; dishes €4-10) The smoky *Rauchbier* served here is superb. Coupled with great views of the Dom and the Altstadt from the beer garden, this place is a comfortable distance from the crowds in the Altstadt. Crowds do gather in November though, to ring in the *Bockbier* (malty beer) season.

Ambräusianum (☎ 509 0262; Dominikanerstrasse 10; dishes €5-9) The newest brewpub on the scene does a killer Weisswurst breakfast – parsley-speckled veal sausage served with a big fresh-baked pretzel and a Weissbier. You can sit next to the copper vat and listen to the beer ferment.

Also recommended:
Josch (☎ 208 3095; Herzog-Max-Strasse 21) Creative French and Bavarian-inspired dishes by a Dutch chef.

Salino (☎ 579 80; Schillerplatz 11) The best stone-oven-cum-beer-garden in town is also one of Germany's earliest pizza-bakers.

Drinking & Entertainment

Consult the free listings magazines *Franky* or *Treff* for the latest 'in' spots and events. For

chilled-out entertainment the best place to head for is Austrasse, where the hip hang out by day and night.

Café Espresso (☎ 208 2634; Austrasse 33) A studenty place that hovers somewhere between coffee house and cocktail bar.

Bassanese (☎ 509 568; Karolinenstrasse 2) Serves authentic Italian *gelato*, strudels and hand-made chocolates to fans in wicker chairs on the cobblestones near the old town hall.

Other possible options include **Pelikan** (☎ 603 410; Untere Sandstrasse 45), a candle-lit pub with occasional live music, and **Downstairs** (☎ 208 3786; Generalgasse 3), a cool alternative dance club with an underground vibe.

Live Club (☎ 603 410; Oberer Sandstrasse 7) is a premier venue for live music. Down the road, **Blues Bar & Jazz Keller** (☎ 603 410; Oberer Sandstrasse 18) is a fixture on the scene for intimate, high-quality acts.

Getting There & Around

There are at least hourly RE and RB trains from Nuremberg (€10, 45 to 60 minutes) or from Würzburg (€15.50, one hour), as well as ICE trains every hour to/from Munich (€48, 2½ hours) and Berlin (€69 to €105, 4½ hours). The A73 runs direct to Nuremberg.

Several buses, including 1, 2 and 14, connect the train station with the central bus station, ZOB. Bus 10 goes from the ZOB to Domplatz.

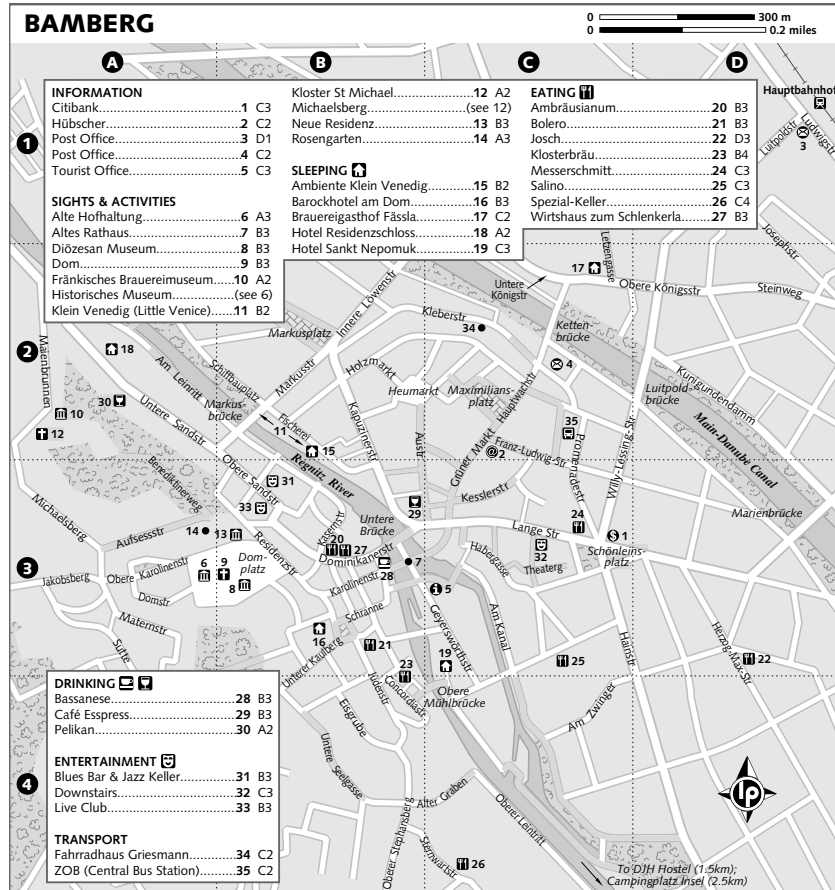
Once you're in town walking is the best option, but you can also hire bicycles at **Fahrradhaus Griesmann** (☎ 229 67; Kleberstrasse 25; per day €5-8). Cars are a colossal pain in town, so park on the outskirts or take a bus (€1.10, or €6.60 for a Tourist Ticket good for 48 hours of unlimited travel). For a taxi, call ☎ 150 15.

BAYREUTH

☎ 0921 / pop 75,000

But for Richard Wagner, the city of Bayreuth would probably just be a sleepy petit bourgeois town. For 11 months of the year it still is, but over a few weeks every summer, the town's Wagner Festival becomes the world's top operatic venue, drawing musical talent from around the globe.

Bayreuth's glory days began in 1735 when Wilhelmine, sister of King Frederick the Great of Prussia, was forced to marry stuffy Margrave Friedrich. Bored with the local scene, the cultured Anglo-oriented Wilhelmine invited the finest artists, poets, composers and



architects in Europe to court. Apart from its musical pedigree the city gained some superb rococo and baroque architecture, still on display for all to see.

Orientation

The Hauptbahnhof is five to 10 minutes' walk north of the historic cobblestone centre. Head south on Bahnhofstrasse to Luitpoldplatz and on to the pedestrianised Maximilianstrasse, the main drag also known as Markt. The Eremitage, a baroque palace with manicured gardens, is about 6km to the east, while the Festspielhaus, the theatre for the Wagner Festival performances, is 1.5km north of the town centre.

Information

Bayreuth Card (72hr €9) Good for unlimited trips on city buses, museum entry and a two-hour guided city walk (in German).

Commerzbank (Luitpoldplatz 8) Opposite the tourist office.

Internet Telecafé (☎ 507 2224; Maximilianstrasse 85; per hr €0.75; ☎ 9.30am-10pm) Internet access at a friendly chicken-run of a café.

Post office (Hauptbahnhof & Kanzleistrasse 3)

Tourist office (☎ 885 88; www.bayreuth-tourismus.de; Luitpoldplatz 9; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-1pm Sat)

Sights

TOWN CENTRE

Outside of the Wagner Festival from late July to the end of August the streets of Bayreuth slip into a kind of provincial slumber, although the town's strong musical traditions ensure there are good dramatic and orchestral performances all year.

Designed by Giuseppe Galli Bibiena, a famous 18th-century architect from Bologna, the **Markgräfliches Opernhaus** (Margravial Opera House; ☎ 759 6922; Opernstrasse; tours adult/under 18yr/concession €5/free/4; ☎ tours 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Oct-Mar) is a stunning baroque masterpiece. Germany's largest opera house until 1871, it has a lavish interior smothered in carved, gilded and marbled wood. Yet Richard Wagner deemed the place too modest for his serious work and conducted here just once. German speakers especially will enjoy the 45-minute sound-and-light multimedia show, which is a glorification vehicle for the Duchess Wilhemine more than the great composer.

Just south of here is Wilhelmine's **Neues Schloss** (New Palace; ☎ 759 690; Ludwigstrasse 21; adult/

concession €4/3; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Oct-Mar), which opens into the vast **Hofgarten** (admission free; ☎ 24hr). A riot of rococo style, the margravial residence after 1753 features a collection of 18th-century porcelain made in Bayreuth. The annual VIP opening gala of the Wagner Festival is held in the Cedar Room. Also worth a look is the **Spiegelscherbenkabinett** (Broken Mirror Cabinet), which is lined with irregular shards of broken mirror – supposedly Wilhelmine's response to the vanity of her era.

To learn more about the man behind the myth, visit **Haus Wahnfried**, Wagner's former home on the northern edge of the Hofgarten. It now houses the **Richard Wagner Museum** (☎ 757 2816; Richard-Wagner-Strasse 48; adult/concession €4/2; ☎ 9am-5pm, 9am-8pm Tue & Thu Apr-Oct). Wagner had this lovely home built with cash sent by King Ludwig II. Inside is a thorough, if unexciting, exhibit on Wagner's life, with glass cases crammed with documents, photographs, clothing and private effects. The composer is buried in the garden with his wife Cosima and his loving companion, the dog Russ.

OUTSIDE THE TOWN CENTRE

North of the Hauptbahnhof, the **Festspielhaus** (☎ 787 80; Festspielhügel 1-2; adult/concession €3/2.50; ☎ tours 10.45am & 2.15pm, closed Mon & Nov) was constructed in 1872 with Ludwig's II's backing. The structure was specially designed to accommodate Wagner's massive theatrical sets, with three storeys of mechanical works hidden below stage (see p370). Take bus 5 to Am Festspielhaus.

About 6km east of the centre lies the **Eremitage**, a lush park girding the **Altes Schloss** (☎ 759 6937; Eremitage; adult/concession €3/2; ☎ tours half-hourly 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Oct, closed mid-Oct-Mar). This was Friedrich and Wilhelmine's summer residence. Its rooms are an odd mix of rococo indulgence and monastic abstinence. Also in the park is horseshoe-shaped **Neues Schloss** (not to be confused with the one in town), which centres on a mosaic Sun Temple with gilded Apollo sculpture. Around both palaces you'll find grottoes and gushing fountains. To get there take bus 2 from Markt.

For a fascinating look at the brewing process, head to the enormous **Maisel's Brauerei-und-Büttneri-Museum** (Maisel's Brewery & Coopers Museum; ☎ 401 234; Kulmbacher Strasse 40; tours adult/concession €4/2) next door to the brewery of one of Germany's finest wheat-beer makers. The 90-minute guided tour (2pm daily, in German)

takes you into the bowels of the 19th-century plant, with atmospheric rooms filled with 4500 beer mugs and amusing artefacts. A foaming glass of Weissbier is served in the bottling room, now a saloon with old-timey slot machines.

Tours

Altstadt walking tours (adult/child €4.50/2.50; ☎ 10.30am May-Oct, Sat 10.30am Nov-Apr, in German) leave from the tourist office.

Festivals & Events

The **Wagner Festival** has been a summer fixture for over 130 years. The event lasts 30 days, with each performance attended by an audience of 1900. Demand is insane, with an estimated 500,000 fans vying for less than 60,000 tickets. You have to stick with it, as the waiting period is five to 10 years. Tickets are allocated by lottery but preference is given to patrons and Wagner enthusiasts. To apply, send a letter (no phone, fax or email) by mid-September for the next year's festival to the Bayreuther Festspiele, Kartenbüro, Postfach 10 02 62, 95402 Bayreuth, or one of the authorised ticket vendors (see www.bayreuther-festspiele.de for details). You must write in every year until you 'win'. Lucky concert-goers then face another endurance test – the seats are hard wood, ventilation is poor and there's no air-conditioning.

Sleeping

Be warned that sleeping options – like the tickets themselves – are rare as hen's teeth during the Wagner Festival, with most places booked out months in advance.

DJH hostel (☎ 764 380; www.djh.de; Universitätsstrasse 28; dm under/over 26yr €17.20/21.40; ☎ closed mid-Dec-Jan) The excellent 150-bed hostel near the university has lovely modern rooms.

Camp Site (☎ 511 239; tent/person €2/3; ☎ Jul-Aug) In peak season the city council operates this simple camp site behind the DJH building. Walk about 15 minutes south of the centre or take bus 6 to Kreuzsteinbad.

Hotel Goldener Hirsch (☎ 230 46; www.bayreuth-goldener-hirsch.de; Bahnhofstrasse 13; s €55-75, d €65-89; ☎ ☎) This landmark site has had the same name since 1753, and has been a hotel since 1900. Behind its forest-green exterior there's more than a whiff of the '70s, but rooms are spacious and welcoming. It's nicely positioned not far from the train station.

Jagdschloss Thiergarten (☎ 09209-984 050; www.schlosshotel-thiergarten.de; Oberthiergärtner Strasse 36; r €80-170; ☎ ☎) A former hunting castle, this gorgeous place has its own white deer wandering in the gardens and luxurious rooms with canopied beds. The gourmet, traditional restaurant has a domed 13m ceiling, and there's a library and bar with open fireplace. The hotel is about 6km south of Bayreuth.

Hotel Goldener Anker (☎ 650 51; www.anker-bayreuth.de; Opernstrasse 6; s €68-118, d €98-178; ☎ ☎) The refined elegance of this hotel, owned by the same family since the 16th century, is hard to beat. It's just a few metres from the opera house, in the pedestrian zone. The rooms are decorated in heavy traditional style with swag curtains and dark woods.

Eating

Bayreuth's dining options, apart from the many restaurants attached to hotels, hail from all round the globe.

Oskar (☎ 516 0553; Maximilianstrasse 33; dishes €6-12) This updated version of a Bavarian beer hall bustles from morning to night, with patrons often spilling into the street. The menu includes salads and baked potato dishes, but the speciality is anything involving dumplings.

Sinnopoli (☎ 620 17; Badstrasse 13; mains €4-8) Ec-centric lamps and artwork set the scene in this contemporary café, which serves up creative pastas, baguettes, vegetarian dishes and, at the weekends, an all-you-can-eat breakfast buffet (€11). There's a lovely garden and terrace area, and children are welcome.

Hansl's Wood Oven Pizzeria (☎ 543 44; Friedrichstrasse 15; pizzas €5-9) The best pizza in town is found at this hole-in-the-wall. A check-list menu lets you choose your own gourmet toppings, and *voilà*, you can name your creation. In summer, the long outdoor tables ease the indoor crush.

Kraftraum (☎ 800 2515; Sophienstrasse 16; mains €4-7) This vegetarian eatery has plenty to tempt the most committed meat-eater. Pastas and jacket potatoes hold the fort, alongside some amazing salads and antipasti platters. Sunday brunch has a devoted following.

Other restaurant recommendations:
Miamiam Glouglou (☎ 656 66; Von-Römer-Strasse 28; mains €6-13) Delightful Parisian-style restaurant with respectable prices.
Hua Hin (☎ 644 97; Ludwigstrasse 30; mains €8-16; ☎ 11.30am-2.30pm & 5.30-11.30pm) A temple of tasty Thai food.

RICHARD WAGNER

With the backing of King Ludwig II, Richard Wagner (1813–83), the gifted, Leipzig-born composer and notoriously poor manager of money, turned Bayreuth into a mecca of opera and high-minded excess. Bayreuth profited from its luck and, it seems, is ever grateful.

For Wagner, opera-listening was meant to be work, and he tested his listeners wherever possible. The *Götterdämmerung*, *Parsifal*, *Tannhäuser* and *Tristan and Isolde* are grandiose pieces that will jolt any audience geared for light entertainment. Four days of *The Ring of the Nibelungen* are good for limbering up.

After poring over Passau and a few other German cities, Wagner designed his own festival hall in Bayreuth. The unique acoustics are bounced up from a below-stage orchestra via reflecting boards onto the stage and into the house. The design took the body density of a packed house into account, still a remarkable achievement today.

Wagner was also a notorious womaniser, an infamous anti-Semite and a hardliner towards 'non-Europeans'. So extreme were these views that even fun-loving Friedrich Nietzsche called Wagner's works 'inherently reactionary, and inhumane'. Wagner's works, and by extension Wagner himself, were embraced as a symbol of Aryan might by the Nazis, and even today there is great debate among music lovers about the 'correctness' of supporting Wagnerian music and the Wagner Festival in Bayreuth.

Getting There & Away

Bayreuth is well served by rail from Nuremberg (€14.70, one hour). Trains from Munich (€53, three hours) and Regensburg (€25, 2½ hours) require a change in Nuremberg.

COBURG

☎ 09561 / pop 43,000

If marriage is diplomacy by another means, Coburg's rulers were surely masters of the art. Over four centuries, the princes and princesses of the house of Saxe-Coburg intrigued, romanced and ultimately wed themselves into the dynasties of Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Portugal, Russia, Sweden and, most prominently, Great Britain. The crowning achievement came in 1857, when Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha took the vows with his first cousin, Queen Victoria, founding the present British royal family. They quietly adopted the less-Germanic name of Windsor during WWI.

Coburg languished in the shadow of the Iron Curtain during the Cold War, all but closed in by East Germany on three sides, but since reunification the town has undergone a revival. Its proud Veste is one of Germany's finest medieval fortresses. What's more, some sources contend that the original hot dog was invented here.

Orientation

Markt is the old town's central square. The Hauptbahnhof lies to the northwest, Veste Coburg to the northeast.

Information

Postbank (Hindenburgstrasse 6)

Stadtbücherei Coburg (☎ 891 421; Herengasse 17; ☎ noon-6pm Mon, Tue & Thu, 9am-1pm Wed, 11am-5pm Fri, 9am-noon Sat) Free internet access.

Tourist office (☎ 741 80; www.coburg-tourist.de; Herengasse 4; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat Apr-Oct, 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri Nov-Mar) Just off Markt.

Sights & Activities

Markt, the town's magnificent square, oozes a colourful, aristocratic charm. The fabulous Renaissance façades and ornate oriels of the **Stadthaus** (Town House) and the **Rathaus** compete for attention, and lord over the imposing statue of Prince Albert.

The lavish **Schloss Ehrenburg** (☎ 808 832; Schlossplatz; tours in German adult/under 18yr/concession €4/free/3; ☎ tours hourly, 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep, 10am-3pm Tue-Sun Oct-Mar) was once the town residence of the Coburg dukes. Albert spent his childhood in this sumptuous, tapestry-lined palace, and Queen Victoria stayed in a room with Germany's first flushing toilet (1860). The splendid **Riesensaal** (Hall of Giants) has a baroque ceiling supported by 28 statues of Atlas.

Towering above everything is a storybook medieval fortress, the **Veste Coburg** (☎ courtyard dawn-dusk). With its triple ring of fortified walls, it's one of most impressive fortresses in Germany, but curiously it has a dearth of foreign visitors. It houses the vast collection of the **Kunstsammlungen** (☎ 8790; adult/concession €3.30/1.80; ☎ 10am-5pm daily Apr-Oct, 1-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar), with

works by star painters such as Rembrandt, Dürer and Cranach the Elder. The elaborate Jagdintarsien-Zimmer (Hunting Marquetry Room) is a superlative example of carved woodwork.

Protestant reformer Martin Luther, hoping to escape an imperial ban, sought refuge at the fortress in 1530. His former quarters has a writing desk and, in keeping with the Reformation, a rather plain bed.

The **Veste-Express** (one-way/return €2/3; Apr-Oct), a tourist train, makes the trip to the fortress every 30 minutes. Bus 8 goes uphill year-round from Herrengasse near the Markt (€1.25 each way). Otherwise it's a steep 3km climb up the path on foot.

Festivals & Events

In mid-July, the streets of Coburg explode during the annual **Samba Festival**, an orgy of song and dance that draws around 90 bands and up to 200,000 visitors.

Sleeping & Eating

DJH hostel (☎ 153 300; www.djh.de; dm under/over 26yr €17.10/21.10) Coburg's spick-and-span hostel is housed in a mock redbrick castle, Schloss Ketschendorf, some 2km from town. Take bus 1 or 11 from the Hauptbahnhof.

Gasthof Fink (☎ 249 40; www.gasthof-fink.de; Lützelbacher Strasse 22; s €29-43 d €47-64) This smart English-speaking inn, 4km south of town, consists of a traditional *Gasthof* (inn), with timber-lined rooms and a light-strewn contemporary *tor* with balconies.

Coburger Tor (☎ 250 74; fax 288 74; Ketschendorfer Strasse 22; s €59-80, d €80-130; ☎ ☒) A refined ambience, impeccable service, nicely equipped rooms with thoughtful décor, and one of the best restaurants in town (mains €18 to €26) make this place a winner. It's about a 15-minute walk from the centre.

Tie (☎ 334 48; Leopoldstrasse 14; mains €8-14; ☎ from 5pm Tue-Sun) Heavenly food is made with fresh organic ingredients at this bright vegetarian restaurant. Dishes range from vegetarian classics to Asian inspirations, with the odd fish or meat dish for the unconverted.

Café Prinz Albert (☎ 945 20; Ketschengasse 27; dishes €3-5; ☎ to 6.30pm) Coburg's links with the British royals are reflected here in both the décor and menu. This is a fine place for a Prince Albert breakfast – a cross-cultural marriage of sausage, egg and Bamberger croissants.

Getting There & Away

Direct trains to Bamberg (€9.10, 45 minutes) and Nuremberg (€17.60, 1½ hours) leave every other hour. The trip to Bayreuth (€13.40, 1½ hours) requires a change in Lichtenfels. Berlin LinienBus links Coburg to Berlin (€40, 5½ hours) twice a week.

AROUND COBURG

About 25km south of Coburg is the ornate gilded 18th-century pilgrimage church, **Basilika Vierzehenheiligen** (☎ 09571-950 80; admission free; ☎ 6.30am-7pm Apr-Oct, 7.30am-dusk Nov-Mar). It stands on the spot where a local shepherd reported having recurring visions of the infant Jesus flanked by the 14 *Nothelfer* (Holy Helpers), a group of saints invoked in times of adversity since the 14th-century Black Plague.

The church is one of the masterpieces of Balthasar Neumann, the renowned architect. The intersecting oval rotundas, play of light and trompe l'oeil ceiling create an optical illusion, making the interior appear much larger than it is and creating a sense of constant motion. Statues of the saints line the freestanding central altar, the focal point of the sumptuous interior.

Alte Klosterbrauerei (☎ 09571-3488; snacks €3.50-5; ☎ 10am-8pm) is a wonderful brewery attached to the adjacent convent at the back of Vierzehenheiligen (up past the wooden stands peddling kitsch). Grab a table in the leafy beer garden, order a half-litre of bracing *Nothelfertrunk* beer and drink in the stunning view. Snacks include hearty bread-and-sausage platters, but you can also bring your own. Stay long enough and you may glimpse the nun in her habit who lugs in cases for refill.

Getting There & Away

Regional trains connect Coburg with Lichtenfels (€4.60, 20 minutes), from where there are two buses a day to Vierzehenheiligen. A taxi from Lichtenfels is about €6. The basilica is near the town of Staffelstein, just off the B173, about a 30-minute drive from Coburg.

ALTMÜHLTAL NATURE PARK

The Altmühltal Nature Park is one of Germany's largest nature parks and covers some of Bavaria's most gorgeous terrain. The Altmühl River gently meanders through a region of little valleys and hills before joining the Rhine-Main Canal and eventually emptying into the Danube. You can explore the park on your

well-marked hiking and biking trails, or by canoe. There's basic camping in designated spots along the river, and plenty of accommodation in the local area.

The park main information centre is in the city of Eichstätt (opposite), a charming place at the southern end of the park that makes an excellent base for exploring.

For information on the park and for help with planning an itinerary, contact the **Informationszentrum Naturpark Altmühlal** (☎ 08421-987 60; www.naturpark-altmuehlal.de; Notre Dame 1, Eichstätt; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm Sun Apr-Oct, 9am-noon & 2-4pm Mon-Thu, 9am-noon Fri Nov-Mar). Upstairs in the centre is a museum of the park's wildlife and habitats, complete with a re-creation of landscapes in the garden.

Orientation

The park takes in 2900 sq km of land southwest of Regensburg, south of Nuremberg, east of Treuchtlingen and north of Eichstätt. The eastern boundaries of the park include the town of Kelheim.

There are bus and train connections between Eichstätt and all the major milestones along the river including, from west to east, Gunzenhausen, Treuchtlingen and Pappenheim. North of the river, activities focus around the towns of Kipfenberg, Beilngries and Riedenburg.

Activities

CANOING & KAYAKING

The most beautiful section of the river is from Treuchtlingen or Pappenheim to Eichstätt or Kipfenberg, about a 60km stretch that you can do lazily in a kayak or canoe in two to three days. There are lots of little dams along the way, as well as some small rapids about 10km northwest of Dollnstein. Signs warn of impending doom, but locals say that if you heed the warning to stay to the right, you'll be pretty safe.

San-Aktiv Tours (☎ 09831-4936; www.san-aktiv-tours.de; Bühringer Strasse 11, 91710 Gunzenhausen) and **Natour** (☎ 09141-922 929; www.natour.de; Gänswirtshaus 12, 91781 Weissenburg) are the largest and best-organised canoe-hire companies in the park, with a network of vehicles to shuttle canoes, bicycles and people around the area.

Canoe trips through the park run from April to October and cost around €21 for a half-day trip and €160 for a three-day tour. You can canoe alone or join a group. Packages generally include the canoe, swim vests, maps,

instructions, transfer back to the embarkation point and, for overnight tours, luggage transfer and accommodation. Most trips start in Dietfurt near Treuchtlingen.

You can hire canoes and kayaks in just about every town along the river. Expect to pay about €15/€25 per day for a one-/two-person boat, more for bigger ones. Staff will haul you and the boats to or from your embarkation point for a small fee.

You can get a full list of boat-hire outlets from the Informationszentrum Naturpark Altmühlal. Some recommendations include the following:

Bootsverleih Otto Rehm (☎ 08422-987 654; www.rehm-r.de; Dollnstein)

Fahrradgarage (☎ 08421-21 10; www.fahrradgarage.de; Eichstätt)

Franken-Boot (☎ 09142-4645; www.frankenboot.de; Treuchtlingen)

Lemming Tours (☎ 09145-235; www.lemmingtours.de; Solnhofen)

CYCLING & HIKING

Around 800km of bicycle trails and 3000km of hiking trails crisscross the nature park. The most popular route is the Altmühlal Radweg, which runs parallel to the river for 160km. Cycling trails are clearly labelled and have long rectangular brown signs bearing a bike symbol. Hiking-trail markers are yellow.

You can hire bikes in almost every town within the park, and prices are more or less uniform. Most bike-hire agencies will also store bicycles. Ask for a list of bike-hire outlets at the Informationszentrum Naturpark Altmühlal.

In Eichstätt, Fahrradgarage (above) hires out bicycles for €8 per day. Staff will bring the bikes to you or take you and the bikes to anywhere in the park for an extra fee.

ROCK CLIMBING

The worn cliffs along the Altmühl River offer some appealing terrain for climbers of all skill levels. The medium-grade 45m-high rock face of Burgsteinfelsen, located between the towns of Dollnstein and Breitenfurt, has routes from the fourth to eighth climbing level with stunning views of the valley. The Dohlenfelsen face near the town of Wellheim has a simpler expanse that's more suitable for children. For more details of the area's climbing options, contact the Informationszentrum Naturpark Altmühlal (left).

Getting There & Away BUS

From mid-April to October the FreizeitBus Altmühlal-Donautal takes passengers and their bikes around the park. Buses run three to five times a day from mid-April to early October (see www.naturpark-altmuehlal.de for a timetable, listed in German under 'Freizeit/Tipp'). Route FzB1 runs from Regensburg and Kelheim to Riedenburg on weekends and holidays only. Route FzB2 travels between Dollnstein, Eichstätt, Beilngries, Dietfurt and Riedenburg with all-day service on weekends and holidays and restricted service on weekdays. All-day tickets cost €9/€6 for passengers with/without bicycles, or €20.50/€15 per family with/without bikes.

TRAIN

Trains run between Eichstätt Bahnhof and Treuchtlingen at least hourly (€4.60, 25 minutes), and between Treuchtlingen and Gunzenhausen (€3.40, 15 minutes, at least hourly). RE trains from Munich that run through Eichstätt Bahnhof also stop in Dollnstein, Solnhofen and Pappenheim.

EICHSTÄTT

☎ 08421 / pop 13,000

The wide, cobbled streets of Eichstätt have a distinct Mediterranean flair. They meander past elegant buildings and leafy squares, giving this sleepy town a general sense of refinement. Italian architects, notably Gabriel de Gabrieli and Maurizio Pedetti, rebuilt the town after Swedes razed the place during the Thirty Years' War (1618-48) and it has remained undamaged ever since. In 1980 it became home to Germany's sole Catholic university.

Orientation

Eichstätt has two train stations. Mainline trains stop at the Bahnhof, 5km from the centre, from where diesel trains shuttle to the Stadtbahnhof. From here walk north across the Spitalbrücke and you'll end up in Domplatz, the heart of town. Willibaldsburg castle is about 1km southwest of the Stadtbahnhof.

Information

Kreiskrankenhaus (☎ 6010; Ostenstrasse 31) Hospital.

Post office (Domplatz 7)

Raiffeisenbank (Domplatz 5)

Tourist office (☎ 6001 400; www.eichstaett.de; Dom-

platz 8; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat & 10am-1pm Sun Apr-Oct; 10am-noon & 2-4pm Mon-Thu, 10am-noon Fri Nov-Mar)

Sights

TOWN CENTRE

Eichstätt's centre is dominated by the richly adorned **Dom** (cathedral). Standout features include an enormous stained-glass window by Hans Holbein the Elder, and the carved sandstone **Pappenheimer Altar** (1489-97), depicting a pilgrimage from Pappenheim to Jerusalem. The seated statue is of St Willibald, the town's first bishop.

The **Domschatzmuseum** (Cathedral Treasury; ☎ 507 42; Residenzplatz 7; adult/children €2/1; ☎ 10.30am-5pm Wed-Fri & 10am-5pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct) includes the robes of St Willibald and baroque Gobelin tapestries.

The **Residenz** (Residenzplatz; admission €1; ☎ tours 11am & 3pm Mon-Thu, 11am Fri, 10.15am & 3.30pm Sat) is the former prince-bishops' palace, completed in 1736. It has a stunning main staircase and Spiegelsaal (Hall of Mirrors) with a fresco from Greek mythology. In the square is a golden statue of Mary on a 19m-high column.

North of the Dom is another baroque square, the **Markt**, where markets are held on Wednesday and Saturday mornings. About 300m northwest of here, on Westenstrasse, is the **Kloster St Walburga**, the burial site of St Willibald's sister and a pilgrimage site: every year between mid-October and late February, water oozes from Walburga's relics and drips down into a catchment. The nuns bottle diluted versions of the so-called **Walburgaöl** (Walburga oil) and give it away to the faithful. The walls in the upper chapel are covered with beautiful *ex voto* tablets as a thank you to the saint.

WILLIBALDSBURG

The hill-top castle of Willibaldsburg (1355) houses two museums. The **Jura-Museum** (☎ 2956; Burgstrasse 19; adult/under 18 €4/free; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Nov-Mar, closed Mon) is great, even if fossils usually don't quicken your pulse. Highlights are a locally found archaeopteryx (the oldest-known fossil bird) and the aquariums with living specimens of the fossilised animals. Also up here is the **Museum of Pre-History & Early History** (☎ 894 50) with a 6000-year-old mammoth skeleton. Descend to the cellar to find the 76.5m-deep well - toss in a coin and listen for about 10 seconds for the

plop. The **Bastiongarten**, built on the ramparts, affords a fantastic view of Eichstätt.

Looking across the valley, you can make out the **limestone quarry** (adult/child €2/1; ☎ 9am-5pm) where you can dig for fossils. At the base of the quarry is the **Museum Berger** (☎ 4663; Harthof; adult/child €2/0.50; ☎ 1.30-5pm Mon-Sat, 10am-noon Sun Apr-Oct, or by request), which displays geological samples.

Tours

The tourist office runs walking tours of the town centre (€3, 1½ hours) at 1.30pm on Saturday from April to October (also Wednesday at 1.30pm in July and August).

Sleeping & Eating

Camping Daum (☎ 90847; fax 90846; Westenstrasse 47; site €6; ☎ Apr-Oct) This pretty camping ground is on the northern bank of the Altmühl River, about 1km east of the town centre. It closes for 10 days during the Volksfest (a mini-Oktoberfest) in late August or early September. Towed caravans are not allowed.

DJH hostel (☎ 980 410; www.djh.de; Reichenaustrasse 15; dm under/over 26yr €18.40/23.40; ☎ closed Dec-Jan) This comfy, modern place has 122 beds and a commanding view of the Altstadt. The double rooms, if available, have their own shower and toilet.

Fuchs (☎ 6789; Ostenstrasse 8; www.hotel-fuchs.de; s €38-48, d €60-80; ☎ P X) A super-central, family-run hotel with underfloor heating in the bathrooms, which adjoins a cake shop with a sunny dining area. It's convenient to a launch ramp on the river, and you can lock your boat in the garage.

Hotel Adler (☎ 6767; www.adler-eichstaett.de; Markplatz 22; s €59-67, d €89-95; ☎ P X) A superb ambience reigns at this ornate 300-year-old building right on Markt. The rooms are bright, airy and modern, and it offers all the trappings, including bike and boat hire and a generous breakfast buffet. There's wheelchair access.

Café im Paradeis (☎ 3313; Markt 9; mains €6-14) This sophisticated spot on Markt is prime for people-watching. Recharge with a snack or full meal, either in the antique-lined interior or out on the Mediterranean-style terrace.

Zum Ammonit (☎ 2929; Luitpoldstrasse 19; mains €5-15) Within this royal baker's home you can enjoy gourmet salads and seasonal Bavarian fare with lots to please the eye – vaulted ceilings, hunting trophies and oil paintings, even

an indoor well. The Bierstube to the rear has cosy raised nooks perfect for a tête-à-tête.

For fast food, try **Metzgerei Schneider** (Markt).

Getting There & Away

Trains run hourly or more between Ingolstadt and Eichstätt (€4.60, 25 minutes).

INGOLSTADT

☎ 0841 / pop 122,000

Even by Germany's high standards Ingolstadt is awfully prosperous. Audi, the auto manufacturer, has its headquarters here, flanked by a clutch of oil refineries in the outskirts. But industry has left few marks on the charming medieval centre, with its cobbled streets and historic buildings. Ingolstadt's museum church has the largest flat fresco ever made. And few people know that its old medical school figured in the literary birth of Frankenstein, the monster by which all others are judged.

Orientation

The Hauptbahnhof is 2.5km southeast of the Altstadt; buses 10, 11, 15 and 16 run between them every few minutes (€1.80). The Danube (Donau) is south of the Altstadt; the Audi factory is about 2km north of the centre.

Information

City Internet Café (☎ 142 865; Münzberger Strasse 6; internet access per hr €3; ☎ 10am-11pm)

Dresdner Bank (Rathausplatz)

Post office (Am Stein) Also in Hauptbahnhof.

Stadtbücherei (☎ 305 1831; Hallstrasse 2-4) Free internet access.

Tourist office (☎ 305 3030; www.ingolstadt-tourismus.de; Rathausplatz 4; ☎ 8am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat, 10am-3pm Sun)

Sights

ASAMKIRCHE MARIA DE VICTORIA

The crown jewel among Ingolstadt's sights, the **Asamkirche** (☎ 175 18; Neubastrasse 11/2; adult/concession €2/1.50; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun Mar-Oct, 10am-noon & 1-4pm Nov-Mar) is a baroque masterpiece designed by brothers Cosmas Damian and Egid Quirin Asam between 1732 and 1736.

Its shining glory is the trompe l'oeil ceiling (painted in just six weeks in 1735). This mesmerising piece of work, the world's largest fresco on a flat surface, is full of stunning optical illusions. Stand on the little circle in the diamond tile near the door and everything

snaps into 3D; look over your left shoulder here at the archer with the flaming red turban, and his arrow will follow you around the room. Focus on anything – the Horn of Plenty, Moses' staff, the treasure chest – and it will alter dramatically when you move around the room. The Asams took the secrets they used to the grave.

The side chamber features the Lepanto Monstrance, a gold and silver depiction of a Christian sea victory over the Ottoman Turks in 1571. Note the beaten sultan departing in a lifeboat on the bottom right.

Across the street is the **Tilly House** (Neubastrasse 2), where General Tilly, a famous Field Marshal in the Thirty Years' War, died in 1652 from tetanus (the result of a war wound). There's a commemorative plaque around the corner on Johannesstrasse.

DEUTSCHES MEDIZINHISTORISCHES MUSEUM

Located in the stately Alte Anatomie (Old Anatomy) at the city's university, the **Deutsches Medizinhistorisches Museum** (German Museum of Medical History; ☎ 305 1860; Anatomiestrasse 18/20; adult/child €3/free; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-5pm Tue-Sun) chronicles the evolution of medical science as well as the many instruments and techniques used. Pack a strong stomach for the visit.

The ground floor eases you into the exhibition with birthing chairs, enema syringes and lancets for blood-letting. Upstairs things get closer to the bone in displays of human skeletons with preserved musculature and organs, foetuses of conjoined twins, a pregnant uterus and a cyclops.

Although presented in a completely scientific, almost clinical, fashion, there's a ghouliness to the place. After your visit, you can recover in the bucolic medicinal plant garden, which includes a garden of smells and touch designed for the blind.

NEUES SCHLOSS, BAYERISCHES ARMEE MUSEUM & REDUIT TILLY

The ostentatious Neues Schloss (New Palace) was built for Duke Ludwig the Bearded in 1418. Fresh from a trip to wealth-laden France, Ludwig borrowed heavily from Gallic design and created an ostentatious new home with 3m-thick walls, Gothic net vaulting and individually carved doorways. Today the building houses the **Bayerisches Armeemuseum** (Bavarian Military Museum; ☎ 937 70; Paradeplatz 4; adult/concession

€3.50/3, on Sun €1, combined ticket with Reduit Tilly €4.50/3.50; ☎ 8.45am-4.30pm Tue-Sun). Expect details of long-forgotten battles, armaments dating back to the 14th century and thousands of tin soldiers.

The second part of the museum is in the **Reduit Tilly** (adult/concession €3.50/3, on Sun €1, combined ticket with Neues Schloss €4.50/3.50; ☎ 8.45am-4.30pm Tue-Sun) across the river. This 19th-century fortress has an undeniable aesthetic, having been designed by Ludwig I's chief architect. It was named after Johann Tilly – a field marshal of the Thirty Years' War who was known as the 'butcher of Magdeburg' – and features exhibits covering the history of WWI and post-WWI Germany.

MUSEUM MOBILE

This high-tech car museum is part of the **Audi Forum** (☎ 283 4444; Ettinger Strasse 40; admission adult/concession €2/1.50, tours €4/3; ☎ 10am-8pm). Exhibits on three fancy floors chart Audi's humble beginnings in 1899, to its latest high-octane roadsters. Some 50 cars and 20 motorbikes are on display, including prototypes that glide past visitors on an open lift. One-hour tours (some in English) run twice hourly. Take bus 11 to the terminus from the Hauptbahnhof or Paradeplatz.

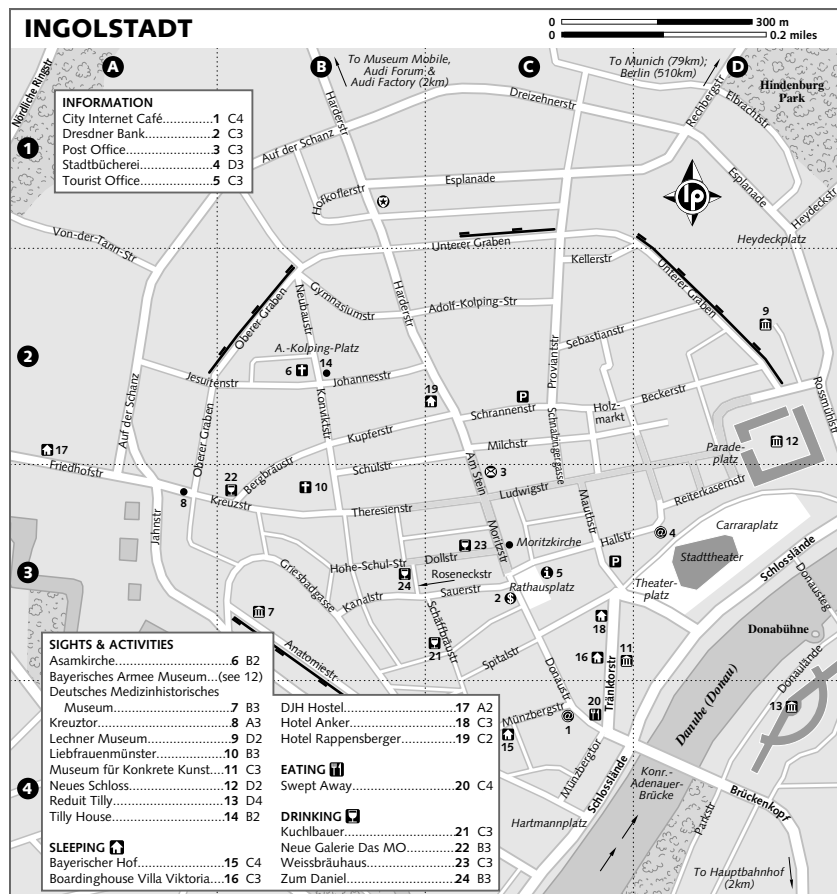
The two-hour tours of the **Audi factory** (☎ 0800-282 4444; tours free; ☎ 9am-2pm production days only) entail a heavy dose of PR.

LIEBFRAUENMÜNSTER

The city's largest church was founded by Duke Ludwig the Bearded in 1425 but was enlarged over the next 100 years. A classic Gothic hall church, the **Liebfrauenmünster** (Minster of Our Dear Lady; ☎ 8am-6pm) has a pair of strangely oblique square towers that flank the main entrance. Inside, subtle colours and a nave flooded with light intensify the magnificence of the soaring ceiling vaults, with strands of delicate stonework. Worth a closer look are the brilliant stained-glass windows and the high altar by Hans Meichel (1560). On the rear altar panel is an odd scene of St Katharina debating with a gathering of professors at Ingolstadt's new university, ostensibly in a bid to convert the Protestant faculty to Catholicism. The painting was a poke at Luther's Reformation.

KREUZTOR

The red-brick **Kreuztor** (1385), with its Gothic outline of pixie-capped turrets, was just one of four main city gates until the 19th century.



The former **fortifications**, which are now flats, still encircle the city.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Ingolstadt has two of Germany's leading art galleries for experimental materials. The **Museum für Konkrete Kunst** (Museum of Concrete Art; ☎ 305 1871; Tränktorstrasse 6-8; adult/concession €2/1; ☎ 11am-6pm Tue-Sun) features creative abstracts and fascinating three-dimensional works in concrete, with artists of international renown.

The **Lechner Museum** (☎ 305 2250; Esplanade 9; adult/concession €3/1.50; ☎ 11am-6pm Tue-Sun) highlights works cast in steel, a medium that's more expressive than you might think. Exhibits are displayed in a striking glass-covered factory hall from 1953.

Sleeping

DJH hostel (☎ 341 77; www.djh.de; Friedhofstrasse 41/2; dm under/over 26yr €16.15/20.15; ☎ closed mid-Dec-Jan) This beautiful hostel is in a renovated city fortress (1828), about 150m west of the Kreuztor. It's a well-equipped place with wheelchair access, near the swimming pool and skating rink.

Bayerischer Hof (☎ 934 060; Münzbergstrasse 5; www.bayerischer-hof-ingolstadt.de; s/d €56/82; ☎) The corridors here won't win any ambience prizes, but the rooms themselves, located around a Bavarian eatery, are furnished with hardwood furniture, TVs and modern (albeit brown) bathrooms. And there are little 'we care' touches like biscuits laid out on the pillows.

THE BIRTH OF FRANKENSTEIN

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, published in 1818, set a creepy precedent in the world of monster fantasies. The story is well known: young scientist Viktor Frankenstein travels to Ingolstadt to study medicine. He becomes obsessed with the idea of creating a human being and goes shopping for parts at the local cemetery. Unfortunately his creature is a problem child and sets out to destroy its maker.

Shelley picked Ingolstadt because it was home to a prominent university and medical faculty. In the 19th century, a laboratory for scientists and medical doctors was housed in the Alte Anatomie (now the Deutsches Medizinhistorisches Museum, p375). In the operating theatre, professors and their students carried out experiments on corpses and dead tissue.

Hotel Anker (☎ 300 05; www.hotel-restaurant-anker.de; Tränktorstrasse 1; s €52, d €80-84) Bright rooms, a touch of surrealist art and a great location make this family-run hotel a good central choice. Rooms have direct-dial phone and cable TV, and a traditional German restaurant attracts a loyal local following.

Boardinghouse Villa Viktoria (☎ 620 55; www.villa-viktoria.com; Tränktorstrasse 13; r €95-115; ☎) These stylish designer apartments are a perfect solution for families seeking quality without breaking the bank. They boast full-service kitchens, split-level living and bedrooms and smart Mediterranean-hued bathrooms. Rates drop sharply for longer stays.

Hotel Rappensberger (☎ 3140; www.rappensberger.de; Harderstrasse 3; s €80-135, d €97-175; ☎) This small, stylish hotel specialises in minimalist rooms with designer lighting and traditional German touches. The standard rooms are snug, but accommodation becomes quite roomy a step up. The attached café-restaurant is a byword for chic.

Eating & Drinking

Local drinkers are proud that Germany's Beer Purity Law of 1516 was issued in Ingolstadt. To find out why, try a mug of smooth Herrnbräu, Nordbräu or Ingobräu.

Zum Daniel (☎ 352 72; Roseneckstrasse 1; mains €5-12; ☎ closed Mon) This is the oldest pub in town and just drips with character and tradition.

The owner, a Frankenstein fan, has a monster kit-car that he parks in the garden. Locals say Daniel has the town's best pork roast.

Weissbräuhaus (☎ 328 90; Dollstrasse 3; mains €9-15) This modern beer hall serves standard Bavarian dishes, including the delicious Weissbräupfändl (pork filet with homemade Spätzle noodles). There's a beer garden with a charming fountain in the back.

Neue Galerie Das MO (☎ 339 60; Bergbräustrasse 7) Right opposite the Liebfrauenmünster, this trendy café-bar holds art exhibits and has probably the nicest beer garden in town, in a dense copse of chestnut trees.

Also recommended:
Swept Away (☎ 931 1679; Donaustrasse 14; mains €7-15; ☎ dinner) Quirky bamboo-clad décor with a purely veggie menu, cocktails and live bands.

Kuchlbauer (☎ 335 512; Schaffbräustrasse 11a) A brewpub almost painful in its quaintness but with oodles of neat brewing gear.

Getting There & Around

Trains to Regensburg (€11.70, one hour) and Munich (€13.40, one hour) leave hourly. BEX BerlinLinien buses leave for Berlin daily at 10.55am (one-way/return €44/81, five hours).

Single journeys on local buses cost €1.80.

EASTERN BAVARIA

Few foreigners know that Eastern Bavaria was a seat of power in the Dark Ages, ruled by rich bishops at a time when Munich was but a modest trading post. A conquering Napoleon lumped Eastern Bavaria into river districts, and King Ludwig I sought to roll back these changes by re-creating the boundaries of a glorified duchy from 1255. Though it brought a sense of renewed Bavarian-ness, the area remained very much on the margins of things, the odd and appealing mixture of ancient Roman cities, undulating farmland and rugged wilderness that it is today.

Regensburg, a former capital, is one of Germany's prettiest and liveliest cities. From here the Danube gently winds its way to the Italianate city of Passau. Thanks to its relative remoteness, the Bavarian Forest is a well-kept secret with an enviable array of hiking and skiing facilities that exist alongside the ancient tradition of glass-blowing. What's more, it's all easy on the wallet.

REGENSBURG

☎ 0941 / pop 149,000

Regensburg is one of the best-preserved medieval towns in Europe, with a wealth of landmarks in the centre going back over 2000 years. The city's brand-new Unesco heritage listing hasn't gone to its head and the old centre remains an unpretentious, very livable whole. A Roman settlement completed under Emperor Marcus Aurelius, Regensburg became the first and foremost capital of Bavaria, the residence of dukes, kings and bishops, and for 600 years an imperial free city. Outstanding features such as the Old Stone Bridge and the cathedral date from this period in the Middle Ages. Since then the Altstadt seems hardly to have changed – there are still towering patrician's houses, friendly locals and lots of flourishing businesses.

Oskar Schindler lived in Regensburg for years, and now one of his houses bears a **plaque** (Am Watmarkt 5) to his achievements commemorated in the Spielberg epic *Schindler's List*.

Orientation

The city is divided by the east-flowing Danube, which separates the Altstadt from the northern banks. Islands in the middle of the river, mainly Oberer and Unterer Wöhrd, are populated as well. The Hauptbahnhof is at the southern end of the Altstadt. From there, Maximilianstrasse leads north to Kornmarkt, the centre of the historic district.

Information

BOOKSHOPS

Bücher Pustet (☎ 585 320; Gesandtenstrasse 6-8)
Good collection of English-language novels and travel books.

Presse + Buch (Hauptbahnhof) Stocks English books and magazines.

EMERGENCY

Ambulance (☎ 192 22)

Police (☎ 110; Minoritenweg 1)

INTERNET ACCESS

C@fe Netzblick (☎ 599 9700; Am Römling 9; per 30min €1.50; ☎ 6pm-1am)

INTERNET RESOURCES

City of Regensburg (www.regensburg.de) Regensburg's useful website.

LAUNDRY

Münz Wasch Center (Winklergasse 14; per 6kg load €3; ☎ 6am-10pm Mon-Sat)

LIBRARIES

Stadtbücherei (☎ 507 1477; Haidplatz 8, Thon Dittmer Palais)

MEDICAL SERVICES

Evangelisches Krankenhaus (☎ 504 00; Emmeramsplatz)

MONEY

More banks are located along Maximilianstrasse.

Sparkasse City Center (Neupfarplatz)

POST

Post office (Domplatz) Also in the Hauptbahnhof.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourist office (☎ 507 4410; Altes Rathaus; ☎ 9.15am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9.15am-4pm Sat, 9.30am-4pm Sun)

Sights

DOM ST PETER

Regensburg's soaring landmark, the **Dom St Peter** (☎ 597 1002; Domplatz; admission free, tours in German adult/concession €3/1.50; ☎ tours at 10am, 11am & 2pm Mon-Sat, 1pm & 2pm Sun May-Oct) ranks among Bavaria's grandest Gothic cathedrals. Construction dates from the late 13th century, but the distinctive filigree spires weren't added until the 19th; the extravagant western façade from this period is festooned with sculptures. Inside are kaleidoscopic stained-glass windows above the choir and in the south transept. Another highlight is a pair of charming sculptures (1280), attached to pillars just west of the altar, which features the Angel Gabriel beaming at the Virgin on the opposite pillar as he delivers the news that she's pregnant.

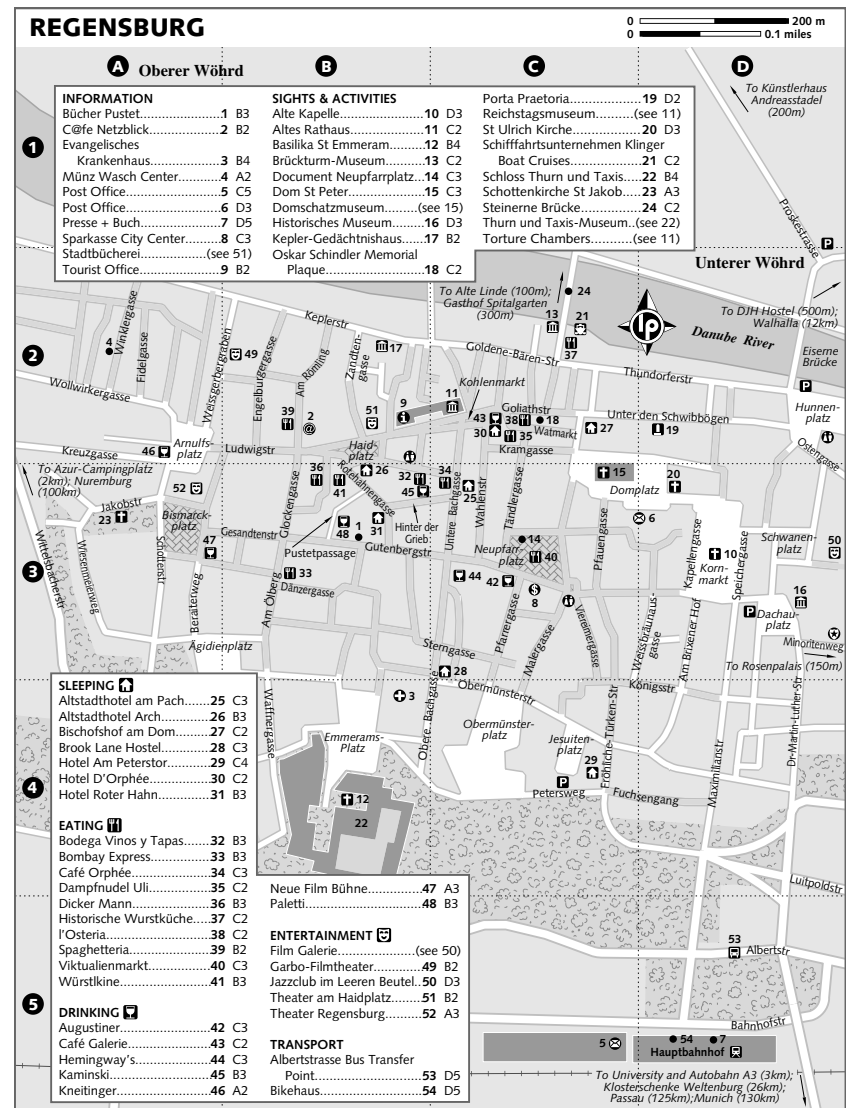
The **Domschatzmuseum** (Cathedral Treasury; ☎ 576 45; adult/concession €2/1; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sat, noon-5pm Sun Apr-Nov) brims with monstrosities, tapestries and other church treasures.

SCHLOSS THURN UND TAXIS & MUSEUM

In the 15th century, Franz von Taxis (1459–1517) assured his place in history by setting up the first European postal system, which remained a monopoly until the 19th century. To compensate for the loss the family was given a new palace, the former Benedictine monastery St Emmeram, henceforth known

as **Schloss Thurn und Taxis** (☎ 504 8133; www.thurnundtaxis.de; Emmeramsplatz 6; combined ticket adult/concession €11.50/9; ☎ tours at 11am, 2pm, 3pm & 4pm Mon-Fri, also 10am Sat & Sun). It was soon one of the most modern palaces in Europe, and featured such luxuries as flushing toilets, central heating and electricity. Tours include a look into the Basilika St Emmeram (p380).

The palace complex also contains the **Thurn und Taxis-Museum** (☎ 504 8133; adult/concession €3.50/2.50; ☎ Tue-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat & Sun 11am-5pm). The jewellery, porcelain and precious furnishings on display here belonged, for many years, to the wealthiest dynasty in Germany. The fortune, administered by Prince Albert II, is still estimated at well over €1 billion.



JEWISH MEMORIALS

Regensburg once had a thriving medieval Jewish community centred around Neupfarplatz. When the city fell on hard economic times in the early 16th century, the townspeople expelled all Jews and burned their quarter to the ground. A multimedia exhibit, the **Document Neupfarplatz** (☎ 507 1452; tours adult/concession €5/2.50; ☎ 2.30pm Thu-Sat) explains events on the square from ancient times right up until the formation of the Nazi resistance movement in 1942–43. You can visit a Roman legionary fortress, Jewish houses and both Gothic and Romanesque synagogues.

There's a memorial plaque to Regensburg's Jews in the pavement west of the Neupfarrikirche, as well as a memorial to the concentration-camp victims on the north side of the Steinerne Brücke.

ALTES RATHAUS & REICHSTAGSMUSEUM

The seat of the Reichstag for almost 150 years, the **Altes Rathaus** is now home to Regensburg's three mayors and the **Reichstagsmuseum** (Imperial Diet Museum; ☎ 507 4411; Altes Rathaus; adult/concession €6/3; ☎ tours 9.30am, 10.30am, 2pm & 3pm Mon-Sat, 10am & 11am Sun; tours in English 3pm Mon-Sat). Tours take in not only the richly decorated **Reichssaal** (Imperial Hall) but also the original **torture chambers** in the basement. The interrogation room bristles with tools such as the rack, the Spanish Donkey (a tall wooden wedge on which naked men were made to sit) and spiked chairs.

STEINERNE BRÜCKE

An incredible feat of engineering for its day, Regensburg's **Steinerne Brücke** (Stone Bridge) was at one time the only fortified crossing of the Danube. Ensnared in its southern tower is the **Brückturm-Museum** (☎ 567 6015; Weisse-Lamm-Gasse 1; adult/concession €2/1.50; ☎ 10am–5pm Apr–Oct), a small historical exhibit about the bridge.

CHURCHES

South of the Dom, the humble exterior of the graceful **Alte Kapelle** (Alter Kornmarkt 8) belies the stunning interior with its rich rococo decorations. The core of the church, however, is about 1000 years old, although the Gothic vaulted ceilings were added in the Middle Ages. The church is open only during services but you can always peek through the wrought-iron gate.

Near the Schloss is a masterpiece by the Asam brothers, the **Basilika St Emmeram** (☎ 510 30; Emmeramplatz 3; ☎ closed Fri & Sun morning). There are two giant ceiling frescoes and, sheltered in its crypt, the remains of Sts Emmeram, Wolfgang and Ramwold, all Regensburg bishops in the early days of Christianity.

The 12th-century main portal of the **Schottenkirche St Jakob** (Jakobstrasse 3) is considered one of the supreme examples of Romanesque architecture in Germany. Its reliefs and sculptures form an iconography that continues to baffle the experts.

OTHER SIGHTS

The most tangible reminder of the ancient *Castra Regina* (Roman fortress), where the name 'Regensburg' comes from, is the remaining **Roman wall**, which follows Unter den Schwibbögen and veers south onto Dr-Martin-Luther-Strasse. The impressive **Porta Praetoria** arch is a key reminder of the city's heritage.

The **Historisches Museum** (☎ 507 2448; Dachauplatz 2-4; adult/concession €2.20/1.10; ☎ 10am–4pm Tue–Sun) has exhibits ranging from the Stone Age to the Middle Ages, with an emphasis on the Roman period and the city's medieval glory days.

In the former bishop's residence, the **Dom-schatzmuseum** (Cathedral Treasury; ☎ 516 68; adult/concession €2/1; ☎ 10am–5pm Tue–Sun Apr–Oct) brims with vestments, monstrosities, tapestries and other riches. It's housed in the painted medieval St Ulrich Kirche.

Other interesting visits include the house of astronomer and mathematician Johannes Kepler, now the **Kepler-Gedächtnishaus** (Kepler Memorial House; ☎ 507 3442; Keplerstrasse 5; adult/concession €2.20/1.10; ☎ 10.30am–4pm, Sat & Sun Apr–Oct).

Tours

City walking tours (adult/child €6/4; ☎ in English 1.30pm Wed & Sat May–Sep, in German 2.45pm Mon–Sat, 10.45am & 2pm Sun) Starting at the tourist office (1½ hours).

Schiffahrtsunternehmen Klinger (☎ 521 04; www.schiffahrtsklinger.de) Offers short cruises (50 minutes) on the Danube (adult/child €7/3; hourly from 9am to 4pm, April to mid-October) and to the Walhalla monument (adult/child single €7/3, return €10/4.50; at 10.30am and 2pm, two hours each way plus a one-hour stop at the monument).

Festivals & Events

Dult Oktoberfest-style party with beer tents, carousel rides, entertainment and vendors on the Dultplatz, during Pentecost and late August.

Weihnachtsmarkt Christmas Market, with stalls selling roasted almonds, spiced biscuits and traditional wooden toys. At Neupfarplatz and Schloss Thurn und Taxis, during December.

Sleeping

BUDGET

DJH hotel (☎ 574 02; www.djh.de; Wöhrdstrasse 60; dm under/over 26yr €19.20/23.20) Regensburg's modernised hotel occupies a beautiful old building on a large island about a 10-minute walk north of the Altstadt. Take bus 3 from Albertstrasse to Eisstadion.

Hotel Am Peterstor (☎ 545 45; www.hotel-ampeterstor.de; Fröhliche-Türken-Strasse 12; s €35–50, d €45–60; ☎) A convenient location, bright modern rooms and affordable rates make this hotel a good choice. It's a no-frills place with simple taste, but the quarters are bright, clean and in great shape.

Also recommended:

Azur-Campingplatz (☎ 270 025; www.azur-camping.de/regensburg; Weinweg 40; per person €5.50–7.50, per tent €6–9). A pretty site about 2km from the Altstadt on the southern bank of the Danube. Take bus 6.

Brook Lane Hostel (☎ 690 0966; www.hostel-regensburg.de; Obere Bachgasse 21; dm €17, d €30) Indie backpacker hostel with bunks for 10 and one double room, plus kitchen.

MIDRANGE

Hotel Roter Hahn (☎ 595 090; www.rotter-hahn.com; Rote-Hahnen-Gasse 10; s/d €85/105; ☎) Old on the outside but modern within, this swish family-run hotel is a winner for its quirky rooms (some with trompe l'oeil murals, others very modern) and its good restaurant.

Altstadthotel Arch (☎ 586 60; www.altstadthotel-arch.de; Haidplatz 4; s €71–97, d €96–130; ☎) This landmark hotel located in a medieval patrician mansion, puts you right into charismatic Haidplatz, which is a hub of activity on balmy summer nights. Rooms here have an air of understated elegance. The beamed **Ratsherrenzimmer** (councilmen's room) is the ticket for romance.

Altstadthotel am Pach (☎ 298 610; www.ampach.de; Untere Bachgasse 9; s €80–100, d €100–180; ☎) Those who have shaped Regensburg history, from Marcus Aurelius to Emperor Karl V, are commemorated in the 21 rooms of this sleek new hotel. Rooms vary in size but all are warmly furnished with thick carpets, comfy mattresses and a minifridge with complimentary beer and water.

Künstlerhaus Andreasstadel (☎ 5960 2300; www.kuenstlerhaus-andreasstadel.de; Andreasstrasse 26; r €95–135; ☎ ☎) Now this is savvy: a historic salt store where huge, carefully restored guestrooms reveal a tasteful mix of Sri Lankan chests, marble-topped French tables and sleek German bathrooms – with wi-fi throughout. Add polished-wood floors, kitchens, a river-facing garden terrace and beautiful hosts, and no-one will blink when you wheel your bicycle inside for safekeeping.

TOP END

Bischofshof am Dom (☎ 584 60; www.hotel-bischofshof.de; Krauterermarkt 3; s €67–97, d €149–175; ☎) The sprawling residence of the former bishops is now a romantic upmarket hotel, with stylish rooms set around a beautiful leafy courtyard. The beer garden is a popular spot on summer evenings, and there's wheelchair access.

Eating

'In Regensburg we ate a magnificent lunch, had a divine musical entertainment, an English hostess and a wonderful Moselle wine,' Mozart wrote to his wife Constance in 1790. Available in Mozart's day, but better washed down with a local Kneitinger Pils, is a delectable **Bratwurstl** (grilled sausage) and **Händlmaier's Süsser Hausmachersenf**, a distinctive sweet mustard.

RESTAURANTS

Spghetteria (☎ 0130-785 700; Am Römling 12; dishes €6–8) For heavenly pastas and a spirited crowd, step into this former 17th-century chapel. You can pick fresh noodles, sauces and side dishes from the buffet and get out the door for the cost of a cocktail in Munich. The entrance fresco has a pasta-sucking character from *Commedia dell'Arte*.

Café Orphée (☎ 529 77; Untere Bachgasse 8; mains €11–16; ☎ 9am–1am) This delightful brasserie, decked out in red velvet, dark wood and plenty of mirrors, is straight off a Parisian street. Patés, snacks, coffee or a light lunch all stem from a menu of delectable French cuisine.

Dicker Mann (☎ 573 70; Krebsgasse 6; mains €8–14) One of the oldest restaurants in town, this stylish, very traditional restaurant has dependable Bavarian food, swift service and a lively flair thanks to its young and upbeat staff. On a balmy evening, grab a table in the lovely beer garden out back.

THE AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Behind a humble door right in the heart of the city lies a world of genuine charm, unexpected extras and real attention to detail. The striped floors, wrought-iron beds, original sinks and common rooms with soft cushions and well-read books give **Hotel D'Orphée** (☎ 596 020; www.hotel-orphee.de; Wahlenstrasse 1; s €65-98, d €79-115) the feel of a home lovingly attended rather than a hotel. Each room is unique: number seven is stunningly romantic, while number five has a bathroom accessed through a hidden door. For single travellers on a budget there's one attic room with a taste of luxury at an affordable rate. A mouth-watering breakfast is served at the connected Café Orphée (p381), where a new branch of the hotel has opened.

Rosenpalais (☎ 599 7579; Minoritenweg 20; bistro mains €11-18, restaurant mains €22.50-29; ☹ closed Sun) This two-tone establishment caters for a well-heeled clientele at the graceful silver-service restaurant upstairs, and for gourmets on a more restrictive budget downstairs. Either way the food is superb. For the best possible deal try the weekday two-course lunch special (€9.50).

Other recommendations:

Bodega Vinos y Tapas (☎ 584 0486; Von der Grieb 1a; tapas €4-7) Delectable Spanish snacks served in the elegant, torch-lit surrounds of a former horse butcher's.

l'Osteria (☎ 599 9181; Watmarkt 1; mains €7-11) The big steaming plates of pasta and thick toppings inspire its patrons to loud, spirited conversation.

QUICK EATS

Historische Würstküche (Thundorfer Strasse 3; dishes €2.70-7.60) Justifiably famous for its little sausages grilled over beechwood and served with *Kraut* (cabbage). There's also wheelchair access.

Würstlkine (Rotehahngasse 2) If Historische Würstküche is closed, head for this sausage stand with cult status among night owls.

Dampfnudel Uli (☎ 532 97; Watmarkt 4; dishes under €5; ☹ closed Sun & Mon) For a speciality you're unlikely to find anywhere else, try the steamed doughnuts with custard (€4).

Bombay Express (☎ 584 0954; Am Ölberg 3; mains €5-8; ☹ 11am-7pm Mon-Sun) Has fragrant Indian curries made with choice ingredients for takeaway or eating at stand-up tables.

Viktualienmarkt (☹ daily) There is a fresh produce market at Neupfarrplatz.

Drinking

BEER GARDENS

Augustiner (☎ 584 0455; Neupfarrplatz 15) This popular beer garden and restaurant (meals €5 to €16) is ideally located in the heart of the city. The sprawling garden and cavernous interior swell with happy locals enjoying the good food and local brews.

Kneitinger (☎ 524 55; Arnulfplatz 3; ☹ 9am-11pm) Everyone from students to actors to regular burghers flock to this quintessential Bavarian brewpub for its hearty home cooking (meals €5 to €13) and delicious house suds. It's been in business since 1530. Tours of its brewery are given Wednesday afternoons at 3pm.

Alte Linde (☎ 880 80; Müllerstrasse 1) A lovely place at any time of year, but especially worth a visit on summer evenings, the Alte Linde is a large and leafy beer garden with a panoramic view of the Altstadt. They also do food (meals €6 to €11). It's accessed via the romantic Steinerne Brücke.

PUBS & BARS

Café Galerie (☎ 561 0408; Kohlenmarkt 6) This multi-level fun spot on Kohlenmarkt, an old coal-seller's square, affords partiers untold options. Buy a scoop at the ice-cream bar, bypass the sports TV to meet your mate on the dance floor, or just slip behind a mellow sidewalk table for a cocktail.

Kaminski (☎ 5999 9033; Hinter der Grieb 6) Whether for afternoon coffee, a champagne breakfast or red wine with mussels, this self-assured café with pin-striped décor has something for everyone. Breakfast always has a classical soundtrack.

Paletti (☎ 515 93; Pustetpassage; ☹ 8am-1am Mon-Sat, 3pm-1am Sun) Tucked into a covered passage-way off Gesandtenstrasse, this buzzy Italian café-bar is a hip hang-out with seen-and-be-seen windows and art-clad walls. Patrons come for thimble-sized espressos, hearty pastas or chilli Pinot Grigio.

Hemingway's (☎ 561 506; Obere Bachgasse 5) Black wood, big mirrors and lots of photos of Papa himself add to the cool atmosphere of this Art Deco-style bar. It fills up with the trendy set in the late evening.

Neue Film Bühne (☎ 570 37; Bismarckplatz 9) Theatrical décor and the odd disco ball

characterise this funky café-bar frequented by an eclectic crowd of students, yuppies and young families. In summer, the terrace overlooking Bismarckplatz is great for lounging.

Entertainment

Ask for a free copy of *Logo*, the local listings mag, in cafés and bars around town.

CINEMAS

Film Galerie (☎ 560 901; Bertoldstrasse 9) Part of the Leerer Beutel cultural centre, this cinema concentrates on arthouse films, often shown in the original language (including English).

Garbo-Filmtheater (☎ 575 86; Weissgerbergraben) This theatre shows classic Hollywood and modern films in English.

JAZZ & FINE ARTS

Jazzclub im Leeren Beutel (☎ 563 375; Bertoldstrasse 9) This moody jazz club is a vortex of talent, putting on two to three concerts a week. The host art centre also has an art gallery, cinema and stylish restaurant.

Theater Regensburg (☎ 507 2424; Bismarckplatz) runs a packed and varied programme of opera, ballet, classical concerts and drama. The **Theater am Haidplatz** (Haidplatz 8) also has open-air performances in summer.

The cathedral's famous boys' choir, the Regensburger Domsptzen, sings at the 10am Sunday service in the Dom.

Getting There & Away

Regensburg has direct train links to Frankfurt-am-Main (€56, three hours), Munich (€21, 1½ hours), Nuremberg (€15.50, 1½ hours) and Passau (€22, one hour).

Regensburg is about an hour's drive south-east of Nuremberg and northwest of Passau via the A3 autobahn. The A9 runs south to Munich.

Getting Around

BICYCLE

Bikehaus (☎ 599 8808; Hauptbahnhof; bikes per day €9/6; ☹ 10am-7pm Mon-Sat) Staff here can help plan bike trips along the Danube and in other regions. It also has bike storage.

BUS

The Altstadtbus runs between the Hauptbahnhof and the Altstadt every six minutes for just €0.70, except Sunday. The bus transfer point is one block north of the Hauptbahnhof,

on Albertstrasse. Tickets cost €1.70/2.30 for short/long journeys in the centre; strip tickets cost €5.60 for five rides (two strips per ride in town). An all-day ticket (€3.50 at ticket machines, more on the bus) is a better deal.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

The Steinerne Brücke and much of the Altstadt is closed to private vehicles. Car parks in the centre charge from €1.20 per hour and are well signposted.

TAXI

For a taxi, call ☎ 194 10 or ☎ 520 52.

AROUND REGENSBURG Klosterschenke Weltenburg

When you're this close to the world's oldest monastic brewery, there's just no excuse to miss out. **Klosterschenke Weltenburg** (☎ 09441-3682; www.klosterschenke-weltenburg.de; Asamstrasse 32; ☹ 8am-7pm mid-Mar-mid-Nov, closed Mon-Tue Mar & Nov) has been brewing its delicious dark beer since 1050. Now a state-of-the-art brewery, it is a favourite spot for an excursion, and the comely beer garden can get quite crowded on warm weekends and holidays.

Not everyone comes for the brew alone, as the complex is also home to a most magnificent church, **Klosterkirche Sts Georg und Martin**, designed by Cosmas Damian and Egid Quirin Asam. Its eye-popping high altar shows St George triumphant on horseback, with the dead dragon and rescued princess at his feet. Also worth noting is the oval ceiling fresco, with a sculpture of CD Asam leaning over the railing.

The nicest approach to Weltenburg is by boat from the Danube river town of Kelheim (about 30km southwest of Regensburg on the B16) via the **Danube Gorge**, a particularly dramatic stretch of the river as it carves through craggy cliffs and past bizarre rock formations. From mid-March to October, you can take a trip up the gorge for €4/7 one-way/return; bicycles are an extra €1.80/3.60.

Walhalla

Modelled on the Parthenon in Athens, the **Walhalla** (adult/children €3/2.50; ☹ 9am-5.45pm Apr-Sep, 10am-noon & 1-3.45pm Oct-Mar) is a breathtaking Ludwig I monument dedicated to the giants of Germanic thought and deed. Marble steps seem to lead up forever from the banks of the Danube to this stunning marble hall, with a

gallery of 127 heroes in marble. It includes a few dubious cases, such as astronomer Copernicus, born in a territory belonging to present-day Poland. The latest addition (2003) was Sophie Scholl, a member of *Die Weiße Rose* resistance group (see p302).

To get there take the Danube Valley country road (unnumbered) 10km east from Regensburg to the village of Donaustauf, then follow the signs. Alternatively, you can take a two-hour boat cruise with **Schiffahrtsunternehmen Klinger** (☎ 0941-521 04; €/10 one-way/return; ☎ 10.30am & 2pm Apr–mid-Oct), which includes a one-hour stop at Walhalla.

Befreiungshalle

Perched on a hill above the Danube, this mustard-coloured tankard of a building is the **Befreiungshalle** (Hall of Liberation; ☎ 09441-15 84; Befreiungshallestrasse 3; adult/concession €3/2; ☎ 9am–6pm Apr–Sep, 9am–4pm Oct–Mar). Erected in 1863, it's an outrageous piece of Bavarian nationalism ordered by King Ludwig I to commemorate the victories over Napoleon (1813–15). Inside you'll find a veritable shrine lorded over by white marble angels modelled on the Roman goddess Victoria.

STRAUBING

☎ 09421 / pop 45,000

Some 30km southeast of Regensburg, Straubing enjoyed a brief heyday as part of a wonky alliance that formed the short-lived Duchy of Straubing-Holland. As a result, the centre is chock-a-block with historical buildings that opened new horizons in a small town. In August, the demand for folding benches soars during the **Gäubodenfest**, a 10-day blow-out that once brought together grain farmers in 1812, but now draws over 20,000 drinkers.

Orientation & Information

Compact and quite walkable, the historical centre is squeezed between the Danube and the Hauptbahnhof. The central square is shaped more like a street and consists of Theresienplatz and Ludwigsplatz. The **tourist office** (☎ 944 307; www.straubing.de; Theresienplatz 20; ☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Fri, 9am–noon Sat) makes free room referrals.

Sights & Activities

Lined with pastel-coloured houses from a variety of periods, the pedestrian square is lorded over by the Gothic **Stadtturm** (1316).

It stands next to the richly gabled **Rathaus**, originally two merchants' homes but repackaged in neo-Gothic style in the 19th century. Just east of the tower is the gleaming golden **Dreifaltigkeitssäule** (Trinity Column), erected in 1709 as a nod to Catholic upheavals during the Spanish War of Succession.

Straubing has about half a dozen historic churches. The most impressive is **St Jakobskirche** (Pfarrplatz), a late Gothic hall church with original stained-glass windows but also a recipient of a baroque makeover, courtesy of the amazing Asam brothers. The pair also designed the interior of the **Ursulinenkirche** on Burggasse, their final collaboration. Its ceiling fresco depicts the martyrdom of St Ursula surrounded by allegorical representations of the four known continents. Also worth a look is the nearby **Karmelitenkirche** on Hofstatt.

North of here is the former ducal residence **Herzogsschloss** (Schlossplatz), which overlooks the river. This rather austere 14th-century building was a tax office and home to a small collection of **religious art** (☎ 211 14; adult/child €2.50/1.50; ☎ 10am–4pm Thu–Sun Apr–Jan).

One of Germany's most important vaults of Roman treasure is the intimate **Gäubodenmuseum** (☎ 974 10; Frauenhoferstrasse 9; adult/concession €2.50/1.50; ☎ 10am–4pm Tue–Sun). Displays include imposing armour and masks for both soldiers and horses, probably plundered from a Roman store.

Getting There & Away

Straubing is on a regional train line from Regensburg (€7.60, 30 minutes) and Passau (€11.70, one hour). Trains to and from Munich (€20.60, two hours) require a change. Drivers should take the Kirchhof exit off the A3 (the Nuremberg–Passau autobahn). There's free parking at Unter den Hagen, a five-minute walk south of Stadtplatz.

PASSAU

☎ 0851 / pop 50,000

Straddling the confluence of three rivers, the Danube, Inn and Ilz, Passau was predestined to become a powerful trading post. The waterways brought wealth, especially from 'white gold' (salt), and Christianity brought prestige as the city evolved into the largest bishopric in the Holy Roman Empire. The beautiful old centre has a distinct Italian look, with winding medieval lanes, tunnels and archways. The *Niebelungenlied*, the epic poem about a

dragon-slayer, is believed to originate from here, at the bishop's 13th-century court.

Passau is a major river-cruise stop and is often deluged with day visitors. It is also the hub of many long-distance cycling routes, eight of which converge here, and a good springboard for explorations into upper Austria.

Orientation

Passau's Altstadt is a narrow peninsula with the confluence of the three rivers at its eastern tip. From the north the little Ilz brings soily water from the Bavarian forest, which meets the murkier Danube as it flows from the west and the greenish Alpine water of the Inn from the south. The Hauptbahnhof is about a 10-minute walk west of the Altstadt. The Veste Oberhaus is on the north side of the Danube.

Information

Citibank (Theresienstrasse 1)

Coffee Fellows (Schrottgasse 10; per 30min €1.30) One of the trendier coffee and internet bars in town.

Commerzbank (Ludwigstrasse 13)

Post office (Bahnhofstrasse 27)

Tourist office Altstadt (☎ 955 980; www.passau.de; Rathausplatz 3; ☎ 8.30am–6pm Mon–Fri, 9.30am–3pm Sat & Sun, closed lunch & weekends mid-Oct–Easter); Hauptbahnhof (☎ 955 980; Bahnhofstrasse 36; ☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Thu, 9am–4pm Fri year-round, 9am–1pm Sat & Sun Easter–mid-October)

Sights

VESTE OBERHAUS

This 13th-century fortress, built by the prince-bishops, towers over the city with patriarchal pomp. Views are superb, either from the castle tower (€1) or from the **Battalion Linde**, a lookout that gives the only bird's-eye view of the confluence of all three rivers.

Inside the bastion is the **Oberhausmuseum** (☎ 493 350; Oberhaus 125; adult/concession €5/4; ☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Fri, 10am–6pm Sat & Sun, closed mid-Dec–mid-Mar). Some of the best exhibits here uncover the mysteries of medieval castle-building and a knight's rites of passage.

DOM ST STEPHAN

The characteristic green onion domes of Passau's cathedral, the **Dom**, float serenely above the town silhouette. There has been a church on this spot since the 5th century, but the current baroque look emerged after the Great Fire

of 1662. The interior was designed by a crew of Italian artists, notably the architect Carlo Lurago and the stucco master Giovanni Carlone. The frescoes show fascinating scenes of heaven, but the true masterpiece is the church organ – it's one of the world's largest with a staggering 17,974 pipes. Organ recitals are held on weekdays at noon, and on Thursday at 7.30pm from May to October (adult/child €3/1 lunchtime; €5/3 evening).

From the south aisle, a set of corkscrew stairs leads to the New Bishop's Residence, which contains the **Domschatz- und Diözesanmuseum** (Cathedral Treasury & Museum; adult/concession €1.50/0.50; ☎ 10am–4pm Mon–Sat May–Oct). This showcases a range of ecclesiastical finery that nicely illustrates the power and wealth of the Church rulers.

ALTES RATHAUS

The carillon in the colourful **Rathaus** chimes several times daily (hours are listed on the wall alongside the historical flood levels). Inside, the **Grosser Rathous Saal** (Great Assembly Room; adult/concession €1.50/1; ☎ 10am–4pm Apr–Oct) has wonderful murals by local artist Ferdinand Wagner, showing scenes from Passau's history with a melodramatic flourish. If it's not being used for a wedding, also sneak into the adjacent **Small Assembly Room** for a peek at the ceiling fresco showing buxom beauties and a fierce-looking man – meant as allegories of the three rivers.

Wagner, who used to live in the huge building on the north bank of the Danube, just to the right of where the Luitpoldbrücke suspension bridge is today, threatened to move out of town if the bridge was built. It was, he did, and after viewing the paintings, you wonder whether the city made the right choice.

PASSAUER GLASMUSEUM

A splendid collection of over 30,000 examples of Bohemian glasswork and crystal from over 250 years is on view at the **Passauer Glasmuseum** (Passau Museum of Glass; ☎ 350 71; Hotel Wilder Mann, Am Rathausplatz; adult/concession €5/3; ☎ 1–5pm). Even if you charge through the place, you'll need an hour to view the 36 rooms filled with baroque, classical, Art Nouveau and Art Deco pieces. There's a luxury bedroom chamber right in the museum that's let to visiting VIPs as part of the adjacent Hotel Wilder Mann (p386). Be sure to pick up a floor plan as it's easy to get lost.

OTHER MUSEUMS

The **Museum Moderne Kunst** (Modern Art Museum; ☎ 383 8790; Bräugasse 17; adult/concession €5/3; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun) shows an ambitious cycle of temporary exhibits, often of international merit, in a fascinating jumble of buildings.

Across the Fünferlsteig Inn footbridge, in the Kastell Boioto, is the **Römermuseum** (☎ 347 69; Kastell Boioto; adult/concession €2/1; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-4pm Tue-Sun Mar-May & Sep-Nov, 10am-noon & 1-4pm Jun-Aug), which depicts Passau's original settlement.

Activities

From March to early November, **Wurm + Köck** (☎ 929 292; www.donauschiffahrt.de; Höllgasse 26; adult/child 45min €6.50/3.50, 2hr €9.50/6.50) runs cruises to the Dreiflusseck from the docks near Rathausplatz.

It's a pleasant, easy hike from town to the Zur Triftsperre (opposite). From the camping ground Zeltplatz Ilzstadt (right), head north and walk 2.8km along Halser Strasse and its extension, Grafenleite Strasse, looking for the beer garden signs. Ask at the tourist office for hiking maps.

Sleeping

Zeltplatz Ilzstadt (☎ 414 57; Halser Strasse 34; adult/child €6/5) This tent-only camping ground has an idyllic spot on the Ilz, about a 15-minute walk from the Altstadt. Catch bus 1, 2, 3 or 4 to Exerzierplatz-Ilzbrücke.

DJH hostel (☎ 493 780; www.djh.de; Veste Oberhaus 125; dm under/over 26yr €17.10/21.10) This beautifully renovated hostel is right in the fortress.

Pension Rössner (☎ 931 350; www.pension-roessner.de; Bräugasse 19; s/d €35/60; (P)) You'll get plenty for your money at this immaculate *pension* in a restored mansion on the eastern tip of the Altstadt. Each room is uniquely decorated and many also have fortress views. Breakfast is €7 extra.

Hotel König (☎ 3850; www.hotel-koenig.de; Untere Donaulände 1; s €68-85, d €85-130; (P) ☎) Spacious modern rooms, great views over the river and a good central location make this riverside property an excellent choice. The hotel also has a good restaurant with a beautiful dining terrace. There is wheelchair access.

Hotel Wilder Mann (☎ 350 71; www.wilder-mann.com; Am Rathausplatz; s €40-50, d €60-180; (P)) Royalty and celebrities, from Empress Elizabeth of Austria

FAVOURITES IN GLASS

Georg Höttl, founder of the Passauer Glasmuseum, named the following works as a few of his favourites:

- Dolphin dinner service (No 262) – A beautiful enamel-and-gold-leaf 170-piece set, all adorned with a happy flopping fish; thought to be a wedding present for the well-to-do.
- A pair of decorative vases (No 288) – Larger-than-life Oriental-style vessels hand-blown in transparent amber for the 1876 Munich Trade Fair (each 1.65m tall).
- Daumengläser (Nos 293–94) – Curious tumblers (literally 'thumbglasses') in Old German style that were all the rage in the mid-1800s.
- Sektgläser (Nos 305–08) – Brocaded, barbell-shaped sparkling wine glasses with piercing white-eyed portraits of four poets and artists including Albrecht Dürer.
- Bismarck wine glass (No 311) – Detailed profile of the Iron Chancellor in a Bacchanalian setting.

to Mikhail Gorbachev and Henry Kissinger, have stayed at this historic hotel. Rooms seek to recapture a lost grandeur, and some of the carved bedsteads are very grand indeed. The best rooms overlook the garden at the back.

Hotel Schloss Ort (☎ 340 72; www.schlosshotel-passau.de; Im Ort 11; s €54-78, d €88-128; (P)) Behind the walls of this snug medieval palace awaits a stylish hotel just a hop from the Dreiflusseck. Rooms have wrought-iron beds, modern parquet floors and great river views.

Eating & Drinking

Heilig-Geist-Stiftschänke (☎ 2607; Heilig-Geist-Gasse 4; mains €8-16) Traditional food is prepared with panache, and served either in the classy walnut-panelled tangle of dining rooms or the leafy beer garden, where hedges create separate dining areas. The candle-lit stone cellar is open from 6pm.

Zi'Teresa Pizzeria (☎ 2138; Theresienstrasse 26; meals €4.80-12.50) Theresienstrasse and its side streets are lined with cafés and restaurants and popular places to just hang out, such as Zi'Teresa. This lively, always-bustling Italian restaurant draws people of all ages to munch on delicious pizzas and pastas as well as the good appetisers and salads.

Zum Grünen Baum (☎ 356 35; Höllgasse 7; mains €6-14) This darling eatery has some eccentric design touches, such as a cutlery chandelier and a toy-filled, smoke-free backroom. Organic beer, wine and lots of vegetarian dishes give this place a healthy bent. For dessert, be sure to ask for the unlisted 'variety platter'.

Café Kowalski (☎ 2487; Oberer Sand 1; dishes €5-11) Chat flows as freely as wine or beer at this

gregarious café, a kicker of a night spot. The giant burgers, schnitzels and salads are best sampled on the terrace overlooking the Ilz.

Birreria Venti Tre (☎ 490 5283; Schmiedgasse 23; mains €8-16) This new trattoria has candle-lit ambience and tasty food that blend together as perfectly as a Tuscan stew. The spaghetti *Renate* (with shrimp and tomatoes) is highly recommended. The garden is among Passau's finest.

Zur Triftsperre (☎ 511 62; Triftsperre Strasse 15) A wonderful beer garden and restaurant on a peaceful section of the Ilz.

Other recommendations:

Café Duft (☎ 346 66; Theresienstrasse 22; mains €3.40-8.20) A vaulted chamber with low lights, dark wood and a good range of dishes.

KÖPA Schmankerlpassage (Ludwigstrasse 6) Fruit stalls, meat and fish counters to put together a full meal under €6.

Getting There & Away

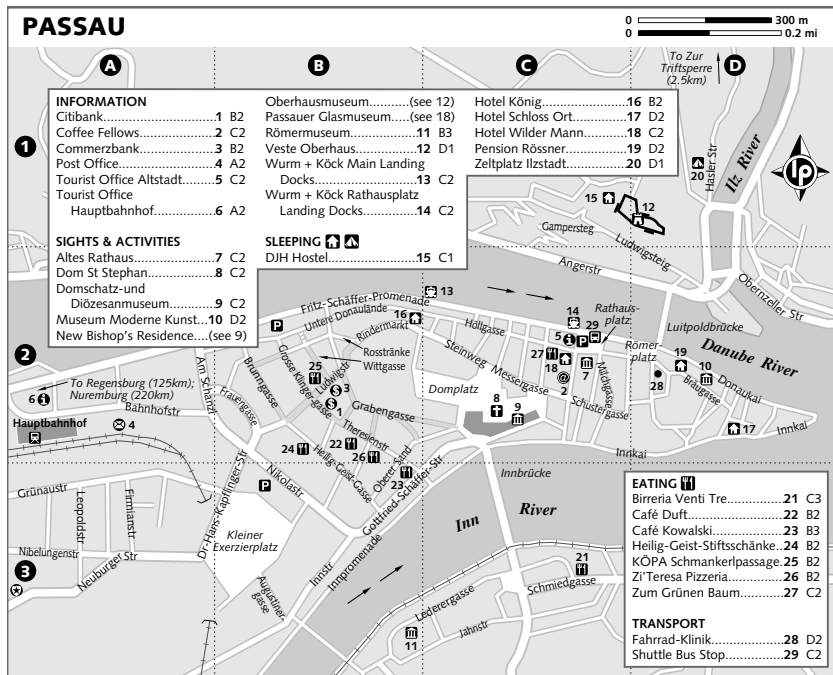
TRAIN

Passau is on the main train line going to Nuremberg (€37, two hours), Regensburg (€18, 1½ hours) and Vienna (€38, 3½ hours). There are also direct trains to Munich (€27, 2¼ hours). The trip to Zwiesel (€17, 1½ hours) and other Bavarian Forest towns requires a change in Plattling.

Passau is just off the A3 autobahn from Nuremberg to Regensburg, which links up with the A92 to Munich near Deggendorf.

Getting Around

Central Passau is compact, so most sights are reachable on foot. The CityBus regularly links the Bahnhof with the Altstadt (€0.80). Longer



trips within Passau cost €1.50; a day pass costs €3 (€4 for a family).

The walk up the hill to the Veste or the hostel, via Luitpoldbrücke and Ludwigsteig path, takes about 30 minutes. From April to October, a shuttle bus operates from Rathausplatz (€2/2.50 one-way/return).

There are several public car parks near the train station but only one in the Altstadt at Römerplatz (€1.10/€10 per hour/day).

The **Fahrrad-Klinik** (☎ 33411; Bräugasse 10) hires out bikes from €11 per day.

MARKTL AM INN

☎ 08678 / pop 2700

On a gentle bend in the Inn, some 68km southwest of Passau, sits the prim hamlet of Markt am Inn. Few people outside of Germany (or indeed Bavaria) had heard of it before 19 April 2005, the day when its favourite son, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, was elected as **Pope Benedict XVI**. Literally overnight the village was inundated with reporters, devotees and the plain curious, all seeking clues about the pontiff's life and times. Souvenirs like mitre-shaped cakes, 'Papst-Bier' (Pope's Beer) and religious board games flooded the local shops.

The pope's **Geburthaus** (Birth House; ☎ 748 820; Marktplatz 11; adult/child €2/free; ☹ 2-5pm Tue-Sun) is the simple but pretty Bavarian home where Ratzinger lived for the first two years of his life before his family moved to Tittmoning, another tiny burg. A tablet commemorates his birth in 1927, and his elevation to honorary citizen half a century later, by which time he was already serving as chief advisor to his predecessor in the Vatican. A Ratzinger museum was expected to open here in late 2006.

The **Heimatmuseum** (Local History Museum; ☎ 7341; Marktplatz 2; adult/child €1.50/1; ☹ 2-4pm Tue-Sat, 2-4.30pm Sun, May-Oct) is in possession of a golden chalice and a skullcap that was used by Ratzinger in his private chapel in Rome. His baptismal font can be viewed at the **Pfarrkirche St Oswald** (Parish Church of St Oswald, ☎ 293; Marktplatz 6), which is open for viewing except during church services.

More papal attractions are sure to be in development, so do check for the latest details at the newly-erected **tourist office** (☎ 748 820; www.markt-marktl.de; Marktplatz 1). Markt am Inn is best reached by car on the B12 between Munich and Passau.

BAVARIAN FOREST

Together with the Bohemian Forest on the other side of the Czech border, the Bavarian Forest (Bayerischer Wald) forms the largest continuous woodland area in Europe. It's a lovely landscape of rolling hills and tree-covered mountains interspersed with small, little-disturbed valleys. A large area is protected as the surprisingly wild and rugged Bavarian Forest National Park (Nationalpark Bayerischer Wald).

Despite being incredibly good value, the region sees very few international tourists and remains quite traditional. A centuries-old glass-blowing industry is still active in many of the towns along the **Glasstrasse** (Glass Road), a 250km holiday route connecting Neustadt an der Waldnaab with Passau. You can visit the studios, factories and shops and stock up on the magnificent designs.

Orientation

The ranges of the Bavarian Forest stretch northwest to southeast along the German-Czech border, and its wild frontier nature is still the region's chief attribute. One of the bigger towns, and an ideal base for its good train and bus connections, is Zwiesel.

Information

Café Flitzer (☎ 09922-502 160; Dr Schottstrasse 18, Zwiesel; per 10min €0.50; ☹ 11am-10pm) Internet access; about 300m southwest of the main square.

Grafenau tourist office (☎ 08552-962 343; www.grafenau.de; Rathausgasse 1; ☹ 9am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Thu, 9am-4pm Fri, 10-11.30am Sat) Also has internet access (€2 for 30 minutes).

Zwiesel tourist office Town centre (☎ 09922-840 523; www.zwiesel-tourismus.de; Stadtplatz 27); Zwiesel-Süd (☹ 10am-1pm & 2-5pm Mon-Fri, 10-3pm Sat) The latter has English-speaking staff and is just outside town on the main road towards Regan.

Sights

Forest, local customs and glass making are the main themes of exhibits at Zwiesel's **Waldmuseum** (Forest Museum; ☎ 09922-608 88; Stadtplatz 28; adult/concession €2/1.50; ☹ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon & 2-4pm Sat & Sun mid-May-mid-Oct, reduced hours in winter). Also in Zwiesel is the **Dampfbier-Brauerei** (☎ 09922-846 60; Regener Strasse 9, Zwiesel; tours €7; ☹ tours 10am Wed) where you can join a brewery tour and sample its peppery ales.

Frauenau's sparkling new **Glasmuseum** (☎ 09926-9401 020; Am Museumspark 1; adult/child €5/2.50;

☹ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun) covers four millennia of glass-making history, starting with the ancient Egyptians and ending with modern glass art from around the world. Demonstrations and workshops for kids are regular features. The colourful section of designer snuff flasks is a must-see.

On the southern edge of the Bavarian Forest, in Tittling, there's the **Museumsdorf Bayerischer Wald** (☎ 08504-8482; Herrenstrasse 11; adult/child €3.50/free; ☹ 9am-5pm Apr-Oct). This 20-hectare open-air museum features 150 typical Bavarian Forest buildings from the 16th to the 19th centuries, with displays ranging from clothing and furniture to pottery and farming implements. Take RBO bus 8771 to Tittling from Passau Hauptbahnhof.

BAVARIAN FOREST NATIONAL PARK

A paradise for outdoor enthusiasts, the Bavarian Forest National Park stretches for about 24,250 hectares along the Czech border, from Bayerisch Eisenstein in the north to Finsterau in the south. Its thick forest, most of it mountain spruce, is crisscrossed by hundreds of kilometres of hiking, cycling and cross-country skiing trails. The three main mountains, Rachel, Lusen and Grosser Falkenstein, rise up to between 1300m and 1450m and are home to deer, wild boar, fox, otter and countless bird species.

The park's superb visitor centre is housed in the **Hans-Eisenmann-Haus** (☎ 08558-961 50; www.nationalpark-bayerischer-wald.de; Böhmsstrasse 35, Neuschönau; ☹ 9am-5pm). You can pick up maps and leaflets (some in English) and see exhibits on the park's flora, fauna and environmental issues; there's also a children's discovery room and a library. See p390 for details about transport in the park.

Activities

Two long-distance hiking routes cut through the Bavarian Forest: the European Distance Trails E6 (Baltic Sea to the Adriatic) and E8 (North Sea to Carpathia). There are mountain huts all along the way. Another popular hiking trail is the Gläserne Steig (Glass Trail) from Lam to Grafenau. Detailed maps and hiking suggestions are available at the local tourist offices and at the Hans-Eisenmann-Haus.

The Bavarian Forest has seven ski areas, but downhill skiing is low-key, even though the area's highest mountain, the Grosser

Arber (1456m), occasionally hosts European and World Cup ski races. The best resorts are in the north, such as Bischofsmas near the Geisskopf (1097m), Bodenmais near the Grosser Arber, and Neukirchen near the Hoher Bogen (1079m). The major draw here is cross-country skiing, with 2000km of prepared routes through the ranges.

Sleeping

Accommodation in this area is a real bargain; Zwiesel and Grafenau have the best choices.

HOSTELS & CAMPING

All hostels close for at least a month around November and December.

DJH hostel (☎ 08553-6000; www.djh.de; Herbergsweg 2; dm under/over 26yr €18.10/22.10) The only hostel right in the national park and an ideal base for hikers.

Azur-Ferienpark Bayerischer Wald (☎ 09922-802 595; www.azur-camping.de; Waldesruhweg 34, Zwiesel; per person €5-7, tent €5.50-8.50) About 500m north of the Hauptbahnhof, near public pools and sports facilities.

PENSIONS & HOTELS

Landgasthaus Karin (☎ 08552-2187; www.schall-fewer.de; Buschweg 24, Grafenau; d €39-44, apt €31-50; ☎ ☹) Run by a delightful young couple, this child- and pet-friendly property sits right on a forest slope, with meticulously kept rooms and apartments. Rates include admission to the local fitness centre.

Hotel-Gasthaus Zum Kellermann (☎ 08552-967 10; www.hotel-zum-kellermann.de; Stadtplatz 8, Grafenau; s/d €31/50; ☹ closed Wed; ☎) Bright, modern rooms at very reasonable rates make this simple guesthouse in Grafenau a good bet. There's a pretty terrace area outside and the restaurant (mains €6 to €12) serves up tasty traditional dishes.

Hotel Zur Waldbahn (☎ 09922-3001; www.zurwaldbahn.de; Bahnhofplatz 2, Zwiesel; s €54-58, d €84-90; ☎ ☹) Tradition and modern comforts blend seamlessly at this friendly inn, conveniently located opposite the Hauptbahnhof. The warm, wood-panelled rooms are tastefully furnished and the restaurant, with an authentic tiled oven, is top-notch (mains €7 to €16).

Hotel Hubertus (☎ 08552-96490; www.hubertus-grafenau.de; Grüb 20, Grafenau; s €46-58, d €72-102; ☎ ☹) This elegant hotel in Grafenau offers incredible value for the weary traveller. The stylish rooms are spacious and most have balconies. Guests are treated to a pool and sauna, and delicious buffet meals.

Eating

Many of the hotels mentioned in Sleeping also have good restaurants.

Restaurant Nepomuk (☎ 09922-605 30; Stadtplatz 30, Zwiesel; mains €6-13) This place, just off the square opposite the tourist office, is popular with locals. It has a good range of traditional dishes as well as some lighter choices and a few vegetarian options.

Weinanger (☎ 09922-869 690; Angerstrasse 37, Zwiesel; mains €5-9) If your stomach craves lighter fare, try this cheerful wine bistro with brick walls and polished wooden tables. French onion soup, cheeses and baguette sandwiches all feature on the menu, and some Fridays there's live jazz.

Getting There & Around

From Munich, Regensburg or Passau, Zwiesel is reached by rail via Plattling; most

trains continue to Bayerisch Eisenstein on the Czech border, with connections to Prague. The Waldbahn shuttles directly between Zwiesel and Bodenmais and Zwiesel and Grafenau.

There's also a tight network of regional buses, though service can be infrequent. The Igel-Bus navigates around the national park on four routes. A useful one is the Lusen-Bus (€4/10 per one-/three-day ticket), which leaves from Grafenau Hauptbahnhof and travels to the Hans-Eisenmann-Haus, the Neuschönau hostel and the Lusen hiking area.

From mid-May to October, the best value is usually the **Bayerwald-Ticket** (€6), a day pass good for unlimited travel on bus and train throughout the forest area. It's available from the visitors centre and tourist offices throughout the national park.