# SouthWest Germany’s gourmet hiking and biking trails

# Hit the trail for good food and drink

SouthWest Germany is criss-crossed with well-signposted, well-maintained hiking and biking trails through glorious countryside. But it’s not only nature lovers, who enjoy the Great Outdoors. Foodies also have a terrific choice of themed trails that bring out their inner gourmet. The only difficulty? Deciding which trail to choose...

# Tour de Spargel: The Asparagus Tour

One of Europe’s largest asparagus growing areas is in the Rhine Valley, between the fine old towns of Schwetzingen and Bruchsal, an hour northwest of Stuttgart. The mild climate and sandy soil provide the perfect growing conditions to produce the delicate flavour that makes Spargel (white asparagus) such a treat! Find out more on the Tour de Spargel cycle trail, which is flat and easy to ride for all the family. The best time to visit? During the asparagus season from mid-April to St John’s Day (June 24). Along the 108 km/67 miles, taverns and restaurants serve freshly-picked asparagus prepared in a variety of ways: hot with Hollandaise sauce; cold with vinaigrette; as a partner to ham or salmon. But year-round, there are many attractions to visit, including Schwetzingen Palace and its impressive gardens, where the local asparagus craze started 350 years ago!

[www.tour-de-spargel.de](http://www.tour-de-spargel.de)

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# The Schnapps Distillery Trails: The best things in life are free

The Schnapsbrunnenwege, the Schnapps Distillery Trails, could be the world’s most unusual hiking routes. Along Black Forest paths, ten ‘schnapps fountains’ offer hikers free samples of locally-distilled spirits. As well as being the birthplace of recreational hiking, the region is renowned for its small family distilleries. These transform locally-grown apricots, cherries and apples into schnapps, world-class fruit brandies. On the trails around Sasbachwalden, south of Baden-Baden, bottles of schnapps cool naturally in the mountain spring water of the ‘schnapps fountains’. Help yourself to free samples or leave a few Euros for other drinks, such as liqueurs, ciders and soft drinks for children. Two trails start from Sasbachwalden. Allow two hours for the northern loop (7 km/4 miles) and four hours for the southern (12 km/7.7 miles).

[www.sasbachwalden.de/Wandern-Aktivitaeten/Die-Schnapsbrunnenwege](http://www.sasbachwalden.de/Wandern-Aktivitaeten/Die-Schnapsbrunnenwege)

## **The Green Spelt Bike Trails: Healthy is as healthy does**

Green Spelt (Grünkern in German) is a super food. And it flourishes in four regions some 90 minutes north of Stuttgart: the Odenwald, Taubertal Valley, Hohenlohe and Heilbronn area. Back in the 19th century, with famine threatening, farmers harvested the spelt crop while it was still green. They dried the unripened grain in kilns – and the result was unexpected: tasty, nutritious and versatile. There are two Grünkern-Radwege, Green Spelt Bike Trails. Both make a perfect day out in lovely countryside. Attractions along the way include the Odenwald living history museum.

<https://www.heilbronnerland.de/de/radfahren/radtouren/grunkern-radweg>

# The Yach Bread Trail: The staff of life

In the southern Black Forest, a couple of hours southwest of Stuttgart, is the unspoiled Yach Valley. Here, many farming families still bake their own bread the traditional way. Now the Brotweg Yach, the Yach Bread Trail, links several of these farms, so that hikers can enjoy both the landscape – and the bread! The clearly-marked path is 12 km/7 miles long and takes in clear streams, dense forest and lush mountain meadows. Hikers can stop for refreshments at family-run farms. Vesper (German for a hearty snack) is a tradition in these parts: slices of smoked local ham, fried potatoes with soft white cheese, apple juice and that homemade bread. With luck, you will arrive just as a loaf comes out of the wood-fired oven!

### [www.yach.de/wandern/brotweg](http://www.yach.de/wandern/brotweg)

## **The Tettnang Hop Trail: Here’s to hops**

Grown near Lake Constance, Tettnang hops are SouthWest Germany’s gift to the brewing world. Learn why by walking the Tettnang Hop Trail. Along its 4 km/2 miles are orchards and hop gardens, plus spectacular views of Lake Constance and even the snow-tipped Alps. Learn about the hop-growing tradition that dates back to 1150 and, of course, the art of brewing. The tour starts at the Krone Brewery in the centre of Tettnang and finishes at the Hopfengut Nº20 hop farm. Discover more about growing and drying hops, then visit the brewery, museum, shop and restaurant to complete the ultimate hop experience. Tettnang is two hours southeast of Stuttgart.

[www.tettnang.de/de/geniessen/sport/wandern/tettnanger-hopfenpfad/](http://www.tettnang.de/de/geniessen/sport/wandern/tettnanger-hopfenpfad/)

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# Ehingen Beer Hiking Trail: Beer Culture and more

Beer Culture City: that is the self-proclaimed title of the small, historic community of Ehingen, 90 minutes southeast of Stuttgart. And with four breweries that produce some 43 different beers, it is no idle boast! The 550-year-old Berg Brewery is a family business dating back nine generations. Local barley, malt, hops and water are the ingredients for their eight bottom-fermented beers and five seasonal brews. The town’s other breweries are the Schwanen Brewery, the Brauerei Schwert and the Brauerei zum Rössle. All are on the Bierwanderweg, the Beer Hiking Trail, whose 14 km/9 miles also include historic buildings and the scenic Danube Valley. Get information on the trail and also e-bike tours at the tourist office in the town hall.

 <https://bierkulturstadt.ehingen.de/en/things-to-do/beer-hiking-trail/>

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# Rothaus Zäpfle Brewery Trail: Natural high

Two hours southwest of Stuttgart, one of SouthWest Germany’s best-known breweries is also Germany's highest, set 1,000 m/3,300 ft up in the Black Forest. Originally a small monastic brewery, Rothaus became the Baden State Brewery and now, after 220 years, is a favourite of beer lovers around the world. Along the brewery’s Zäpfle Weg (Zäpfle Trail) are information boards and pavilions with explanations of beer making: everything from raw materials and the art of brewing to environmental responsibility. You can even peer through a window to watch 60,000 bottles being filled every hour. A popular selfie spot is the Zäpfle Fountain, where a giant beer bottle sprays water from the spring used for brewing.

[www.rothaus.de/en/about-rothaus/visits/visit](http://www.rothaus.de/en/about-rothaus/visits/visit)

# The Württemberg Wine Cycle Trail: Pedal through the vineyards

Cyclists, who are also wine lovers, should put the Württemberg Wine Cycle Trail top of their ‘to do’ list. Its 350 km/220 miles link popular winemaking destinations between Niederstetten and Rottenburg am Neckar in the beautiful Tauber and Neckar valleys. Stop and taste in wineries and Besenwirtschaften, typical pop up wine taverns. Time it right and you could enjoy one of the regular village wine festivals. For more in-depth knowledge, join a wine tour or visit a wine museum. Württemberg is Germany’s fourth largest winegrowing region and is best known for its red wine, especially Pinot Noir and local favourites Trollinger and Lemberger. But white grapes also thrive in the sun, producing excellent Riesling and Müller-Thurgau.

### [www.weinwege-wuerttemberg.de/wege/weinradweg/](https://www.weinwege-wuerttemberg.de/wege/weinradweg/)

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