

Ancient meets modern

Walking through history in SouthWest Germany's cities

STUTTGART – Every city in SouthWest Germany, the German federal state of Baden-Württemberg, has a unique tale to tell. Some boast a youthful charm, others are proud of their heritage. With their architecture, culture and inventiveness, the region's nine so-called independent cities create a rich and diverse tapestry. And here in Germany's sunniest region, each is determined to preserve the past, while offering a better future for its citizens.

Stuttgart: Poetry in motion

With its world-famous car manufacturers, Stuttgart is often seen as a modern city. But the capital of SouthWest Germany also has a historic heart, with grand palaces and handsome churches. In the centre is Schillerplatz (Schiller Square), which stands on the spot that gives the city its name: the Stutengarten or stud farm. High on a plinth, a statue of poet Friedrich Schiller has stood since 1839. He admires the displays at the Flower Market on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings. He surveys the colourful stalls at the annual wine festival at the end of August. What does he enjoy most? Most likely, the fun and bustle of one of Europe's oldest, largest and best Christmas markets from late November to Christmas Eve.

www.stuttgart-tourist.de/en

Heidelberg: Romantic past; leading-edge present

With its ruined castle high above the Neckar River and atmospheric Old Town below, Heidelberg is often pigeonholed as the cradle of the German romantic movement. But it is also a hotspot for science. Germany's first university was founded here in 1386 and research was – and still is – a pillar of academic and city life. Today, the site of a former railway station is the new Bahnstadt district, a base for biotech and other high-tech companies. Later this year, the striking new Heidelberg Congress Center (HCC) will open for conferences. And, reflecting the motto "Business by day; romantic at night", the century-old civic centre is the perfect place for evening receptions in the heart of the city. Ninety minutes northwest of Stuttgart.

www.heidelberg-marketing.de/en

Baden-Baden: Special then; special now

Playing on Baden-Baden's double-barrelled name, this sophisticated city on the edge of the Black Forest has a witty slogan: "The good-good life." In 2021, it was given UNESCO World Heritage status as one of the "Important Spa Towns in Europe". It was known as Aquae to the Romans, who came for the soothing, healing power of the 12 thermal springs. From 1700 onwards, Europe's aristocracy flocked here to "take the waters" and Baden-Baden became the "summer capital of Europe". Today, that tradition continues, with unique spa experiences and elegant gardens, plus grand buildings, such as the stylish Kurhaus cultural centre, the casino, Germany's largest

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opera house and world-class art museums. No city offers so much glamour and style, all conveniently close together. Ninety minutes west of Stuttgart.

www.baden-baden.com/en

Ulm: UNESCO recognises Oath Monday

In July, the citizens of Ulm celebrate Oath Monday, a unique ceremony that dates back to the 14th century. In the Weinhof, the oldest part of Ulm, they gather at the Oath House (Schwörhaus). High on a balcony, the mayor gives an hour-long speech that looks back at what he has achieved in the past year and then forward to the goals for the coming year. The ringing of the Oath Bell is followed by the mayor's vow to "serve rich and poor alike". Then the shops shut, and the partying begins. The highlight is the "Nabada". With themed, decorated boats and live music, it is like a carnival procession floating down the Danube. This ancient tradition was named by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2021. Ninety minutes southeast of Stuttgart.

www.tourismus.ulm.de/en/

Freiburg: One of Europe's Greenest Cities

Green, greener, greenest. That's Freiburg, the historic city between vineyards and the Black Forest. Back in the 1970s, locals protested against plans to build a nearby nuclear power plant. They kick-started an ecological revolution. And that green revolution is now a way of life in Freiburg, with numerous initiatives. In 2010, Environmental Action Germany named Freiburg the "Federal Capital for Climate Protection". Germany's southernmost city is still an example of sustainability. Stay in a comfortable climate-neutral hotel or guesthouse; use the GreenCityMap to explore exciting green initiatives. Particularly impressive is the Heliotrope, the world's first plus-energy house, producing three times more energy than it uses. Stroll through the Vauban district: dating back to the 1990s, this is a model of sustainable urban development, with its green hotel, green spaces and low traffic. Two hours southwest of Stuttgart.

www.visit.freiburg.de/en

Karlsruhe: Cradle of modern media communication

Not every city in SouthWest Germany has medieval roots: Karlsruhe was planned and built in 1715. It was the brainchild of Karl, Margrave of Baden-Durlach, who wanted a city that was "open in structure and spirit". Nicknamed the Fan City, because the main avenues fan out from the palace, Karlsruhe retains that creative open-mindedness, especially on the global art and culture scene. The ZKM (Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe) was recently ranked among the world's top five museums by ArtsFacts.net. In 2019, UNESCO named Karlsruhe as a "City of Media Arts", adding it to its "Creative Cities Network". And in the funky Alter Schlachthof district, 19th-century industrial buildings now house start-ups, performance venues, nightspots and restaurants. One hour west of Stuttgart.

www.karlsruhe-erleben.de/en

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Mannheim: The City of Squares

Mannheim² (Mannheim squared) is the apt slogan for this city, which was designed and built in 1606. Elector Friedrich IV of the Palatinate ordered his planners to follow the then-fashionable Renaissance ideals. Their creation, a checkerboard pattern with 144 squares, remains today. Everything is logical: streets are in a grid; addresses have letters and numbers, such as E4, 6. At the heart of it all is Europe's second largest Baroque palace. With six wings and hundreds of windows, this glorious building is now home to what is, arguably, Germany's most beautiful university. Two hours northwest of Stuttgart.

www.visit-mannheim.de/en

Heilbronn: Where Riesling and Lemberger flow

Set on the Neckar River, Heilbronn is the oldest wine town in Württemberg. The grape-growing and wine-making tradition stretches back 1,250 years and the surrounding vineyards cover the equivalent of 700 football fields. This is the centre of Germany's largest red wine region, producing local favourites Lemberger, Samtrot and Trollinger. As for white wine, the southwest-facing slopes overlooking Heilbronn are renowned for Riesling. The best time to visit? During any of the wine festivals, especially the 10-day Wine Village in September, when 400 different wines are on display for tasting! One hour north of Stuttgart.

www.heilbronn.de

Pforzheim: From a river crossing to a big city

One of the oldest settlements in SouthWest Germany, Pforzheim gets its name from the Latin "portus" or river crossing. The Romans, who arrived in 90 AD, settled at the ford across the Enz River and built one of their famous roads to link Cannstatt and Strasbourg. Discover more in Pforzheim's fine Archaeological Museum, which has remains of Roman heating systems, kitchens, latrines and wells dating back 1,800 years. The nearby Villa Rustica estate, has one of the region's best-preserved Roman complexes, with impressive Roman foundation walls. The recently-created Römerweg/Roman Way leads to the site and helps to bring the city's Roman past to life. One hour west of Stuttgart.

www.pforzheim.de/en/tourism.html

A digital version of this press release - as well as more detailed information on SouthWest Germany - is available on our website <https://www.tourism-bw.com/press>

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