

Storybook Castles by Day, Hofbräuhaus Toasts by Night — A 7-Day Germany Itinerary

Bavaria & the Romantic Road · Munich · Füssen · Rothenburg ob der Tauber · Nuremberg

Bavaria compresses centuries into seven days: gilded Munich beer halls give way to Neuschwanstein's turrets rising out of Alpine mist, then to Rothenburg ob der Tauber's half-timbered lanes still ringed by their medieval walls, and finally to Nuremberg's Imperial Castle and its sobering Courtroom 600. This loop threads the Romantic Road by regional train rather than rental car, trading a rearview mirror for hours to actually look out the window.

DURATION

7 Days

BEST TIME TO GO

Late Spring–Early Autumn

May, June and September bring warm days for castle-hopping and beer gardens with lighter crowds — July and August are the busiest months at Neuschwanstein and Rothenburg.

FROM

\$1,950

Per person · double occupancy · excludes international flights

Day 1

Arrival in Munich & a Hofbräuhaus Welcome

Touch down, settle into the Altstadt, and ease into Bavaria with Munich's most famous beer hall.

Airport Transfer to the Altstadt

40–50 min · from €13 one-way (S-Bahn)

The S-Bahn runs directly from Munich Airport (MUC) into the city center roughly every 10–20 minutes; take the S8 or S1 to Marienplatz and you're steps from the hotel. A taxi runs closer to 45 minutes and €70–90, useful if you're arriving with jet lag and luggage.

Check-In: Platzl Hotel Munich

2 nights · from €260/night

This four-star Bavarian-style hotel sits two minutes' walk from Marienplatz and the Hofbräuhaus, with a rooftop pool and a lobby that leans into carved wood and dirndl-print upholstery without tipping into kitsch. It's the most central base for exploring the Altstadt on foot.

Platzl Hotel München · +49 89 23 703 0 · platzl.de

Sunset Stroll to Marienplatz

Self-guided · free

Walk over for the Neues Rathaus's Gothic Revival facade lit up at dusk, then wander the pedestrian lanes toward the Frauenkirche's twin onion domes. The Glockenspiel figures perform daily at 11am and noon (plus 5pm March–October) — worth timing tomorrow's schedule around if you miss it tonight.

Dinner at Hofbräuhaus München

2–3 hours · mains from €14

The 1589 royal brewery-turned-beer-hall is touristy and loud in the best way — liter steins, an oompah band most evenings, and a menu of schweinshaxe and obatzda. Arrive by 6:30pm to get a table without a wait; communal benches mean you'll likely be sharing with strangers, which is half the fun.

Hofbräuhaus München · +49 89 290136-100 · hofbraeuhaus.de

Day 2 Royal Munich & the English Garden

A guided pass through the old town's history, then an afternoon in Europe's most surprising city park.

Old Town Walking Tour with Radius Tours

2 hours · €23 per adult

A guide walks the Frauenkirche, Marienplatz, Viktualienmarkt and the Hofbräuhaus quarter, threading in the 1972 Olympics, the Nazi era's uncomfortable footprint on the city, and why Munich still throws Oktoberfest. Tours meet near the Hauptbahnhof and run daily in English.

Radius Tours · +49 89 5434 8777 40 · radiustours.com

Munich Residenz & Treasury

1.5–2 hours · €10 adult

The Wittelsbachs' former palace unfolds through more than 130 rooms, including the gilded Antiquarium banquet hall and a Treasury stacked with crowns, reliquaries and an absurd amount of rock crystal. Add the Cuvilliés Theatre next door with a combined ticket if you have time.

English Garden & the Eisbach Surfers

2+ hours · free

Bigger than New York's Central Park, this 18th-century park is where Munich actually relaxes — sunbathers fill the meadows and a permanent standing wave on the Eisbach draws wetsuited surfers who never leave the same spot. End at the Chinesischer Turm beer garden for a stein under the pagoda.

Dinner at Chinesischer Turm Biergarten

Casual · mains from €12

One of Munich's oldest beer gardens, seating thousands under chestnut trees around a wooden pagoda built in 1789. Bring your own picnic to the self-service tables if you like — it's a Bavarian beer garden tradition — or order from the table-service section for hot food.

Day 3 The Fairy-Tale Castle: Neuschwanstein & Hohenschwangau

Trade the city for the Alpine foothills and the castle that inspired Disney's own.

Regional Train: Munich → Füssen

~2 hours · from €12.40 (Bayern-Ticket, per person)

Bayerische Regiobahn (BRB) runs direct regional trains from Munich Hbf to Füssen roughly every two hours; the Bayern-Ticket covers a full day of regional travel at a flat rate and is the cheapest way to do it. From Füssen station, a local bus or 10-minute taxi covers the last stretch to Hohenschwangau.

Neuschwanstein Castle Tour

35-min guided tour · €21 adult

King Ludwig II's unfinished fantasy castle is the reason half the world pictures Bavaria like this — turrets, a Singers' Hall modeled on Wagner sets, and views over the Alpsee that make the 30-minute uphill walk (or horse carriage) worth it. Tickets are timed-entry only and sell out days ahead in summer, so book online through the Hohenschwangau ticket center well in advance.

Hohenschwangau Ticket Center · hohenschwangau.de

Hohenschwangau Castle & Marienbrücke Viewpoint

1.5 hours · €21 adult (castle) / free (bridge)

Ludwig II's yellow childhood castle sits on the opposite hill and gets a fraction of Neuschwanstein's crowds despite being just as lavishly decorated inside. Afterward, walk 20 minutes up to the Marienbrücke footbridge for the postcard shot of Neuschwanstein against the Alps — it's free, though it closes in high wind.

Check-In: Villa Ludwig Suite Hotel

1 night · from €280/night

An adults-only boutique hotel a five-minute walk from the Hohenschwangau ticket center, with the castles visible from several of the suites. It's small and books out early for peak season, so reserve well ahead.

Villa Ludwig Suite Hotel · +49 8362 929920 · villa-ludwig.de

Day 4

Along the Romantic Road to Rothenburg

A cross-Bavaria train day tracing the Romantische Straße into the walled heart of Franconia.

Regional Train: Füssen → Rothenburg ob der Tauber

~3.5 hours, 2 changes · from €40 per person

There's no single direct train along the old Romantic Road, so the realistic route is regional trains via Augsburg and Steinach (bei Rothenburg), changing onto the branch line for the final 15-minute hop into Rothenburg. It's a slower day than driving it, but the window seat delivers hay meadows and onion-domed village churches without anyone having to watch the road.

Check-In: Hotel Eisenhower

Night Watchman's Tour

1 hour, evening · €9 adult

A costumed guide leads a lantern-lit walk through the old town recounting plagues, sieges and the Thirty Years' War legend of the Meistertrunk, in the cadence of an actual medieval night watchman doing his rounds. It runs nightly year-round in English and is one of the most consistently well-reviewed things to do in town.

Käthe Wohlfahrt Christmas Village

30–45 min · free to browse

An entire shop devoted to German Christmas ornaments and nutcrackers, open 365 days a year regardless of season — it's a Rothenburg institution in its own right, and the attached Christmas Museum (small admission fee) covers the history of the German Weihnachtsmarkt tradition if you want more than shopping.

Day 6 Transfer to Nuremberg & the Imperial Castle

Back on the rails to Franconia's biggest city, capped with a castle that's stood watch since the 1000s.

Regional Train: Rothenburg ob der Tauber → Nuremberg

~1.5–2 hours, 1 change · from €23 per person

Regional trains run from Rothenburg's branch-line station to Steinach (bei Rothenburg), where you change onto the main Würzburg–Nuremberg line; the whole hop takes under two hours door to door. Le Méridien sits directly across from Nuremberg's Hauptbahnhof, so the walk from the platform to check-in is under five minutes.

Check-In: Le Méridien Grand Hotel Nuremberg

1 night · from €170/night

A restored Art Nouveau grand hotel from 1896, right across from the Hauptbahnhof and a 10-minute walk from the Kaiserburg. The lobby's stained glass and original stucco are worth a look even if you're not staying.

Le Méridien Grand Hotel Nuremberg · +49 911 23220 · marriott.com

Kaiserburg — Nuremberg Imperial Castle

1–1.5 hours · €7 adult (Palas & Museum)

Holy Roman Emperors held court here for nearly 500 years; the Palas apartments, the Romanesque double chapel and the Deep Well (guided demonstration included) are the highlights, and the ramparts give the best rooftop view over Nuremberg's red-tiled Altstadt. Open daily 9am–6pm April–September, 10am–4pm the rest of the year.

kaiserburg-nuernberg.de

Dinner at Bratwurst Röslein

Casual · mains from €10

Self-described as the world's largest bratwurst restaurant, this Hauptmarkt institution has grilled Nuremberg's small, finger-length sausages over beechwood since the 15th century. Order the classic 'Drei im Weggla' — three bratwurst in a bread roll — or the full grill plate with sauerkraut.

Bratwurst Röslein · +49 911 214860 · bratwurst-roeslein.de

Day 7 Courtroom 600 & Departure

A sobering morning at the site of the Nuremberg Trials, then time to make your onward connection.

Memorium Nuremberg Trials (Courtroom 600)

1.5 hours · €7.50 adult

The actual courtroom where the International Military Tribunal tried the surviving Nazi leadership in 1945–46 is still a working courtroom today, open to visitors when not in session, alongside a museum on the trials and their legacy for international law. Book timed tickets online in advance and check the closing-times calendar first — the room shuts to visitors on days it's in active use.

museums.nuernberg.de

Free Time: Altstadt & Hauptmarkt

2+ hours · free

Spend the late morning browsing the Hauptmarkt's daily produce stalls, climbing to the Schöner Brunnen fountain's gilded spire for the good-luck ring turn, or ducking into St. Sebald and St. Lorenz, Nuremberg's twin Gothic churches that somehow survived — and were rebuilt from — WWII bombing raids.

Departure: Train to Munich or Frankfurt Airport

1–2 hours · from €30 per person

Nuremberg Hauptbahnhof has direct ICE service to both Munich Airport (about 2 hours) and Frankfurt Airport (about 2 hours), so onward flights connect easily from either. Build in at least a 3-hour buffer before an international departure — German rail runs reliably but not always exactly on schedule.