



Franconia for Variety

Culture, Nature, and Culinary Delights: The Vacation Destination Franconia

Many visitors consider the diverse landscapes of the vacation destination Franconia in the Bavarian North a “miniature version” of Germany. Each one of Franconia’s 16 vacation regions has its own, distinct charm. Enjoy Franconian cuisine, a great variety of beers, Franconian wine, go sight-seeing, visit museums, or dive into the diverse cultural life.

Franconia is home to 10 nature parks, covering more than half its territory. Mother Nature has blessed Franconia with a great variety of landscapes: the wide open spaces of the Rhön and their fascinating moors, the Fichtelgebirge Mountains with Franconia’s highest peaks, the caves and massive rock formations of the Franconian Switzerland, the gently rolling hills of the Hassberge Mountains, the Altmühl Valley and its juniper pastures, as well as the “Geo-Nature Park Bergstrasse-Odenwald,” where you can get a fascinating view into the history of the earth. Also unique is the remarkably high percentage of forested land in Franconia’s nature parks. These include the forest nature preserves of the Frankenhöhe, the Frankenwald that is dubbed the “Green Crown of Bavaria,” and the Spessart Forest. The latter is one of the largest, contiguous deciduous forests in Central Europe, thanks to its impressive stands of oak and beech. A great place to experience this green world close-up is at the Steigerwald Forest. The Tree Top Trail near Ebrach affords views across the crowns of the trees and offers exciting insights into the world of the forest ecosystem (www.frankentourismus.com/specials/hiking/).

The Franconian Lake Country, one of Franconia’s favorite vacation destinations, is a manmade paradise and 2020 marks the 50th anniversary of its creation. In 1970, the Bavarian State Parliament passed the bill authorizing the construction of dams and creation of reservoirs to improve water availability in the dry, north of Franconia. This massive undertaking created an entirely new vacation area that now encompasses 19 km² of water surfaces, delighting surfers, sailors, wakeboarders, and beachgoers alike. The lakes have become a part of the landscape of rolling hills and, today, it seems as if they have always been there. Easy accessibility is a big draw for the Altmühl, Brombach, Roth, Hahnenkamm, and Dennenloher Lakes. Visitors enjoy sandy beaches, grassy areas for sun tanning, and trails around the lakes for cyclists and walkers, as well as coffee shops and bars with great views of the water. Surfers enjoy easy water access at specially designed launch areas. Information on the creation of this Franconian lake paradise is available at the “Seenland Informationszentrum” inside the Mandlesmühle building near the town of Pleinfeld. The hiking trail “Der Seenländer” conveniently connects all the lakes (www.fraenkisches-seenland.de).

Franconia's variety is especially well on display in the cities of the vacation region. City highlights include Ansbach, Aschaffenburg, Bamberg, Bayreuth, Coburg, Dinkelsbühl, Eichstätt, Erlangen, Forchheim, Fürth, Kulmbach, and Nuremberg, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Schweinfurt, and Würzburg. The magnificent Würzburg Residenz Castle, the Bamberg Old Town, and the Margravian Opera House in Bayreuth all share a special honor: They are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Including the Germanic-Rhaetian Limes, the ancient Roman Empire's border wall, that is also located in Franconia, four out of eight Bavarian UNESCO World Heritage Sites are located in Franconia.

2020 is a big year for the Würzburg Residenz Castle: May 22, 2020 marks the 300-year anniversary of the laying of its foundation stone. The Würzburg Prince-Bishop Johann Philipp Franz von Schönborn envisioned a "castle above all castles" when he hired the then little known architect Balthasar Neumann and put him in charge of realizing his plans. Neumann hired the most influential, European artists, such as the "ornamental genius" Antonio Bossi and the fresco painter Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, to create the most spectacular regal residence of the 18th century. As one of the most significant structures of the European Baroque era, the Residenz was dedicated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1981 – a first in Bavaria at the time. The 300-year anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone will be celebrated by the castle administration during a special celebratory week (May 18 – 24, 2020). One planned event is a picnic concert in the royal garden. The highlight of the festivities will be high-caliber musical performances at the Residenz Night (www.schloesser.bayern.de, www.residenz-wuerzburg.de).

Another 2020 Würzburg anniversary is dedicated to the sciences. On November 8, 1895, or 125 years ago, Professor Dr. Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen discovered the x-rays at the Physikalisches Institut in Würzburg. The laboratory where the professor made this stunning discovery now houses an x-ray memorial. On display are Röntgen's personal belongings as well as original and replicated research instruments used during the time. The anniversary year events are designed to teach visitors how exciting experimental physics was in the late 19th century. The happenings kick off with an event featuring the renowned scientist Professor Dr. Harald Lesch on April 6, 2020. There is a Campus Festival on July 5, 2020 and a festival called "Highlights der Physik" from September 21 – 26, 2020. The town of Fürth also participates in the celebrations. Their Fraunhofer Institut X-Ray Development Center is on the cutting edge of taking Röntgen's discovery to the future. Events include an exhibit in the art gallery featuring photographs of the x-ray technology and guided tours with a specially constructed "Röntgenmobil" (www.wilhelmconradoentgen.de).



The motto in Bamberg is “1000 Years – 1000 Connections.” The St. Stephan’s Church, located in the old town and therefore part of the UNESCO World Heritage, is the cause of this anniversary celebration. St. Stephan is the oldest protestant church in Bamberg and also the only church North of the Alps that has been dedicated by the pope. The anniversary programming includes worship services, exhibits, lectures, theater performances, concerts, and festivals (www.1000Begegnungen.de).

Rothenburg ob der Tauber presents itself as a “Walkable Painting” through 2021, during its theme years “Picturesque – Rothenburg ob der Tauber as a Landscape Garden.” Numerous exhibits explore artists and architects of the English and German “Garden City Movement.” Around 1900, as part of the “Picturesque Moderne” movement, they were drawn to and inspired by the city. The wistful Rothenburg cityscape also invites regular visitors to explore their artistic leanings. There are painting classes at captivating sightseeing locations that are open to all. Other ways to explore the Picturesque charm of the city is by joining picnics, themed guided tours, or garden tours (www.rothenburg-tourismus.de).

The Museum Georg Schäfer in Schweinfurt invites visitors to experience great art and impressive, modern architecture. For 20 years now, the museum has housed a unique collection of German paintings and drawings, including the largest Spitzweg collection in the world. The museum collection includes works dating from 1760 to 1930 and includes creations by the artists Caspar David Friedrich and Max Liebermann that chronicle a time of artistic and social change. The museum celebrates its anniversary year with three special exhibits: Female, German painters of the Romantic period, idyllic paintings by the Dresden native Traugott Faber, and the work of Karl Hagemeister, the most significant representative of German Impressionism and pioneer of modern landscape painting (www.museumgeorgschaefer.de).

The Romantic Road connects fairy-tale landscapes and the cities of Würzburg and Füssen. Germany’s oldest and possibly most famous scenic drive celebrates its 70th anniversary in 2020. The route is an early product of the post-WWII economic miracle years. The rationale for the creation of this scenic drive was to promote a friendly and open-minded Germany. The concept was a success. The 460-km long Romantic Road from the Main River in Franconia to the Alps in the Bavarian South is a favorite drive, away from high-speed freeways. Visitors marvel at medieval towns, half-timbered houses, castles, fortresses, gently rolling hills, and vineyards. Starting in Würzburg, the course of the Romantic Road in Franconia includes the towns of Tauberbischofsheim, Bad Mergentheim, and Weikersheim. From there it is onward to Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Feuchtwangen, and Dinkelsbühl. Then the route leaves Franconia and enters Swabia, as it reaches its end point in Füssen via Augsburg. The Romantic Road can



be explored by car but, also highly recommended are rides on historical trains, trams and busses, as well as explorations of the equally named bicycle and hiking trail (www.romantischestrassen.de).

Any anniversary celebrations in Franconia also include opportunities to explore the region's culinary side. A glass of Franconian wine is the pinnacle of Franconian hospitality and the delicious marriage of nature's bounty and the winegrowers' passion give ample reasons for a road trip. The initiative "Franken – A Land of Wine and Beauty!" features a number of well selected services that are certified and vetted. Explore wine estates, restaurants, inns, wine taverns and wine bistros of the Franconian Wine Country. Or stay with a winegrower, explore wine hiking trails, indulge in Franconian delicacies, learn about distinctive wine architecture, spectacular sightseeing spots, and the "terroir f – the magical places of the Franconian wine" to round out your culinary exploration of the Franconian Wine Country (www.franken-weinland.de).

The same goes for the other, hugely successful initiative "Franken – Where Beer is at Home." It features interesting tips and pieces of information about Franconian beers and beer tours, beer festivals, and beer travel packages. The Franconian beer brewing heritage is unparalleled in this world: Franconia has the highest density of beer breweries and consequently varieties of beer anywhere, such as the smoked beer and the "Ungespundete," or "un-bunged" beer. There are many small, privately owned breweries and brew pubs that keep the Franconian beer brewing traditions alive. This includes historical beer cellars dug into cliff sides outside of towns. They are a distinctly Franconian version of a beer garden and a popular and enjoyable summer destination. Other great ways to get a taste of the Franconian beer brewing traditions include a visit to a beer museum, a beer hike, a beer brewing class, a guided beer tour, or participating in one of the many traditional beer festivals (www.franken-bierland.de). Friends of Franconian beers also have their own facebook page "Bierland Franken," where you can stay abreast of what is new. The page already has over 79,000 fans.

The brochure "Franken – A Land of Indulgence" takes you on a culinary discovery tour of the tangible indulgences available in Franconia. You can find this brochure, as well as the other FrankenTourismus brochures online as well. "Franken – A Land of Indulgence" introduces Franconia's culinary delicacies, such as brats, Nuremberg gingerbread or Aischgrund carp (www.frankentourismus.com/specials/culinary-delights).



The Franconian events calendar is full of culinary and wine-related cultural occasions. Plus there are traditional events, high-caliber concerts and Christmas Markets. Literary celebrations alternate with historical festivities, theater performances and festivals. For information, consult the events calendar of the webpage www.frankentourismus.com/specials/events that is also available for mobile devices. Browse through more than 2,500 events per year - the number increases all the time. Take advantage of the search functions and filter by location, area, time and date, or event category.

It takes only a quick glance to realize the people of Franconia like to celebrate. There are traditional beer fests and Kirchweih fairs, such as the Erlangen Bergkirchweih (May 28 – June 8, 2020), the 180th Annafest in Forchheim (July 24 – August 3, 2020), the Kulmbach Beer Week (July 25 – August 2, 2020), and the Michaelis Kirchweih in Fürth (October 3 – 14, 2020). Or how about the boundless atmosphere of a music performance, such as the Würzburg Mozartfest (May 29 – June 28, 2020), the International Pipe Organ Week in Nuremberg (June 26 – July 5, 2020), the Schönbusch Serenades in Aschaffenburg (May 21, June 20, and September 19, 2020), or the Music Fest Eichstätt (May 8 - 10, 2020).

Another staple of Franconia's culture is the event series "Music Magic Franken," that will be in its 25th season in 2020. To become certified as part of the "Music Magic Franken" event series, great musical acumen and a special ambiance are required. Included are everything from church concerts, to open air concerts at Franconia's fortresses, to swing festivals. You can find information on all "Music Magic Franken" events in 2020 in the brochure with the same name that is available free of charge at FrankenTourismus or online at www.frankentourismus.com.

For a trip back in time, visit a historical festival or reenactment, such as the Rococo Festival in Ansbach (July 3 – 7, 2020) or the "Kinderzeche" in Dinkelsbühl (July 17 – 26, 2020). Franconia also offers big sporting events. Take for example the German Tourenwagen-Masters race at the Norisring in Nuremberg in July or the German Archery Championships from March 13 – 15, 2020 in Hof. The legendary "DATEV Challenge Roth," an internationally renowned triathlon, takes place on July 5, 2020 and will also be the German Triathlon Championship race this year.

Franconia continues to be a top destination for active travelers, thanks to the many quality and premium hiking trails. Currently, there are 48 certified hiking routes in Franconia, which means there is a higher density of quality-certified hiking routes here than anywhere else in Germany. For an unforgettable hiking experience, consider the "Franken Trail – From the Rennsteig to the Swabian Alb" that was certified as early as



2004, or the “Franconian Mountain Trail.” The “Franken Trail – From the Rennsteig to the Swabian Alb” is 520 km long and crosses the hiking mecca Franconia from the Northeast to its southernmost tip. The “Franconian Mountain Trail,” on the other hand, travels 428 km across many of Franconia’s most imposing peaks. Thanks to their impressive hiking opportunities, the Frankenwald Forest and the “outlaw country” Spessart-Mainland are now certified as outstanding hiking regions as well (www.frankentourismus.com/specials/hiking).

Franconia is also a prime destination for bicycling aficionados. Take for example the “Lovely Tauber Valley – The Classic” bicycle route that takes the rider right into history on its 100 km long course between Rothenburg ob der Tauber and Wertheim am Main. The trail celebrates its 40-year anniversary in 2020. (www.liebliches-taubertal.de) A bit more challenging is the “Rhön Bicycle Trail.” You have to overcome 1500 m in elevation gain on its 182 km long route. Along the way, cyclists enjoy the amazing variety of landscapes of the Rhön area, everything from river valleys, forests, high plateaus and moors (www.rhoen.de).

The “MainRadweg,” on its 600 km long route, offers more variety than any other bike trail. This long-distance bicycle route follows the life-giving Main River through a number of vacation regions. It begins at the Main River’s two springs and travels to the confluence with the Rhine River. It crosses vacation regions with distinct characters, visits three UNESCO World Heritage Sites along the way, and there are opportunities for many culinary explorations. The “Regnitz Bicycle Trail” offers pure river valley delight. The route features a river and a canal route and connects the towns of Bamberg and Nuremberg. And just as impressive is the “Tauber Altmühl Bicycle Trail” that follows the river valleys of the Main, Tauber, Altmühl and Danube Rivers on its 350 km long course connecting Wertheim and Kelheim. City highlights along the way include Bad Mergentheim, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Gunzenhausen and Eichstätt (www.frankentourismus.com/specials/bicycling).

Cyclists in Franconia can get an extra boost from a large selection of e-bike offers. The vacation destination Franconia prides itself on offering great services along the way. The Romantic Franconia region, the Altmühl Valley Nature Park, and the Franconian Lake Country are recognized as electric bike friendly areas. Here you find an especially good network of battery charging and rental shops, e-bike repair and service facilities, as well as inns offering e-bike rentals to guests (www.stromtreter.de).

Motorcyclists also enjoy a visit to Franconia. Exciting tour routes with much variety that offer nature and city highlights, idyllic rest areas and motorcycle-friendly inns have given Franconia a reputation as a relaxed biker paradise. For a selection of tours



through the Franconian vacation regions as well as tours that include areas outside the area get the newly updated brochure just for motorcyclists available through FrankenTourismus. RV-ers also have a great time in Franconia. A separate FrankenTourismus brochure that is also available online features many options for a great driving and vacation experience in your motorhome.

Regardless of how you choose to explore Franconia, relaxing moments are part of the deal. After all, there are 19 hot springs and spas in the “Health Park Franken.” Thanks to innovative concepts and the generosity of Mother Nature – such as salt and radon – these facilities excel at promoting healing and wellness. Enjoy modern hot springs, amazing sauna-scapes, a variety of wellness programs and other surprises, such as the first healing water lake in Germany, or salt lakes with a salt concentration equal to the Dead Sea. Regenerate physically but also and especially spiritually. An insider tip is the Altmühl Hot Spring in Treuchtlingen that is newly reopened after expensive renovations (www.frankentourismus.com/specials/health-park).

For more information:

FrankenTourismus
Pretzfelder Strasse 15, 90425 Nürnberg
Telephone +49 911/941510, FAX +49 911/9415110
info@frankentourismus.de, www.frankentourismus.com

Media Services (photography, press releases, etc.):

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