

Nutcrackers and Notables

Treasures, Traditions and Christmas Markets from the Romaric Road to the Toy Town of Seiffen



Focus on the Christmas markets of central Germany and on the cultural treasures and rich history of the region. Spend a night in fairy-tale-like Rothenburg, visit Nuremberg, then four nights in Seiffen, a toy manufacturing town in the Ore Mountains where traditions have been unchanged for centuries and international tourism is barely known (yet).

Go on excursions to historic Prague for a day and to Renaissance Dresden, see Weimar and Erfurt, and sleep in the Monastery where Luther was living as an Augustinian Monk from 1505 to 1511. Also visit Wartburg Castle, where he translated the bible into German.

This tour includes visits to the famous Christmas Markets of Rothenburg, Nuremberg, Seiffen, Prague, Dresden, Weimar, Erfurt, and Frankfurt.

Map



Itinerary

Day 1 – DEPARTURE

Board your flight from home to Frankfurt.

This itinerary assumes this to be an overnight flight.

Air fare independently arranged.



Day 2 – WELCOME, ROTHENBURG

Arrival in Frankfurt. Your guide will pick you up at the Airport. Together with your other traveling companions and tour director you will drive south to Rothenburg ob der Tauber.

Check in your Hotel and meet your guide for a walking tour of Rothenburg.

Completely surrounded by its medieval ramparts with countless towers, Rothenburg is famous for its ancient houses, fountains, cobbled lanes, hidden corners and street signs. Also famous for the Meistertrunk, in which – according to legend – the burgomeister saved the town by emptying a 6-pint tankard in one single draught.



Enjoy the famous Christmas markets of Rothenburg on the Main square and in the little alleyways.

After a great welcome dinner go for a walk with the Rothenburg nightwatchman.

> *Your tour includes: Transfer from airport to hotel, dinner, tour, hotel in Rothenburg*

Day 3 – NUREMBERG

After breakfast we check out and go east to NUREMBERG (Nürnberg or Nuernberg in German, sometimes Nurnberg on the net), the former free Imperial City dominated by a large fortress, the Burg.

An orientation drive features the landmarks of the city and ends on the main square, the Hauptmarkt, where Germany's most famous Christmas Market takes place.

Take a tour of the NUREMBERG castle. Towering over the Altstadt (Old Town) north of the River Pegnitz, Nuremberg Castle was once the most important in Germany, as it was the seat of the Holy Roman Emperors who virtually ruled over Europe for hundreds of years from medieval times.



Visit the Romanesque chapel and the Imperial Apartments which contain a permanent exhibition on the Holy Roman Empire. Go up the Sinwell Tower (Sinwellturm), which has a viewing platform for fine city panoramas, and go with your tour guide to the deep well.



Christkindlesmarkt Nürnberg
by Roland Berger (Wikimedia Commons)

After that just walk downhill to Nuremberg's sprawling Christkindlesmarkt.

The oldest and most famous Christmas market in Germany (400 years) will delight you.

In the afternoon we leave for Seiffen, your home for the next four nights. An enjoyable dinner awaits you.

> *Buffet breakfast, door-to-door transportation, guided city tour, inside tour Nuremberg castle, dinner, hotel in Seiffen*

Day 4 – SEIFFEN

After Breakfast join your guide on a City tour of Seiffen.

Seiffen is located in the in the heart of the Ore Mountains (German: Erzgebirge), which are famous for many Christmas traditions.

Nutcrackers, "smoking men", Christmas pyramids (carousels with figures of the Christmas story or from mining) and Schwibbögen (wooden candle arches, displayed in windows, symbolizing the opening of a mine) are some of many Christmas goods.



Take a tour of the GLÄSSER company's workshops and see decorations still being made by hand today.

In the afternoon time for you own Christmas shopping.

In the Evening 3 course dinner in a typical restaurant.

> *Buffet breakfast, door-to-door transportation, tour Glässer Manufacture, dinner, hotel in Seiffen*

Day 5 – DRESDEN

We continue to DRESDEN, one of Germanys most beautiful cities and a jewel of history. Dresden today ranks as a world-class city of art and culture.

Set in a magnificent landscape in the Elbe valley it went through a blossoming of architectural and artistic brilliance that earned it the name "The Jewel Box". On our orientation tour we see the Royal Palace, Zwinger Palace, the Semper Opera House, Elbe castles, Villa Quarter, Hellerau garden city, award-winning modern buildings, and the "Blue Wonder" bridge east of the city centre. Inside visit at FRAUENKIRCHE (The Church of Our Lady), one of Germany's most amazing post-WW2 reconstructions.

It seems as though Augustus the Strong and his successors were not prepared to wait for nature to finish the job; with their skill, artistry and determination, they filled the Grüne Gewölbe (Green Vault) and Türkische Cammer (Turkish Chamber) with treasures from all over the world, collected paintings and porcelain, and were patrons of the great composers. Inside visit at the GREEN VAULT.

In the late afternoon there's time to visit the Striezelmarkt, one of the oldest Christmas Markets in Germany. Later enjoy a dinner overlooking the Elbe.

For overnight we return to your hotel in Seiffen.

> Buffet breakfast, door-to-door transportation, Dresden tour, entrance fees, dinner, hotel in Seiffen



Day 6 – PRAGUE

Today we go east across the border to PRAGUE, where you will have plenty of time to explore one of the largest castles in the world, Hradcany or Prague Castle.

There was already a castle in the 9th century. It was rebuilt in the 14th century in gothic style under Charles IV, and given its final style under Empress Maria Theresa. Today it is the historical and political centre of both city and state.



Then join your guide on a walking city tour of Prague, the immortal capital of the Czech Republic, also called the Golden City or the Mother of Cities. See the Jewish Prague, Old Town Square, and the Astronomical Clock and after free time for early dinner we return to Seiffen.

> Buffet breakfast, door-to-door transportation, entrance fee Prague Castle, local guide, hotel in Seiffen

Day 7 – WEIMAR and ERFURT



After breakfast and check out we continue to WEIMAR—famous for three items on the World Heritage List: Classical Weimar, the State Bauhaus, and Goethe's handwritten manuscripts in the *Memory of the World*.

"Here, you feel as grand and free as the wondrous nature before your eyes." Goethe's words still ring true today, and are a perfect description of what awaits visitors in and around Weimar.



The National Goethe Museum is the most important monument to the classical period. But the town has plenty more museums to visit – more than 40, in fact! They include the Bauhaus Museum, the Museum of Prehistory and Early History, and even the German Bee Museum!

Go for stroll with a local guide and spend time on Weimar's Christmas Market.

From here a short ride to ERFURT, the Capital of Thuringia. Check into your monastery room, the very same monastery where Luther was staying in Erfurt. Join your guide for an orientation walk before dinner.

> *Buffet breakfast, door-to-door transportation, tour in Weimar, dinner, Augustiner Monastery in Erfurt*

Day 8 – ERFURT and WARTBURG CASTLE

Before leaving Erfurt take a tour with the historic tramway. See the most important sights from the city's recent and more distant past. The beautifully preserved Jugendstil (Art Nouveau) areas of the city are especially well worth seeing. A short stroll through the historical old quarter as far as the Merchants' Bridge.

Then a beautiful drive this morning to the WARTBURG CASTLE overlooking Eisenach in the Thuringia Forest, constructed between 1155 and 1180.



It is one of the best preserved secular buildings of the late Romanesque period north of the Alps, and it is surely one of the most beautiful.

It was here that Luther translated the Bible. Goethe praised the beautiful natural surroundings of the Wartburg, and Ludwig II King of Bavaria used it as a model for Neuschwanstein. Enjoy your guided to of this wonderful castle!

Return to Frankfurt and take a look at the Christmas Market just before returning to your hotel for a great farewell dinner.

> *Buffet breakfast, door-to-door transportation, Wartburg tour, historic Tram, dinner, overnight in Frankfurt*

Day 9 – HOME FROM FRANKFURT

Time to say "Auf wiedersehen". One final breakfast and then a complimentary transfer to the Frankfurt Airport for your return flight home. Return flights may leave anytime today.

> *Buffet breakfast, transfer to Airport*



Cost and Date Information

- Tour includes:
- all features as per itinerary, departure guaranteed,
 - 7 breakfast buffets,
 - 6 three-course dinners, each including one drink and coffee or tea,
 - accommodation for 7 nights – in Rothenburg, Seiffen (4 nights), Erfurt, and Frankfurt
 - door-to-door transportation (bus, boat, horse, etc.),
 - reservation fees, entrance fees, and local guide fees, and
 - the services of the Tour Director and Driver throughout the tour.

All castle visits include inside tours with experienced guides and plenty of time on your own.

Featured Christmas markets are in Rothenburg, Nuremberg, Seiffen, Prague, Dresden, Weimar, Erfurt, and Frankfurt.

There are no hidden extras. Maximum group size is 30 persons.

This tour is offered on the following basis:

Tour prices are for the **land segment** only. Air fare is not included.

Prices are per person, in U.S. dollars, based on double occupancy.


Guaranteed Departure: The Christmas Markets Tour is guaranteed to operate as scheduled and will not be cancelled due to a low level of participation.

A deposit of US \$ 300 per person is required to secure a reservation.

Personal expenses, lunches and gratuities for the driver and local guides are not included.

Nutcrackers and Notables Tour – 2019

Your international flight leaves ...	Double Occupancy	Single Occupancy	Triple Occupancy	Child 8 - 16 with 2 Adults
December 6, 2019	US \$ 2,629	2,879	2,479	1,840



This is one of our Christmas tours. We also offer a Bavarian Christmas Markets tour and Christmas versions of our Black Forest, Alsace and Switzerland tour and our private Berlin and the East of Germany tour.

Full details of these tours and printable itineraries are provided on our website.

Private Tour Option

Do our dates not work for you? We can arrange the tour for you or your party as a private tour. Same itinerary as above in a private limousine or van, with bilingual, professional private guide / chauffeur. Prices per individual are the same as for the regular group tour, plus a US \$ 200 per day private tour premium for the group. Please contact us directly to confirm availability.

Detailed **Reservation Request** instructions are provided on the [Reservations - Multi-Day](#) page of www.europeancastlestours.com .

Final payment is due 45 days before departure.

Five weeks before departure you will receive a detailed information package with lots of travel tips and information about places we will visit.

Participation in Astrid Baur Travel tours is conditional on acceptance of the Astrid Baur Travel **Terms and Conditions** posted on the Reservations page of www.europeancastlestours.com .

Cancellation Policy

If notice of cancellation is received more than 45 days prior to tour start, the deposit will be retained.

Otherwise:	31 to 45 days prior to tour start:	20 % of total price
	15 to 30 days prior to tour start:	35 % of total price
	8 to 14 days prior to tour start:	50 % of total price
	1 to 7 days prior to tour start:	75 % of total price
	Departure day and later:	100 % of total price

The deposit will be applied against any cancellation charge.

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