

A GERMAN HOLIDAY



Even as the skies are opening up here, it's nice and sunny out there in Germany these days. Kishore Rathod takes you on a guided tour to Stuttgart and nearby regions

Beautiful, amazing, awesome, stunning, fantastic - you can run out of adjectives within minutes of landing in Germany, and after that it's an unending journey of exciting experiences wherever you go in Deutschland - especially the picture-perfect region of Baden-Wuerttemberg in South-West Germany, that share's borders with Switzerland, France and Austria. And what better place to start this voyage than Stuttgart, the charming and vibrant capital of the region!

Magnificent panoramas, sprawling gardens, bustling town squares, majestic palaces and an interesting amalgamation of architectural wonders, Stuttgart is symbolic of a great European city - with all the old world charm, and the buzz of a modern metropolis. The friendly demeanor of the cheerful locals, the cultural and culinary diversity, and above all, the effortless transportation system make Stuttgart a perfect holiday destination.

Even as we are all set to negotiate the monsoon here, it's sunny summer season in Stuttgart, with day-time temperatures hovering around the 20-degree mark - it's like the AC is on throughout the day! The lovely weather will continue till September - just perfect for the long walks that you will need to take to discover this superb city.

Stuttgart is a city of museums, a magnet for art-lovers. From the outstanding collection at the Stuttgart State Gallery to the glass-cube Museum of Art that hovers above the Konigsstrasse like a light sculpture; from the Wurttemberg State Museum in the Old Paalce to the House of History that documents the region's history

HISTORY OF AUTOMOBILES



Even as Stuttgart - the birthplace of Mercedes and Porsche - gears up to celebrate 125 years of its automotive history next year, the spectacular Mercedes-Benz and Porsche Museums are already a must-see for every visitor to the city. The Porsche Museum, located in the Zuffenhausen suburb has 80 Porsche beauties on display - from the road vehicles to the racing models of the Le Mans series - right from the Cayennes and Caymans to the latest Panamera. Meanwhile, the Mercedes-Benz Museum documents automotive history on nine different levels. The first Mercedes, every model manufactured over the years, the Merces of famous people, an entire section showcasing the racing cars and even a simulator for the ultimate cockpit experience - the Mercedes Benz Museum is a dream-come-true for any automobile enthusiast.

...AND A PIG MUSEUM TOO!



There are museums and there are museums, and then there is a Pig Museum. Yes, an entire museum dedicated to swines - with more than 40,000 exhibits from across the planet representing pigs in every shape, size and well, emotion. Located on the outskirts of Stuttgart, the Schweine Museum is spread across 28 thematic rooms, and is all about the history and stories of pigs. From the presence of pigs in arts and culture to their zoological evolution, from the mythical tales surrounding pigs across the world to their emergence as popular icons through the ages - and of course, how the humble pig ends up on the plate in different avatars - it's pigs all the way. Lucky pigs, cuddly pigs, laughing pigs, sad pigs, fat pigs, lean pigs, scary pigs - they are all there. There's even a section showcasing naughty pigs, who are up to naughty acts. Truly a place you must visit for an educational experience, if not for sheer novelty.

And of course, where there are pigs, there must be food. The Museum has a restaurant and a Biergarten on the ground floor.

over the past 200 years, these landmarks give fascinating insights into the life and times of the stately city. Not to mention the rich tradition of ballets, operas and cabarets for a lively evening out.

And for those who love the outdoors, there's the Wilhelm park - Europe's largest zoological and botanical garden that houses over 6000 plants and 8000 animals,

including polar bears and penguins. The best part is the cost-effectiveness of the holiday. You get a good hotel room for 100 Euros (that's less than Rs 6,000) and a great meal for two, with a glass of wine thrown in, for just 50 Euros. Check out mo.hotel, the chic, contemporary and classy hotel in Vaihingen area of Stuttgart - even one week flies in Stuttgart region.

Vineyards and Wine Museums

Even as your Deutsche Bahn express train rolls in and out of Stuttgart, you can see the rolling vineyards on the hills surrounding the city. One of the finest views of Stuttgart's vineyards and the idyllic Neckar valley is from the historic Wurttemberg hill. At its foot is the Ulhbach village, that's the centre of the wine-growers' co-operative and also houses a wine museum, that traces the area's wine growing culture over the years. You are welcome to a session of wine-tasting, before you pick Ulhbach's exquisite dry white wine for taking back home.



Wine-enthusiasts can also visit Metzingen, the historic wine-growing area, just an hour away. Besides a wine museum, the Metzingen co-operative also has a retail outlet and a string of cosy taverns - the perfect venue for a romantic evening-out.

Shop till you drop



Talking about Metzingen, it once happened to be the place where tailor Hugo Boss started a modest outlet for factory workers. Today, it has transformed into Outlet City, with breathtaking flagship stores of some of the biggest labels and brands offering at least 30 per cent discount on their wares. Not for nothing people from across Germany - and neighbouring countries - drive down to Metzingen for shopping.

Back in Stuttgart, there are dozens of deals right on the streets and in the quaint outlets along them. From high street shopping at King's Street to value buys at the weekly farm fairs, to the amazing array of goods at the historic Market Hall complex - there's a lot to choose from.

And for the ultimate in luxury shopping, there's the Breuninger mall in the heart of the city. Spread across 35,000 square metres, the outlet is home to every conceivable luxury brand. They say if you can't find it here, you won't find it anywhere.

Baden Baden - Feels like heaven

If an entire city is aspiring for World Heritage Site status, it must be something. And it is - paradise for a perfect holiday. From lush green countryside and miles of gardens to shaded boulevards and cobbled pathways, Baden-Baden is beautiful personified.



Keeping with its tradition of playing hosts to royalty since Roman times, the city's classy hotels like Steigenberger Europäischer and Brenner's Park Hotel & Spa are playgrounds for indulging in the lap of luxury. The city's four major attractions - mineral water springs, the casino, the horse race and the festival theatre - make it the favourite retreat of millions every year. While an evening at the Casino Baden Baden is a formal coat-and-tie affair, an afternoon at the health spas with spring water baths is an experience by itself. The Caracalla Spa offers wellness and relaxation on a heavenly scale. Relax between the marble columns and immerse yourself in tempting turquoise blue pools, where natural springs rise from depths of around 6,500 feet and provide an unforgettable bathing experience in this sprawling glass dome. A romantic hot and cold rock grotto, bubbling whirlpools, waterfalls, counter-current pools, massaging water jets and sauna rooms with varying temperatures - they all add up to give you that floating feeling.

Exciting times at Europa Park

From 0 to 100 is just 2.5 seconds, and this is just the beginning of the absolutely exciting roller-coaster ride that Blue Fire is. Welcome to Europa Park, Germany's biggest theme park that has received over 82 million visitors till date, and continues to a favourite destination for families.



Spread over an area of 85 hectares, with more than 100 attractions and international shows as well as 13 themed areas that represent European countries in good detail, right down to the architecture, vegetation and the food specialities of each country (your only chance to see Russia in Germany)! The 4-D movie at the special theatre in Europa Park is an experience by itself, as are the various rides and games that promise to keep the family busy for days together. Not for nothing, 80 percent of the folks are repeat visitors.

And to keep you rested, and energized for more, the park even has four hotels - two designed along Spanish theme and one each in Portuguese and Roman style.

Black Forest & Cuckoo Clocks



Take the train to Titisee, drive down to the lake and you are transported into a whole new world. The placid lake at the foothills of the Black Forest mountains is the source of the Danube river, which goes on for 2,850 kms through ten countries, before it meets the Black Sea.

Stay at the Alemannenhof, the timber-built hotel that's perched right on the lakefront for the best views of the fairy-tale setting. Soak in the peace and tranquility from the balcony of your hotel, go for a ride on the battery-operated boats (no petrol boats allowed to preserve the lake waters) or shop for an authentic cuckoo-clock at the store owned by the Drubba family. The cuckoo-clock was invented by these folks from Black Forest, and still continues to be a fiercely guarded tradition among the handful of local manufacturers. And yes, only the one made with the wood from the Black Forest qualifies to be called a Cuckoo Clock, officially!

Kings & Castles

The Swabian Alps in South Germany are home to scores of impressive castles and fortresses, each of which has a historic significance in terms of its contribution to the region.

One popular castle among them is the Hohenzollern Castle, the ancestral seat of the Prussian Kings and German Emperors, as well as the Swabian branch of the Princes of Hohenzollern. Ranked among Europe's most famous castles, the stunning panorama of the picturesque landscape has already been admired by Emperor William II, who visited the castle several times and is said to have uttered "the view from up here is truly worth a voyage". Now, you can take that voyage too!



PICS: KISHORE RATHOD

Monsoon's here, protect your skin

Dermatologists advise against using make-up during the rainy season

Vrushali Chitre

Everybody looks forward to monsoon after bearing the scorching summer heat. For children, this is especially the time to get drenched in the first downpour and experience the coolness of monsoon but beware, rains can cause a number of skin and hair problems. Here are some ways you can diminish the harmful impact of rains on your skin and hair: Take few precautions and enjoy monsoon happily.

Beauty always grows with a healthy skin. Different seasons affect your skin in various ways. For now, pre-monsoon showers have brought a welcome respite from summer heat but they also pose a lot of challenges to healthy skin. The heat-induced rashes of summer give way to the humidity-induced problems of the rainy season. If you are health-conscious and take a few simple precautions, you can save yourself a lot of misery over bad skin.

The biggest skin complaint during the monsoon is fungal infections as fungus thrives in humidity. Wet skin folds rubbing against each other get macerated easily, providing easy entry to fungi and yeast. As a result, one may develop itchy, circular, reddish, flaking patches on the body, especially in skin folds at the groin and underarms. One may develop Turrigomits, a kind of rash. Fungal infections can also affect your feet, especially if you wear closed shoes all day.

To avoid this, experts advise washing your feet immediately after entering home. Dry your feet and apply powder, preferably an anti-fungal powder. This powder should be kept handy. Staying dry is, however, the best way to avoid this type of allergy. If you can, carry a set of dry clothes and footwear to the office and change immediately if you get drenched on your way. City-based dermatologist Jaishree Sharad, said, "One can keep Clotrimazole, an anti-fungal medication for treatment of fungal infections. Tinea versicolor is another fungal infection in which a person stinks if he stays with wet clothes on for long hours."

Scabies is another common infection that preys on both children and adults during the monsoon. It is caused by a mite infestation. Experts say if your child complains about a body itch that intensifies at night and you see few red bumps or a rash on his hands, wrists, underarms, abdomen, groin and buttocks, then rush to the dermatologist. This condition is high-

ly contagious and invariably spreads to the family, if not treated properly.

Children often look forward to rains, as they can play in water with friends. After play, taking bath with warm water is advisable. Wet hair can lead to lice and dandruff too. For this, one should cover one's hair with a proper cap or a raincoat with a cap. Also one should wash hair regularly to avoid such problems.

Vashi-based beautician Kamayani Rai said, "During monsoon, there is a



lot of moisture in the air because of which hair gets pumped up and frizzy. To keep them in good shape and manageable, you need to condition them more often and use leave-on products. I also advise cleansing and toning of the face to keep your face glowing and healthy. One should use oil-free moisturiser during monsoon."

Dr Jaishree also advised, "Do not get deceived by the clouds as the sun can wreak havoc even in between the rains. One should use sunscreen even on cloudy days to prevent allergies caused by ultraviolet rays."

Makeup is best avoided during these wet days. One should avoid using foundation. If it is not avoidable, make sure it is water proof. Otherwise, use a talcum powder. Liquid eye liners and mascaras should be avoided as they may smudge if you get wet and enter your eyes. Instead use a pencil liner or waterproof mascara. One should also avoid manicure and pedicure that involves pushing cuticles inside as they are an easy access to bacteria during monsoons, advised a beauty expert from Nerul.

Here's the recipe for the perfect fresh fruit cake!

Amrita Agarwal (41), a resident of Seawoods is a homeopath by profession but a homemaker by choice. Mother of two smart girls Tanya and Ananya, she spends most of her time looking after them and attending to their studies. Another passion she pursues diligently is baking cakes, recipes of most of which she learnt from her mother-in-law. "I used to bake cakes for my daughters and friends and all of them would appreciate it. Slowly my friends started giving me orders and this kept me busy. I now have my hands full. My daughters too help me as they thoroughly enjoy the experience of baking," she said. Amrita even attended classes to learn new techniques of baking. Her husband Manoj heads the Inorbit Malls and has a hectic schedule. Keeping pace with husband and kids is what keeps Amrita busy. Today, she shares two of her favourite recipes with the readers of DNA Navi Mumbai.



ly in two equal halves. Soak both the halves in sugar solution. Whip up the cream till light and fluffy. Apply the cream on one half of the cake.

On this half, scatter the chopped pineapple pieces. Place the second half of the cake on the top of the first half. Cover the whole cake with whipped fresh cream smoothening all the surfaces. Decorate the top of the cake with fresh fruits as per your choice. Use fruits that don't turn black on cutting.

Pineapple and Onion Salad

Ingredients:
1 pineapple cut in to big pieces
3 medium-sized onions sliced into big pieces, Salt, pepper and chilli flakes to taste, 2 tsp sugar
Method:
Heat two spoonfuls of oil in a pan and sauté the onions till transparent. Add the chopped pineapples. Add sugar, salt, pepper and the chilli flakes. Serve hot.

Fresh Fruit Cake

Ingredients:
Sponge cake 1 kg
Fresh cream 200 grams
Chopped tinned pineapple
Fresh fruits of your choice
Method:
Slice the sponge cake horizontal-