

Bavarian Castles Tour + Passion Play



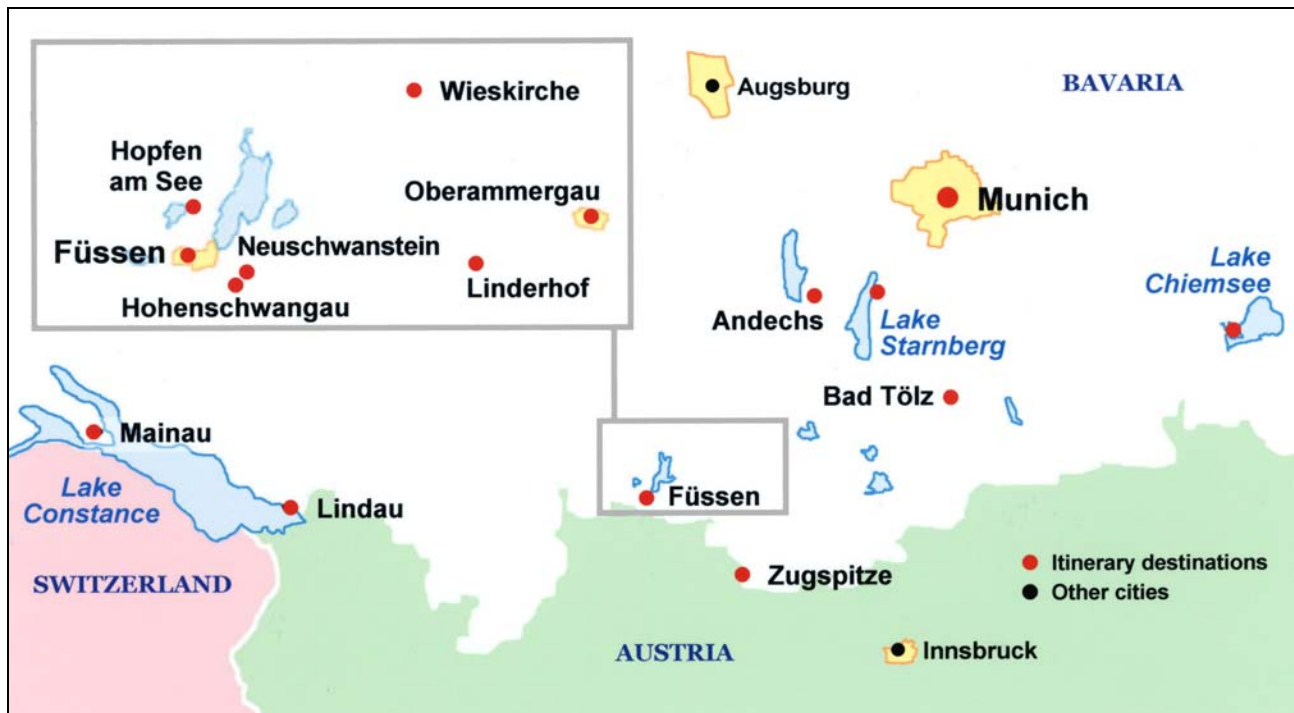
King Ludwig II's Castles, the Bavarian Lakes,
and the Oberammergau Passion Play

Discover the wonderful castles of King Ludwig II and the beauty of Bavaria's lakes and countryside and enjoy the famous Oberammergau Passion Play, 2010 edition.

Tour inside the castles with local guides and take time to explore on your own.

Alternate the visits to castles with other excursions, including a trip to the top of Mount Zugspitze, the floral grandeur of Mainau, the Nymphenburg Palace in Munich, the Church in the Meadow, and the picturesque towns and villages of the region.

Map



Itinerary - 2010 Tours

Day 1 - Friday

Board your flight from your home destination to Munich, Germany.

This itinerary assumes this to be an overnight flight.

Air fare independently arranged.



Day 2 - Saturday - WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOME AT HOPFEN AM SEE

Arrival Munich, Germany.

Your flight should arrive at the Munich Airport by 11:15 a.m. at the latest for the complimentary transfer at noon.

When the group is complete we head south to HOPFEN AM SEE, on the lake near Fuessen, within hiking distance of Neuschwanstein in the beautiful Bavarian Alps. You are staying in a typical local "landhaus", where you are a friend, not a tourist. Your rooms are very gemuetlich, decorated in Bavarian country style, all with cable TV, telephone, refrigerator, extra sitting area, balcony, and a great mountain view.



Upon arrival, your room will be ready for you; you may call home at our expense to tell the ones at home you arrived well and give them your personal telephone number for your entire stay.

The afternoon is at leisure. You may suffer from jet-lag and want to take a nap. Or you may want to go for a walk on the lake, go swimming, hike up to Hopfen's old castle ruin, or – if you are restless – take the bus to Füssen (2 miles) to go shopping or see the Castle of Fuessen.

At 6 p.m. we meet for a glass of Champagne in the garden before going to dinner in a restaurant on the Lake Promenade.

> *Your tour includes: Transfer from airport to hotel, three-course welcome dinner with menu choices, one beverage, and coffee or tea after, overnight at Landhaus Koessel in Hopfen am See*



Day 3 - Sunday - NEUSCHWANSTEIN, HOHENSCHWANGAU

It takes less than 10 minutes to get to THE CASTLES.

First we go up to Marienbrücke (Mary's Bridge), sitting high above the Poellat Gorge, where you can take the best pictures of Neuschwanstein. (If Mary's Bridge is closed because of ice or snow on the path, you will be taken to another lookout where you can take wonderful pictures of Neuschwanstein.)

Afterwards we walk down for our inside tour of NEUSCHWANSTEIN – Germany's most famous castle – with a castle guide.

Please wear your tested and proven walking shoes. Although we take transportation up to the site, there still is some steep walking required.

Day 3 - Sunday, continued

Back down in the village of Hohenschwangau, you have time to have a bite to eat, and to go for a stroll on Lake Alpsee, one of the most beautiful Lakes in the region, where young Ludwig learned to swim.



In the afternoon we visit HOHENSCHWANGAU, the castle built by his father Maximilian, where Germany's fairy tale king spent much of his childhood, and where he dreamed about his future castles. Much smaller and often overlooked by tourists on a tight schedule, but equally important, because without this one, Neuschwanstein would not exist. Local guides in both castles.

Tonight we are having dinner in the area that Ludwig II had chosen for next project, Castle Falkenstein. He died before launching this project, so we have to use our imagination. However, an old castle ruin is still there, which you can see from a distance.

> Buffet breakfast, door-to-door transportation, entrances and guided tours of Neuschwanstein and Hohenschwangau, horse carriage, three-course dinner, Landhaus Koessel

Day 4 - Monday - ZUGSPITZE, LINDERHOF, OBERAMMERGAU

Today we have another highlight coming up: THE ZUGSPITZE, at 10,000 feet Germany's highest mountain. The best way to get there is a beautiful drive through the Tyrol in Austria.

Once we get to Garmisch we take a cable car up to the summit of Zugspitze, where we have the most stunning views of the Alps. On a clear day we can see as far as Italy and Switzerland. We can cross the border by foot between Austria and Germany at the summit (no passport required). Even with clouds around us, be prepared for breathtaking scenery.

Remember to pack a warm sweater, because year-round there can be snow at the top.



We take a quick orientation drive through Garmisch before continuing to LINDERHOF, Ludwig's beautiful hiding castle deep in the forest. Ludwig spent more at Linderhof than in his other castles, and it served as a background for the romantic fancies of the young king.

Day 4 - Monday, continued

You have time for lunch on the grounds before we visit the Castle from the inside with a local guide. Afterwards we take a look into the Grotto and the Kiosk. Time to explore the beautiful gardens on your own.

We return home via the pretty village of OBERAMMERGAU, famous all over the world for the Oberammergau Passion Play which you will attend on Saturday. Today's visit is to the town of Oberammergau itself, known as the home of a long tradition of woodcarving. The streets of the town are home to dozens of woodcarver shops. Oberammergau is also famous for the "Lüftmalerei", or frescoes, of traditional Bavarian themes, fairy tales, or religious scenes that are found on many homes and buildings. The town's year-round Christmas shops are favourite destinations for many visitors.



Medieval Dinner in Füssen tonight.

> Buffet breakfast, door-to-door transportation, Zugspitze cable car, guided tour of Linderhof, three-course dinner, Landhaus Koessel

Day 5 - Tuesday - HERRENCHIEMSEE, BAD TOELZ

Today we focus on Ludwig's largest castle, HERRENCHIEMSEE, on an island in Lake Chiemsee. Ludwig built this castle after a visit to Versailles, but only ever stayed in it for one week.

To get to the island we take a boat and then we take a horse carriage to the Palace. Inside visit with Castle Guide. Time for lunch on the island.

On the way back we stop for postcards and a cup of coffee in the most pretty town of BAD TOELZ.

At 7:00 pm we join the locals for great atmosphere and great food at a local brewery.

> Buffet breakfast, door-to-door transportation, boat and carriage rides, Herrenchiemsee tour, dinner, Landhaus Koessel



Day 6 - Wednesday - MUNICH, NYMPHENBURG

We go to MUNICH and first visit NYMPHENBURG PALACE, the Summer Residence of the Wittelsbacher Family, the place where Ludwig II was born, and the Marstallmuseum, containing many of Ludwig's elaborate carriages.

Our Orientation Tour of Germany's secret capital features the Olympic Stadium, Olympic Tower, Leopoldstrasse, Schwabing, Ludwigstrasse, Odeonsplatz, Koenigsplatz, Karlsplatz, and ends by the Residenz and the Opera, where we get off and continue the last few meters on foot to Marienplatz, the very heart of Munich, known for the Glockenspiel carillon in the Town Hall.



You have plenty of time on your own for shopping, more sightseeing (BMW Museum, German Museum, Pinakothek ... the options list is endless) or enjoying the city in one of the many beer gardens.

Why not have a beer at the famous Hofbraeuhaus tonight, Munich's most famous beer hall, or have a traditional Bavarian dinner in one Munich's fine restaurants.

Dinner is on your own tonight. Astrid will be helpful with suggestions or reservations.

> *Buffet breakfast, door-to-door transportation, Munich orientation tour, entrance to Nymphenburg Palace, Landhaus Koessel*

Day 7 - Thursday - WIESKIRCHE, LAKE STARNBERG, ANDECHS

We take the Romantic Road today to visit the Masterpiece of Bavarian Rococo, the WIESKIRCHE, or Church in the Meadow, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

We continue to LAKE STARNBERG and at Berg see the Votivchapel and the cross in the lake where Ludwig died. Then on to ritzy Starnberg with time for lunch and a stroll on the lake.



Day 7 - Thursday, continued

Afterwards a short drive to ANDECHS, a famous Benedictine monastery on the Holy Mountain. The monks are also well known for making their own beer, which we have time to enjoy in one of the many beer gardens.

Dinner at the Landhaus tonight.

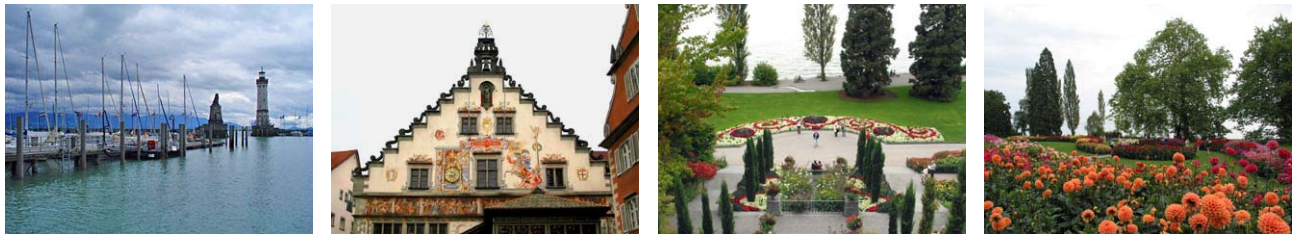
> *Buffet breakfast, door-to-door transportation, three-course dinner with menu choices, one beverage, and coffee or tea after, Landhaus Koessel*

Day 8 - Friday - LAKE CONSTANCE, LINDAU, MAINAU

Our last traveling day takes us to LAKE CONSTANCE, or Bodensee, its German name. It is the biggest lake of the northern alpine region and is surrounded by Germany in the north, Switzerland in the south and Austria on the western shore.

We first visit LINDAU, the only Bavarian City on the Lake; the rest is part of Baden Wuertemberg, the second southern state, or Bundesland.

Lindau in the Lake is a very charming town with old fortifications, a picturesque harbor, the Old Lighthouse, narrow lanes, romantic courtyards and many fountains and hidden corners.



After early lunch we continue to visit the Island of MAINAU, a paradise for plant enthusiasts because even tropical flowers grow in the mild climate. The palace and the charming baroque church contribute to the magic of the island.

At 7:30 p.m. we leave for a fantastic farewell dinner in a typical Mountain Inn.

> *Buffet breakfast, door-to-door transportation, ferry to Mainau, entrance to Mainau, three-course dinner, Landhaus Koessel*

Day 9 - Saturday - OBERAMMERGAU PASSION PLAY

After a leisurely breakfast this morning enjoy a guided walk through FUESSEN, an old Roman Town on the Lech River. Walk its narrow streets and lanes and enjoy the details your local guide provides.

After free time for lunch we drive to Oberammergau for another highlight of your tour: The Oberammergau Passion Play, 2010 Edition.

Day 9 - Saturday, continued

The Oberammergau Passion Play was first performed in 1634 to honour the village's vow that it would perform a passion play depicting the life and death of Jesus every ten years if it were spared the effects of the bubonic plague then sweeping the region. Oberammergau was spared the worst effects of the plague and has continued to honour its commitment throughout the centuries.



In the year 2000 Oberammergau presented its Passion Play for the 40th time.

The play is now performed repeatedly over the course of five months during the last year of each decade, and involves over 2,000 performers, musicians, and stage technicians, all residents of Oberammergau. The Passion Play Theatre, with renovations completed in 1999, now accommodates an audience of 4,720 in covered seats.



The first part of the performance runs from 2:30 to 5:00 p.m., the second from 8:00 to 10:30 p.m.

Your ticket category is "1" or "1a".

During the break enjoy a nice dinner in town. We return to the Landhaus for overnight.

> *Buffet breakfast, door-to-door transportation, guided tour of Fuessen, Category 1 ticket to Oberammergau Passion Play, three course dinner with choice, Landhaus Koessel*

Day 10 - Sunday - Transfer to Airport

Time to say "Auf Wiedersehen".

Transfer to Munich Airport for your homebound flight which arrives the same day.

Your flight should not leave Munich before 10:30 a.m.

> *Buffet breakfast, transfer to airport*



Cost and Date Information

The 2010 tours have been completed.

Other tours are available. Please see www.europeancastlestours.com .

Contact Information

Would you like to talk to passengers from previous tours? Let me know.

I will be pleased to answer questions you may have, and very pleased to take your reservation.

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