



News from Germany

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German Spas

Spas have been a part of German culture and history since the time of the Romans in the early part of the Middle Ages. There are over 350 spa towns in Germany that range from ancient to contemporary including mud, mineral and Kneipp spas as well as climatic health and seaside resorts. What may be different is that Germans consider spas a normal part of life, a very typical vacation where one simply relaxes in a beautiful setting. And, Germans also go to spas regularly for medical treatments. Fortunately for Germany, as it is home to so many beautiful spas, 33% of leisure travelers say access to a spa is a primary consideration in making travel plans, according to about.com's Anitra Brown.

The state of Baden-Württemberg is situated in southwest Germany bordered by France and Switzerland. A plethora of world class spas and the famed Black Forest make Baden-Wuerttemberg one of the most popular tourist destinations in Germany. Stuttgart is the capital of Baden-Wuerttemberg and is surrounded by terraced vineyards, beautiful castles, and is home to

"Easter and Spas in Baden-Württemberg Reign Supreme"

Table of Contents

- [World Cup Tickets](#)
- [German Easter Markets](#)
- [World Cup in Cologne](#)
- [Festivals & Events](#)
- [Special Deals](#)
- [Contact Information](#)

EDITOR'S CHOICE

On Your Mark, Get Set....and Go!

World Cup Tickets have hit the Market! For soccer fans and cultural hounds who are interested in attending the World Cup in Germany from June 9-July 9, 2006, tickets are on sale now! On the 1st of February, 812,000 tickets were made available and another 300,000 will be up for grabs on the 15th of February. Click your way to www.fifaworldcup.com or call 011-49-180-526-2006. Don't forget to reserve your rooms at Fifa Accommodation Service at www.2006FIFAWCAS.com.

[back to top](#)

FEATURED STORY

Easter Markets in Germany

German Easter markets roll out all over Germany and are wonderful way to rediscover traditions and rituals, and to prepare for the Easter holidays. Many of the American traditions as we know them, including egg decorating, Easter trees and Easter egg games, were brought to America by German immigrants.

The origins of the German Easter traditions are not certain but some say they can be traced back to payments in kind by peasants to their lords; others say it goes back to the pagan worship of the maiden-goddess of fertility, "Easte," or "Eastre," "Eostre" or "Ostara" and the coming of spring. The egg and rabbit were symbols of fertility and new birth. The Germanic tribes lit bonfires to welcome spring, and in many towns today, men in towns and cities across Germany collect wood, often old Christmas trees, and create piles for Easter night's (Saturday) celebration.

After Christmas, Easter is the most important holiday in Germany. There is spring cleaning, and decorations in the form of budding twigs, crocuses and daffodils, willow and birch, the first shoots of grasses, or wheat sprouts, are brought into the home. Easter branches are hung with blown and painted eggs, and are put into a vase. And, an inseparable part of the holiday is the Easter meal with an Easter cake in the shape of a lamb.

Parents give their children Easter eggs - colored and boiled eggs - Easter bunnies and other sweets. Adults give each other gifts of food and drink. Children still hunt for eggs as they did in the 1500s and play at many different egg games called "Waleien," "Walka," or "Eierspecken," where eggs are rolled, chased and thrown. Children also play at a game called Chocolate Kiss where the object is to gobble up chocolate-covered marshmallows -- the winner is the person who can eat the most chocolate marshmallows with the cleanest face.

Before the Easter celebration, Easter egg markets are popular throughout the country with

