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Exploring Germany and its Religious Art

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Editors Choice: Jazz in Germany

Jazz can almost be a religion in May in Germany with a following of thousands. From blues to big-band, mainstream to avant-garde - local and international jazz stars perform high-quality repertoires in Dresden, Hannover and Duesseldorf this month. All four cities will host international jazz festivals and attract thousand of visitors to swing the cities. At the International Dixieland Festival in Dresden about 40 bands from Europe and the US entertain jazz fans in various concerts, on Elbe steam boats, and on the Prager Strasse from May 9 to May 13. www.dixieland.de On May 17 the Swinging Hannover Festival takes place in front of the New Town hall and will once again attract about 30 000 visitors to celebrate with jazz artists from all over the world. www.swinginghannover.info (German only) Only a few days later, from May 25 to May 27, jazz is king in Duesseldorf's pubs of the local breweries and on open-air stages all over the city during Duesseldorf's Jazz Rally. www.duesseldorfer-jazzrally.de (German only) And even the small North Sea island of Borkum hosts its own jazz festival featuring four international bands from May 25 to May 27. www.borkum.de

Theme: Whirlwind tour of Germany's Religious Art Treasures

Germany was predominantly a Roman Catholic country during the medieval period. It was not until the Reformation started by Martin Luther in 1517 that Protestantism emerged and has since become the country's second major religion. Today Germany has the fastest growing Jewish community in Europe, made up mostly of Jews from Eastern European

Events

International Firework Competition, Hannover

May - September
The Royal Herrenhausen Gardens once again play host to the International Firework Competition where the world's most creative pyrotechnicians, show off their skills in this beautiful Baroque setting accompanied by pop and classical music with perfectly-timed explosions, rockets and astonishing displays of light and color. www.hannover.de

818th Birthday of Hamburg Harbor

May 11 - May 13
The popular harbor festival along the river every year lures thousands of visitors with scores of attractions on land, on water and in the air. Traditional highlights are: The parade of tall and traditional ships, tugboat ballet, dragon boat racing, and harbor illuminations. www.hamburg-

countries. Visitors to Germany can experience these major world religions and find astonishing religious art treasures, among them some UNESCO World Heritage Sites, throughout the country. Take a whirlwind tour through Germany's states and their religious gems:

Perched atop a small rise at the foot of the **Bavarian** Alps, the ornate Rococo church 'Wieskirche', a UNESCO World Heritage Site, boasts opulent stucco ornamentation and a ceiling fresco painted by Johann Baptist Zimmermann. www.wieskirche.de In Munich the new Jewish Museum, opened this March in the center of the Bavarian capital, and visitors can experience a world of insights into Jewish life and culture. www.juedisches-museum.muenchen.de

In the state of **Baden-Wuerttemberg**, the UNESCO World Heritage site, the monastery Maulbronn, is the most extensively preserved medieval monastic complex north of the Alps. The monastery offers detailed information on the life and work of the order from the 12th to the 16th century. www.maulbronn.de

Worms, in the state of **Rhineland Palatine**, has unique witnesses from the eventful history of the co-existence of Christians and Jews. In the old town visitors can find the well-preserved old Jewish quarter, with the Romanesque Synagogue, a ritual bath and the Raschi-Haus home to the Jewish Museum. www.worms.de In Mainz the Catholic Church of St. Stephen features beautiful windows designed by artist Marc Chagall, depicting themes from the Old and New Testament, in a striking blend of meditative blue. www.mainz.de

Cologne's Gothic cathedral in **Nordrhein Westphalia** was added to the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1998. The cathedral, with its characteristic spires, houses the golden Shrine of the Three Magi, as well as numerous other outstanding art treasures. www.koelner-dom.de

Michelstadt, set among the hills of the Odenwald in the State of **Hesse**, was built in the 14th century and presents a typical image of a medieval Germany with its half-timbered houses. A true rarity is the 18th century synagogue, which escaped being burned by the National Socialists and today houses a small Jewish museum. www.michelstadt.de

St. Mary's Cathedral and St. Michael's Church in Hildesheim in **Lower Saxony** are outstanding examples of Romanesque architecture and exceptional repositories of religious art from the Holy Roman Empire. St. Mary's Cathedral is also home to a unique collection of medieval treasures and a 1,000 year old rose tree. www.niedersachsen-tourism.de

St. Anne's new art gallery and museum in Luebeck in **Schleswig Holstein** are located on the site of the former Augustinian Abbey Church and offer the wonderful opportunity to see contemporary and 20th century art, religious art and Germany's most important collection of medieval carved altar pieces at one place. www.luebeck.de

Hamburg's skyline is defined by the steeples of its principal churches. The 433 feet high tower of St. Michael, known locally as "Michel", is Hamburg's famous landmark. Visitors can climb the 453 steps to the viewing platform and enjoy fabulous views over Hamburg. www.hamburg-tourism.de

Berlin is home to Daniel Libeskind's Jewish museum and the Peter Eisenman's memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe in the center of the city. www.stiftung-denkmal.de

Eisleben in **Saxony Anhalt** is, as many other German cities, associated with the life and work of Martin Luther. Here Luther's birth house, which

tourism.de

Designmai, Berlin

May 12 - May 20

This international design festival, which celebrates its fifth anniversary in 2007, will again be at the cutting edge of new global trends as it explores the relationship between digital technology and design. www.designmai.de

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner 'A Journey through Germany', Chemnitz

May 13 - August 5

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, a founding member of the "Brücke" (Bridge) group, was one of the artists seeking to renew art at the start of the 20th century. The inventive richness, formal variety and expressive power of Kirchner's works on paper are without parallel in modern art. www.chemnitz.de (German only)

International Handel-Festival, Goettingen

May 18 - May 29

The Festival takes place under the banner Might and Plight - Handel's Rulers and Heroes. The centerpiece of the Festival is the opera Giulio Cesare, with the talented young American counter-tenor Gerald Thompson in the title role. www.haendel.org

150th Birthday of the Schwerin Castle

May 26 - May 28

This year at Pentecost the finishing of the Schwerin Castle in its present-day shape is celebrated for the 150th time. Around the castle, exhibitions, markets and cultural events invite visitors to a time journey from 1857 to 2007. www.schwerin.com (German only)

Special Deals

Take off with LTU to Germany

New in May 2007, LTU International Airways, one of Germany's leading leisure airlines will introduce two weekly flights from Las Vegas to Germany, making this its seventh North American gateway. Frequencies will also

documents the childhood and youth of the reformer, has re-opened this year. The ground floor rooms are preserved as typical of the end of the Middle Ages. www.eisleben-tourist.de (German only)

In Eisenach, in **Thuringia**, Luther left his marks as well. It was here, at one of Germany's most revered castles, the Wartburg, that he translated the New Testament into German. The Luther memorials have been lovingly preserved, in an exhibition at the Luther house.

www.lutherhaus-eisenach.de

The Zittau 'Fastentuch' in **Saxony** is the only one of its type in Germany showing 90 pictures out of the Old and New Testament. Unique is the story of the Lenten Cloth itself: It was cut into four pieces and used as towels by Russian soldiers in WWII and later found by a farmer in the mountains close to the city. www.zittau.de (German only)

Feature: Where the monks live - Reichenau Abbey on Lake Constance

In the South of Germany in the State of Baden Wuerttemberg, Lake Constance is surrounded by picturesque, historic towns and villages where visitors can still see many buildings from the Middle Ages.

The most important gem is the Abbey on Island Reichenau, located at the South West corner of the lake. The UNESCO World Heritage Site, which was once the cradle of western civilization and played a key role in influencing European culture, illustrates the religious and cultural importance of the abbey in the Middle Ages. Eminent scholars taught at the renowned Abbey School, which produced outstanding theologians, politicians, scientists, poets and musicians and was renowned for its teaching of book calligraphy and painting and its goldsmiths.

It was founded in 724 AD by the itinerant bishop Pirmin. The abbey's Münster is dedicated to the Virgin and St Mark and the churches wall paintings illustrate the island's former importance. Two further churches were built on Reichenau consecrated to St Georg, and to Sts Peter and Paul. The monastery itself was secularized in 1802, but Reichenau still demonstrates an extraordinary connection to its monastic traditions. The worship of the relics has survived monastery times and locals as well as visitors still swarm the streets during the yearly island festivals, when the valuable holy relics are carried across the island in processions. And since 2001 a small group of monks has returned to the abbey.

www.reichenau.de

But that's not all, Lake Constance, one of the largest German lakes, has to offer. The lake lies nestled in a lovely landscape of hills and mountains between Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Lichtenstein. In summer, it sparkles against the backdrop of the Alps. The popular "flower island Mainau" between Meersburg and Constance is a very special experience at any time of year and enchants its visitors with luxuriant blossoms, a park with trees around 150 years old and the baroque splendor of the castle. As well as the vegetation and the castle, visitors can enjoy Germany's largest butterfly house, hosting over 25 species of exotic butterflies, the palm house and temporary exhibitions. Glamorous events such as the Count's Island Festival, taking place from May 17 to May 20 this year, and the Mainau open air concerts in summer attract visitors from all over the world. www.mainau.de

Other well-known attractions at Lake Constance include the town of Constance www.konstanz.de, the Zeppelin museum in Friedrichshafen www.zeppelin-museum.de, the prehistoric buildings on stilts in Unteruhldingen www.pfahlbauten.de (German only), and of course all its beautiful tranquil villages all around the lake. www.tourismus-bw.de

be increased from LTU's Florida gateways; Miami and Ft. Myers. To celebrate the beginning of the summer, LTU also offers special fares to Germany for departures in May from New York, prices starting at \$318, from Miami starting at \$368, from Los Angeles starting at \$648, and from Las Vegas starting at \$348. Taxes and fees not included in the price.

www.ltu.com

Deilmann's Golf Programs on Ocean Sailings

Golf theme cruises are scheduled on six Deilmann river ships beginning with the Spring Golf Cup aboard the five-star MV Casanova sailing from Basel, Switzerland to Passau, Germany, on the Rhine and Main rivers and the Rhine-Main Canal, May 19-31. The golf program includes six rounds of golf, all transfers, green fees, guides, pull carts, half day excursion and five nights at the five-star Steigenberger Hotel in the resort town of Bad Kissingen in Germany. Prices start at \$ 3,446 including airfare, bookable right away.

www.deilmann-cruises.com

To learn more about golfing in Germany consumers can order the new brochure 'Discover Germany playing golf' at

www.ComeToGermany.com

Wagner Festival Tour

Visit the world famous Bayreuth Music Festival and experience the magnificent opera house built especially for works by Richard Wagner! During this special tour music lovers will have the rare opportunity to visit the four performances 'Das Rheingold', 'Die Walkure', 'Siegfried' and 'Gotterdammerung' and also visit the cities of Heidelberg, Rothenburg, Nuremberg, Erfurt and Berlin during this eleven day tour through Germany. Travel dates are August 6-17, 2007. The price per person is \$5,998 including round-trip from the US, hotels double occupancy, ground transportation and tickets to all opera performances.

www.valhol.com

Contact Information

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