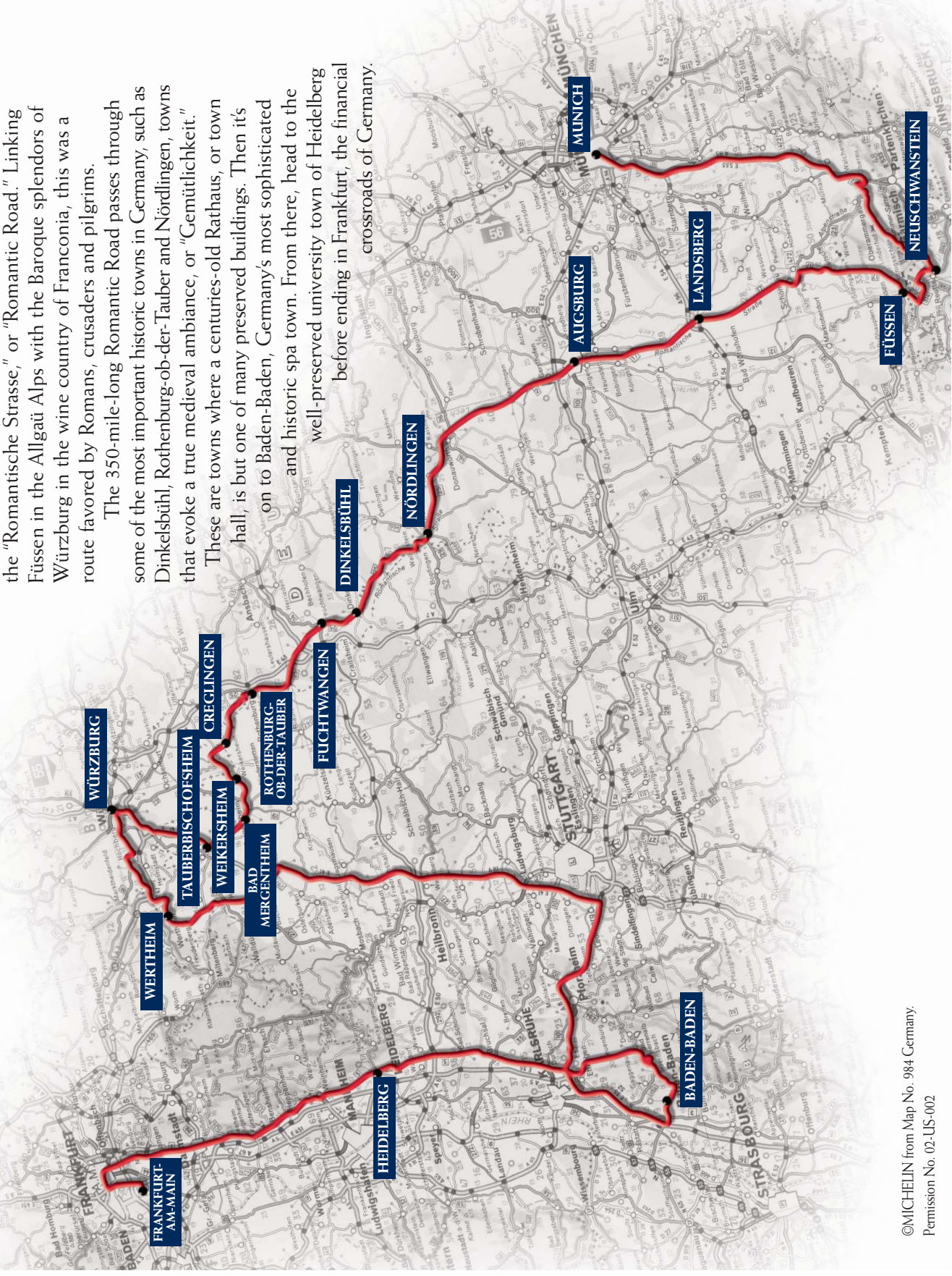


ROMANTIC ROUTE— MUNICH TO FRANKFURT

THIS IS A CLASSIC GERMAN ROAD TRIP filled with churches, castles and half-timbered houses, a drive that takes you through mountains, pristine farmland and bustling cities. The itinerary begins in Munich and continues to one of the finest of Mad King Ludwig II's castles. From there, it's on to the "Romantische Strasse," or "Romantic Road." Linking Füssen in the Allgäu Alps with the Baroque splendors of Würzburg in the wine country of Franconia, this was a route favored by Romans, crusaders and pilgrims.

The 350-mile-long Romantic Road passes through some of the most important historic towns in Germany, such as Dinkelsbühl, Rothenburg-ob-der-Tauber and Nördlingen, towns that evoke a true medieval ambiance, or "Gemütlichkeit." These are towns where a centuries-old Rathaus, or town hall, is but one of many preserved buildings. Then it's on to Baden-Baden, Germany's most sophisticated and historic spa town. From there, head to the well-preserved university town of Heidelberg before ending in Frankfurt, the financial crossroads of Germany.



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(Mileage is estimated from each preceding city or site. Before you begin your trip, please note: For space reasons, we could not provide the most detailed map with this brochure. We recommend the use of Michelin Map #984 Germany in conjunction with this guide.) To order Michelin maps, call 1-800-223-0987.

MUNICH—Begin by flying to Franz-Josef Strauss airport and then consider staying in Munich for a few days. The city of BMWs and beer, Munich is a "millionendorf," literally a village of a million or so people. You can see masterpieces by Albrecht Dürer and Leonardo da Vinci at the Alte Pinakothek, check out the high-fashion emporiums along the Maximilian-strasse or stroll in the English garden, Munich's famous city park. Even if you're not here during Oktoberfest, there are beer gardens where lederhosen and feathered hats are still worn, Bavarian-style brews reign supreme and the weisswurst is tasty.

64 miles
NEUSCHWANSTEIN—Born in Bavaria in 1845, King Ludwig II ascended to the throne at age 18. With a grandiosity inspired by the excesses of the French King Louis XIV, Ludwig II is best remembered for building three extravagant castles—Linderhof, Herrenchiemsee and Neuschwanstein—at enormous expense. Neuschwanstein is the most theatrical of the three, and it's little surprise to discover that it was created with

the aid of a stage designer. It is architectural madness, a mish-mash of Byzantine, Romanesque and Gothic styles. Ludwig, who was later certified insane, died before the castle was finished. But the completed rooms are marvels of craftsmanship and detail, decorated with references to Wagner's operas. The best viewing spot of the castle's exterior is from the nearby Marienbrücke, or Mary's Bridge, which spans a gorge.

2 miles
FÜSSEN—Sitting high above the Lech River, Füssen is a health resort and the first stop on the Romantic Road. Walk down the town's cobbled main street, the Reichenstrasse. Pause at the Benedictine abbey of St. Mang, whose baroque rooms now serve as a museum. Or attend a show at the König-Ludwig-Musical-Festspielhaus, which hosts year-round performances of a musical based upon the life of the mad king.

38 miles
LANDSBERG-AM-LECH—Landsberg became a regional center in the middle ages and was an important trading town. Be sure and walk the Stadtrundgang, a signposted circular town walk, which takes in the best crooked alleys and the town ramparts. You'll get a birds-eye view of a veritable sea of red roofs alongside the River Lech. It was in Landsberg that Adolf Hitler was imprisoned following his unsuccessful beer hall "putsch" of 1923. While incarcerated there, he wrote *Mein Kampf*.

23 miles
AUGSBURG—While Augsburg's medieval appearance has been carefully restored, it's not museum-quiet. The cobbled Ludwigsplatz is a lively gathering place in this university town, and it's transformed into an open-air café during the summer and a Christmas market in December. Bordering it is a Renaissance Rathaus from 1620, which is arguably Germany's finest secular Renaissance building. Inside, the Goldener Saal, which

boasts gold-leaf pillars and a marble floor, is a reminder of when the Fugger banking dynasty made Augsburg one of the financial centers of Europe. By all means climb up the Perlachturm, a tower that rewards you with fine views from the top.

44 miles
NÖRDLINGEN—Nördlingen prospered between the 14th and 16th centuries, when it held a Whitsun Fair. The good times disappeared, but you can thank that turn of events for preserving the town's medieval heart. Consequently, Nördlingen is one of the most popular stops along the Romantic Road. You can walk the entire circuit of the town walls, passing its towers and gates. The Marktplatz has a Rathaus that dates from Nördlingen's heyday. If you're feeling lit, climb the stairs of the Daniel Tower of the St. Georgskirche, the town's late-Gothic church. If you're spending the night, throw open your hotel window around ten so you can hear the town crier shout "So g'sell" or "Alls well."

24 miles
DINKELSBÜHL—Less touristed than its neighbors, Dinkelsbühl is another well-preserved medieval town on the Romantic Road, with a fine city wall and 17 watch towers. The most dramatic approach to the town, located on the River Würnitz, is via the causeway known as the Rothenburger Tor. Follow the Martin Luther Strasse to the central market square, the Weinmarkt, lined with early Renaissance town houses. The most spectacular of all is the 16th-century Deutsches Haus, a gem of half-timbered architecture. Pause at the Schranne, a 17th-century granary that's now the venue for festivals like the Kinderzeche. This is the town's most important celebration, held the third week of July. It marks an episode from 1632 when invading Swedish troops spared the town. Take time to wander into the Münster St. Georg church, with its spectacular vaulted ceiling. Then plan to walk the romantic ramparts of Dinkelsbühl at night, preferably in the company of the town's night watchman.

7 miles
FEUCHTWANGEN—This town has Romanesque cloisters that become an open-air theater in summer. In December, it has one of Bavaria's most colorful Christmas markets, known as a Weihnachtsmarkt.

19 miles
ROTHENBURG-OB-DER-TAUBER—Rothenburg-ob-der-Tauber may well be Germany's best-preserved medieval town, a place of turreted fortifications, 24 towers and winding cobblestone streets. Tour the city's 14th-century ramparts to get a real sense of the town, and its half-timbered buildings with gabled roofs, turrets and spires. Visit the Puppen & Spielzeug Museum, which boasts the largest doll and toy collection in Germany. The St. Jakobskirche is the town's splendid Gothic church. Inside you can see the "Heiligblut" or Holy Blood altar, carved by sculptor



Tilman Riemenschneider to hold what was alleged to be drops of Christ's blood. Not surprisingly, it attracted legions of medieval pilgrims. The sloping Marktplatz is dominated by the arcaded front of the Renaissance Rathaus, which is one of Germany's great Renaissance buildings. Don't miss the town's oddest attraction, the Mittelalterliches Kriminalmuseum, a medieval crime museum. Here are thousands of macabre devices including masks of shame, which are bizarre indeed.

11 miles
CREGLINGEN—Legend has it that in 1384, a peasant plowing a field here found a Host, the consecrated bread of the Eucharist. That led the townspeople to build a church on the spot that's called the Hergotikirche. At the end of the 15th century, Tilman Riemenschneider, arguably the greatest sculptor of the late Gothic period, was commissioned to carve a new altar for the church. The result was the Altar of the Virgin Mary, which historians consider to be his masterpiece. It depicts the life of the Virgin in a series of reliefs, with the main panel depicting Mary's ascent to heaven.

7 miles

WEIKERSHEIM— In this town you'll find Schloss Weikersheim or Weikersheim Castle, a Renaissance castle with suggestive statues of dwarfs and nymphs cavorting in the garden. The star attraction is the "Rittersaal," or Knights Hall, with a ceiling adorned with hunting scenes. In the summer-time, the Jeunessees Musicales brings an international festival for young musicians to Weikersheim.

7 miles

BAD MERGENTHEIM— In the mid-16th century, this town became the headquarters of the Knights of the Teutonic Order, a religious and military society. These knights constructed a baroque castle, known as the Deutschordenschloss, an edifice of gables, turrets and towers. One of its most interesting features is the Benward-Treppe, a vertiginous spiral staircase. The town, which has a wonderful old town square and Rathaus, also has three mineral springs that were discovered by a shepherd in 1826. That led to Bad Mergentheim's emergence as a health resort. Its waters are allegedly good for digestive complaints.

11 miles

TAUBERBISCHOFSHHEIM— Surrounded by rolling hills, forests and vineyards, Tauberbischofsheim is a remarkably well-kept medieval town of timber-framed buildings. The old palace has a fine local history museum.

21 miles

WÜRZBURG— Wine made this city the terminus of the Romantic Road. The wine produced around Würzburg was consumed by German emperors and the rulers of Nürnberg and Rothenburg-ob-der-Tauber. Nowadays the wine is still delectable, and you can sample it throughout the city. Würzburg is also home of the Residenz of the Prince-Bishops, a palace that was intended to show that the Würzburg bishops could hold their own among such great European courts as Versailles. They did rather well, and the 18th-century splendor reaches its peak in the enormous ceiling fresco by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo.

Afterwards, move on to the Marktplatz. It's little surprise that in this gastronomic center, there's a lively daily food market.

27 miles

WERTHEIM— Located at the meeting point of the Main and Tauber Rivers, Wertheim is a stage set of half-timbered houses and narrow streets surrounded by forested hills. The Altes Schloss, a 12th-century structure erected by the counts of Wertheim, towers over the town. Visit the glass museum on Mühlenstrasse as well as the museum housed in the 15th-century Kilianskapelle, or St. Kilian's Chapel.

144 miles

BADEN-BADEN— One of Germany's most stylish resorts, Baden-Baden draws visitors to its world-famous spa and casino. Set in the green valley of the Oos River, at the northern edge of the Black Forest, Baden-Baden is a town of 19th-century hotels, palatial villas, tree-lined avenues and well-groomed visitors. Queen Victoria, Bismarck and Brahms are among the distinguished visitors who came for the waters. The town still exudes a rare pre-war grandeur. A great example of "Jugendstil," or Art Nouveau, architecture is the Trinkhalle, or "drink hall," where you can sample the decidedly salty local waters. The neoclassical Kurhaus is the town's cultural center. Inside is the lavish casino, which inspired Dostoevski to write *The Gambler*. Take the waters yourself at the splendid 19th-century

Friedrichsbad, a riot of ornamentation, or at the newer Caracalla.

Therme, where pools, whirlpools, grottos and saunas await.

56 miles

HEIDELBERG— Heidelberg, with its ancient towers, bridges and sandstone castle, may well be the most romantic city in Germany. Situated alongside the River Neckar, it's still a

lively university town, whose flair immortalized in Sigmund Romberg's operetta, "The Student Prince." Walk across the Alte Brücke, or Old Bridge, which spans the Neckar. And then tour the Schloss, the castle that housed the princes of Pfalz for more than 500 years.

58 miles

FRANKFURT-AM-MAIN— The financial capital of Germany, Frankfurt is the crossroads of Germany and, arguably, of Europe. Go to the Zeltgalerie, where the rooftop observation deck will give you an overview of the city. Take time to explore Römerberg, Frankfurt's oldest central square, which is ringed with 14th- and 15th-century buildings. Pop into Coethe's house, now a museum and library dedicated to Germany's most beloved writer. And enjoy an evening out in the city that some German wags have dubbed "Mainhattan."

HOTELS

Brenner's Park Hotel & Spa. There are just 100 antique-laden rooms at Brenner's, fit for royalty and celebrities who come for rest, pampering and dining at the hotel's Park-Restaurant. Schillerstrasse 4-6, 76550 Baden-Baden. Tel: 49 0 72 21 9000 Fax: 49 0 72 21 3 8772

Romantik Hotel Augsburgur Hof.

Located opposite the Mozart house, this hotel is located in a historic building, but the rooms have been nicely updated.

Auf dem Kreuz 2, Augsburg.

Tel: 49 0 821 34 30 50

Fax: 49 0 821 34 30 555

Villa Hammerschmiede. The

Schwalbe family runs this 30-room hotel located between Heidelberg and Baden-Baden.

The decor runs to Italian Art

Deco style, there's an extraordinary indoor swimming pool carved out of the rock and you can dine in the hotel's English winter garden.

Hauptstrasse 162, Pfingsttal-

Söllingen.

Tel: 49 0 7240 601 0

Fax: 49 0 7240 601 60

Romantik Hotel Markusturm. Since

1264, this hotel has welcomed guests to Rothenburg. The Berger family runs this antique-filled hotel in the town center.

Rödergasse 1, Rothenburg-ob-der-Tauber.

Tel: 49 0 9861 94280

Fax: 49 0 9861 9428 113

Romantik Hotel Insel Mühle. Located in Untermenzing, on the western outskirts of Munich, most rooms have a balcony with views of the river or the garden. The hotel is known locally for its idyllic riverside beer garden. Von-Kahr-Strasse 87, Munich.

Tel: 49 0 89 81010

Fax: 49 0 89 8120571

Hotel Hessischer Hof. Located in the center of Frankfurt, the hotel is appointed with period furniture and antiques but has been completely modernized. Friedrich-Ebert-Anlage 40, Frankfurt-am-Main.

Tel: 49 69 7540-0

Fax: 49 69 7540-2924

RESTAURANT

Gasthof "Zur Stadt Mainz." This is a Würzburg classic in a setting festooned with antlers, grandfather clocks and farmhouse furnishings. The typical menu includes game pancakes and ox-tail ragout with red wine.

Semmelstrasse 39, Würzburg.

Tel: 49 0 931 53155

Fax: 49 0 931 58510

