

# Bavarian Alps



Quaint, invigorating and absurdly beautiful, the Bavarian Alps captivate with equal drama and grace, and embrace with a gusto that leaves city dwellers gasping. The air is bracing, the skies blow a cobalt blue and the lakes shimmer in a myriad of shades. It's enough to convert the most dedicated couch potato to the great outdoors.

You'll also find clichés in spades: the thigh-slapping lederhosen lads, the foaming mugs of beer and platters groaning beneath portions of pork roast with sauerkraut. An admirable job is done in exploiting these popular images, but the story is presented with such sincerity that you can't resist playing along.

Much of the region is rural, endowed with the kind of scenery that is the stuff of post-cards. Nature and architecture blend harmoniously just about everywhere you look. Overall, people here are patriotic, politically conservative, overwhelmingly Roman Catholic and proud of their traditions.

The region is a paradise for outdoor activities, offering everything from leisurely dips and Alpine hikes to thrilling swooshes through some of Europe's most alluring ski areas. Although in many villages time seems to stand still, the tourism industry is state of the art. Every place has a helpful tourist office, there's good public transport and finding accommodation to suit every budget is rarely a problem.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Exorcising Nazi ghosts in the **Eagle's Nest** (p158) near Berchtesgaden
- Marvelling at the fantastical riches in Ludwig II's **Schloss Linderhof** (p143)
- Riding a pulse-quickening cable car to the top of the **Zugspitze** (p136), Germany's highest mountain
- Splashing, surfing and taking a sauna in the **Alpamare** (p145) fun pool in Bad Tölz
- Spending the night on the idyllic **Fraueninsel** (p152) in the Chiemsee



# WERDENFELSER LAND

## GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN

☎ 08821 / pop 26,200 / elev 708m

A favourite haunt for outdoor enthusiasts and moneyed socialites, Garmisch-Partenkirchen is blessed with a fabled setting and some of the best skiing in the land, including runs on Germany's highest peak, the Zugspitze (2962m). To say you were 'skiing in Garmisch' has a fashionable ring, but it's really a superb destination in any season. The towns of Garmisch and Partenkirchen were merged on the occasion of the 1936 Winter Olympics and to this day host international skiing events. Each retains its own distinct flair: Garmisch feels more cosmopolitan; Partenkirchen flaunts an old-world Alpine village vibe.

### Orientation

The train tracks that divide the two towns culminate at the Hauptbahnhof. From here, turn west on St-Martin-Strasse to get to Garmisch and east on Bahnhofstrasse to get to Partenkirchen.

### Information

**HypoVereinsbank** (Am Kurpark 13 & Rathausplatz 11)

**Internet Café** (☎ 2727; Zugspitzstrasse 2, Garmisch; per 15min €1; ☎ 6am-6pm) Fast connections inside a bakery.

**Klinikum** (☎ 770; Auenstrasse 6, Partenkirchen) Full-service hospital with emergency room.

**Post office** (Bahnhofstrasse, Partenkirchen)

**Presse & Buch** (☎ 4400; Hauptbahnhof, Partenkirchen) International papers and mags.

**Tourist office** (☎ 180 700; www.garmisch-partenkirchen.de; Richard-Strauss-Platz 1, Garmisch; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-noon Sun) Also sells the Zugspitzcard (www.zugspitzcard.de, in German), which includes cable-car rides, admission to museums and fun pools, and other activities in Garmisch-Partenkirchen and surrounding villages. The three-day version costs €39/24 per adult/child.

### Sights

#### ZUGSPITZE

Views from Germany's rooftop (www.zugspitze.de) are quite literally breathtaking and, on good days, extend into four countries. Skiing and hiking are the main activities here. For a detailed description of the hike descending from the summit via the Partnachklamm, see p66.

The trip to the Zugspitze summit is as memorable as it is popular; beat the crowds by starting early in the day and, if possible, skip weekends altogether. In Garmisch, board the **Zahnradbahn** (cogwheel train) at its own station behind the Hauptbahnhof. Trains first chug along the mountain base to the Eibsee, a forest lake, then wind their way through a mountain tunnel up to the Schneeferner Glacier (2600m). Here, you'll switch to the **Gletscherbahn** cable car for the final ascent to the summit. When you're done soaking in the panorama, board the **Eibsee-Seilbahn**, a steep cable car, that sways and swings its way back down to the Eibsee in about 10 minutes. It's

not for vertigo sufferers, but the views surely are tremendous.

Most people come up on the train and take the cable car back down, but it works just as well the other way around. Either way, the entire trip costs €37.50/22.50 per adult/child in winter and €47/27.50 in summer. Winter rates include a day ski pass.

### TOWN CENTRES

The heart of Garmisch is the Kurpark, just north of Richard-Strauss-Platz and the tourist office. A pedestrian zone lined with touristy shops and cafés leads west to Marienplatz and the richly stuccoed 18th-century **Alte St Martinskirche**, a work by the prolific Joseph Schmuzer, whose name you'll inevitably encounter again and again in this part of Bavaria. North of the church, across the little Loisach River, is Garmisch's most idyllic street, the **Frühlingstrasse**, which is flanked by proud houses frescoed in a style called *Lüftmalerei* (see the boxed text, p142).

More magnificent houses are along **Ludwigstrasse**, a former trading route and still Partenkirchen's main commercial drag. Local arts and crafts are a focal point of the **Werdenfels Museum** (☎ 2134; Ludwigstrasse 47, Partenkirchen; adult/child €1.50/0.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun), where the prized possessions include some pretty scary local carnival masks. The tangle of rooms also showcases Oberammergau woodcarvings, an 18th-century silver crib and delicate glass paintings.

### KÖNIGSHAUS AM SCHACHEN

High in the mountains above Garmisch-Partenkirchen, at a lofty 1866m, the **Königshaus am Schachen** (☎ 929 30; adult/concession €4/3; ☎ tours 11am, 1pm, 2pm & 3pm Jun-early Oct) was Ludwig II's little-known mountain retreat. What looks like a rather plain wooden hut actually has some surprisingly magnificent rooms, including the over-the-top Turkish Room. A fantasy of fine carpets, peacock feathers, a fountain and boldly coloured glass windows, it could easily have been dreamed up by Scheherazade herself. Picture the king in its midst, smoking water pipes and surrounded by turban-wearing servants. Downstairs is more functional, with a dining room, study, bedroom and chapel.

If you'd like to spend the night, check for availability in the **Schachenhaus** (☎ 0172-876 868; www.schachenhaus.de; dm/r with shared bathroom per person

€9.50/14.50; ☎ Jun-early Oct), where accommodations are anything but royal. The inn also serves refreshments and hot meals.

Getting up here involves a gruelling three-to four-hour hike via the Partnachklamm (below) or Schloss Elmau.

### Activities

#### SKIING

Garmisch-Partenkirchen's ski season runs from late November to early May in the higher elevations, making it the longest in Bavaria. See the boxed text on p58 for details. **Skischule Alpin** (☎ 945 676; www.skischulealpin.de; Reintalstrasse 8, Partenkirchen; 1-day group lessons €30, ski gear €18) and **Skischule Garmisch-Partenkirchen** (☎ 4931, 74260; www.skischule-gap.de; Am Hausberg 8, Garmisch; 1-day group lessons €35, ski gear €25) are both outfitters with good reputations.

Cross-country ski trails run along the main valleys, including a long section from Garmisch to Mittenwald.

#### HIKING

Garmisch-Partenkirchen is the gateway to superb hikes, two of which are detailed on p64. Tourist-office staff will happily supply you with additional ideas, tips and maps.

One of the most popular destinations that's easily accessed from the valley is the magnificent **Partnachklamm** (☎ 3167; adult/child €2/1), a narrow 750m-long gorge with walls rising up to 80m. It's especially magical in winter when you can walk beneath curtains of icicles the size of swords, and waterfalls frozen in mid-splash. Call ahead to make sure it's open. The entrance is about a 15-minute walk south of the Olympia Skistadion.

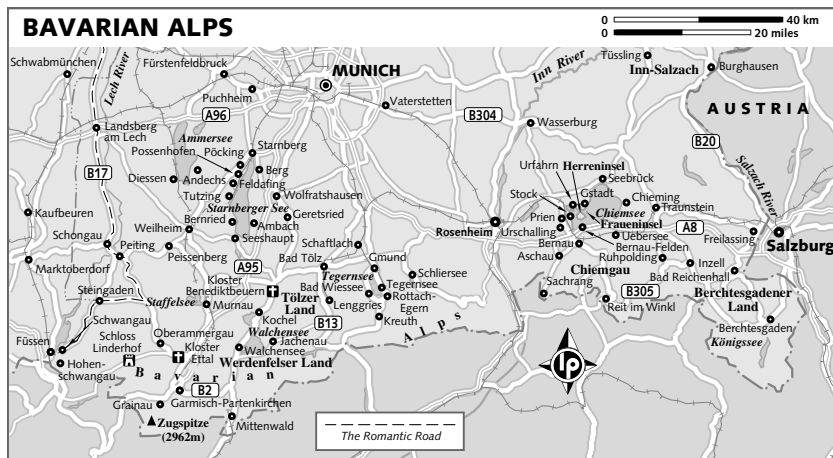
#### OTHER ACTIVITIES

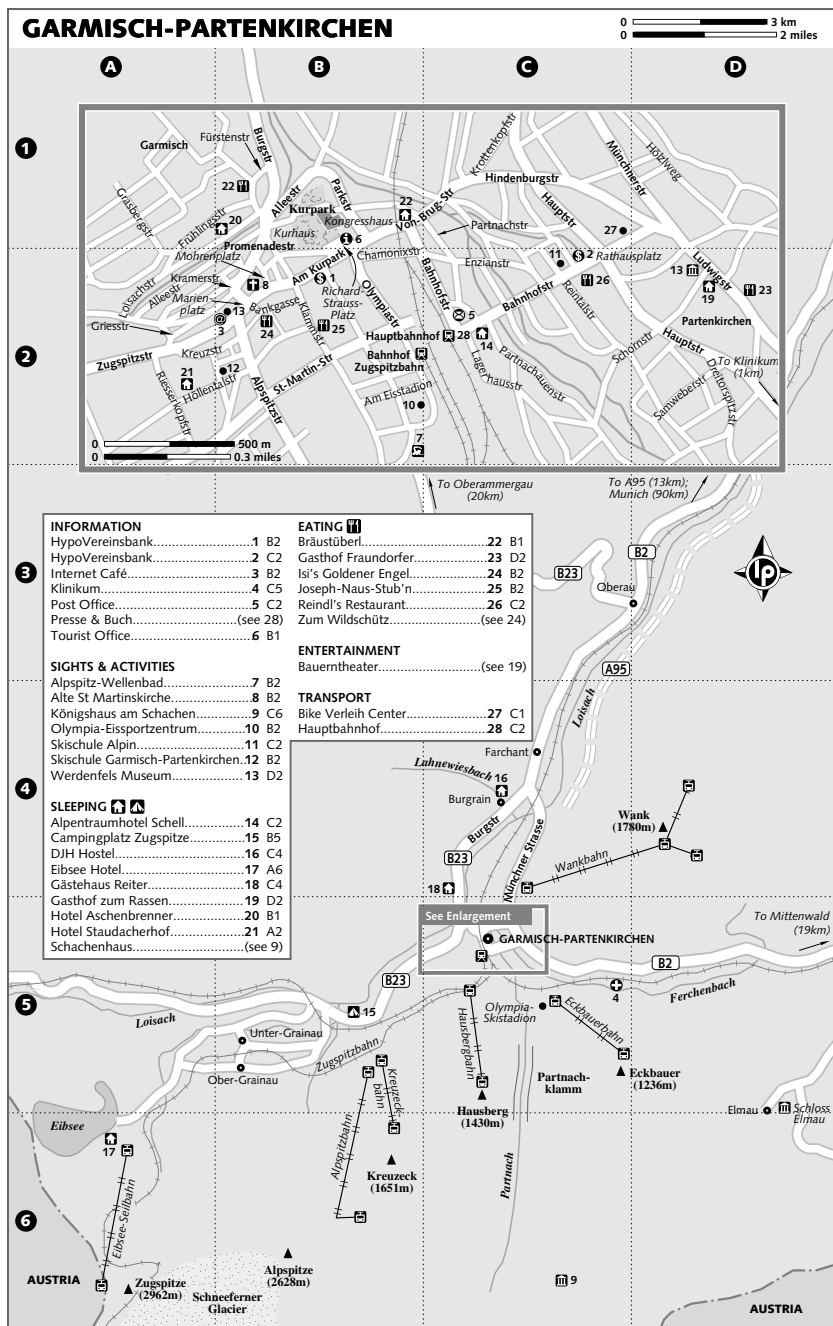
Built for the 1936 Olympics, the **Olympia-Eissportzentrum** (☎ 753 291; www.gw-gap.de; Am Eisstadion, Garmisch; adult/child €4/2.30) has three indoor and two outdoor rinks (winter only) for skating, ice hockey and curling. It's open daily, but skating times vary.

The **Alpspitz-Wellenbad** (☎ 753 313; Klammstrasse 47, Garmisch; adult/child per 3hr €4.80/2.70, all day €6.50/3.70; ☎ 9am-9pm Mon-Sat, 9am-7pm Sun) is a fun indoor wave pool with multiple saunas.

#### Festivals & Events

Garmisch-Partenkirchen hosts international skiing and ski-jumping competitions, but on





6 January thousands of spectators invade for the quirky **Hornschlittenrennen** ([www.hornschlitten.de](http://www.hornschlitten.de), in German). About 100 teams of four dare-devils each race down a 1200m-long narrow ice track, clinging to historic wooden sledges, with the winners crowned Bavarian champions.

Top international musical talent comes to town in early June for the **Richard-Strauss-Festival** (tickets ☎ 730 1995; [www.muenchenticket.de](http://www.muenchenticket.de), [www.richard-strauss-tage.de](http://www.richard-strauss-tage.de), in German), which honours the composer who lived in Garmisch from 1908 until his death in 1949. It's a highlight on the year's cultural calendar.

## Sleeping

There is an electronic room-reservation board outside the tourist office and a 24-hour **reservation hotline** (☎ 194 12).

**DJH hostel** (☎ 967 050; [www.garmisch.jugendherberge.de](http://www.garmisch.jugendherberge.de); Jochstrasse 10; dm €20.50-26.50; (P) (X) (Q)) Amenities at this smartly revamped hostel in a gorgeous creekside spot are as good as at basic chain hotels. It has 205 beds in brightly pigmented rooms with IKEA-type furnishings, including 21 four-bed family rooms with private bathroom and toilet. Diversions include a climbing wall.

**Gasthof zum Rassen** (☎ 2089; [www.gasthof-rassen.de](http://www.gasthof-rassen.de); Ludwigstrasse 45, Partenkirchen; s €32-53, d €52-90; (P) (X)) The modern rooms in this beautifully frescoed 14th-century building are a welcome respite from the frilly traditional décor of the lobby and restaurant. The Bauerntheater (p140) performs in the former barn.

**Alpenraumhotel Schell** (☎ 957 50; [www.hotel-schell.de](http://www.hotel-schell.de); Partnachauenstrasse 3, Partenkirchen; s from €45, d €75-100, tr €90-115; (P)) Sick of heavy retro furniture and bad oil paintings? Then book a 'dream room' in this small, family-run hotel where lovebirds can share their fantasies in the sensuous 'Life is for Love' room, and teens might get a kick out of 'Fire on Ice' with its ice-hockey theme. It's close to the Hauptbahnhof but very quiet, with a big garden for playing and relaxing.

**Hotel Staudacherhof** (☎ 9290; [www.staudacherhof.de](http://www.staudacherhof.de); Höllentalstrasse 48, Garmisch; s €46-96, d €118-142; (P) (X) (Q) (R)) This elegant country inn is a top-flight address for class and personal service. Rooms are dressed in cheerfully elegant vanilla and cherry hues and come with balconies and a bevy of 21st-century amenities. Head to the spa for an extended relaxation session or go active with yoga, pilates or aqua-fitness.

**Hotel Aschenbrenner** (☎ 959 70; [www.hotel-aschenbrenner.de](http://www.hotel-aschenbrenner.de); Loisachstrasse 46, Garmisch; s €55-70, d €90-120; (P) (X)) Small but beautiful, this hotel is a class act all around and has bright and airy rooms, mostly in a peaches-and-cream colour palette with mountain-view balconies. Breakfast is a bonanza served under the stern gaze of carved apostles.

**Eibsee Hotel** (☎ 988 10; [www.eibsee-hotel.de](http://www.eibsee-hotel.de); Am Eibsee 1-3, Grainau/Eibsee; s €111, d €125-175; (P) (X) (Q) (R)) Take a dream location, mix with a gourmet restaurant, stir in a lake-view sauna and private beach and you'll get one killer cocktail of a hotel. Choose from luxe rooms facing either the lake, the Zugspitze or the forest. In winter, a beginner's ski lift is right outside the hotel.

Other places you might consider:

**Campingplatz Zugspitze** (☎ 3180; [www.zugspitzcamping.de](http://www.zugspitzcamping.de), in German; Jochstrasse 4, Grainau; per tent/person/vehicle €3/5/3) Well-kept year-round campsite with heated bathrooms, all hemmed in by craggy mountains.

**Gästehaus Reiter** (☎ 2223; [www.reiter-gap.com](http://www.reiter-gap.com); Burgstrasse 55, Garmisch; s €20-30, d €40-60; (P) (X)) Chalet-style guesthouse with modern rooms and garden.

## Eating & Drinking

**Bräutüberl** (☎ 2312; Fürstenstrasse 23, Garmisch; mains €6-17; ☎ 9.30am-midnight Thu-Tue) Conversation flows as freely as the beer at this quintessential Bavarian brew-pub, complete with enormous enamel coal-burning stove and dirndl-clad waitresses. In summer, locals and tourists share tables beneath the chestnuts in the beer garden; the beer hall oozes the charms of yesteryear.

**Gasthof Fraundorfer** (☎ 9270; Ludwigstrasse 24, Partenkirchen; mains €7-17; ☎ 7am-1am Thu-Mon, 5pm-1am Wed) The Fraundorfers have been in the hospitality business since 1820, so they know what people want: big mugs of beer, gigantic portions of some part of the pig, and yodelling, knee-slapping and dancing locals in lederhosen. It's kitsch, it's camp and, after a beer or two, it's a rollicking good time.

**Isi's Goldener Engel** (☎ 948 757; Bankgasse 5, Garmisch; mains €9-18; ☎ 11am-2.30pm & 5-11pm, closed Nov-Christmas) The 'Golden Angel' is a rococo riot, complete with wacky frescoes and gold-leaf-sheathed ceilings that wouldn't look out of place in a church. It's family run, neighbourhood adored and delivers classic Bavarian cooking, including a mean pork knuckle with the crust done just so.

**Reindl's Restaurant** (☎ 943 870; Bahnhofstrasse 15, Garmisch; mains €12-24; ☎ noon-2.30pm & 6.30-11pm) Empty tables are rare in this art- and antique-stuffed bulwark of tradition. Regulars keep such classics as rack of venison in juniper cream sauce on the menu, but the chef's talent truly shines with lighter, more inspired flavour bombs, such as lamb filet with date balsamico jus.

**Joseph-Naus-Stub'n** (☎ 9010; Klammstrasse 19, Garmisch; mains €14-20, menu €25-55; ☎ 6-11pm Tue-Sun, noon-3pm Sat & Sun) The creative, light and contemporary comfort food with ingenious Bavarian and Mediterranean accents has vaulted this charmer to the top of many a local's fave list. It's in the Zugspitze hotel.

**Zum Wildschütz** (☎ 3290; Bankgasse 9, Garmisch; mains €6-17; ☎ 10am-midnight) The best place in town for fresh venison, rabbit and other seasonal game dishes, this place is, not surprisingly, popular with hunters.

## Entertainment

**Bauertheater** (peasants' theatre; ☎ 562 24; tickets €6-8) Bavaria's oldest theatre of this sort, this place has been staging folk plays ranging from ribald to religious (or both) since 1892. Performances take place once a week, normally on Saturday, at the Gasthof zum Rassen in Partenkirchen (p139). Even native German speakers have trouble understanding the strong dialect, but the traditional costumes are fun and the silly stories easy to grasp.

## Getting There & Around

Garmisch is serviced twice hourly by trains from Munich (€16.40, 1½ hours). RVO bus 9606 travels to Füssen via the Wieskirche, Neuschwanstein and Oberammergau, while bus 9608 goes as far as Kochel via Mittenwald. If you're driving, the A95 from Munich is the direct road route.

Bus tickets cost €1.50 for journeys within town. For a big selection of reliable touring and mountain bikes try **Bike Verleih Center** (☎ 549 46, 0151-1222 4466; Ludwigstrasse 90, Garmisch; per day €12-25; ☎ 9am-6.30pm).

## MITTENWALD

☎ 08823 / pop 7865 / elev 913m

Mittenwald is about tradition not trendiness, family not flings – it's an authentic getaway from the urban bustle. Goethe described it as 'a living picture book' and he wasn't just talk-

ing about the gorgeous setting or unhurried village flair. No, he meant it quite literally, for nearly every façade here is festooned with colourful and intricate frescoes in a style called *Lüftlmalerei* (see the boxed text, p142).

## Information

**HypoVerreibank** (Obermarkt 30)

**Post office** (Bahnhofplatz 1) Opposite the train station.

**Tourist office** (☎ 339 81; www.mittenwald.de; Dammkarstrasse 3; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat, 10am-noon Sun May-Sep, 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri Oct-Apr)

## Sights

Competing with the Karwendel (2384m) for prominence is the baroque tower of the **Pfarrkirche St Peter and Paul** (Church of St Peter and Paul), standing at the eastern end of the pedestrianised Obermarkt like the dot in an exclamation point. It's an especially successful collaboration by stucco master Josef Schmuzer and Matthäus Günther, who created the elaborate frescoes inside and on the tower starring the church's patron saints, Peter and Paul.

The memorial outside the church honours **Matthias Klotz** (1653–1743), the man credited with turning Mittenwald into an internationally renowned centre of violin making. Learn more about him, the craft and the instrument itself in the engagingly organised **Geigenbaumuseum** (Violinmaking Museum; ☎ 2511; Ballenhausgasse 3; adult/child/concession €4/2/3; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Feb–mid-Mar, mid-May–mid-Oct & mid-Dec–early Jan, other months 11am-4pm Tue-Sun). There's still a violin-making school in town today and the film showing the many steps required in fashioning the instrument is truly fascinating.

**Obermarkt** itself is a parade of *Lüftlmalerei* beauties, most notably the **Gasthaus Alpenrose** (Obermarkt 1), which uses secular themes to convey a religious message: at the bottom are the four virtues, in the middle the five senses and on top the Virgin Mary ringed by angels and saints. The **Neunerhaus** (Obermarkt 24) is another eye-catcher. The oldest frescoes, though, are west of the church, on Im Gries. Today this ancient tradition is still kept alive by local artist Stephan Pfeffer.

## Activities

### HIKING

Mittenwald is an excellent place for hiking. Popular local hikes with cable-car access go to

the Alpspitze (2628m), the Wank (1780m), Mt Karwendel (2384m) and the Wettersteinspitze (2297m). The **Karwendelbahn cable car** (☎ 8480; adult/child one way €13.50/9.50, return €22/12; ☎ 8.30am-5pm) goes to Germany's second-highest mountain station at 2244m, the gateway to a number of strenuous hikes.

An exciting walk, especially for kids, runs through the **Leutascher Geisterklamm** (Leutasch Ghost Gorge; admission free; ☎ 9am-6pm mid-May–late Oct), a series of metal walkways and bridges built into or suspended above the steep-sided rocky canyon. Along the way, you'll have several encounters with an imaginary 'ghost' living at the bottom of the gorge who reveals secrets about the area's geology, history and mythology. Hokey, but fun. Views can be rather dizzying, so don't attempt if you're afraid of heights. Parking is €5.

### SKIING

For details about the Kranzberg, Mittenwald's local ski mountain, see the boxed text on p58. A special treat for advanced skiers is surfing the powder of the 7km **Dammkar** (☎ 8480; day pass adult/child €27/18; ☎ 9am-4.30pm), a spectacular free ride area reached via a 400m tunnel from the Karwendelbahn mountain station.

For equipment hire and ski or snowboard instruction, contact the **Erste Skischule Mittenwald** (☎ 3582; Bahnhofplatz). A three-hour ski or snowboard lesson costs €30, while complete ski gear goes for €20.

## Sleeping & Eating

The tourist office website (www.mittenwald.de) has a room-booking function.

**Gästehaus Sonnenbichl** (☎ 922 30; www.sonnenbichl-tourismus.de; Klausnerweg 32; s €34-43, d €68-82; ☎) At this hillside charmer, about a five-minute saunter from town, you'll sleep like a log in bright, well-kept rooms that skimp neither on space nor country-style charisma. We also like the soul-restoring Karwendel views from the balcony or the pretty garden, and the free bike and toboggan rentals.

**Hotel Post** (☎ 938 2333; www.posthotel-mittenwald.de; Obermarkt 9, enter via Karwendelstrasse 14; s €50-75, d €86-136; ☎) Mittenwald's premier in-town hotel is a classic outpost of charm and tradition. Rooms, many with balconies, come in three styles and categories; we recommend the bright and spacious **Jugendstilzimmer** that face away from the street. The restaurant does interesting things with local rabbit and deer.

**Gröblalm** (☎ 9110; www.groebalm.de, in German; Gröblalm 1-2; s €54, d €83-89; ☎) This family-run mountain lodge on a sunny slope embraces you with warmth, peace and quiet and delivers fabulous views. Rooms, while comfortable, are not of the latest vintage but the sauna area has been redone in a neat Alpine mountain-hut look. Restaurant dishes show off local farm and field products.

**Restaurant Arnspitze** (☎ 2425; Innsbrucker Strasse 68; mains €17-23; ☎ Thu-Mon, closed Apr) Regional cooking goes gourmet at Herbert Wipfelder's critically acclaimed restaurant, about 1km south of town. Dishes such as rabbit paired with goat cheese or olive-encrusted lamb spotlight both the quality ingredients and the chef's know-how.

## Getting There & Away

Mittenwald is served by hourly trains from Munich (€19.10, two hours), Garmisch-Partenkirchen (€3.50, 20 minutes) and Innsbruck (€9.70, one hour).

RVO bus 9608 links Mittenwald with Garmisch-Partenkirchen (30 minutes) frequently and Kochel (50 minutes) twice daily.

Mittenwald is about 20km southeast of Garmisch-Partenkirchen on the B2.

## OBERRAMMERRGAU

☎ 08822 / pop 5400 / elev 850m

A blend of genuine piety, religious kitsch and commercial greed of Disney proportions, Oberammergau sometimes seems to sink under the weight of day-trippers. Sadly, the crush of humanity may distract from the town's triple charms: its gorgeous valley setting below the jagged Kofel peak, a 500-year-old woodcarving tradition and a wealth of houses painted with *Lüftlmalerei*. About 20km north of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Oberammergau is known worldwide for hosting the famous **Passion Play**, acted out by hundreds of townspeople every 10 years since 1634 to give thanks for being spared from the plague. The next one is in 2010.

For information, stop by the **tourist office** (☎ 923 10; www.oberammergau.de; Eugen-Papst-Strasse 9a; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat year-round, plus 10am-noon Sun Jun-Oct). Internet access is available at **Hotel Alte Post** (☎ 9100; Dorfstrasse 19).

## Sights & Activities

It's hard to escape the hordes, but one place that's usually pretty quiet is the church of St

**Peter and Paul** (Herkulan-Schwaiger-Gasse 5), another fine collaboration by local master artists Joseph Schmuzer (design and stucco) and Matthäus Günther (frescoes). The churchyard has some moody headstones and crosses.

But ultimately it's the eye-popping *Lüftlmalerei* frescoes that give Oberammergau its special appeal. Some even have endearing fairy-tale themes, such as the **Hänsel & Gretel House** (Ettaler Strasse 41) and the **Little Red Riding Hood House** (Ettaler Strasse 48). The most accomplished, though, is the **Pilatushaus** (☎ 923 10; Ludwig-Thoma-Strasse 10; admission free; ☹ 1-6pm Tue-Sat May-Oct), which depicts the scene of Jesus being handed his death sentence. Inside, local woodcarvers are busy carving and chiselling everything from saints to devils. This local tradition is also a main focus of the **Oberammergau Museum** (☎ 941 36; Dorfstrasse 8; adult/child/concession €4/1/3.50; ☹ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Dec-Jan & Apr-Oct), although the historic crib collection on the ground floor is even more impressive.

The Passion Play is performed at the **Passionstheater** (☎ 923 10; Passionswiese 1; tour adult/child/concession €4/1/3.50; ☹ tours 9.30am-5pm Mar-Oct & Dec). The 45-minute tour provides ample background on the play's history and also lets you peek at the costumes and sets. Museum/theatre combo tickets are €6/1/5. Ask at the tourist office about performances.

About 1.5km east of town, the **Laber-Bergbahn** (☎ 4770; www.laber-bergbahn.de; Ludwig-Lang-Strasse 59; one way/return adult/child €8.50/13.50; ☹ 9am-4.30pm Sep-Jun, 9am-5.30pm Jul & Aug) ferries hikers, skiers and sightseers to the peak of Mt Laber (1684m), which also has a restaurant and sweeping views of the valley and Alps. Day ski passes per adult/child cost €21.50/14.50.

Another fun place to frolic around is the **Wellenberg** (☎ 923 60; www.wellenberg-oberammergau.de; Himmelsreich 52; adult/child per 4hr €9/6, with sauna €14/9; ☹ 10am-9pm) indoor/outdoor swimming pool and sauna complex, where highlights include a sandy beach and a circular wave pool.

### Sleeping & Eating

Oberammergau has plenty of private rooms, small *Pensionen* and holiday flats. Otherwise, your best budget bet is the **DJH hostel** (☎ 4114; www.jugendherberge.de/jh/oberammergau, in German; Malensteinweg 10; dm €18-22; ☹ closed mid-Nov-late Dec; ☹), a 132-bed facility with modern bunks and baths. It's about a 15-minute walk south of the train station.

### LÜFTLMALEREI

Throughout the Bavarian Alps you'll come across timeworn houses with façades swathed in frescoes in a style called *Lüftlmalerei*. It's a type of trompe l'oeil painting that became popular in the 18th century to show off the region's increasing wealth. The term literally means 'air painting' but is actually derived from a house in Oberammergau named 'Zum Lüftl' and owned by Franz Seraph Zwink (1748-92), who pioneered the practice. Images usually have a localised, religious flavour (the disciples in local garb, Mary in a dirndl), but some also illustrate the profession of the house owner or depict decidedly secular beer-hall scenes. The best examples are in Oberammergau (p141) and Mittenwald (p140).

**Hotel Alte Post** (☎ 9100; www.ogau.de; Dorfstrasse 19; s €42-48, d €63-84; ☹ ☑) This frescoed hotel has a pedigree going back to 1612 but is also solidly rooted in the here and now. Thumbs up for rooms sparking in a frill-free country look, wi-fi and the on-site internet café. It has an *Umweltsiegel* (ecoseal) from the Bavarian government for operating ecoconsciously. The restaurant (mains €8 to €16) is OK but nothing special.

**Hotel Turmwirt** (☎ 926 00; www.turmwirt.de; Ettalerstrasse 2; s €67, d €94-108; ☹ ☑) This homey inn (restaurant mains €9 to €18) has 22 spotless rooms done up in fine-looking Bavarian style and outfitted with all major amenities; many have balconies. It's run by the well-travelled and personable Glas family, who speak fluent English. Light sleepers may be bothered by the church bells next door.

**Hotel Antonia** (☎ 920 10; www.hotel-antonia.com; Freikorpsstrasse 5; s/d/tr €68/89/98) Another fine place to sleep. It has bright and modern rooms and free wi-fi.

**Landgasthaus Café Beim Kargl** (☎ 640; Im Kirchfeld 9, Saulgrub; mains €12-24; ☹ 11am-midnight) It's worth the quick drive north of town to savour Anton Kargl's exquisite Old Bavarian cooking made almost exclusively with locally sourced organic meats and vegetables. He does magical things with *Bärlauch*, a wild-growing leafy herb with a garlicky taste, which he turns into pastas, pestos, soups, even schnapps.

### Getting There & Around

Hourly trains connect Munich with Oberammergau with a change at Murnau (€15.60, 1¼ hours). RVO bus 9606 links Oberammergau with Füssen and the Wieskirche as well as Garmisch-Partenkirchen almost hourly. For bike rental, **Sportzentrale Papistock** (☎ 4178; Bahnhofstrasse 6a) charges €10 per day.

### ETTAL

☎ 08822 / pop 810 / elev 877m

Ettal would be another turn in the road were it not for its famous monastery **Kloster Ettal** (☎ 740; www.kloster-ettal.de; admission free; ☹ 8am-6pm). Ludwig der Bayer founded the place in 1330 after returning from a quarrel with the Pope in Rome. In his pocket he carried a marble Madonna, now the monastery's prized possession and displayed as part of the basilica's high altar. A fire devastated most of the old Gothic structure, which was rebuilt in the sugary rococo style you see today. Enrico Zuccalli and Joseph Schmuzer pulled out all the stops to create this imposing complex with its vast courtyard, weighty dome and a façade sporting larger-than-life statues of the apostles.

In the basilica all eyes are drawn to Johann Jakob Zeiller's dome fresco, which shows a hearty celebration of the Trinity by St Benedict and his followers, with (count them) 431 individual figures. Elaborate stucco ornamentation smoothly frames the painting.

Today's monastery still has about 55 Benedictine monks, an enterprising bunch who manage not only a prestigious boarding school but also a publishing business, a hotel-restaurant, a brewery and a distillery churning out the famous Ettaler Klosterlikör, a sweet herbal digestif.

Check with the **tourist office** (☎ 3534; www.ettal.de; Ammergauer Strasse 8; ☹ 8am-noon Mon-Fri) about hotel options or try **Blaue Gams** (☎ 6449; www.blaue-gams.de; Vogelherdweg 12; s/d €42/80; ☹), a bastion of warmth and hospitality with modern rooms, dream views of the monastery complex and a well-respected restaurant (mains €10 to €18).

Ettal is about 5km south of Oberammergau on the B23 and served by RVO bus 9606 from Garmisch-Partenkirchen and Oberammergau and bus 9622 from Linderhof and Oberammergau.

### SCHLOSS LINDERHOF

The pocket-sized palace of **Schloss Linderhof** (☎ 08822-920 30; www.schlosslinderhof.de; adult/under 18yr/concession Apr-Sep €7/free/6, Oct-Mar €6/free/5; ☹ 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Oct-Mar) is Ludwig II's most irresistibly charming whimsy. Embedded in an idyllic valley about 13km southwest of Oberammergau, it hugs the hillside in a romantic setting of French gardens, fountains and follies. Ludwig used the palace as a retreat and hardly ever received visitors here. Like Herrenchiemsee (p151), Linderhof was inspired by Versailles and dedicated to Louis XIV, Ludwig's idol.

Linderhof is full of fanciful treasures and myth-laden frescoes, evidence of the king's creativity as well as his ostentatious taste. The largest room is the heavily ornamented **bedroom** with its enormous crystal chandelier. An artificial waterfall, built to cool the room in summer, cascades just outside the window. The **dining room** reflects both the king's passion for privacy and for newfangled gadgets: its central fixture is a 'magic table' that sinks through the floor to the kitchen. No need to see the servants.

Ludwig also poured enormous effort and imagination into the gardens and outbuildings, which are only open April to October. In the **Moorish Kiosk** he used to hang out pasha style, dressed in exotic costumes and

### LUDWIG'S BEST FOR...

The myth and mystique of King Ludwig II is one of Bavaria's most endearing attractions. Here's our list of favourite places to soak up his enigma.

- Over-the-top frilliness – **Schloss Linderhof** (above)
- Romantic getaway – **Roseninsel** (p129)
- Least overrun – **Königshaus am Schachen** (p137)
- Bragging rights back home – **Schloss Neuschwanstein** (p283)
- Unbridled opulence – **Schloss Herrenchiemsee** (p151)
- Final resting place – **Michaelskirche** (p91)
- Sad remembrance – **Berg on Lake Starnberg** (p128)

enjoying late-night entertainment from his flashy peacock throne. Just as kooky is the **Venus Grotto**, a fake stalactite cave with an illuminated lake and a conch-shaped boat with cherub prow.

Bus 9622 makes the trip out to Linderhof from Oberammergau nine times on weekdays and four times on weekends, while RVO bus 9606 comes in from Garmisch-Partenkirchen (1½ hours). By car, turn off the B23 and onto ST2060 between Oberau and Oberammergau. To avoid the worst crowds, come early or after 4pm in summer.

Schloss Linderhof is about a one-hour drive east of Schloss Neuschwanstein (p283) via Reutte (Austria).

## MURNAU

☎ 08841 / pop 12,000 / elev 700m

What is it about Murnau that has inspired so many artists? Is it the backdrop of the muscular mountains, the majesty of the lake, the crispness of the sky, the higgledy-piggledy village, the ethereal quality of light? 'All of the above', the painters of *Der Blaue Reiter* (The Blue Rider) might say. Two of the founders of this seminal early-20th-century artist group, Gabriele Münter and Wassily Kandinsky, first fell in love with Murnau in 1908. They continued spending their summers here until the outbreak of WWI in 1914, often joined by fellow *Blaue Reiter* members Alex Jawlensky, August Macke, Franz Marc and other avant-gardists. Marc bought a house at the nearby Kochelsee (p147), while Münter stayed in Murnau until her death in 1962. During the Nazi years, she fiercely safeguarded a vast trove of paintings, especially Kandinsky's, that had been deemed 'degenerate' by the regime. In 1957, she donated her entire private collection to the Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus (p93) in Munich.

## Orientation & Information

Murnau's *Bahnhof* and main bus station are about 700m northwest of the town centre. Take *Bahnhofweg* to *Bahnhofstrasse* south, which gets you to Gabriele-Münter-Platz and the tourist office. One block east is Obermarkt, the main artery, with the Schlossmuseum up on a low hill. The Staffelsee is about 1km west of Obermarkt. For information, stop by the **tourist office** (☎ 614 10; www.murnau.de; Kohlgruber Strasse 1; ☎ 9am-noon Mon-Sat & 2-6pm Mon-Fri May-Jul & Sep-Oct, 9am-noon Mon-Sat & 2-5pm Mon-Fri Nov-Apr).

The website [www.dasblauland.de](http://www.dasblauland.de) also has some good info.

## Sights & Activities

The **Münter-Haus** (☎ 628 880; Kottmüllerallee 6; adult/under 18yr €2.50/free; ☎ 2-5pm Tue-Sun), also known as the Russian House, has been faithfully restored to its original state when Münter lived here with Kandinsky. Highlights include the furniture the two of them painted, as well as an amazing staircase decorated by Kandinsky. Two rooms focus on the book *The Blue Rider Almanac*, a collection of essays and illustrations considered a groundbreaking manifesto on avant-garde art.

Münter's art spanning the entire arc of her creative life is on view at the **Schlossmuseum Murnau** (☎ 476 207; www.schlossmuseum-murnau.de; Schlosshof 4-5; adult/child/concession €4.50/2/3; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Oct-Jun, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun Jul-Sep). Other rooms focus on the *Blaue Reiter*, the writer Ödon von Horváth, the history of the palace, Murnau landscapes and painted glass. The **Münter-Brunnen**, a modern fountain on Gabriele-Münter-Platz, re-creates the floor plan of the Münter-Haus.

One much-painted motif is the **Staffelsee** and its seven islands. Warmer than most Alpine lakes, it's ideal for swimming. You can also cycle or walk around its 18km circumference or hire rowing or paddle boats. From May to October, boats shuttle between the three lake communities (Murnau, Seehausen and Uffing), the latter with beer gardens near the landing) four times daily. The entire loop costs €7/3.50 per adult/child.

## Sleeping & Eating

Lodging is bookable via [www.murnau.de](http://www.murnau.de), or swing by the tourist office for referrals.

**Griesbräu** (☎ 1422; www.griesbraeu.de; Obermarkt 37; s €50-65, d €80-95; ☎ 10am-1am; ☎) Right in town, rooms here have dark furniture and a lot of ambience. Some are wi-fi enabled (for a fee). The traditional brew-pub (meals €6 to €12) with beer garden and hotel makes sudsy amber Weissbier that goes exceptionally well with the roast piglet and crispy chicken.

**Am Eichholz Galerie & Art-Hotel** (☎ 5863; www.ameichholz.de; Am Eichholz 21; d €95-140; ☎) Artist Gina Feder (www.feder-art.de) has infused her quiet four-unit Art Nouveau retreat with a delightful marriage of tradition and modern designer flair. Splashes of colour, original art throughout and great mountain views make

for a romantic and/or inspiring getaway. Ask about art workshops.

**Alpenhof Murnau** (☎ 4910; www.alpenhof-murnau.de; Ramsachstrasse 8; s €140-195, d €190-290; ☎) An urge to splurge is well directed towards this *Relais & Chateaux* charmer that makes a virtue out of sophisticated chic while maintaining a laid-back vibe. Spacious rooms lack no comforts and rates include spa access.

For succulent pork knuckle and superb Weissbier, head to the **Karg's Bräustüberl** (☎ 8272; Untermarkt 27; mains €5-13; ☎ 11am-11pm Tue-Sun) brew-pub.

## Getting There & Away

Direct RB trains go hourly to Munich (€12.40, one hour), Garmisch-Partenkirchen (€4.80, 30 minutes) and Oberammergau (€4.80, 40 minutes). RVO bus 9611 makes at least hourly trips to Kochel (30 to 40 minutes). Murnau is on the B2, about 25km north of Garmisch-Partenkirchen and 36km southwest of Bad Tölz.

# TÖLZER LAND

## BAD TÖLZ

☎ 08041 / pop 17,700 / elev 659m

The picture-book-pretty spa town of Bad Tölz is a popular getaway for city-weary Münchners and it's easy to see why. The location on the Isar River is gorgeous, the old town quaint and the family-friendly attractions numerous.

## Orientation & Information

The Isar separates the spa quarter in the west from the Altstadt in the east. The *Bahnhof* is near the eastern edge of town, about a 20-minute walk from the river. The **tourist office** (☎ 786 70; www.bad-toelz.de; Max-Höfler-Platz 1; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) has a public internet terminal.

## Sights & Activities

Cobblestoned and car free, the *Marktstrasse* gently slopes through the Altstadt, flanked by statuesque town houses with painted façades and overhanging eaves. Have a closer look at the Sporerhaus at No 45 and the Pflegerhaus at No 59. The old town hall now houses the **Stadtmuseum** (☎ 504 688; Marktstrasse 48; adult/child €2/1; ☎ 10am-4pm Tue-Sun), which touches on practically all aspects of local culture and history. It has an especially good col-

lection of painted armoires (the so-called Tölzer Kisten) along with the usual assortment of beer steins, folkloric garments and religious objects.

Paralleling *Marktstrasse* is Säggasse, which leads up to the 707m-high Kalvarienberg where the twin-towered baroque **Kalvarienbergkirche** (Cavalry Church) dwarfs the tiny adjacent **Leonhardikapelle** (Leonhardi Chapel; 1718), the destination of the Leonhardi pilgrimage (below).

In the spa section of town, **Alpamare** (☎ 509 999; www.alpamare.de; Ludwigstrasse 14; all-day weekday pass adult/child €23/19, weekend pass €32/23; ☎ 9am-10pm) is one of the oldest fun pools in Europe but it's by no means old-fashioned. Rainy days evaporate as you splash around in the indoor and outdoor mineral pools, compete for waves in the surfing pool and chase each other down breakneck waterslides. Afterwards, saunas and steam rooms invite unwinding. Take bus 9570 (from the *Bahnhof*) to the Kurviertel/Alpamare stop.

Southwest of town, the **Blomberg** (1248m) is a family-friendly mountain with a wicked **Alpine slide**. This fibreglass track snakes 1.3km downhill through 17 hairpin bends, with you crouched on wheeled bobsleds and controlling the speed with a joystick. You can go as fast as 50km/h but be careful not to ram anyone or to fly off the track, and wear a long-sleeved shirt and jeans. Getting up the hill involves a chairlift ride aboard the **Blombergbahn** (☎ 3726; adult/child return top station €8/3.50; ☎ 9am-6pm May-Oct, 9am-4pm Nov-Apr weather permitting). Riding to the midway station and sliding down costs €4/3.50 per adult/child, with discounts for multiple trips. In winter there's skiing, but the real kick is the 5.5km **toboggan track**; half-day passes are €11/9 per adult/child and sledges cost an extra €6.50.

Back in town, the traditional **Marionettentheater Bad Tölz** (☎ 741 46; Schlossplatz 1) has delighted young and old since 1908 with fanciful tales acted out by endearing, handcrafted puppets on a string.

## Festivals & Events

Every year on 6 November the town celebrates the patron saint of horses, Leonhard, with the famous **Leonhardifahrt**, a pilgrimage up to the Leonhardi chapel on Kalvarienberg. Townsfolk dress up in their finest traditional costume for the occasion and ride in garlanded horse-drawn carts to the strains of brass bands.

## Sleeping & Eating

For a casual meal, try **Solo** (☎ 730 923; Königsdorfer Strasse 2; mains €7-10; ☎ 9am-midnight), in town and right on the Isar, which draws an all-ages crowd with global bistro favourites (pasta, curries, enchiladas, salads).

**Altes Fährhaus** (☎ 6030; An der Isarluft 1; mains €13-28; ☎ 11.30am-2pm & 6-9.30pm Wed-Sun) Elly Reisser-Kluge helms this romantic riverside inn, where she orchestrates choice ingredients into such tastebud stunners as dove breast with foie gras tortellini. Rooms (singles/doubles from €70/100) are just as classy and overlook the Isar.

For additional lodging options, contact the tourist office (p145) or test-drive its online room search and booking function.

**our pick** **Auberge Moar-Alm** (☎ 08021-5520; www.moar-alm.de; Holzkirchner Strasse 14, Sachsenkam; mains €21-26, 3-course meal €29-48; ☎ noon-2pm & 6pm-midnight Wed-Fri, noon-midnight Sat & Sun) At this handsome chalet cum art gallery the kitchen swings between Mediterranean brio (excellent fish and seafood dishes) and heart-warming dishes from northern France. The warm, congenial hosts also offer cooking courses and baby-sitting for guests. It's about 10km north of Bad Tölz, just off the main B13, and well worth the drive.

## Getting There & Away

Bad Tölz has hourly train connections with Munich on the private Bayerische Oberlandbahn (BOB; €9.60, 50 minutes). Bus 9612 goes to Kochel via Benediktbeuern, bus 9557 to Tegernsee and bus 9564 to Lenggries.

## LENGGRIES

☎ 08045 / pop 9500 / elev 700m

Outdoorsy day trippers from Munich often deluge this tiny village, the gateway to hiking and skiing on the Brauneck (1555m). The recently modernised **Brauneckbahn** (☎ 08042-503 940; www.brauneck-bergbahn.de; one way/return €9/15, day ski pass adult/child €26/14.50; ☎ 8.30am-4.30pm) ferries people up the mountain. Snow levels can be unreliable, but on good days skiing here is pure joy.

Lenggries is also a popular departure point for white-water canoeing, kayaking and rafting trips on the Isar River. **Kajakschule Oberland** (☎ 916 916; www.viactiva.de, in German; Ganghoferstrasse 7) is an experienced outfitter offering courses (from €119) and rafting tours (four hours from €44, including equipment).

## DETOUR: LENGGRIES TO WALCHENSEE

This leisurely drive, 34km in total, links Lenggries with Walchensee, taking you past velvety meadows dotted with traditional Alpine barns. From Lenggries, take Wegscheider Strasse 2km south and turn right on the road marked Jachenau. Well off the busy highways, the soundtrack is of bubbling brooks and tinkling cowbells. You'll pass through a clutch of hamlets until you reach pretty **Jachenau** village, with bucolic *Lüftmalerei* paintings along Dorfstrasse. Continuing west, pay the road toll (€3) and carry on till you reach the **Walchensee**. The road skirts the south shore of this emerald-green lake with numerous spots for pulling over for a swim or a picnic. At the end of the road, turn right and reach Walchensee village, about 3km away.

The **tourist office** (☎ 501 80; www.lenggries.de; Rathausplatz 2; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon Sat & Sun, shorter hours in low season) can help you find accommodation, or try **Hotel Gasthof Der Altwirt** (☎ 8085; www.altwirt-lenggries.de; Marktstrasse 13; s/d €43/70; ☎ ☑), a massive inn from 1469 with cosy, traditional rooms, a small sauna and a good restaurant (mains €7 to €15). It has the Bavarian state eco seal for its thorough approach to ecofriendly hotel management.

**Dorfschänke Lenggries** (☎ 2108; Bachmairgasse 3; mains €8-20; ☎ 10am-10pm Fri-Tue, 5-10pm Thu), a locals' favourite nicknamed 'Bunker', welcomes you with the irresistible aroma of ribs, steaks and sausages tickled by an open fire. The home-made, unfiltered Kellerbier is the perfect complement.

Open late and good for a beer and a snack is the earthy **Hirschbach Stüberl** (☎ 8312; Karwendelstrasse 50; dishes €5-9; ☎ 5pm-1am Mon-Sat, noon-1am Sun), home of the famous **Hirschsemmeln** – giant sandwiches with delicious fillings.

Lenggries is the southern terminus of the private BOB railway from Munich (€12.40, one hour) and is linked to Bad Tölz by buses 9564 and 9553.

## KLOSTER BENEDIKTBEUERN

One of the oldest monasteries in Bavaria (c739), the venerable **Kloster Benediktbeuern** (☎ 08857-880; www.kloster-benediktbeuern.de, in German; Don-Bosco-Strasse 1; admission free; ☎ 9am-5.30pm) is run by Salesian

monks who operate a school of theology, environmental education centre, restaurant, youth hostel and guesthouse, and high-calibre cultural programme. The *Benediktbeurer Konzerte*, a classical concert series held in summer, is renowned throughout Bavaria.

Concerts take place in the **Basilika St Benedikt**, a baroque confection heavily stuccoed with flowers, fruit and vegetables in praise of creation. The ceiling fresco shows pivotal moments from the life of Jesus and is an early work by Hans Georg Asam, father of the famous brothers Cosmas and Damian Asam.

The small rococo **Anastasiakapelle** (Anastasia Chapel), the collaborative effort of top talent from the era, seems almost playful by comparison. It's dedicated to a 4th-century martyr whose bones came to Benediktbeuern in 1053 but who didn't get her own magnificent chapel until performing a miracle in the 18th century. When the monks and villagers found themselves under attack, with enemy forces about to cross the frozen Kochelsee, everyone prayed fervently to Anastasia for help. Lo and behold – a warm wind came up, melted the ice and drove away the marauders (who apparently were too lazy to go around the lake).

If that's too much hocus-pocus for you, return to earth in the **Fraunhofer-Glashütte**, which harbours the re-created workshop of, and exhibits about, Joseph von Fraunhofer (1787–1826). It was here in the early 19th century that the famed physicist discovered the 'Fraunhofer lines' (the dark lines in the sun's spectrum) and produced optical lenses that paved the way for spectral analysis. The exhibit was getting a revamp at the time of research but should have reopened by now.

From Munich, regional trains travel hourly to Benediktbeuern (€10.60, one hour). The monastery is just off the B11, about 14km southwest of Bad Tölz and served several times daily by bus 9612 (30 minutes).

## KOCHEL AM SEE

☎ 08851 / pop 4200

Charismatic Kochel, with its rich and sensuous palette of colours and lake motifs, greatly inspired one of the most influential early-20th-century German painters Franz Marc (1880–1916). Along with Wassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter, who spent their summers in nearby Murnau (p144), Marc was a co-founder of the artists' group *Der Blaue Reiter* (The Blue Rider; 1911). Marc first fell in love with Kochel in 1908 while still a student at the Munich Arts Academy, finally buying a house here in 1914. Two years later he died on the battlefields of Verdun. He's buried in Kochel cemetery and best remembered for his paintings featuring animals, horses in particular.

For information, stop by the **tourist office** (☎ 338; www.kochel.de; Kalmbachstrasse 11; ☎ 8am-noon Mon-Fri year-round, plus 1-4pm Apr-Sep) in the tiny town centre.

## Sights

Kochel's main cultural draw is the **Franz Marc Museum** (☎ 7114; www.franz-marc-museum.de; Herzogstandweg 43; adult/child/student/family €7.50/3.50/5/18; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar). At research time a modern, natural-stone-clad extension was being docked to the original hillside villa. Set to open by this book's publication, it will showcase not only oils and works on paper

## CARMINA BURANA

Medieval love poems in a dead language don't usually make it into film soundtracks. But through composer Carl Orff (1895–1982), the rants of a hedonistic band of Germans have survived to titillate, amuse and inspire movie scores for a host of films, including *The Omen*, *Excalibur* and *The Doors*.

*Carmina Burana* (literally, 'Songs of Beuern') is a collection of about 250 raging, erotic and humorous poems composed by goliards (defrocked monks, minstrels and wastrels). The 13th-century manuscript was found, by accident, in the monastery of Benediktbeuern in 1803.

Early in his career, Orff was mainly a music educator whose life was forever changed after he wrote his famous secular cantata, which disregards the notation of the Latin originals. The epic premiered in Frankfurt in 1937 to immediate acclaim. In treating these celebrations of eroticism, gluttony, drinking and gambling, his choral and instrumental arrangements were light-hearted, inspirational and downright frightening. Through the driving strains of the *Carmina Burana*, one fact about the 13th century is made abundantly clear: they sure knew how to party.



by Marc and fellow Blue Riders but also by other expressionist artists, including Brücke members Karl Schmidt-Rottluff and Ernst Kirchner. A third focus is on abstract post-WWII painters, such as Willy Baumeister, who were influenced by these early-20th-century avant-gardists.

At the southern end of the Kochelsee, you can learn how water is turned into electricity at the multimedia **Informationszentrum Walchensee** (☎ 770; Altjoch 21; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm), attached to the Walchenseekraftwerk, a 1924 hydroelectric power plant. It produces about 300 million kWh of clean energy per year by channelling water from the higher Walchensee via six giant tubes to the Kochelsee, some 200m below. The exhibit explains the process through models, turbines and other techno displays. Labelling is in German, but free English-language brochures are available. Sponsored by the energy concern E.ON, the centre is easy to dismiss as a propaganda ploy, but it's actually quite well done. Just ignore the third room where the company presents itself.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Campingplatz Renken** (☎ 615 505; www.campingplatz-renken.de; Mittenwalder Strasse 106; per adult/car/tent €6/2.50/3; ☎ Apr-Sep) New owners have breathed new life into this place. It's in a pretty spot right on the lake, but has little shade and can get cramped.

**Landhotel Herzogstand** (☎ 324; www.herzogstand.de; Herzogstandweg 3; s €44-55, d €70-100; ☎ ☒ ☑) King Ludwig II once kept his horses at this traditional hotel, which counts country-style rooms, a huge garden and a convivial restaurant among its assets. It has the Bavarian ecoseal and has Viabono (green hotel association) accreditation.

**Alpenhof Postillion** (☎ 1820; www.alpenhofpostillion.de; Kalmbachstr 1; s/d from €50/100; ☎ ☒ ☑ ☒) At this good-value inn rooms come in soothing colours and with free wi-fi, and dishes (mains €10 to €16) starring fresh lake fish or home-grown *Bärlauch* (wild garlic) are the kitchen's best ambassadors. This hotel also minimises energy consumption and uses ecofriendly technology. Kids will love splashing around in the grotto-like minipool.

### Getting There & Away

Kochel is about 22km southwest of Bad Tölz and is served several times daily by bus 9612 from Bad Tölz via Benediktbeuern (40 minutes). Trains from Munich connect with Kochel hourly; change in Tutzing (€12.40, one hour).

## WALCHENSEE

☎ 08858 / pop 580

A Harley rider's dream road, the **Kesselbergstrasse** twists and turns between the Kochelsee and the much larger Walchensee, at 194m Germany's deepest Alpine lake and a water-sports mecca. In summer, when water temperatures may reach a tolerable 23°C, swimmers and sun worshippers crowd the pebbly beaches; the inlets along the southern shore are the prettiest. Want to catch your dinner? Enquire about fishing permits at the **Walchensee tourist office** (☎ 411; Ringstr 1; ☎ 9am-noon Mon-Fri, 1-4pm Mon-Thu); the Walchensee is one of the few lakes allowing foreign visitors to pull out pike and lake trout.

Rumours of Nazi treasure buried in the depths of the lake continue to captivate divers, but the Walchensee's real fame is as a hot spot of the windsurfing scene. A peculiar microclimate generating strong breezes during fine-weather days lures experienced surfers and even the sport's elite, such as Robbie Naish of Hawaii. On weekends, the water can get crowded. **Windsurf & Bike-Center** (☎ 261; Seestrasse 10), on the western shore right next to the Herzogstandbahn gondola, rents gear and runs courses.

A particularly rewarding day hike with superb views takes you to the peak of the 1731m Herzogstand, one of King Ludwig's favourite mountains. You can start either near Urfeld on the northern shore of the Walchensee or in Schlehdorf/Raut on the Kochelsee. If you want to enjoy the views without breaking a sweat, catch a gondola ride on the **Herzogstandbahn** (☎ 236; Am Tanneneck 6; adult/child one way €7.50/4.25, return €12.50/6.75; ☎ 8.30am-5.45pm Apr-Oct, 9am-4.15pm Nov-Mar). Those not prone to vertigo could extend this tour via the craggy, cable-lined ridge walk from Mt Herzogstand to Mt Heimgarten (1790m). From here, you could either double back or work your way downhill to Walchensee. All local tourist offices sell hiking maps.

Walchensee is about 35km southwest of Bad Tölz. Bus 9608 makes several stops along the western shore on its route between Kochel and Garmisch-Partenkirchen, via Mittenwald.

## TEGERNSEER LAND

Set against an Alpine stage and surrounded by forests, the Tegernseer Land is about 50km south of Munich and embraces the Tegernsee, one of Bavaria's most beautiful lakes. This fact has not gone unnoticed by Germany's money

elite – celebs, industrialists and blue-bloods – many of whom keep weekend villas here (which has inspired the nickname Lago di Prozzo, or Braggers' Lake). But as supermodels know, being blessed with great beauty can also be a curse. Here, this is especially true on sunny summer weekends when the only road linking the four lakeside communities gets as clogged as a Los Angeles freeway. Better to get out of the car and onto a trail or a boat.

The lake is usually warm enough for swimming from May to September. Point, a sandy beach on a small peninsula between Tegernsee and Rottach-Egern, offers the nicest shore access, although it can get crowded on weekends.

A leisurely way to explore the lake communities is by **boat**. You can travel between towns, make a full loop (€12) or a southern loop (€8) that stops everywhere except Gmund.

### Getting There & Around

Gmund and the town of Tegernsee (€9.60, one hour) are both stops on the private BOB railway from Munich (€9.60, 53 minutes).

RVO bus 9551 stop in all lake communities before continuing on to Munich (1¼ hours). Bus 9557 goes to Bad Tölz from Tegernsee via Gmund and Bad Wiessee, although it's faster to take the BOB and change in Schaftlach (€3.50, about one hour, depending on connection).

Bus 9559 makes a sweep of the lake communities every 30 to 60 minutes.

## TEGERNSEE

On the eastern lakeshore, the lake and region's namesake town is also the most historical and once had considerable pull on the monastic scene. Founded in 746 by Benedictine monks, Tegernsee monastery had a library that, for a while, was the envy of even the Vatican. In 1817, the Wittelsbach ruling family bought the place, used it as a summer residence and took over the monastery brewery, which descendants still operate today. Sample the suds in the famous **Bräustüberl** (☎ 4141; Schlossplatz 1; dishes €3.50-10; ☎ 9am-11pm), where grizzled locals mingle with noisy tour groups under the vaults of this historic beer hall. The beverage of choice is the delicious Tegernseer beer, known for its mild, malty taste. The menu has all the usual brew-pub eats, but the *Weisswurst* (veal sausage) with potato salad is recommended.

Next door, **Pfarrkirche St Quirin** (Church of St Quirin; ☎ 9am-7pm Apr-Oct, 9am-4.30pm Nov-Mar), with frescoes by Johann Georg Asam, completes the 'Bavarian Trinity' of palace, brewery and church. The complex also houses a grammar school.

Fans of biting caricature should check out the **Olaf-Gulbransson-Museum** (☎ 3338; Im Kurgarten; adult/child €4/1; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun). The Norwegian-born artist (1873-1958) worked for the Munich-based satirical magazine *Simplicissimus*, but spent much of his adult life in Tegernsee. The museum shows the entire range of his work, from cartoons to oils and drawings. His caricatures of Kaiser Wilhelm are world famous.

For general information, stop by the **tourist office** (☎ 180 140; www.tegernsee.de; Hauptstrasse 2), where staff can also make lodging referrals. For a killer hilltop location with postcard views, head to **Leeberghof** (☎ 188 090; www.leeberghof.de; Ellingerstrasse 10; s €78-180, d €200-320; ☎ ☒ ☑), a first-class boutique hotel with 15 individually decorated rooms. Even if you can't afford the steep tab, come up here for a meal (mains €16 to €25) or a drink with a view from the terrace or a cocktail in the stylish Sassa Bar. To get there, make a sharp turn on Leebergstrasse and follow the signs.

## ROTTACH-EGERN

The two-part town of Rottach-Egern, on the southern shore, is the most glamorous of the lakeside communities. Its streets are lined by beautiful old houses with painted shutters and façades. Many more houses with overhanging eaves and wooden balconies cling to the slopes of nearby hills.

Rottach-Egern is the departure point of the **Wallbergbahn** (☎ 705 370; Am Höhenrain 5-7, Rottach-Egern; one way/return €15/9 Apr-Oct, €4.50/7 Nov-Mar; ☎ 8.45am-5pm Apr-Oct, 8.45am-4.30pm Nov-Mar), a cable car up Mt Wallberg (1722m) where there's a restaurant, trailheads and predictably superb views. In winter you can head back down on the exhilarating 6.5m-long toboggan run – the longest in Germany!

If you have your own vehicle, a drive up the mountain on the panoramic **Wallbergstrasse** (toll €3) to the **Berggasthof Wallbergmoos** (☎ 5638; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Mon), is another fun thing to do. From here, it's a one-hour hike to the Wallberg summit through lovely Alpine terrain dotted with edelweiss and gentian. Also keep an eye out for snow hens and chamois.



Back in town, a lovely overnight option is **Hotel Gami Reiffenstuel** (☎ 927 350; www.reiffenstuel.de; Seestrasse 67; s €69, d €76-102; (P)). This friendly lakeside hotel has its own swimming beach, boat hire and a vast back garden for taking in the rays. Its countrified rooms are spacious and comfy, most with views of the lake and the Alps beyond.

If they're full, stop by the **tourist office** (☎ 671 341; www.rottach-egem.de; Nördliche Hauptstrasse 9) for more ideas.

For eats, locals' favourite **Beim Zotz'n** (☎ 2999; Wolfgrubstrasse 6; mains €6.50-12; ☎) from 5pm Tue-Sat, from 11.30am Sun) scores a perfect 10 on our charm meter for its three woodsy chambers, its jovial host Herr Bogner and, of course, the perfectly executed Bavarian-Tyrolean food (the *Krustenbraten* pork roast is a speciality). It's a bit hard to find but worth the effort.

Also good is **Weinhaus Moschner** (☎ 5522; Kisslinger Strasse 2; mains €9-20; ☎) from 6pm Wed-Sun, bar from 9.30pm), where you can warm up with rustic food in the wine bar downstairs, then indulge in libational flights of fancy in the upstairs cocktail bar.

## OTHER LAKE COMMUNITIES

Tegernsee's two other lakeside towns are family-oriented **Gmund** in the north and the spa town of **Bad Wiessee**, well known for its curative iodine springs and lavish new casino, in the west. Bad Wiessee has a **tourist office** (☎ 860 30; www.bad-wiessee.de) at Adrian-Stoop-Strasse 20, while **Gmund's** (☎ 750 527; www.gmund.de) is at Kirchenweg 6.

A few kilometres south of the lakeshore is tradition-minded **Kreuth**, whose beautiful 15th-century church is the destination of Bavaria's oldest Leonhardifahrt, a pilgrimage honouring the patron saint of horses (the biggest celebration is in Bad Tölz, see p145). Cross-country skiers have a scenic 23km trail to explore from Kreuth, which does not have its own tourist office.

Feng shui meets classy Bavarian country style at Bad Wiessee's **ourpick Romantik Hotel Landhaus Wilhelmy** (☎ 986 80; www.romantikhotels.com/bad-wiessee; Freihausstrasse 15; s €80-95, d €140-170; (P) ☎), which puts a premium on an eco-friendly approach to hospitality. The organic bath amenities, the plush robes, and the sauna and steam room in the small but exclusive spa are all thoughtful touches.

Gourmets should book early for a table at **ourpick Gasthaus zum Hirschberg** (☎ 08029-315;

Nördliche Hauptstrasse 89; mains €10-25; ☎) 11.30am-11pm Wed-Mon) in Kreuth. The region's star chef, Alex Winkelmann, is a wizard when it comes to giving Bavarian home cooking the gourmet treatment. Trout, venison, veal and other ingredients are all organic, locally sourced and paired with seasonal treats like white asparagus or porcini mushrooms. From 2pm to 6pm, snacks and home-made cakes are served. Dinner reservations are de rigueur.

## CHIEMGAU

The Chiemgau is the kind of holiday region that will have you storing memories by the gigabyte. Nature has been especially prolific here, creating a rich pastiche of landscapes from rolling foothills to the rugged peaks of the Chiemgau Alps, rippling mountain streams to romantic river valleys and moody moorland to majestic lakes, most notably the giant Chiemsee. Bordered by the Inn River in the west and the Salzach River on the Austrian border, the Chiemgau is perfect for outdoor pursuits of all stripes. Swimming, boating, windsurfing, cycling and hiking are all popular, while in winter the snow makes the higher elevations suitable for snowboarding and downhill and cross-country skiing. Toss in a few ancient monasteries and Ludwig II's grandest palace for cultural appeal and you'll have one potent cocktail of experiences.

## CHIEMSEE

Shimmering softly in umpteen shades of blue, the Chiemsee is backed by the Chiemgau Alps and is rich in trout, pike and other fish. Affectionately known as the 'Bavarian Sea', it's a haven for water rats, stressed-out city dwellers and anyone on the grand palace tour. Ludwig II liked it so much, he chose to build his homage to Versailles – Schloss Herrenchiemsee – on one of its islands. On summer weekends, ferries to the palace quite literally spill over with day-trippers, so come during the week or in the low season in order to understand the region's true magic.

Though not the prettiest lake towns, **Prien** and **Bernau**, about 5km south, are the most convenient bases for exploring the region. Both are stops on the Munich-Salzburg rail line. Of the two, Prien is the larger and more commercial.

## Information

**Chiemsee Infocenter** (☎ 08051-965 550; www.chiemsee.de; Felden 10, Bernau; ☎) 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat & Sun; (i) General information for the entire area; it's on the southern lakeshore, just off the autobahn exit Bernau-Felden.

**Prien tourist office** (☎ 08051-690 50; www.tourismus.prien.de; Alte Rathausstrasse 11, Prien; ☎) 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-4pm Sat, 8.30am-noon Sun May-Sep, 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri Oct-Apr; (i)

## Sights

### SCHLOSS HERRENCHIEMSEE

Ludwig II's worship of French king Louis XIV reached its pinnacle with the building of **Schloss Herrenchiemsee** (☎ 08051-688 70; www.herren-chiemsee.de; adult/under 18yr/concession €7/free/6; ☎) tours 9am-5.15pm Apr-mid-Oct, 9.40am-3.40pm mid-Oct-Mar) on its own island (the Herreninsel) in the Chiemsee. Ludwig truly pulled out all the

stops for his 'Bavarian Versailles', spending more money here than on Neuschwanstein and Linderhof combined. When cash ran out in 1885, one year before his death, 50 rooms remained unfinished.

The vast **Prunktreppenhaus**, a double staircase leading to a frescoed gallery and topped by a glass roof, is the first visual knockout on the 30-minute guided tour. But even this fades in comparison with the dizzying **Grosse Spiegelgalerie** (Great Hall of Mirrors), which is 10m longer than that in Versailles.

Just as gaspworthy are the chapel-like **Paradeschlafzimmer** (State Bedroom), where morning and evening audiences were held, and the king's **private bedroom**, encrusted with gilded stucco and wildly extravagant carvings.

For insight into the man, his warped brain and intriguing predilections, take a spin around the **König Ludwig II Museum** in the south wing

## DETOUR: WASSERBURG AM INN

Utterly enchanting **Wasserburg** (population 12,000, elevation 419m) hangs like a teardrop in a spectacular hairpin loop of the Inn River. It's a tiny, quiet spot with an almost completely intact medieval old town of turrets, towers, gables and steeples that's enlivened by a dynamic contemporary arts scene. The driving force here is the **Arbeitskreis 68** (www.arbeitskreis68.de), an artist group whose work can be seen along the 1.5km-long **Skulpturenweg** (Sculpture Path). It follows the river starting at Brucktor, a massive bridge gate at the end of the Rote Brücke (Red Bridge).

On the left past the Brucktor is the Heilig-Geist-Spital, a medieval hospital that now harbours the **Imaginäres Museum** (☎ 08071-4358; adult/child €2.50/1; ☎) 1-5pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, 1-4pm Oct-Dec, Feb-Apr), which shows eerily perfect reproductions of famous paintings – from Monet to Hundertwasser – created by a special screen technique developed by the late artist Günter Dietz.

Strolling around the old town, you'll eventually arrive at the central square, Marienplatz, lorded over by the imposing **Rathaus** (☎ 1050; tours adult/child €2.50/1; ☎) tours 10am & 11am Tue-Sun, 2pm, 3pm & 4pm Tue-Fri), the Gothic town hall that also survived a stint as a bakery. Join a tour to see the stunning 16th-century murals in the wood-panelled council chamber. The **tourist office** (☎ 08071-105 22; www.wasserburg.de; ☎) 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat May-Sep, 9am-3pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat Oct-Apr) is downstairs.

**Boat trips** (☎ 08071-4793; adult/child €6/3; ☎) Apr-Oct) depart from the south end of the Rote Brücke. Call or check locally for current departure times. To truly appreciate Wasserburg's scenic setting, though, head up to the **Schöne Aussicht** viewpoint on the Kellerberg, reached in a 15-minute walk via Salzburger Strasse from the south side of the Rote Brücke.

If hunger strikes, you'll eat sensationally well and cheaply in the **Wasserburger Markthallen** (☎ 08071-3838; Salzsenderzeile 4; mains around €4), famous for its Saturday all-you-can-eat buffet breakfast (€7.50; served to 11am). Or stock up on crusty bread, cheese and cold cuts here and find a picnic spot by the inn. For lunch or dinner (preferably on the terrace) prepared with local, seasonal and organic ingredients, there are few finer destinations than the **Weisses Rössl** (☎ 08071-502 91; Herrergasse 1; menu lunch €12.50, dinner €23-34; ☎) 11.30am-2pm & 6pm-midnight Tue-Sat). If you'd like to spend the night, check out the romantic **Hotel Fletzinger** (☎ 08071-908 90; www.hotel-fletzinger.de; Fletzingerasse 1; s €66-78, d €88-128; (P)), with its modern designer rooms, stylish bar and plenty of thoughtful perks like fresh fruit and wi-fi.

Wasserburg is about 28km north of the Chiemsee, near the crossroads of the B15 and the B304. RVO bus 9414 makes the trip from Prien am Chiemsee several times daily in 50 minutes.

**DETOUR: URSCHALLING**

God depicted as a woman? Nope, it's not the work of Damien Hirst or some other 'art heretic' but of an unknown 15th-century artist who decorated the walls of the **St Jacobuskirche** in the hamlet of Urschalling with this 'offensive' imagery. The Church was so incensed that the frescoes were swiftly painted over and remained hidden until a cleaning lady accidentally rediscovered them in 1923. In fact, this unusual take on the Holy Trinity (located on the altar ceiling) continues to stir debate today.

To get to the church from Prien am Chiemsee, take Bernauer Strasse south for 2km, turn right into Urschallinger Strasse and drive half a kilometre. If you find the doors locked, get a key from the sexton (☎ 5886).

of the palace. The broad collection includes his christening and coronation robes, displays on his Wagner obsession, blueprints for more manic architectural projects and his death mask, but nothing about his controversial death.

Ferries to Herreninsel leave from Prien-Stock (€6.20 return, 15 minutes), Bernau-Felden (€6.70 return, 25 minutes, May to September only) and Gstadt via Fraueninsel (€6.20 return, 20 minutes). Prien gets busiest, so board in Gstadt if possible.

It's about a 20-minute walk from the landing to the palace through lovely gardens.

**FRAUENINSEL**

From Herrenchiemsee boats continue on to the romantic Fraueninsel, the southern section of which is taken up by the **Frauenwörth Abbey** (☎ 08054-9070; admission free; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-6pm), a nunnery active since the late 8th century. Its ancient **basilica** has a Romanesque core, Gothic net-vaulted ceiling and fabulous baroque altars. Replicas of its Romanesque frescoes are in the nearby **Torhalle**, a gatehouse that's another century older still. It presents artistic or historical exhibits in summer.

Return ferry fare, including a stop at Herreninsel, is €7.30 from Prien-Stock, €7.80 from Bernau-Felden and €4 from Gstadt.

**Activities**

The most easily accessible **swimming** beaches are at Chieming and Gstadt (both free) on

the lake's east and north shores, respectively. The small beach at Urfahrn, about 5km west of Gstadt, is particularly nice. **Boats**, available for hire all around the lake, range from €5 to €20 per hour, depending on the type.

Rainy days are best spent in **Prienavera** (☎ 08051-609 570; Seestrasse 120, Prien; adult/child 4hr pass €10/5.50, day pass €12/6.50, sauna extra €3; ☎ 10am-9pm Mon-Fri, 9am-9pm Sat & Sun), an enormous pool complex with sauna, steam baths, slides, Jacuzzi and fitness area in Prien-Stock. The **beach** (admission €2.50; ☎ 9am-8pm) opens from May to September.

Reasonably fit cyclists can cover the lake's 65km circumference in a day. Rent bikes from **Radverleih Chiemsee** (☎ 964 789; Prien-Stock), right by the minigolf course in Prien harbour. Touring bikes cost €5 per day and mountain bikes range from €10 to €18.

**Festivals & Events**

For three hot days in late August, the world's reggae elite and some 25,000 of their fans come together for the open-air **Chiemsee Reggae Summer** (www.chiemsee-reggae.de), one of Europe's largest such festivals in Uebersee, close to the lake's southern shore.

**Sleeping**

**Panorama Camping Harras** (☎ 08051-904 613; www.camping-harras.de; Harrasser Strasse 135, Prien; per person/tent/car €5.50/3.60/1.70; ☎ Apr-Nov) In a scenic location on a peninsula, this modern campground has top-notch bathrooms, a private beach, catamaran and windsurfing gear rentals and a restaurant with lakeview terrace. Prices are 15% higher for stays under four days.

**DJH hostel** (☎ 08051-687 70; www.prien.jugendherberge.de, in German; Carl-Braun-Strasse 66, Prien; dm €18.50-22.50; ☎ closed Dec-mid-Feb; ☎) Often deluged with school groups, Prien's modernised hostel doubles as an environmental study centre and is about a 15-minute walk from the Hauptbahnhof.

**Gästehaus Lechner** (☎ 08051-7373; www.gaestehaus-lechner.de; Aschauerstrasse 85, Bernau; s €37.50, d €52-62, apt €53-66) This renovated farmhouse on the quiet outskirts of Bernau offers quite literally a breath of fresh air. You'll be charmed by the owner, the modern country-look rooms and the redolent garden with private pond. There's a surcharge for stays of under three days.

**Hotel Bonnschlössl** (☎ 08051-965 6990; www.bonnschloessl.de; Ferdinand-Bonn-Strasse 2, Bernau; s €42-72, d €70-97; ☎) Fancy yourself knight and damsel in this turreted 1477 palace with rooms

of considerably more modern vintage. The integrated spa has a long menu of relaxation options (massages from €21) and breakfast on the terrace overlooking the rambling garden is just as blissful.

**Inselhotel zur Linde** (☎ 08054-903 66; www.linde-frauenchiemsee.de; Fraueninsel; s/d €70/120; ☎) Once the last ferry boat leaves the Fraueninsel, the ambience goes from frantic to romantic in no time. Take a deep breath: a dinner in the cosy restaurant (great fish plucked fresh from the lake; mains €6.50 to €16.50) and a night in this 600-year-old hotel await.

**Eating**

**Hacienda** (☎ 4448; Seestrasse 7, Prien; tapas €2-3.50, mains €7-16; ☎ 6pm-1am Mon-Sat) This sassy little number is often mobbed by hip and youthful locals lusting after tapas, paella, mojitos and sangria, and making it an ideal place to take a break from the schnitzel and *Schweinshaxe* (pork knuckles) routine.

**Der Alte Wirt** (☎ 890 11; Kirchplatz 9, Bernau; Brotzeit €4-9, mains €7-16; ☎ 11am-11pm Tue-Sun) In a massive half-timbered inn with five centuries of history, this place is an ambience-laden port of call for dependable Bavarian cuisine. The *Leberkäse* is the star of the menu but – thanks to an in-house butcher – all meat dishes are uniformly excellent. The waitresses dart around as if on roller blades.

**Badehaus** (☎ 970 300; Rasthausstrasse 11, Bernau; mains €6-15; ☎ 10am-1am) Near the Chiemsee Infocenter and the lakeshore, this contemporary beer hall has quirky décor and upscale fare enjoyed by a mix of locals and coach tourists. The Sunday brunch is popular; don't even think about showing up without reservations.

**Mühlberger Restaurant** (☎ 08051-966 888; Bernauer Strasse 40, Prien; mains €18-23; ☎ 11.30am-2pm & 6-10pm Thu-Mon) The shooting star in Chiemsee's culinary firmament; Thomas Mühlberger's cooking is all about substance, not smoke and mirrors. Only fresh and carefully edited ingredients find their destiny in such dishes as turbot with poached tomato, foie gras with apple compote and a swoonworthy *mousse au chocolat*.

**Getting There & Around**

Prien and Bernau are served by hourly trains from Munich (€14.20, one hour). Hourly bus 9505 connects the two lake towns (10 minutes) before going on to Reit im Winkl (p154). Local buses operate between Prien **Bahnhof**

and the harbour in Stock or go the nostalgic route aboard the historic **Chiemseebahn** (one way/return €2/3; daily late May-Sep, Sat & Sun Oct-mid-May), the world's oldest steam tram from 1887. Also from May to September, the **Chiemseeringlinie** 'hike and bike bus' loops around the lake, stopping in all communities.

**Chiemsee-Schiffahrt** (☎ 6090; www.chiemsee-schiffahrt.de; Seestrasse 108, Prien) operates ferries between Herreninsel, Fraueninsel, Bernau, Gstadt, Seebuck and Chieming on a seasonally changing schedule. You can circumnavigate the entire lake and make all these stops with or without getting off for €10.20. Children aged six to 15 get a 50% discount, and family tickets are also available.

**ASCHAU IM CHIEMGAU**

☎ 08052 / pop 5600 / elev 615m

Cradled by the craggy Kampenwand (1669m), tiny Aschau sits prettily in the forested Prien Valley, a mere 5km south of the Chiemsee lakeshore. It's not a bad town to base yourself in as long as you don't mind the sight of big-city boomers in beemers flocking to Heinz Winkler's Michelin-starred gourmet temple. Otherwise, Aschau keeps a pretty low profile and has some of the best hiking in the area.

Aschau's **tourist office** (☎ 904 937; www.aschau.de, in German; Kampenwandstrasse 38; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat, 10am-noon Sun May-mid-Oct, 8am-noon & 1.30-5pm Mon-Fri mid-Oct-Apr) is on the main drag.

**Sights & Activities**

The Gothic parish church is worth a look, but Aschau's main sight is the hilltop **Schloss Hohenaschau** (☎ 904 937; Schlossbergstrasse; tour & museum adult/child €3/2; ☎ tours 9.30am, 10.30am, 11.30am Tue-Fri May-Sep, Thu only Apr & Oct). It has 12th-century origins and still looks quite imposing despite now being a government-owned holiday retreat. Guided tours let you peek inside the baroque chapel, the prison and the ornately stuccoed Preysingsäle. Also inside is the rather lame **Prientalmuseum** (☎ 9.30-noon Tue-Fri May-Sep, Thu only Apr & Oct), with exhibits about local rulers and the valley's industrial heritage.

No matter if you just want to soak in the dramatic Alpine panorama or are planning an all-day mountain trek, be sure to head up the Kampenwand aboard the **Kampenwandbahn** (☎ 4411; An der Bergbahn 8; adult/5-15yr one way €11/5.50, return €15.50/8; ☎ 9am-5pm May-Jun & Sep-Oct, 9am-6pm Jul & Aug, 9am-4.30pm Dec-Apr). In less than 15 minutes, gondolas whisk you to the mountain

station at 1500m and a nearby restaurant. From up here you'll have access to one of the most extensive trail networks in the Bavarian Alps, including a 1.5km groomed trail in winter. Skiers have 12km of pistes to play with, including the 5km valley run; all-day ski passes cost €22.50/13.50 per adult/child.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Prillerhof** (☎ 906 370; www.prillerhof.de; Höhenbergstrasse 1; s €33, d €64-72; ☒) Run by an award-winning young hotelier, Prillerhof is both a feel-good and good-value place. The generously sized, modern rooms have pantry kitchens, balconies, fluffy bathrobes and other amenities more typical of pricier properties. The sparkling spa with sauna, Jacuzzi, steam room and such unusual relaxation devices as a 'body-swing' (only sounds naughty) is a perfect spot for reliving the day's exploits.

**Residenz Heinz Winkler** (☎ 179 90; www.residenz-heinz-winkler.de; Kirchplatz 1; à la carte from €48, 5-/8-course menus from €120-150; ☒ noon-3pm & 6.30pm-midnight) Make reservations early if you hope to join a Rolls-Royce crowd of diners for triple-Michelin-starred Heinz Winkler's complex, elegant and supremely satisfying gourmet creations. The dining room is part of the historic hotel that Winkler modernised in 1989. The elegant rooms (singles/doubles from €205/250) have the full gamut of creature comforts. Check the website for upcoming cooking seminars (packages from €510).

**SonnenAlm** (☎ 4411; dm incl breakfast €29.50 May-Oct, €34.50 Nov-Apr) For an unforgettable mountaintop sunrise, book a bed in this simple and family-friendly lodge near the mountain station of the Kampenwandbahn.

**Café Pauli** (☎ 907 40; Höhenweg 3; dishes €3-10; ☒ Apr-Oct & late Dec/early Jan) A good eatery for the tot-brigade is this charismatic place, which has home-made cakes, hearty snacks, a chestnut-shaded beer garden, and a petting zoo with goats and rabbits.

### Getting There & Away

Regional trains link Prien with Aschau hourly (€1.90, 15 minutes). Trains also stop in Urschalling.

## CHIEMGAU ALPS

South of the Chiemsee, the gentle foothills gradually rise up to an elevation of 1800m, forming the so-called Chiemgau Alps. The three key resort towns are Ruhpolding, Inzell

and Reit im Winkl, all top winter-sports resorts in Bavaria. **Ruhpolding** is a cross-country skiing mecca and hosts the annual Biathlon World Cup. **Inzell** is best known for its ice-skating rink where lightning-fast speed skaters compete in national and international events. **Reit im Winkl** has the largest Alpine ski area and is also the birthplace of Rosi Mittermaier and Eva Sachenbacher, both multiple Olympic medal winners in downhill and cross-country skiing, respectively.

In summer, the area is premier hiking terrain with trails suitable for everyone from stroller-strapped families to rock hounds. The main cultural draw is the rare and precious Romanesque Madonna (c 1200) in the church of St Georg in Ruhpolding.

### Information

**Inzell tourist office** (☎ 08665-988 50; www.inzell.de; Rathausplatz 5)

**Reit im Winkl tourist office** (☎ 08640-800 27; www.reit-im-winkl.de; Dorfstrasse 38)

**Ruhpolding tourist office** (☎ 08663-880 60; www.ruhpolding.de; Hauptstrasse 60)

### Activities

#### SKIING

The Chiemgau's top ski area is the **Winklmoos-Alm**; see the boxed text on p58 for details.

Cross-country skiers can go wild on 60km of groomed trails in Ruhpolding, 30km in Inzell and 90km in Reit im Winkl. A nice and easy terrain is the 'Drei Seen' area between Ruhpolding and Reit im Winkl. Fitter types should find the 40km sunny 'Chiemgau-Marathon-Loipe', which links all three communities and runs past several lakes, a scenic challenge.

All three resort towns have ski schools, which also hire out boots, skis and poles, as well as snowboards.

#### CYCLING

Beautiful scenery and routes from easy to demanding give the Chiemgau Alps an edge among pedal freaks. The most ambitious route is the **Chiemgau MTB Marathon Trail**, with both a 65km and a 130km version starting in Ruhpolding. The 50km **Reit im Winkl-Unken** tour is for moderate to advanced riders, while less athletic types may prefer the **Chiemgau Radweg**, which connects the three communities via a 34km route along the valley floor. Bicycles may be hired in all communities, or check out **Raddl**

**Sepp** (☎ 08663-5607; St Valentin 19, Ruhpolding), who charges between €7.50 and €18 and can also show his favourite spots on guided bike tours.

### OTHER ACTIVITIES

From Ruhpolding, cable cars go up the **Unternberg** (1450m) and the **Rauschberg** (1672m), where the imaginative playground is a big hit with kids. The hike up either is quite strenuous but can be done in two to three hours.

If you need to soothe sore muscles or just want to splash around, head to the **Vita Alpina** (☎ 08663-419 90; Brander Strasse 1; indoor 3hr without/with sauna €9.50/13, outdoor 3hr €3.20, ☒ indoor 9am-9pm year-round, outdoor 9am-7pm Jun-Aug) indoor and outdoor adventure pool. Frolicking stations include a saltwater wave pool, a steam bath, saunas, massage jets and a 76m waterslide.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Landhotel Maiergschwendt** (☎ 08663-881 50; www.landhotel-maiergschwendt.de; s/d from €39/78; ☒ ☒)

This low-key country inn on a quiet meadow outside Ruhpolding is a hit with families and a youthful, sporty clientele. Roomwise you can go traditional in the Alpine-style Stammhaus or cutting-edge in the ecofriendly and smoke-free Biohaus. All rooms have balconies.

**Steinbach-Hotel** (☎ 08663-5440; www.steinbach-hotel.de; Maiergschwendter Strasse 8-10a; s €47-64, d €84-130; ☒ ☒ ☒) The moment you enter the lobby with its lusty fireplace, thick oriental carpets and open-beam ceiling, you know this lodge is all about relaxation. Wrap up your day by unwinding in the sauna or pool, then dream softly knowing that the breakfast buffet will be there until a sleep-friendly 11am.

**Klauser's Café & Restaurant** (☎ 08640-8424; Birnbacher Strasse 8, Reit im Winkl; mains €18-35) Wolfgang Klauser learned his craft in some of Germany's top kitchens and now treats demanding diners to contemporary spins on Bavarian cuisine. Veal fillet with chanterelles mushrooms or monkfish with saffron sauce are typical menu items.

### Getting There & Around

Trains travel to Ruhpolding from Munich with a change in Traunstein (€20.30, two hours). Ruhpolding, Inzell and Reit im Winkl are all connected by RVO bus 9506 with several departures throughout the day. Bus 9505 goes from Prien am Chiemsee to Reit im Winkl via Bernau. Bus 9526 goes to Bad Reichenhall from Inzell.

## BAD REICHENHALL

☎ 08651 / pop 17,200 / elev 471m

Bad Reichenhall, on the River Saalach, sits serenely at the foot of the Berchtesgaden and Chiemgauer Alps. Its history and prosperity has quite literally been built on salt, which has been hauled from the underground mines since Roman days. To this day, Bad Reichenhall – meaning a spa 'rich in salt' – remains the largest supplier of table salt in Germany.

It's also a famous spa town thanks to its richly concentrated briny springs. Prominent guests such as King Maximilian II took the waters here. Spas aren't quite the rage they used to be, however, and a charming air of faded elegance now hangs over the town.

Bad Reichenhall is equidistant (about 20km) to Berchtesgaden and Salzburg, and makes a good alternative base for outdoor and cultural explorations.

### Orientation

Bad Reichenhall's compact Altstadt is custom-made for strolling, but otherwise the town is rather sprawling. The Hauptbahnhof is a short walk east of the historic centre, with the pedestrianised Ludwigstrasse as the main drag.

### Information

**Café Amadeo** (☎ 6404; Poststrasse 29; per hr €2;

☒ 8am-1am) Internet access.

**Post office** (☎ 778 150; Bahnhofstrasse 35) At the train station.

**Sparkasse** (Bahnhofstrasse 17) Bank with ATM and money-changing counter.

**Tourist office** (☎ 6060; www.bad-reichenhall.de; Wittelsbacher Strasse 15; ☒ 8am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat Apr-Oct, 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat Nov-Mar, 9am-noon Sun May-Sep)

### Sights

#### KURPARK

Plenty of signs lead you to the **Kurpark** (admission free; ☒ 7am-10pm Apr-Oct, 7am-6pm Nov-Mar), the town's historic spa gardens and a nice spot to break a busy day with a relaxing stroll. Folded into the groomed paths and mature trees is the neo-baroque **Kurhaus**, where blue-haired foxes often do the foxtrot to schmaltzy evergreens played by a home-town band. The bizarre structure opposite the Kurhaus is an open-air inhalation facility – the so-called **Gradierwerk** – built in 1912 and as quaint as it is big. From

**WAGNERIAN CREAM PUFFS**

For a unique treat, brave the tourist throngs at the **Windbeutelgräfin** (☎ 08663-1683; Brander Strasse 23, Ruhpolding; ☎ 10am-6pm), an endearing farmhouse café famous for its Lohengrin-Windbeutel – giant profiteroles generously stuffed with layers of berries, cream and ice cream. Inspired by the Wagner opera *Lohengrin*, each is decorated with a cardboard swan neck with a number on it that tells how many have been served thus far (more than 2.2 million, and counting). If you manage to eat three, you get the fourth one for free (the record, held by a guy from Berlin, is eight).

April to November about 100,000 blackthorn twigs are constantly drizzled with salty spring water, creating a fine mist eagerly gulped by those sedately pacing the ambulatory. To further improve your health, also stop by the Art Nouveau **Wandelhalle** to guzzle cups of saline mineral water from a marble fountain.

**ALTE SALINE & SALZMUSEUM**

A treat for tech heads, the red-brick industrial ‘cathedral’ housing the **Alte Saline & Salzmuseum** (Old Salt Works & Salt Museum; ☎ 700 2146; Salinenstrasse; adult/child €5.90/3.90; ☎ 10am-11.30pm & 2-4pm May-Oct, 2-4pm Tue & Thu Nov-Apr) is essentially a 3D text book on salt production through the ages. A fire destroyed the original 16th-century salt works in 1834, giving King Ludwig I an excuse to rebuild in fanciful neo-Romanesque style and with machinery still in use today. Guided one-hour tours (in German) thread through a network of tunnels and bring you face to face with mighty water wheels and pumps (bring a jumper, the temperature is a steady 12°C). Afterwards you’re free to bone up on ‘white gold’ (ie salt) in the museum.

**ST ZENO**

Church and architecture fans should make a quick detour to **St Zeno** (☎ 714 290; Salzburger Strasse 30), the largest basilica in Bavaria with Romanesque origins. Alas, only the original west portal survived a 1512 fire, but it’s a looker: two types of marble, pillars propped up by lions and a top decorated with sculptures of Mary, St Zeno and St Rupert. The church itself was rebuilt in Gothic style and later got the

obligatory barococo update. There are some fine altars inside, but it’s usually closed.

**Activities**

Bad Reichenhall offers the full monty of outdoor activities. Many easy hiking trails start right in town, but for a more challenging foray, head up Hochstaufen mountain (1771m) north of town. Climbing to the top takes about three hours from the Padinger Alm (Nonner Strasse 79), a mountain restaurant at 667m.

Lazy types can still reach lofty heights via a steep ascent aboard Germany’s oldest original cable car still in existence, the 1928 **Predigtstuhlbahn** (☎ 2127; Südtirolerplatz 1; one way/return €10/17; ☎ 8.30am-7pm mid-Apr–mid-Oct, 9am-5pm mid-Oct–mid-Apr). It goes up the 1613m Predigtstuhl mountain, where you can enjoy the views in the comfort of a hotel-restaurant or on several trails. The valley station is in the southern suburb of Kirchberg, which is served by bus 1.

**Club Aktiv** (☎ 672 38; Frühlingstrasse 61) and **Sport Müller** (☎ 3776; Spitalgasse 3) are outfitters that can organise various outdoor activities, including mountain biking, canyoning, skiing and mountain climbing.

A perfect rainy-day destination, the luxe **Rupertustherme** (☎ 01805-606 706; Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 21; 4hr ticket €14, incl sauna €19; ☎ 9am-10pm) is a natural saline-spring day spa and sauna complex that’s just the ticket to get rid of those aches. Its wraparound panoramic windows make you feel like you’re swimming through the Alps, and some of the heated salt pools are outside in the fresh mountain air.

**Sleeping**

**Hotel Bergfried & Schönblick** (☎ 780 60; www.fuchs-ho.tels.de; Adolf-Schmid-Strasse 8; s €35-44, d €64-76, tr €72-87; ☎ ☒ ☑) Rather than rest on its laurels, this popular twin property has recently been linked via a modern addition and treats you to a lavish breakfast buffet (€4.50) with garden views and a small library and big sauna perfect for playing back the day’s adventures. Rooms are spacious and inoffensively neutral-toned.

**Hotel-Pension Erika** (☎ 953 60; www.hotel-pension-erika.de, in German; Adolf-Schmid-Strasse 3; s €38-58, d €64-96; ☎ ☒ ☑) This delightful 50-room palazzo-style hotel combines old-style elegance in the public areas with snappy modern rooms where lines are clean and linens crisp. The garden is

fantastic for lolling about with the Alps in your lap. Closed November to February.

**Bio und Nichtraucherhotel Hansi** (☎ 983 10; www.hotel-hansi.de; Rinckstrasse 3; s/d/tr/q €44/88/105/124; ☎ ☒) Smoking is a no no and ecoprinciples are heartily embraced at this family-run charmer near the Kurpark. Retreat to cheerfully decorated rooms with wooden floors and energy-saving devices. Days begin with an extra-lavish organic spread that will spoil you with choices.

**Hotel Neu-Meran** (☎ 4078; www.hotel-neu-meran.de; Nonn 94; s €58, d €116-128; ☎ ☒ ☑) If you don’t fall in love with the mountain panorama, you will develop a hankering for the exquisite cuisine (mains €10 to €16) at this uphill and upmarket contender. Rooms blend traditional and modern country style and the nicest have a balcony perfect for serenading the sunset, cold beer in hand. Afterwards, work out the kinks in the basement spa with pool, sauna, steam room and small gym.

**Eating**

**Wieninger Schwabenbräu** (☎ 969 50; Salzburger Strasse 22; Brotzeit €3-10, mains €8-11, dinner buffet €7) For a cold snack or casual meal (from salads to roasts), come to this convivial place with a young clientele and a small beer garden. It’s about 2km north of the spa district.

**Café Reber** (☎ 600 3174; Ludwigstrasse 10; mains €6-10; ☎ 9am-6pm) This coffee-and-cake shop and café is famous for its *Mozartkugeln* (a round chocolate confection with a nougat and pistachio centre) and also serves a few hot dishes at lunchtime. Piano music is piped onto the terrace.

**Bürgerbräu** (☎ 6089; Waaggasse 1-2; mains €6-12) Next to the Rathaus, this traditional beer hall serves some interesting brews, including a rare Bavarian pilsner and a low-alcohol Weissbier that’s a great thirst quencher. Traditional fare comes in belt-loosening portions, so bring an appetite. Each of the rooms has a different ceiling, including a vaulted one that looks like an upside-down egg carton.

**Piccolino** (☎ 984 343; Schachtstrasse 2; mains €9-20; ☎ closed Sat lunch & Sun) This pint-sized Tuscan-style bistro is run by a delightful couple (he cooks, she serves) and offers a small menu of freshly prepared, seasonal cuisine. Standards are frighteningly high and as the sign says, pizza is not served.

**Kirchberg Schlössl** (☎ 2760; Thumseestrasse 11; mains €14-22; ☎ 11am-3pm & 6pm-midnight Thu-Tue) At this upscale indulgence you can stick with feel-good Bavarian food (eg suckling pig in beer sauce) or go contemporary with lighter and more international creations. Reservations advised.

**Entertainment**

**Bad Reichenhaller Philharmonie** (☎ 762 8080; www.bad-reichenhaller-philharmonie.de, in German) Whenever you’re in town, chances are that this well-respected 40-member orchestra will be playing somewhere, either in the Kurhaus, the Wandelhalle, the modern Kurgastzentrum (spa guest centre) or alfresco in the Kurpark summer pavilion. Check with the tourist office for the schedule.

**Magazin 4** (☎ 965 360; www.magazin4.de, in German; Alte Saline 12) The old salt works gets a contemporary edge at this music, cabaret and party pen. Completely oompah free, it’s a great spot for plugging into the Bavarian music scene – rock to jazz, reggae to pop.

**Getting There & Around**

Regional trains to Berchtesgaden depart at least hourly (€3.50, 30 minutes). Coming from Munich requires a change in Freilassing (€24.60, 2½ hours). To get to Salzburg, either take the train (€4.80, 30 minutes) or RVO bus 180, which goes straight to Mirabellplatz in about one hour. Bus 839 travels to the Königssee in Berchtesgaden.

**BERCHTESGADEN & BERCHTESGADENER LAND**

☎ 08652 / pop 7750 / elev 550

Steeped in myth and legend, the Berchtesgadener Land enjoys a natural beauty so abundant that it’s almost preternatural. A tale has it that angels, charged with handling out Earth’s wonders, were startled by God’s order to hurry up and dropped them all here. Framed by six formidable mountain ranges and home to Germany’s second-highest mountain, the Watzmann (2713m), the dreamy, fir-lined valleys are filled with gurgling streams and peaceful Alpine villages.

Much of the terrain is protected by law as the Nationalpark Berchtesgaden, which embraces the pristine Königssee, one of Germany's most photogenic lakes. Outdoor activities, notably hiking, are plentiful. Yet Berchtesgaden's history is also indelibly entwined with the Nazi period as chronicled at the Dokumentation Obersalzberg. The Eagle's Nest, a mountaintop lodge built for Hitler, is now a major tourist attraction.

## ORIENTATION

The main town in Berchtesgadener Land is Berchtesgaden, home to the Hauptbahnhof, which doubles as the central bus station, as well as most hotels, restaurants and the main tourist-office branch. About 5km south of town is the Königssee community of Schönau, while the Obersalzberg is about 3km east, Marktschellenberg is some 9km north, Ramsau is about 9km west and Bischofswiesen is 5km northwest.

## INFORMATION

**HypoVereinsbank** (Weihnachtsschützenplatz 2½, Berchtesgaden)

**Internet Café** (☎ 0160-9721 7399; Königsseer Strasse 17, Berchtesgaden; per 15min €1.50; ☎ 9am-8pm) Coin-operated, high-speed internet access.

**Nationalpark-Haus** (☎ 643 43; www.nationalpark-berchtesgaden.de; Franziskanerplatz 7, Berchtesgaden; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat) Hiking and environmental information galore.

**Post office** (Franziskanerplatz 2½, Berchtesgaden)

**Tourist office** (☎ 9670; www.berchtesgadener-land.com; Königsseer Strasse 2, Berchtesgaden; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat, 9am-3pm Sun May-mid-Oct, 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat mid-Oct-Apr) Has a public internet terminal.

## SIGHTS

### Dokumentation Obersalzberg

In 1933, the quiet mountain retreat of Obersalzberg (some 3km from Berchtesgaden) became the southern headquarters of Hitler's government, a dark period that's given the full historical treatment at the **Dokumentation Obersalzberg** (☎ 947 960; www.oberalzberg.de; Salzbergstrasse 41, Obersalzberg; adult €3, child & student free; ☎ 9am-5pm daily Apr-Oct, 10am-3pm Tue-Sun Nov-Apr). It's a fascinating exhibit that will probably make you queasy and uneasy, but seeing it is an essential experience. You'll learn about the forced takeover of the area, the construction of the compound and the daily life of the Nazi

elite. All facets of Nazi terror are illuminated, including Hitler's near-mythical appeal, his racial politics, the resistance movement, foreign policy and the death camps. A section of the underground bunker network is open for touring. To get there take bus 838 from the Hauptbahnhof in Berchtesgaden.

### Eagle's Nest

Berchtesgaden's creepiest – yet impressive – draw is the Eagle's Nest atop Mt Kehlstein, a sheer-sided peak at Obersalzberg. Martin Bormann, one of Hitler's leading henchmen, got 3000 workers to carve the steep road in only 13 months and to build this lofty retreat for the Führer's 50th birthday. Perched at 1834m, the innocent-looking lodge (called Kehlsteinhaus in German) is in an achingly scenic spot with sweeping views across the mountains and down into the valley where the Königssee shimmers like an emerald jewel. Ironically, Hitler is said to have suffered from vertigo and rarely enjoyed the spectacular views himself.

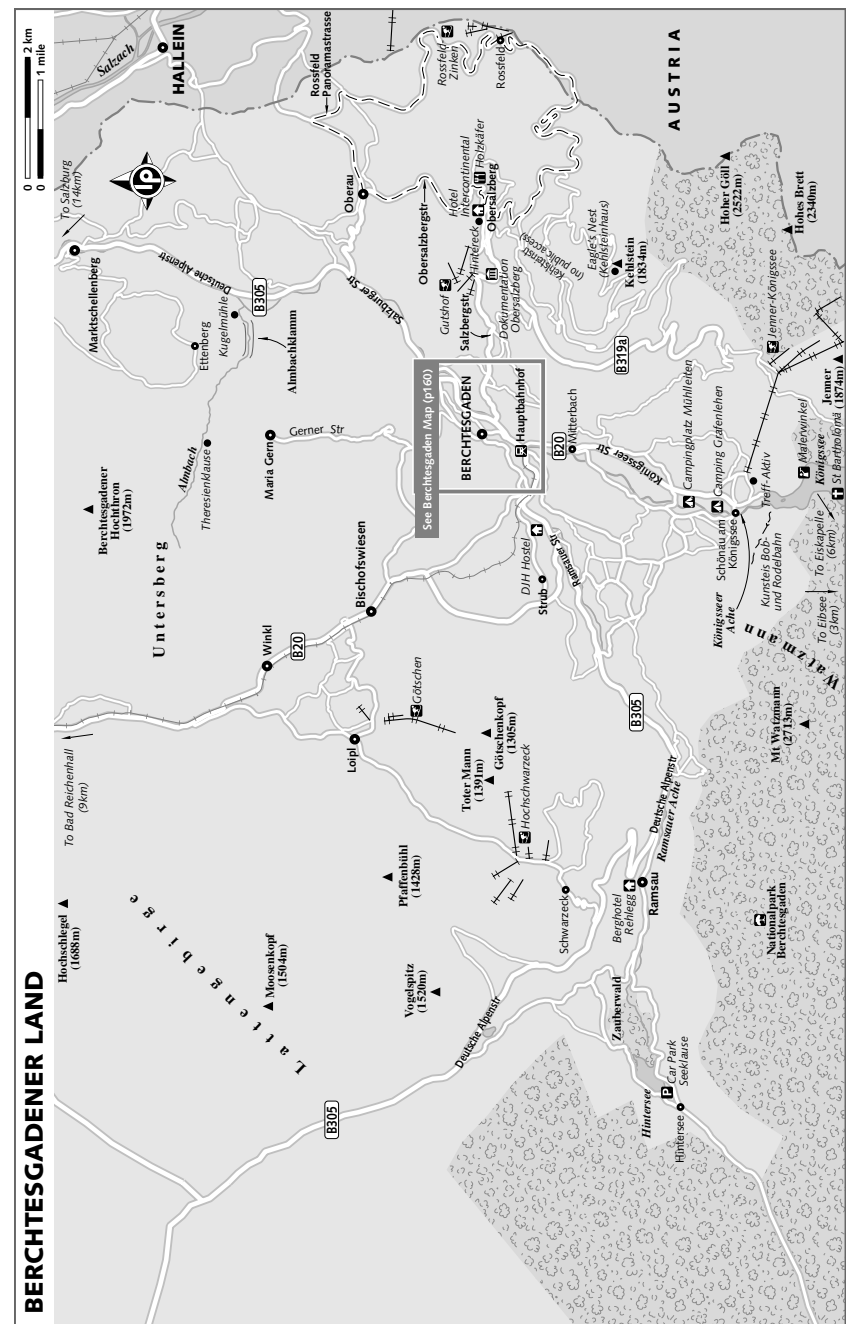
The Kehlsteinhaus opens to visitors from mid-May to October. It's both a splendid and a disturbing spot, but frankly, even just getting up there is a lot of fun. Drive or take bus 849 from the Berchtesgaden Hauptbahnhof to the Kehlstein stop, where you board a special bus (www.kehlsteinhaus.de; adult/child €13/12) that drives you up the mountain. It runs between 7.20am and 4pm, and takes 35 minutes. The final 124m stretch to the summit is in a luxurious, brass-clad lift. The Kehlsteinhaus now contains a **restaurant** (☎ 2969; mains €6-13; ☎ 8.20am-5pm) that donates profits to charity.

### Salzbergwerk

Once a major producer of 'white gold', Berchtesgaden has thrown open its **salt mines** (☎ 600 20; adult/child €14/9, combination ticket with Alte Saline in Bad Reichenhall €17.50/11.50; ☎ 9am-5pm May-Oct, 11.30am-3.30pm Nov-Apr) for fun-filled 90-minute tours. Kids especially love donning miners' garb and whooshing down a wooden slide into the depth of the mine. Down below, highlights include mysteriously glowing salt grottoes and the crossing of a 100m-long subterranean salt lake on a wooden raft.

### Königssee

Crossing the beautiful, emerald-green **Königssee** makes for some unforgettable memories. Framed by steep mountain walls some





5km south of Berchtesgaden, it's Germany's highest lake (603m), with clear waters shimmering into fjordlike depths. Bus 841 makes the trip out here from the Berchtesgaden Hauptbahnhof roughly every hour.

Escape the hubbub of the bustling lakeside tourist village by taking an electric **boat tour** ([www.seenschiffahrt.de](http://www.seenschiffahrt.de); adult/child €11.50/5.80) to St Bartholomä, a quaint onion-domed chapel on the western shore. At some point, the boat will stop while the captain plays a horn towards the Echo Wall – the sound will bounce seven times. Pure magic! The effect only fails during heavy fog. From the dock at St Bartholomä, an easy trail leads to the wondrous **Eiskapelle** in about one hour. See p70 for a detailed description of this fabulous ramble.

You can also skip the crowds by meandering along the lake shore. It's a nice and easy 3.5km return walk to the secluded **Malerwinkel** (Painter's Corner), a lookout famed for its picturesque vantage point.

### Schloss Berchtesgaden

In Berchtesgaden's main square, **Schloss Berchtesgaden** (Royal Palace; ☎ 947 980; Schlossplatz; adult/child €7/3; ☞ tours 10am–1pm & 2–4pm mid-May–mid-Oct, 11am & 2pm mid-Oct–mid-May) used to be a monastery and shows off items from the personal collection of Bavaria's former ruling family, who still own the place. Exhibits spread across three floors and cover all major artistic periods from the Romanesque to the Biedermeier. There are some real treasures here, includ-

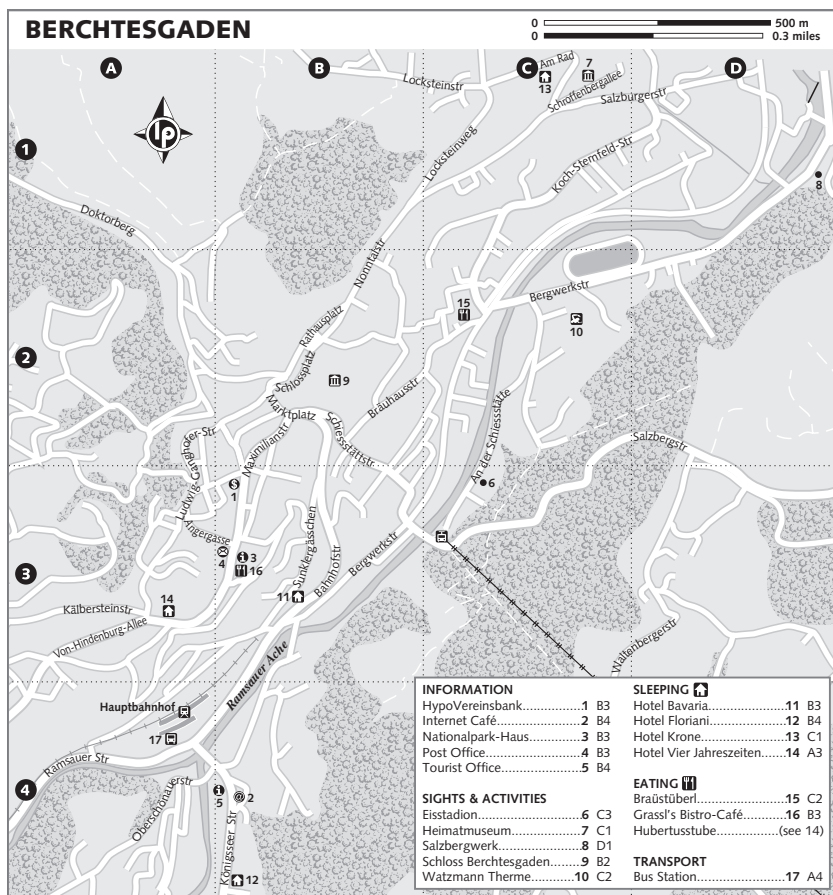
### HITLER'S MOUNTAIN EYRIE

Of all the German towns tainted by the Third Reich, Berchtesgaden has a burden heavier than most. Hitler fell in love with nearby Obersalzberg in the 1920s and bought a small country home here, later enlarged into the imposing Berghof.

After seizing power in 1933, Hitler turned the sweet area into a second seat of government after Berlin, bringing much of the party brass, including Hermann Göring, Martin Bormann and Albert Speer with him. They bought or confiscated large tracts of land and tore down ancient farmhouses to build a 2m-high barbed-wire fence and guardhouses along the three access roads. There were special barracks for SS members, a bunker system inside the mountain and, at a lofty 1834m, the Eagle's Nest.

Little is left of Hitler's 'Alpine Fortress' today. In the final days of WWII, the Royal Air Force and American long-distance bombers levelled much of the Obersalzberg, though the Eagle's Nest was left strangely unscathed. In 1952, the Bavarian government destroyed the remaining ruins and the American military used it as recreational zone, kept off limits by the general public. After troops left in 1996, the area was returned to the Bavarian government, which decided to build a commemorative exhibit. The Dokumentation Obersalzberg opened in 1999.

Yet, despite this effort of coming to terms with the past, the area's wartime legacy is never far below the surface, as demonstrated by the vituperative debate over the unseemliness of building the ultraluxurious Hotel Intercontinental near the site of the Platterhof, a Nazi-era hotel. In the end, the prospect of drawing more luxury cash to the area outweighed the local council's qualms and the new hotel complex was unveiled in 2005.



ing sculpture by Tilman Riemenschneider, baroque hunting rifles, a giant stag trophy weighing more than 18kg and porcelain from Nymphenburg. In the rose garden, you'll want to bring out your digicam to snap awesome views of the Watzmann.

### Heimatmuseum

Local crafts and history take centre stage at the **Heimatmuseum** (Local History Museum; ☎ 4410; [www.heimatmuseum-berchtesgaden.de](http://www.heimatmuseum-berchtesgaden.de); Schroffenbergallee 6; adult/child/student €2.50/free/1; ☞ 10am–4pm Tue–Sun Dec–Oct), one of the Alps' most interesting folk museums inside the petite Adelsheim palace. One exhibit traces the tradition of Berchtesgaden's hand-crafted boxes made from thin strips of pine, then painted and decorated with flowers and traditional designs. Other rooms display altars and dollhouses carved from ivory or cow bones, religious art, gingerbread moulds, toys and a vintage marionette theatre.

### ACTIVITIES Hiking

The wilds of the Nationalpark Berchtesgaden unquestionably offer some of the best hiking in Germany. Trails weave along placid lake shores, past lush mountains meadows, through dark forests and into sunny valleys, all beneath a phalanx of horned Alpine peaks. We've outlined a couple of hikes

here, but p68 provides great detail on two more.

### ZAUBERWALD

This family-friendly 1.5km hike starts at the car park Seeklause and skirts the shores of the idyllic **Hintersee**, just west of Ramsau, where rowing boats share the water with ducks. The trail continues through the 'Magic Forest', where massive boulders pile up haphazardly along the creek. May to July are the best months.

### ALMBACHKLAMM

The hearts of romantics will beat faster when traipsing through the **Almbach gorge** (Almbachklamm; ☎ 08650-461; adult/child €2.50/1.30; ☞ 7.30am–7pm May–Oct), a dramatic wonderland of steep cliffs flanking a rushing stream with waterfalls tumbling into clear pools. The trail picks up about 4km northeast of Berchtesgaden at the **Kugelmühle**, Germany's oldest functioning marble mill (1683) and climbs up to the dam at Theresienklause. From here, it spills out into a lovely valley leading to the village of Ettenberg with its pilgrimage church. This is a good spot for a picnic or a *Brotzeit* (snack) before heading down a steepish trail back to Marktschellenberg. The hike has an elevation gain of 320m and takes about three hours (walking time only).

The best time of year is between May and October. To get to the trailhead, take bus 840 from Berchtesgaden.

## Skiing

The Berchtesgadener Land has five ski areas with almost 60km of downhill slopes, 80km of groomed cross-country tracks, and plenty of ski schools and outfitters. Skiing conditions, however, are not as reliable as in other Alpine resorts such as Garmisch-Partenkirchen, or across the Austrian border. On the plus side there are cheaper lift tickets and less crowded slopes. For snow conditions, call ☎ 967 297 (recording in German).

For details on the two main ski areas – the Götschen and the Jenner – see the boxed text on p58. Good family playgrounds:

**Gutshof** (www.oberzalzbahn.de, in German; adult/child one-day lift ticket €16/9) In the Obersalzberg area; attractions include a 4km tobogganing track.

**Rosfeld-Zinken** (www.rosfeld.info; adult/child one-day lift ticket €14.50/11) The most snow reliable, with a separate area for boarders.

**Hochschwarzeck** (www.hochschwarzeck.info; adult/child one-day lift ticket €19/12.50) Has a tobogganing track and other attractions.

For equipment hire and courses, try **Treff-Aktiv** (☎ 667 10; www.treffaktiv.de, in German; Jennerbahnstrasse 19, Königssee), a full-service outfitter that also organises hikes, mountaineering and rafting trips and other outdoor adventures.

## Other Winter Sports

Speed freaks will love the **Kunsteis Bob- und Rodelbahn** (☎ 9670, 1760; Schönau). It's a 1.2km-long ice canal with an 11% incline and 14 curves, including a full loop. You can go down in a regular guest bobsleigh but if that's too tame, whiz down at up to 120km/h with a professional racer in a four-person racing bob (per person €85).

There's ice-skating at the **Eisstadion** (☎ 614 05; An der Schiessstätte 7, Berchtesgaden; adult/child/family €3/1.70/7), or you could head out to the Hintersee, which is usually frozen in winter.

## Watzmann Therme

Berchtesgaden's thermal wellness and fun activity pool complex, **Watzmann Therme** (☎ 946 40; www.watzmann-therme.de; Bergwerkstrasse 54, Berchtesgaden; tickets 2hr/4hr/day €8.30/10.80/15.30; ☎ 10am-10pm) has several indoor and outdoor pools with various hydrotherapeutic

treatment stations, a sauna and fabulous Alpine views.

## Rosfeld Panoramastrasse

Memorable views are guaranteed on a drive along the Rosfeld Panoramastrasse, which corkscrews up to an elevation of 1600m and at times crosses over into Austrian territory. There's some excellent hiking up here, for instance to the Purtscheller Haus at 1692m or the Eagle's Nest at 1834m. The toll is €4.30 for the car and driver, plus €1.70/1.10 for each additional adult/child.

## TOURS

An excellent way to experience the creepy legacy of the Obersalzberg area, including the Eagle's Nest and the underground bunker system, is by taking a four-hour tour with **Eagle's Nest Tours** (☎ 649 71; www.eagles-nest-tours.com; adult/6-12yr €45/30; ☎ 1.30pm mid-May–Oct). Buses depart from the tourist office and reservations are advised.

## SLEEPING

**DJH hostel** (☎ 943 70; www.berchtesgaden.jugendherberge.de, in German; Struberweg 6, Bischofswiesen; dm €16-20, s/d from €24/40; ☎ closed Nov-late Dec; ☎) This 274-bed hostel has great views of Mt Watzmann but can't quite shake that institutional feel. For an adrenaline jolt, swing up the new high-ropes course. The hostel is a 25-minute walk from the Hauptbahnhof.

**Hotel Floriani** (☎ 660 11; www.hotel-floriani.de; Königsseer Strasse 37, Berchtesgaden; s €29-46, d €58-86; ☎) The framed mountain-scene prints and plastic flowers won't land this place in *Architectural Digest* but who cares when the price is right, beds are comfortable, and your hosts are incredibly friendly and English speaking. It's just past the tourist office and within walking distance of the station.

**Hotel Krone** (☎ 946 00; Am Rad 5; www.hotel-krone-berchtesgaden.de; s €37-42, d €68-104; ☎) In a quiet spot, yet close to the town centre, this family-run property offers great extras (including wi-fi, a sauna and steam room) at very reasonable prices. The cosiest rooms are the lodge-style ones, which are clad in knotty pine. TVs are small but you'll be more than entertained by the stunning mountain panorama outside your balcony, provided you've invested a few extra euros for a south-facing room.

**Hotel Bavaria** (☎ 966 10; www.hotelbavaria.net; Sunklergässchen 11, Berchtesgaden; s €46-61, d €64-170; ☎) Owned by the same family for 100

years, this place has been seriously slicked up and now has delightful 'romantic' rooms and suites, the latter with canopy beds and private whirlpool. Breakfast is a gourmet affair with sparkling wine and both hot and cold items. The cheapest rooms are rather ordinary.

**Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten** (☎ 9520; www.hotel-vierjahreszeiten-berchtesgaden.de; Maximilianstrasse 20, Berchtesgaden; s €50-72, d €76-100; ☎) For a glimpse of Berchtesgaden's storied past, stay at this traditional in-town lodge where Bavarian royalty once entertained. Rooms are a bit long in the tooth but the spectacular mountain views (only from south-facing rooms) more than compensate. Don't miss dinner in the atmospheric Hubertusstube restaurant (right).

**Berghotel Rehlegg** (☎ 988 40; www.rehlegg.de; Holzengasse 16, Ramsau; s €70, d €120-160; ☎) This 17th-century farmhouse delivers 21st-century comforts and a mountain-cool vibe in its rooms with ministereero, sunny dining room with modern German cuisine and especially the bar-lounge, where you can plan the next day's adventure, cocktail in hand, next to an open fireplace. Active types have several saunas and two pools – one indoor, one outdoor – to look forward to.

**Hotel Intercontinental** (☎ 975 50; www.intercontinental.com; Hintereck 1; r €205-295, ste €281-678; ☎) An upscale palace in the clouds (1000m), the Interconti has luxuries such as all-season terraces, a library with fireplace, 24-hour fitness centre and state-of-the-art rooms – if you can accept its controversial location on the Obersalzberg (see the boxed text on p161).

The nicest campgrounds are near the Königssee in Schönau and include **Campingplatz Mühlleiten** (☎ 4584; www.camping-muehlleiten.de; Königsseer Strasse 70, Königssee; per site/person €6.50/5.50) and **Camping Grafenlehen** (☎ 4140; www.camping-grafenlehen.de; Königsseerfussweg 71, Schönau; per site/person €6.50/5.50).

## EATING & DRINKING

**Grassl's Bistro-Café** (☎ 2524; Maximilianstrasse 11, Berchtesgaden; mains €3-9; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat) This cosy café with the porcelain knick-knacks is an ideal lunch spot, not least for the breathtaking terrace. Besides its array of soups, sandwiches and daily specials, try its snow-capped Mt Watzmann chocolates.

**Holzkafer** (☎ 621 07; Buchenhöhe 40; dishes €4-9; ☎ 2pm-1am Wed-Mon) This funky log cabin in the Obersalzberg hills is a great spot for a

night out with fun-loving locals. Cluttered with antlers, carvings and backwoods oddities, it's known for its tender pork roasts, dark beer and Franconian wines.

**Bräustüberl** (☎ 876 724; Bräuhausstrasse 13, Berchtesgaden; Brotzeit €4-9, mains €8-13; ☎ 10am-1am Mon-Sat, 11am-10pm Sun) One of the few places in town that's open late (food until midnight), this venerable brew-pub pegs its inception back to 1645 but has a menu that's very much in the now. The beer hall drips with quaintness but the courtyard is the spot to be on balmy nights.

**Hubertusstube** (☎ 9520; Maximilianstrasse 20; mains €15-25; ☎) Peter Miller, the owner of the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten, also works his magic in the kitchen with imaginatively prepared German and Austrian classics. Game is locally shot, the trout is still alive when you order it and the warm apple strudel is worth the hip-expanding indulgence. Fine views of the mountains are served on the side.

**Le Ciel** (☎ 975 50; Hintereck 1; mains €29-39; ☎ 6.30pm-10pm) Don't let the Hotel InterConti location turn you off: Le Ciel really is as heavenly as its French name suggests and it has the Michelin star to prove it. Testers were especially impressed by Ulrich Heimann's knack for spinning regional ingredients into such inspired gourmet compositions as fried lobster with apple sweet-pea salad and coconut foam. Service is smooth and the circular dining room is magical.

## GETTING THERE & AROUND

For the quickest train connections to Berchtesgaden, it's usually best to take a Munich-Salzburg train and change at Freilassing (€32, 2½ hours). There are direct trains from Salzburg (€7.90, 1¼ hours), although RVO bus 840 makes the trip in about 45 minutes and has more departures. Berchtesgaden is south of the Munich-Salzburg A8 autobahn.

Berchtesgadener Land towns are well linked by local RVO buses. Pick up a detailed schedule at the tourist office. For a taxi call ☎ 4041.

# INN-SALZACH

## ALTÖTTING

☎ 08671 / pop 12,800 / elev 403m  
What Lourdes is to France, Altötting is to Bavaria. Every year more than a million



Roman Catholic pilgrims deluge this innocuous little town to pay their respects to a limewood sculpture of Mary. She arrived here about 1330, worked a few miracles and soon became everybody's favourite gal. Kings, dukes and popes, including current pope, Benedict XVI, who was born in nearby Markt am Inn (p209), have stopped by.

Mostly, though, it's nuns in habits, frocked priests and robed monks mingling with the mainly elderly pilgrims. Unsurprisingly, the pope connection has further intensified the stream of the faithful, turning Altötting ever more into a Disneyland for the devout. Commercialisation is rampant: images of an awkwardly smiling Benedict grace everything from beer steins to tea cosies. And, this being Bavaria, there's even a Papst-Bier. Altötting is also the starting point of the Benediktweg, a 248km cycling route has further intensified the stream of the faithful, turning Altötting ever more into a Disneyland for the devout. Commercialisation is rampant: images of an awkwardly smiling Benedict grace everything from beer steins to tea cosies. And, this being Bavaria, there's even a Papst-Bier. Altötting is also the starting point of the Benediktweg, a 248km cycling route taking in major Pope-related places, including Markt am Inn, Wasserburg and the Chiemsee. For more information, see [www.benediktweg.info](http://www.benediktweg.info).

Note that Altötting all but shuts down from mid-November to early March.

## Orientation & Information

Altötting's compact centre is anchored by Kapellplatz, a short walk north of the *Bahn*hof. For information, stop by the **tourist and pilgrim-age office** (☎ 506 219; [www.altoetting.de](http://www.altoetting.de); Kapellplatz 2a; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon, 8am-noon & 2-5pm Tue-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat, 10am-1pm Sun).

## Sights

Like moths to the flame, pilgrims flutter towards the **Gnadenkapelle**, a tiny 8th-century octagonal chapel right on Kapellplatz, where miraculous Mary perches amid silver and gold, clad in festive robes and blackened from centuries of exposure to candle soot. The chapel wall is lined with silver urns containing the hearts of various Wittelsbach rulers, including Ludwig II. Creepy! Everywhere you look, *ex voto* tablets have been put up in gratitude, indicating that Mary is still quite busy in the miracle department. Some of them are really quite beautiful examples of folk art. In a further show of devotion, super-pilgrims schlepp heavy crosses around the chapel, sometimes crawling on their knees and reciting the rosary in religious ecstasy.

Kapellplatz is ringed by half a dozen other churches, most notably the big twin-towered late-Gothic **Stiftskirche**, built in 1511 to accom-

modate the burgeoning throng. Inside is an oversized grandfather clock topped by a scythe-wielding silver skeleton mercilessly signalling someone's death with each swing. Known as the *Tod von Eding* (Death of Eding), the fellow was created during the 1634 black plague. If that's not macabre enough, descend down into the **Tilly-Gruft** (Crypt, enter via cloister; admission free; ☎ 7.30am-5pm) to view the bony remains of Catholic Thirty Years' War general Count von Tilly.

The church's **Schatzkammer** (Treasury; ☎ 5166; adult/child/senior €3/free/2; ☎ 10am-noon & 1-4pm Tue-Sun Apr-Nov) has plenty of precious baubles, most famously the exquisite Goldenes Rössl (Golden Horse) from 15th-century Paris, a small silver-and-gold altar smothered with pearls and jewels.

More impressive still is the rare **Jerusalem Panorama** (☎ 6934; [www.panorama-altoetting.de](http://www.panorama-altoetting.de); Gebhard-Fugel-Weg 10; adult/child/concession/family €4.50/1/3.50/6; ☎ 9am-5pm Mar-Oct, 11am-2pm Sat & Sun Nov-Feb), an accomplished monumental 360-degree painting of Jerusalem at the time of Jesus' crucifixion created in 1903 by Gebhard Fugel. A 30-minute surround-sound narration (in German) vividly narrates the events leading up to this fateful day.

Across the street, the **Mechanische Krippe** (Mechanical Creche; ☎ 6653; Kreszentiaheimstrasse 18; adult/child €2/0.50; ☎ 9am-5pm Mar-Dec) is a dizzying setup of 130 wooden figurines carved by Oberammergau's masters in the 1920s.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Landgasthof Bauernsepp** (☎ 08633-8940; [www.bauernsepp.de](http://www.bauernsepp.de); Kiefering 42, Tüßling; s €40-48, d €65-72) In an idyllic spot about 7km southwest of Altötting, this family-run ex-farmhouse is modern in attitude and even has a lovely *wintergarten* (a glass-enclosed, plant-filled terrace) with palm trees. The cuisine gets top marks, especially the game dishes, often personally shot by dad or son. Rooms are charming and individually decorated.

**Hotel-Café Plankl** (☎ 928 480; [www.hotel-altoetting.de](http://www.hotel-altoetting.de); Schlotthamerstrasse 4; s/d from €45/79; (P) ☎ ) Bored with rustic Bavarian décor? Then let your fantasies go wild in the Oriental, the Circus, the Egyptian or any of the 15 other themed rooms, many with private Jacuzzi, steam bath, a solarium above the bed and other sexy features, in a building that's won a state award for its sustainability and eco-sensitivity. 'Normal' rooms also available (but why bother?).

**Hotel Zur Post** (☎ 5040; [www.zurpostaltoetting.de](http://www.zurpostaltoetting.de); Kapellplatz 2; s €52-93, d €108-150; (P) ) Drenched in tradition, this venerable hotel has bedded Mozart, Ludwig III, the Pope and other famous folk in rooms that lack no modern comforts, even though some are a bit modest in size. The integrated 'Roman' spa and sauna complex is a snazzy refuge from the pilgrim hordes outside. Free wi-fi in the restaurant.

## Getting There & Away

Coming from Munich by train requires a change in Mühldorf (€15.60, 1½ hours). Trains to Burghausen leave at least hourly (€3.50, 20 minutes). Altötting is just off the B12, about 93km due east of Munich.

## BURGHAUSEN

☎ 08677 / pop 18,250 / elev 350m

Burghausen was once a mover and shaker in Europe, a flourishing centre of the salt trade and a regional seat of government. Decline set in, as it tends to do, and by the 17th century Burghausen's star had dimmed. Looking on the bright side, the old town preserved its medieval appearance for posterity.

The lovely Altstadt hugs a gentle bend of the Salzach River – which separates it from Austria – and is lorded over by Europe's longest castle complex, draped grandly across a mountain ridge. North of the Altstadt – and feeling like a separate universe – is the modern part of Burghausen, which developed with the arrival of the chemical industry in the early 20th century. There's little reason to go here, unless you're arriving at the train station; from there bus 1 quickly whisks you to the Stadtplatz, the old town hub and site of the **tourist office** (☎ 887 140; [www.tourismus.burghausen.de](http://www.tourismus.burghausen.de); Stadtplatz 112; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat).

The best views of the castle and the Altstadt are from the Austrian side. Cross the bridge over the Salzach and either drive or walk uphill to the signposted viewpoint.

## Sights

### BURG ZU BURGHAUSEN

Stretching out for 1034m, and visible from anywhere in the Altstadt, Burghausen's namesake **Burg** (castle) consists of several groups of buildings wrapped around six courtyards. The dukes lived in the lap of luxury, although there was a fair amount of discord as the nobles tended to keep their ex-wives cooped up in the same complex. The main castle at the

southern end has an inner core dating back to 1255 and now houses several museums. A combination pass is €5.50. Tickets are sold in the information office past the last gate and on your left near the big staircase.

The **Stadtmuseum** (☎ 651 98; adult/under 18yr/concession €2/free/1; ☎ 9am-6pm May-Sep, 10am-4pm mid-Mar-Apr & Oct, closed Oct-mid-Mar) opens a window onto Burghausen's illustrious and turbulent past in the ambience-laden rooms of the Gothic *Kemenate*, the former ladies' wing. The assortment is predictably eclectic, with religious folk art, nifty guns and, somewhat incongruously, a huge collection of mounted butterflies and stuffed birds all competing for your attention.

The **Staatsgalerie** (State Gallery; ☎ 4659; adult/under 18yr/concession €3/free/2; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Oct-Mar) is a collection of paintings, sculptures, furniture and Gobelins (tapestries) produced by Bavarian and Austrian artists in the 15th and 16th centuries. Don't miss the view over town and river from the rooftop terrace.

Finally, there's the **Haus der Fotografie** (House of Photography; ☎ 4734; adult/child/concession €2/free/1; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Sun mid-Mar-Oct), which has lots of old cameras – including a Hasselblad that took pictures on the moon in 1968 – plus changing exhibits by contemporary photographers to keep things dynamic.

There are several ways to get to the castle. If you're driving, you'll find a car park at its northern end near Curaplatz. Trails leading to the Altstadt are in the second and sixth courtyards, while another, via the Georgstor, heads down the other side to the Wöhrsee, a large recreational lake.

## ALTSTADT

Sights in the old town frame the pretty **Stadtplatz**, an elongated, Italianate square hemmed in by candy-coloured town houses. Edifices worth closer inspection include the magnificent **Taufkirchenpalais** (Stadtplatz 97), where Napoleon stayed briefly in 1809; the exotically blue **Regierungsgebäude** (Government Building; Stadtplatz 108), bearing some elaborate coats of arms and topped by a trio of copper-domed turrets; and the **Rathaus** (Stadtplatz 112), which now houses the main tourist office. The southern end of the square is punctuated by the **Pfarrkirche St Jakob**, from where a painted arch leads to the pedestrianised In den Gröben, the former craftsmen's quarter. The ancient Gothic buildings along this lane now seem

with charming boutiques, wine taverns, pubs and restaurants. It ends in the **Mautnerschloss**, the former toll-collector's home and now home to **Jazzkeller** (☎ 2741; In den Grüben 193), a general culture centre, despite the name.

### Tours

From March to October, Altstadt and castle tours (in German; €4), leave from Curaplatz on weekends and holidays at 11am and 2pm.

### Festivals & Events

Burghausen is famous for its jazz festivals, especially the **Internationale Jazzwoche** (International Jazz Week; www.b-jazz.com, in German) in April and May, which draws an international line-up.

### Sleeping & Eating

**DJH hostel** (☎ 4187; www.burghausen.jugendherberge.de, in German; Kapuzinergasse 235; dm incl breakfast €16.30-22.30; ☒ closed Dec; ☒ ) None of the rooms inside this former monastery sleep more than four people, but all are cheerfully painted, furnished in pine and sport a locker for each person.

**Altstadt Pension** (☎ 878 686; In den Grüben 138/142; s/d €42/59; ☐ ) This *Pension* with bright flowers and solid pine furniture is tucked away in

an alley south of the main square. You can have breakfast in the riverside beer garden at the rear, or just watch the rowers plying the Salzach.

**Reisingers Bayerische Alm** (☎ 9820; www.bayerischealm.de; Robert-Koch-Strasse 211; s/d €78/105; ☐ ☒ ) Time seems to slow down at this progressive port of call. Watch the sun set over the castle from the leafy beer garden or the comfort of your room, where the abstract canvases of a local artist add splashes of colour. Accolades have also been heaped on the restaurant (mains €10 to €20), where regional farm-fresh ingredients steer the seasonal, organic menu. Rooms without castle views are a bit cheaper, but wi-fi is free for all.

In den Grüben is lined with cafés full of character that draw the young and young at heart. **Café Uhu** (☎ 650 68; 40 In den Grüben) and **Café am Bichl** (☎ 913 993; 162 In den Grüben) are recommended.

### Getting There & Away

Trains from Altötting make the trip to Burghausen at least hourly (€3.30, 25 minutes). Burghausen is on the B20, about 15km southeast of Altötting.