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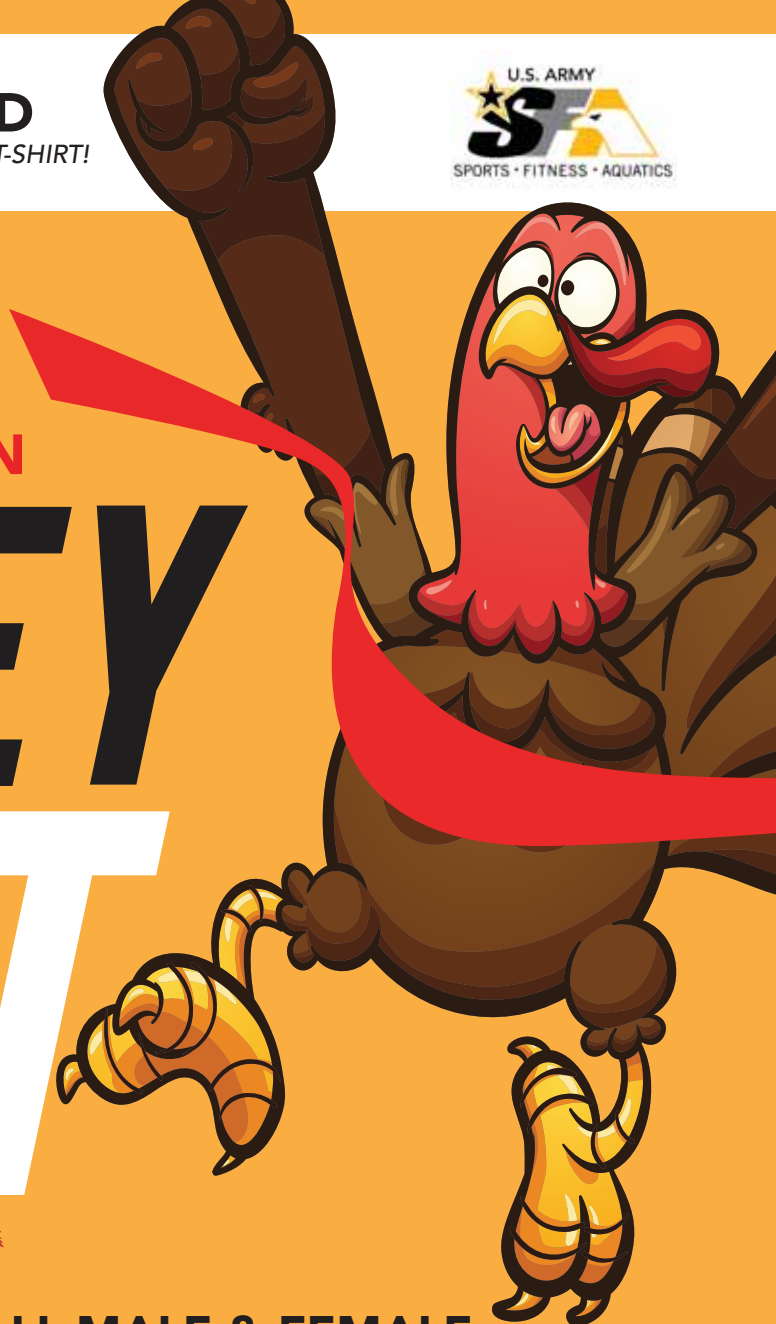


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PLAN AHEAD

By Katie Wells



BAVARIA

Nuremberg Christmas Market

NOV. 28–DEC. 24, 2025

The **Nürnberger Christkindlesmarkt** is one of the oldest and most famous Christmas markets in the world, dating back to the 17th century. My spouse and I visited the “little town of wood and cloth” last year and adored it. The freshly roasted Nuremberg bratwursts with horseradish and the *Lebkuchen* (gingerbread) cookies warmed us right up on the cold, rainy days we were there. A couple of market stalls even had gluten-free Lebkuchen! Music concerts fill the square as you shop the many stalls and Nuremberg offers official licensed products like special wax sealing stamps and ornaments. We purchased a delicate traditional Nuremberg angel for our tree. There is also the **Twin Cities Market**. These stalls are run by non-profit organizations and the proceeds benefit local charitable projects. When we attended, we sampled specialty food and drinks from Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Nicaragua and more. Plus, we purchased a beautiful hand-decorated bowl from Poland and a glass hot air balloon from Türkiye. Don't miss the largest *Feuerzangenbowle* in the world at **Feuerzangenbowle Village**. A 340-meter-high cauldron holds 9,000 liters of the sweet, more potent rum-infused Glühwein.



KAISERSLAUTERN

Kaiserslautern Christmas Market

NOV. 17–DEC. 23, 2025

Kaiserslautern's **Lautrer Weihnachtsmarkt** is one of my favorite markets; although, I may be biased since it is the closest to my home. It's a very cozy market that offers all the traditions of a larger market and more. Every year, my spouse and I love seeing the various designs for the mugs, sipping Glühwein, having bratwursts for dinner and shopping the market stalls. There is a ride section for kids. On select dates, the historic **Fruchthalle** hosts a culture market where visitors can find unique handicrafts and fair-trade products from charitable organizations that make for great Christmas gifts. For a more intimate Christmas market experience, you can visit the **Edith Stein House** in Kaiserslautern's old town. There is a cafeteria that offers cinnamon waffles, home-made cakes and lunch that you can enjoy while shopping the lovingly handmade only items.



STUTT GART

Stuttgart Christmas Market

NOV. 26–DEC. 23, 2025

Spread across the city center (Schlossplatz, Schillerplatz, Karlsplatz and Marktplatz) is the **Stuttgarter Weihnachtsmarkt**. It is one of Europe's oldest Christmas markets, dating back to 1692 and possibly further. You can enjoy the holiday magic as you stroll past wooden huts with decorated roofs, listen to the sound of choirs singing your favorite Christmas carols as well as many other musical performances and shop for crafts and antiques from over 300 vendors. There is also an ice rink, and for kids, check out fairy land where they can ride on a mini wooden train around a miniature village or do fun activities like baking gingerbread hearts. Part of the city's holiday program is the **Stuttgart Glanzlichter**, where over 110 trees are decorated with lights on the shopping street, Königstrasse. Light sculptures around the city highlight some of the biggest attractions, like an elephant to represent the Wilhelma Zoo and a Mercedes and Porsche to represent the automobile museums. The lights typically stay up through the new year.



WIESBADEN

Shooting Star Market

NOV. 25–DEC. 23, 2025

Wiesbaden's **Sternschnuppenmarkt** has plenty to do and see. Visitors can explore market stalls and gaze at 21 large, illuminated lilies and dozens of smaller lilies, snowflakes and stars which create a magical atmosphere along the streets of Wiesbaden. The **Kindersternschnuppenmarkt**, or the children's market, on Luisenplatz offers special activities for kids such as crafts, Christmas stories and the Shooting Star Express. Visitors can enjoy a stroll through Gnome Forest with characters and fir trees illuminated in a fairy-tale atmosphere. There is an ice rink where you can skate or practice curling and after all the fun, you can try *Kaiserschmarrn*, sweet bits of fluffy pancake served with apple or cranberry sauce. If you'd like to warm up, head to the foyer of the **Kurhaus** where over 2,000 red poinsettias make up a special Christmas tree that lights up. ■

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The Gutenberg Bible



By Kat Nickola

S ometime around 1436, a German goldsmith in Mainz began putting his knowledge of metalwork to a new use by creating a set of metal letters that could be reused to print different pages of text. The motivation to mass-produce printed materials like indulgences, Latin grammar guides and calendars made Johannes Gutenberg's moveable-type printing press a commercial success by 1450. His claim to fame, however, began in 1452 when Gutenberg's workshop began printing Latin Bibles.

You can see two of the original Gutenberg Bibles and experience a medieval printing workshop at the [Gutenberg Museum](#) in Mainz. It is currently housed at the Natural History Museum while a new building is being constructed. ■

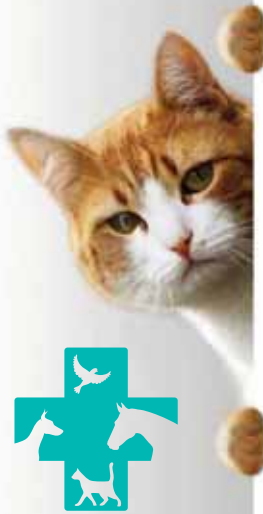
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FIND GRIMMS' FAIRY TALES IN THE SCHWARZWALD

..... Story and Header Photo By Katie Wells

A visit to the Black Forest is reminiscent of any Grimms' fairy tale. The region is dense with half-timbered homes that look quite a lot like gingerbread houses; the forests remain thick, the landscape rolling with mist spilling over the land. Meals are hearty and served hot, and Black Forest cake is as tasty and magical as the sweets that tempted Hansel and Gretel.

BADEN-BADEN

While you won't want to miss a spa day, walking through the rose garden or exploring art exhibits in Baden-Baden, if you take the time to go just a few minutes outside of the city center, you may stumble upon a few characters from Grimm's Fairy Tales. In front of **Waldgaststätte Büttorf**, a cozy restaurant that sits by a watermill, is an antique carousel with paintings of characters and scenes from many of the stories. When my spouse and I visited a couple of years ago, I enjoyed walking around and admiring it while we waited for our meal. Before we had dinner here, we spent the afternoon further up in the hills hiking to **Geroldsau Waterfall**. As the dense canopy stole more light the further along the trail we went, my inner book nerd came out and I had to take a photo shoot of my copy of "Grimms' Fairy Tales" that I just so happened to have in my bag.

The **Mehliskopf Bobbahn**, a wooden alpine coaster that weaves through the forest where you might spy creatures lurking nearby also felt like something out of a Brother's Grimm tale. As I ricocheted through the leaves, I whizzed past a friendly hedgehog and possibly a big badger... or at least I think I did. It was raining and misty. Perhaps the mystical forest had my imagination creating stories.



EUROPA-PARK

In Rust, is the perpetually popular **Europa-Park** features its very own **Grimms' Enchanted Forest!** As you make your way past colorful mushrooms, towers, enchanted trees and castles, you might spy Rapunzel's long braid cascading down from a high window or the frog prince hopping along with a wishing orb. All your Grimms' Fairy Tale wishes come true at this park. Get a peek into the infamous candy house from "Hansel and Gretel" and meet the witch or walk past the grandmother's house from "Little Red Riding Hood" (maybe Grandmother is resting in the bed, or maybe it's the wolf).

Everywhere you look, there is a detail from the stories or a real-life adaptation like the animatronic showing of "The Golden Goose." At a newer ride, children can be whisked away on a cart spilling over with gemstones by the seven dwarves and go to Dwarf City. And, of course, you can't miss going inside the Grimms' Library, where an interactive show has the brothers at work and allows guests to participate as magicians who protect the world. No fairy-tale-themed park is complete without sweets. Gingerbread hearts, candy canes and more can be found in the Land of Cockaigne near a towering cuckoo clock.

: "PERHAPS THE
: MYSTICAL FOREST
: HAD MY IMAGINATION
: CREATING STORIES."

TRIBERG

Triberg is the land of the cuckoo clocks. Cuckoo clocks have a dreamlike quality about them: From the music they play to the delicate carvings that combine forest motifs with folksy depictions of animals and people going about their everyday lives. My spouse and I took my dad here for a weekend trip in December. The snow and colorfully painted buildings felt like a town of illustrations, but it was the giant cuckoo clocks and **Triberg Waterfall** that made us feel like we were walking around in a storybook.

At **The House of 1,000 Clocks**, located in the town center, a giant cuckoo clock with a bear family moves with music every 15 minutes. This two-story building is home to the most cuckoo clocks in the world. We found the golden goose egg of all cuckoo clocks here, adorned with three gold bears, along with plenty of other unique traditional and modern designs. We also drove a few minutes out of town to visit the "Largest Cuckoo Clock in the World" at **Uhren Park**. This clock goes off twice an hour and at the back, you can see a man and woman come out. The giant cuckoo clock is very picturesque; however, my family was a little disappointed by the comically underwhelming sound of the "cuckoo" for such a large clock; I suspect an evil witch stole the bird's voice.

Forests, especially dense ones with streams and rolling landscapes like the Black Forest, are perfect realms for dreaming, whether it's the good ones or darker ones (as in Grimms' Fairy Tales) that come true. ■

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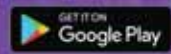
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Grimm Legacy

By Kat Nickola



Over 200 years ago, the first published version of German folk tales was printed

by the Brothers Grimm. In doing so, they inspired people across Europe to revive and record their own folklore in print. But it was stories from the brothers' German "Kinder-und Hausmärchen" (Children and Household Tales) that came to represent classic fairy tales.

Most of these fairy tales are dark, gory, violent and supernatural. Many are far different from the versions relayed to kids today.

In fact, the stories gathered by the brothers weren't originally intended for children at all, but were analyzed academically, even though they are often about kids, families and rural households. As students of literature, and later librarians, the Grimm brothers gathered traditional tales to help firm up a sense of German cultural identity, creating the field of folklore studies. The Grimms were proponents of a movement to unite the roughly 200 unique Germanic-speaking territories into a single state.

This led them to research connected mythologies like those of the Norse, Danish and Irish, as well as to delve into historical languages. In fact, Jacob Grimm became a premier philologist, writing a history of the German language and establishing "Grimm's Law," which is still used today to study the way languages evolve. The brothers also started the "Deutsches Wörterbuch" (German dictionary), a 33-volume work that was not fully completed until 2016.

The Grimm brothers didn't create any of the fairy tales or legends in their publications. Instead, they recorded folklore gathered from people across the German-speaking population. As time went on, Wilhelm edited and updated the stories. At first, his goal was to edit and re-write the tales to align them with the brothers' Germanic cultural research. However, later versions of the stories were edited to appeal to wealthy audiences, or written for children, which meant that older mythological aspects, violence and sexuality were sanitized and Christian themes were added.

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How the Grimm Brothers changed fairy tales ♦

There were seven versions of the “Kinder-und Hausmärchen” book of folklore, and Jacob Grimm edited and updated the tales over time. The number of stories was also expanded with new versions; more folktales were added, but some were also removed. The first edition was published in 1812, and the final version came out in 1857.



In **Rapunzel**, Frau Gothel is originally a fairy, not a sorceress. Also, Rapunzel gets pregnant by the prince who visits her in the tower; in later editions, she marries him.

In the first written version of **Hansel and Grätel**, the biological mom and dad abandon the kids in the woods, while in later editions, the blame is placed on an evil stepmother in cahoots with the witch.



The first Grimm version of **Cinderella** mirrors one written earlier by Charles Perrault; birds sent by her deceased mom help Cinderella and they peck out her stepsister's eyes. By the final Grimm version, a fairy godmother has replaced the birds, and the sisters are forgiven.

In the earliest Grimm version of **Snow White**, the prince obsesses for a long time over her body in the glass coffin and she is eventually woken when his servant gets frustrated with the situation and hits her; in the final tale, she stirs because her coffin is dropped on the day the prince finds her. Also, the queen is originally her biological mother but is later changed into an evil stepmother using witchcraft.



The German Fairy Tale Route

2025 marks the 50th anniversary of the German Fairy Tale Route! Beginning just west of Frankfurt, the **Deutsche Märchenstrasse** travels north for 600 kilometers to destinations from the Grimm brothers' lives and from the stories they collected.

In the city of **Hanau**, a bronze statue of the brothers is the route's starting point. The town is the birthplace of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm and also the home of the yearly Brüder Grimm Festspiele, which lasts from May to July and hosts numerous performances.

Next up is the village of **Steinau**, where you cannot miss a tour through the brothers' childhood home. It is now a museum decked out in period décor and presents a great overview of the brothers' lives.

Beyond that is **Rotkäppchenland**, or the land of Little Red Cap (also known as Little Red Riding Hood in English). The traditional costume of a young unmarried girl in this region, called Schwalm, inspired the use of the red cap in the famous story from this area. Don't miss wandering in the fairytale town of **Alsfeld**, with its cobblestone streets and crooked medieval half-timbered homes.

If you would rather have a home base to explore Grimm country, choose **Kassel**. This is the town where the Grimm brothers spent most of their lives, and the place from which they ventured out to gather fairy tales and legends. Set aside time to visit **Grimmwelt**, a modern museum dedicated to the brothers' works which also offers a glimpse at the brothers' original manuscripts.

In a nearby town, you can visit Rapunzel's tower at **Trendelburg Castle**, which is also a hotel and restaurant. Or venture to Cinderella's inspiration at **Sababurg Castle**, before spending some time exploring the trails in the deep, dark forests of the **Reinhardswald** or **Habichtswald**.





Further north lies **Hameln**, famed for the way the village cleared its rat problem. Follow the Pied Piper Trail, marked by brass cobblestone rats, past historic buildings and art representing the famous piper who led rodents to their death in the river and then took the kids as payment. There is also a musical called "Rats," a Pied Piper Museum and walking tours led by folks dressed as the famed musician.

There are numerous small towns and villages, castles and forts along the Deutsche Märchenstrasse to visit. At www.deutsche-maerchenstrasse.com you can explore them all.

At the northern end of the route is **Bremen**. "The Bremen Town Musicians" loom large in this Hanseatic city where a recreation of the famous story is set to stage every Sunday at 12 p.m. (in German) and 1 p.m. (in English) at the **Domshof Square**. Don't miss a visit across the river to the quaint, colorful shops in former merchant houses of the Schnoor neighborhood.

Buxtehude marks the northern terminus of the Deutsche Märchenstrasse, and it seems fitting that the town is known for being the source of the tale "The Hare and the Hedgehog," in which the slow, steady hedgehog (a modification the Grimm's made from Aesop's fabled tortoise) races the lazy hare to death. The pace here is slow; it's the perfect spot to channel your inner hare and stop for a drink along the canals. ■

2025 marks the
50th anniversary
of the German
Fairy Tale Route!





By Rachel Kersey

When I come home from college every summer, one of my first stops is the library. I LOVE books so much! There is always a fun story between the covers to transport me to another world. Every bookworm needs a good library, just like every resident of a foreign country needs to discover her host nation's culture. Check out these German libraries for a little bit of both.

JACOB AND WILHELM GRIMM CENTER | BERLIN

Of course I had to include the library of the brothers that inspired this entire issue of "What's Up." The **Jacob-und-Wilhelm-Grimm-Zentrum** is home to approximately 1.5 million volumes, including nearly 6,000 volumes from the private library of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, the literary masters who brought us fairytales like "Hansel and Gretel," "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" and "Little Red Riding Hood."

Completed in 2009, the Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm Center is part of the central library at Humboldt University in Berlin. Visitors have access to 450 computer workspaces; copying, printing and scanning services; wireless internet, video and graphic editing; and an electronic publishing service. There's even a parent-child section called the **Berliner-Volksbank Nursery**, making this library a family-friendly environment!

THE GERMAN NATIONAL LIBRARY | FRANKFURT

For a bit of culture, check out the **Deutsche National Bibliothek** in Frankfurt. This library collects all German and German-language publications since 1913 as well as foreign publications about Germany and works translated from German. Additionally, the library houses the works of German-speaking emigrants published abroad between 1933 and 1945, which means that visitors can likely find interesting perspectives on World War II from those who left Germany. This library also affords access to Germany's scientific heritage.

Users must be at least 16 years old, and there is an admission charge, though monthly and annual passes can be purchased.



German Exile Archive 1933-1945 with the expatriation card of Albert Einstein.

STUTTGART CENTRAL LIBRARY | STUTTGART

Located within the grassed area at Mailänder Platz, the **Stadtbibliothek Stuttgart** houses more than one million books and media on nine floors in this modern building. It was created to be a new intellectual and cultural center, and it is accordingly a compilation of literature, art and music from the city and region.

This library is also family friendly. There is a central children's library as well as a music library, study rooms and a café. The library also has a roof terrace with a viewing platform that offers panoramic views of Stuttgart and the surrounding area. As a bonus, at night the building's entire facade lights up in blue! ■



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BUCHAREST, ROMANIA

Photo by Kevin Brown



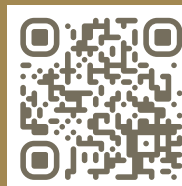
The **Palace of the Parliament** in Bucharest, Romania, is the heaviest building in the world at 4.1 million tons! The building has a complicated history. It was built during the dictator, Nicolae Ceaușescu's, regime from the rubble of demolished buildings. This demolition displaced over 57,000 families. During that time, the building was a statement of communism, totalitarianism and socialism; now, it is an emblem of democracy and houses the Romanian Parliament.

The building features other oddities, including underground tunnels and a bunker, plus it can be seen from the moon. Additionally, it sinks .24 inches each year. It's no surprise that it is also believed to be haunted by ghosts who wander the extravagant corridors whistling and setting off security systems. ■



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Christmas Décor, Polish Pottery, Holiday Items, Cuckoo Clocks, Wine, Chocolate, Dutch Cheese, Paintings, Antiques, Honey Products, Calendars, Cards, Leather Goods, and more!

U.S. Dollar and all major credit cards accepted



U.S. ID cardholders only

U.S. Army Garrison Ansbach Family and MWR

