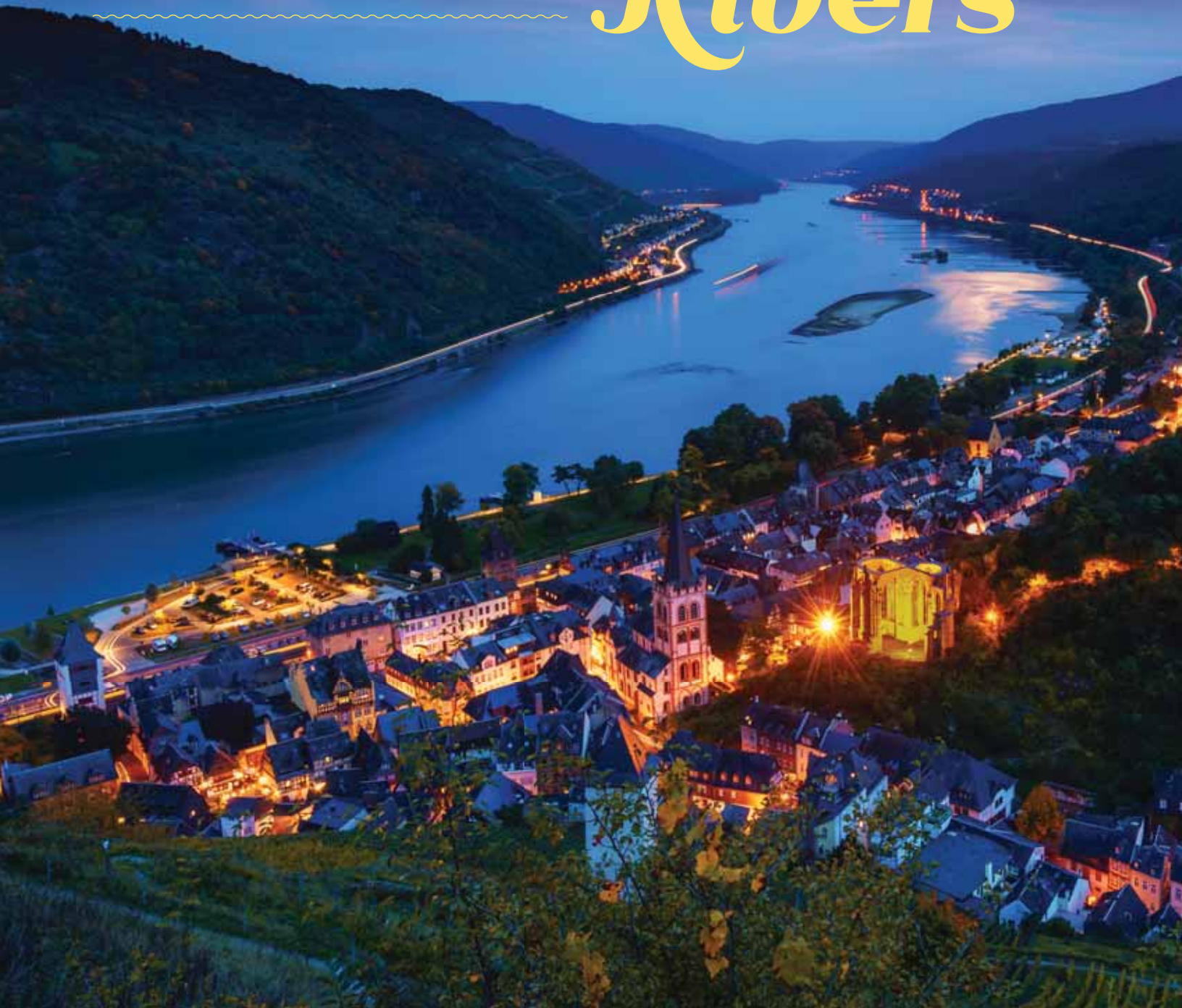


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# PLAN AHEAD

By Katie Wells



## BAVARIA

### Kirchweihdult, Munich

OCT. 18 – 26, 2025

This traditional festival takes place three times per year (Meidult, Jakobidult, Kirchweihdult). **Kirchweihdult** is a fall fest and the last of the Auer Dult. Historically, a “dult” was a fair that attracted artisans, junk dealers, performers and more eclectic characters. The first record of the fair dates back to 1310, and since 1905 three annual fairs have been held at the town square, Mariahilfplatz. While you can find an abundance of beer tents and live music, the festival is very family-friendly with more lowkey market stalls to shop from and various fair rides like bumper cars and a swing-boat. Kids will enjoy puppet shows, acrobats and other fun forms of entertainment. Visitors can indulge in Bavarian food while shopping for a wide offering of pottery like porcelain and china as well as an array of antiques and knickknacks.



## KAISERSLAUTERN

### Trierer Unterwelten

OCT. 31 – NOV. 22, 2025

Considered to be Germany’s oldest city, Trier was founded by Romans in the late 1st century BC. With such a rich heritage, there are bound to be ghost stories born out of the ruins. As “spooky season” draws near, plan to go underground for an eerie festival that resides in catacombs, cellars, crypts, tunnels and more strange spaces. The **Trier Underworlds Festival** spans over three weeks and has plenty of events planned like guided tours, culinary specialties and live musical performances. Plus, there will be theatre productions, art on display, cinema screenings and readings. As you move through the festival you will learn about the history along with myths and legends of locations in the city that include: Germany’s oldest wine cellar, the Episcopal wineries and the Imperial baths.



## STUTT GART

### Fellbacher Herbst

OCT. 9 – 13, 2025

Give thanks for the wine harvest at the **Fellbach Thanksgiving and Wine Festival**, which is now the second-largest harvest festival in the Stuttgart region. It takes place every second weekend in October and visitors can enjoy trying fine wines of the Kappelberg region along the wine route, regional cuisines, and live music. An extensive program includes the Sepp Herberger Memorial Cup Tournament (a non-official soccer tournament that honors Sepp Herberger’s legacy coaching the West German team to victory at the 1954 World Cup), a lantern parade, musical fireworks display, a grand parade through the city center, and of course, plenty of thrilling rides. The city center will be car-free on Sunday, so you may want to plan accordingly if you travel via car.



## WIESBADEN

### Frankfurter Buchmesse

OCT. 15 – 19, 2025

Calling all book lovers and writers! The **Frankfurt Book Fair** is the largest trade fair for books in the world. If you loved Scholastic Book Fairs as a kid, this event is a much larger version, where you can peruse multiple genres of books and be one of the first to hear about upcoming releases. You can also meet authors and listen to seminars. Literary agents and publishing houses will be there for any writers wanting to learn more about the industry. In addition, engaging workshops and conferences are available for guests to participate in. Artists, creatives and cultural enthusiasts are a large part of the fair as well. The five-day annual event takes place on the Frankfurt Trade Fair grounds. October 15 – 19 is open for trade visitors and the opening days for the general public are from October 17 – 19. For 2025, there will be three “Guests of Honor” representing the Philippines, Czechia and Chile. ■

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# The Art and Music of the Danube



CC BY-NC ((PD-US))/"DONAULANDSCHAFT MIT SCHLOSS WÖRTH" ALBRECHT ALTENDORFER (C. 1530)

By Kat Nickola

**Y**ou may not know it by name, but you would instantly recognize the music of Johan Strauss' waltz "An der schönen, blauen Donau" from its use in film. Called "The Blue Danube" in English, it's a perky waltz in which the horns and woodwinds seem to flow back and forth between speedy joyful sections and slower serene moments.

The Danube River has long inspired artwork, and this was especially true during the early 16th century when a few Renaissance painters began to use it as inspiration for a new style of painting. Defined in modern times as the Danube School, their artworks are landscape-focused with rugged terrain, evocative forests, golden-hued lighting and small human elements that are dwarfed by the prominent beauty of nature. ■

Listen to a clip of  
"The Blue Danube"





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# RHINE RIVER CRUISES: A DAY IN SPEYER

By Katie Wells

## MEETING AT THE DOCKS

For visiting friends and family, or for your next leisure trip, a **Rhine River Cruise** may be the perfect option to see more of Germany and surrounding countries. My aunt and uncle recently decided to take one with Viking Cruises and luckily, they had stops planned in a couple of cities close to Kaiserslautern. This made for an easy day trip for me and my spouse to meet them. From the KMC, there were a few options within ideal driving range: Rudesheim, Speyer and Strasbourg, France. We choose to meet them in **Speyer**, less than an hour away.

While we waited for them to port, my spouse and I grabbed a table by the docks to enjoy tiramisu and tea on a rare, sunny day in Germany. It was fun to watch large and small ships pass and then to greet my relatives as they disembarked. Their cruise started in Amsterdam where they did a one-day excursion to see the famous tulips in bloom and ended a week later in Basel, Switzerland.





## STROLLING THROUGH SPEYER

Speyer, founded by ancient Romans, is one of Germany's oldest cities. Walking in from the docks, you cross an arching bridge and find a beautiful Romanesque cathedral, historic half-timbered houses and plenty of cafés which make for a charming stroll. To experience a traditional folk festival, or *volksfest*, **Brezelfest** occurs over six days, the second weekend of July every year. It honors delicious salty, slightly crispy, soft pretzels and guests are encouraged to dress in traditional *dirndls* and *lederhosen*. Visitors driving into town will likely notice large planes



*Scan the QR  
to read more  
about **Brezelfest!***

propped up into the sky, impressive locomotives and vintage cars. That's because the **Technik Museum Speyer** (a mechanical museum with an emphasis on transportation) is located here. For any lover of planes, trains, automobiles, submarines and much more, it's a must. For visitors without the worry of their ship leaving them behind, a "2-Day Museum Package" is offered along with an overnight stay at **Hotel Speyer am Technik Museum** or their sister hotel (a 40-minute drive), **Hotel Sinsheim** near the **Technik Museum Sinsheim**. This package includes entrance to both museums and a show at Sinsheim's IMAX 3D movie theatre and Speyer's IMAX DOME movie theatre.



## INSIDE A RHINE RIVER CRUISE

If you wish to plan a Rhine River Cruise, you have various options, from single-day trips to mini and week-long voyages, plus themed cruises that focus on things such as wine, cheeses and Christmas markets.

My family offered us a sneak peek into their trip. Each day, they had optional excursions where they could learn more about the history of the cities they stopped in; or, they could simply meander on their own.

They even snuck us on the ship and gave us a quick tour of the facilities. The deck was lined with a variety of lounge chairs. My uncle joked about fellow passengers quarrelling each evening to claim the most desirable rocking chairs at the bow of the boat. On the upper deck, an herb garden was growing which my aunt said the chef used to prepare meals each night. A shuffleboard and a small track for walking laps was also available. River cruises are meant to be slow-paced and relaxing. There was one intimate dining area and a bar for drinks and coffee. Each bedroom had a balcony from which my aunt enjoyed reading books and glancing up every so often to admire the many castles passing by. ■



VISIT GERMANY'S

# 5 *Greatest Rivers*

By Kat Nickola

**The waterways of Germany** have always inspired art and music. They've been a connection to the wider world and the borderlands dividing it. Today, visiting one of Germany's five largest rivers is an experience not to be missed, and each one offers something a little different.





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# Flowing into the North Sea

## RHINE RIVER

The Rhine and its left-bank tributary, the Mosel, are still powerhouses of industry, flowing north to connect the chemical and industrial companies of Germany with worldwide shipping lanes from ports in the Netherlands.

Modern industry mixes with history as barges trundle up and down its course, past vineyards and castles along the **Middle Rhine**, between Bingen and Bonn. In ancient times, this was frontier land to the Romans who brought their wine-making skills. You can still visit a few Roman ruins in the town of **Boppard**, where you can also check out the Rhine's largest loop. For a great view of the river, hike, take the chairlift (*sesselbahn*) or, with proper equipment, climb the local via ferrata (*klettersteig*) west of town.

Get out on the water by taking the Köln-Düsseldorfer (K-D) ferry. Stop in **Bacharach** to enjoy a meal along the cobblestone streets amongst half-timbered buildings and old city walls. Visit **Sankt Goar** where you can walk (or take a shuttle) up to the Rhine's largest castle ruin: Burg Rheinfels. Village train stations along this section of the river are all connected via the RB26, so exploring is easy.

## WESER RIVER

The Weser River has a hard-working history. Flowing north from the forests of central Germany, it became a major route for exporting German goods during the Middle Ages.

Thanks to the river, the city of Bremen grew into a powerhouse of trade. It became a wealthy hub for the Hanseatic League, and nowadays, the old town is still full of ships and the brick gothic architecture of guild halls. There are also quaint, colorful merchant houses in the Schnoor neighborhood which now host small shops and restaurants that spill into the tiny streets.

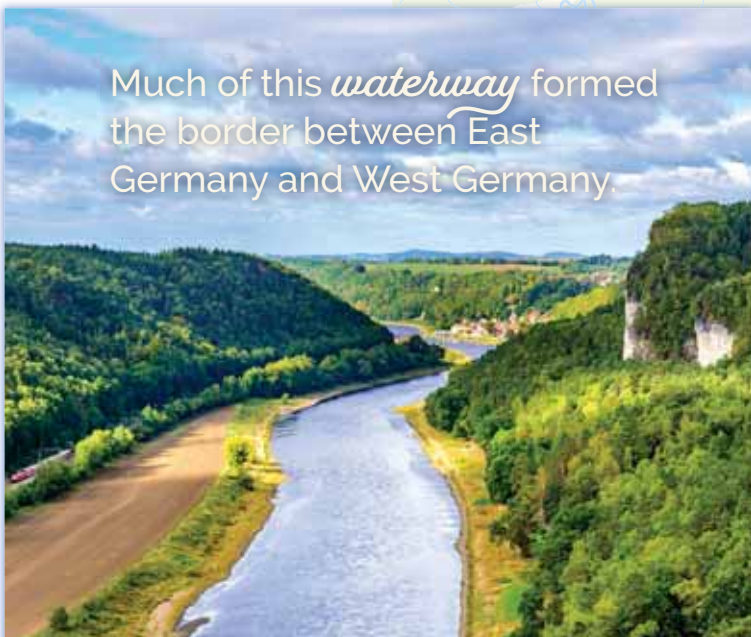
If being on the water is more your style, then the Weser River is a perfect destination for **canoe or kayak trips**. With few cargo ships and no dams, the Upper Weser offers 135 kilometers of navigable fun between Hann Münden and **Hamelin**. Be sure to stop into Hamelin, which leans hard into its "Pied Piper" heritage. A tourist walking trail marked by brass cobblestone rats takes you past historic buildings and all art forms representing the famous piper who led rodents to their death in the Weser River and then took the kids as payment.

## ELBE RIVER

The Elbe River is unique in Germany. Much of this waterway formed the border between East Germany and West Germany. Inside the frontier zone, some of the riverbanks were fenced off to prevent escape attempts. Without human interference, these areas returned to their natural habitat, and now much of the Elbe is part of the **UNESCO Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve**. In the Lower Saxonian portion of the reserve, the river spreads into a large floodplain with numerous tributaries and wetlands.



Much of this *waterway* formed the border between East Germany and West Germany.



**FROM THE TOP** The Rheinschleife, the Rhine River's largest loop; the "Pied Piper" of Hamelin; Saxon Switzerland National Park in Germany along the Elbe River



In the former border towns of **Popelau** and **Darchau**, you can climb up former BT-9 observation towers to look out over this former “no mans land.” Across the river from these two hamlets (via a short ferry) is the town of Neu Darchau and the Albia Kanu company which offers **canoe and kayak rentals** and shuttle services along the Elbe River.

## Flowing into the Baltic Sea

### ODER RIVER

The Oder River and its major tributary, the Neisse, define Germany's border with Poland. The northern portion, near its mouth in the Baltic Sea is protected by large national parks. One of the best ways to explore these wetlands and bird habitats is along the **Oder-Neisse Cycle Route**.

At the other end of the river system, the town of **Görlitz** on the Neisse River has a unique blend of past and present. With historic architecture at every turn, and a series of fortified towers, Görlitz advertises itself as the most beautiful city in Germany. The entertainment industry seems to agree. Numerous movies, such as “The Monuments Men,” “Inglorious Basterds” and “The Grand Budapest Hotel” were filmed in the city. Now dubbed **Görliwood**,® a free tour of all 36 filming sites is available via the SmartGuide app.

## Flowing into the Black Sea

### DANUBE RIVER

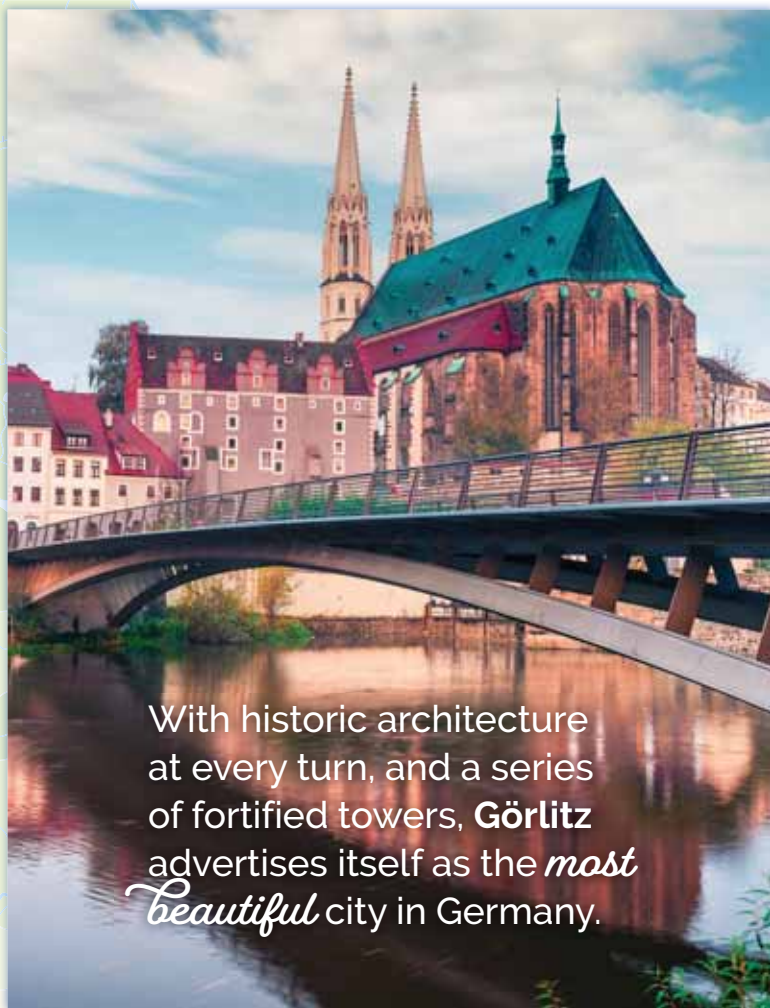
The only major German river that doesn't flow north, the Danube (Donau in German), is perhaps the most sophisticated of the bunch. From its representation in art and music, to its course across 10 different countries and through numerous major cities, it represents a mishmash of cultural icons.

To really dig into all the Danube represents, take a trip to **Regensburg**. The old town is a UNESCO World Heritage Site with its architecture showing off the city's cultural and artistic heritage. Don't miss the stained glass in St. Peter's Cathedral or taking a tour at the monastery-turned-palace called **Schloss Thurn und Taxis**.

East of the city is Valhalla. Well, it's a monument called **Walhalla**, named after Woden's feast hall from Germanic mythology. A **ferry ride** on the Danube from Regensburg takes you to this memorial that honors German-speaking notables including royalty, scientists and artists.

Much of the Danube south of Regensburg flows through Hopfenland, or **Hops-growing land**, and, you guessed it, the heart of beer brewing. Even better, Germany's oldest monastic brewery, the **Kloster Weltenburg**, is still active and produces the award-winning Barock Dunkel. Tour the abbey and brewery, have a drink in the biergarten and then walk out to the stony beach and dip a toe in the waters of the Danube. ■

**FROM THE TOP** The town of Görlitz; the Walhalla monument along the Danube River



With historic architecture at every turn, and a series of fortified towers, **Görlitz** advertises itself as the *most beautiful* city in Germany.



# Classical Music

## from the Rhine River

By Anna Leigh Bagiackas

The Rhine River has long been a source of inspiration for people. From winemakers to storytellers and poets, a trip along the Rhine will be sure to include tales of epic battles, alluring sirens atop dangerous rocks and river robberies. But did you know that the magic of the Rhine River has also found its way into classical music?

If you have spent any time listening to or learning about classical music, you probably picked up that Germany has been home to many of the powerhouse classical music composers throughout the centuries. And if the composer wasn't from Germany, they certainly made their way to this classical music hub to study, perform or be inspired.

Some well-known composers and musicians include Pachelbel, Telemann, J.S. Bach, Haydn, Beethoven, Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn, Robert and Clara Schumann, Wagner and Brahms. Germany can also claim one of the earliest recorded female composers, Hildegard von Bingen of the medieval period, whose hometown (Bingen) sits along the Rhine.

Experience some of the musical Rhine magic from the comfort of your home. Here are a couple of the necessary listens:

### Symphony No. 3, nicknamed the "Rhenish" symphony by Robert Schumann

When this Romantic-era composer moved to Dusseldorf in 1850 to take a music director position, he wrote this work in just over a month and it was quickly nicknamed "Rhenish" as it reflected the sights, sounds and life along the Rhine with its folk-like sounds. Some say that it may have also been inspired and influenced by Beethoven and his famous Eroica symphony.

It was also written that the fourth movement was inspired by Schumann's visit to the Cologne Cathedral, no doubt having a powerful effect on the composer.

### Siegfried's Rhine Journey by Richard Wagner

If you know the name Richard Wagner, you probably know that his music is big, bold and powerful. This piece of music is no different and as you listen to it, you might be able to envision yourself as part of one of the epic journeys you've heard about.

Part of Wagner's famous operatic "Ring Cycle," this piece is part of the beginning, or prologue, as the sun rises, and the character Siegfried ventures out on his own journey down the Rhine.

### Rhine Nymphs Overture by Jacques Offenbach

Another work from an opera, the story takes place during the wars of the 16th century near Bingen and the Kreuzbach Castle. Filled with romance, battle and a little fairy magic, it is easy to imagine this as a soundtrack to a Rhine River tale.

There are so many different ways to explore the Rhine River and all the area has to offer, let a few of these composers add a little extra magic to your next visit! ■



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# Photo by Felix Ocampo



The **Saarpolygon**, is a unique, ever-changing landmark atop the Halde Duhamel in Ens Dorf. It was built in 2016 to honor 250 years of coal mining tradition in Saarland. The polygon design mimics mining lines and acts as a symbol of remembrance, structural change and the future. As you circle around the landmark, the shape changes making for an illusory experience. Visitors can climb 30-meters to the top for panoramic views of the Saar River and as far as France. ■



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