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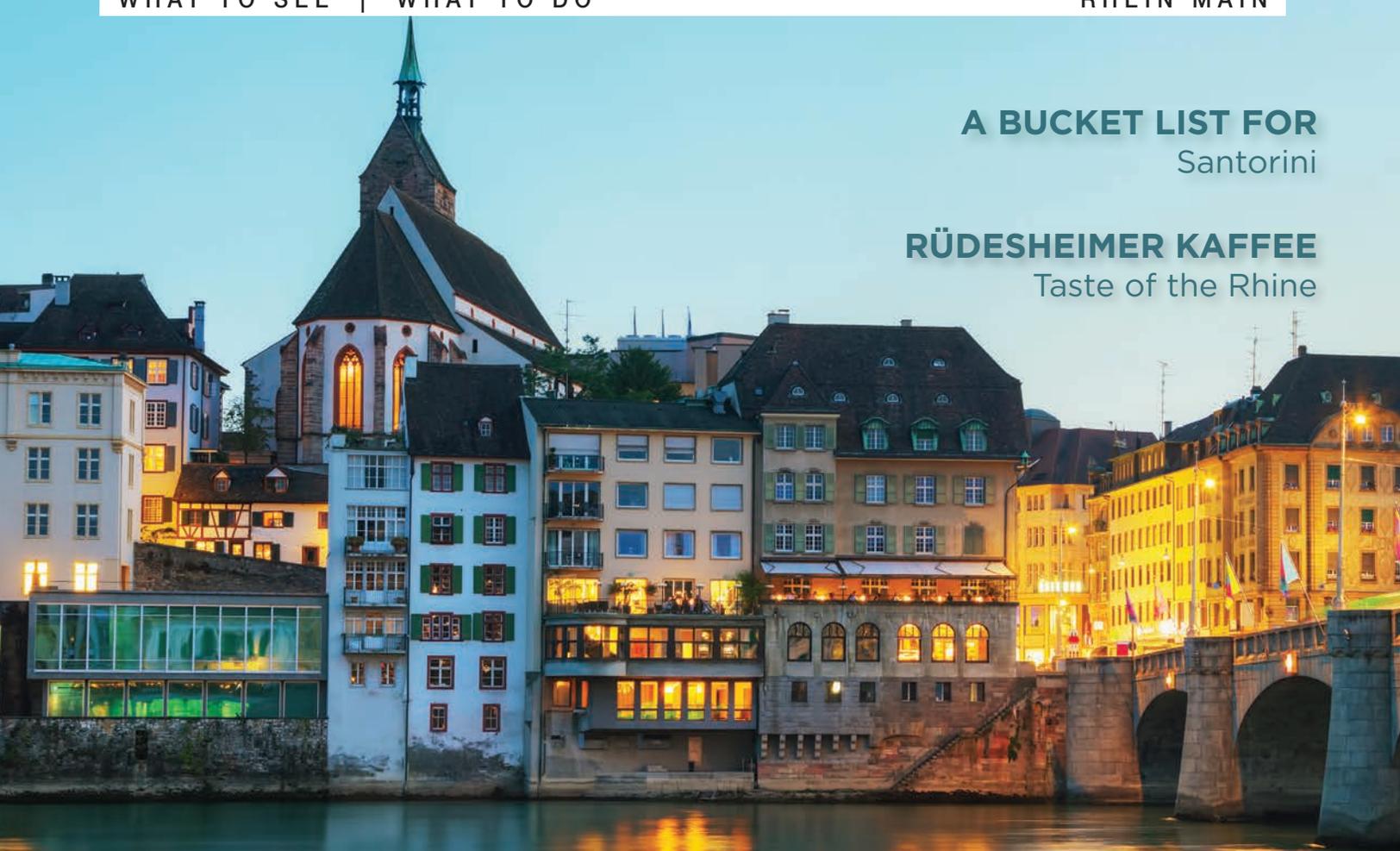
# WHAT'S UP

WHAT TO SEE | WHAT TO DO

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Taste of the Rhine



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# May Events

By Karen Bradbury

# EDITOR'S PICKS

Spring continues to pick up pace throughout Germany. As the snow melts from the mountain peaks, flowers burst into glorious blossoms and the first of the crops are brought to the table, the list of fun and exciting things to do in our free time grows ever longer. As always, be sure to double-check that these events will indeed be going forward before planning travel of any distance, and be sure to confirm you're fully up to date with the COVID-19 regulations in force at the time of the event.

## Spargelsamstag / Asparagus Saturday May 7, Schwetzingen



A city surrounded by fields in which Germany's "white gold" grows, Schwetzingen celebrates the beloved vegetable with art exhibitions, wacky competitions, fashion shows and culinary treats.

## Deutscher Sekttag / German Sparkling Wine Day May 8, Rudesheim am Rhein



On Mother's Day each year, hundreds of sparkling wine makers open their doors to offer tours, tastings, live music and culture. Sektellerei Ohlig has a lively program planned.

## Tempelmarkt / Tempel Market May 13-14, Nuremberg



Germany's largest inner-city flea market offers bargains on treasures you never knew you needed. The market runs 4 p.m. to midnight on Friday and all-day Saturday.

## Rheinland-Pfalz-Tag / Rhineland-Palatinate Day May 20-22, Mainz



A festive air prevails as this southwest German state introduces its people, places, products and public institutions through live shows, demos and food and drink stands.

## Long Night of Museums May 21, Stuttgart



Museums and cultural institutions stay open late with an eclectic program of exhibitions, tours, live performances and access to places usually closed to the public.

## Japan Day May 21, Düsseldorf



Japanese culture comes to life through dance, drumming, fashion shows and a demonstration by those clad as Samurai warriors. A stunning fireworks display crowns festivities.

## International Africa Festival May 26-29 in Würzburg



Europe's largest festival for African music and culture offers live acts, artists, food and drink stands, a bazaar, fashion show and activities geared toward kids.

## Strohhatfest / Straw Hat Fest May 26-29, Frankenthal



This lively volksfest, held in a suburb of Mannheim, turns the inner city into one long street party, with food, fun and live music galore. Be sure to wear a straw hat!

## PLAN AHEAD

### Franconian Beer Festival June 15-19, Nuremberg

Some 30 breweries from the city and the Franconian region proudly pour more than 100 variations of their masterfully brewed beer in what was once castle moat. ■

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# PHOTO of the month

The famed Mont St. Michel located in Normandy, France is a spectacular abbey that was built atop the hilly island in 966 and was upgraded over the centuries, isolated from the mainland during high tide by water and low tide by dangerous sandy bogs. A visit to this abbey is a must while in Normandy.

Photo by Robert Dawson.

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### Recognizing volunteers

U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden hosts the Volunteer of the Year Recognition Ceremony on May 19 at 6 p.m. at the Community Activity Center (Little Italy) on Clay Kaserne. Call Army Community Service at civ (0611) 143-548-9201 for more information.

### Pool Tournament

Kick off the four-day Memorial Day Weekend with an exciting Pool Tournament at the Wiesbaden Entertainment Center Lounge on May 26 starting at 6 p.m. Win cash prizes of up to \$100. Registration costs \$20 and opens at 4 p.m. on the day of the tournament.

### Fishing Course

Learn what you need to know to purchase your German Fishing License during Outdoor Recreation's U.S. Forces German Fishing Course May 5-8. Cost is \$75 for adults ages 16 and up; \$25 for ages 10-15. Register at Outdoor Recreation on Clay North or call civ (0611) 143-548-9801.

### Spouse Appreciation Day Discount at Auto Skills

The Wiesbaden Automotive Skills Center pays tribute to military spouses on Spouse Appreciation Day, May 6, with a \$5 discount for oil change services. Call civ (0611) 143-548-9817.

### Normandy/Mont St. Michel

Explore the scenic wonder of Mont St. Michel and visit World War II landing beaches during Outdoor Recreation's trip to Normandy May 26-30. Cost is \$499 for adults; \$469 for children ages 15 and under. Call civ (0611) 143-548-9801.

### Mother's Day Specials

The Wiesbaden Entertainment Center invites Moms to **bowling free** on Mother's Day, May 8. Meanwhile at the Automotive Skills Center, **Moms get a \$5 discount for oil change services** (by

appointment only — call civ 0611-143-548-9817).

### Frankfurt by Train

Visit the most international city in Germany with Army Community Service's Relocation Readiness Program on May 12. This walking and train tour to Frankfurt takes participants to the largest financial center on the continent — a cultural and shopping mecca. Bring Euros for public transportation and any personal purchases. Call civ (0611) 143-548-9201 to register.

### Skydiving with Outdoor Rec

Get your adrenaline pumping during a tandem jump with the skydiving experts in Bitburg on May 14. Cost is \$299 including the tandem jump and round-trip transportation. Register by April 28 at Outdoor Recreation on Clay North — or call civ (0611) 143-548-9801.

### Four-Person Scramble

Earn prizes for Gross and Net scores during a Four-Person Scramble on May 14 at the Rheinblick Golf Course. Cost is



Join Outdoor Recreation for a trip to Normandy and Mont. St. Michel May 26-30.

\$25 for club members; \$25 plus applicable greens fees for all others. Call civ (0611) 143-548-5485.

### Memorial Day Murph

Compete in a two one-mile runs, 100 pull-ups, 200 push-ups and 300 air squats during the Memorial Day Murph (honoring fallen Navy SEAL Lt. Michael P. Murphy) on May 21 starting at 10 a.m. Stop by the Fitness Center or call civ (0611) 143-548-9830 for details.

### EBiking in the Netherlands

Enjoy a relaxing day biking on the historic backroads of Limburg and Maastricht during this Outdoor Recreation adventure on May 21-22. Cost is \$339 including round-trip transportation and e-bike use. Bring extra Euros for meals and personal purchases. Call civ (0611) 143-548-9801 to register.

### Paintball Play Day

Wiesbaden Outdoor Recreation hosts an Open Paintball Play Day on May 14 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Minimum age is 10. Cost is \$25 per person including marker, air, mask and field fees. Only field paint is permitted. Call civ (0611) 143-548-9801 for details.

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# BAUMWIPFELPFAD SAARSCHLEIFE

By Anna Leigh Bagiackas



The treetop observation tower is the main attraction.

When searching for the top “outdoor destinations in Germany,” it’s easy to immediately think of the Black Forest or Bavarian Alps. While those are certainly worth visiting, many people don’t realize the sheer number of great forests, mountains and outdoor spots sprinkled throughout the rest of Germany—and your own backyard. Baumwipfelpfad Saarschleife, or Treetop Walk Saarschleife, is one of those spots.

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a day at

## BAUMWIPFELPFAD SAARSCHLEIFE



Activity stations offer introductions to the plants, animals and other wildlife of the area to passersby.

Located about one-and-a-half hours from Kaiserslautern by car, this spot is not far from the French border and near the spa town of Mettlach-Orscholz. It makes for a perfect day trip during any season but is especially nice on a beautiful spring day to get outside with the family.

The primary attraction is, of course, the treetop observation tower, but there are a number of stations along the way to keep children and families engaged too. The walk itself is one-and-a-quarter kilometer long and the tower then reaches up 42 meters above the ground. Designed with gradual ramps, the tower is accessible to wheelchairs and offers areas along the way to stop and rest. Once you reach the top, you will be treated to a view of the Saar-Hunsrück Nature Park and the Saarschleife Valley. This valley features a unique bend in the Saar River that has been carved into a layer of quartzite over time—making it one of Saarland's most popular destinations. On a clear day, you may even be able to see France's Vosges mountain range in the distance.

Along the way, activity stations offer introductions to the plants, animals and other wildlife of the area to passersby. There are two different entrances with ticket offices, the Treetop Walk entrance and the Adventure Forest entrance. With an additional ticket, your family can visit the Adventure Park playground, housing 25 different nature-themed play areas and learning stations.

Looking for a snack or refreshment on the way up or down from your treetop hike? At the entrance to the park, you will find Bistro Mirabell, where you can fill up on a selection of warm dishes, coffee, drinks and cakes. In the warmer months, take advantage of the lovely patio. Halfway through the walk you will then come upon Futterkrippe Blumenfels, next to a rest area and restrooms. Futterkrippe has a large beer garden and offers fresh regional specialties with a focus on sustainability, including options for vegan and gluten-free diners.



### Planning Your Trip

Adult tickets are 11.50 euros, children ages 6 to 14 are 9.50 and ages 5 and below are free. You can also purchase a family ticket, group tickets or even annual passes—worth considering because the views will change depending on the season. Tickets can be purchased online ahead of time and in-person. Be sure to review any rules and COVID-19 guidelines prior to visiting. The treetop walk is open year-round, with differing hours depending on the season, and parking is available in a variety of lots near and around the treetop walk.

If you're looking for a few more stops to round out your day in Saarland, consider visiting Montclair Castle, world-renowned ceramic company Villeroy & Boch or one of the many hiking trails in the area. ■

*"ONCE YOU REACH THE TOP OF THE TOWER, YOU WILL BE TREATED TO A VIEW OF THE SAARSCHLEIFE VALLEY. THIS VALLEY FEATURES A UNIQUE BEND IN THE SAAR RIVER THAT HAS BEEN CARVED INTO A LAYER OF QUARTZITE OVER TIME—MAKING IT ONE OF SAARLAND'S MOST POPULAR DESTINATIONS."*



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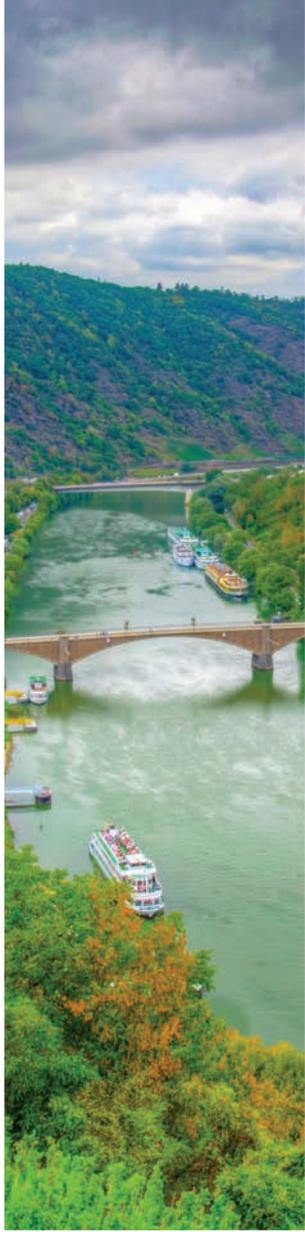
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# CRUISING

*Down the Rhine*

By Karen Bradbury



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The mighty Rhine River rises in the Swiss Alps and empties into the North Sea near Rotterdam, Netherlands. Along the banks of its 765-mile path, numerous great cities including Basel, Switzerland; Strasbourg, France and Cologne and Düsseldorf, Germany can be found. But there's one stretch in particular that has fueled the lion's share of the myths and legends surrounding Western Europe's second-longest river.

The Upper Middle Rhine Valley is the official term for the 40-mile length of the river between Bingen and Koblenz, Germany. Colloquially known as the Rhine Gorge, the officially designated UNESCO World Heritage Site is a fairy-tale land of brooding castle ruins, medieval half-timbered villages and impossibly steep vineyards. Sandstone cliffs and hairpin turns add yet more drama to a landscape that has been inspiring poets and artists for centuries.

## ALL ABOARD

In addition to the barges and working craft plying up and down the Rhine, dozens of cruise vessels ferry tourists along the entirety

of the river's navigable stretch. For many passengers, the highlight of this weeklong tour will be the time spent in the Rhine Gorge. For those without unlimited vacation time or the deep pockets needed to spend a week aboard a ship, day cruises can make for a fun and affordable alternative.

The Köln-Düsseldorfer Deutsche Rheinschiffahrt, KD for short, offers regular sailings aboard its extensive fleet of riverboats from April through October. Passengers can hop on board in Mainz or Wiesbaden-Biebrich and cruise as far as Koblenz or vice-versa; they can also elect to hop off at any number of adorable towns such as Rudesheim, Bacharach or St. Goar. Once a town has been thoroughly explored, they can either board another ship back to their starting points or hop a train for their homebound journeys.

KD Lines' additional offerings include a historical paddle steamer named Goethe that makes its way from Koblenz to Rudesheim and back once a day, or a special sailing from the town of Boppard to the Loreley, a monument to a mythical maiden who threw herself into the Rhine River in despair over her faithless lover. Magically transformed into a siren upon her death, she sits on a rock and

combs her golden hair, distracting sailors and making them run their ships aground. The beloved legend has inspired a popular song; don't be surprised if the German-speaking passengers onboard start singing it loudly as the ship sails past the monument.

Other KD specials include ship-bicycle and ship-cable car combination tickets. Onboard party nights, after-work and evening cruises can also be booked. Boat tickets can be purchased online or at onshore booths near the landing stages.

The Bingen-Rudesheimer Schifffahrtsgesellschaft is another shipping company serving the Rhine Gorge area. Its so-called "ring ticket" offers a boat ride from Bingen to Rudesheim, from where passengers can hike or take a chairlift to the imposing Niederwald Monument, erected in 1883 to commemorate the unification of Germany. From there, they can either hike or take a different chairlift down into the town of Assmannshausen before boarding another ship to take them back to their starting point. Ring tickets offering a similar itinerary are also available departing from the town of Bacharach.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

In non-pandemic times, there are five summer evenings in particular when it's a special treat to be aboard a ship. Rhine in Flames events are evenings during which the cities of Bonn, Bingen, Goarshausen, Koblenz, Oberwesel, Rudesheim and Spay take turns hosting brilliant displays of fireworks set against a backdrop of illuminated vineyards and monuments. A merry convoy of riverboats done up in lights chugs slowly along the Rhine, granting those on board front-row seats to the action. These spectacles take place on selected weekends between May and September. The USO typically offers tours inclusive of bus transfers and an on board program including dinner and live entertainment on many of the Rhine in Flames dates.

In between the day trip and weeklong cruise options is another wonderful way to discover the Rhine and its villages. In the weeks leading up to Christmas, several riverboat tour operators offer three-day cruises departing from Cologne and calling in at towns with their Christmas markets in full swing. Tour-goers get to experience all the magic of the markets for several hours without the hassle of driving or parking, and once their toes and noses have grown nippy, their warm and sumptuously decorated riverboat home awaits them just steps away.

The wild beauty and romance of the Rhine is undoubtedly one of Germany's best touristic assets, and the experience of being afloat in its mythical, ever-flowing waters is as timeless as the river itself. ■



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**The legend of the Loreley has inspired a popular song; don't be surprised if the German-speaking passengers onboard start singing it loudly as the ship sails past the monument.**

“ RHINE IN FLAMES EVENTS ARE EVENINGS DURING WHICH CITIES ALONG THE RIVER TAKE TURNS HOSTING BRILLIANT DISPLAYS OF FIREWORKS SET AGAINST A BACKDROP OF ILLUMINATED VINEYARDS AND MONUMENTS. ”



# Your Santorini Bucket List

By Mary Del Rosario

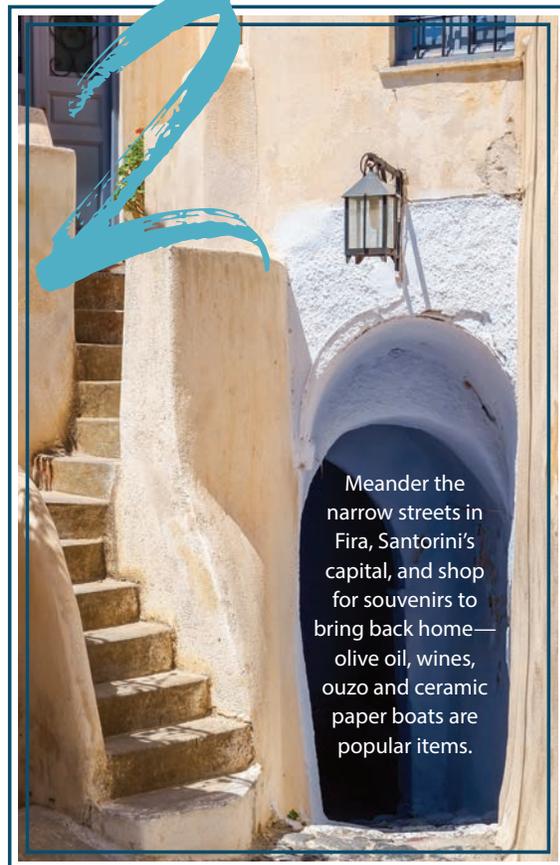
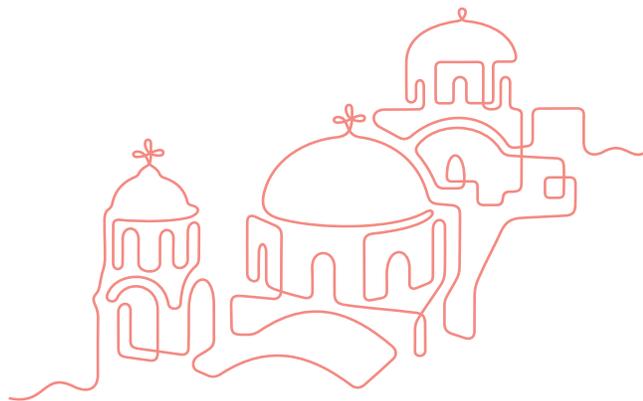
*A magical destination such as Santorini needs no introduction. With blue-domed churches, unreal views of the Aegean Sea and picture-perfect moments with every turn of your head, this whitewashed beauty of an island will leave you awestruck until the end of your stay. To make the most of your time here, check the following off your bucket list:*



# 1

Treat your eyes to the best  
*sunrise and sunset*  
you've ever seen.

For a good vantage point, head to the Byzantine Castle in Oia. Don't forget to set your alarm to catch the sunrise, but be aware there may be a sea of people who had the same idea.



Meander the narrow streets in Fira, Santorini's capital, and shop for souvenirs to bring back home—olive oil, wines, ouzo and ceramic paper boats are popular items.

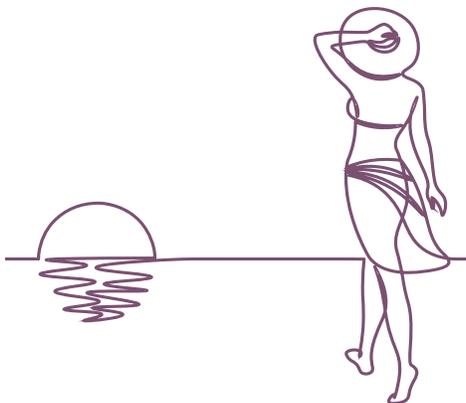
Delight your tastebuds in Greek fare such as fava (a side dish made from pureed split yellow peas), "chlorotyri" (goat cheese found only in Santorini) and "saganaki" (fried cheese wrapped in Phyllo dough) to name a few. Seafood, of course, is a must.



3

6

If watersports aren't for you, venture to the many nearby beaches to include Perissa, Kamari, Red Beach, White Beach and Vlichada Beach for starters. Note that the beaches are rocky, so be sure to bring water shoes.



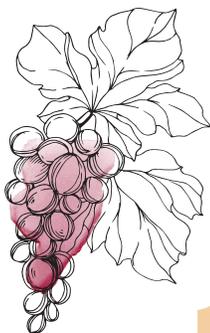
8

Admire the churches of Agios Theodori in Firostefani, Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist in Fira and Orthodox Metropolitan Cathedral, also located in Fira.



4

Clink your glasses and become an oenophile with the handful of wineries found on the island. Assyrtiko is the main grape variety here.



7

Take a high-touch history lesson and explore what may be the real Atlantis in Akrotiri, a settlement that was destroyed in the Minoan eruption.



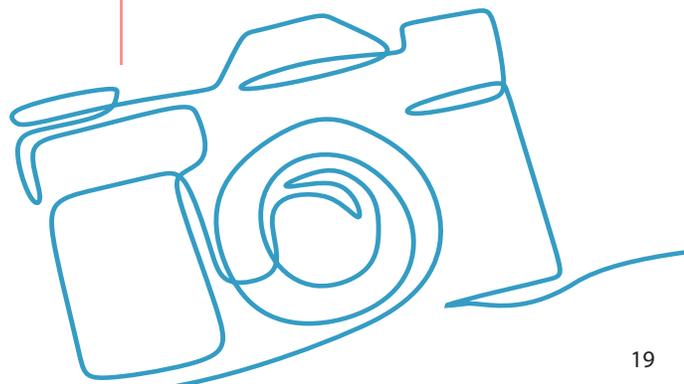
9



Book the ultimate stay at one of the many cave accommodations—whether it's through Airbnb or hotels such as Lava Caves.

10

Hire a photographer to capture that magical moment in this beautiful Greek island. There are several photographers on Airbnb.



5

Be adventurous and try your hand at water activities such as jet skiing, kitesurfing, windsurfing or diving. Or charter a boat and live the extravagant life for a few hours.



# Rüdesheimer Kaffee

## a taste of the Rhine

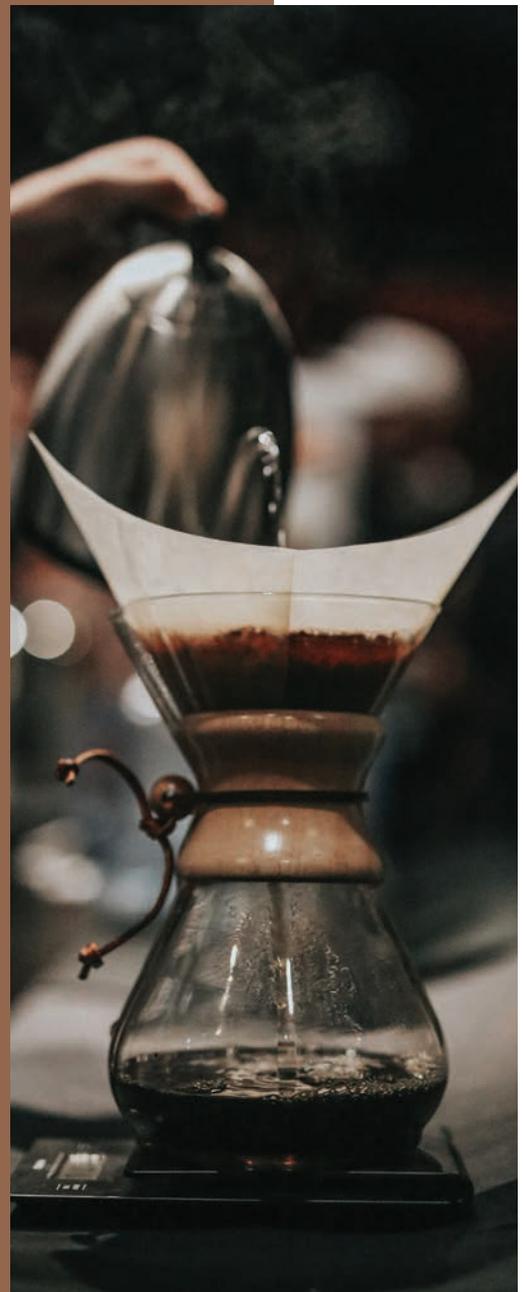
By Anna Leigh Bagiackas

**T**he town of Rüdesheim am Rhine is a well-known winemaking spot along the Rhine River. Marked as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, tourists to this charming town can stop at various weinstubes to taste local Rhine wines and cuisine as well as take a cable car to Niederwalddenkmal, the patriotic statue towering over the vineyards. You can also visit a couple of local castles, including Burg Ehrenfels among the vineyards and the 10th-century castle Brömserburg, known as the oldest castle in the Rhine Gorge World Heritage Site.

After a morning of exploring the town and surrounding vineyards, a Rüdesheimer coffee is in order. Not only is this locale known for its wine drinking, but it also has its own coffee concoction. Invented in 1957, this coffee cocktail mixes a bit of theatrics with the town's signature item: wine, of course.

This coffee's unique ingredient is Asbach Uralt brandy, which originates in Rüdesheim from when Hugo Asbach opened his distillery there in 1892. This wine town was perfect for him, as cognac/brandy is made by distilling wine. Because France claimed the term "cognac," Asbach changed the name of his product to "weinbrand."

The theatrics enter the picture when warm brandy is poured over a couple of sugar cubes and then the mixture is flambeed in the mug, before freshly brewed coffee is added. Naturally, a dollop of whipped cream and shaved chocolate on top are the final touches. While Rüdesheimer coffee has its own specially designed mug, which you can purchase for optimal coffee enjoyment, it can also be served in an Irish coffee mug.



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## Rüdesheimer Kaffee

*Start to finish: 10 minutes, including brewing coffee*

*Serves: 1*

**Equipment:** long match, long spoon

**2 cubes sugar**

**1 1/3 ounces Asbach Uralt Brandy**

**Freshly brewed coffee**

**Heavy cream**

**Pinch of cinnamon, optional**

**Chocolate bar for grating**

Prepare the whipped cream, adding a pinch of cinnamon while whipping, if desired.

Once your coffee has finished brewing, place sugar cubes in coffee mug. Warm the brandy either in the microwave or over gentle heat on the stove, not allowing it to boil.

When the brandy is warmed through, pour over sugar cubes. Light the mixture with a long match and let burn for 1 minute, stirring with a long spoon to dissolve the sugar.

Pour the hot coffee over brandy-sugar mixture and top with a dollop of whipped cream. Using a potato peeler, gently shave chocolate bar over whipped cream. Enjoy! ■



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