

That's Thuringia



100 stories.
100 surprises.

Table of Contents

Famous Exports

- 1 | *The Weimar Bauhaus*
- 2 | *Engines serviced in Thuringia*
- 3 | *Simson inspires generations of two-wheelers*
- 4 | *The story of the Oktoberfest*
- 5 | *The Brooklyn Bridge*
- 6 | *A dog of noble origin*
- 7 | *Weimar is the birthplace of German democracy*
- 8 | *Hans Beck develops PLAYMOBIL*
- 9 | *Books from one of the largest offset printing companies in Europe*
- 10 | *The astronaut Ulf Merbold and his successor*
- 11 | *Products for top sporting performances*
- 12 | *A Thuringian invented Meissen porcelain*
- 13 | *The toothbrush comes from Bad Tennstedt*

Living Traditions

- 14 | *Christmas tree ornaments from Lauscha*
- 15 | *A classic Christmas carol and its story*
- 16 | *The first Purity Law for beer*
- 17 | *The aristocratic yearbook 'Almanach de Gotha'*
- 18 | *The Thuringian bratwurst*
- 19 | *Whisky from the Free State*
- 20 | *Volkenroda and the Christ Pavilion*
- 21 | *Gnomes from Gräfenroda*
- 22 | *Cars 'made in Eisenach'*
- 23 | *The long carnival tradition in Thuringia*
- 24 | *The eventful history of Erfurt University*
- 25 | *The Mühlhausen legal code*

- 26 | *Sugar cones for little sweethearts*
- 27 | *Bad Langensalza, 'City of Roses'*
- 28 | *Toys from Thuringia*
- 29 | *Erfurt, the city of flowers*
- 30 | *The sweet success story of Viba*
- 31 | *Thuringian half-timbered houses: Tradition in wood and design*
- 32 | *Prophet's cake*
- 33 | *Handcrafted excellence for Harry's razor blades*
- 34 | *The renaissance of wine-growing in Thuringia*

Worthwhile Destinations

- 35 | *Tübke's panorama of the Peasants' War*
- 36 | *The Satiricum in Greiz*
- 37 | *The Zeiss Planetarium, Jena*
- 38 | *Thuringia in the Age of Reformation*
- 39 | *Barbarossa on Kyffhäuser ridge*
- 40 | *Niederdorla and the Via Regia*
- 41 | *The Ekhof Theatre*
- 42 | *The Buchenwald memorial*
- 43 | *The Erfurt Krämerbrücke*
- 44 | *Erfurt's Jewish legacy*
- 45 | *'Rococo en miniature' in Rudolstadt*
- 46 | *The Fairy Grottoes in Saalfeld*
- 47 | *Erfurt's Cathedral Hill*
- 48 | *The Lindenau Museum in Altenburg*
- 49 | *Hainich National Park: a UNESCO World Heritage Site*
- 50 | *Impressive castles and palaces*
- 51 | *Place of pilgrimage for palaeontologists*
- 52 | *Bad Frankenhausen's leaning landmark*

Passionate about Life

- 53 | *Germany's oldest long-distance trail*
- 54 | *Erfurt – the capital of children's media*
- 55 | *Playing cards from Altenburg*
- 56 | *Thomas Müntzer and the Peasants' War*
- 57 | *Thuringia is cycling country*
- 58 | *Arnoldi establishes the insurance industry*
- 59 | *Festivals in Thuringia*
- 60 | *Winter sports and winter fun in Oberhof*
- 61 | *Queen Victoria and her love of Gotha*
- 62 | *Wiegleb's academy for pharmacists*
- 63 | *Friedrich Fröbel's kindergarten*
- 64 | *Bertuch's Journal of Luxury and Fashion*
- 65 | *Saint Radegund followed her own path*
- 66 | *A Hungarian princess as patron saint*
- 67 | *Meister Eckhart, the mystic*
- 68 | *The Brothers Grimm are the first to mention chocolate*

Cultural Highlights

- 69 | *Goethe and Schiller*
- 70 | *Bechstein and Wilh. Steinberg*
- 71 | *Bach and Liszt*
- 72 | *Georg II and the Meininger Staatstheater*
- 73 | *Thuringia is a real film star*
- 74 | *Bechstein's fairy tales*
- 75 | *The Duden Dictionary from Schleiz*
- 76 | *Theodor Storm's Thuringian years*
- 77 | *Justus Perthes' Geographic Institute*

- 78 | *Duchess Anna Amalia Library*
- 79 | *Restoration experts save valuable writings*
- 80 | *Alfred Brehm and his 'Life of Animals'*
- 81 | *Novalis and the early Jena Romantics*
- 82 | *Zughafen Erfurt*
- 83 | *Adam Ries and Gottlob Frege*
- 84 | *The painter Otto Dix*
- 85 | *Johann Pachelbel's popular processional*

Ground-breaking Discoveries

- 86 | *Döbereiner and his catalytic lighter*
- 87 | *Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland*
- 88 | *Otto Schott in Jena*
- 89 | *Researchers tinker with the green battery*
- 90 | *The real inventor of instant soup*
- 91 | *Ritter discovers UV light*
- 92 | *Thermometers in mass-production*
- 93 | *Friedrich Mosengeil's stenography*
- 94 | *Space exploration with Thuringian technology*
- 95 | *Carl Zeiss and Ernst Abbe*
- 96 | *Hermann Eicke invented the coffee machine*
- 97 | *Gerontology and genome research in Thuringia*
- 98 | *How hemp is revolutionising the textile industry*
- 99 | *New approaches in the fight against dementia*
- 100 | *The Thuringian State Observatory*

Famous Exports

1-13

Famous Exports

An idea conquers the world

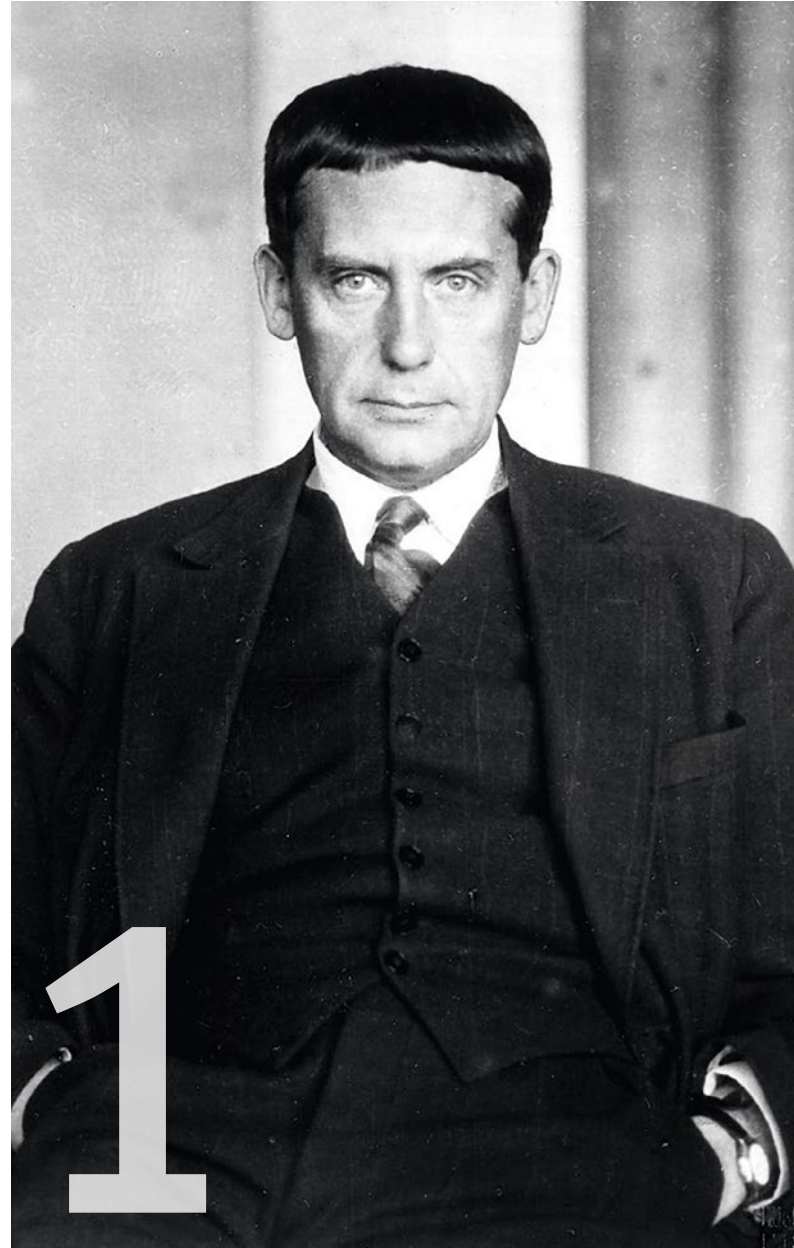
The Weimar Bauhaus

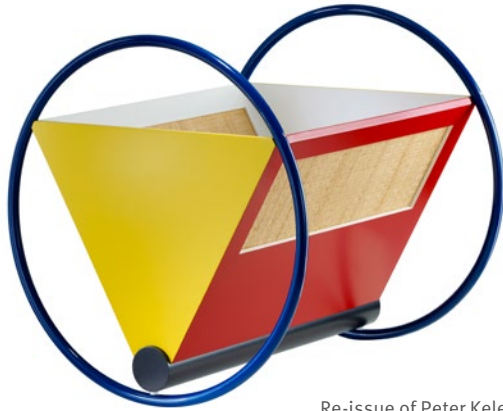
Walter Gropius wanted nothing less than to redefine the way we coexist when he founded the Bauhaus Art and Architectural School in Weimar in April 1919. And despite the strong opposition from conservative and reactionary circles, the Thuringian ideas about design, art and education prevailed in many parts of the world.

Today, Bauhaus stands for much more than just an art school that existed for only 14 years at the beginning of the 20th century. The ideas, designs and architecture live on in our day. Whether in Rio de Janeiro, Chicago or Tel Aviv – the Bauhaus has left a trace everywhere. But to really understand what makes the Bauhaus so fascinating and timeless, you have to travel to Thuringia.

The history of this art school began in Weimar in a functional building designed by Henry van de Velde. At the time, numerous national and international artists and architects came to Weimar as teachers – called Meisters – including Wassily Kandinsky, Oskar Schlemmer and Lyonel Feininger. Together with their students, they experimented, celebrated and provoked. And they achieved great things. Today, 100 years later, van de Velde's building is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and home to the Bauhaus University, which is a magnet for students from all over the world.

Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius:
His ideas have changed the world
and are still relevant today.





Re-issue of Peter Keler's
legendary cradle



Meanwhile, important works belonging to the art school have found a new home at the Bauhaus Museum Weimar, which opened in 2019. The impressive cube is not merely a place of remembrance, hosting the oldest collection of Bauhaus exhibits worldwide, from the Wagenfeld lamp to Peter Keler's cradle. It's also the place where contemporary answers to Gropius' programmatic questions, 'How will we live, how will we settle, what form of community do we want to aspire to?' are sought.



Bauhaus Museum Weimar

One such answer is provided by three spectacular apartment buildings from the 1920s: the 'Haus am Horn' in Weimar and the 'Zuckerkanal' and 'Auerbach' buildings in Jena. With their clear expression of form, all three are jewels of modernism. Numerous examples of the innovative power of modernism can be found in Gera, the city with the largest number of building monuments of this style. Many of these originate from the work of architect Thilo Schoder, a Meister student of Henry van de Velde and one of the most significant proponents of modernism.



Interior view of the Auerbach
building in Jena



Design classic:
the Wagenfeld lamp

You can even stay overnight in the Bauhaus in Thuringia. After extensive renovation, the hotel 'Haus des Volkes' opened its doors in Probstzella in 2005. Although from outside only the lettering is typical Bauhaus, inside the signature of the Bauhaus style is obvious. From the furniture to the colour schemes of the walls: In the 'Haus des Volkes' guests can immerse themselves for a few hours in the illusion of living back in the 1920s.

Famous Exports

Making the safest mode of transport even safer

Engines serviced in Thuringia

Do you know what the greatest risk of flying is? It's the trip to the airport. Because the aeroplane itself is the absolute safest means of transport. And Thuringia contributes to this, too. To be precise, N3 Engine Overhaul Services, a joint venture between Lufthansa Technik AG and Rolls-Royce Holdings plc, which is based in Arnstadt. The Rolls-Royce Trent engines in the Lufthansa fleet and those of more than 50 other international airlines are serviced at the only factory in Europe.

A job that carries a high level of responsibility, when you think about the fact that an engine has to operate reliably for about twelve million kilometres until its next service. And a very complex task, as can be seen from the fact that such an engine consists of over 15,000 individual parts.

Accordingly, the more than 1,000 technicians at N3, who have serviced some 150 engines each year, are highly qualified and able to ensure a secure flying experience. Thanks to a planned expansion, the plant will offer increased capacity for overhauling more than 250 aircraft engines in the future.

2

Rolls-Royce Trent engine on its way through the N3 testing facilities



The rattle and rumble of times past

Simson inspires generations of two-wheelers

Like almost no other brand, Simson symbolises the defining spirit of the former East Germany and its love of motorised transport. The Suhl-based company was one of the biggest names in East German vehicle manufacturing, producing more than six million two-wheelers. Among these was the legendary ‘Schwalbe’ (‘Swallow’) that was launched in 1964 as the first model in the ‘Vogel’ series. These mopeds, as they were commonly called, were not only ever-present on East German streets, but have long since achieved cult status everywhere. Throughout the country, retro mopeds such as the ‘Schwalbe’ or ‘SR 50’ have effortlessly surpassed former competitors like Zündapp or Hercules in terms of popularity.

Moped clubs can be found all over Germany, from north to south, in celebration of the Simson models and to keep the brand’s history alive. The annual Simson Day, which has been celebrated since 2019, shows how the brand continues to captivate and how it remains an integral part of two-wheeler culture.

From the outset, Simson mopeds combined robust technology and distinctive design, making them a much-loved icon across many generations. The ‘Schwalbe’ itself with its maximum speed of 60 km/h and inimitable two-stroke sound is probably the best-known symbol of an entire era. By 1986, more than 1.1 million units had been produced. Models such as the ‘Star’, ‘Habicht’ and, above all, the ‘SR 50’ and ‘SR 51’ also hold a special place in the hearts of Simson fans.



The legendary ‘Schwalbe’, model KR51

Whether hobby, collector’s item or faithful road trip companion – Simson is more than just a brand. As they ‘put-put’ their way through the streets, the legendary two-wheelers tell stories of freedom, zest for life and a very special connection between generations.

Famous Exports

Therese's wedding

The story of the Oktoberfest

It wasn't an easy life for this lady from Thuringia in Munich. Her husband was a devout Catholic and tried repeatedly to convert her away from her Protestant faith. Princess Therese of Saxe-Hildburghausen and Crown Prince Ludwig of Bavaria, married in 1810.

Although she remained a Protestant, Queen Therese became quite popular among the Bavarian people. To this day, she is fondly remembered as a virtuous and charitable 'mother' to her subjects. Theresienstrasse, the shopping boulevard named in her honour, is one of the most prestigious addresses in Munich. And each year, millions of people, tourists and natives alike, converge on Munich's Theresienwiese (Therese's Meadow) for the Oktoberfest – a festival marking that famous royal marriage back in 1810. While the modern Oktoberfest is notorious for its raucous revelry, the royal couple would probably not mind the 'lèse majesté'. After all, the original feast on the 'Wies'n' some two hundred years ago was rather exuberant as well. It all started when a non-commissioned officer had the idea of organising a horse race outside the city gates. Not to be outdone, the local marksmen's club announced a festive shooting competition. These combined events drew a crowd of some 30,000 people. Such huge crowds had to be supplied with food and drink – the rest is history!

The town of Hildburghausen, Therese's home before she became Queen of Bavaria, has begun holding its own annual festival in her honour. Launched in 1990, the year of German reunification, the Theresienfest has since become one of the most popular events in Southern Thuringia.

The portrait of Queen Therese of Bavaria in coronation attire by court painter Joseph Stieler



New York landmark with roots in Thuringia

The Brooklyn Bridge



Anyone looking at an image of the Brooklyn Bridge will automatically think of New York. Yet only a few people know that it was designed by a Thuringian: Johann August Röbling from Mühlhausen. As a young man, this engineer had emigrated to America. John August Roebling initially worked for a railway company, among other employers, and then went on to found the first steel cable manufacturing company in the US. In the early 1850s, he oversaw the construction of a suspension bridge near Niagara Falls. Relying on his expertise in steel cable construction, Röbling proposed building a similar bridge across New York's East River. Selling this ambitious project to the politicians and bureaucrats proved to be a project demanding more patience than anything else. It was not until 1869 that construction could finally begin.

Röbling did not live to see the inauguration of the Brooklyn Bridge in 1883. The engineer suffered a crushed foot during surveying work and died of blood poisoning after it was amputated. But the genius from Mühlhausen is not forgotten. The John A. Roebling Memorial Park in New Jersey still bears his name and a bronze monument was erected in the market square, the Untermarkt, in his old hometown. The Brooklyn Bridge was actually completed by Röbling's daughter-in-law, Emily Warren Roebling. Entirely self-taught, Emily became one of the first female civil engineers ever. The memory of this determined pioneer lives on in Germany's Emily Roebling Prize, which is awarded each year to female entrepreneurs in Central Germany.

Famous Exports

The Weimaraner Pointer

A dog of noble origin

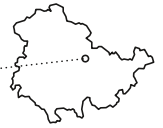
When stepping out of the subway at 23rd Street in New York, you stare into the faithful dog eyes of two Weimaraner. The American photographer artist William Wegman portrayed his dogs Flo and Topper in human clothes and poses. Both had also previously posed for Vogue and now in the subway their likenesses look down as mosaics from the tiled walls of the platform, as though they are waiting for the next train.

The 'grey ghost', as it is sometimes called in the US, has long been one of the most sought-after dogs there. Frank Sinatra and Grace Kelly were among prominent owners, as was President Eisenhower. The Weimaraner is more than

just a good looking. In fact, the elegant four-legged Thuringian with its gleaming silver-grey fur, floppy ears and amber eyes is a hunting dog. As a so-called pointer, it reliably tracks down game. The first well-known owner was Grand Duke Karl August of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, who kept these dogs at the court of Weimar, from which they have their name. The Weimaraner has been officially bred as a distinct breed since 1890. Hunters and rangers to this day value this loyal companion for its sensitivity, its agility and its noble appearance.



Weimaraners are art: murals in the New York subway station on 23rd Street



Revolution of values

Weimar is the birthplace of German democracy

In 1919, the National Assembly met for the first time in the Weimar National Theatre: 423 women and men who were to advise on the first democratic constitution of Germany.

They were emissaries of the people, freely elected by secret ballot in all parts of the Reich. What they developed became one of the most progressive constitutions of its time. For the first time on German soil, they wrote down fundamental rights that today seem self-evident.

They created the roots of democracy in Weimar. Men and women have equal rights. Every citizen over the age of 20 has the right to vote. The state remains neutral in questions of religion. Freedom of assembly prevails. Labour laws are unified and the middle class strengthened.

National conservatives and religious fundamentalists did prevent certain advances toward modernity, such as the abolition of the death penalty. Nevertheless, Weimar became an example to Europe and far beyond. For example, German immigrants translated the work of the Weimar Assembly for their fellow citizens in South America. From Chile in 1925, to Brazil in 1934, to Argentina in 1949, numerous Latin American constitutions reflect the wording of the Constitution of the Weimar Republic.

7

Première:
election poster calling all
citizens to take part in the
first free and democratic
German election



Famous Exports

When children's dreams come true *Hans Beck develops PLAYMOBIL*

Most retailers were in agreement: the figures that the geobra Brandstätter company introduced at the Nuremberg International Toy Fair in 1974 would be a flop. 'You can get that sort of thing cheaper from China', was the verdict. But the retailers made this calculation without taking into account their target group. PLAYMOBIL was a huge hit with children from the outset.

The creator of the world-famous plastic figurines came from Greiz. Even as a teenager, Hans Beck, born in 1929, used to craft toys for his siblings. At 19, he left the Soviet zone and settled in Franconia where Horst Brandstätter, the owner of geobra, became aware of the inventor. Beck advanced to development manager at the company and in the early 1970s he made children's dreams come true with PLAYMOBIL. Hans Beck achieved this by assuming the perspective of young people: PLAYMOBIL figures look like children's drawings and place no limits on the imagination. A damsel who puts on a hard hat and helps the fire department, on the back of a unicorn, to extinguish a prairie fire? PLAYMOBIL makes it possible.

8



Bestsellers from Thuringian history:
composer Johann Sebastian Bach (left)
and poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe as
special figurines from PLAYMOBIL

In 2000, Hans Beck received a special honour. At the EXPO in Hanover, the developer from Greiz was among the 100 Germans whose busts were displayed in the German Pavilion.

Yet it is not only the numerous themed worlds that enrich the PLAYMOBIL range, but also special Thuringian figures such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Johann Sebastian Bach and Friedrich Schiller. In addition, the 2023 Luge and Biathlon World Championships in Oberhof were honoured with figures of the Thuringian athletes Dajana Eitberger and Erik Lesser and the mascot 'Flocke' in a dedicated PLAYMOBIL set.



Bestsellers from Hape Kerkeling to Ken Follett

Books from one of the largest off-set printing companies in Europe

Formerly, it was Russian textbooks and most of the books for East Germany. Today, bestsellers by the likes of Hape Kerkeling and Ken Follett are all produced in Thuringia, in one of the largest offset printing companies in Europe. But GGP Media GmbH became famous mainly thanks to a young wizard: The Poessneck company produced parts of the German 'Harry Potter' series as well as the seventh volume of the British original. Further bestsellers such as the '50 Shades of Grey' series followed. The utmost secrecy was required, with the result that not a single line was leaked to the eagerly awaiting fans. GGP Media GmbH also makes taking care of the environment a top priority, and in 2004, the printer became the first European book manufacturer to be certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Globally, the FSC seal of approval stands for the fair and environmentally friendly production and treatment of paper.



Totally adrift from the Earth

The astronaut Ulf Merbold and his successor

On the 28th of November 1983, the first ESA astronaut, Ulf Merbold, born in Greiz, was launched into space as part of the Spacelab 1 mission. That made him the second German in space and the first non-American on board the US Space Shuttle.

That Merbold, today an honorary citizen of his hometown, was able to follow in the footsteps of the first German in space, cosmonaut Sigmund Jähn, had a lot to do with the fact that he himself had left East Germany. Merbold actually wanted to study physics at Jena, but was not allowed. He was not a member of the FDJ (Free German Youth).



So, at 19 he went to the West where he began a career at the Max Planck Institute for Metals Research, before replying to a mundane job advertisement in 1977. The European Space Agency and what is now the German Aerospace Centre (DLR) were looking for a 'scientist in the space laboratory'. Merbold distinguished himself among the 2,000 applicants and took part in a total of three space flights.

Since then, other German astronauts have followed him into space. Alexander Gerst, the first German commander of the ISS Space Station, and Matthias Maurer are the currently active members of the European Astronaut Corps and continue the tradition – also thanks to pioneer Ulf Merbold. Today, the DLR Institute for Data Science in Jena provides the data backbone for DLR's aerospace, energy, transportation and security activities.

10

11

High tech for peak performance

Products for top sporting performances

Sport is part of Bauerfeind's DNA. In Germany, Sporthilfe uses the company's expertise and high quality on an almost daily basis. Bauerfeind supports over 4,000 athletes and almost all the Olympians in the country.

The company has been at the Summer and Winter Olympics from as early as 2002, supporting and taking care of athletes with chronic and acute injuries in collaboration with doctors and physiotherapists. As partner to the relevant Olympic organising committees, Bauerfeind gathers valuable experience in caring for the world's top athletes and incorporates this Olympic know-how into the further development of its own products. The company in Zeulenroda, Thuringia, makes state-of-the-art bandages, orthoses, compression stockings and insoles that are used by both amateur and professional athletes. A wonderful example of this are the partnerships with Andreas Toba, Anna Hahner or Thomas Röhler. Thanks to collaborations with clubs, such as THW Kiel, Alba Berlin, SSC Palmberg Schwerin and Eintracht Frankfurt, Bauerfeind is an active partner to various ball sports.



Innovations from Zeulenroda for athletes worldwide: Bauerfeind products are designed for peak performance at every level.

Famous Exports

White gold re-imagined

A Thuringian invented Meissen porcelain

The originator of Meissen porcelain was a Thuringian. The apothecarist and alchemist Johann Friedrich Böttger, born in 1682 in Schleiz, came up with the recipe almost accidentally. Augustus the Strong had demanded he manufacture gold. Of course, Böttger was unable to produce this miracle, but instead manufactured snow-white porcelain. And with that, in 1708, not only was Böttger off the hook, but the Chinese monopoly on 'white gold' was also broken.

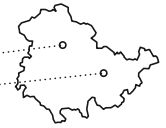
The secret of the porcelain remained guarded for a long time. It wasn't until at least 50 years after Böttger that three other Thuringians almost simultaneously discovered ways of making porcelain: the theologian Georg Heinrich Macheleid, the factory inspector Johann Wolfgang Hammann and glass maker Johann Gotthelf Greiner. They laid the foundations, as competitors, for the Thuringian porcelain tradition, which reached its peak in 1900. At that time, there were around 400 manufacturers in Thuringia.

Today, there are still more than a dozen operations producing porcelain in the state – with modern designs and innovative production methods. Thuringia is also home to one of Europe's largest porcelain producers: the company KAHLA, founded in 1844. Its products have already won multiple awards, including the Red Dot Design Award ten times between 1997 and 2014.

Enthusiasts can also experience the fascination of porcelain in historical settings. Leuchtenburg Castle near Kahla, once the administrative seat of the House of Wettin as well as a court and penitentiary, hotel and youth hostel, today combines its 800-year history with the tradition of the valuable material in the 'Porcelain Worlds' exhibition. The modern visitor centre and the 'Steg der Wuensche' (Skywalk of Wishes) – a glass platform from which porcelain plates with wishes can be thrown into the depths – symbolise the fusion of past and future.



Excellent design for sustainable coffee enjoyment: the 'cupit' take-away cup from KAHLA/Thüringen porcelain manufacturer



Clean idea

The toothbrush comes from Bad Tennstedt

Sawdust, sponges, quills: For a long time these kinds of rather ineffective items were used by local people here to clean their teeth. But, thanks to Thuringian Christoph von Hellwig, about 320 years ago, a revolution began to fight tooth decay. The priest's son, born in 1663 in Kölleda, had studied medicine in Erfurt and Jena and had been the city physician since 1696 – something like an early public health officer – in Tennstedt, known today as Bad Tennstedt.

In this position, he developed a new kind of toothbrush. Its handle was made of wood or metal and its bristles were of horse hair. In 1700, the innovative doctor presented his invention and its ease of use in the newspaper 'Frauenzimmer-Apotheke'. That was the beginning of a centuries-long success story.

Although modern toothbrushes have bristles made of nylon rather than horse hair, they are still very similar to Hellwig's invention. Meanwhile, in Bad Tennstedt, a memorial was erected to the most famous invention in the history of the city: two giant toothbrushes in a huge tumbler.



At the entrance to Bad Tennstedt stands this monument, honouring the most important invention in the history of the city: the toothbrush.

13



Living Traditions

14-34

14



Living Traditions

Necessity is the mother of invention

Christmas tree ornaments from Lauscha

A small town near the southern end of Thuringia's Rennsteig ridge, Lauscha is best known as the birthplace of the Christmas tree ornament. According to local legend, the glassblowers of Lauscha were too poor to decorate their Christmas trees with apples or nuts, so they made glass copies of these fruits to use instead. The historical record first mentions these Christmas tree ornaments in the year 1847, but it took another 20 years before the technical preconditions were in place to mass produce such large, thin-walled glass ornaments. International success took off around 1880 when F. W. Woolworth became aware of these beautiful baubles and began selling them at his first store in Pennsylvania. Some 20 years later, when Woolworth's had expanded into a large chain of stores, the glittering globes, angels, Santas, stars and 5,000 other glass shapes had conquered the world!

The museum for glass arts (Museum für Glaskunst) in Lauscha documents this period of Thuringia's history, while also educating visitors about how the art of glassblowing has evolved in the region since early modern times. The first glass-smelting workshop in Lauscha was founded as early as 1597. The 'Production of Hand-Blown Glass Tree Ornaments in Lauscha' was included in the 'Nationwide Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage' in 2021 and an exhibition area of the museum expanded to include the topic.

A true Christmas classic:
Christmas tree ornaments from Lauscha

Good cheer in the face of grief

A classic Christmas carol and its story

Visitors to German Christmas markets will hear the carol ‘O du fröhliche’ played over and over again. But who would suspect that this ditty has a very serious history? The text of the first verse was written by Johannes Daniel Falk, a Weimar-based author and educator. Falk had lost four of his seven children in a matter of months while the Napoleonic Wars were raging through Germany. This moved him to found the ‘Society of Friends in Need’, a charity that took in children and youngsters orphaned and homeless due to the war. In 1815, Falk composed the text for ‘O du fröhliche, o du selige, gnadenbringende Weihnachtszeit’ (‘O you merry, o you blessed, merciful Christmastide’) for his young charges to sing, setting it to a Sicilian fisherman’s song. One of his associates later added another two verses.

By the way, Falk’s was no ordinary orphanage; its educational programme became a model for today’s youth-oriented social work.

16

Brewed, not watered down

The first Purity Law for beer

In 1998, the little town of Weissensee near Sömmerda was the scene of a minor sensation. An old legal guideline for taverns from the year 1434 was discovered in the city archives, one proving that the oldest ‘Purity Law’ for beer (Reinheitgebot) actually originated in Thuringia. The regulations entitled ‘Statuta Thaberna’ in Latin prescribed that only ‘hops, malt, and water’ could be used to brew beer, under threat of punishment. Before this unexpected discovery, it was Bavarian brewers who had always laid claim to the first Rheinheitsgebot, based on a document from 1516. Thuringia has a long tradition of brewing. Mentions of the Köstritzer dark beer brewery are documented as far back as 1543. Known as the ‘Köstritzer Erbschenke’ back then, the brewery is one of the oldest breweries in Germany. The dark speciality beer with its strong malt flavour that is brewed here is enjoying growing popularity among beer connoisseurs worldwide.

From breweries with a history going back centuries to recently established craft beer breweries – the Thuringian brewing tradition is experiencing a real renaissance.

15



Living Traditions

Not for everybody

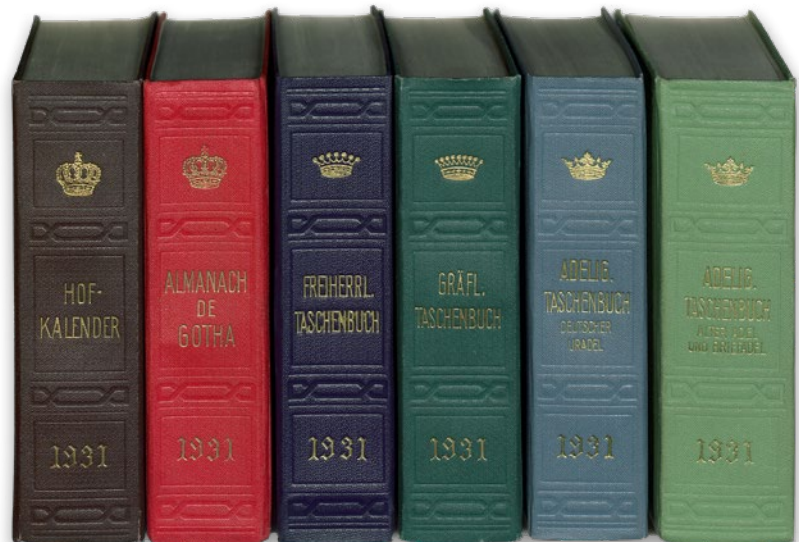
The aristocratic yearbook 'Almanach de Gotha'

In 1764, Gotha bookseller Johann Christian Dieterich published the first 'Almanach de Gotha' – a reference book that was to become world famous. The yearbook included, in the French language, a calendar, the family histories of the European monarchs and a list of German Kaisers. The Almanach also reported on science, trade and art. A year later, a German version also appeared, the 'Gothaischer Hofkalender'.

New French and German editions were issued every year until 1944, supplemented over time by statistics on foreign countries. However, the core of it remained the pedigrees of the noble houses. The families themselves made sure they were up to date by reporting christenings, weddings and deaths to the editors. A follow-up series now continues the tradition of the Almanach: The 'Gothaisches Genealogisches Handbuch' first appeared in Marburg in 2015.

17

A collection of books including the 'Almanach de Gotha', the 'Gothaischer Hofkalender' and the 'Genealogische Taschenbücher'





Mühlhausen 18 |

Gotha 17 |



When culture and culinary art combine

The Thuringian bratwurst

At least 15 centimetres long, medium ground, raw or par-boiled – behind this somewhat mundane description lies a true delicacy. We're talking about the Thuringian bratwurst, which has to fulfil these requirements according to EU guidelines. Since 2004, the geographical indication has also been protected.

This means at least 51 percent of the raw ingredients must come from Thuringia. Which exact ingredients they are remains the secret of every butcher. What is certain, however, is that the speciality, first mentioned in 1404, also inspires innumerable connoisseurs far beyond Thuringia. The bratwurst became a popular postcard motif around 1900, ensuring that Thuringia was on everyone's lips. The state was therefore an obvious location for the 1st German Bratwurst Museum, an attraction dedicated to this truly historic delicacy, which opened in 2006. Founded in Holzhausen and relocated to Mühlhausen, it now offers far more than just a tribute to the beloved bratwurst.

With a history spanning more than 600 years, the bratwurst offers a world of experience. In 2022, the Thuringian bratwurst was even included in the 'Nationwide Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage'.

The so-called bratwurst or caraway equator divides Thuringia: North of the Rennsteig, where the sausage is 'Rostbratwurst' or grilled sausage, it contains caraway. South of the border, the sausage contains marjoram. But the one thing that pretty much everyone agrees on is mustard as the condiment of choice. Never ketchup. But of course, that's just a personal preference. It's what's inside the sausage that really counts.

18

Living Traditions

Thuringia's highlands

Whisky from the Free State



Master of the barrels: Bernd Ehbrecht, founder of whisky brand The Nine Springs

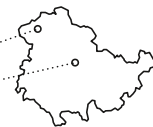
Germany's image as a nation of beer drinkers is becoming an outdated cliché. In fact, the per-head consumption of beer in Germany has been declining for years. At the same time, demand for premium and regional spirits has been growing steadily. One of the first Thuringians to recognise this trend was, of all people, a beer brewer: Bernd Ehbrecht, owner of Neunspringe traditional brewery in Leinefelde-Worbis. After a holiday in Scotland, he came up with the idea of producing whisky on his brewery's premises.

In the Scottish Highlands, he discovered that the area had a key feature in common with his home region of Thuringia: an abundance of soft spring water. There are nine springs at his brewery site that are still in use today.

19

Leinefelde-Worbis 19 |

Erfurt 19 |



Ehbrecht began by experimenting with distilling equipment, blends and different aromas. By 2013, his first batch of whisky distillate was finally ready to be poured into oak barrels in which bourbon, sherry or French red wine had previously been aged. The high-proof liquid was allowed to mature for three years, until it became The Nine Springs Single Malt Whisky, the first of its kind to be made in Thuringia.

This was just the start of a remarkable success story, which continued with the opening of Whiskywelt Burg Scharfenstein, a unique world of experience that offers deep insights into the art and history of whisky production. Tastings give visitors the opportunity to experience the distinctive flavour of the local whiskies.

The finest grain and fresh spring water from the Harz Mountains are the secret recipe for the whisky produced by the traditional grain distillery in Nordhausen. Grain has been distilled in Nordhausen since 1507 – longer than anywhere else in the world. Here, the focus is on the tangy rye flavour, which develops over several years of maturation in new or pre-used wooden casks. The Art Nouveau building was constructed over a century ago as a small-batch distillery and is today open to visitors.

Whisky is also produced in the heart of Erfurt. Founded in 2017, the family distillery NICOLAI & SOHN produces fine spirits at Zughafen station cultural centre – regionally, sustainably and with an abundance of patience. The distillery also produces a single malt whisky, which is distilled with precision by hand using Scottish distilling techniques. The interaction of different raw materials and barrel types creates unique aromas.



Courtyard at Echter Nordhäuser Traditionsbrennerei

Living Traditions

An ancient cloister gets a modern makeover

Volkenroda and the Christ Pavilion



Cloister Volkenroda:
The new buildings,
together with the
renovated monastery
church form an exciting
ensemble.

20



Though the village of Volkenroda near Mühlhausen has fewer than 200 inhabitants, it is still visited by tens of thousands each year. What they come to see is a spectacular synergy of medieval and contemporary architecture, of past and present: Germany's oldest surviving Cistercian monastery church. Lovingly restored, the compound's half-timbered houses now serve as a guest house, a youth training centre and a conference building, respectively. This quaint ensemble is juxtaposed with a decidedly modern structure: a church in the shape of a giant, light-flooded cube, known as the 'Christ Pavilion'.

Clearly structured and consisting of unassuming building materials, such as steel, glass, exposed concrete and marble, it was designed by renowned architect Meinhard von Gerkan for the international EXPO 2000 trade fair in Hanover. Since 2001, the 'Christ Pavilion' has been given a permanent home in Volkenroda and is used not only for church services but also for various art and cultural events.



A huge success

Gnomes from Gräfenroda



The garden gnomes are exclusively hand-painted.

Garden gnome lovers versus garden gnome haters – this petty bourgeois dispute plays a role even in Goethe's 'Hermann and Dorothea'. Scarcely any other figure combines tradition, craftsmanship and humour in such a charming fashion. Gnomes first made it big at the Leipzig trade fair in 1884 when a terracotta company from Gräfenroda presented a new product: a depiction of a miner marked from the hard work of his trade, which soon became a popular symbol of industriousness in advertising.

Statues of small people had only decorated the gardens of the rich in the Baroque period, but August Heissner and Philipp Griebel mass-produced the gnomes out of clay. Their factory at the edge of the Thuringian Forest is considered the 'birthplace of the garden gnome'. By the end of the 19th century, 15 terracotta factories in Gräfenroda supplied the growing worldwide demand for the figures, which became popularly known as garden gnomes after the Second World War. To this day, the Philipp Griebel

Zwergstatt Gräfenroda manufacturing company – the only remaining traditional gnome manufactory in the world – uses traditional methods to finish off the little men with their colourful pointed hats that are beloved in both gardens and advertising. Visitors can follow the exciting development process first hand – from moulding the figures to the artistic painting. The company has also constructed a small garden gnome museum displaying the finest specimens.



21

Living Traditions

From Dixi to Opel

Cars ‘made in Eisenach’

Daimler, Benz and Opel – these are the names that many Germans associate with the early history of the automobile. A fourth important name is known only to specialists: Heinrich Ehrhardt. This major industrialist founded the vehicle factory Eisenach AG in 1896. It produced bicycles and military vehicles, and introduced the Wartburg-Motorwagen to the market as early as 1898.

After Gottlieb Daimler and Carl Benz, but before Opel, Heinrich Ehrhardt was the third automobile producer in Germany. Fans of vintage cars rave about one Eisenach car

in particular: the Dixi. This brand existed from 1904 to 1928, the year BMW took over the Eisenach factory and thus entered the automotive production business for the first time. After the Second World War, the Wartburg was produced in Eisenach along with many other vehicles that remain in the memory of East German citizens. Together with the ‘Trabi’, it formed part of the typical street scene in the former GDR.

Adam Opel AG began production shortly after Heinrich Ehrhardt as the fourth German automobile company, and has also been manufacturing in Eisenach since 1990. BMW has been active in Eisenach again since the 1990s: In 2022, the company celebrated the 30th anniversary of its (new) plant, the BMW Group’s largest toolmaking site worldwide.



The historic Dixi is housed in the vehicle museum in Suhl.

22

Woesinge ahoi! Erfordia helau!

The long carnival tradition in Thuringia



Grand historical pageant in Wasungen

23

Many places in Thuringia are taken over by revellers during carnival time – and that’s how it’s been for hundreds of years. In Erfurt, there is evidence that the first carnival celebrations date back as far as 1342. In those days, people met in the town hall for a banquet. Today, the impressive carnival floats wind their way through the centre of Erfurt every year on Carnival Sunday, stopping occasionally and attracting tens of thousands of onlookers and festive folk.

The inhabitants of Wasungen can also look back on a long carnival tradition. As early as 1524, the mayor of the small town donated a bucket of beer to the players in the carnival games, as evidenced by a bill. The southern Thuringian town subsequently developed into a real carnival stronghold, with its own unique characteristics. For example, there is no prince and princess, only a prince, and the Carnival Monday procession takes place on Saturday.

To mark its 500th birthday, the Wasungen carnival was celebrated in style in 2024 under the motto ‘Hüsch wäerd’s wärn’ (‘Schön wird’s werden’ or ‘It’ll be great’). Large numbers attended the festivities, and one or two politicians were gently mocked. This tradition has always attracted many people, and in GDR times regularly brought 30,000 visitors to the ‘city of the people’s carnival’.

The carnival season is celebrated in numerous other locations throughout Thuringia with parades or other events. And just as varied as their traditions are the party calls of the Thuringian carnival-goers: for example, in Erfurt they say ‘Erfordia helau!’ while in Wasungen it’s ‘Woesinge ahoi!’.

Living Traditions

Old grandeur revived

The eventful history of Erfurt University

It sounds paradoxical: Erfurt has the oldest as well as the youngest university in Germany. This apparent contradiction goes back to the eventful history of the Erfurt 'Hierana', the high school on the Gera river. Thanks to the papal founding privilege of 1379, it is considered the oldest German university, even before Heidelberg (1385) and Cologne (1388).

Its story down through the ages: In the medieval university, all four faculties were taught: law, theology, medicine and philosophy. In the 15th century, 'Alma Mater Erfordensis' was one of the most renowned universities in Central Europe. Martin Luther studied there from 1501 to 1505 and the present-day Institute for Evangelical Theology is named after him. In 1816, the university's history came to an end for the time being with its closure by the Prussians. In 1994, it was re-founded by the state of Thuringia – and that's why it's also known as Germany's youngest university. The time-honoured main building, Collegium Maius, in Erfurt's Old Town and the modern campus on Nordhäuser Strasse symbolise this coming together of tradition and new beginnings.

24

Old University of Erfurt,
Collegium Maius



‘For we are all neighbours, here in this town’ *The Mühlhausen legal code*

The dark Middle Ages – that’s too simplistic. The 13th century, for example, was a time of cultural awakening, of economic and social progress. Just take the legal codes that local potentates established in their fiefdoms during this period: they were in the German vernacular, rather than in scholarly Latin, and binding for all, regardless of station.

But the increasingly prosperous, self-governing free towns of the Holy Roman Empire also codified their laws to benefit their citizens. It was Mühlhausen on the river Unstrut, one of the Empire’s centres, that spearheaded this development. The first town charter written in the German language was promulgated in Mühlhausen between 1220 and 1250. Its 49 chapters govern many aspects of communal life in the town. How was a murderer to be punished? What should a woman do to bring charges against a rapist? How long was the probation period for newcomers before they could acquire citizenship? Even the crime of trespassing was covered: ‘Every man here in Mühlhausen shall be entitled to enjoy peace and quiet in his home. If anyone should attack him there with unjust violence, by day or by night, he shall answer for it with his neck.’

In the region of 2,300 historical documents and more than 2,000 metres of files are stored in the Mühlhausen city archives. Among them is one of only two surviving original copies of the Mühlhäuser Rechtsbuch.

25



Living Traditions

A sweet first day of school

Sugar cones for little sweethearts

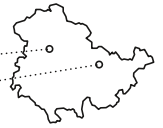
It's the typical first-day-of-school photo treasured by generations of German parents: a gap-toothed smile, a proud gaze somewhere behind a paper cone full of sweets almost as tall as the child carrying it. The tradition of easing a child's transition to school life with sweets goes back a long way. To 1817 in fact, when children in Jena were given paper cones filled with special treats as they set off for their first day.

At first, the custom remained confined to Thuringia and Saxony. It was not until the 20th century that the tradition became popular throughout Germany. Initially, it was just the wealthier classes. But soon even less well-off parents were sweetening the start of school for their little ones.

26



Historical photographs
from the 19th century



A blossoming legacy

Bad Langensalza, 'City of Roses'

If you follow your nose in Bad Langensalza, you can't go wrong. From May to September, the northeast of the Old Town smells as though the houses themselves had been sprayed with perfume. The enticing aroma comes from an 18,000 square metre municipal garden in which around 450 species and varieties of the Rosaceae plant family flourish – roses in all colours and sizes.

The rose garden is the living expression of a tradition that dates back to 1870. At that time, gardeners in the village of Ufhoven, now part of Bad Langensalza, began to grow roses to sell. Some families later took up the challenge of not only multiplying the 'queen of flowers', but also of breeding their own varieties, resulting in more than 90 new

specimens. The rose-breeding success of Bad Langensalza, which earned the right to officially call itself the 'City of Roses' in 2002, can be admired in the Rose Museum at the entrance to the garden. One of these breeds is the 'Rosenstadt Bad Langensalza®' – a 'thank you' from rose breeder Volker Rönigk to all those who earned a living from the rose in Bad Langensalza.

But it is not only the garden that tempts you to linger: Bad Langensalza impresses with a unique variety of well-kept parks and gardens, which are among the most beautiful in Germany. Each of these green spaces has its own unique atmosphere – and makes Bad Langensalza an unforgettable experience for nature and garden lovers.



The rose garden in Bad Langensalza is considered one of the most beautiful gardens in Germany.



Living Traditions

Classic designs for the nursery

Toys from Thuringia

For Renate Müller, the late fame came as a surprise. The designer from Sonneberg has been making animal toys out of natural materials since the 1960s. Out of hessian ('Rupfen'), for example, a coarse fabric that also gave the animals their name 'Rupfentiere'. Müller's hessian animals were initially used primarily for therapeutic purposes before they also became popular in the nursery.

One day, two gallery owners from the USA visited her workshop. It wasn't long until they asked her if she would like to see her rhinos, horses and turtles on offer in New York. Müller agreed, with the result that, in 2012, even the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) included the design classics from Thuringia in an exhibition. Some of her creations, influenced by the maxims of the Weimar Bauhaus, now attract four figure bids at auction.

From nursery to MoMA –
Renate Müller and her therapeutic 'Rupfentiere' made from natural materials

Kellner plug-in figures from Bad Tabarz in Thuringia



Bad Tabarz 28 |

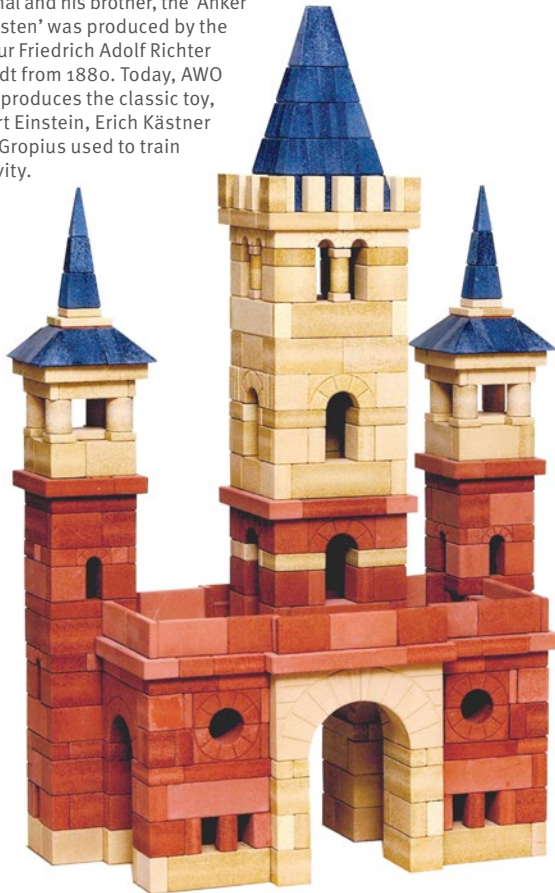
Rudolstadt 28 |

Sonneberg 28 |



28

Originally invented by aviation pioneer Otto Lilienthal and his brother, the 'Anker Steinbaukasten' was produced by the entrepreneur Friedrich Adolf Richter in Rudolstadt from 1880. Today, AWO Rudolstadt produces the classic toy, which Albert Einstein, Erich Kästner and Walter Gropius used to train their creativity.



It's no accident that someone from Sonneberg designs toys. This town in the south of Thuringia developed into a leading centre of toy production in the 18th and 19th centuries. At the beginning of the 20th century, producers in the 'world toy-making city' dominated the global market together with those from the former 'doll city' Waltershausen, from Lauscha, Suhl, Großbreitenbach and other places in Thuringia.

And even if this industry has seen its heyday, numerous companies continue the tradition thanks to the ideas, workmanship and quality of their products.

For example, the famous 'Anker Steinbaukasten' play system is being revived today and firms such as Steiner produce soft toys in every conceivable variation. Another example is the Kellner plug-in figures, which have been manufactured in Thuringia since the 1950s. The lovingly designed wooden figures can be put together using simple plug-in connections and thus playfully promote creativity and motor skills.

The region's toy-making tradition is honoured in the German Toy Museum in Sonneberg. This magnificent building houses the oldest special toy collection in Germany. Among them are Thuringian wooden toys, teddy bears and dolls from the 18th and 19th centuries, but also exhibits from ancient Egypt, classic antiques and toys from East Asia and Africa.

Living Traditions

Blossoming love

Erfurt, the city of flowers

Erfurt has a well-established tradition as a city of flowers. The first evidence of this dates back to the 7th century when monks in Erfurt's monasteries dedicated themselves to the cultivation of herbs and vegetables thanks to the fertile loess and clay soils. The cultivation of woad, a flowering plant in the Brassicaceae family which yielded a valuable blue dye, began in the 13th century and helped Erfurt to achieve economic, political and cultural power, as well as fame far beyond the city limits.

In the 18th century, skilled gardeners came to the city at the instigation of the mayor, Christian Reichart, himself a skilled gardener and pioneer of commercial horticulture. They concerned themselves mainly with the cultivation of flower and vegetable seeds. Reichart's work laid the foundation for Erfurt's worldwide reputation in floriculture and seed cultivation.



Flowerbed in the egapark Erfurt with a view of the 'Danakil' desert and jungle house

29

Reichart also developed the cultivation of watercress, to ensure the best possible utilisation of the soil. Even today, Erfurt watercress is still grown using traditional methods and seed breeding continues to contribute to its image as the 'city of flowers'.

The egapark in Erfurt, known locally as the 'Garden of Thuringia', continues this tradition. It is one of the largest garden and leisure parks in Germany and a symbol of the city's longstanding horticultural tradition. The former city fortress was converted into a public park from 1885 onwards. From 1961, it regularly hosted the International Garden Exhibition (iga), the most important event of its kind in the GDR and the Eastern Bloc.

Visitors flock to the egapark to admire its exhibition and plant showhouses, themed gardens, Europe's largest continuous flowerbed measuring 6,000 square metres, an observation tower, an observatory and the country's only horticultural museum. On the occasion of the 2021 German Garden Show, the 'Danakil' desert and jungle house was officially opened at the horticultural show grounds. With an average of 450,000 visitors each year, the egapark is one of the most visited tourist attractions in Thuringia.

A somewhat different cigar

The sweet success story of Viba

Their first success came with a twist: As demand for their nougat grew, Willy Viebahn and Anna Reim purchased a cigar packing machine, which they filled with their sweet paste. The siblings, who had founded a coffee house in Schmalkalden in 1893, entered the confectionery production business in 1920 and began producing round nougat bars on an assembly line. The classic nougat bar remains popular to this day thanks to its delicate melting texture and distinctive nutty taste. One of the key ingredients in Viba's recipe for success is the in-house roasting of hazelnuts. A wide range of other products complements the company's range. The location's eventful history has not diminished its success.

Today, visitors flock to Viba Nougat-Welt in Schmalkalden, Viba Erlebnis-Confiserie in Dresden and many other branches throughout Germany – and with the Heilemann, arko and HUSSEL brands now also part of the group, there are even more possibilities to make your sweet dreams come true. With around 1,000 employees, Viba is Germany's largest confectionery chain, and more than 130 years after its founding it remains a firm favourite among those with a sweet tooth.



Architecture like something out of a fairy tale

Thuringian half-timbered houses: Tradition in wood and design

Visitors are transported back in time: Half-timbered construction is one of the most characteristic architectural features to be found in large parts of Thuringia and a living testament to regional craftsmanship. The Franconian-Henneberg style is particularly recognisable thanks to its curved and often richly decorated St. Andrew's crosses. This half-timbered construction is not only found on town houses, but also on prestigious buildings such as official residences and town halls – testimonies to the cultural significance of this architecture.

Stunning half-timbered buildings can be admired throughout Thuringia – such as the Luther House in Eisenach, which is one of the oldest half-timbered houses in the city. Another example is the town hall in Treffurt, a half-timbered Renaissance building with a five-storey half-timbered tower, boasting impressive aesthetics. Schmalkalden features a particularly impressive collection of half-timbered buildings. The almost completely preserved old town with houses from the 15th and 16th century reflects the region's rich history. The beauty and diversity of this traditional architecture is perhaps best appreciated along the German Half-Timbered House Road ('Fachwerkstrasse'). This route leads through the Thuringian Forest and past picturesque towns and villages that could have come from a book of fairy tales.

But the half-timbered look was not always appreciated. In the 18th century, the Duchy of Saxe-Meiningen had many half-timbered houses in the ducal residence town ('Residenzstadt') plastered to create a distinctive cityscape. It is only recently that the beauty of this architecture has come to be appreciated again. The careful restoration of many of these treasures of regional architecture has returned them to their former splendour.

Even today, it is clear how vibrant and forward-looking the combination of traditional half-timbered construction and modern building methods can be. An outstanding example of this is the straw bale house in the Weimar district of Ehringsdorf. This ecological construction project uses proven natural materials such as straw, wood and clay, and shows how resource-efficient, sustainable construction can pave the way for the future.



Town hall in Treffurt

Mountains and valleys of butter and flour

Prophet's cake

Nutty and buttery flavours spread across your tongue and fill your mouth, the delectably moist texture of the dough and the dusting of icing sugar on its surface forming a seductive combination. You can't help but lick your lips. Delicious! Prophetenkuchen (prophet's cake) is a traditional sweet treat that is well known in Thuringia, but is also eaten in numerous variations in other parts of Germany. The cake, characterised by its distinctive wavy texture resembling mountains and valleys, is a speciality that has been appreciated in the region for centuries. The origin of the name remains unclear – in some areas it is also called Huckelkuchen, which fits well with the hilly landscape.

One of the most popular recipes for prophet's cake comes from Mario Gräfe, an award-winning pastry chef from Eisenberg. Gräfe is renowned for his intensely flavoured prophet's cake, which he sells in his bakeries as well as

online for the enjoyment of Thuringians far and wide. The recipe is widely used, and numerous variations of the cake can be found in many sources. According to Gräfe, among the ingredients that give his cake its distinctive flavour are butter, flour, lots of eggs as well as extra egg yolks, spices and spirits. A really hot oven is important to allow the dough to rise perfectly and give the cake its typical shape.

Having the right equipment is also crucial: A narrow knife is needed to cut the cake so that it doesn't break. Gräfe still has the knife that belonged to his grandfather, the first pastry chef in the family. It's the perfect implement for cutting prophet's cake, and Gräfe still treasures it to this day.

32



Living Traditions

Thuringian precision meets New Yorker vision *Handcrafted excellence for Harry's razor blades*

Eisfeld, Thuringia, is home to a company that combines tradition and modernity in a unique way. Feintechnik GmbH Eisfeld has been manufacturing razor blades here since 1920. Over the decades, the site has become synonymous with precision and quality in blade manufacturing. This craftsmanship didn't go unnoticed, and in 2014, New York entrepreneurs Jeff Raider and Andy Katz-Mayfield acquired the company and founded the Harry's brand.

The concept behind Harry's is as simple as it is ingenious: high-quality shaving products that combine traditional craftsmanship with contemporary design. The location in Eisfeld plays a central role, as the blades are produced here with the same precision for which the region has been renowned for over 100 years. The arrival of the new American owners was regarded not as a failure, but as an opportunity, and with new ideas and an international focus, Feintechnik GmbH became a global player.

Today, Harry's confidently calls itself a 'hundred-year-old start-up'. It is this combination of Thuringian craftsmanship and the New Yorker spirit of innovation that makes the brand so successful. Production in Eisfeld remains the focus – a place where the future of shaving technology merges with the heritage of an entire region.

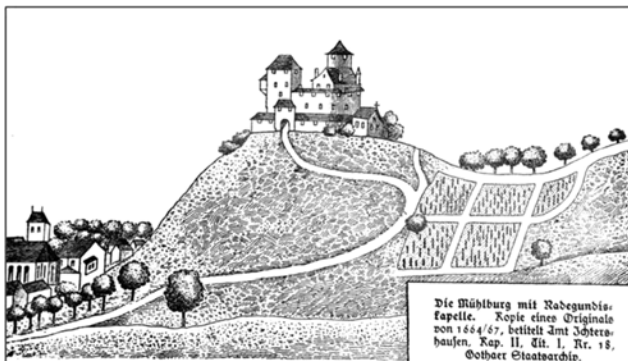
Razor blades ready for
quality control in Eisfeld



New life for vines

The renaissance of wine-growing in Thuringia

Even if you don't immediately associate Thuringia with wine, grapes have been grown and wine made here for over 1,000 years. Wine-growing in the Saale-Unstrut region was first mentioned as early as 998. In those days, it was the monasteries that introduced viticulture to the picturesque river valleys. From Erfurt to Bad Sulza, from Eisenach to Meiningen: For centuries, wine was not only an important economic activity, but also shaped the landscape. Erfurt had a dense network of vineyards, complete with a variety of taverns, five or six of which could be found in every street and alleyway. Viticulture soon even surpassed the importance of woad cultivation, one of Erfurt's most important economic pillars.



Vineyards at Mühlburg (three castles known collectively as the 'Drei Gleichen') in the 17th century

Wine was an everyday beverage in the Middle Ages and well into the modern era, and Thuringia was a major wine-growing region. But wars and climate change as well as diseases, such as phylloxera, damaged the crop and many vineyards were abandoned in favour of grain and fodder crops. By the mid-20th century, viticulture in Thuringia was almost a thing of the past, that is until a new chapter began in the 1990s, with the Bad Sulza and Zahn wineries heralding the rebirth of viticulture in Thuringia. Others followed on the Thuringian side of the Saale-Unstrut region. The Weimar winery kept Weimar's wine culture alive, preserving the tradition of the 18th and 19th centuries and cultivating wine of mixed grape varieties in its vineyards.

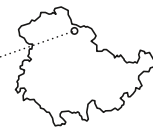
Today, Thuringia is continuing old traditions with 135 hectares of vineyards. The Erfurter Weinzunft winegrowers' guild is also aiming to preserve the wine-growing culture – the vineyard on the slopes of Petersberg is just one such project.

Worthwhile Destinations

35-52

Worthwhile Destinations





One painting, 1,700 square metres of history

Tübke's panorama of the Peasants' War

You enter the exhibition and suddenly feel quite small as you find yourself surrounded by a monumental panoramic painting, stretching over 123 metres of canvas. This is Werner Tübke's panorama of the Peasants' War, a fascinating, life-like glimpse into Germany's Age of Reformation, an epoch marked by Humanist scholarship as well as the bloody conflict of the Peasants' War. Each of the roughly 3,000 figures populating the panorama, including Martin Luther and peasant leader Thomas Müntzer, has been given an unmistakable personality and a colourful, historically accurate costume. The government of the German Democratic Republic had a special building complex built to house Tübke's work: the Panorama Museum in Bad Frankenhausen. This location was chosen for having been the site of the decisive battle of the hard-fought Peasants' War (on 15 May 1525).

Work on this epic picture took about six years and was finished in 1987.

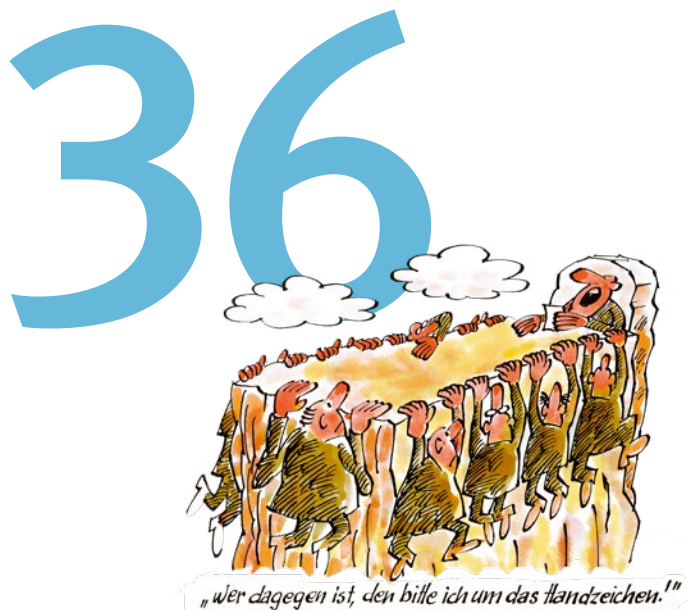
35



Worthwhile Destinations

Poking fun at the powers that be *The Satiricum in Greiz*

In the former German Democratic Republic, the town of Greiz got away with something the ruling Communist Party (SED) would never have allowed in the country's urban centres of East Berlin, Leipzig or Dresden. The so-called 'Satiricum' houses a permanent exhibit of domestic political cartoons and caricatures, whose levels of satire range from sly to brazen. Opened in 1975 in the town's baroque Summer Palace, the collection is also famous for treasures from other eras, many of which were compiled by the Princes of Reuss with caricatures by famous artists, such as Hogarth, Chodowiecki, Gillray or Daumier. Also represented are works from the Weimar period and from the reunified Federal Republic of Germany. The tradition of collecting and exhibiting caricatures has been continued since 1994 with the Triennial of Caricature – one of the most important German exhibitions of humorous drawings.



Jena 37 |

Greiz 36 |



37

Jena's 8th wonder of the world

The Zeiss Planetarium, Jena

The city of Jena can lay claim to the world's oldest planetarium still in operation. With a dome 23 metres in diameter, the building was touted as 'Jena's latest wonder' during its inauguration in 1926. (This was an allusion to the 'seven wonders of Jena' celebrated in a Latin rhyme from the early modern period.) The Zeiss Planetarium in Jena has since been designated a listed historical monument and has retained its original exterior. The interior, meanwhile, has been upgraded with high-tech planetarium equipment made in Jena and Ilmenau. Here, visitors are given a stunning visual tour of outer space, in which the heavenly bodies are projected against the 800-square-metre inner surface of the planetarium dome. The device boasts cutting-edge LED technology and glass-fibre lenses that recreate the stars' particularly bright glow. In addition, a modern dome projection system consisting of six laser-phosphor projectors enables virtual immersion into the vastness of space. Thanks to a 3D SpatialSound Wave hi-fi system from the Fraunhofer Institute for Digital Media Technology IDMT in Ilmenau, the Zeiss Planetarium in Jena offers visitors a sound experience that is second to none in the world. This impressive technical experience is complemented by a varied programme offering: from fascinating educational programmess and entertaining family offers for young and old to music shows with legendary bands from the history of rock and pop, such as Queen and Pink Floyd.

Developed and built at the Zeiss plant in Jena:
the Universarium Model VIII star projector

38





Scene of major upheaval

Thuringia in the Age of Reformation

Sometimes words are enough to make history. At Wartburg Castle in Thuringia, Martin Luther didn't draw a sword, but a quill – and changed the world. In 1521, Luther hid from his enemies here, high above Eisenach, and created a work that would last for eternity. Working in deep silence within the thick walls, he translated the New Testament into German in just a few months and not only created a new language of the time, but also expressions and idioms that are still in use today: Sündenbock (scapegoat), Gewissensbisse (remorse), Machtwort (final word). He made the Bible accessible to everyone and laid the foundation for a standard written German language. Without his creative neologisms, no one today would 'clench their teeth' or 'blurt out something'.

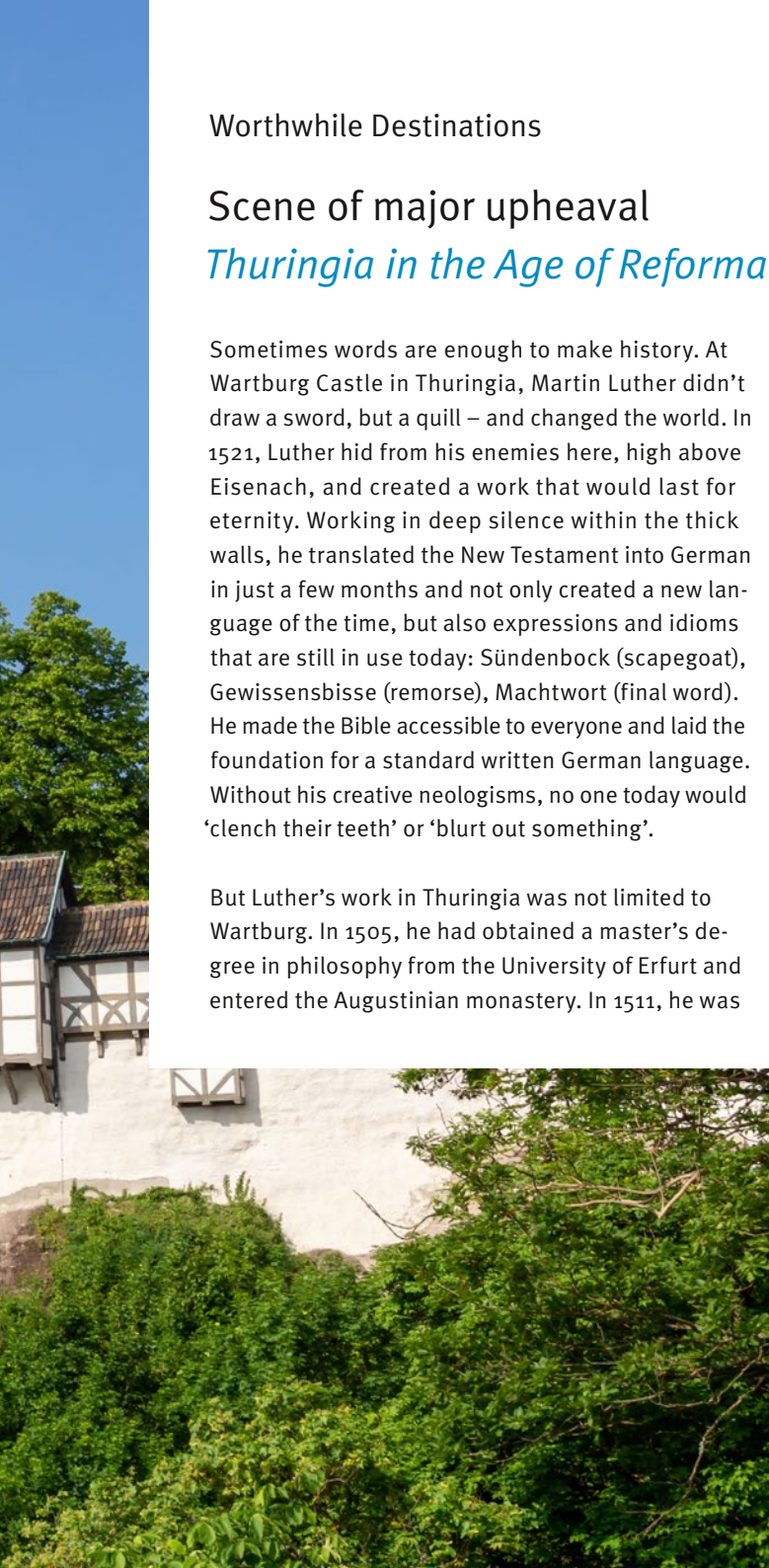
But Luther's work in Thuringia was not limited to Wartburg. In 1505, he had obtained a master's degree in philosophy from the University of Erfurt and entered the Augustinian monastery. In 1511, he was

ordained a priest in Erfurt Cathedral. This is where his critical examination of faith and the institution of the church began.

Another milestone of his work is the 'Schmalkaldic Articles', a theological pamphlet from 1537, in which Luther sharply criticised relics, purgatory and the selling of indulgences. He railed 'against the Pope, the devil and the world'. That sounds as radical as it was – even among Protestants, the text initially remained controversial. Today it is considered a Protestant confession of faith and a reminder of the conflict that shook the society of the time to its very core.

The Reformation movement initiated by Luther was to revolutionise Europe, and Thuringia was the foundation on which these upheavals were initially set in motion.

The Wartburg, a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1999, sits impressively enthroned above Eisenach.





Worthwhile Destinations

Where orchids and legends bloom *Barbarossa on Kyffhäuser ridge*

Cliffs and caves, marshes and fallow grasslands, forests and meadows with scattered fruit trees – these are the characteristic features of Kyffhäuser National Park. Thirty different varieties of orchids bloom along this ridge of hills, a paradise for hikers and bikers. In the autumn, thousands of cranes stop here on their way to southern climes. To the non-locals, the Kyffhäuser ridge is best known for Barbarossa's Cave near Rottleben. The bizarre rock formations in this giant grotto, which never fail to amaze visitors, have inspired a famous legend: This is supposedly where medieval Emperor Friedrich I, aka 'Barbarossa', sits on his rock-hewn throne, sunk in immortal sleep. One day, when the German lands are in danger, he will wake and come to the rescue, ushering in a glorious new age and defeating the forces of evil in a climactic battle. This hoary legend has been retold many times in literature. Thus, the poet Heinrich Heine imagined himself face-to-face with the yearned-for Barbarossa in his verse narrative 'Germany, A Winter's Tale.' Other rulers to leave their mark on the region besides Barbarossa were Kaiser Wilhelm I and the Princes of Schwarzburg-Sondershausen, whose family seat, the Reichsburg castle, is perched atop the Kyffhäuser ridge. This is also the site of the imposing, 81-metre-high Kyffhäuser Monument, with two giant statues: Kaiser Wilhelm I astride his charger and Barbarossa on his throne.

Visitors have a spectacular view from the tower dome of the 81-metre-high Kyffhäuser landmark.



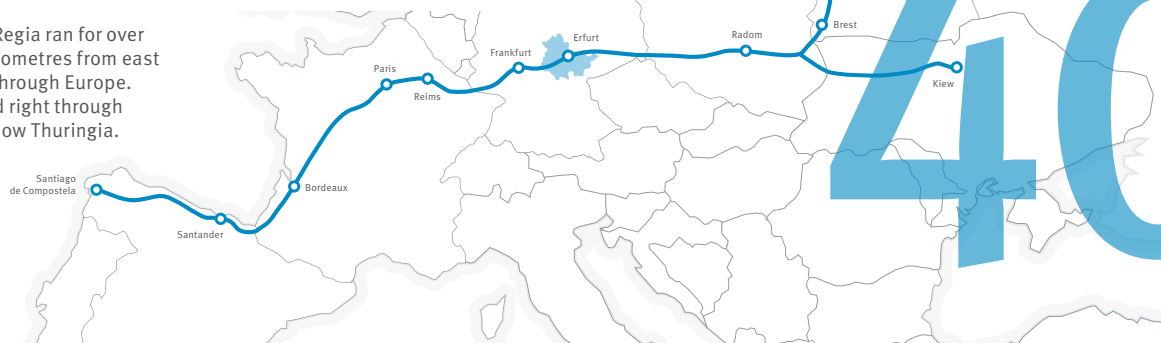
Welcome to Central Europe

Niederdorla and the Via Regia

Do you know Niederdorla? This village in the Unstrut-Hainich-Kreis district of Thuringia has something unique to offer. It forms the geographical centre of Germany, and therefore also lies in the centre of Europe. This special location proved to be a great advantage as early as the Middle Ages. The oldest east-west connection in Europe, the Via Regia, ran from Kiev to Santiago de Compostela and straight through the middle of today's Thuringia. It was a busy trade route and one that enabled contact between peoples. Cities such as Gotha, Eisenach and Erfurt were founded on this important route and became important trade centres. In Erfurt, the Via Regia also crossed Nürnberger Strasse and Böhmische Strasse, giving today's state capital additional significance. It was not by accident that the famous Krämerbrücke was built near this important trade intersection, where craftspeople offered their wares for sale.

Today, the central location of Thuringia also makes it an important logistics centre. About 280 million people live within a radius of 800 kilometres, potential customers therefore who can be reached within a day. Add to that the good connection to the trans-European road and rail networks thanks to Erfurt's role as an ICE hub, and the A4 running approximately along the route where the Via Regia used to be.

The Via Regia ran for over 4,500 kilometres from east to west through Europe. It passed right through what is now Thuringia.



In direct proximity to the Via Regia: the Krämerbrücke in Erfurt



In the centre of Europe: Niederdorla
in the Unstrut-Hainich-Kreis district
of Thuringia

Worthwhile Destinations

Italian baroque in Gotha

The Ekhof Theatre

In the 17th century, Italy and France in particular vied for primacy in the realm of theatre. But anyone wishing to experience the artistic heights that musical comedy, opera and drama attained in the Baroque era can do so right here in Germany, by visiting the Friedenstern Palace in Gotha. Its West Tower houses a beautiful Baroque theatre whose manually operated, wooden set machinery is the oldest system of its kind in the world that is still working. Duke Friedrich I of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg had this little jewel built between 1681 and 1687, and went to great expense to install a series of elaborate background sets in the Italian style – with all the fancy detail and décor in vogue at the time. Thus, 18 carts located under the stage were used to roll entire landscapes in and out, while an ingenious system of main shafts and pulleys allowed several backdrops to be moved at once with minimal noise. The theatre reached its apogee during the second half of the 18th century, when Duke Ernst II hired a permanent acting ensemble – a first for any German court. In 1775, the artistic direction was entrusted to one of the best known actors of the day, Conrad Ekhof, after whom the baroque theatre is still named. Each summer, the theatre's Ekhof Festival features a programme of opera performances, theatre productions, readings and concerts.

Performance of a baroque
opera in the Ekhof Theatre





41

Worthwhile Destinations

Light and shadow

The Buchenwald memorial

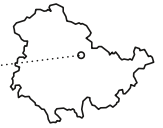
The brightest and darkest chapters of German history – in scarcely any other place do they clash as visibly as in Weimar. Weimar was the centre of German Classicism, with Goethe, Schiller, Herder and Wieland all living here. It was also the birthplace of German democracy, where the country's first constitution came into force. But not far from Weimar, in 1937, the Buchenwald concentration camp was constructed. National Socialism found many willing helpers here, with merchants, freight-forwarders and tradesmen offering their services. The city also profited from forced

labour. By the time the camp was liberated, 56,000 people had been murdered in Buchenwald, among them Jews, Sinti and Roma, homosexuals and political dissidents.

Anyone entering the present-day memorial at Buchenwald is confronted at the gate by a phrase that is emblematic of the crimes of National Socialism: 'To each his own'. The former Bauhaus student Franz Ehrlich, who was imprisoned in 1937, was forced to produce the lettering. For the cynically reinterpreted Roman legal phrase he used a typeface



The notorious inscription 'To each his own' on the camp gate comes from a former Bauhaus student.



42

inspired by the Bauhaus, which was hated by the Nazis. A subversive act that went unnoticed.

The memorial powerfully illustrates the crimes and the suffering in the camp in the permanent exhibition ‘Buchenwald. Ostracism and Violence 1937 to 1945’. Historians, museologists and history educators devised it together with survivors. In addition to documenting the crimes committed, it shines a spotlight on the political and moral state of Nazi society.

Visitors to the site can also learn about the ‘second history’ of Buchenwald, that of the Soviet Special Camp No. 2 from 1945 to 1950. This phase of the camp’s history, during which many political prisoners and suspected Nazi perpetrators were imprisoned, was for a long time a taboo subject in the GDR. Only after reunification did people begin to examine this period and discuss it publicly. The GDR National Monument, erected in 1958, should also be seen in this context. It originally served as a central memorial site for the anti-fascist resistance. Today it forms part of the critical examination of the site’s complex history.



The entrance to the former camp



Model of the former concentration camp in Buchenwald

43



One of Erfurt's landmarks: the historic Krämerbrücke

Life in a landmark

The Erfurt Krämerbrücke

It's lucky that Erfurt was short of cash at the end of the 19th century. Otherwise, the city would have torn down the Krämerbrücke (Merchants' Bridge), which today is the only bridge north of the Alps with buildings along its length. First documented in 1156 as the 'pons rerum venalium' (bridge market), the ensemble of timber-framed houses is now one of the landmarks of Thuringia. But the bridge is not only a much-visited attraction. It has remained a location for shopkeepers and artisans.

It is important to the tenants that no chain stores are established here. Instead, they include porcelain manufacturers,

art galleries, book sellers, craft shops and many more, including a creative chocolatier: Alex Kühn has set himself up independently on the Krämerbrücke with his Goldhelm chocolate factory. The native Erfurter presents chocolate lovers only with unique items for which Goldhelm has become renowned in Thuringia and beyond. Also Andrea Heese-Wagner and her shop Tilibom – the smallest shop on the bridge at just under 22 square metres – can be found on the Krämerbrücke. The Erfurt-based designer makes unique teddy bears, with a love of detail and entirely by hand – in keeping with the tradition of the Krämerbrücke.



44

Hidden treasure

Erfurt's Jewish legacy

When the bubonic plague broke out in Erfurt in 1349, the blame was placed on 'The Jews'. A devastating pogrom ensued, which claimed the lives of almost the entire Jewish population. Almost 650 years later, construction workers digging near Erfurt's Old Synagogue discovered a spectacular treasure trove: 3,000 French silver coins, a number of silver ingots and more than 700 pieces of artfully crafted jewellery, including a gold wedding band from the early 14th century. The assumption is that well-to-do Jewish citizens must have hidden these valuables before the pogrom. This 'Erfurt Treasure' is of great art-historical significance and was exhibited internationally, before being housed permanently in the museum of the Old Synagogue.

Today, the Old Synagogue, together with the Mikveh and the medieval Stone House, is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site 'Medieval Jewish Heritage in Erfurt'. This exceptionally well-preserved collection illustrates the important role of the Jewish community and its cultural contributions to the city's development. It tells of the diversity of Jewish life that characterised Thuringia for centuries and is an impressive example of cultural and religious coexistence in medieval Europe.



The Jewish wedding band from the 'Erfurt Treasure' is made of pure gold. It was worn exclusively during the ceremony.

A triumph of wit and love of detail *'Rococo en miniature' in Rudolstadt*

When things get boring, kids like to escape into a fantasy world of their own making. That's exactly what Gerhard Bätz and Manfred Kiedorf did in the 1950s – except they're still indulging in their world of make-believe to this day. Welcome to the rococo-era kingdoms of Dyonia and Pelaria, separated by the River Dempa – an imaginary world made entirely of paper maché, plaster and wood, inhabited by thousands of hand-made figurines with model buildings on a 1:50 scale. Every staircase is historically accurate, every drawer can be opened, every painted face expresses a clear emotion. Take the character 'Bombastus of Igelschieb', for example, an imaginary court poet known for doggerel such as: 'Behold the wig-maker, with his pigeon's nest/ artfully conceal the balding crest.' In this virtual world, the human creators Kiedorf and Bätz are worshipped by their miniature creations as the gods 'Manfred' and 'Gerhard'. In an added touch of humour, the character 'Princess Talophé' has a doll's house of her own – i.e. a miniature world within a world! 'A life's work of baroque lightness' was the headline of an article in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung about the baroque fantasy worlds that emerged over a period of 50 years and their eccentric creators. 'Rococo en miniature' can be seen today in one of the most beautiful baroque castles in Thuringia, Heidecksburg Palace, the former residence of the counts and princes of Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt.

Huge fun at a scale of 1:50: original figure
from the 'Rococo en miniature'



A riot of colour deep beneath the earth

The Fairy Grottoes in Saalfeld

‘If these caves were located in the United States, and not in Germany, they would be an international tourist mecca by now.’ This quote does not come from a current travel guide, but from naturalist Ernst Haeckel, who visited the caves in 1914, when they were first opened to the public. From 1530 to 1850, the caves had been used for mining a sought-after rock known as alum shale.

Today, more than 110 years after their opening, the fairy grottoes have become a place of pilgrimage for tourists, who are fascinated by the unique cave landscape. On 8 August 2024, the 20 millionth visitor was welcomed.

Centuries of mining activity combined with natural processes have given the Saalfeld Caves their unique beauty. Even while miners were still at work in the subterranean shafts, the first stalactites and stalagmites were forming. Within

a few centuries, they had become the most colourful drip-stone formations anywhere in the world – a natural wonder recognised by an entry in the Guinness Book of World Records in 1993. The caves’ roughly 100 colour tones (including blues, greens, yellows, reds and numerous shades of brown) are produced by the 45 minerals found in the rock.

Many of the glittering dripstones seem almost as thin as long strands of hair. This is what inspired geologist Hans Heß von Wichdorff to come up with the name ‘Feengrotten’. The same geologist named the most famous rock formations to be seen in the cave, the ‘Fairy Tale Cathedral’ and the ‘Castle of the Grail’.

Fascinating underworld:
The fairy grottoes were formerly a mine.



Worthwhile Destinations

47

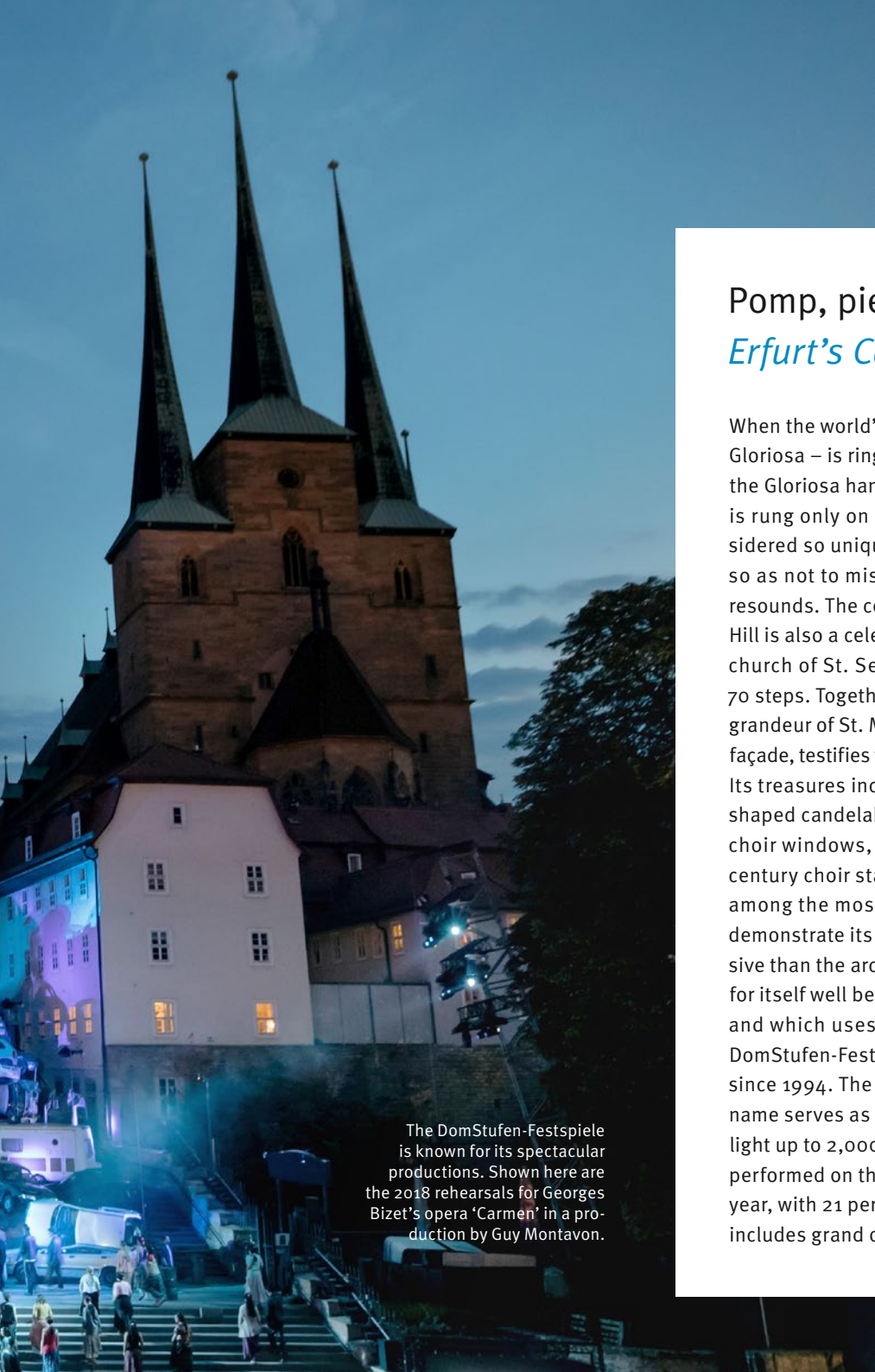




Pomp, piety and a grand staircase

Erfurt's Cathedral Hill

When the world's largest free-swinging medieval bell – the Gloriosa – is ringing, you know it's a holiday. That's because the Gloriosa hanging in the middle tower of Erfurt Cathedral is rung only on special occasions. And the sound is considered so unique that many people mark their calendars so as not to miss the eight times a year the famous bell resounds. The collection of buildings on Erfurt's Cathedral Hill is also a celebration – St. Marien Cathedral, the parish church of St. Severi and the imposing staircase with its 70 steps. Together, they form the city's main landmark. The grandeur of St. Marien Cathedral, with its richly decorated façade, testifies to Erfurt's status as a medieval trading centre. Its treasures include the Wolframleuchter, a bronze, man-shaped candelabra from the 12th century, the 19-metre-high choir windows, made between 1370 and 1420, the 14th-century choir stalls and the high altar from 1697. They are among the most valuable treasures in the cathedral and demonstrate its importance for the region. No less impressive than the architecture is an event that has made a name for itself well beyond the borders of Thuringia and Germany, and which uses the Cathedral Hill as a backdrop: the DomStufen-Festspiele, which has taken place every summer since 1994. The cathedral staircase from which it takes its name serves as the stage for elaborate productions that delight up to 2,000 spectators night after night. A new play is performed on the spectacular open-air festival stage every year, with 21 performances per season. The programme includes grand operas and musicals.

A large photograph of Erfurt Cathedral Hill at night. The main image shows the massive stone structure of St. Marien Cathedral with its three prominent spires against a dark blue sky. Below the cathedral, the white-walled buildings of the hill are lit up. In the foreground, the wide stone staircase of the DomStufen-Festspiele is visible, with people walking up and down. Stage lights and equipment are positioned along the stairs, and a large production set is visible on the left side of the stairs.

The DomStufen-Festspiele is known for its spectacular productions. Shown here are the 2018 rehearsals for Georges Bizet's opera 'Carmen' in a production by Guy Montavon.

Worthwhile Destinations

Art for all

The Lindenau Museum in Altenburg

Those in the know mention the Lindenau Museum in the same breath as the most significant art collections in Germany. It possesses one of the most extensive collections of Italian Early Renaissance painting, with works by greats such as Sandro Botticelli, Fra Angelico and Luca Signorelli. Especially impressive are the 2,500-year-old Greek and Etruscan ceramics, and the plaster collection is illuminating. It brings together faithful copies of original sculptures and reliefs from antiquity through to the Renaissance. The museum also houses a range of sculptures and paintings from the 19th to 21st century as well as the world's largest collection from the internationally renowned artist Gerhard Altenbourg, who died in 1989.

This collection exists mainly thanks to Bernhard August von Lindenau (1779–1854). The statesman and scholar

acquired most of the works in 1843 during an extensive trip through Italy and France. And he wanted to make them accessible to everyone. In 1845, he had a museum built at his residence, the Pohlhof in Altenburg, and in 1876 the collection was moved to a magnificent building purpose-built in the palace grounds, designed by Semper's pupil Julius Robert Enger.

The museum is committed to Lindenau's education ideals. Since 1971, the youth art school that he founded has continued as the 'Studio Bildende Kunst' (art education studio) – unique in the German museum landscape.

Following extensive renovation and expansion, the museum is set to reopen in 2026 with a completely new concept and an interactive exhibition.



48

Preliminary design for the remodelling of the entrance area (the so-called 'Stadtgeschoss' or first floor) of the Lindenau Museum in Altenburg

Hainich 49 |

Altenburg 48 |



49

Where wild cats prowl *Hainich National Park: a UNESCO World Heritage Site*

Located between Eisenach, Mühlhausen and Bad Langensalza is the biggest contiguous expanse of broadleaved woodland in Germany, Hainich Forest, almost half of whose 16,000 hectares are located in Hainich National Park. For decades, this area was a restricted military zone, an area where unspoiled nature was allowed to develop undisturbed, creating a primeval forest. Thanks to its impressive stands of beeches, Hainich National Park has been designated a World Natural Heritage Site by UNESCO, a distinction it shares with special places like Yellowstone National Park and the Galapagos Islands. Besides the beech, Hainich National Park also features other broadleaved trees such as ash, maple, lime and the service tree, a rare species. The Hainich's fauna is just as diverse, comprising wild cats, pine martens, 15 species of forest bats as well as beetles previously considered extinct. A special walkway has been installed at tree-top level for visitors to explore this primeval woodland from on high.

Tourist attraction: the canopy walkway at the Hainich
National Park UNESCO World Heritage Site

Worthwhile Destinations

Palatial neighbourhood

Impressive castles and palaces

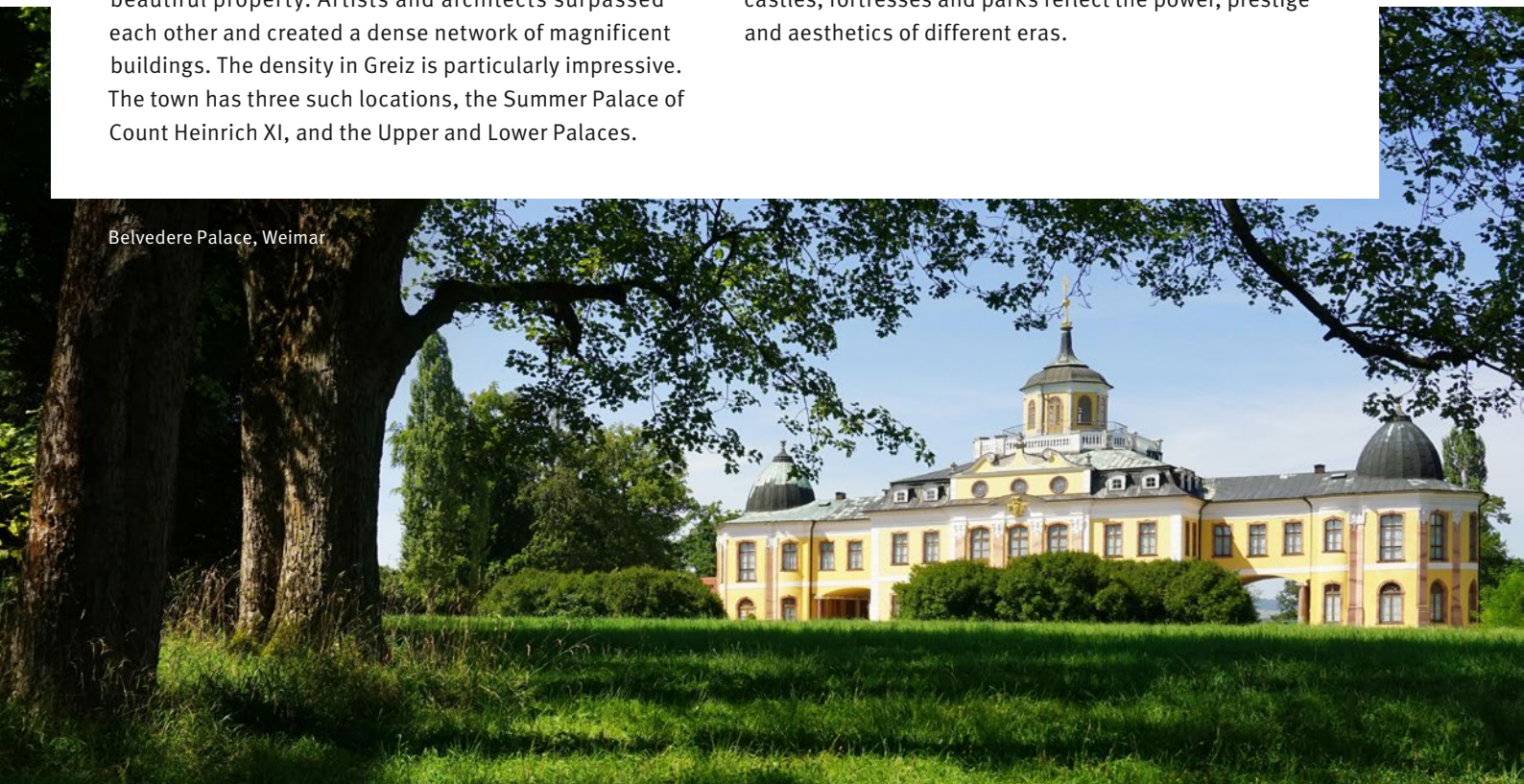
From the majestic Wartburg Castle to the baroque Friedenstempel Palace in Gotha to palatial Heidecksburg Castle in Rudolstadt with its magnificent gardens and decorative interiors – nowhere in Europe are there so many fortresses, castles and parks in such a condensed space as in Thuringia. This is due to the proliferation of small states: from the Middle Ages until 1920, the present-day state consisted of many small dominions – and every ruler wanted a fitting residence, preferably a little more magnificent than their neighbour's.

This led to real competition as to who had the most beautiful property. Artists and architects surpassed each other and created a dense network of magnificent buildings. The density in Greiz is particularly impressive. The town has three such locations, the Summer Palace of Count Heinrich XI, and the Upper and Lower Palaces.

The Thuringian Castles and Gardens Foundation endeavours above all to ensure with the help of donations that 31 of the most culturally important castles in Thuringia do not lose their former splendour. This meant that impressive rooms such as the gallery and ancestral hall at Schwarzburg Castle could be restored and reopened to the public. Also not to be missed are the Stadtschloss (city palace) Weimar, Leuchtenburg Castle or Friedenstempel Palace in Gotha with its stately garden.

The Thuringian residential landscape is a unique testimony to European cultural history. Its artistically designed castles, fortresses and parks reflect the power, prestige and aesthetics of different eras.

Belvedere Palace, Weimar

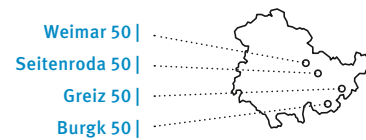




Unteres Schloss (Lower Palace), Greiz



Burgk Castle above the
Burgkhammer dam



Weimar 50 |

Seitenroda 50 |

Greiz 50 |

Burgk 50 |

50



Leuchtenburg, Seitenroda

Tracing the footsteps of the past

Place of pilgrimage for palaeontologists



51

Site of Homo erectus
Bilzingslebensis

Bilzingsleben is one of the cradles of humanity. In 1818, at the excavation site with the nondescript name of 'Steinrinne', paleontologist Friedrich Ernst von Schlotheim found the (later lost) skull of Homo erectus Bilzingslebensis, 'Bilzi' for short. This early human made camp here at the Thuringian Basin 370,000 years ago. In the 1970s, researchers found more stone artefacts and bone remains. They are among the earliest humans discovered in central and north-western Europe and the first documented early human settlements.

Later, Thuringia continued to offer a home to people of various origins: Significant archaeological finds span the arc from the Neolithic and the Early Bronze Age with the Aunjetitz culture, to which the Leubinger Fürstenhügel is attributed – the largest preserved tomb of the Bronze Age culture – to the time of the Roman Empire. They are outstanding examples showing how Thuringia was a melting pot of cultures thousands of years ago.



Leaning more than the Leaning Tower of Pisa

Bad Frankenhausen's leaning landmark

You don't need to hold a spirit level up to the tower of the Bad Frankenhausen Oberkirche in the Kyffhäuserkreis – it is obviously out of plumb. In fact, at an inclination of five degrees, that's almost one degree more than its famous counterpart in Pisa. The 56-metre-high tower became imbalanced due to subsidence of the earth beneath it. Even while the 'Church of Our Dear Lady of the Mountain' was being erected in 1382, the cavity-filled ground was evidently treacherous. In 1908, 500 metres from the tower, the ground actually collapsed. The tower gradually began to tilt, at a rate of up to six centimetres per year. In the end, it had to be closed, and even demolition was considered. But it didn't come to that. Now, the foundations have been secured. Steel pipes and tension rods were used to prevent the dangerously increasing tilt just in time. And the community of Bad Frankenhausen cherish and maintain their landmark, having recently renovated its spire, the tower clock and the roof, among other things. The tower and the former nave will soon be accessible as a visitor centre – at least, the signs are 'leaning' that way.

52

Bad Frankenhausen's
leaning landmark



Passionate
about Life

53-68

Passionate about Life

The Rennsteig breaks records *Germany's oldest long-distance trail*

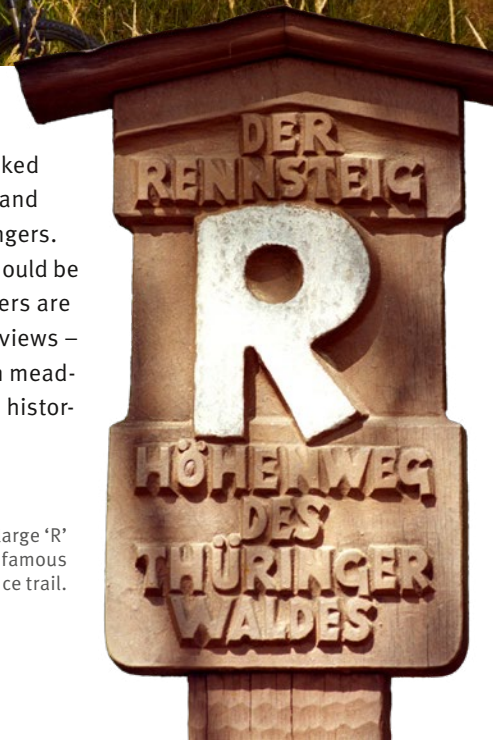
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The Rennsteig also welcomes cyclists.

Over the ridge of the Thuringian Forest and the Thuringian Slate Mountains to the northern Franconian Forest. From the middle of the Werra to the upper reaches of the Saale. Through this picturesque landscape runs Germany's most famous long distance hiking trail – the Rennsteig. At almost 170 kilometres, including 30 kilometres through the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve of the Thuringian Forest, it offers everything that makes hiking attractive. No wonder that enthusiastic hikers from all over Germany and beyond go the extra mile to get to it. If you come by car, you'll want to pass through the Rennsteig tunnel if possible. It passes underneath the famous hiking trail and, at 7,916 metres, is the longest road tunnel in Germany.

Originally, the Rennsteig linked important cities and towns and was mainly used by messengers. Nowadays, the ridge path should be experienced at leisure. Hikers are rewarded with picturesque views – into deep valleys, mountain meadows and villages, as well as historic castles and palaces.

Distinctive sign: The large 'R' denotes Germany's most famous long-distance trail.



Anyone who wants to walk the entire Rennsteig needs to plan a few days. Leisure hikers are recommended to divide the route into eight stages – six for athletes and four for extremely ambitious people. Various sporting events provide activity in the Rennsteig region. In addition to the ‘RENNSThike World Championship’ hiking world championship, which has been held since 2016, and the Rennsteig racing hill for mountain bikers, the GutsMuths-Rennsteiglauf is a particular magnet for athletes and spectators: Around 15,000 people of all ages are drawn to the Rennsteig every year in May to participate in marathons, half marathons, children’s cross-country or Nordic walking. This makes the GutsMuths-Rennsteiglauf the largest cross-country run in Europe.



The Rennsteig starts in Hörschel and ends in Blankenstein.
 Difficulty level: medium; accessible year-round.
 Highest point: Plänckner's Lookout (973 m),
 lowest point: Hörschel (196 m).

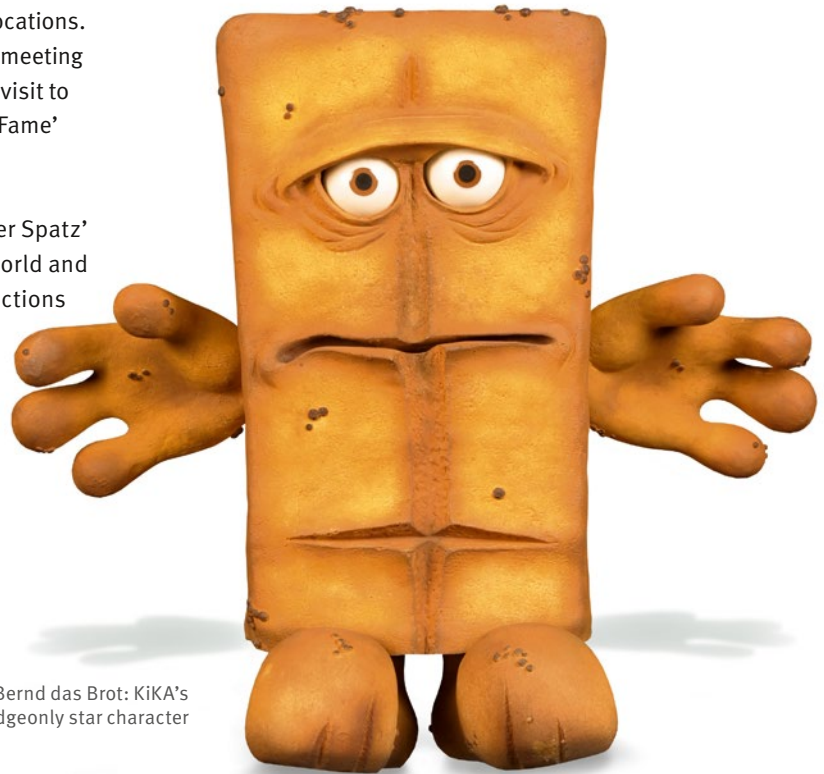
Passionate about Life

Where childhood heroes come to life *Erfurt – the capital of children's media*

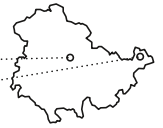
Bernd the Talking Bread is a chronically grumpy, talking hunk of bread with overly short arms and a tendency to stare at woodchip wallpaper. With his stoic nature and favourite saying 'drats!', the anti-hero has long since been something of a cult classic and has shaped the face of the children's channel KiKA, which has been based in Erfurt since 1997. Bernd and his friends from the KiKA universe, including stars of the German children's programmes 'Sendung mit der Maus' and the 'Sandmännchen', inspire children all over Germany. They can also be found everywhere in Erfurt's city centre, where 17 life-size figures from the KiKA productions have been placed in various locations. Whether it's a selfie with Tigerente, the tiger duck, a meeting with Pittiplatsch, also known as Pitti for short, or a visit to the small green dragon Tabaluga: The 'KiKA Hall of Fame' inspires delight and joy among fans of all ages.

Incidentally, the children's media festival 'Goldener Spatz' is the largest of its kind in the German-speaking world and honours outstanding TV, cinema and digital productions for children once a year in Erfurt and Gera. The jury is – naturally – made up exclusively of children.

54



Bernd das Brot: KiKA's
curmudgeonly star character



The epicentre of the skat world

Playing cards from Altenburg

Altenburg is the home of the game of skat, where playing cards have been manufactured since 1509. In 1813, keen players in the local taverns began to develop skat out of older card games. It wasn't long before it was known all over Germany.

The skat fountain, the only memorial to skat in the world, commemorates the legendary 'skat brothers'. The German Skat Association, founded in 1899, returned to Altenburg after reunification and has been presiding over disputed skat games since 2001 in the form of the International Skat Court.

The playing card museum in the Residential Palace in Altenburg, the oldest of its kind in the world, explores the history of skat and of card games in general.

The game of skat has significantly more competition these days. In addition to skat sets, other blockbuster game sets, such as Star Wars, Marvel Avengers and Minions, are also big sellers amongst the offerings of playing card manufacturer ASS Altenburger. Despite the temptations of the Internet, streaming services and game consoles, Altenburg remains an important centre for card game enthusiasts. YOSEPHINUM® Games World, due to open in 2027, will provide an interactive experience centre that explores the game from its origins to the present day and further strengthen this authentic Altenburg tradition.

Always a good hand:
playing cards from the
skat city of Altenburg

55

Passionate about Life

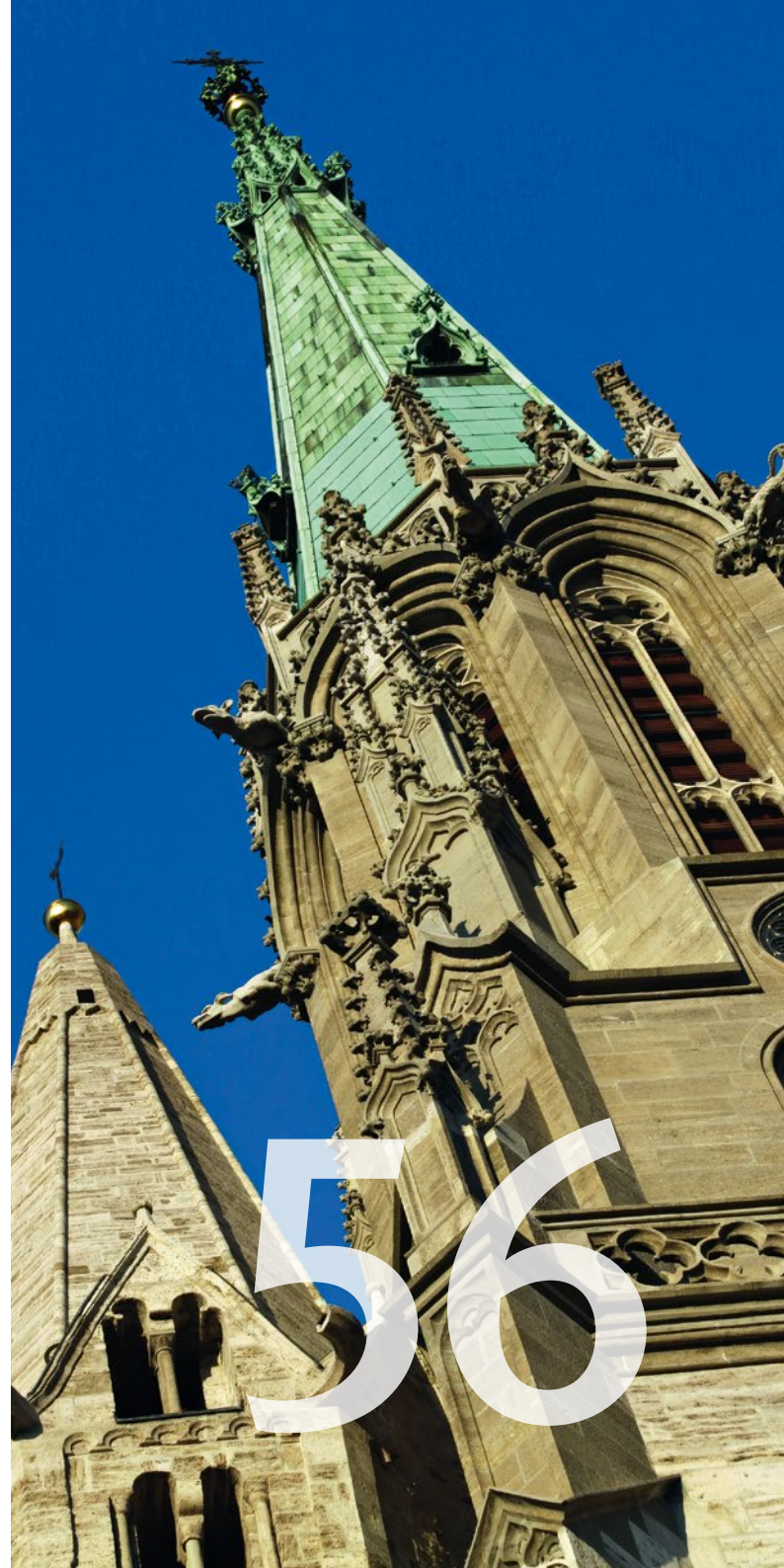
A preacher of the sword

Thomas Müntzer and the Peasants' War

Whether Cromwell in England, Robespierre in France or Che Guevara in Latin America – many of the great revolutionaries claiming to fight for freedom have been controversial figures. And so it was with Thuringia's most famous 'freedom-fighter', Thomas Müntzer. Much like his contemporary Martin Luther, the pastor of the Marienkirche in Mühlhausen preached fire and brimstone against the papacy. But Müntzer went further, becoming a social revolutionary and ridiculing the great reformer as 'that stupid, soft-living bag of flesh of Wittenberg'. His was a radical vision, calling for a violent social revolution in which the common people would rise up and free themselves from the godless, greedy nobility with fire and sword.

These inflammatory words soon turned into violent deeds, as the followers of the firebrand preacher laid waste to churches and monasteries such as in Volkenroda. In 1525, Müntzer instigated a revolt and led a group of insurgents, consisting of commoners and peasants from the Mühlhausen region, at the Battle of Frankenhausen, one of the decisive engagements of the so-called 'Peasants' War'. Defeated on the field by the well-equipped nobles and their mercenaries, the rag-tag army was scattered and Müntzer was captured and beheaded shortly thereafter.

Marienkirche in Mühlhausen:
Thomas Müntzer delivered his
controversial sermons here.





From pedal drive to exciting cycle paths

Thuringia is cycling country

Thuringia can look back on a long tradition of cycling, as far back as the invention of the pedal drive. In 1845, Thuringian locksmith Heinrich Mylius optimised Baron von Drais' running machine by building pedals onto the front wheel – paving the way for the development of the modern bicycle. The pioneering invention can be seen today at the Suhl Vehicle Museum. Even if some encyclopaedias name Pierre Michaux as the inventor of the pedal drive, it was Mylius who developed the first functioning solution. Because of his political activity during the revolution of 1848/49, Mylius had to flee to the USA, with the result that his bicycle invention never received the widespread recognition it deserved.

Nowadays, the opportunities for cycling are far more widespread. Long-distance cycle paths, such as the 230-kilometre Thüringer Städtekette, wind their way through the state, connecting historical towns like Erfurt, Weimar and Jena in a cycling chain. The Unstrut Cycle Path takes cyclists through picturesque landscapes and idyllic villages. For mountain bikers there are challenging trails like those in the Thuringian Forest. Whether a leisurely ride or a challenge, Thuringia offers the perfect cycling experience for everyone.

57



The first pedal-crank bicycle in Germany is on display at the Suhl Vehicle Museum.

Passionate about Life

Safety in numbers

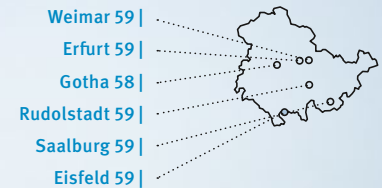
Arnoldi establishes the insurance industry

People stand up for one another. That was the founding principle on which the insurance industry is based to this day. It was devised by Ernst Wilhelm Arnoldi. This son of a Gotha merchant family experienced the burning of his father's tobacco factory – a bitter loss that in 1818 led Arnoldi to ask how factories and companies could better insure themselves against fire. The solution: Entrepreneurs jointly establish a bank and pay contributions as owners. In the case of a fire, the injured party is financially supported. 16 merchants promptly took part in Arnoldi's first concept, and a short time later there were 118. In 1820, Arnoldi and his colleagues finally established the Fire Insurance Bank for the German merchant class – an institution that the Gotha Insurance Bank of today harks back to.

Only seven years later, the visionary from Gotha translated the idea of mutual help from the economic to the private sphere. He founded the Gothaer Life Insurance Bank, in order to better protect widows and orphans from poverty. The 'father of German insurance' is commemorated in Gotha at the only company-independent insurance history museum in Germany.



58



Booming bass and bagpipes

Festivals in Thuringia

Driving beats, booming bass, celebrating masses. That's what SonneMondSterne is about, one of the biggest electronic music festivals in Europe. Since 1997, ravers have been meeting at the Thuringian Saalburg. These days, more than 35,000 people make the pilgrimage to the Bleiloch river dam, year after year, on the second weekend in August, to celebrate the music of German and international DJs and electronic acts.

You can also encounter electro beats in Rudolstadt. But in rather unusual combinations, such as with bagpipes. And it's at the Rudolstadt Festival, Germany's biggest festival of world music, that you can hear fado, reggae and other types of world music. Every year, tens of thousands of

people flock to this small town with a population of 24,000, and celebrate artists appearing on more than 30 stages. Stoner rock and psychedelic fans make the pilgrimage to the Stoned from the Underground Festival near Erfurt. If you prefer a relaxed and family-friendly atmosphere, you should visit the Woodstock Forever Festival in Eisfeld, which revives the spirit of the 1960s and 1970s.

By contrast, the 'Weimar Summer' is almost leisurely. An old town like a film set and picture-postcard parks provide the backdrop for numerous open-air events in the cultural city of Weimar, which attract thousands of visitors every year.

SonneMondSterne
Festival, Saalburg-
Ebersdorf

59



Passionate about Life

The sports town in the Thuringian Forest

Winter sports and winter fun in Oberhof

Oberhof, the winter sports mecca of Thuringia, is small but mighty. With just under 2,000 inhabitants, the town not only has a remarkable sporting history, but also an international appeal that attracts thousands of fans and athletes every year. Here, in the middle of the Thuringian Forest at an altitude of 800 metres, tradition goes hand in hand with cutting-edge sports technology – and has done for more than a century.

The beginnings date back to 1904, when one of the first winter sports clubs in Germany was founded here. The first bobsleigh run followed shortly afterwards, and Oberhof made history in 1931 when it became the first German winter sports resort to host the Nordic World Ski Championships. Since then, the city has been an integral part of the winter sports map.

Whether at the ‘International Oberhof Ski Games’ in the GDR era or as host of the 1999 National Winter Games – Oberhof was and is the scene of legendary competitions. Most recently, the winter sports stronghold was in the spotlight in 2023 when it was the venue for two world championships, namely in luge and biathlon.

Oberhof has established itself as a firm favourite with athletes. The modernised LOTTO Thüringen EISARENA and the LOTTO Thüringen Skisport-HALLE attract both professional and amateur athletes alike. The new luge track is one of the most modern and technically challenging in the world. No wonder top athletes like luger Max Langenhan deliver top performances here or that biathlete Vanessa Voigt has chosen Oberhof as her private and sporting home.

But Oberhof has more to offer than just sporting thrills. Nestled in the quiet beauty of the Thuringian Forest, the region is a great place for outdoor activities in both summer and winter. The famous Rennsteig, the longest cross-country ski trail in Central Europe, is a paradise not just for hikers, but also for cross-country skiers. Fast descents and the experience of ice rafting in the ice channel offer adventure for the brave, while families can discover the winter landscape on a relaxed horse-drawn sleigh ride.



Always lifting the mood:
the Oberhof snowman mascot 'Flocke'



First ski jumping in 1905

60



The LOTTO Thüringia EISARENA was inaugurated in 1971 as the second artificial ice rink in the world.

Passionate about Life

‘I feel so at home here’

Queen Victoria and her love of Gotha

Visiting each other’s in-laws is for many a necessary evil that they’d rather skip. Not so for Queen Victoria, former Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, who was delighted to accompany her husband Albert on regular visits to his ancestral court of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. ‘I feel so at home here’, reads an entry from Victoria’s diary on the occasion of just such a visit in 1845, praising Friedenstein Palace, which was particularly close to her heart.

Her affection for this place was so great that even Albert’s untimely death did not put an end to Victoria’s visits. In September of 1862, she returned to see the places in Thuringia where she had so often stayed with her beloved husband. This included Reinhardsbrunn Castle, which wasn’t easy to reach. To get there, Victoria had to detrain in Mechterstädt and switch to a horsedrawn carriage. To make this change as easy as possible for her, Duke Ernst II had a special ramp with steps built.



Friedenstein Palace – one of Queen Victoria’s favourite places in Thuringia (drawing from 1862)





Friedenstein Palace was, however, much more than just a place of royal visits. It embodies a crucial epoch in European history, in which Gotha rose to become a cultural and political centre. Duke Ernst I of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg had this impressive residence built in the 17th century. Gotha flourished under his rule and its reputation spread far beyond the borders of Thuringia.

Thanks to a clever marriage policy, the lines of the Ernestine branch were connected to the most important royal houses in Europe. These connections shaped and continue to shape many European monarchies and ruling dynasties, from Great Britain to Sweden and Norway to Belgium. Places like Friedenstein Palace are a reminder of an era in which Gotha became a hub for dynastic relationships – and had a lasting influence on the history of Europe.

Portrait of Queen Victoria (2nd from left)
in the north wing of Friedenstein Palace

61

Passionate about Life

From quacks to experts

Wiegleb's academy for pharmacists

Requiring years of intense training and study, pharmacy is one of the most demanding professional fields that a young university student can embark upon. The fact that the training provided is so thorough is thanks to committed scholars like Johann Christian Wiegleb, an apothecary from Langensalza. One of the pioneers of modern chemistry, Wiegleb wrote a textbook for pharmacists in training. In 1779, he founded the first private pharmaceutical training institute in Germany – a model that soon became standard. His textbooks laid the foundation for the training of future pharmacists and helped to establish pharmacy as a scientific discipline.

The exciting history of pharmacy comes to life at the Pharmacy Museum in Bad Langensalza. Here you can discover Wiegleb's historical medicines, pharmacy equipment and – replicas of – laboratories and follow the development of the pharmacy from the 18th to the 20th century.

62





A priest's son as visionary

Friedrich Fröbel's kindergarten

The Friedrich Fröbel Museum and the Fröbel Trail in Bad Blankenburg commemorate a visionary who once influenced the city: Friedrich Fröbel recognised, as far back as 200 years ago, how important the first few years of life and an intact family were to the development of a human being. The priest's son from the Thuringian Forest campaigned for the rights of young people to a holistic education and founded a 'play and activity institute' in which children were to playfully explore the world and discover their own abilities.

The institute was intended as a garden for children in which they could observe nature and live within it. But also a garden of children freely developing their creative potential. In 1840, Fröbel coined the term 'kindergarten'. The concept established itself all over the world, and influenced the art of the 20th century. The geometric shapes and colours of the play materials developed by Fröbel are echoed in the paintings and sketches of Bauhaus adherents. Even famous architects such as Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright were influenced by the ideas of the Thuringian pedagogical pioneer.

Today, teachers worldwide refer back to Friedrich Fröbel – and his term 'kindergarten' has made its way into many languages.



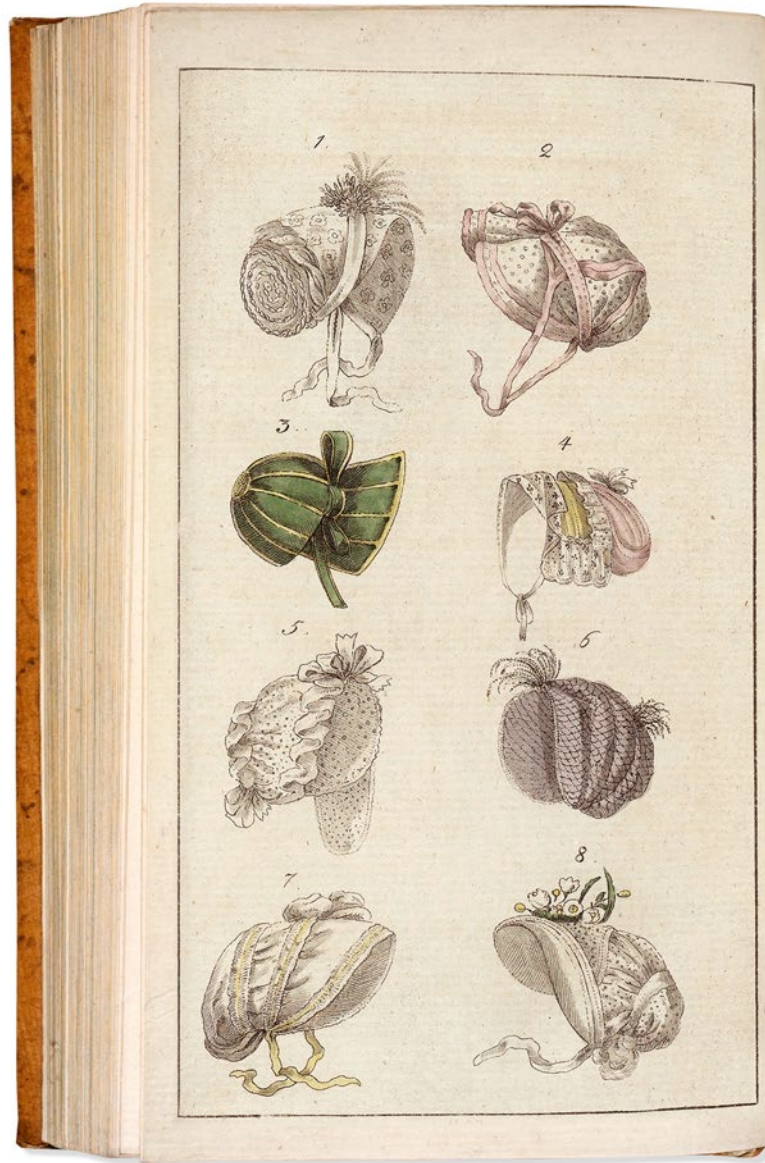
Kindergarten originator Friedrich Fröbel (1782–1852)

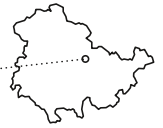
Passionate about Life

The grandmother of all ladies' magazines *Bertuch's Journal of Luxury and Fashion*

'A commode is an attractive piece of furniture for the living room of a lady, a place to store her toiletries.' This definition, the introduction to an advertisement for a Weimar cabinet-maker, comes from the first issue, dated 1786, of the 'Journal des Luxus und der Moden'. Published by Friedrich Justin Bertuch, the magazine appeared once a month for 40 years for a broad readership of around 25,000 female readers (and probably male readers too). It ranks as the grandmother of all women's magazines. The editors kept track of all the latest unusual trends – such as wearing a nightcap on the street – while also reviewing theatre plays and providing tips on gardening and good health. Devices and inventions for the household or different means of transportation, such as carriages, were presented, while reports about faraway countries and travels satisfied the yearning for the exotic. And of course, there was no lack of social gossip and political events.

64





Thuringia, the land of fashion:
The 'Journal des Luxus und der
Moden' from 1786 was Germany's
first women's magazine.

Bertuch pursued a consistent pedagogical through-line with the magazine. The enterprising publisher, who at the time was as famous as his contemporaries Goethe or the Duke of Weimar, wanted to shape the practical and aesthetic sense of his mostly female audience. Historians credit Bertuch with making a significant contribution to improving the self-esteem of the middle class emerging in the 19th century and known as the bourgeois class.

In 2022, a collection of documents entitled 'Luxury & Lifestyle - Weimar and the wider world' was published, which pays tribute to the magazine's colourful, hand-coloured issues. The illustrated book impressively shows how some trends from that time remain a source of inspiration for modern styles.



Passionate about Life

A Frankish Queen from Thuringia

Saint Radegund followed her own path

Radegund of Thuringia must have been an impressive woman – she certainly had a mind of her own. Born around 520 as a Thuringian princess, the eleven-year-old was abducted together with one of her brothers and taken to the Frankish Empire as spoils of war after the defeat of the Thuringians by the Franks in the Battle of Unstrut. Here she received a Christian education, learning to read, write and speak Latin. According to legend, she devoted herself to the care, nourishment and education of poor children. At the age of about 20, she was forced into an unwanted marriage with the Frankish King Chlothar I. She had tried to flee, but was caught and led a very pious life in a marriage that was as loveless as it was childless.

When Chlothar had Radegund's brother murdered, she fled to Poitiers, where she founded the later Sainte-Croix Abbey, the first women's monastery in Europe. Chlothar tried several times to have her brought back, but Radegund was able to successfully evade him.

In 565, the poet and priest Venantius Fortunatus came to Poitiers and became a close friend of Radegund. Shortly after her death in 587, he wrote the elegy 'De excidio Thuringiae' with the 'Lamentation of Radegund'. In it, he depicts her lamenting the downfall of the Thuringian Empire with great emotion and drama – reminiscent of the story of the fall of Troy.

Portrait of
Saint Radegund,
engraving from 1830





A lifetime of service to the poor

A Hungarian princess as patron saint

Her short life was marked by loss and charity. Elisabeth, the Hungarian King's daughter, born in 1207, had to leave her homeland at an early age. At the age of only four, she was betrothed to Hermann, the son of the Landgrave of Thuringia, and taken to Wartburg Castle to be educated. After Hermann's untimely death, she married Ludwig IV, Hermann's younger brother and the new Landgrave of Thuringia, at the age of 14. The marriage was marked by deep affection and Elisabeth bore Ludwig three children.

At Wartburg Castle, Elisabeth set a new social agenda, caring for the sick and the poor. Once, during a great famine, she opened the granaries to people in need while her husband was absent. Through her charity, but also as a result of the increasingly intense expressions of her piety, she came into conflict with Ludwig's relatives and the court officials, but was supported by her husband: 'Let her do good and give to God in the way she likes!'.

But Ludwig died in 1227 during a crusade and Elisabeth was forced by his younger brother to leave Wartburg

Castle. With a heavy heart, she left behind her children so that they could continue to live a life befitting their station. She lived for a while as a poor woman among the poor, as no one dared give her shelter. Finally, she moved from Thuringia to the Hessian home of her spiritual father, the crusade preacher Konrad of Marburg.

In 1228, she founded a hospital in Marburg, where she cared for the sick and outcasts and lived in poverty following the example of Francis of Assisi. She died in 1231 at the age of only 24, and just four years later was canonised by Pope Gregory IX. She was also venerated by Protestants as a symbol of active charity and became a kind of German 'national saint'. Thuringia and Hesse both chose her as their patron saint.



Image of Saint Elisabeth, Altenberg Altarpiece (1320/1330), Städelches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt

66

Passionate about Life

Legacy of a medieval (free) thinker

Meister Eckhart, the mystic

Eckhart von Hochheim (1260–1328), commonly known as Meister Eckhart or Master Eckhart, was an important German theologian and philosopher, whose teachings had a great influence both in his time and even today. Born in Hochheim or Tambach near Gotha, his early years shaped his later work. In Erfurt, he entered the Dominican Order and received his basic training at the Predigerkirche monastery, an important centre of medieval spirituality. In 1294, Eckhart was made Prior at Erfurt, after which he continued his studies and held high-ranking positions at some of the most important monasteries and centres of faith of the late Middle Ages.

His sermons and writings made him one of the most well-known theologians of his time. Eckhart was primarily inspired to spread the principles of spirituality throughout the world, as a way of life and conscious engagement. He called for people to free themselves from external constraints, possessions and vanity in order to achieve inner freedom and serenity. With his neologisms, he made a decisive contribution to German philosophical nomenclature. He translated the Latin concepts of scholasticism into Middle High German and coined words such as 'Wesentlichkeit' (materiality) and 'Eigenschaft' (characteristic).

Eckhart's teachings still resonate with people who are searching for meaning and serenity in a complex world. Numerous philosophers, including Martin Heidegger, Hannah Arendt, Erich Fromm and Carl Gustav Jung, studied his work and found astonishing parallels. As his home, Thuringia remains a focal point of his work. The University of Erfurt established the Meister Eckhart Research Centre here in 2004, researching his work with particular reference to Thuringia.



Oil painting from 1515
by Giovanni Bellini



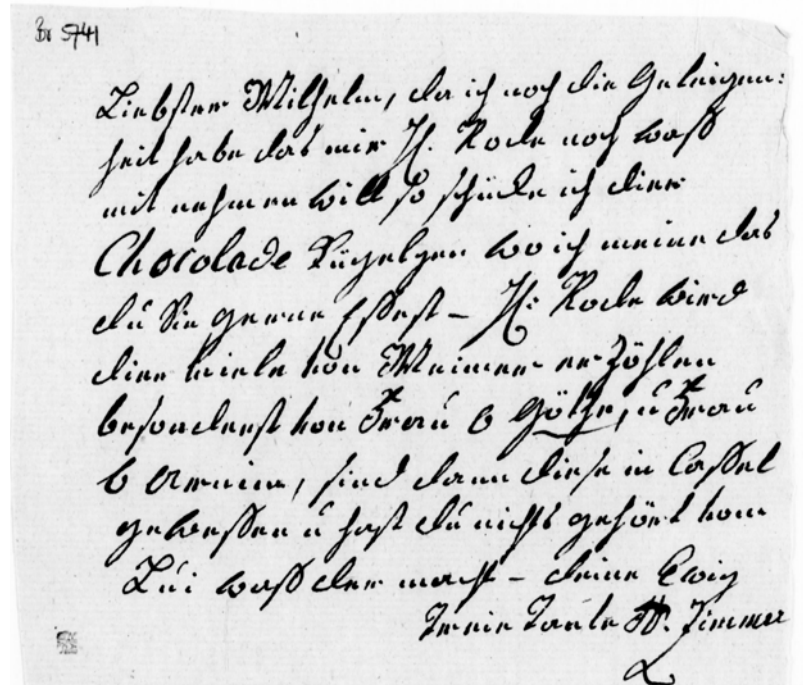
A fairy-tale delight

The Brothers Grimm are the first to mention chocolate

They apparently had a real sweet tooth. In 1812, Wilhelm Grimm wrote a letter to his aunt Henriette, who lived in Gotha, thanking her for the delicious gift of chocolate pralines, adding: 'I don't go for a walk without taking a few with me.' Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were working on the famous 'Children's and Household Tales' in Kassel at the time.

On reading this, art historian Andrea Linnebach-Wegner was intrigued. Until now, the invention of the cocoa butter press in the Netherlands in 1828 was considered the birth of edible chocolate – but here was proof that chocolate was already being enjoyed in Thuringia some 16 years earlier. A minor sensation in cultural history. Upon further investigation, the researcher came across a recipe for chocolate pralines from a Gotha court confectioner – it is highly likely that this is the sweet gift that Aunt Henrietta gave her nephews.

68



Excerpt from an exchange of letters between Henriette and Wilhelm Grimm

Cultural Highlights

69–85

Cultural Highlights

A historic poets' alliance

Goethe and Schiller

The bond between Goethe and Schiller: was it a true friendship or just an alliance of convenience? This was a question already being asked by the two poets' own contemporaries. Often mentioned in the same breath, Goethe and Schiller influenced each other, corresponded, collaborated on the magazine 'Die Horen' (The Horae) and launched barbs at rival authors in their literary journal 'Xenien' (The Xenia).

A government minister at the Weimar Court, Goethe paid frequent visits to Schiller, who was a professor in Jena. They seemed to enjoy these get-togethers immensely, at least Schiller's wife Charlotte recounted that she could hardly sleep a wink, due to the convivial laughter of the two poets in the room next door. That the Hessian Goethe and the Swabian Schiller would cement their bond in Thuringia was no accident, since the region offered congenial conditions for the literary endeavours of both men. Thus, the Duchy of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, to which the nearby University of Jena belonged, was home to a series of leading scientists, philosophers and writers who appreciated its relatively liberal political climate. In fact, no other region of Germany could boast the same concentration of intellectual brilliance around the year 1800.

After Schiller's death, the association between the two poets was idealised by Goethe himself – and even more so by later generations. A tangible example is the double memorial in front of the German National Theatre in Weimar. Erected in 1857, the statue bears the lofty inscription: 'To the Poet Pair Goethe and Schiller, from the Fatherland.'

Goethe-Schiller memorial in Weimar





69

Cultural Highlights

Illustrious names

Bechstein and Wilh. Steinberg

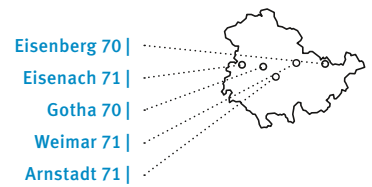
Thuringia is associated with many illustrious names. Two in particular are Steinberg and Bechstein. The handcrafting of pianos and grand pianos of the highest quality has been a tradition in Eisenberg since 1877, when Adolph Geyer founded his first piano factory there. Following an eventful history, the factory eventually became known as 'Wilh. Steinberg'. The distinctive abbreviation adorns instruments that are appreciated by artists and music lovers worldwide. Each one is made with great attention to detail using traditional craftsmanship.

Bechstein also has Thuringian roots: Carl Bechstein, a native of Gotha, founded his piano factory in Berlin in 1853. Starting out as a one-man operation, Bechstein quickly became Europe's leading maker of pianos and grand pianos. The popular exports found their way into concert halls, royal courts and musical conservatories worldwide. Great composers like Franz Liszt, Richard Wagner and Claude Debussy all held their Bechsteins in high regard. But Bechsteins are also popular with contemporary stars like Elton John and Ariana Grande.

Many celebrities from the world of pop and classical music love the sound of Bechstein pianos.



70



Immortal keyboard wizards

Bach and Liszt

During his lifetime, Johann Sebastian Bach was relatively unappreciated as a composer. The reputation of this brilliant musician, born in Eisenach, was based more on his virtuoso organ playing and on his skills as a choir master and church cantor. Not long after his death, Bach had been practically forgotten. Yet today, music lovers from all over the world travel to Eisenach, to hear Bach's music played in the house of his birth; to Arnstadt, where Bach obtained his first post as court musician and where he was married; to Weimar, where he was employed by the local Duke for a number of years. Practically no other composer has influenced so many other musicians as Bach did. The list of his admirers is a long one, stretching from classical masters like Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Schönberg to contemporary artists like Nina Simone. One of the first to rescue Bach from obscurity was Franz Liszt, who transcribed several of the Baroque master's works for the piano, and who used Bach's organ works as inspiration for some of his own compositions. Liszt also followed in Bach's footsteps by accepting an appointment to the Court of Weimar some 140 years after his famous predecessor, thereby ending a phase of his life in which he had toured restlessly across Europe as an acclaimed concert pianist, building up an enthusiastic following. Like Bach, Liszt was best known in his day as a virtuoso performer. A native of Hungary, he settled down in Weimar from 1848 to 1861, and then again from 1869 until his death. During his stay, Liszt turned Weimar into a leading European music centre, attracting admirers like Hector Berlioz and Johannes Brahms. Weimar's Academy of Music still bears Liszt's name, while his apartment in the city (Marienstrasse 17) has been turned into a museum where visitors can admire his original Bechstein grand piano.



Franz-Liszt memorial in Weimar



Johann-Sebastian Bach memorial in Eisenach

71

Cultural Highlights

Duke by birth, director by avocation

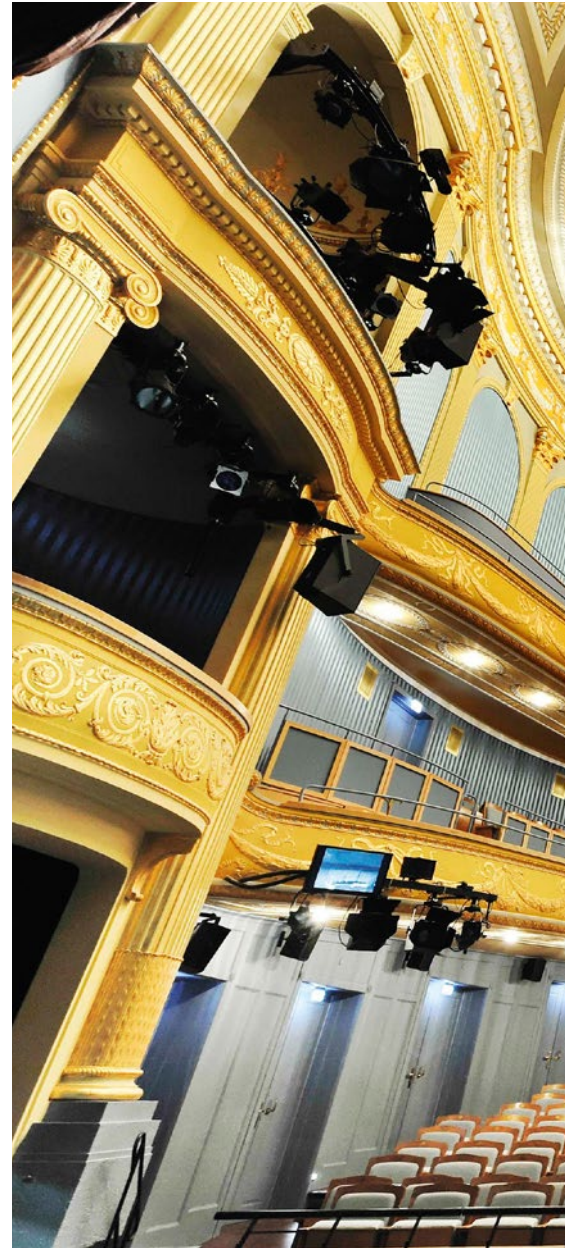
Georg II and the Meininger Staatstheater

‘The Meiningers are coming!’ Back in the 19th century, this was an announcement that could fill theatres from Stockholm to Trieste, from London to Moscow. When the curtain went up, the audience would marvel at the sets even before a single actor had stepped on stage. Elaborate historical backdrops, intricate mass choreography and the artistic refinement infusing each production made the ‘Meiningers’ a famous and beloved theatrical company. The performances of the ‘Meiningers’, especially their tours between 1874 and 1890, attracted attention throughout Europe. The troupe’s artistic director was none other than Duke Georg II of Saxe-Meiningen, who was known for ground-breaking stage artistry that successfully translated Richard Wagner’s concept of the Gesamtkunstwerk (a total work of art unifying various media of art) from the opera to the theatre. Carrying on this great theatrical tradition, Meiningen’s venerable theatre offers modern audiences everything from musicals, dramas, musical concerts, ballets and puppetry. Top-class musical accompaniment is provided by the Meiningen Court Orchestra, founded in 1690. The theatre itself, a neoclassical structure from 1831, was fully renovated for its 180th anniversary. Thanks to the installation of state-of-the-art theatre equipment, audiences can now experience cutting-edge productions in a lush historic setting.

Visitors to the Theatermuseum ‘Zauberwelt der Kulisse’ in Meiningen can still marvel at 276 original pieces of scenery from this period: fantastic sets, magnificent costumes and the personal stage and costume designs of Theatre Duke Georg II. Famous actors such as Monica Bleibtreu, Klaus Maria Brandauer and Armin Mueller-Stahl are committed to preserving these treasures.

72

View into the magnificent
auditorium of the Meininger
Staatstheater





Cultural Highlights

Great cinema!

Thuringia is a real film star

It may not have the glamour of Hollywood, but Thuringia's medieval streets and former residences have been featured in many German and international film productions for decades. The fairy-tale film 'The Cold Heart' was shot here as early as 1950, and 'Rapunzel' was filmed in Reinhardsbrunn Castle in 1989.

The website of Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung lists over 300 possible locations in Thuringia, from historical and modern buildings to parks and sports centres to entire city ensembles. So it's no wonder that location scouts on the lookout for spectacular backdrops are so successful in Thuringia.

Film crews in Weimar are almost an everyday occurrence. The city with its many historical buildings is an ideal location for films, such as 'Beloved Sisters' by Dominik Graf, which tells of the amorous entanglements of the poet Friedrich Schiller. The ZDF series 'Die neue Zeit' and the TV film 'Lotte am Bauhaus' were filmed here during the centenary of the Bauhaus art school, which was founded in Weimar in 1919.

There is hardly a more authentic backdrop than Gera for films set in the 1970s and 1980s. The impressive group of buildings on Amthorstrasse has already been used many times as a film location, including for the comedy 'Two to One' (2024) starring acclaimed actress Sandra Hüller in the lead role – who, incidentally, is from Thuringia.

The city of Erfurt, the capital of Thuringia, is home to the children's channel KiKA and is a popular location for productions aimed at children and young people. The Erfurt STUDIOPARK KinderMedienZentrum where, among others, the successful Otfried Preußler film adaptation 'The Little Witch' (2018) was shot, was used as a filming location for 'The School of Magic Animals 2' in 2022. And the popular children's series 'Schloss Einstein' has been filmed in the egapark since 2007.

So the final curtain has not yet fallen here for national and international film crews. And – Action!

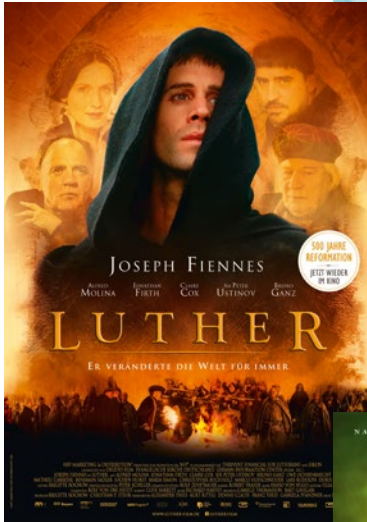
73

Weimar 73 |

Erfurt 73 |

Reinhardtsbrunn Castle 73 |

Gera 73 |



From the Schiller drama 'Beloved Sisters' to 'The School of Magic Animals 2' to the comedy 'Two to One': great films that were made in Thuringia

Cultural Highlights

Lazy Ludwig

Bechstein's fairy tales

Once upon a time there was a lad named Ludwig who lived with his uncle – on his mother's side – in Meiningen. Ludwig was a sluggard at school, and his uncle often punished him by confining him to his room. There was only one thing that Lazy Ludwig worked hard at: writing stories and collecting fairy tales. In fact, Ludwig Bechstein was such a good storyteller that his fame soon spread throughout the German-speaking lands. His German fairy tales, first published in 1845, were reprinted dozens of times. In Germany today, entire schools are named after the indolent student of old, one of them being located in Meiningen.

74

Also with a firm place in the Bechstein collection of German fairy tales: 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarves' (left) and 'Cinderella'





Schleiz 75 |
Meiningen 74 |



75

Making sense of the babble

The Duden Dictionary from Schleiz

Due to its geographic location, the town of Schleiz has long been a place where one could hear any number of regional German dialects spoken, primarily Thuringian, Franconian and Saxon. This presented a real problem for Konrad Duden, originally from the Rhineland, when he became principal of a local secondary school there in 1869. Since his pupils were used to writing in their own dialect, he found it difficult to make sense of their essays. At that time, there were still no standard spelling rules for written German. Duden resolved to remedy this state of affairs. By 1872, he had compiled an erudite reference work with 6,000 keywords known as the 'Schleizer Duden'. This was the precursor of the authoritative Duden Dictionary currently found in practically every German home and office. Thus Schleiz became the starting point for a revolution in the German written language – and made Konrad Duden the father of German spelling.

Cultural Highlights

A northern luminary in the Eichsfeld region

Theodor Storm's Thuringian years

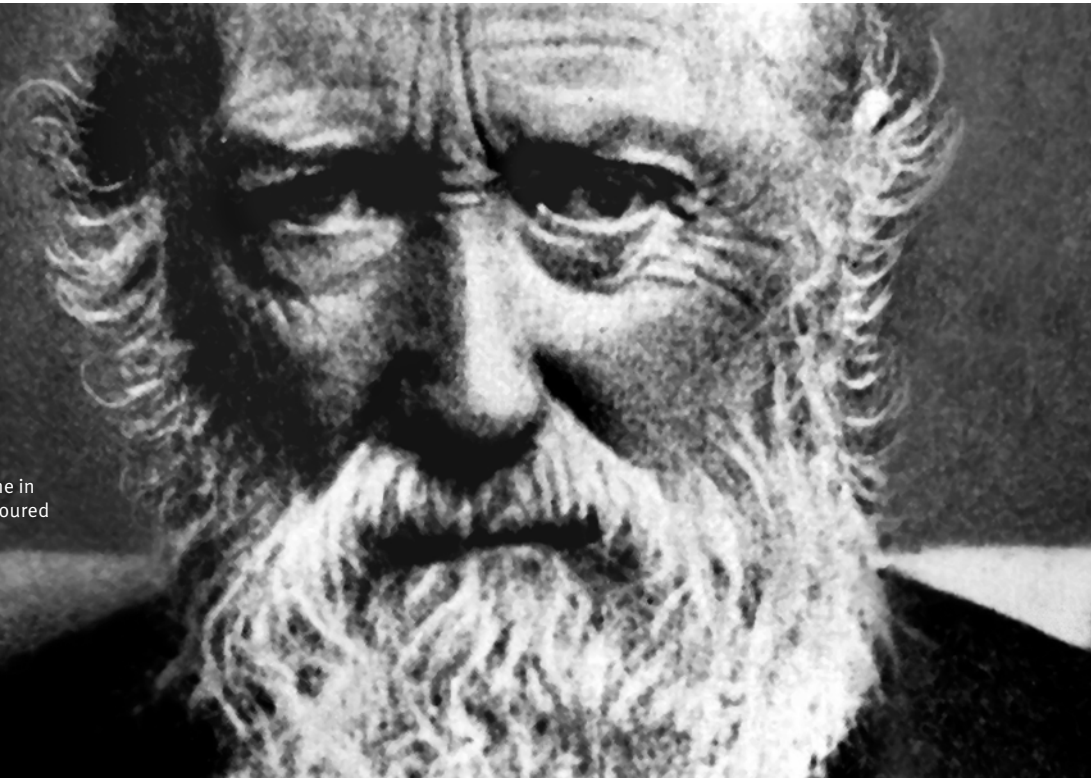
For most Germans, the writer Theodor Storm is most closely associated with the northern province of Schleswig-Holstein. Few are aware that this great novelist and lyric poet spent eight years of his life in the Eichsfeld region of Thuringia. The political climate in his home had made it impossible for Storm to continue working as a lawyer. That is why he moved to Potsdam in 1853 and three years later to Heiligenstadt, where he made a modest living as a district magistrate.

While living quietly in the predominantly Catholic region of Eichsfeld, Storm developed the realistic narrative style that was to make him famous. He was impressed by the deep

religiosity that he encountered in Eichsfeld, and his writings would return time and again to a theme that already preoccupied him as a young man: the role of Christianity and the church. In 1988, to mark the centenary of the death of its famous district magistrate, Heiligenstadt inaugurated the Theodor Storm Literary Museum. The museum's permanent exhibition, housed in a quaint half-timbered house dating back to 1436, was thoroughly revamped a few years ago. Currently on exhibit are documents and installations dealing with Storm's relationship to the concept of the homeland and of foreign regions as well as with his interest in folk tales and the Christmas tradition.

76

The writer Theodor Storm lived for a long time in Heiligenstadt, where his works are now honoured in a museum.





Famous for precision

Justus Perthes' Geographic Institute

Some 200 years ago, the art of cartography was revolutionised by two Thuringians, the publisher Justus Perthes and the ducal court official Adolf Stieler. Working in Gotha, they created maps in which every detail had been meticulously researched. Stieler's 'pocket atlas' won over specialists and laypeople alike. The Geographic Institute founded by Justus Perthes, meanwhile, grew into an international scientific centre, thanks first and foremost to brilliant collaborators like August Petermann. In 1855, Petermann began putting out a specialised periodical that provided unequalled coverage of the ongoing geographic discoveries of the 19th century. From polar explorers to African adventurer – they all wanted to be featured in his geographic bulletins, known as Petermanns Geographische Mitteilungen. The maps, atlases and journals shaped the scientific view of the Earth well into the 20th century and made it accessible to a broader public.

While revolutionary at the time, today it is taken for granted. Nowadays, navigation systems in cars or on smartphones can help users to establish their location and plan routes. But the basis for everything is still the tried and tested map. After all, Perthes' and Stieler's maps were not only works of science, but essential orientation aids. The map collection and specialist library 'Sammlung Perthes' (Perthes Collection), which is part of the Gotha Research Library, are among the items that have been preserved to this day. As the only surviving cartographic archive on the European continent, it contains unique source material on the development of cartography and geography in the 19th and 20th centuries.

77

Cultural Highlights

The scholarly legacy of the duchess

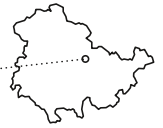
Duchess Anna Amalia Library

In 1691, the Duke of Saxe-Weimar opened the doors of his library to the general public. This event marks the birth of one of Germany's most important research collections: the Duchess Anna Amalia Library. The library had nothing special to recommend it at first, much like the small duchy of Saxe-Weimar where it was located. But as the city of Weimar, astride the River Ilm, began to bloom into a cultural powerhouse, the ducal library, too, grew by leaps and bounds. In 1766, Duchess Anna Amalia had the collection moved to its present location in the 'Green Palace'. By 1800, the ducal library had joined the ranks of the most notable libraries in the German-speaking lands. A tragic landmark in its long history occurred in September of 2004, when a fire destroyed the upper floors and famous rococo reading room.

78

The famous rococo hall of the Duchess Anna Amalia Library in Weimar has been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1998.





Restore, preserve, research

Restoration experts save valuable writings

The completely restored Duchess Anna Amalia Library was inaugurated by the German Federal President some three years after the catastrophic fire in 2004. Only 28,000 volumes could be salvaged unscathed from the library, while 118,000 were slightly to severely damaged by fire, heat, fire extinguishing water and pollution. 25,000 of these books were recovered from the debris of the fire in the form of seven million individual sheets of paper and have become known as 'ash books'. In 2008, the only restoration workshop in Germany specialising in fire-damaged documents was set up in Weimar-Legefild. The hope is to restore 1.5 million pages by 2028, which corresponds to 13,500 works.

Unlike other historical libraries, the Duchess Anna Amalia Library is an active collection. It is regarded as a research

library with a particular focus on the years 1750 to 1850 and combines the maintenance of historical works with the task of keeping them accessible for current and future generations.

A special example of the importance of the restoration of historical writings is the 18th-century Luther Bible, which was severely damaged after the flood disaster in the Ahr valley. This valuable work was saved and restored thanks to the expertise of Thuringian restoration experts. The elaborate restoration shows how the knowledge collected in Weimar on restoring damaged written material has an impact far beyond the borders of Thuringia and contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage.



Cultural Highlights

Researcher, globetrotter, story-teller *Alfred Brehm and his 'Life of Animals'*

Alfred Edmund Brehm, born in 1829 in Unterrentendorf, was an animal enthusiast even as a child. Nevertheless, he first studied architecture. But when he was invited by ornithologist Johann Wilhelm von Müller to go on an expedition to Africa, Brehm discontinued his studies. For five years he observed and prepared animals that he came across in Egypt and the Sudan, among others places.

After his return, Brehm studied natural sciences in Jena. He wrote about his experiences on further expeditions in essays, but especially in his most extensive and best-known work, 'Brehm's Life of Animals', which has shaped generations and is still known to many Germans to this day. This is also because new editions are continuously being released, the most recent in 2018, published by the Biographische Institut publishing house.



The 240 pages of the new edition of 'Brehm's Life of Animals' bring together many highlights from the significantly more comprehensive original.

The enduring success of this Encyclopaedia is based above all on the vivid and captivating descriptions. Alfred Brehm did not see the animals as soulless eating machines, rather as creatures with individual characteristics. He received recognition for this from the highest authority. Charles Darwin supported having the Thuringian's writings translated into English.

Since 2020, the permanent exhibition 'BREHMS WORLD – Animals and People' in the former Brehm Memorial in Rentendorf has highlighted the relationship between humans and animals and brings the ideas of Alfred Brehm and his father Christian Ludwig Brehm into the present. Among its exhibits, the museum shows the historic parlour and study and stuffed birds as well as exhibitions on topics such as ornithology, ecology and species protection. Modern technology makes it possible to access bird songs via smartphone and to experience Alfred Brehm virtually in the museum.

80

Dreamers between worlds

Novalis and the early Jena Romantics

Friedrich von Hardenberg, better known by his pen name Novalis, was a captivating orator. One of the great poets of early Romanticism, he looked good, was articulate and spoke quickly. It was no coincidence that other proponents of the movement gathered in Jena in the mid-1790s. Novalis had studied there, and it was to here that his friend moved also, the philosopher Friedrich Schlegel, with his wife, as well as Schlegel's brother August Wilhelm with his wife Caroline. The four rented a house near the town church in Jena. While Novalis was lyrically mourning his great love Sophie von Kühn, who died at the age of just 15, August Wilhelm and Caroline Schlegel were busy translating Shakespeare's works. Spirits were high during this period, which was also the time of Goethe and Schiller. For a long time, Novalis was guided by the philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte, who also lived in Jena. 'When numbers and figures are no longer the key to all creatures' is the beginning of one of Novalis' most famous poems, which often symbolises the Romantic era. Novalis died in 1801 at the age of just 28. But his work lives on to this day and has influenced generations of poets.

81



Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis).

Cultural Highlights

A haven for creatives and visionaries

Zughafen Erfurt

An idea and two friends who wanted to create a movement: In 2002, a cultural flagship of the city – the ‘Zughafen’ – was built at the freight yard in Erfurt, east of the old town.

Andie Welskop and the musician Clueso created a place where music projects, fresh business ideas and art could develop freely. Thousands of hours went into renovation work, before the first offices and music studios could be set up. From this point on, Clueso started his career with his own band, and the other spaces were let out to firms and artists.

Today, this scene, with its industrial charm, is an important cultural centre in Erfurt. Creative people come together here: On the compound, between rails, train platforms and brickwork, they use workshops, warehouses and rehearsal and recording spaces. There are cafés and a beer garden for the visiting public. Performers can use several locations simultaneously, including an open-air stage. From Indie concerts to Bach weeks, every imaginable genre is on offer. At night, the techno beats from the Kalif Storch club mix with the clattering of goods trains.

In addition to studios and galleries, start-ups have also established themselves here. Entrepreneurs have founded a craft brewery, a wood design workshop, an online wine merchant and even a whisky distillery and a gin distillery.

Clueso has now become a national star, while the other creatives continue their work at the freight yard. Welskop founded the ‘Netzwerk Kulturbahnhof’ association and fought for a long time to extend the rental contract with Deutsche Bahn. And he was successful, too: The city purchased the premises in 2018 and in doing so began the first lively trend in Erfurt’s ‘ICE City’. It will be exciting to see what ideas the resident artists, musicians and small business owners have for the newly emerging district. Because that’s how the Zughafen began – with an idea.

82

Clueso live at the anniversary concert to mark ‘20 years of Zughafen’





83

Pioneers of mathematics and logic *Adam Ries and Gottlob Frege*

‘According to Adam Riese, the result should be ...’. It’s a stock phrase commonly used by Germans to emphasise the presumed correctness of a given calculation. Yet many probably don’t even know that ‘Adam Ries’ was a real person (over time, the name’s spelling became corrupted to Riese or ‘giant’). A plaque reminds passers-by of the house at Michaelisstrasse 48 in Erfurt, where Adam Ries’ first arithmetic handbook was printed in 1518. Though intended to teach children, it was to form the basis for more advanced treatises, including works on algebra. It was in Erfurt that Ries wrote his most famous book ‘Calculation on the Lines and with the Quill’, in which he gave detailed explanations of how to divide and multiply using a calculating board or a pen and paper, and also proposed that the cumbersome Roman numerals then in use be replaced by the more practical Arabic numbering system. The native Franconian worked in Erfurt from 1518 to 1522 and wrote in everyday German rather than scholarly Latin. This allowed him to impart his arithmetic techniques even to common tradesmen or merchants. Reprinted all the way into the 17th century, Adam Ries’ works reached a huge readership and thus also contributed to the development of standard, written German.



You can count on Thuringia. Thanks to great mathematicians such as Gottlob Frege and Adam Ries.

It was only in later life that mathematician and philosopher Gottlob Frege received the fame he deserved. He taught mathematics at the University of Jena at the end of the 19th century, yet devoted his scholarly writings almost exclusively to logic, a niche field of philosophy at the time. As a result, Frege was never fully accepted by his academic peers as either a proper mathematician or a true philosopher.

By 1918, when he retired to Wismar in his native Mecklenburg, Frege had become quite embittered. Yet he was ultimately vindicated, albeit in a somewhat roundabout fashion: The British philosopher Bertrand Russell became fascinated by the German’s attempt to synthesise arithmetics and logic. Together with his famous student Ludwig Wittgenstein, Russell went on to expand upon Frege’s ideas, with the result that Frege is now recognised as the founder of modern logic.

Cultural Highlights

The working man's avant-garde

The painter Otto Dix

Otto Dix always stayed true to his working-class roots, even though he sometimes rubbed people up the wrong way in the process. Born in 1891 to a blue-collar family in Gera, the painter was still proud of his humble origins at the age of 70: 'I don't paint for this one or that one. I'm just a proletarian who's independent-minded and if I say 'This is what I'm going to do', then I really don't care what others have to say about it.' Even before the First World War, Dix had already become committed to the artistic avant-garde, experimenting with cubism and futuristic formats. He is best known for his uncompromising realism, however. Dix' birthplace on the banks of the White Elster river has been made into a museum housing one of the largest state-owned collections of his works.

The city of Gera has also dedicated a comprehensive exhibition to the artist at the Orangerie under the title 'Otto Dix – Trau Deinen Augen' (Otto Dix – Trust Your Eyes). Around 50 paintings and 35 watercolours and drawings from the various phases of the painter's career are presented here. Set to run until 2028, the exhibition is accompanied by interactive media stations and a multimedia room offering insights into the life and work of the artist.

84



'Portrait of the Painter Hans Theo Richter and his wife Gisela' by Otto Dix (1933)



A canon of global fame

Johann Pachelbel's popular processional

His name may not be as well known as Bach or Handel. However, one of his works has been performed at weddings and festive occasions all over the world since the Baroque era and has become an eternal favourite. We are talking about Johann Pachelbel.

Born in Nuremberg in 1653, Pachelbel came to Eisenach in 1677 as the ducal court organist. Just one year later, he moved to Erfurt to take up the position of organist at the Predigerkirche. This was probably arranged by the Bach family, a family of musicians from Thuringia with whom he was friends and which included Johann Sebastian. Pachelbel gave organ lessons to his older brother Johann Christoph. He remained in Erfurt for twelve years, and it was here that he married his second wife in 1684. In 1695, Pachelbel returned to the city of his birth, where he died at the age of 52.

His most popular composition, the Canon and Gigue in D major, was probably written in Gotha, where he had been the city organist from 1692. It is the only canon that has been handed down from him. It is thought that he composed the work for the wedding of Johann Christoph Bach on 23 October 1694. From Mozart, who quoted the piece in “The Magic Flute”, to pop musicians like David Bowie and Kylie Minogue, the beautiful melody has been adopted and varied around the world as a popular processional on festive occasions.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Joh. Pachelbel.' in a cursive script.

Signature of Johann Pachelbel from the year 1695

85

Ground-
breaking
Discoveries

86–100

Ground-breaking Discoveries

Fire at will!

Döbereiner and his catalytic lighter

Spark ignites gas. An exceptional practical household aid functions according to this simple principle: the lighter. The precursor to the commercial disposable lighter functioned without sparks and was significantly more complex.

In 1823, Johann Wolfgang Döbereiner, a native Franconian who worked as a chemistry professor in Jena, discovered that hydrogen would make platinum incandescent. This enabled him to create a new type of lighter known as 'Döbereiner's Lamp'. In a small glass cylinder, zinc was mixed with sulphuric acid to create hydrogen gas; when the gas came in contact with a small piece of platinum sponge, it oxidised and – pow! a flame sprung up.

Although the Döbereiner lamp was generally safe and convenient, it could explode if left unvented for long periods. It remained in common use nonetheless for decades. Today, Döbereiner's lamps have become a coveted collector's item. But perhaps the real legacy of this talented chemist and personal friend of Goethe is his pioneering role in the field of industrial catalysis. Döbereiner's idea to accelerate the reaction of two substances by adding a third has become a proven way to save energy, time and precious resources.



Sought after by collectors:
Döbereiner's Lamp was
one of the first modern
lighters.

Bad Langensalza 87 |

Jena 86 |



87

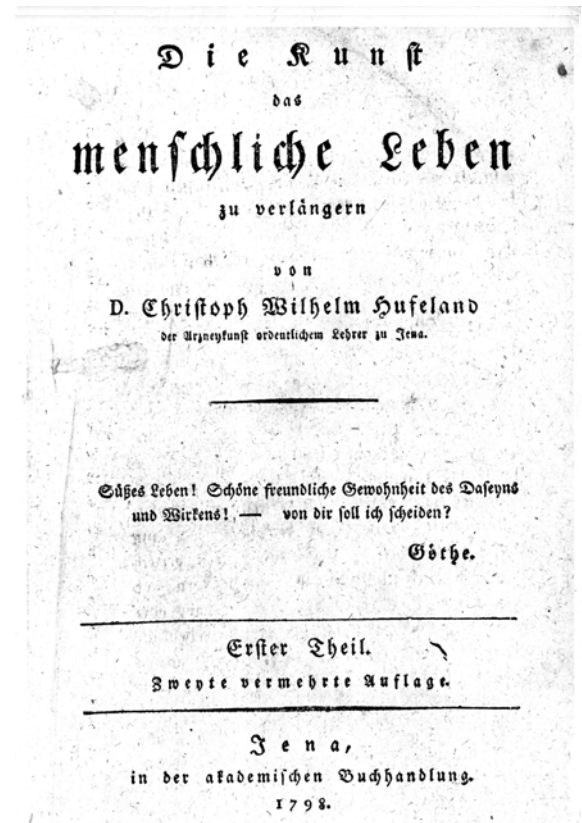
The doctor who increased life expectancy

Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland

Health and well-being, regular exercise, a balanced diet, sensible consumption of alcohol, stress management and getting enough sleep are yardsticks for a modern lifestyle. But what does modern mean? In fact, a doctor from Bad Langensalza was already promoting this healthy way of living over 220 years ago.

We are talking about Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland, who first cured the intellectual greats from Weimar, then worked as a professor in Jena and finally built himself a career in Prussia. In 1796/97, he published 'Die Kunst, das menschliche Leben zu verlängern' (The art of extending human life), and became world-renowned. Many of his suggestions and ideas were ahead of their time. Hufeland advocated immunisation, discovered that war causes psychological illness and founded the first outpatient clinic for poor people in Berlin. His principle: 'A doctor must simply see the human being and not differentiate between the large and the small.'

His standards for a healthy lifestyle are more relevant today than ever. Hufeland is also the role model and inspiration behind the naming of the Hufeland Clinic located in his hometown. It was the clinic's porter who suggested the name in the 1960s, to pre-empt it being named after an early communist. The Ministry of Health in Berlin liked the proposal, and thus it was renamed on Hufeland's 200th birthday.



'Die Kunst, das menschliche Leben zu verlängern' (1796), title page

Ground-breaking Discoveries

High-tech glass

Otto Schott in Jena

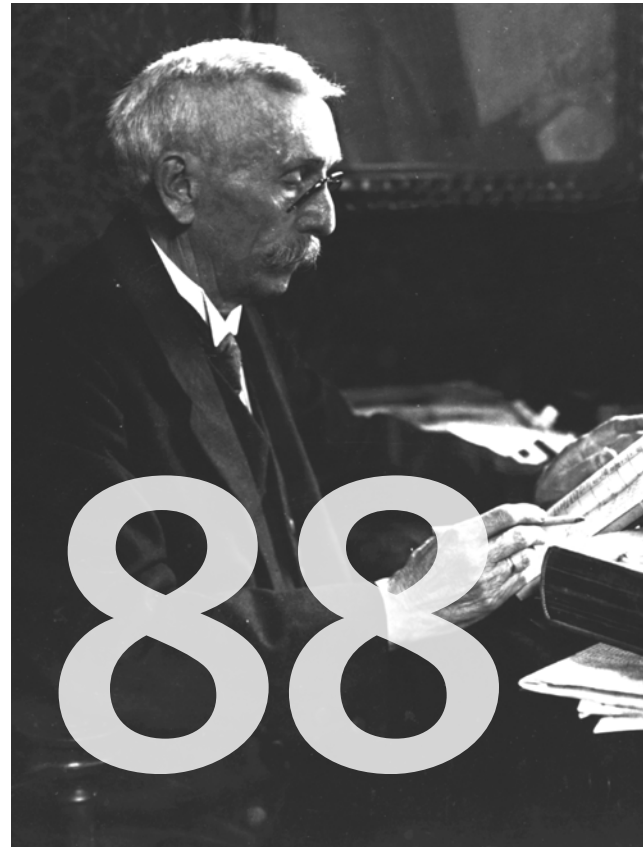
In 1879, the famous Jena physicist Ernst Abbe received mail from the Ruhr. A certain Otto Schott had sent a sample of a new type of material along with his best recommendations. It was lithium glass, which the 28-year-old Schott had developed in the cellar of his family home. After an intensive exchange of letters, Abbe brought the young inventor to Jena. In 1884, the two founded a company together with Carl Zeiss, the Glass Technology Laboratory Schott & Partners, later Jena Glassworks Schott & Partners and the kernel of today's SCHOTT corporation, which now operates worldwide.

In his new workplace, Otto Schott developed a chemically resistant borosilicate glass that can withstand high temperatures. This 'Jena glass' began a success story that endures to this day. Modern glass technology from Jena is used in fire-proofing and optical devices as well as in the automotive and electronics industries. Biochips from Schott enrich medical technology. Special glass from SCHOTT can be found today in stage spotlights, cinema projectors or diving and is even used in space, in telescopes.

Advances are still being made, with high-index glass wafers for augmented reality and ultra-thin glass for foldable displays in smartphones and tablets. In 2024, SCHOTT succeeded in manufacturing optical glass using only hydrogen for the first time.

Inventor of new types
of glass: Otto Schott

200 square metres of Schott PYRAN® S fireproof glass is installed on the Queen Mary 2



A clean future

Researchers tinker with the green battery

Batteries that charge more quickly, use more environmentally friendly materials and cost less than their conventional lithium-ion counterparts are poised to be a breakthrough for the energy transition. This is because lithium is expensive, controversial in terms of how it is extracted and simply not available in sufficient quantities to meet the ever-growing demand. The future of 'green' batteries is being shaped by leading minds in battery research in Thuringia, for example at the Technical University in Ilmenau, at the Centre for Energy and Environmental Chemistry (CEEC) at the Friedrich-Schiller University Jena, at the Helmholtz Institute for Polymers for Energy Applications in Jena (HIPOLE Jena) and at the Fraunhofer Institute for Ceramic Technologies and Systems IKTS in Hermsdorf. Their new approaches and innovative solutions are helping to drive forward the battery revolution.

Research is being carried out at the CEEC Jena and at the HIPOLE Jena into batteries that are not reliant on critical and environmentally harmful raw materials and can be adapted for various storage solutions. Attention is focusing on less problematic materials, such as plastic molecules in salt water, instead of toxic substances, such as sulphuric acid and vanadium. These innovative batteries have the potential to supply entire neighbourhoods with energy. Research at the Fraunhofer IKTS centres on inorganic materials and the further development of sodium batteries, which could offer a cost-effective alternative for electric cars. However, the main focus is on use as grid storage for renewable energies, for example, or also for storing energy from industrial processes.

The ultimate goal is to develop cost-effective and environmentally friendly energy storage systems that are versatile and can be produced sustainably.

Ground-breaking Discoveries

Maggi? No, Scheller!

The real inventor of instant soup

Some misconceptions take a long time to die out. One of these is that Julius Maggi supposedly invented instant soup. In reality, Rudolf Scheller had already been making dried soups some 15 years before the Swiss entrepreneur in the Thuringian town of Hildburghausen, and was selling them in large quantities to the Prussian Army.

In the years 1870/71, Prussia was at war with France and was feeding its soldiers rations of Erbswurst: ground peas compressed into a sausage-shaped paste and diluted with water to make soup. Unfortunately, the paste proved to be too moist and would not keep for long. Scheller set about improving the recipe and pressed the ingredients onto dried bars using specially developed equipment. Although the military rejected Scheller's innovation, the enterprising Thuringian refused to give up; in 1872, he began producing his own line of 'condensed soups' on a large scale. His soup bars came in four varieties (rice, flour, semolina or peas) and were ready to be eaten in minutes. Scheller's soups were a hit and made it all the way to the United States.

There was no competition at first, but that changed when the Maggi and Knorr companies succeeded in bringing their own instant products to market. By 1947, the 'Erste Fabrik condensirter Suppen' factory in Hildburghausen had to close its doors. The local industrial history is illuminated in the Hildburghausen City Museum, including Rudolf Scheller's basic principles for modern ready-made soups.

90





91

Lost and found

Ritter discovers UV light

In 1800, the Jena-based natural scientist Johann Wilhelm Ritter received exciting news from England: William Herschel, the famous astronomer, had discovered a form of invisible light. Herschel had set up an experiment in which he allowed sun beams to pass through a prism, thereby producing a visible spectrum of colours. He had then measured the temperature of each colour and found that it increased progressively from violet and blue to green and yellow and eventually to red. Surprisingly, the temperature was especially high to the right of the colour spectrum, i.e. in a range where red light was no longer to be seen. What Herschel had accidentally discovered was infrared light.

Inspired by Herschel, Ritter decided to look for more types of invisible light. Influenced by the philosophical ideas of the 'Jena Romanticism' school, Ritter believed that infrared light had to have a counterpart – a violet light likewise invisible to the naked eye. Ritter knew that silver chloride turned black when exposed to the sun. He also knew that violet light was more intense than red light. Accordingly, he constructed an apparatus in 1801 that allowed him to expose silver chloride to the invisible light that he suspected to exist just beyond the visible spectrum. Lo and behold, the silver chloride instantly turned pitch black. Ritter had discovered ultraviolet light (UV light).

Ground-breaking Discoveries

From knick-knacks to measuring devices

Thermometers in mass-production

Making a good idea available for everyday, practical use requires lots of business acumen. Franz Ferdinand Greiner, the first to bring mass-produced thermometers onto the market, certainly had it in spades. A miller from Stützerbach in the Ilm district, Greiner apprenticed as a glass-blower for lamps; in 1830, he set up his own glass foundry in the family water mill. At first, the workshop's output consisted mainly of glass knick-knacks. One evening, Greiner was watching as one of his employees, Wilhelm Berkes, blew a left-over piece of glass into a pipette with a bulb at one end, which he then filled with a liquid that expanded when exposed to heat. Realising that this was the rudimentary basis for a thermometer, Greiner decided to expand his product palette. Working together, Greiner and Berkes made a number of improvements to the design, using mercury as the filling liquid, for example. Thus, Greiner was able to bring the first serially produced thermometer to market. Greiner's tradition of excellence is carried on today in Geschwenda by the company Geratherm Medical AG. When a ban on the use of mercury in thermometers in the EU came into force in 2009, the medical devices manufacturer was quick to respond: Today, the company's products inter alia include touch-free fever thermometers.

92

The first industrially manufactured thermometers came from Thuringia.



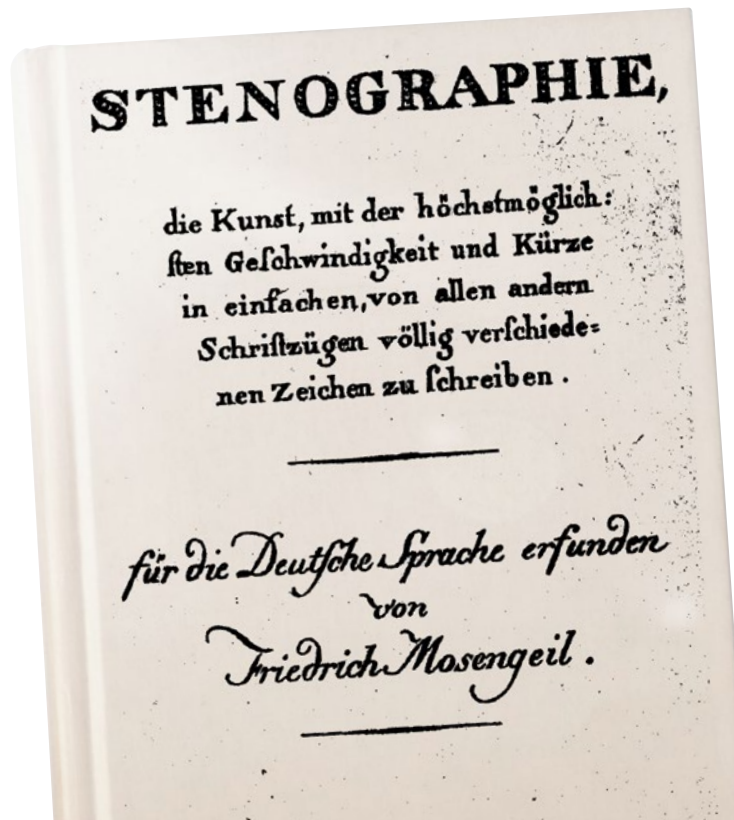


Keeping it short

Friedrich Mosengeil's stenography

Stenography may seem somewhat redundant, given that we now have smartphones that record spoken language in good quality and translate it directly into written text. Yet shorthand is still practised today, in the Bundestag, for example. One of the fathers of stenography in the German-speaking lands was Friedrich Mosengeil. The son of a parish pastor, Mosengeil developed a system during his studies that allowed the user 'to write with maximum brevity and speed [...] using simple symbols'. This formed the basis of an instructional manual that Mosengeil published in 1796 in Zillbach, near Schmalkalden.

93



Friedrich Mosengeil's standard work on stenography, 1903 edition

Ground-breaking Discoveries



94



Extraterrestrial application

Space exploration with Thuringian technology

When the InSight probe landed safely on Mars on 26 November 2018, after more than half a year's flight through space, there was great celebration in the NASA control centre in Pasadena, California, as well as among several scientists from Thuringia. That's because InSight had six sensors on board that were developed and manufactured by the Leibniz Institute for Photonic Technology (IPHT) in Jena.

The sensors were part of an infrared radiation thermometer and recorded the ground temperature of the planet without contact and precisely to one tenth of a degree Celsius. The heat measurements could provide insight into whether Mars is made of the same material as Earth and why it has developed differently from our planet.

As part of the InSight mission, Thuringian high technology was sent millions of kilometres from the Earth to Mars, for the second time. Since 2012, the 'Curiosity'

rover has been collecting information on the red planet with the help of sensors from IPHT. The self-propelled robot also contains photodiodes that document UV radiation and were built by ifw optronics GmbH in Jena.

Thuringian technology also plays an important role in the exploration of the Jovian system and in satellite communication. The GALA laser altimeter, co-developed by the Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Optics and Precision Engineering (IOF) in Jena, is used on board the ESA JUICE mission, which was launched in 2023. It is aiming to precisely measure the surface of Jupiter's moon Ganymede and could provide clues to the presence of water. In addition, the company Jena-Optronik is supplying the ASTRO APS star sensor for the Heinrich Hertz mission that started in 2023, launching Germany's first communications satellite into space in 30 years. The star sensor's equipment includes a telecommunications component from the Technical University of Ilmenau.

Equipped with sensors from the Leibniz Institute for Photonic Technology in Jena: High-tech from Thuringia landed on the red planet for the second time, with the Mars probe InSight (the picture shows a simulation).

Ground-breaking Discoveries

Masters of light

Carl Zeiss and Ernst Abbe

When craftsman Carl Zeiss opened his first workshop in 1846 with a modest starting capital of 100 thalers, he paved the way for the founding of one of the leading technology companies in the optical and optoelectronics industry. Zeiss was driven by the ambition to build microscopes that were better and cheaper than those of the competition.

But this native of Weimar soon realised that the methods of manufacturing such instruments had to be improved, and so he sought the help of Ernst Abbe. This fruitful collaboration with the mathematician and physicist eventually gave Zeiss the breakthrough he was looking for. By 1872, Carl Zeiss AG was producing microscopes calibrated on the basis of precise scientific calculations, ones that stood head and shoulders above the competition thanks to the optical properties of the Jena microscopes. This allowed the company to establish a reputation for quality that endures to this day. Starting in the late 1880s, Abbe and his engineers expanded the range of products on offer, e.g. with optical measuring devices and binoculars. In 1890, the Jena-based company introduced the first distortion-free imaging lens. It is thanks to Zeiss and Abbe that Jena, also known as the 'City of Light' or 'Optical Valley', has been one of the world's most important centres of optics and photonics since the mid-19th century. The headquarters of Carl Zeiss AG is currently located in Oberkochen in the state of Baden-Württemberg, but all four ZEISS divisions are

95

represented at the Jena site – Industrial Quality & Research, Medical Technology, Consumer Markets and Semiconductor Manufacturing Technology. Jena produces powerful systems that shape technological progress, such as the ZEISS Elyra 7 microscope system. With this, scientists can map dynamic processes in living cells, in three dimensions and high resolution, over long periods of time.

The new ZEISS high-tech campus in Jena will accommodate all development units and the bulk of the local production and administration departments in the future, at the very place where the company was founded and which is now the second largest Carl Zeiss AG location worldwide – shining a light on the high-tech and science city of Jena.

Spectacular insights:
copepod under a fluorescent
microscope from Carl Zeiss AG





Ground-breaking Discoveries

Perfect brew

Hermann Eicke invented the coffee machine

Patent number 3044 signified the breakthrough for Hermann Eicke. The inventor, originally from the village of Weissenborn-Lüderode in north-western Thuringia, described the way his ‘tilting steam-pressure coffee machine’ functioned in the document submitted to the Imperial Patent Office in Berlin in 1878. The main attraction of this device is that once the coffee is ready, the lid of the burner automatically snaps closed and extinguishes the flame, to avoid overheating. This precursor of modern coffee machines became a successful model and sold so well that Eicke earned a small fortune. And although espresso machines and capsule machines have dominated households in recent decades, the good old filter machine is making a comeback among coffee gourmets. There’s nothing like a good cup of freshly brewed coffee.



96

Coffee at the press of a button – thanks to a Thuringian it’s an everyday item



Weissenborn-Lüderode 96 |

Jena 97 |

Researchers from Jena were involved
in decoding the human genome.

Fit and healthy

Gerontology and genome research in Thuringia

Eternal youth is a dream of humanity – but science is only gradually discovering what actually happens during the ageing process and what could slow it down. The Leibniz Institute on Aging – Fritz Lipmann Institute (FLI) in Thuringia researches these biological processes and the causes of ageing in order to develop approaches for healthy ageing. From nematodes to mice and humans, scientists from different countries are investigating which factors influence the ageing process in different organisms. The work being carried out in Jena aims to create the basis for new therapeutic approaches that will contribute to healthy ageing and more effective treatment of age-related diseases in the long term.

In addition to gerontology, the FLI is doing important work in genome research. Researchers have contributed to the decoding of important parts of the human genome, in particular the analysis of the human Chromosome 21, which has advanced research into trisomy 21 – better known as ‘Down Syndrome’. FLI scientists have also made important contributions to the study of the X chromosome, which is often associated with hereditary diseases and age-related changes. The human genome consists of three billion building blocks, the exact sequence of which has been known since it was decoded in 2003. The international Human Genome Project, in which 20 research institutes worldwide participated, was considered one of the most ambitious projects in life sciences at the time.



A material with a future

How hemp is revolutionising the textile industry

Straw bales are piled up to the ceiling, the sound of clattering, hissing and whirring can be heard in an old GDR production hall belonging to Pahren Agrar GmbH near Zeulenroda-Triebes. A pulping plant consisting of machines that are more than 30 years old provides the basis for a product that could fundamentally change the textile industry: hemp straw. There are only four plants in the whole of Germany that can process hemp straw.

Roughly 60 kilometres to the west, the Thuringian Institute of Textile and Plastics Research (TITK) in Rudolstadt is developing pioneering technologies for the use of hemp in textile production. The first trials were conducted in 2016 followed since by the development of the hemp-based textile fibre 'Lyohemp', a fully recyclable textile fibre. Lyohemp can be used in the clothing industry as a sustainable alternative to cotton.

Hemp cultivation requires little water and no pesticides – a huge ecological advantage. In addition, global textile fibre production has almost doubled in the last 20 years and this growth cannot be met with cotton. This makes Lyohemp a promising, environmentally friendly alternative to cotton, which could be crucial for the textile industry of tomorrow.

Spun-dyed lyocell fibres

Thuringian research into Alzheimer's disease

New approaches in the fight against dementia

Alzheimer's is one of the greatest challenges of our time, but new approaches in research and therapy are emerging in Thuringia to help fight the disease.

When she was just 17 years old, Vivien Zeihs from Wutha-Farnroda developed 'The Dementia Web App'. Her idea for helping dementia patients to activate memories and reconstruct experiences through personalised images and music was motivated by personal concern after her grandmother had developed dementia. At the time she was only twelve years old. Her multiple award-winning app now enables sufferers to stimulate their cognitive abilities through regular exercises. The aim is not only to improve the quality of life of those affected, but also to support family caregivers and nursing staff.

Significant progress is also being made in Thuringia at a scientific level. Prof. Dr. Janine Kirstein is researching the causes of Alzheimer's at the Leibniz Institute on Aging in Jena. She is investigating how misfolded proteins lead to the destruction of nerve cells. One area of focus is molecular chaperones – proteins that help other proteins fold correctly. She hopes to develop new therapeutic approaches through studies with the model organism *Caenorhabditis elegans*.

In addition to digital tools and basic research, innovative technology also plays a role. Healyan GmbH from Barchfeld-Immelborn has developed LED glasses that use stroboscopic light pulses to activate certain defence cells in the brain. This technology, which is already used in psychotherapy to treat depression, could also be useful

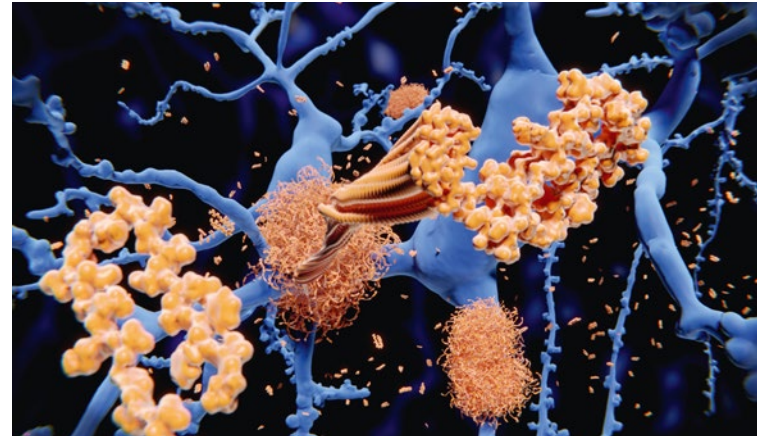


Illustration of a brain affected by Alzheimer's disease

for Alzheimer's. Initial studies in the USA are to examine whether this light therapy can support cognitive functions and slow down the progression of the disease.

99

Ground-breaking Discoveries

100





Exploring the interior of the sun

The Thuringian State Observatory

It was only two years after the Second World War had ended that Hans Kienle, Director of the Astrophysical Observatory Potsdam, dared to reach for the stars and approached the company Carl Zeiss in Jena in 1947. A large optical telescope in Germany – the idea had been around since the late 1930s, and now it was to become a reality. Zeiss is also to thank for the founding of the present-day Thuringian State Observatory in the Tautenburg Forest, north of Jena, just 13 years later in 1960. Alfred Jensch, the chief designer at the time, developed a new type of universal telescope, which was one of the five largest in the world. Today, the Thuringian State Observatory is one of the most important astronomical research institutions in Germany. Its optical telescope is the largest Schmidt camera in the world, with a focal length of four metres and a correction lens of 134 centimetres in diameter. The telescope is used to study galaxies, the formation of stars and planets outside our solar system.

The State Observatory also operates a station of the international radio telescope Low Frequency Array (LOFAR). Its antennas can be used to study radio waves from distant celestial objects such as galaxies with massive black holes. The data from all the European LOFAR stations is interconnected to receive signals from the most remote corners of the universe. Germany's contributions to LOFAR are coordinated by the Thuringian State Observatory. The light from the sun is analysed in the Tautenburg Solar Laboratory. A prototype is being developed here for solar observatories that collect data to improve understanding of the processes inside the sun.

A LOFAR radio telescope antenna in front of the open dome of the 2-metre telescope at the Thuringian State Observatory

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13 | *The toothbrush comes from Bad Tennstedt*

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Living Traditions

14 | *Christmas tree ornaments from Lauscha*

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15 | *A classic Christmas carol and its story*

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17 | *The aristocratic yearbook 'Almanach de Gotha'*

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18 | *The Thuringian bratwurst*

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19 | *Whisky from the Free State*

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21 | *Gnomes from Gräfenroda*

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22 | *Cars 'made in Eisenach'*

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23 | *The long carnival tradition in Thuringia*

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24 | *The eventful history of Erfurt University*

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26 | *Sugar cones for little sweethearts*

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27 | *Bad Langensalza, 'City of Roses'*

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28 | *Toys from Thuringia*

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29 | *Erfurt, the city of flowers*

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30 | *The sweet success story of Viba*

Nougat bars | Michael Bernhardt

31 | *Thuringian half-timbered houses: Tradition in wood and design*

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32 | *Prophet's cake*

Kaffeehaus Gräfe

33 | *Handcrafted excellence for Harry's razor blades*

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34 | *The renaissance of wine-growing in Thuringia*

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Worthwhile Destinations

35 | *Tübke's panorama of the Peasants' War*

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36 | *The Satiricum in Greiz*

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37 | *The Zeiss Planetarium, Jena*

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38 | *Thüringen in the spirit of the Reformation*

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39 | *Barbarossa on Kyffhäuser ridge*

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40 | *Niederdorla and the Via Regia*

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41 | *The Ekhof Theatre*

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42 | *The Buchenwald memorial*

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43 | *The Erfurt Krämerbrücke*

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44 | *The Jewish legacy of Erfurt*

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45 | *'Rococo in miniature' in Rudolstadt*

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46 | *The Fairy Grottoes in Saalfeld*

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47 | *Erfurt's Cathedral Hill*

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48 | *The Lindenau Museum in Altenburg*

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49 | *Hainich National Park: a UNESCO World Heritage Site*

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50 | *Impressive castles and palaces*

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52 | *Bad Frankenhausen's leaning landmark*

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Passionate about Life

53 | *Germany's oldest long-distance trail*

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54 | *Erfurt – the capital of children's media*

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55 | *Playing cards from Altenburg*

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56 | *Thomas Müntzer and the Peasants' War*

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57 | *Thuringia is cycling country*

Suhl Vehicle Museum

58 | *Arnoldi establishes the insurance industry*

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59 | *Festivals in Thuringia*

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60 | *Winter sports and winter fun in Oberhof*

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61 | *Queen Victoria and her love of Gotha*

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62 | *Wiegleb's academy for pharmacists*

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63 | *Friedrich Fröbel's kindergarten*

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64 | *Bertuch's Journal of Luxury and Fashion*

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65 | *Saint Radegund followed her own path*

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66 | *A Hungarian princess as patron saint*

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67 | *Meister Eckhart, the mystic*

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68 | *The Brothers Grimm are the first to mention chocolate*

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Cultural Highlights

69 | *Goethe and Schiller*

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70 | *Bechstein and Wilh. Steinberg*

picture alliance | Andreas Franke

71 | *Bach and Liszt*

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72 | *Georg II and the Meininger Staatstheater*

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73 | *Thuringia is a real film star*

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74 | *Bechstein's fairy tales*

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76 | *Theodor Storm's Thuringian years*

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78 | *Duchess Anna Amalia Library / The rebirth of a treasure trove of knowledge*

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81 | *Novalis and the early Jena Romantics*

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82 | *Zughafen Erfurt*

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83 | *Adam Ries and Gottlob Frege*

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85 | *Johann Pachelbel’s popular processional*

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95 | *Carl Zeiss and Ernst Abbe*

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96 | *Hermann Eicke invented the coffee machine*

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97 | *Gerontology and genome research in Thuringia*

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98 | *How hemp is revolutionising the textile industry*

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99 | *New approaches in the fight against dementia*

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100 | *The Thuringian bratwurst*

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Ground-breaking Discoveries

86 | *Döbereiner and his catalytic lighter*

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87 | *Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland*

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88 | *Otto Schott in Jena*

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89 | *Researchers tinker with the green battery*

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91 | *Ritter discovers UV light*

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92 | *Thermometers in mass-production*

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93 | *Friedrich Mosengeil’s stenography*

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94 | *Space exploration with Thuringian technology*

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The locations of the 100 stories



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Published by:

Thuringian Ministry for Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Rural Areas
Location Marketing and PR
Max-Reger-Strasse 4–8
99096 Erfurt, Germany

www.thats-thuringia.com

Editor: Thuringia Location Marketing
Design: familie redlich AG – Agentur für Marken und Kommunikation
8th Edition, 2025