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Middle Rhine Castles and Palaces

MittelrheinBahn
Schöner fahren

Contents



Dear MittelrheinBahn passengers,

MittelrheinBahn (RB26) transports you along one of Germany's most beautiful stretches of railway. It is a single line linking the cities of Cologne, Bonn, Koblenz and Mainz, with a plethora of worthwhile places of interest along its entire length. These include majestic palaces and mighty fortresses, as well as imposing castles and picturesque castle ruins. The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Upper Middle Rhine Valley alone has a good 40 of these – more than any other region in the world. It's no wonder then that the Rhine Romanticism of the 19th century was inspired by these age-old structures.

Climb aboard the MittelrheinBahn and take a voyage of discovery through the fortresses, castles and romantic locations of the region. To give you some ideas for your next excursion, we've provided information on some of the most impressive examples in the following pages. Let yourself be carried away by the magic of these ancient buildings. Take in stunning views of the magnificent scenery. And the many rustic inns of the traditional Middle Rhine wine-growing area are the perfect place to take a break and savour a glass of wine and some regional specialities. Use the QR codes to help you find your way to the featured castles and palaces.

We hope you have fun hiking and exploring!





Step by step, our fleet is being modernised and equipped with **Wi-Fi and power sockets**, among other amenities.

MittelrheinBahn – ideal for all your destinations

Whether you're visiting one of the many **places of interest** or want to take a tour of discovery through the beautiful Rhine valley, you will travel stress-free and in comfort with the MittelrheinBahn (RB 26).

We run an hourly service for the entire Cologne to Mainz route every day – until 2 am in some cases, and stopping at every station on the left bank of the Rhine. For destinations between Mainz and Bingen, services run every half hour from 5 am to 8 pm, Monday to Friday. And the RB 26 even runs round the clock at the weekend between Cologne and Bonn.

What's more, at many stations you can change onto other lines or other local public transport networks without a long wait.

Our bright and spacious trains have space for around 200 passengers and 12 bikes. MittelrheinBahn's modern electric carriages also have other features to make your journey more enjoyable:



large **panoramic windows**



quiet ride



full **air conditioning**



state-of-the-art **passenger information system**



access aids for passengers with limited mobility



accessible, **barrier-free toilets**



© Schloss Augustusburg Brühl, Gartenseite, Florian Monheim



© Horst Gummersbach

Castles

Augustusburg and Falkenlust



Brühl

How to get there: Augustusburg Castle is directly across from the station. From there, it's a short 2.5 km stroll along Falkenluster Allee to Falkenlust hunting lodge.

Two magnificent witnesses to an eventful past await you in Brühl – Augustusburg and Falkenlust castles. The two castles and their gardens and parklands have held **UNESCO World Heritage** status since 1984. Augustusburg Castle was built by Elector and Archbishop of Cologne Clemens August (1700–1761). He commissioned artists such as François de Cuvillies the Elder and Balthasar Neumann, who between them created a great work of art encompassing architecture, sculpture, painting and landscaping between 1725 and 1768. From 1725, Dominique Girard was responsible for the design of the famous baroque gardens in the French style. Peter Joseph Lenné added an English landscape garden in 1840. Just a short stroll away is the delightful Falkenlust hunting lodge, one of the most exquisite examples of German Rococo in existence. It was built by François de Cuvillies the Elder between 1729 and 1737, also for Elector Clemens August. [schlossbruehl.de](https://www.schlossbruehl.de)

Your route to the castle





© Dr. Thomas Mauerberg, Universität Bonn

Your route to the castle



Poppelsdorf Palace and the Electoral Palace



Bonn Central Station (Hbf)

How to get there: Walk from the station towards the city centre and Bonn Minster, and then on towards the University or Hofgarten Park.

The Electoral Palace has been used by the University since 1818. The castle as it stands today dates back to the turreted four-wing building constructed by Munich court architect Enrico Zuccalli in 1697–1705. Robert de Cotte laid out the court garden to the south in 1715–1723. In 1777, the castle was completely destroyed by fire and was reconstructed in a simplified form. In the 1920s, it was restored, only to be destroyed again in 1944. It acquired its present appearance after its reconstruction post-1951, in which students also took part. An avenue of chestnut trees leads from the Electoral Palace to Poppelsdorf Palace.



© Dr. Thomas Mauerberg, Universität Bonn

Your route to the castle



Among other things, the palace houses a mineralogical collection and the botanical garden in the palace grounds is one of the oldest and most diverse in the world. Poppelsdorf Palace, which was built in the 18th century to plans by Robert de Cotte, was extended by Balthasar Neumann. It was rebuilt in the 1950s after being destroyed in the **Second World War**. **botgart.uni-bonn.de**

Climb the steep hill on foot and take the **historical rack railway** back down – or vice versa.

Your route to the castle



Drachenburg Castle and Drachenfels Castle ruins



Bonn-Mehlem

How to get there: Ferry terminals are at the end of Austrasse. After crossing the river, go along Drachenfelsstrasse and then take the steep footpath or the rack railway up to Drachenburg Castle and Drachenfels Castle ruins.

You will come across Drachenburg Castle half way up to Drachenfels. The imposing residence in the Historicist style was built for banker (and later Baron) Stephan von Sarter, a native of Bonn, between 1882 and 1884. Von Sarter had no children, so the castle was used for a variety of purposes in the decades that followed. Among other things, it was a hotel, a convalescent home for women and a boarding school, before it slowly fell into disrepair. In 1971, the complex was acquired by a wealthy private owner who saved the castle from falling into ruin. After renovating it, he transformed it into a public museum focusing on the life and culture of

the time. Today, the castle and its grounds are listed monuments. Take a walk around the restored rooms and admire the historical furniture from the time the castle was built.

Among the striking landmarks of the Siebengebirge is the 312 m Drachenfels hill. At the top of the hill, you will find the picturesque ruins of the castle of the same name – along with magnificent views. Archbishop Arnold I of Cologne had the castle built in 1138 for the purpose of fortification. However, it quickly lost its original function when the Bonn city walls were built in the mid-13th century. The castle was largely destroyed in the Thirty Years' War, and any remaining parts collapsed in 1788, due to subterranean mining of valuable trachyte, which was used in the construction of churches. All that remains today of the castle's grandeur is a few ruins, including of the former great hall and the castle keep.

der-drachenfels.de and **schloss-drachenburg.de**





Your route to the
fortress



Fortress Ehrenbreitstein



Koblenz Stadtmittel

How to get there: Walk along Schloßstrasse to Neustadt and along Stresemannstrasse to Konrad-Adenauer Ufer. Walk along the Rhine as far as the ferry landing or the spectacular cable car.

From Ehrenbreitstein Fort, you get a unique and beautiful view of Koblenz and the confluence of the Rhine and Mosel rivers at the Deutsches Eck. The complex on the opposite river bank, sitting regally 118m above the Rhine, emerged in its present form between 1817 and 1828. Majestic with its metre-thick walls – and moats, tunnels, bridges and gates – it is one of the largest fortresses in Europe. Today, the Ehrenbreitstein Fortress Cultural Centre, together with the Koblenz State Museum, invites visitors to explore exhibitions on archaeology, photography or wine and cultural history, as well as special exhibitions. Families can enjoy the the large adventure playground and the AdventureGolf course on the fortress plateau. With around 600 events

and guided tours, this cultural centre is a popular place to visit in northern Rhineland-Palatinate and offers beautiful views over the Rhine and Moselle rivers. You can easily reach Ehrenbreitstein Fortress from the city centre by taking the Koblenz cable car. tor-zum-welterbe.de



Travel in **comfort
and spectacular
style** with the
Koblenz cable car



Marksburg Castle



Rhens

How to get there: After crossing the river on one of the KD ships, follow the signposted Rheinsteig path.

Marksburg Castle, located above Braubach, holds many fascinations. Its elevated position means it is visible from far off – and is also the only hill castle in Middle Rhine never to have been destroyed. The first mention of the castle is in 1231, when it was in the ownership of the Lords of Eppstein, one of the region's most powerful families. From 1283, it belonged to the Counts of Katzenelnbogen, who, extended the original Roman style triangular-shaped castle to create a mountain stronghold in the 15th century, giving it the imposing appearance it has today. But this did not prevent the mighty edifice from falling into disrepair over the following centuries.

In 1900, the castle was acquired by the German Castles Association, who renovated it. Castle expert and architect Bodo Ehardt reconstructed the rooms, including the knights' hall, castle kitchen, ladies' chambers and chapel. Today, the Castles Association uses the buildings as its headquarters and displays a remarkable exhibition of figures of warriors from the Bronze Age to the 17th century in the castle's Rheinbau (Rhine Wing). A walk through the medieval botanical garden is an experience that should not be reserved for nature lovers. marksburg.de



Your route to the castle



Stolzenfels Castle

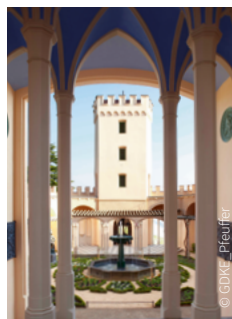


Koblenz Central Station (Hbf)

How to get there: From Koblenz Central Station (Hbf), take the 670 bus towards Boppard as far as the stop Stolzenfels-Schlossweg and from there follow the signposted footpath.

Alternatively, you can arrive by boat from Koblenz.

Stolzenfels Castle, one of the most important examples of Rhine Romanticism, is situated high above the Rhine, south of Koblenz. Its fairy-tale appearance will make you want to pay a visit, but it also has an interesting history. A castle originally built on the same spot in the 13th century was destroyed in 1689 during the Nine Years' War. In 1823, the people of Koblenz gifted the ruins to the Prussian Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm, who, after his succession, had a neo-Gothic castle based on the English Tudor style built here in 1847 by Karl Friedrich Schinkel. Peter Joseph Lenné's wonderful country park was the perfect complement. The crenellated buildings and their gardens and grounds were restored to their former glory in 2011. Be equally amazed by the enchanting castle with its proud keep, the height at which it sits, and the amazing views from the Rheinterasse terrace. tor-zum-welterbe.de



Your route to the castle



Your route to the castles



Sterrenberg and Liebenstein castles



Boppard-Bad Salzig

How to get there: Cross by ferry to Kamp-Bornhofen and hike along the Rheinsteig trail from there.

Take a trip to the Middle Ages with a visit to Sterrenberg and Liebenstein castles, which are also known as “the hostile brothers”. One of the most popular legends of Middle Rhine is interwoven with these castles. It tells of how two sons of the Burgrave of Sterrenberg and Liebenstein quarrelled so badly that it ended in fratricide. Sterrenberg Castle dates back to the 11th century and was extended as time went on. It is recorded as being dilapidated as early as 1456 and then as uninhabited in 1568. After appropriate safety measures were taken, the derelict site was partly rebuilt, starting in 1970. Liebenstein Castle was probably built in the 13th century as an outer bailey of Sterrenberg Castle. After initial expansion between 1284 and 1290, the gate tower, defence tower and main residence tower were finally added in the 14th century. By 1529, Liebenstein Castle had also



fallen into disrepair and was no longer inhabited. After extensive restoration work in 1977 and 1978, the main residence tower and annexe were opened as a hotel and restaurant with viewing terrace, where they will be happy to welcome you.

burg-sterrenberg.com and **castle-liebenstein.com**

You can find ship connections at **k-d.com**, for example





Your route to the castle



Rheinfels Castle



St. Goar

How to get there: Follow the signposted footpath from the market square in St. Goar, or travel with the Rheinfels Shuttle (May to October).

Learn about Rheinfels Castle, one of the largest fortifications of its time. Immerse yourself in the times of the Counts of Katzenelnbogen, who were responsible for the castle's construction in 1245. Discover how, over the course of time, the castle's appearance changed under the Counts of Hesse into a Renaissance palace and later into a fortress. Discover the historical background to the demise of Rheinfels Castle when it was blown up by French occupiers in 1796 and 1797. Even today, the ruins of Rheinfels Fortress still amaze visitors with their immense size and many unique structural features.

The newly renovated castle museum is a wonderful addition to an exploration of the fortress complex. There, you will find special exhibits and historic tales from almost 800 years of castle and town history. Afterwards, you have the option of exploring your surroundings on various hiking trails or taking a short walk along the banks of the Rhine and enjoying the rest of your day in the town over a cup of coffee. stadt-st-goar.de



Picturesque Rhine panorama – pure romance



Your route to the castle



Schönburg Castle



Oberwesel

How to get there: From Oberwesel railway station, walk along Liebfrauenstrasse towards the town centre, then after a few metres turn left into Kirchstrasse. After about 100 m, a narrow access path to the “Elfenley” rock path begins, which leads to Schönburg Castle.

Probably dating back to the early 10th century, Schönburg Castle has had an extremely eventful history. It suffered in particular from frequent armed conflicts until the 17th century. The House of Schönburg, which resided there from the 12th century, had the right to levy customs on the Rhine, among other privileges. They also ruled over Oberwesel at times as imperial bailiffs. During the Nine Years' War, French troops burned Oberwesel and the castle to the ground in 1689.

Fantastic at any time of year



Savour the **high-quality cuisine and regional wines** in the restaurant!

It survived the following two centuries as a ruin – praised by Victor Hugo as one of the most magnificent works of rubble in Europe.

After the Schönburgs died out and the castle changed hands several times, the German-American Major Oakley Rhinelandier acquired the crumbling ruins. By 1914, he had invested over two million gold marks in restoring the castle to its former glory. In 1950, the town of Oberwesel acquired the castle from his son – and leased it to the Hüttl family in 1957. Today, the third generation of the family runs this inviting, historic castle hotel. hotel-schoenburg.com



View from the castle into the Rhine valley



Your route to the castle



Stahleck Castle



Bacharach

How to get there: From Bacharach Railway Station, walk to the old town, then turn left into Blücherstrasse heading towards the Steeg district. After about 100 m, turn left through the Malerwinkel (“Painters’ Corner”). The path is signposted.

From a small hill in Bacharach, Stahleck Castle greets you from afar. It was once surrounded by a moat filled with water. Built in the 11th century, the castle was initially the seat of the bailiffs of the Archbishops of Cologne. From around 1100, the Counts Palatine of the House of Wittelsbach resided in it for over 500 years. Several attacks during the Thirty Years’ War caused severe damage to the castle on a number of occasions. In the late 17th century, it was almost completely destroyed by the French. In the early 20th century, the Rhenish Association for the Preservation of Monuments and the Protection of Local History took over the ruins and rebuilt the castle in 1925, true to its historical form.

The ensemble, which has since been used as a youth hostel, was renovated and further expanded in the 1960s. The 25-minute climb to the castle from Bacharach is a rewarding hike – with great views over vineyards and the Rhine valley. The castle courtyard, with its free-standing keep, is open to visitors at all times. The castle itself can be visited only by prior arrangement.

jugendherberge.de



Bacharach – the secret capital of Rhine Romanticism

bacharach.de



Your route to the castle



Reichenstein and Rheinstein Castles



Trechtingshausen

How to get there: Hike along the signposted RheinBurgenWeg. The castles are located on Stage 1 (South–North). For further information, visit rheinburgenweg.com

According to late medieval sources, Rheinstein Castle was originally known as Vaitzburg or Fautsburg Castle. The latest historical buildings research indicates that its construction began in 1316/17, probably under Archbishop of Mainz Peter von Aspelt (1306–1320). The castle was probably constructed to enforce the prohibition on rebuilding the Reichenstein ruins. The castle was further extended around 1330 and again in the late 15th century, before gradually falling into disrepair at the end of the 16th century. In 1816, the famous Prussian architect, Karl Friedrich Schinkel, developed an interest in the dilapidated castle. He drew up plans for its reconstruction in the Romantic style and encouraged Prince Friedrich of Prussia to buy the castle in 1823. By 1829, Prince Friedrich had had the castle reconstructed in line with Schinkel's plans – the first of the derelict or destroyed



Rhine castles to be restored. Only after its redesign in 1829 did it become known by its current name, Rheinstein Castle. The castle laid the foundations for the Romantic reconstruction of all the Rhine castles in the 19th century. Today, the Kleiner Weinprinz restaurant welcomes visitors to the castle. burg-rheinstein.de

Reichenstein Castle was built in the early 11th century and destroyed for the first time in 1282. After reconstruction in the mid 14th century, it was definitively destroyed in 1689 during the Nine Years' War. Its current form dates back to 1900, when new owner Baron Nikolaus von Kirsch-Puricelli had a neo-Gothic English-style residence built. Today the castle museum's collection of weapons and armour, and a [hotel and restaurant](http://burg-reichenstein.com) are open to visitors here. burg-reichenstein.com



On the trail of castles and palaces

The prime Rheinsteig hiking trail and the equally beautiful RheinBurgenWeg can lead you to a multitude of castles and palaces. A hike along these popular routes gives you the chance to explore these imposing structures. The 320 km **Rheinsteig** trail runs between Bonn, Koblenz and Wiesbaden, mainly on narrow paths with steep climbs and descents through side valleys. The 200 km **RheinBurgenWeg** runs from Rolandsbogen near Remagen to the Mäuseturm (Mouse Tower) at Bingen. It winds through the heights and wooded valleys – with some challenging stretches. Both hiking trails offer you impressive sites, spectacular views and lots of inviting places to stop off along the way. And with MittelrheinBahn, you can take your hiking trip in easy stages: just get off the train at the start of your trail and catch the train back from your destination!



Information about the KD range at k-d.com

KD City, countryside, river – great excursions

Treat yourself to a very special excursion as you explore the castles: combine a MittelrheinBahn journey with a river trip on one of the luxurious KD Deutsche Rheinschiffahrt GmbH excursion ships. KD ships run between Cologne and Mainz – just as the MittelrheinBahn does – and there are more than 160 landing stages where you can embark and disembark.

RB 26 Route network



Current timetable and information on construction works at [mittelrheinbahn.de](https://www.mittelrheinbahn.de) (in German)

The DeutschlandTicket is valid on the entire MittelrheinBahn route.

Between Cologne and Bonn-Mehlem: Verkehrsverbund Rhein-Sieg (VRS) transport network

The VRS tariff applies to connecting services as far as Brohl. When using season tickets or tickets for discounted fares (JobTickets, Großkunden-Tickets, SemesterTickets or SchülerTickets), special VRS tariff regulations apply.

Between Rolandseck and Oberwesel: Verkehrsverbund Rhein-Mosel (VRM) transport network

Between Bacharach and Mainz: Rhein-Nahe Nahverkehrsverbund (RNN) transport network

Top tips for tickets

Whether you're travelling with MittelrheinBahn as an individual or as a group – there's a corresponding ticket for every journey.

You can get tickets for **regional transport** by Regional-Express, RegionalBahn, S-Bahn, city and regional buses, as well as Deutsche Bahn local services – even across different networks – quickly and conveniently from various ticket machines along the entire route between Cologne and Mainz. When you buy tickets, you benefit from low-price transport association tariffs.

Recommendation: Buy your ticket online, e.g. via the DB Navigator. Once you have registered, you can use all the network tickets and long-distance tickets offered in the DB Navigator as a mobile phone ticket or at [bahn.de](https://www.bahn.de) as an online print ticket.

For all those who regularly travel on local public transport, we recommend the DeutschlandTicket, available at [deutschlandticket.de](https://www.deutschlandticket.de)

Information at: [mittelrheinbahn.de/tickets](https://www.mittelrheinbahn.de/tickets)

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