

Take the
RB26 and RB 32
to the region's most
beautiful **castles
and palaces**

© TransRegio, Smilla Dankert

Castles and Palaces by the Ahr and Middle Rhine

MittelrheinBahn
Schöner fahren

Contents



Dear passengers,

The MittelrheinBahn (RB26) and the Ahr-Mittelrhein-Bahn (RB32) transport you along tow of Germany's most scenic stretches of railway. RB26 links the major cities of Cologne, Bonn, Koblenz and Mainz, whilst RB32 runs between Remagen and Ahrbrück. There are plenty of interesting sights to visit along the way, including majestic palaces and mighty fortresses, imposing castles and picturesque ruins. The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Upper Middle Rhine Valley alone has a good 40 of these castles – no other region in the world has as many. It's no wonder then that the Rhine Romanticism of the 19th century was inspired by these age-old structures.

Climb aboard and take a voyage of discovery along the Rhine and the Ahr to 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 age-old buildings. Take in stunning views of the magnificent scenery. Plus, the many rustic inns of the traditional wine-growing regions of Middle Rhine and Ahr are the perfect place to take a break and enjoy 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!



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RB 26 and RB 32 – ideal for all your destinations along the Ahr and the Middle Rhine

Whether you're visiting one of the many **places of interest** or want to take **tour of discovery** through the beautiful Rhine Valley, you will travel stress-free and in comfort with the Mittelrhein-Bahn (RB26). And since December 2025, you've also been able to take a detour into the beautiful Ahr Valley on our new RB32 line from Remagen.

The RB26 service between Cologne and Mainz runs hourly every day – sometimes until 2 am between Cologne and Koblenz, 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. Between Cologne and Bonn, the RB26 even runs daily around the clock. In the Ahr Valley, the RB32 runs every hour, every day – until around midnight. 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:



quiet journeys



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accessible, **barrier-free toilets**



© Schloss Augustusburg Brühl-Gartenseite, Florian Monheim



© Horst Gummersbach

Palace and Lodge

Augustusburg and Falkenlust



Brühl

How to get there (RB26): Augustusburg Palace 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 Palace and Falkenlust Lodge. The two buildings and their gardens and parklands have held **UNESCO World Heritage** status since 1984. Augustusburg Palace 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 Mauersberg, University of Bonn

Your route to the palace



Poppelsdorf Palace and the Electoral Palace



Bonn Central Station (Hbf)

How to get there (RB26): 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 palace as it stands today dates back to the turreted four-wing building constructed by Munich court architect Enrico Zuccalli between 1697 and 1705. Robert de Cotte laid out the court garden to the south between 1715 and 1723. In 1777, the palace was completely destroyed by fire and rebuilt in a much simpler style. It was restored in the 1920s, only to be destroyed again in 1944. It acquired its present appearance during its reconstruction post-1951, a project in which students also took part. An avenue of chestnut trees leads from the Electoral Palace to Poppelsdorf Palace.



© Dr. Thomas Mauersberg, University of Bonn, Poppelsdorf

Your route to the palace



Among other things, the palace houses a mineralogical collection, and the botanical garden in the 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 castles



Drachenburg Castle and Drachenfels Castle ruins



Bonn-Mehlem

How to get there (RB26): ferry terminals are at the end of Ausstrasse. 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 halfway 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 rack and 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 erected in the mid-13th century. The castle was largely destroyed in the Thirty Years' War, and any remaining parts collapsed in 1788 due to the subterranean mining of valuable trachyte, which was used in church construction. 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 castle



Saffenburg Castle



Mayschoß

How to get there (RB 32): from Mayschoß railway station, follow the Ahr Valley Trail 'A1' up to Saffenburg Castle.

Rising above the village of Mayschoß, Saffenburg is one of the oldest ruined castles in the region. Its history dates all the way back to the High Middle Ages: the name refers to the Counts of Saffenburg, a prominent member of whose family, Adalbert, was first mentioned in a document in 1081. The castle later passed into the hands of various noble families as a fief of the Electorate of Cologne. As a hilltop castle, it was strategically positioned above the Ahr Valley. The complex was characterised by massive walls built from local trachyte, a rectangular layout, residential and service areas, and a central courtyard. Access was via the valley side through a gatehouse; additional walls provided protection. It was occupied on several occasions, usually without any fighting.

In 1632, it was stormed by Swedish troops and was temporarily occupied by the French during the War of the Spanish Succession. In 1704, Saffenburg was destroyed; its stones were later used to build vineyard walls.

Today, the Friends of Saffenburg Association is committed to the preservation, maintenance and sustainable use of the Saffenburg ruins. Cultural events and guided tours are regularly held here. Situated on a vast rocky plateau at an altitude of 253 metres, Saffenburg offers hikers sweeping panoramic views of the vineyards of Mayschoß, Rech and Dernau. **ahrta.de**



Mayschoß at the foot of Saffenburg Castle

Your route to the castle



Are Castle



Altenahr

How to get there (RB 32): from the station, turn right onto Altenburger Strasse and cross the Ahr bridge into the village, then take the steep path to the ruins at Roßberg 56.

High above Altenahr, the ruins of Are Castle stand on a steep rocky outcrop some 240 metres above the Ahr Valley. The hilltop castle was built between 1095 and 1105 by Count Theoderich I of Are; it first appears in written records in 1121. Thanks to its strategic location, it developed into a centre of power for the Counts of Are. The castle later passed to the Archbishopric of Cologne and was used as the official residence of the Electorate of Cologne.

Even today, the remains of the once square-shaped complex give an idea of the castle's former importance: among its surviving features are parts of the outer bailey, the defensive wall, the gate tower, the palas (where the great hall was located), the "Gymnicher

Porz" gate complex and the Romanesque castle chapel. After an eventful history, several instances of damage and its demolition in 1714, the ruins were stabilised in the 1990s and made more accessible to visitors.

Today, Are Castle is a popular destination for anyone looking to combine history, nature and wonderful scenery. The climb is rewarded with a stunning view of Altenahr, the River Ahr, the surrounding vineyards and the Ahr Valley. Anyone wishing to find

out more about the Middle Ages and the history of the castle can also join a guided tour of the ruins.

ahrtal.de



Are Castle is situated right on the Red Wine Trail (Rotweinwanderweg).



Your route to the fortress



Ehrenbreitstein Fortress



Koblenz Stadtmitte

How to get there (RB 26 and RB 32*): follow Schloßstrasse to Neustadt and continue along Stresemannstrasse to Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer. Walk along the Rhine as far as the ferry landing or the spectacular cable car.

From Ehrenbreitstein Fortress, you get a unique and beautiful view of Koblenz and the confluence of the Rhine and Moselle rivers at the Deutsches Eck. The complex on the opposite bank, sitting regally 118 m above the Rhine, emerged in its present form between 1817 and 1828. Majestic with its metre-thick walls – not to mention moats, tunnels, bridges and gates – it's one of the largest fortresses in Europe. Today, the Ehrenbreitstein Fortress Cultural Centre and the Koblenz State Museum invite visitors to explore exhibitions on archaeology, photography, wine and cultural history, as well as special exhibitions.

**Due to planned renovation work on the Right Rhine Corridor, the RB 32 service will be suspended between Remagen and Boppard from 10 July to 12 December 2026.*

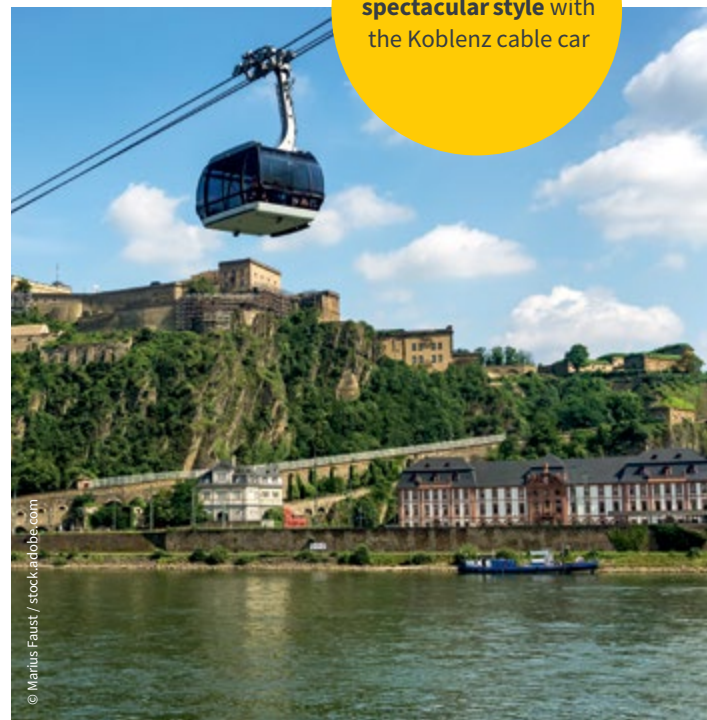
Families can enjoy the large adventure playground and the Adventure Golf course on the fortress plateau. With around 600 events and guided tours, this cultural centre is a popular place to visit in northern Rhineland-Palatinate and offers beautiful views over the Rhine and Moselle rivers. Ehrenbreitstein Fortress is easy to reach from the city centre by taking the Koblenz cable car.

tor-zum-welterbe.de



© majonit / stock.adobe.com

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



© Marius Faust / stock.adobe.com

Marksburg Castle



Rhens

How to get there (RB26 and RB32*): after crossing the river on one of the KD vessels, follow the signposted Rheinsteig path.

Marksburg Castle, located above Braubach, holds many fascinations. Its elevated position means it's visible from far off – and is also the only hill castle in Middle Rhine that has never been destroyed. The first mention of the castle occurs 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 warrior figures dating 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 alone.

marksburg.de



Your route to the castle



Stolzenfels Castle



Koblenz Central Station (Hbf)

How to get there (RB26 and RB32*): 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 take the 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 Rheinterrasse terrace.

tor-zum-welterbe.de

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Your route to the castle





Your route to the castles



Sterrenberg and Liebenstein Castles



Boppard-Bad Salzig

How to get there (RB26): 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 the castles of Sterrenberg and Liebenstein, which are also known as “the hostile brothers”. One of the most popular legends of Middle Rhine is famously associated 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

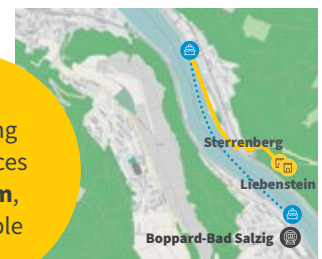


© Burg Liebenstein, Johannes Nickenig

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**

Find
connecting
boat services
at **k-d.com**,
for example





Your route to the castle



Rheinfels Castle



St. Goar

How to get there (RB26): follow the signposted footpath from the market square in St. Goar, or take the bus.

Learn about Rheinfels Castle, one of the largest fortifications of its day. 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 1796/1797. Even today, the ruins of Rheinfels Fortress still amaze visitors with their immense size and many unique structural features. The upgraded 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

the surrounding area 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 (RB26): 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. It survived the following two centuries as

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and **regional wines** in
the restaurant!

© @allegold

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 purchased 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



© Morian Loop / isrockphoto.com

Picturesquely situated, with imposing and well-preserved city walls featuring 16 defensive towers: the wine-growing village of Oberwesel



Your route to the castle



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

Stahleck Castle



Bacharach

How to get there (RB26): 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, it was the home of the Counts Palatine of the House of Wittelsbach 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.





Your route to the castle



Reichenstein and Rheinstein Castles



Trechtingshausen

How to get there (RB 26): hike along the signposted RheinBurgenWeg. The castles are located on Stage 1 S (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 likely constructed to enforce the ban 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 decaying 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 rebuilt in line with Schinkel's plans – the first of the derelict or destroyed Rhine castles to be restored.



Your route to the castle



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 is a pleasant stop for 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 is open](http://burg-reichenstein.com) to visitors, as are a hotel and restaurant. burg-reichenstein.com



On the trail of castles and palaces

The Rheinsteig, designated a Premium Hiking Trail, and the equally beautiful RheinBurgenWeg will 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 sights, 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!



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 vessels. KD riverboats run between Cologne and Mainz – just as the MittelrheinBahn does – and there are more than 160 landing stages where you can embark and disembark.

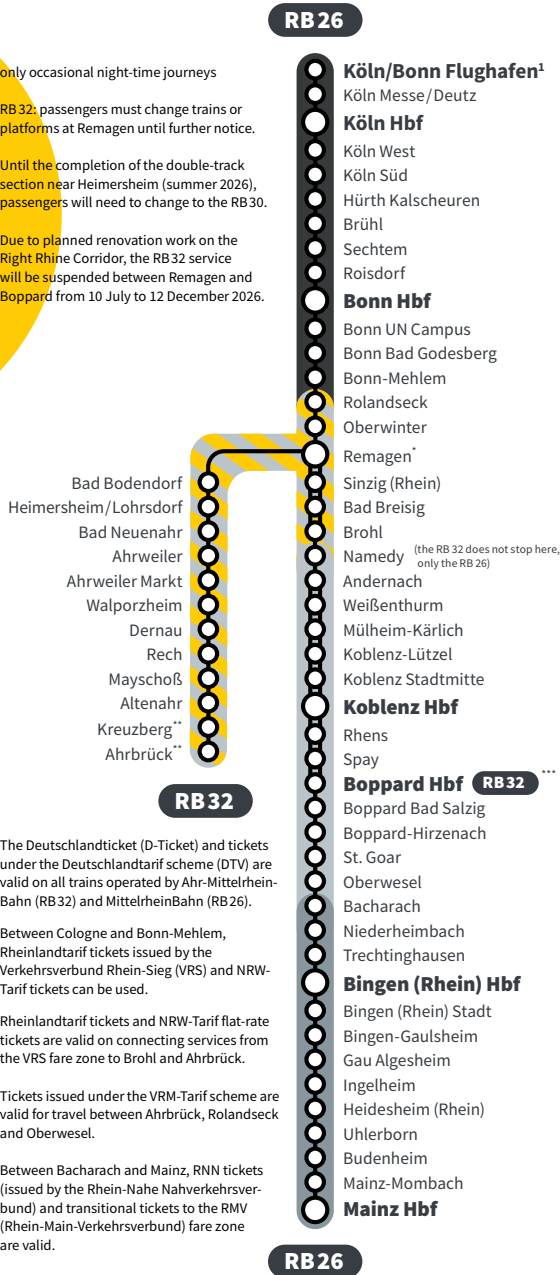
RB26 and RB32 route network

1 only occasional night-time journeys

* RB 32: passengers must change trains or platforms at Remagen until further notice.

** Until the completion of the double-track section near Heimersheim (summer 2026), passengers will need to change to the RB30.

*** Due to planned renovation work on the Right Rhine Corridor, the RB32 service will be suspended between Remagen and Boppard from 10 July to 12 December 2026.



The Deutschlandticket (D-Ticket) and tickets under the Deutschlandtarif scheme (DTV) are valid on all trains operated by Ahr-Mittelrhein-Bahn (RB32) and MittelrheinBahn (RB26).

Between Cologne and Bonn-Mehlem, Rheinlandtarif tickets issued by the Verkehrsverbund Rhein-Sieg (VRS) and NRW-Tarif tickets can be used.

Rheinlandtarif tickets and NRW-Tarif flat-rate tickets are valid on connecting services from the VRS fare zone to Brohl and Ahrbrück.

Tickets issued under the VRM-Tarif scheme are valid for travel between Ahrbrück, Rolandseck and Oberwesel.

Between Bacharach and Mainz, RNN tickets (issued by the Rhein-Nahe Nahverkehrsverbund) and transitional tickets to the RMV (Rhein-Main-Verkehrsverbund) fare zone are valid.

Top tips for tickets

Whether you're travelling on the RB26 or RB32 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 and customer service centres along our routes. When you buy tickets, you benefit from the low-price fare schemes offered by the transport associations.

Recommendation: buy your ticket online, for example, via the DB Navigator, the moveRLP app or the myGO app.

For all those who regularly travel on local public transport, we recommend the Deutschlandticket, available at deutschlandticket.de

Information at: mittelrheinbahn.de/tickets

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