



PRESS RELEASE

Thuringia, where words became world history

London, April 2017. History buff, keen on following in the footsteps of momentous events and discovering some off-the-beaten-track gems along the way? Then look no further than the German federal state of Thuringia, where various special events and exhibitions celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation this year and put the spotlight on the region's stunning castles, palaces and churches.

Special exhibition at Eisenach's Wartburg

Thuringia is home to one of the best-known Martin Luther sites: In 1521/22, the Protestant reformer spent eleven months in custody in the mighty Wartburg Castle, towering above Eisenach. Having nothing else to do, he translated the New Testament from Greek into German and this "little pastime" achieved nothing less than the creation of a unified German language. The special exhibition 'Luther and the Germans' (4 May to 5 Nov) pays tribute to this great achievement and presents more than 300 exhibits from five centuries of German cultural history in the stunning surroundings of UNESCO World Heritage site Wartburg Castle.

Discover Thuringia's hidden gems on the Reformation trail

A new permanent exhibition opening on 29 April in Schmalkalden's Wilhelmsburg Castle, a beautiful Renaissance structure, focuses on the so-called Schmalkaldic League, an alliance of Protestant Princes that was formed here in 1531. Visitors can walk through a large town model, taking them back into the early days of Protestantism. And discover the historic town of Schmalkalden with its charming old town full of lovingly restored half-timbered houses for real!

Roughly 50 miles further north, the small town of Mühlhausen is another hidden gem, hosting the 'Luther's unloved brothers' exhibition this year (until 31 Oct) in the Kornmarktkirche church. The displays shed light on the German Peasant's War which was fuelled by reformatory ideas. Thomas Müntzer, a Mühlhausen preacher, was one of the masterminds behind the revolt. Tip: Don't miss nearby Hainich National Park, featuring a stand-out treetop trail!

Erfurt's historic stage & Gotha's ducal collections

From 18 May to 12 November, Thuringia's capital Erfurt hosts a special exhibition that turns the whole city centre with its narrow alleys and century-old buildings into a real-life exhibition area: 'Barefoot into Heaven?' addresses Luther's relationship with the so-called Roman-Catholic mendicant orders of the city and is shown at the authentic sites of Erfurt's former Augustinian, Dominican and Franciscan monasteries.

Last but not least, head over to lovely Gotha, only 16 miles west of Erfurt: The former residence town of the dukes of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, a branch of the Ernestines, is home to valuable art and ancient documents of the Reformation. The Ernestines were supporters of the Reformation and the collections at Gotha's Friedenstein Castle and in

the Ducal Museum include paintings by Lucas Cranach the Elder, the 'painter of the Reformation', along with precious first prints of Reformation leaflets and Luther scripts.

Further information

Travellers on the Reformation trail can download the free 'Luther to go' app on the [Apple store](#) and [Google Play](#).

For more information on Thuringia, please see www.visit-thuringia.com and www.lutherland-thueringen.de.

Note to the Editor

Thuringia Tourism, www.visit-thuringia.com, is part of the Cultural Heart of Germany, www.cultural-heart-of-germany.com, a tourism initiative of Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt & Thuringia Tourism. The neighbouring states of Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia feature a unique cultural heritage and rich musical tradition that the Cultural Heart of Germany promotes in the UK.

Travel information:

Easy access to the Cultural Heart of Germany: [Ryanair](#) to Leipzig and all major airlines to Berlin.

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