

## Go explore Saxony and Thuringia in 2018

London, December 2017. It's never too early to look at next year's agenda, so here's our "Best of Cultural Heart of Germany 2018" with special events, anniversaries and travel ideas.

### Best of music in Dresden and Leipzig

How does that sound: 32 days of first-class music, 1,500 international top artists and 22 outstanding venues. [Dresden Music Festival](#) (10 May to 10 June 2018) has made a name for itself as one of the most innovative and inspiring international music festivals around. Under the leadership of Jan Vogel, the programme continues to surprise and delight with its eclectic line-up, showcasing anything from classic music to jazz, established artists and exciting new performers. Headlined "Mirror", next year's festival will explore how music influences our individual existence and society and feature internationally acclaimed artists, including H el ene Grimaud, Daniel Barenboim, the London-based Hofesh Shechter Company and innovative chamber music quartet Brooklyn Rider.

For even more music highlights, pencil in Leipzig where the city's [Gewandhaus Orchestra](#) not only celebrates its 275th anniversary in the 2017/2108 season but also welcomes its new music director Andris Nelsons. Four weeks of special performances (18 Feb to 23 March 2018), including a gala concert on 11 March 2018, will mark both occasions. Pianist Lang Lang is just one of the world-class anniversary guests offering their congratulations to the venerable orchestra and performing in Leipzig.

### All about the past and future of cars

2018 is the right time to explore Saxony as a place where automobile history was written: Head to the small town of Zwickau, birthplace of the Audi brand and the iconic East German Trabant car, for the visitor favourite [August Horch Museum](#). The museum, which is in the former Audi factory and tells the story of the more than 100-year-old tradition of car making in Saxony, just opened a stunning modern extension with an additional 3500 m<sup>2</sup> of exhibition space, adding new visitor experiences such as taking a seat on the spectator stands of a Silver Arrows race and focussing on the Trabant production in Zwickau after 1945 and Volkswagen production after 1990. Zwickau celebrates its 900<sup>th</sup> birthday next year and is also the birthplace of composer Robert Schumann, so when in town, don't miss the Robert Schumann Centre featuring the world's largest collection with more than 4,000 original manuscripts or a special historic highlight, the "Priests' Houses" as some of the oldest residential buildings in Eastern Germany dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> history.

For fascinating insights into modern-day car making, Volkswagen's "[Gl aserne Manufaktur](#)" (Transparent Factory) in Dresden is a must. It has been a visitor attraction since 2002, offering the opportunity to experience car manufacturing up close in a stunning futuristic building. Since production of the Phaeton stopped in 2016, the see-through factory with walls almost entirely made of glass has undergone a transformation and is now a fascinating showcase for electromobility. Visitors can see how Volkswagen's e-Golf electric car is produced, experience the future of driving with interactive exhibits and even test-drive electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles.

### Fine art in Thuringia

Lovers of porcelain should pencil in a trip to Thuringia for the "Thuringian Porcelain Day" (7-8 April 2018). The region has a long tradition of porcelain production and the 2018 event will highlight the special relationship between delicate porcelain and flowers, be it porcelain in the shape of flowers or the interplay of flowers and porcelain on a beautifully set table. Thuringian manufactories and museums will showcase rare historical exhibits as well as the work of contemporary artist. Visitors can observe master craftsmen at work or attend workshops to create their own little pieces of porcelain art. For a journey through the history of porcelain, try the interactive multimedia exhibition in [Leuchtenburg Castle](#) near Jena.

### **Best of theatre and opera**

For a very special theatre festival, the [Ekhof Festival](#) (6 July to 25 Aug 2018) at Friedenstein Palace in Gotha, is hard to beat: The Ekhof Theatre is the oldest baroque theatre in the world with its original stage machinery still intact. It was built in the western tower of the stunning palace at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and every summer, the festival delights visitors with plays, operas, concerts, and readings. Besides a great range of baroque concerts, the 2018 programme features the baroque opera 'Marc'Antonio e Cleopatra' (1725) by Johann Adolph Hasse. The baroque stage machinery is operated by muscle power and the scenery changes with the curtains open and before the very eyes of the audience. The festival closes with an open-air concert on the grounds of Friedenstein Palace and a baroque party.

Last but not least, Thuringia has something special in store for all Richard Wagner buffs next year who can enjoy his "Tannhäuser" at [Wartburg Castle](#) (27 April, 11 May, 3 June, 23 June, 6 & 14 Sep, 2 Oct). The legends of this medieval structure and the beautiful scenery of the Thuringian Forest were a source of inspiration for the composer and there is hardly a place more atmospheric to stage this opera, featuring some of Wagner's most well-known music, than the mighty castle towering above Eisenach.

For more event highlights 2018, please click [here](#).

### Note to the Editor

The Cultural Heart of Germany, [www.cultural-heart-of-germany.com](http://www.cultural-heart-of-germany.com), is a tourism initiative of Saxony and Thuringia Tourism. These neighbouring states 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.

**New:** ICE high-speed rail link cutting travel times from Munich and Nuremberg – Munich-Erfurt 2 hrs 15 min, Nuremberg-Erfurt 1 hr, Munich-Leipzig 3 hrs 15 min, Nuremberg-Leipzig 2 hrs

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