



PRESS RELEASE

Better access to Leipzig and Erfurt with new high-speed rail link

London, November 2017. A new ICE high-speed rail link opening on 10 December will considerably cut travel times to the Cultural Heart of Germany regions of Saxony and Thuringia for visitors flying into Munich and Nuremberg airport. Here's a reminder why you should get on the fast track to charming destinations such as Erfurt and Leipzig!

Not to miss in Erfurt ...

.. the city's amazing Old Town: You'll wander around and around and then wander around some more, marvelling at stupendous buildings and getting lost in charming alleyways. The centre piece is the [Merchants' Bridge](#) that dates back to the Middle Ages and is today lined with charming cafés, galleries and small independent boutiques. Don't miss "Goldhelm Schokoladen Manufaktur", a chocolate shop that does some amazingly imaginative sweet treats!

... the Old Synagogue: One of the very few preserved Medieval synagogues in Europe, this site has a special place in the history of art and architecture. The [synagogue](#) is right at the heart of Erfurt's historic centre and many parts of the structure are still intact. The building was reopened in 2009 after extensive renovation and visitors can now also marvel at the "Erfurt Treasure", a collection of Medieval artefacts, including precious gold and silver items, that were discovered in an old basement nearby during building work. Just come and see. It's special.

... the mighty Cathedral of St Mary and Church of St Severus: These magnificent examples of German Gothic architecture form a unique ensemble on the *Domplatz* (Cathedral Square) and are undoubtedly Erfurt's most famous landmark. The Cathedral's central tower is home to "The Gloriosa", the world's largest Medieval free-swinging bell, and the inside is stunning, with a series of coloured stained-glass windows and many rare furnishings and sculptures.

... a quick trip to Eisenach: A mere half hour on the train from Erfurt and you'll be able to see arguably Germany's most famous castle, the Wartburg. High up on the hill above [Eisenach](#), the UNESCO World Heritage Site is a must and offers visitors a fascinating tour through German history. You'll see where Martin Luther translated the New Testament into German or where Richard Wagner's romantic opera "Tannhäuser" is set. Plus, the views across the Thuringian Forest are breathtaking, in particular from the terrace of the "Landgrafentube" restaurant in the Romantik Hotel at the Wartburg.

Get to Leipzig for ...

... its cutting-edge arts and culture scene: There's a certain creative spirit in Leipzig and galleries and artists abound. The [Spinnerei](#), a 19th-century cotton mill, which has been a hub for Leipzig's creative

scene for more than a decade now, is at the centre of this scene. More than 120 artists have set up shop here and a wander around the former factory site is highly recommended! Visitors can also join tours for behind-the-scenes views. Just round the corner, Kunstkraftwerk is the new kid on the block, a former power station that now houses international exhibitions, readings, concerts and parties on 2,000 square metres, with a focus on immersive and multimedia art.

... the special “Leipzig spirit”: This might sound a bit abstract but becomes very real for visitors keen to discover the city off the beaten track. Outside the city centre and beyond the inner city ring road, Leipzig has a lot more to offer than meets the eye, from industrial monuments to *Gründerzeit* glory and 21st century design. The [Hidden Leipzig](#) website embodies this spirit in 60 pictures and almost 150 special tips for the city’s different neighbourhoods including restaurants, shops, galleries and nightlife.

... the Gewandhaus Orchestra: This is simply one of the world’s best orchestras and anyone who can get their hands on tickets for a concert should do it. 2017/2018 is a special season for this venerable musical institution because the orchestra, named after the *Gewandhaus* concert hall where it is based, is celebrating its 275th anniversary, including a gala concert in March 2018. As mentioned, it’s very worthwhile to treat yourself to a [Gewandhaus Orchestra](#) concert at least once in your life. Lasting memories are guaranteed.

... a truly iconic castle: The Leipzig region offers a wide range of historic highlights, including the iconic [Colditz Castle](#) whose history dates back 1,000 years. On these shores it is, of course, best known for the years between 1940 and 1945 when high-level officers from the Allied forces were held prisoners in the internment camp at Colditz Castle. Despite its escape-proof reputation some POWs came up with highly inventive plans, managed to escape – and the rest is history (and a famous film). Today, it’s a picturesque place overlooking the Mulde River and easy day trip from Leipzig.

Background information on new high-speed rail link

As of 10 Dec, a new ICE “Sprinter” will literally race from Munich to Berlin in 3 hrs 55 (before: 6 hours!). A new stretch of track through the Thuringian Forest enables trains to travel at speeds of up to 300 km/h. En route, the Thuringian capital of Erfurt can now be reached in a mere 2 hours and 13 minutes from Munich and just over an hour from Nuremberg with three super speedy connections per day. Travel times of normal ICE services have also been cut and almost hourly services make the journey from Munich to Erfurt in approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes. Leipzig will benefit from the new fast connections, too, since six ICE connections per day make a detour on the way to Berlin to stop in the Saxon city 3 hours and 15 minutes after the departure from Munich or just over 2 hours after leaving Nuremberg. All of which makes these southern German airports very viable additional options for travellers wanting to explore the Cultural Heart of Germany and create alternative travel itineraries to the usual “let’s fly to Berlin” ones.

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Note to the Editor

The Cultural Heart of Germany, 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.

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For press and image enquiries please contact:

B Connects. Barbara Geier Content Services

On behalf of Cultural Heart of Germany (Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia)

barbara@bconnects.net, phone 07983 242 195