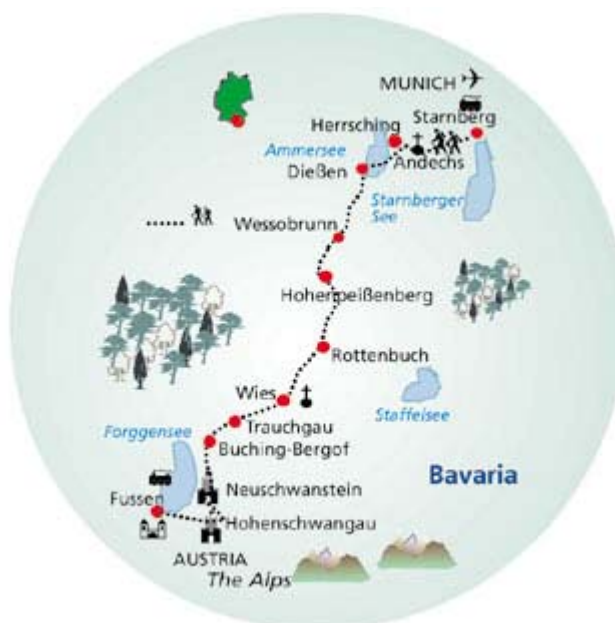


SHERPA: GERMANY BAVARIA: IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF KING LUDWIG

8-day / 7-night self-guided walking holiday

(JKL - Revised: November 09)



Highlights: Neuschwanstein Castle, Kaffee Und Kuchen (Coffee and Cakes), Lakes, Gorges and Mountains

Self-guided departures: Daily from May to October

Also known as the Koenig Ludwig Weg or King Ludwig's Way. The eccentric Ludwig II succeeded to the throne of the then independent kingdom of Bavaria in 1864, as a youth of 18. On 13 June 1886 he and his physician Dr Godden were found dead in the water of the Starnbergersee (Lake Starnberg); the question still remains - Did Ludwig fall or was he pushed? He was a strong swimmer and a post-mortem established that he did not drown. But no one has succeeded in unraveling the mystery. The Koenig Ludwig Weg starts at the Votivkapelle (shrine), which marks the actual spot on the lakeshore (near the hamlet of Berg) where the bodies were found. The route ends 60 miles away near Ludwig's own fairy tale castle at Neuschwanstein.

This walk, which is one of the favourite longer walks in Germany, links places particularly dear to King Ludwig who was a keen walker. It is not a mountain walk and much of the route is on farm tracks and country lanes, but the surroundings are delightful, with a host of splendid buildings to admire in magnificent settings and plentiful opportunities to stop for refreshments!

The plains surrounding Munich give way to gentle rolling hills that become ever higher as one approaches the great wall of limestone that marks the start of the Alps proper. The route passes two of Bavaria's most scenic lakes and through charming villages of geranium bedecked chalets with typical onion shaped church spires. There are masterpieces of baroque architecture, the Andechs monastery, the wonderful cathedral of Diessen on the Ammersee Lake; the monasteries of Wessobrunn and Rottenbuch, as well as the Wies or 'Meadow' church are on the route. The highest point (988m) on the walk is the summit of Hohenpeißenberg hill, considered by many to be the finest viewpoint in Bavaria.

We end our tour at King Ludwig II's most famous architectural masterpiece- the castle Neuschwanstein and at the nearby castle Hohenschwangau, both in Allgau on the Austrian border, where Ludwig spent most of his childhood. To celebrate the 150th anniversary of King Ludwig II (in 1995), the route was extended to begin at the Votivkapelle in Berg. It is a popular walk so early booking is recommended.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more itinerary details and reservations

Travel Information:

First hotel: Starnberg.

Nearest Airport: Munich: 1.5 hour train journey by S-Bahn (suburban railway) from airport to Starnberg, changing once en route.

End of Tour: The tour ends on day 8 after breakfast at Füssen. Return by train to Munich (2 hours) where you can change onto the S-Bahn to the airport (another 45 minutes).

Season: Start any day from May to early October, but unless you book far in advance, it is best to omit starts during the Munich Oktoberfest in late September and early October as there is heavy pressure on accommodation near Munich at this time. Accommodation along the route can also be heavily booked in high summer (late July and August) - so book early!

Level of Difficulty

Grade: Moderate

Day Stages: Each day stage involves approximately 15 to 25km (9 to 16 miles) walking, which can be shortened by using taxis or in some cases by the use of public transport. Much of the walk is on gravel tracks or quiet asphalt lanes, but there are also long stretches of footpath. The traverse of the Ammerschlucht (Day 4) can be difficult in wet weather but it can be bypassed by taking an alternative route.

Waymarking: The trail is easy to follow and mostly well waymarked with a special distinctive King Ludwig 'k' logo and signposts with distances in km. On some sections waymarks are scarce (it seems they make attractive souvenirs...) and it is necessary to pay close attention to the maps and route notes.

General Information

Baths: it is not normal for your room to have a bath, the main reason being that it takes up a lot of space, some hotels/guesthouses may have a separate room in the house where a bath is available to guests, but in the main expect showers.

Breakfast: in countries such as Germany are usually buffet style, please don't offend your hosts by making up a picnic lunch from the breakfast buffet unless you have asked and paid or it has been specifically organised for you. It is important for you to tell us if you have any dietary requirements when you book your holiday so that we can inform everyone that you are staying with.

Single Supplements: are payable on most of our tours. 1) The single supplement guarantees the privacy of your own room, however, rooms can at times be small and in some places may not enjoy the same facilities as double/twin rooms. 2) You are not just paying a supplement on the room but also higher luggage transfer costs. The cost of moving 1 bag or 2 bags etc remains the same.

Language: When travelling in less frequented areas you will not necessarily come across people speaking English. Remember you have left home to find things different.

Luggage: When staying in hotels, sometimes your luggage will have been taken to your room awaiting your arrival. However don't be surprised if your luggage is waiting for you at reception for you to take it up to your room.

Accommodation & Meals

In guesthouses and hotels of a comfortable standard. All rooms have private facilities. Bed and breakfasts only are included. Evening meals & lunches are available locally.

Night 1: Starnberg. This small resort town is attractively situated by the Starnbergersee (Lake Starnberg), with views up the lake to the distant Alps. The train station is on the lakeshore and our first choice hotel is just across the square from the station. It dates from around 1900 and many of the spacious rooms, now all fully en-suite, retain original features such as inner and outer doors. Breakfast is taken in a pleasant café, which is part of the hotel. Our alternative hotel in Starnberg is more modern and the rooms are less spacious, but still with fully en-suite facilities. This hotel is also close to the station and some rooms overlook the lake.

On occasions such as the annual Munich Oktoberfest in late September and early October accommodation in Starnberg may be fully booked well in advance, but in this case we may be able to provide alternative hotel accommodation in the delightful lakeside village of Leoni, which is only 1km from the start of King Ludwig's Way at Berg. Leoni has a ferry service from Starnberg, so it is possible to reach even with baggage; however if the ferry is not operating you will need to take a taxi from the S-Bahn station in Starnberg for the 7km to Leoni.

Night 2: Diessen. There are 2 hotels that we use here, depending on availability. The first is in the village centre in an older building that has been extended in traditional style. Rooms are equipped with shower or bath and WC, balcony, telephone and TV. The second a modern-style, low-rise building on the lakeshore, has its own large garden and offers seasonal specialities.

Night 3: Hohenpeissenberg Unterbau. A small Gasthof (Pension) in a rural setting 1.5km from the village centre. It is on the lower southern slopes of Hohenpeissenberg hill.

Night 4: At or near Rottenbuch. Our first choice is a small hotel right by the historic gateway of Rottenbuch itself. Rooms have en-suite or private facilities. Downstairs is a cafe popular with day visitors for 'coffee and cake'. Evening meal is available at two nearby restaurants in the historic square of the monastic village close to the celebrated church. Our second choice is a small country hotel in a farming hamlet 1.5km (1 mile) from Rottenbuch. All rooms have fully en-suite facilities; TV, hairdryer and some have a balcony. The hotel has its own large enclosed garden and heated outdoor swimming pool. There is also a 'Winter garden' (conservatory) for guests' use. This hotel has its own restaurant for your evening meal.

Night 5: The hotel is located near the village of Trauchgau. It offers an amazing panoramic view. The hotel has large comfortable rooms, TV, swimming pool, sauna and steam room.

Nights 6 & 7: Füssen. A comfortable hotel situated in the historical old town of Füssen. Each room has shower/bath, WC, telephone and television. The hotel is conveniently close to the train station for your departure.

Outline Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Munich. Travel by train (S-Bahn every 20 minutes from the airport with one easy change in central Munich; journey time 1 hour 20 mins) to Starnberg where your hotel is just across the square from the station and lakeshore. Those arriving early can take a boat trip to Leoni on the first afternoon and walk the first 7km of King Ludwig's Way back along the lakeshore via Berg (where a chapel overlooks the point in the lake where King Ludwig was found dead) to Starnberg. Overnight Starnberg (or, rarely, at Leoni).

Day 2: Walk from Starnberg via the Maisinger See nature reserve and the Andechs church & monastery (famous for its brewery) to Herrsching on the Ammersee lake. Ferry to Diessen on the other shore of the Ammersee. Overnight Diessen.

Day 3: The longest day's walk of the tour, much of it level although with a steep ascent and descent near the end. You start with an opportunity to visit the baroque cathedral (Marienmuenster) in Diessen before walking through the forest and across meadows to Wessobrun monastery. An opportunity for lunch at a wayside Gasthof in Wessobrun. Continue via St Leonhard-im-Forst (with a fine village church) to the summit of Hohenpeissenberg hill (988m/3241 feet), the highest point on King Ludwig's Way, with its splendid views. On the summit are a pilgrimage church, an astronomical observatory and a café with a scenic lounge. Then a steep descent across hay meadows to Unterbau village to overnight.

Day 4: Not a long walk, but traverses the wildest landscapes of the tour. From Hohenpeissenberg village you descend into the depths of the romantic Ammerschlucht (Ammer Gorge). The main trail through the Ammerschlucht is a delightful mix of forest and riverside walking in a steep sided valley. There is also a longer alternative climbing high above the valley. Rottenbuch's Augustinian Abbey, formerly a Stiftskirche (now a Pfarrkirche – parish church), was originally a Romanesque basilica dating back to the 11th Century. It was extended in gothic style and between 1730 and 1750 it was decorated in the rococo style. The jovial nature of the style is seen in its decoration with cherubs. Overnight at Rottenbuch.

Day 5: Carry on to Wies (also known as Wieskirche), which boasts Bavaria's most beautiful Pilgrimage church, built in 1745-54 under the supervision of Dominikus Zimmerman. The name means 'meadow' or 'meadow church', and the incongruously vast church is still surrounded by hay meadows. After lunch at the conveniently

situated Gasthof you continue along the base of the densely forested Alpine escarpment to the prosperous village of Trauchgau. Overnight accommodation near Trauchgau.

Day 6: The final day's walk takes you via the Pollath gorge to the castles of Neuschwanstein. Descend to Hohenschwangau castle and the Alpsee, before walking on to the historic town of Füssen where you overnight.

Day 7: A day to explore the town of Füssen and its beautiful surroundings. Easily accessible are a large number of walks and excursions, including the Tegelberg, a high level wonderland for walkers at 1800m, reached by cable car. Also close to Füssen are the beautiful Alatsee and Alpsee (lakes), with delightful circular walks. You can also take a boat trip on the Forggensee or nip across the border into the Austrian Tyrol (only just over a mile away, even closer from Alatsee or Alpsee). Overnight Füssen.

Day 8: Depart by train (one train per hour, journey time 2 hours, either direct or simple cross-platform change at Buchloe) from Füssen to Munich, where you can change onto the S-Bahn to reach the airport (every ten minutes; journey time 45 minutes).

What's Included

The price is based on two people sharing a twin or double bedroom and includes bed and breakfast accommodation in hotels and guesthouses. Rooms normally have en-suite or private facilities. Baggage transfers between hotels are included. Also included are walkers' maps at 1:50,000 scale and route notes, as well as a book on King Ludwig's Way by Speakman.

Not Included

Evening meals, lunches, S-Bahn tickets from Munich airport to Starnberg (around 13 Euros for two), train tickets from Füssen to Munich and/or its airport approx 20 Euros for two people travelling together after 9am or at weekends; but note that availability of these special cheap tickets may change. Also not included are boat tickets on the Starnbergersee (optional excursion from Starnberg to Leoni or Berg on Day 1) or on the Ammersee (Herrsching to Diessen on afternoon of Day 2), other tickets and excursions from Füssen.

Extra Nights

A second night in Füssen is already included in the tour. Extra nights can be arranged at the time of booking at any point along the route. Starnberg (night 1) is a very attractive place for an extra night, especially if you will be recovering from a long flight, and provides easy access by S-Bahn to central Munich for sightseeing or even a visit to the opera (trains every 20 minutes until late evening, journey time 40 minutes). For an extra night in a quiet village with possibilities of extra walks we suggest Rottenbuch (night 4). Please enquire for prices of extra nights, which vary according to the actual cost of the rooms.

Escorted Tours 2010

If you have a group of 6 or more, we can arrange customized escorted departures, please contact us for details.

Other walking holidays – guided in small groups or self-guided with inn-to-inn luggage transfers & meals are available in many parts of Europe through **Outdoor Travel** including in Switzerland the Wildstrubel Circuit, the Alpine Pass Route, the Haute Route, Bernese Oberland & centre-based walks at Meiringen.

For long distance routes we offer the the Way of St James from Le Puy to Santiago, the route of Pilgrims along the River Yonne to Veزالay in Burgundy and St Cuthbert's Way from Scotland into England. We also offer literary walking routes or trails in the footsteps of famous painters such as van Gogh in Provence.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more itinerary details and reservations

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