

The first settlements were established in the wider parts of the valleys and often on the slopes. These settlements became towns, and as they grew in age so did their wealth of history. Even today, the marketplace is often the centre of activity and, in an image typical of small villages, watched over by a large church or castle on high. Many of the churches contain, and are, significant works of historical art. Snug and cosy small villages welcome the visitor from rich fruit groves. History could tell stories of countless treasures in almost every small valley. Immutably ramparts watch the calm waters while the bridges and buildings glow from the flaming red of the Rochlitz porphyry rock. The Valley of Castles tells so much history. The origins of the castles reach back 1000 years to the time of Heinrich I and his successor, when they were conquering the Slavic regions. The Mulde passages, valued for their strategic position, secured the roads to the Elbe river and to the Erz mountains, and the castles became dioceses and the residences of nobility. Castles, churches and town halls all tell tales of noble splendour.

Bad Dübén A spa city which gave the Dübener Heide (Düben heathland) its name; with historical village square, plague gate, agricultural museum in the 1000 year-old Düben castle, one of the only remaining ship's mills in Germany, witch dungeon; starting point for hikes and bicycle tours through the beautiful Düben heathland, a national park since October 1992.

Hohenprießnitz Baroque castle from the first quarter of the 18th century, constructed by H. Korb and holding a remarkable banquet hall; formal castle garden by Johann G.G. Schoch, jr.

Zschepplin Multi-winged fortress dating from a number of historical periods; with banquet hall and English garden.

Eilenburg A Saxony city on the Mulde with a castle complex more than 1000 years old; in 1089 the residence of Count Heinrich, founder of the Wettin territorial state Saxony; notable sites: the Renaissance city hall, city museum, observatory, planetarium and the zoo.

Thallwitz Renaissance castle built in 1580, later expanded as a hunting lodge; castle complex with a water cascade, now dry; on grounds with mature trees; currently the »Wolfgang Rosenthal« plastic surgery clinic for reconstructive facial surgery.

Püchau Saxony's earliest mentioned site; castle with structures dating from the 16th century, »Heinrichsburg«, redesigned in 1888 in Neogothic style by C. Lipsius; arched bridge built between the castle and church in 1564; English style castle estate with a variety of exotic plants.

Nischwitz Castle, built between 1714 and 1721 (currently a home for the elderly); rebuilt and reconverted in 1750 to a Rococo castle to the specifications of the master builder J. Ch. Knöfel for Count H. von Brühl; paintings by Torelli in banquet hall and garden room; English garden grounds with a garden pavilion and mausoleum.

Wurzen A city 1000 years old, and still distinguished by its silhouette typical of the Middle Ages, which consists of the towers of the church, the bishop's diocese (now a police station) and the Wenceslai church; historical old part of the city; notable sites: market with the Ringelnatz fountain, museum, Ringelnatz house, old cemetery with plague huts; Wachtelburg nature reserve with Bismarck tower.

Treßsen Small city on the banks of the Mulde with a unique collection of former manors and a castle, formerly in water; with a number of pediments and arched vaults in the ground floor; will become a continuing education centre for handicrafts and the care of memorial structures; will also house a restaurant, hotel and counselling centre; Romanesque parish church and some of the oldest reliefs in Germany.

Grimma Saxony's city on the Mulde, with a number of interesting structures: early gothic convent and church as well as an Augustinian church; a Renaissance town hall erected

on an earlier Gothic structure; castle, Mulde bridge, with baroque features; Nimbschen convent in the immediate area; in Höfgen the Mulde ferry and one of the only remaining functional ship's mill; boat trips down the Mulde.

Bad Lausick Traditional spa city since 1820 with a notable spa park; today, spa activities are distinguished by several modern clinics. The St. Kilians church from the 12th century is in the city itself; notable is a three-naved Romanesque pillared basilica with a Silbermann organ.

Kösse In the Mulde valley, not far from where the Freiberg and Zwickau Mulde rivers meet at Sermuth; in addition to its weekend and holiday retreats around the Thümlitzsee and in the Thümlitz forest, is also home to a hunting lodge designed by the famous master builder M.D. Pöppelmann and built in 1711; the large hall is used for monthly concerts.

Podewitz Located in the enchanting Mulde valley with the its 16th castle in the water on the banks of the Freiberg Mulde, the castle is one of the few remaining Renaissance castles in the water in Germany. On the opposite banks, the Thümlitz forest stretches deep into the region and offers a wide variety of opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, and camping.

Colditz This charming little city became known for its porcelain and stoneware products; the inner city is characterised by narrow lanes from the Middle Ages and half-timbered structures; the city hall and the castle (still sanatoriums) are both Renaissance; the museum has a permanent exhibition on the former special lodgings for Allied officers (1939-45); the castle has an escape-way; also in the museum an exhibition on the ceramic industry; hiking opportunities in the Colditz forest; zoo with game preserve.

Geringswalde A city characterised by the furniture industry; the geographic centre between Leipzig, Chemnitz and Dresden; pretty city centre featuring a large pond; summer swimming pool; the surrounding area is perfect for hiking, bicycle tours and horseback riding; from the King Friedrich-August tower (more than 300 metres, or 900 ft., above sea level) the view reaches all the way to Leipzig and the entire crest of the Erz mountain range.

Rochlitz City of the geological porphyry tuffs with a historic city centre and »Middle Ages« charm; a number of modern and pleasant restaurants and lodging possibilities; the castle is distinguished by two large 50 metre (150 ft.) towers and late Gothic chapel; also a museum; the Petri church is located just off of the castle; home of the historical Kunigunden church; village green with classical city hall and patrician houses from the turn of the 19th century.

Rochlitzer Berg The Rochlitzer peak is more than 353 metres (1100 ft.) above sea level; coniferous and deciduous woodlands stretch in all directions and have marked hiking paths; great panoramic view from the tower; porphyry faults (registration required for viewing).

Gnandstein The Gnandstein castle in the Kohren region is one of the oldest and most well-preserved castles in Saxony, and houses a museum, observation tower, shop, hotel-restaurant, and all near the city of Kohren-Sahlis, known for its earthenware, with its own earthenware museum and pavilion.

Wechselburg A community shaped by the surrounding countryside, with a colourful history (the Zshillen convent, former Schönburg residence); famous collegiate church of the Augustinian canons (pillared basilica, one of the most well-preserved structures of its kind in Germany); a castle (now a sanatorium) with a large nature park; good hiking paths.

Lunzenau A small typical Saxony town with attractive parks and good hiking paths down the Mulde to the famous Göhrener railway viaduct, more than 68 metres (200 ft.) high and 381 metres (1150 ft.) long, all the way to Wechselburg and up the Mulde to Rochsburg.

Rochsburg Located on wooded slopes at a curve in the Mulde; among other things, known for the Rochsburg castle, built 50 metres (150 ft.) high in the nape of the sloping rocks; now houses the castle museum with Baroque, Rococo, Empire, and Biedermeier period rooms and includes a youth hostel; Romanesque village church; protected nature area around the castle; perfect for hikes to the Höllmühle-Burgstädt and on to Penig and Amerika.

Penig A city rich in history; the city centre is classified and protected as a historical monument and is distinguished by century-old houses of merchant families; narrow lanes from the Middle Ages on the left and right sides of the Mulde; the city hall, constructed in 1545/46, is Saxony early Renaissance, and was rebuilt with a opulent main portal after the great fire of 1716; late Gothic town church (consecrated in 1515) with panelled ceiling, underground mountain passageways; monument from the year 1813 on the »Weißen Spitze«, a mountain top.

Burgstädt This city is 500 years old, and the city centre is also classified and protected as a historical monument; the city gate opens to the Mulde and Chemnitz valley; church dates from 1522 with superbly reconstructed Baroque altar; victory tower (a clock is on the gate tower as the church tower was only built in 1604); the Taurastein tower is one of the most visible symbols of the city.

Wolkenburg Castle with two Lauchhammer cast iron figures at the start of the stairs; once a mighty fortress; the new church is one of the purest examples of classical town church architecture in Saxony; water mill; suspension bridge.

Waldenburg A city known for its earthenware, surrounded by forests; castle of the princes of Schönburg-Waldenberg in English and Neogothic Tudor architecture (today a clinic for treating lung and bronchial ailments); museum with internationally recognised collection of natural science specimens, now housed in the former royal stables; Grünfelder Park, dating from 1780 and in English period design; silvermine galleries in the Niederwinkel area.

Glauchau A city built on seven slopes; two beautiful castles, separated only by a moat; the Hinterglauchau Castle houses a museum (paintings and sculpture from the 19/20th centuries, a collection of graphic works, exhibition on the tradition of the weaving trade and a section on the early mining scientist and physician Georgius Agricola, born in Glauchau in 1494); and the Forderglauchau Castle, with its municipal art gallery »art glochowe«; Baroque town church with a Silbermann organ.

Meerane A small west Saxony town; notable is the Renaissance town hall and post office; local museum; »Steile Wand« (steep wall); the art gallery »ART-IN«.

Lichtenstein/Saxony Surrounded by forests, this town rests at the foot of the Erz mountains and has a number of idyllic parks; castle with subterranean passageways, prince's crypt and torture chamber; viewing tower; convenient hiking possibilities; a flourishing community which maintains tradition while looking to the future.

Zwickau/Saxony The spiritual, cultural and business centre of west Saxony. The birth place of Robert Schumann offers tourists a variety of interesting activities and notable sites. In 1993 Zwickau celebrated its 875th anniversary.

Schönfels The Schönfels castle dates back to the second half of the 12th century; its present appearance is the result of work carried out in the 15th century; with a castle keep over 75 feet high; notable is a circular arbour on the courtyard side complemented on the outside by the battlements; a boudoir restored to original condition; castle chapel with a Renaissance winged altar; richly carved pulpit from the 17th century and a historical organ; museum with a permanent exhibition on regional history in addition to ongoing temporary exhibitions; concerts; yearly castle fest.

Hartenstein Permanent exhibition on the Stein castle built around 1200, and covering the former earldom of Hartenstein; in addition to its exhibition on folklore with

its many exhibits, the museum also possesses a comprehensive collection of weapons; one section is devoted to the poet, physician and lyricist Paul Fleming, born in Hartenstein; another section is devoted to the daring squire Kunz von Kaufungen, known for the »Prinzenraub« in the year 1455, when two princes were kidnapped and held for ransom.

Torgau old town with historical centre - a large-area monument of national importance; Castle Hartenfels built in the style of the early Renaissance in 1485 - 1623, with Wendelstein, Bear's Ditch, Castle's Chapel - the first Protestant church building consecrated by Martin Luther in 1544, St. Marien's Town Church with the tombstone of Katharina von Bora, Luther's wife; Marketplace with Renaissance town hall and houses of the bourgeois; Monument to commemorate the encounter of American and Russian soldiers at the River Elbe in the year of 1945.

The »Valley of Castles« is still a little-known stretch of romantic history with charming natural surroundings. A wealth of art and cultural history can be found throughout the entire valley, all accompanied by lush forests on either side. Surrounding areas invite you to stay a while and relax:

The Kohren region - reachable on the B 7 and B 95 roads; nature preserve; includes the towns of Kohren-Sahlis, Geithain, and Frohburg; Frohburg castle with museum, Gnandstein castle, ethnological museum in Neukirchen-Wyhra; holiday park Pahl, to name a few.

The Frankenau ecological park (=kopark Frankenau, currently under construction) - reachable on the B 175, B 107 road and BAB 4 motorway; with biotope, animals, viewing facilities for promoting the awareness of ecological issues.

The Zschopautal and Striegistal valleys - a network of hiking paths; include the towns of Mittweida, Waldheim, Frankenberg and Hainichen; Kriebstein castle, one of the most well-preserved Gothic fortresses in Saxony, with a museum; Kriebstein dam; Sachsenburg castle.

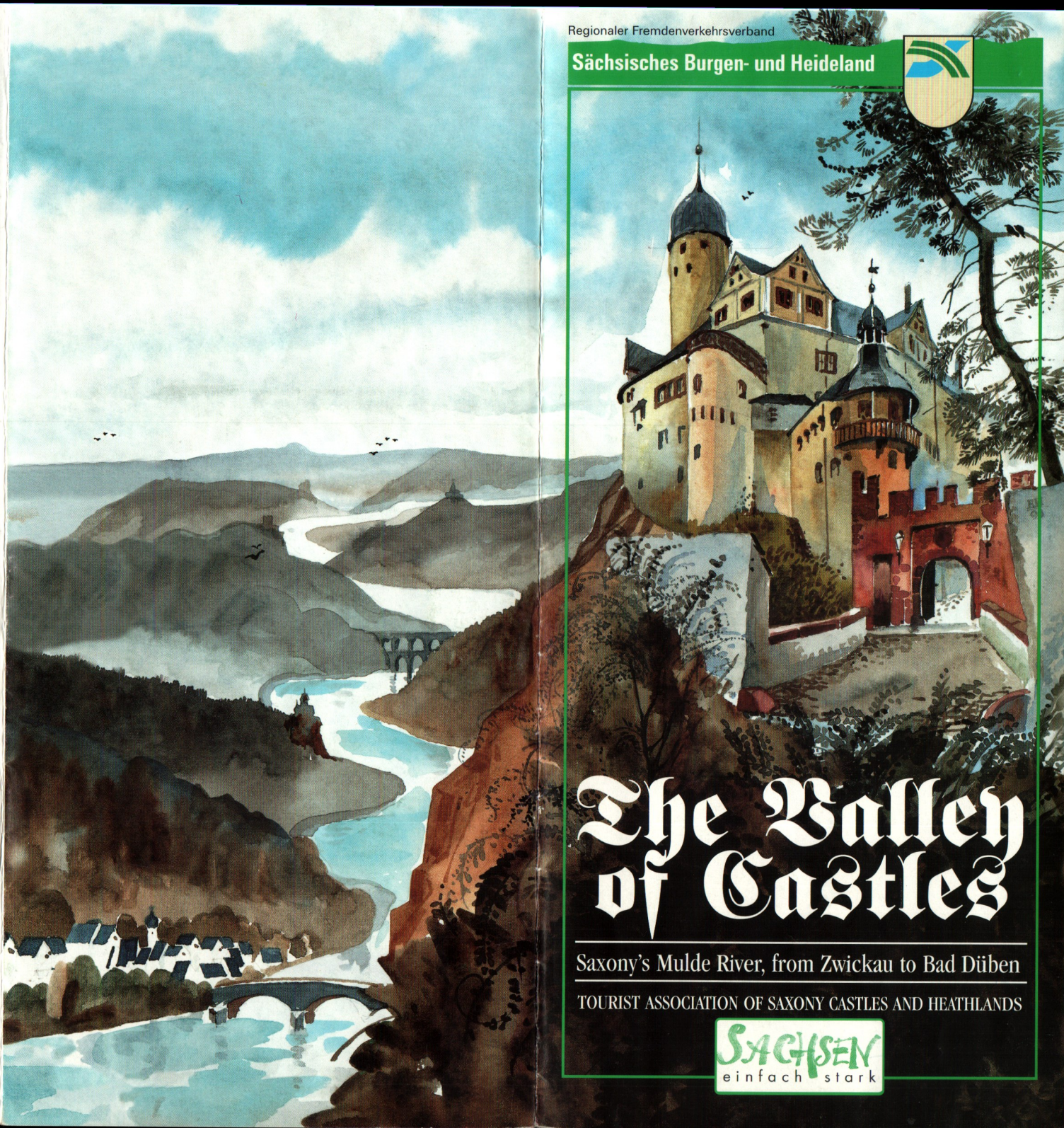
The Freiberg Mulde valley - includes the towns of Leisnig, Döbeln, Roßwein, Nossen; Mildenstein castle in Leisnig, with museum; Buch convent; Nossen castle, Alt-Zella convent.

The »South Battlefield of the 1813 Battle of Nations« at Leipzig - Scene of the Battle of Nations and Thirty Years' War; monuments; boundary stones and markers.

The Machern and Brandis castles (at Wurzen) - reachable on the B 6 road; Machern castle houses a museum, former castle in the water; restaurant, concerts and other events; vaults date from the second half of the 16th century; notable paintings in the knights' room; Romanesque and sentimental garden (1782); Brandis Baroque castle (1727); the castle grounds have a number of uncommon trees and shrubbery.

Come and visit us in Saxony and discover our »Valley of Castles«!

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Sächsisches Burgen- und Heideland



The Valley of Castles

Saxony's Mulde River, from Zwickau to Bad Dübén

TOURIST ASSOCIATION OF SAXONY CASTLES AND HEATHLANDS

