

## Dear Subscriber

### The Europe Restaurant Myth

France and Italy—and to a lesser extent Germany, Austria and Switzerland—have reputations for great food. In fact, I've often heard it said that in these countries you can't get a bad restaurant meal. I was thus surprised when food-savvy, French-speaking friends who for the last 15 years have spent six weeks on business every year in Paris and the south of France, told me they were especially disappointed in their restaurant experiences this fall. I expected to hear the "can't get a bad meal" Francophile party line. Instead, they cited a lack of fresh ingredients, vegetables from cans or no vegetables at all, a preponderance of heavy dishes of mostly meat and potatoes, and little creativity in the kitchen. A euro worth about 1.5 U.S. dollars didn't help matters: inexpensive bad food is one thing, a lousy, expensive meal is quite another.

Their comments surprised me only in the sense that I thought I was alone in my dissatisfaction with many European restaurants. Though in 36 years of travel through Germany, Austria, and Switzerland I have had some extraordinary food, the likes of which is not available in the USA, I've consumed far too many just passable meals—and a few truly awful ones. The idea that every cozy, wood-paneled country inn serves up dishes like *grossmutter* used to make is total fiction.

The reality is, no matter where you are in the world, a few people can really cook, some can get by following a recipe, and the rest should be barred from the kitchen. The conventional wisdom that says familiar dishes like *Schnitzel*, *Rösti*, *Kalbsleber*, *Rostbraten*, and *Maultaschen*, are from ancient recipes that every restaurant knows

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# GEMÜTLICHKEIT

The Travel Letter for Germany, Austria, Switzerland & the New Europe

## 2009 "G" AWARDS

With this issue we complete 23 years of *Gemütlichkeit*. For many of those years an annual year-end feature was a recognition of hotels, restaurants, museums, coffee houses, stores, etc., that in our opinion epitomized *gemütlichkeit*, the untranslatable German word that is so much a part of our travel philosophy. We called them "G" Awards but for unknown reasons stopped making them in the late 90's.

We think it's time to bring the "G" Awards back. Accordingly, what follows is a list of establishments where we've felt something extra; unusually caring management, a special warmth, sincere friendliness, great charm or extraordinary accomplishment. The places we have chosen are not necessarily the best, just the most *gemütlich* — although friendly, caring management usually also means skillful, intelligent management.

### Hotels

#### Tiny Quedlinburg Gem

One of the best hotel values ever reported in these pages is Quedlinburg's **Kunsthau: Kunst + Logis** in the *Altstadt*. Behind this retail shop/gallery/museum are two spacious and elegantly furnished bedrooms that rent for €65 and €70. Each has its own entrance via a quiet garden terrace at the rear of the building. Zen-like tranquility and simplicity in this unusual marriage of art and lodging.

Hohe Str. 27, D-06484, Quedlinburg, tel. +49/03946/901503, [ferienwohnung-im-kaufmannshof@online.de](mailto:ferienwohnung-im-kaufmannshof@online.de), [www.kunsthauquedlinburg.de](http://www.kunsthauquedlinburg.de)

#### Isny's Hohe Linde

This quiet, family-run hotel in

*Continued on page 3...*

## Favorite Backroads Drives

As we observe 23 years of *Gemütlichkeit*, it seems appropriate to re-visit one of our most popular features, "Yellow Roads," so named because yellow is the color chosen by Europe's map makers to indicate less-traveled country roads. Main roads are in red and Autobahns in orange.

Driving Europe's backroads is at the core of our philosophy of independent, off-the-beaten-track travel. The automobile bestows a unique flexibility and freedom to explore the tiniest villages and to experience authentic, family-operated hotels and restaurants. The six "Yellow Roads" drives that follow are summarized and re-printed from past issues, but since they were first published there has been a major change in the way we find our way around Europe—GPS.

Though satellite navigation devices are taking over in-car guidance for auto travelers, *Gemütlichkeit* continues to recommend maps to supplement electronic directions. It's important the scale be 1:200,000 or, better yet, 1:150,000. In Germany, we recommend the 1:150,000 German Auto Club (ADAC) *Maxi-Atlas*. In Switzerland and Austria, look for such publishers as Mairs, Freytag & Berndt, and Michelin. Just make sure you get enough detail; a 1:750,000 scale is useless for backroads driving. Good maps are sold in virtually all book stores and gas stations throughout

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**Exchange rates as of 12/10/09**  
**1 euro = \$1.47**  
**1 Swiss franc = \$0.97**  
**1 gallon diesel, Germany = \$6.00**

**DEAR SUBSCRIBER**

*Continued from page 1*

and can prepare to perfection is simply not true. Not only is the skill and palate of the cook important, a dish can't succeed without fresh, top-quality ingredients. These days that's becoming a rarity. A dead giveaway is the small restaurant with the lengthy menu, especially if the place is not crammed with patrons. Only big restaurants, such as Munich's **Augustiner** (see page three) and Zürich's **Zeughauskeller**, with kitchens that pump out hundreds, or even thousands of dishes daily, can maintain enough fresh components to support long, multiple-page menus. What we get in smaller restaurants with big menus and few patrons is frozen and canned ingredients. Many rely on partially pre-cooked, heat-and-serve dishes from restaurant supply companies. When I'm shown a long menu in a small to midsize restaurant that's not busy on a weekend night, I want to get up and run because I know I'm about to get a glorified TV dinner. In such restaurants I want to see a shorter menu with a separate sheet for daily specials.

A really, really bad sign is half a canned peach or pear on the plate. It's like a big banner that says "Fresh ingredients not used here." I'm *somewhat* forgiving of canned fruit on breakfast buffets, but draw the line at dinner, even if it's a garnish for duck or venison. Unfortunately, by the time the canned fruit appears you are already committed.

Another ghastly restaurant practice is salad greens served dry with dressing on the side and croutons from a package. To make matters worse, the salad is usually on a small plate making it difficult to properly mix in the dressing without knocking some of the greens on to the table. If tossing the salad is to be self-service, please give me a bowl.

The general lack of vegetables, especially fresh vegetables, in everyday restaurants of Germany, Austria and Switzerland—both good and bad—is another personal nit-pick. I thus find it curious that salads with fresh greens and cold vegetables, such as cucumbers, beets, carrots, and green beans, are available in almost every restaurant, but fresh, cooked vegetables are seldom served with the main course.

For every **Gasthof Fraundorfer** (Garmisch-Partenkirchen) there are half a dozen other down-home style restaurants turning out inferior dishes with the same names. So the question that begs for an answer is: how does one know which every-day restaurants serve traditional dishes like *grossmutter* and which ones cut corners and deliver indifferent food? I don't have the answer. You may recall that last year we managed to choose an inviting looking Prague restaurant that served the only meal in Europe I have so far been unable to eat. I stopped after two bites. With that caveat, here are some not-so-foolproof suggestions, some of them

obvious:

- Avoid restaurants with few customers. There's a reason.
- Beware the big menu/small restaurant combo. It can't be all fresh. A lot of it, in fact, may have been in the cold box for days.
- A long list of specials advertised on multiple hand lettered or chalked outdoor signboards is usually a negative indicator.
- On the other hand, a printed sheet with three or four daily specials is a plus.
- By all means rely on *Gemütlichkeit's* recommendations and those of knowledgeable friends. I emphasize "knowledgeable;" listen to friends who "live to eat," not those who "eat to live."
- Michelin's starred restaurants are almost sure to be very good... and very expensive. However, for

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**Using Gemütlichkeit**

- Hotel prices listed are for one night. Discounts are often available for longer stays.
- All hotel prices include breakfast unless otherwise noted.
- Local European telephone area codes carry the "0" required for in-country dialing. To phone establishments from outside the country, such as from the USA, do not dial the first "0".

**Logging on to Our Website**

Back issues in PDF format from January 1993, except for the most recent 10, are available free to subscribers only at [www.gemut.com](http://www.gemut.com) (click on "Members"). To access the issues, enter the user name and password published in this space each month. The new codes are:

User Name: **gaward** Password: **3401**

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**SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO:**

Gemütlichkeit, 288 Ridge Road., Ashland OR 97520

**HOTEL RESTAURANT RATING KEY**

Rating Scale	Scale	Restaurant Criteria	
Excellent	16 - 20	Food	65%
Above Average	12 - 15	Service	20%
Average	8 - 11	Atmosphere	15%
Adequate	4 - 7		
Unacceptable	0 - 3		
Hotel Rating Criteria		Value Rating	Scale
People/Service	30%	Outstanding Value	17 - 20
Location/Setting	15%	Very Good Value	12 - 16
Guestrooms	30%	Average Value	9 - 11
Public rooms	5%	Below Average Value	5 - 8
Facilities/Restaurant	20%	A Rip-Off	0 - 4

**"G" AWARDS***Continued from page 1*

Germany's Allgäu region features a warm, elegant lobby and public areas, 34 contemporary-style rooms, indoor swimming pool and spa, beautifully landscaped gardens, and friendly service; all at very reasonable prices. Special packages offered throughout the year, including room, gourmet meals, and activities such as skiing and horseback riding.

Lindauer Strasse 75, 88316 Isny im Allgäu, Germany, tel. +49/7562-97597, fax 975969, [info@hohe-linde.de](mailto:info@hohe-linde.de), [www.hohe-linde.de](http://www.hohe-linde.de)

**Dresden's Best**

The five-star **Kempinski Taschenbergpalais** involves different shades of local history, beginning in 1709 as Saxon Elector August the Strong's gift to his mistress, then turned into a Wettin prince's mansion. Gutted during 1945's firebombing attacks, the rebuilt structure became an elite Kempinski property. Pale yellow facades with white trim and sculpted ornamentation set the classical tone; crystal chandeliers illuminate a swooping Baroque staircase. Guest rooms and suites (214 overall) have red elmwood furnishings complemented by black lacquered cabinetry and royal blue carpeting. Intermezzo, where candlelit dinners come to table on fine Rosenthal china, opens onto a courtyard and its bubbling fountains. From there, the Elbe city's illustrious Semper opera house and the Zwinger's crowned portals are just a few street-crossings away.

Taschenberg 3, tel. +49/0351/4912. [www.kempinski-dresden.de](http://www.kempinski-dresden.de).

**Ancient Allgäu Inn**

The family-owned **Brauerei-Gasthof Schöfflerbräu**, tucked away a country village has been around since 1468 and a private brewery since 1868. A stay in this traditional Alpine-style inn is like being a guest in a big Bavarian farmhouse with a good restaurant downstairs (top-flight kitchen with a commitment to local ingredients), and an excellent

on-premises brewery and peaceful beer garden.

Brauerei-Gasthof Schöfflerbräu, Hauptstrasse 15, 87547 Missen-Wilhams (Allgäu Region), Germany, tel. +49/8320-92015, fax 92016, [info@schaeffler-braeu.de](mailto:info@schaeffler-braeu.de), [www.schaeffler-braeu.de](http://www.schaeffler-braeu.de)

**Restaurants****Affordable Allgäu Elegance**

Situated within the Hotel Hohe Linde, Isny's **Allgäuer Stuben** serves very fine meals at moderate prices in its elegant dining rooms. Award-winning chef Karl-Heinz Rimmele focuses on stylish, carefully prepared dishes using fresh regional and seasonal ingredients. The wine list is an exceptionally good value for a restaurant of this level.

Lindauer Strasse 75, 88316 Isny im Allgäu, Germany, tel. +49/7562-97597, fax 975969, [info@hohe-linde.de](mailto:info@hohe-linde.de), [www.hohe-linde.de](http://www.hohe-linde.de)

**Capital-City Dining**

The very essence of an urbane *berlinisch* restaurant, **Aigner** nevertheless recalls imperial Habsburg yesteryears with its Austrian meat-and-fish specialties. Meals are served in a stylish black-and-white *Jugendstil* setting replete with upholstered partitions, mirrors and framed antique prints. During your meal, glance outside for close-up views of the photogenic Gendarmenmarkt architectural ensemble here in the heart of Berlin's *Mitte* district.

Französische Strasse 25, tel. +49/030/203/75/1850, [www.aigner-gendarmenmarkt.de](http://www.aigner-gendarmenmarkt.de).

**Wurst on the Danube**

The **Wurstkuchl** in Regensburg claims to be "the oldest Bratwurststube in the world," originally built to sell sausages to the workers constructing the great stone bridge over the Danube between 1135 and 1146. Today this atmospheric little sausage restaurant at the base of the bridge still serves delicious Regensburger Bratwurstl, house-made pork sausages grilled over wood coals, and accompanied by the restaurant's

own brown mustard and sauerkraut, with slices of fresh rye bread. Try to find a spot in the tiny, medieval dining room out front, separate from the larger, more modern Gasthaus on the other side of the beer garden overlooking the Danube.

Wurstkuchl, Thundorferstrasse 3, 93047 Regensburg, Germany, tel. +49/941-466-210, [www.wurstkuchl.de](http://www.wurstkuchl.de).

**Munich Institution**

Rated one of the best beer tavern-restaurants in Munich, the **Augustiner Grossgastätten** in the city center's pedestrian zone. On one side is the **Augustiner Bräu Ausschank**, a traditional, cozy beer hall with vaulted ceilings, dark wood paneling, walls decorated with stuffed deer heads, and a reasonably priced menu offering a wide range of classic Bavarian dishes. The adjacent **Augustiner Restaurant** has the same menu and same prices, with the meals served in dining rooms that are slightly more elegant in decor. Augustiner beers are tapped fresh from the wooden barrels. A *gemütlich* restaurant-tavern frequented by locals and tourists alike.

Neuhauser Strasse 27, Munich, Germany, tel. +49/089/23183257, [www.augustiner-restaurant.com](http://www.augustiner-restaurant.com)

**Bamberg's Smoky Beer**

**Schlenkerla**, an historic, centuries-old brewery-restaurant, serves its special smoke-flavored Rauchbier directly from small wooden barrels in a cozy, wood-paneled dining room and an adjacent, larger, vaulted-ceiling room from a former medieval monastery chapel. Along with the dark beer, try the Bamberg-style Onion with Smoky Beer Sauce, a big onion stuffed with ground pork and bacon, or the chef's new creation, Rauchbier sausage. Popular with locals and tourists alike, the **Schlenkerla** attracts customers of all classes, from the mayor to university students, from visiting dignitaries to workmen in overalls.

Schlenkerla, Dominikanerstrasse 6, D-96049 Bamberg, Germany, tel. +49/951-560-60, fax 540-19, [www.Schlenkerla.com](http://www.Schlenkerla.com)

## Hearty Czech Beer/Food

**U Medvídko** is an historic Prague beer tavern, recently renovated, that serves excellent Budvar (original Budweiser) beer on tap, as well as semi-dark Oldgott and very strong X-Beer from the new micro-brewery upstairs, the smallest brewery in Prague. The restaurant offers an extensive, multilingual menu of well-prepared Central European dishes. Many of the hot and cold appetizers are portioned large enough to make a meal themselves. Among the main dishes, the "Certovo kolo" ("devil's wheel"), a plate-size potato pancake topped with a spicy mixture of meat and vegetables, is highly recommended. Friendly staff and a *gemütlich* ambience.

Na Perstyné 7, Prague 1, Czech Republic, tel. +420-224-211-916, [info@umedvidku.cz](mailto:info@umedvidku.cz), [www.umedvidku.cz](http://www.umedvidku.cz)

## Shopping

### Prague Folk Craft Stores

The **Manufaktura** chain of folk craft stores is the best in Prague, selling a wide range of well-made,

### Key Websites for the Traveler

- [www.gemut.com](http://www.gemut.com) Gateway site for travelers to Germanic Europe, including car rental, rail passes, hotel bookings, travel tips, and past issues (free access to back issues for subscribers; see log-on info on page 2).
- [www.viamichelin.com](http://www.viamichelin.com) The Michelin database of hotels and restaurants, plus great interactive trip planning tools
- [www.travelessentials.com](http://www.travelessentials.com) Guidebooks, maps, travel accessories, luggage, all at 10 percent off for subscribers. Use discount code gemut2009.
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- [www.sbb.ch/index\\_e.htm](http://www.sbb.ch/index_e.htm) Swiss and European rail schedules
- [www.ski-europe.com](http://www.ski-europe.com) Top Web resource for skiers with much data on Alpine resorts
- [www.myswitzerland.com](http://www.myswitzerland.com) Website of Switzerland's national tourist authority
- [www.germany-tourism.de](http://www.germany-tourism.de) Germany's national tourist authority
- [www.austria.info/us](http://www.austria.info/us) Austria's national tourist authority
- [www.historicgermany.com](http://www.historicgermany.com) Website for an alliance of historic German cities
- [www.thetravelinsider.info](http://www.thetravelinsider.info) Info on electronics for travelers — cell phones, computers, etc.

traditional folk crafts such as wooden toys, corn-husk dolls, Nativity scenes, country-style ceramics, handmade soaps, indigo-printed cotton cloth (tablecloths, napkins), expressive marionettes, gingerbreads shaped in antique molds, and intricately painted Easter eggs. Ten locations in the city. One of the largest stores, with an excellent selection of items, is at Melantrichova 17, near the Old Town Square. Other centrally located Manufaktura shops are at Nerudova 31, Mostecká 17, and Karlova 26. These are the best places in Prague to buy well-crafted Czech gifts and souvenirs.

## Sights/Museums/Misc.

### Northeastern Germany's Castle-on-a-Lake

Mecklenburg's Grand Duke Friedrich Franz II had the funds (and ego) to erect **Schloss Schwerin**, a bridge-connected castle that's comparable to Bavarian Neuschwanstein for visual impact. More so because it dominates Schwerin's modestly low-rise lakeshore cityscape. Completed in 1857, this neo-Renaissance whopper is fully outfitted with terra-cotta trimmings and elaborate stone masonry, towers and pinnacles, belfries, 15 turrets and niches for pompous statues. Certainly a showy setup for the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern state's *Landtag* parliamentary offices and reception chambers. Inside, too: ducal throne room, oak-paneled banquet hall, Gothic-influenced chapel, ancestral portrait galleries and the Schlossmuseum's displays of period furniture, jewelry, rare porcelains, medals and vintage weaponry. Visitors relax in the orangerie's glass-walled café and stroll amidst allegorical sculpture groupings in the flowery Schlossgarten.

Lennestrasse 1, tel. +49/0385/5657/38. Web: [www.schwerin.com](http://www.schwerin.com)

### DDR Museum

Documenting East Berlin's socialist past is memorably accomplished in this interactive museum on a Spree riverside embankment, walkably close to the Berliner Dom

cathedral. All things "Ossie" are exhibited, providing a retro look at daily life behind the Wall. A Stasi section recalls secret-service snooping methods and obsessive record-keeping. Museum-goers can sit behind the wheel of a clunky "Trabi" sedan, watch propaganda-loaded TV programs in a chintzy living room, glimpse household doings in an authentically stocked kitchen. Here, too: sports trophies, loyal socialist workers' awards, portraits glorifying governmental bigshots, youth-group insignia and random memorabilia from work, school and home.

Karl-Liebnecht-Strasse 1, tel. +49/030/847/123/731, [www.ddr-museum.de](http://www.ddr-museum.de)

### Detmold Open-Air Museum

Plan at least half a day (and probably longer) for visiting Germany's largest open-air museum, the **Westfälisches Freilichtmuseum** in Detmold, which includes a group of 70 buildings known as the Paderborn Village, as well as numerous other farmhouses, granaries, barns, windmills, and textile workshops situated on 250 acres of land. To keep from getting sore feet, take a horse-drawn wagon from the entrance of the museum to the Paderborn Village, then wend your way back through the fields and farmsteads along the well-marked footpaths. Restaurants and beer gardens provide refreshments at various places within the grounds. Interesting and educational for the entire family.

32756 Detmold, tel. +49/5231-7060, [wfm-detmold@lw1.org](mailto:wfm-detmold@lw1.org), [www.lw1.org/freilichtmuseum-detmold](http://www.lw1.org/freilichtmuseum-detmold)

### Leipzig's Curvaceous Landmark

If you're searching for prime examples of Germanic Jugendstil/Art Nouveau design motifs, step inside city-center Leipzig's circa-1914 **Mädlerpassage** and look around. This skylit, Y-shaped galleria features curved ceilings, sheen, fixtures and geometric flourishes that epitomize the iconic style. Bonus



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#### Your Berlin Headquarters

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Tel. 888-517-4342, Fax +49.30.32774440

Email: [info@hotelartnouveau.de](mailto:info@hotelartnouveau.de)

web: [www.hotelartnouveau.de](http://www.hotelartnouveau.de)

#### Low season flights to Europe Dec. 25-Mar. 25

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Denver.....	\$434
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Miami.....	\$412
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VW PASSAT (W/UPGRADE*)	\$246	\$35
VW PASSAT (AUTO)	\$363	\$52
AUDI A4	\$343	\$49
MBZ C180 (W/UPGRADE*)	\$267	\$38
MBZ C180 (AUTO/GPS)	\$378	\$54
MBZ E200 (AUTO/GPS)	\$473	\$68
VW TOURAN	\$327	\$47
VW GOLF SW	\$268	\$38
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AUDI A4 SW (GPS)	\$343	\$49
BMW 530 SW (AUTO/GPS)	\$586	\$84
VOLVO V70 SW (GPS)	\$394	\$56
VW SHARAN 7-PASS	\$637	\$91
VW MINIBUS 9-PASS	\$637	\$91

### AUSTRIA

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AUDI A3	\$379	\$54
SKODA OCTAVIA	\$380	\$54
MAZDA 6 (AUTO)	\$726	\$104
VW TOURAN (AUTO)	\$569	\$81
FORD FOCUS WAGON	\$376	\$54
SKODA OCTAVIA WAGON	\$489	\$70
CHRYSLER VOYAGER VAN	\$1037	\$148

### SWITZERLAND

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OPEL VECTRA	\$409	\$58
AUDI A4 (AUTO/GPS)	\$977	\$140
TOYOTA AVENSIS (AUTO)	\$476	\$68
OPEL ZAFIRA	\$458	\$65
VW GOLF WAGON	\$408	\$58
FORD GALAXY VAN	\$579	\$83
RENAULT 7-PAX VAN (AUTO)	\$757	\$108

\* UPGRADES THROUGH 1/31/10. DISCOUNTS FOR LONGER RENTALS. ALL RATES QUOTED IN THIS AD ARE AS OF 12/10/09, SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE BUT LOCK-IN AT BOOKING. RATES BASED ON ONE-WEEK BOOKING. RATES INCLUDE UNLIMITED MILEAGE, 3RD PARTY LIABILITY INS. BUT DO NOT INCLUDE VAT, CDW, THEFT INSURANCE, ROAD TAX, AND AIRPORT FEES.

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## Coast & Cruise Handbag

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## Coast & Cruise Zip-Checkable Tote

(Zips into its own pocket!)

**Your Price: \$26.95**  
(Reg: \$29.95)



**Anne McAlpin** spent 280 days on the road last year and averaged 25 flights per month doing it. Anne's been traveling like this for years and her experiences have led to the design of her very own line of handy travel accessories. She has shared her packing tips on Oprah, CNN, The View and HGTV. Hop over to [www.TravelEssentials.com](http://www.TravelEssentials.com) to see all her products and her new book & DVD, *Pack it Up*.

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# 2010 European Rail Pass Prices

## BUYING RAIL PASSES IN 2010

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EURAILPASS	1 Adult	Saver*	Youth
	1st Cl.	1st Cl.	2nd Cl.
15 consecutive days	\$767	\$650	\$498
21 consecutive days	\$994	\$844	\$645
1 month	\$1235	\$1048	\$804
2 months	\$1744	\$1482	\$1134
3 months	\$2150	\$1834	\$1401

EURAIL FLEXIPASS	1 Adult	Saver*	Youth
	1st Cl.	1st Cl.	2nd Cl.
10 days in 2 months	\$905	\$769	\$591
15 days in 2 months	\$1190	\$1013	\$774

EURAIL SELECTPASS	1 Adult	Saver*	Youth
<i>3 adjoining countries</i>			
	1st Cl.	1st Cl.	2nd Cl.
5 days in 2 months	\$484	\$411	\$316
6 days in 2 months	\$535	\$457	\$350
8 days in 2 months	\$634	\$542	\$411
10 days in 2 months	\$735	\$622	\$476

EURAIL SELECTPASS	1 Adult	Saver*	Youth
<i>4 adjoining countries</i>			
	1st Cl.	1st Cl.	2nd Cl.
5 days in 2 months	\$542	\$458	\$352
6 days in 2 months	\$592	\$505	\$385
8 days in 2 months	\$692	\$589	\$450
10 days in 2 months	\$791	\$671	\$512

EURAIL SELECTPASS	1 Adult	Saver*	Youth
<i>5 adjoining countries</i>			
	1st Cl.	1st Cl.	2nd Cl.
5 days in 2 months	\$598	\$507	\$389
6 days in 2 months	\$648	\$551	\$420
8 days in 2 months	\$749	\$634	\$484
10 days in 2 months	\$845	\$716	\$547
15 days in 2 months	\$1071	\$911	\$697

AUSTRIAN RAILPASS	1st Cl.	2nd Cl.	Child 1st	Child 2nd
3 days in 1 month	\$201	\$140	\$101	\$71
Avg. Extra Rail Day (5 max.)	\$28	\$19	\$14	\$10

AUSTRIA-CZECH PASS	Adult	Saver*	Youth
	1st Cl.	1st Cl.	2nd Cl.
4 days in 2 months	\$243	\$207	\$158
Avg. Extra Rail Day (6 max.)	\$33	\$28	\$21

CZECH-GERMANY PASS	1 Adult	Saver*	Youth
	1st Cl.	2nd Cl.	1st Cl. 2nd Cl. 2nd Cl.
5 days in 2 months	\$377	\$310	\$310 \$266 \$266
6 days in 2 months	\$419	\$344	\$344 \$296 \$296
8 days in 2 months	\$491	\$408	\$408 \$352 \$352
10 days in 2 months	\$566	\$471	\$471 \$410 \$410

EUROPEAN EAST PASS	Adults	Senior	Youth
Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia			
5 days in 1 month	\$299 (1Cl)	\$209 (2Cl)	
Avg. Extra Rail Day (6 max.)	\$36	\$28	

FRANCE RAIL PASS	Adults	Senior	Youth
	1st Cl.	2nd Cl.	1st Cl. 1st Cl. 2nd Cl.
3 days in 1 month	\$293	\$250	\$268 \$217 \$186
Avg. Extra Rail Day (6 max.)	\$45	\$37	\$40 \$33 \$28

FRANCE SAVER PASS	2 Adults*
	1st Cl. 2nd Cl.
3 days in 1 month	\$249 \$215
Avg. Extra Rail Day (6 max.)	\$39 \$31

FRANCE-ITALY PASS	1 Adult	Saver*	Youth
	1st Cl.	2nd Cl.	1st Cl. 2nd Cl. 2nd Cl.
4 days in 2 months	\$351	\$307	\$307 \$271 \$232
5 days in 2 months	\$391	\$341	\$341 \$301 \$258
6 days in 2 months	\$432	\$377	\$377 \$332 \$283
7 days in 2 months	\$473	\$410	\$410 \$360 \$313
8 days in 2 months	\$513	\$448	\$448 \$394 \$341
9 days in 2 months	\$554	\$483	\$483 \$426 \$366
10 days in 2 months	\$595	\$519	\$519 \$454 \$396

FRANCE-SWITZERLAND PASS	1 Adult	Saver*	Youth
	1st Cl.	1st Cl.	2nd Cl.
4 days in 2 months	\$376	\$319	\$265
Avg. Extra Rail Day (6 max.)	\$42	\$35	\$29

GERMAN RAILPASS	1 Adult	Youth	Twin Pass*
	1st Cl.	2nd Cl.	1st Cl. 2nd Cl.
4 days in 1 month	\$340	\$260	\$216 \$267 \$195
Avg. Extra Rail Day (6)	\$46	\$31	\$15 \$30 \$21

AUSTRIA-GERMANY PASS	1 Adult	Saver*	Youth
	1st Cl.	2nd Cl.	1st Cl. 2nd Cl. 2nd Cl.
5 days in 2 months	\$390	\$332	\$332 \$285 \$285
6 days in 2 months	\$429	\$365	\$365 \$315 \$315
8 days in 2 months	\$510	\$433	\$433 \$372 \$372
10 days in 2 months	\$593	\$504	\$504 \$433 \$433

GERMANY-BENELUX PASS	1 Adult	Saver*	Youth
	1st Cl.	2nd Cl.	1st Cl. 2nd Cl. 2nd Cl.
5 days in 1 month	\$405	\$305	\$305 \$247 \$247
Avg. Extra Rail Day (5 max.)	\$43	\$33	\$33 \$24 \$24

GERMANY-FRANCE PASS	1 Adult	Saver*	Youth
	1st Cl.	2nd Cl.	1st Cl. 2nd Cl. 2nd Cl.
4 days in 2 months	\$430	\$388	\$388 \$350 \$301
5 days in 2 months	\$475	\$428	\$428 \$386 \$333
6 days in 2 months	\$520	\$468	\$468 \$418 \$366
8 days in 2 months	\$611	\$550	\$550 \$479 \$428
10 days in 2 months	\$701	\$632	\$632 \$550 \$496

GERMANY-SWITZERLAND PASS	1 Adult	Saver*	Youth
	1st Cl.	1st Cl.	2nd Cl.
5 days in 2 months	\$458	\$390	\$322
6 days in 2 months	\$505	\$430	\$355
8 days in 2 months	\$597	\$510	\$419
10 days in 2 months	\$691	\$590	\$486

ITALY RAIL PASS	1 Adult	Saver*	Youth
	1st Cl.	2nd Cl.	1st Cl. 2nd Cl. 2nd Cl.
3 days in 2 months	\$244	\$199	\$208 \$169 \$161
Avg. Extra Rail Day	\$30	\$24	\$25 \$20 \$19

AUSTRIA-SWITZERLAND PASS	Adults	Saver*	Youth
	1st Cl.	1st Cl.	2nd Cl.
4 days in 2 months	\$366	\$311	\$257
Avg. Extra Rail Day (6 max.)	\$41	\$35	\$28

SWISS SAVERPASS & SWISS PASS	1 Adult	Saver*	Youth
	1st	2nd	1st 2nd
	Class	Class	Class Class
4 consec. days	\$369	\$247	\$314 \$210 \$277 \$186
8 consec. days	\$534	\$357	\$455 \$305 \$401 \$268
15 consec. days	\$646	\$430	\$550 \$366 \$486 \$323
22 consec. days	\$746	\$498	\$634 \$424 \$560 \$374
1 month	\$821	\$547	\$698 \$466 \$616 \$411

SWISS SAVER FLEXIPASS & SWISS FLEXIPASS	2 or more Adults*	1 Adult
	1st	2nd
	Class	Class
3 days in 1 month	\$302	\$201
4 days in 1 month	\$365	\$244
5 days in 1 month	\$423	\$282
6 days in 1 month	\$479	\$322

SWISS CARD	1 month - 1 round trip	\$242 (1-Cl)	\$173 (2-Cl)
plus 50% discount on rail tickets			

SWISS TRANSFER TICKET	1 month - 1 round trip	\$183 (1-Cl)	\$121 (2-Cl)
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(\*Prices per person, based on two or more traveling together at all times. \*\*Junior & Youth fares apply only to passengers under 26. Where senior fares are offered, 60 is qualifying age. Children 4-11 pay half the adult fare including Saverpass fares except Switzerland where kids under 16 are free with a

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				Mr./Mrs.		
				Mr./Mrs.		
				Mr./Mrs.		
				Mr./Mrs.		

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extras: 25 Meissen porcelain chimes hang from the rotunda; **Mephisto** is a tempting café-bistro. Descending a marble staircase gets you into vaulted-ceilinged **Auerbachs Keller**, definitely among Europe's best-known historic restaurants, in business since 1525—embellished with Goethe-Faustian murals. Main entrance at Grimmaischer Strasse; side entrances off Neumarkt and Petersstrasse. Restaurant: tel. +49/0341/216/100, [www.auerbachs-keller-leipzig.de](http://www.auerbachs-keller-leipzig.de).

### Basel Artistic Treasures

This city on the Rhine, which touches French and German borders, remains perfectly Swiss and culturally eminent. One reason: its **Kunstmuseum**, containing the country's biggest and best fine-arts collection. Come here to admire works of Old Masters Holbein, Dürer, Cranach, Rembrandt and Breughel—plus notable German Expressionists along with French Impressionists (Courbet, Monet, Renoir, Gauguin, Cézanne). Another reason: head Northeast to Basel's affluent Riehen suburb, where **Foundation Beyeler's** garden-sited glass pavilion (conceived by architect Renzo Piano) houses a spectacular array of international modern art.

Kunstmuseum: St.Alban-Graban 16, tel. +41/616/271/0828, [www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch](http://www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch)

Foundation Beyeler: Baselstrasse 101, tel. +41/616/459/700, [www.beyeler.com](http://www.beyeler.com)

### Potsdamer Platz Past & Present

Prewar Berlin's busiest traffic crossroads and jazziest entertainment quarter got flattened by Allied air raids into bombed-out emptiness. Then, early in the 1990s, **Potsdamer Platz's** ([www.potsdamer-platz.net](http://www.potsdamer-platz.net)) mega-redevelopment began in earnest—ultimately sprouting corporate office towers, deluxe hotels, triple-story **Arkaden** shopping mall, cineplex and **Film Museum**, along with a good mix of restaurants, a brew-

pub and back-from-the-past cafés. Among nostalgic tidbits, a working replica of 1924's traffic signal (Europe's first-ever) stands on the same corner as the original. Equally memorable, Weinhaus Huth—a popular wine bar established long before the bombs fell—is back in business under a new name: **Diekmann**. If modern architectural bravado intrigues you, do some gawking inside the Platz's centerpiece: Helmut Jahn-designed **Sony Center**. Cable-stretched translucent panels, radiate like sails from the peak of a steel-mesh “tent,” filter daylight onto a reflecting pool where throngs of Berliners and out-of-towners linger and imagine what used to be here—surrounded by Potsdamer Strasse, Leipziger Strasse and Bellevuestrasse.

### Picture-Book Town in Upper Austria

Among several fitting the above description, *Gemütlichkeit* has long had a soft spot for not-so-big **Steyr** ([www.steyr.at](http://www.steyr.at)), crammed onto a point of terrain where two tumbling rivers converge. Get your bearings by standing on the central Stadtplatz. This elliptical open space is wrapped inside joined-together rows of Renaissance, late-Gothic and flamboyantly Baroque buildings. Topping the ensemble for civic authority, Steyr's 18th-century clock-towered **Rathaus** sports an onion-bulb spire, balustrades, statues and fussy window dormers. Covering a bluff high overhead, **Schloss Lamberg's** arcaded courtyard serves nicely as an outdoor concert and festival venue. Two miles southwest of town, **Christkindl** doubles as a religious pilgrimage destination and—true to its name—Austria's preeminent Christmas village, complete with a handmade Nativity scene populated by 778 linden-carved figures.

### Renowned Saxon Church

Johann Sebastian Bach's ghost hovers over Leipzig's 15th-century **St. Thomas' Church**, where he founded the world-famous Thom-

aner boys' choir during his 27-years as *Kapellmeister*, beginning in 1723. Accompanied by a sonorous 6,300-pipe organ, the sailor-suited youngsters (who perform on worldwide tours), sing Bach's chorales: motets each Friday, cantatas on Saturday afternoons. Assuring his honored presence, the composer lies buried beneath a marble slab at the altar.

18 Thomaskirchhof, tel. +49/0341/287/103

*These “G” Awards were determined jointly by Gemütlichkeit's three principal writers: Sharon Hudgins, Tom Bross and Bob Bestor* ■

### YELLOW ROADS Continued from page 2

Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

A note about the route descriptions: If, as is likely, you're unfamiliar with the location of some of the towns mentioned in these drives, our suggestion is to rely on Google. Let's say, for example, you don't know the small town of Hieflau in Austria. Simply do a Google search for “Hieflau, Austria.” The first result you see may be a small, “zoomable” map. If not, click “maps” in the top menu. This works for almost every town in Europe. To get a general idea of the territory covered by a drive do a Google search using the departure and destination towns. Type, for example, “Marktheidenfeld to Coburg” into the Google search box. Then when the results appear, click “maps” from the top menu. Be aware, however, that Google typically provides the most direct and fastest way between any two towns, and our backroads drives are usually on less-traveled highways. So our route and theirs will probably not be the same. Still you'll get some idea of distance, time, terrain, and the region of each of these drives.

### Mariazell to Hieflau Austria

This beautiful, peaceful route, from the pilgrimage town of Mariazell (about 65 km south of the Vienna-Salzburg Autobahn, exit St. Pölten), along the Salza river southwest to Hieflau, is through some of

Austria's most uninhabited countryside. Before setting out, fill your gas tank and purchase food and drink for a picnic lunch. There are few restaurants along the way, but several lovely spots for picnics. Including stops for sightseeing and lunch, figure three hours.

The countryside is quietly spectacular. The road runs beneath limestone cliffs eroded into extraordinary formations and the ravine slopes are covered with green conifers and deciduous foliage that make this drive especially lovely in the fall. In places where the valley widens, the farms and grazing cattle seem like set pieces, perfectly placed on the broad meadow. The river runs so clear that if you look closely from your moving car you might see fish swimming.

The few villages that comprise civilization along this road, such as Weischelboden, Wildalpen, Palfau and Grossreifling are tiny and quiet.

Our recommendation is to overnight at Mariazell, where a Benedictine priory was founded in 1157 and Pope John Paul II said Mass on September 13, 1983. The town attracts pilgrims who come to pray for the indulgence of the Madonna of Mariazell. Inside the Basilica see the striking **Chapel of Miracles** and the **Schatzkammer** (Treasury) with its collection of the votive offerings of hundreds of years of pilgrims, from simple drawings by children to heirlooms of great value.

Good rooms are available at **Hotel Goldenes Kreuz**, in the center of the village. Rates range from €40 to €130, add €10 per person for half-pension.

Hotel Goldenes Kreuz, Weinerstrasse 7, A-8630 Mariazell, tel. +43/3882/2309, [scherfler@mariazell.at](mailto:scherfler@mariazell.at)

### Füssen to Mittenwald Germany

Traffic on the German Alpine Road in Southern Bavaria is heavy at all times, but especially in summer. Here is a route from Füssen east to the charming town of Mittenwald via the most deserted of country lanes. Füssen is the town nearest Bavaria's famed **Royal Castles** and Mittenwald is known for its violin-makers. Along the way is one of Germany's most

renowned churches, the **Wieskirche** ("church in the meadows"), a rococo masterpiece.

You may want to start from Seeg, a village 14 kilometers northwest of Füssen, and its friendly and inexpensive little **Pension Heim**. From Seeg, first go east to Rosshaupten then on gray and yellow roads to Lechbruck and on to Steingaden. Just south of Steingaden, from red road #17, get on the gray road to Litzau and the Wieskirche. This part is very tricky, the signs are mostly for hikers. Follow the ones pointing to the Wieskirche. After visiting the church 30 to 45 minutes return to the gravel road and continue southeast to Unternogg and Altenau. This is true backroads travel, in some places more trail than road. There are many places to stop for a picnic in the woods.

Upon reaching the red road go left toward Saulgrub and then right on the yellow road to Bad Kohlgrub. Before Murnau turn right and south toward Grafenaschau and on to Eschenlohe. From there you must go south on the major highway through Garmisch-Partenkirchen then east and finally south, taking the yellow road at Klais into Mittenwald.

It's easy to become confused, and you may have to stop often to consult the map, but this drive is worth it.

Pension Heim, Aufmberg 8, Seeg D-87637, tel. +49/08364/258, fax 08364/1051, [www.pensionheim.de](http://www.pensionheim.de).

Double rooms from €72

Post-Hotel, Obermarkt 9, D-8102 Mittenwald, tel. +49/08823/9382333, [info@posthotel-mittenwald.de](mailto:info@posthotel-mittenwald.de). Double rooms from €99

### Marktheidenfeld to Coburg Germany

The scenery on this drive is pleasant and restful rather than spectacular. On it you will cross the Main River on a little ferry, visit a pilgrimage church in a meadow, encounter interesting medieval towns, pass by Franconian vineyards, see few tour buses and enjoy some of Germany's prettiest farm country.

Begin at Marktheidenfeld, just north of the Autobahn between Aschaffenburg and Würzburg where are

found the excellent **Hotel Anker** and its **Weinhaus Anker**, a fine restaurant. In Coburg, 47 kilometers north of Bamberg, you can overnight at the moderately-priced **Stadt Coburg**.

Head north from Marktheidenfeld to Karbach and Zellingen, through Birkenfeld and Billingshausen. At Zellingen, go through the tower gate and cross the Main. From there go to Retzstadt (where there is a wine festival each July) and Gramschatz.

Next come Hausen and St. Hubertus-Verein, a pilgrimage church and an Augustinian Monastery. Then on to Fährbrück, Opferbaum, Schwanfeld and the interesting wine town of Wipfeld (great stone house and barn). Next, cross the Main again, this time by ferry.

Go on to Lindach, Kolitzheim and Herlheim. Then it's Alitzheim and along the edge of the **Steigerwald Naturpark** to Knetzgau and north to Hassfurt, another interesting town. Continue north to Hofheim then east and a little south to Ebern, once a walled city and full of half-timbered buildings. From here use the map to pick your own route into Coburg. One way is via Sesslach, yet another picturesque town with narrow cobbled streets and a fine stone church.

Hotel Anker, Obertorstrasse 6, Marktheidenfeld, D-97828, tel. +49/09391/60040, [info@hotel-anker.de](mailto:info@hotel-anker.de). Doubles from €108

Stadt Coburg, Loussaustrasse 12, Coburg, D-96450, tel. +49/09561/8740, [stadtcoburg@ringhotels.de](mailto:stadtcoburg@ringhotels.de). Doubles from €99

### Bern to Brienz Switzerland

The obvious and quickest way from Bern to Brienz is via the Autobahn along the south shores of the Thunersee and the Brienzensee through Interlaken. Our route, however, goes through the Emme Valley and into the Bernese Oberland by way of the Glaubenbelen Pass. On it you'll see picturesque farm villages of the Emmental and finish with a wonderfully scenic and panoramic mountain pass road.

Actually, we began at Worb and its excellent and moderately-priced (for Switzerland) **Gasthof zum Löwen**. From there proceed via Zäzwil to Langnau, a prosperous Emmentaler farming town and site of a simple country hotel offering good value, the **Landgasthof Hirschen**. The kitchen is better than average and you may want to stop for lunch. Then continue on to Schüpheim and turn south onto the yellow road over the pass (make sure it is open) to Giswil. Once down the mountain at Giswil you can elect to turn right to Brienz or go left to Lucerne.

Gasthof zum Löwen, Enggistestrasse 3, Worb bei Bern CH-3076, tel. +41/031/839 23 03, [office@loewen-worb.ch](mailto:office@loewen-worb.ch), Double rooms from CH170

Landgasthof Hirschen, Langnau CH-3550, tel. +41/034/4021517, [info@hirschen-langnau.ch](mailto:info@hirschen-langnau.ch). Double rooms from CH180

### Innsbruck to Switzerland Austria/Switzerland

Motorists traveling west across Austria into Switzerland encounter heavy traffic if they choose the traditional Arlberg Tunnel route and then Bludenz and Feldkirch. A more scenic way into the country, though it will take a bit more time unless your ultimate destination is southern Switzerland, is to turn south at Landeck on red road #315. Just north of Nauders at the Italian border, veer right and a little west on red road #27, entering Switzerland at Schalkl. Then follow the signs towards Zernez, staying on #27, passing through Scuol.

At Susch, you can choose to continue south to such destinations as St. Moritz, Pontresina and Lugano, or go northwest over the beautiful Flüela-pass to Davos and on to Zürich.

### Salzburg to Bad Gastein Austria

This a drive that becomes much more interesting by taking a less traveled route, partly over a delightful "yellow road" from Maria Alm (southeast of Saalfelden) to Route 311, or another, though much less direct, east to Bischofshofen.

Out of Salzburg, take any road to

Bad Reichenhall. From there, follow the little yellow road past Thumsee and pick up Route 21 to the Austrian border. Then take Route 312 past Unken toward Lofer. (Coming from Munich, take the Traunstein exit, head south through Inzell on Route 305, and then turn toward Lofer where the road intersects Route 21.)

From Lofer there are views of several mountain peaks and the drive on to Saalfelden is through the Saalach Valley beside the Saalach River. Along the way are caves open for tours and places to stop for a wander through wooded gorges.

At Saalfelden, turn toward Maria Alm then on to Dienten. Maria Alm is a picturesque village with many hotels and restaurants, and an abundance of flowers decorating the buildings. The road from there to Dienten presents an interesting driving experience, particularly the portion beyond Hintertal. From there on it is narrow, seldom more than a car and a half wide and climbs to a summit shortly before Dienten. The trip from Maria Alm to Dienten is scenic and there are many flower-covered houses.

Dienten, a ski resort, is an exceptionally beautiful town. Buildings are decked completely with flowers.

Here you have a decision to make. Your first option is to go straight south. This road, to the main highway between Zell am See and St. Johann, is very narrow and mostly only wide enough for one car. (Too narrow for a yellow line in the middle). There are turnouts, of course, but traffic is light and there are few trucks. The road is curvy and most of the way is downhill to Route 311. At this point a turn to the west will take you to Zell am See or on to Kitzbühl. If you cross 311 and continue south, you enter the beautiful Gasteiner Valley leading to Bad Hofgastein and Bad Gastein.

The other option at Dienten is to continue east through Mühlbach and on to Bischofshofen via the Hoch Königstrasse. Though this a lesser highway even than a "yellow road" (the map shows it white with gray borders) it is paved and well marked. It, too, is a lovely drive.

At Bischofshofen be sure to follow the Zell am See signs or you'll end up on the Autobahn. Once back on red road 311 heading west toward Zell am See, you'll soon see signs for the road south to Bad Gastein.

Haus Hirt, Bad Gastein, tel. +43/6434/29748, [www.haus-hirt.com](http://www.haus-hirt.com). Doubles from €168 including all meals. ■

## News/Deals

### VAT Reduced on Hotel Rooms

- Starting in 2010, Germany will lower the Value Added Tax on hotel rooms from 19 percent to seven percent. Whether hotels will choose to lower room rates or simply pocket the 12 percent difference is not known. No doubt most will compromise, rates will go down a bit and hoteliers will make more money next year. Overall, though, this has to be a plus for travelers.

### Airport/Rail Car Rent Fees Rise

- The fee on auto rentals that originate at German airports and rail stations rises in 2010 from 20 percent to 21 percent. The fee is figured on the base rate of the car plus the Value Added Tax. In other words, if the base rate for one week is \$200, the 19 percent VAT is \$38, making the total \$238 for a car picked up, for example, in downtown Frankfurt. However, if you want that car upon arrival at the Frankfurt Airport, add 21 percent to the \$238 for a total of \$288. *Gemütlichkeit's* car rental booking service can usually arrange for pickups near airports and save the 21 percent fee. Cars can be returned to airports and rail stations for no additional charge.

### Other Car Rental News

- Gemütlichkeit's* special Germany car rental rates—as well as rates for all countries in Europe—for 2010 are now available for booking. The Germany rates are virtually the same as for the last quarter of 2009.

- Unlike Germany, Ireland car rental rates have taken a dramatic rise for spring bookings. A compact car for one week with Value Added Tax has gone from \$136 to \$206.

Travelers contemplating a rental car in Ireland should plan to obtain a Mastercard World Card or a Mastercard Business Card. These are the only credit cards that offer free, zero-deductible collision and theft insurance. This coverage is expensive if purchased from the rental company and also carries a deductible of from \$1500 to \$2000.

• Plan to drive a rental car in Italy? Beware of restricted zones in major cities where it's illegal to drive without a special permit not issued by rental car companies. Drivers entering these zones (signed in Italian only) will be ticketed—often more than once—by cameras. Each ticket is approximately €100. Notification of the violation(s) comes by mail, sometimes as much as a year after the ticketing date. Do not drive in Florence without consulting [www.bella-toscana.com/traffic\\_violations\\_italy.htm](http://www.bella-toscana.com/traffic_violations_italy.htm)

• For rental advice, information, and to book cars call 800-521-6722.

### Buy Three Nights Get One Free

• Through April 30, 2010, Berlin's **Hotel Art Nouveau** currently offers *Gemütlichkeit* subscribers a free night and a welcome drink with the purchase of three nights lodging. Double room prices with tax and breakfast start at €135, or just over €100 per night for the package. The Art Nouveau is two blocks from the Ku'damm in the desirable Savignyplatz neighborhood with many shops and affordable restaurants. Email [info@hotelartnouveau.de](mailto:info@hotelartnouveau.de) and mention *Gemütlichkeit*.

### Rail News

• Travelers who don't want to ride crowded trains will appreciate a new feature at **Swiss Rail's** website ([www.rail.ch](http://www.rail.ch)) that predicts train occupancy levels. At the website, type in your date, plus departure and arrival cities, then click "Search Connection." From the subsequent timetable use the checkbox to choose a train, then click "Details for Selected." At this point the site will provide additional information about the chosen train including estimated occupancy levels in both first and

second class. Three symbols indicate "Low to medium occupancy expected;" "High occupancy expected;" and "Very high occupancy expected."

• North Americans traveling by rail within Germany can now book and print city-to-city tickets and reserve seats online at [www.bahn.de](http://www.bahn.de) (click the U.S. flag for the English version). Book in advance for discounted long distance fares as low as €29. Seat reservations are €2 per person. You can also book local public transportation for your arrival city.

• For two persons traveling together in Germany, the **German Twin Pass** (\$195 per person 2nd class, \$267 1st class) for four days unlimited travel within a one-month period is usually a better deal than purchasing individual tickets. Order the pass online at [www.gemut.com](http://www.gemut.com) or by phone from 800-521-6722. If you order that same Twin Pass from Rail Europe by phone the price is \$218 2nd class and \$298 1st class. ■

### DEAR SUBSCRIBER

Continued from page 2

good food at moderate prices you can rely on Michelin Red Guides' "Bib Gourmand" restaurants ("Good quality cuisine, often with a regional flavor"). The symbol is the face of a red Michelin man.

• For some reason, men waiters seems to be a good food indicator.

• Never choose a restaurant that doesn't smell right.

• Our friends' solution to mediocre restaurants in France has been to purchase fresh ingredients from local markets and prepare their own meals in the kitchens of rented apartments. With the current dollar weakness we expect more travelers to adopt this strategy.

This isn't meant to be a denunciation of German, Austrian, or Swiss cuisine. There are many excellent restaurants, both large and small, that serve delicious, affordable meals in pleasant surroundings. Just not all of them do; which, I presume, is one reason you read *Gemütlichkeit*.

I wish you happy holidays and a healthy, prosperous 2010. — RHB ■

## We Recommend

This listing of good value, mid-priced hotels in popular destination cities is intended for fast reference. Additional hotels and links to hotel websites is in the "Hotels" pages at [www.gemut.com](http://www.gemut.com). Hotels are arranged in price order, higher to lower.

### Berlin

**Hotel Art Nouveau**, Leibnizstr. 59, tel. +49/030/327 7440, fax 327 744 40, [info@hotelartnouveau.de](mailto:info@hotelartnouveau.de), [www.hotelartnouveau.de](http://www.hotelartnouveau.de)

**Hotel Domus**, Uhländstrasse 49, Germany D-10719, tel. +49/030/882041, fax 882 0410, [info@hotel-domus-berlin.de](mailto:info@hotel-domus-berlin.de)

### Bern

**Hotel Bristol**, Schauplatzgasse 10, CH-3011, tel. +41/31/311 0101, fax 311 9479, email [reception@bristolbern.ch](mailto:reception@bristolbern.ch)

**Hotel Kreuz**, Zeughausgasse 41, CH-3000, tel. +41/031/329 9595, fax 329 95 96, [hotelkreuz@swissonline.ch](mailto:hotelkreuz@swissonline.ch)

### Lucerne

**Hotel Wilden Mann**, Bahnhofstrasse 30, CH-6000 Luzern, tel. +41/041/2101666, fax 2101629, [mail@wilden-mann.ch](mailto:mail@wilden-mann.ch)

**Hotel Cascada**, Bundesplatz 18, CH-6003 Lucerne, tel: +41/041/226 80 88, fax 226 80 00, [info@cascada.ch](mailto:info@cascada.ch)

### Munich

**Hotel Exquisit**, Pettenkoferstr. 3, tel. +49/089/ 551 99 0, fax 551 99 499, [info@hotel-exquisit.com](mailto:info@hotel-exquisit.com).

**Hotel Acanthus**, An Der Hauptfeuerwache 14, D- 80331 München, tel. +49/089 / 23 18 80, fax: 2 60 73 64, e-mail: [acanthus@t-online.de](mailto:acanthus@t-online.de)

**Hotel Kraft**, Schillerstr. 49, tel. +49/089/594823-24, fax 550 3856, [office@kraft-hotel.com](mailto:office@kraft-hotel.com)

### Rothenburg ob der Tauber

**Reichs-Küchenmeister**, Kirchplatz 8, Rothenburg o.d. Tauber, Germany D-91541, tel. +49/09861/97 00, fax 97 04 09, [hotel@reichskuechenmeister.com](http://hotel@reichskuechenmeister.com)

**Hotel Hornburg**, Hornburgweg 28, D-91541, tel. +049/09861/8480, fax 5570, [hotelhornburg@t-online.de](mailto:hotelhornburg@t-online.de), [www.hotelhornburg.de](http://www.hotelhornburg.de)

### Salzburg & Environs

**Schloss Haunsperg**, A-5411 Oberalm bei Hallein, Hammerstrasse 32, tel. +43/06245/80662, fax 85680, [info@schlosshaunsperg.com](mailto:info@schlosshaunsperg.com)

**Hotel Struber**, Nonntaler Hauptstrasse 35, Austria A-5020 tel. +43/0662/843 728, fax 843 728 8, [struber@sbg.at](mailto:struber@sbg.at)

**Hotel Jedermann**, Rupertgasse 25, Austria A-5020, tel. +43/0662/873241-0, fax 873241-9, [jedermann@salzburginfo.or.at](mailto:jedermann@salzburginfo.or.at)

### Vienna

**Hotel Römischer Kaiser**, Annagasse 16, A-1010, tel +43/01/512 77 51 0, fax 512 77 51 13, [info@rkhhotel.best-western.com](mailto:info@rkhhotel.best-western.com)

**Altstadt Vienna**, Kirchengasse 41, tel. +43/01/526 3399-0, fax 523 4901, [hotel@altstadt.at](mailto:hotel@altstadt.at), web: [www.altstadt.at](http://www.altstadt.at)

**Pension Aviano**, Marco-D'Aviano-Gasse 1, tel. +43/01/512 8330, fax 512 8330 6, [aviano@pertsch.com](mailto:aviano@pertsch.com)

### Zürich

**Hotel Florhof**, Florhofgasse 4, Switzerland CH-8001, tel. 41/01/261 4470, fax 261 4611, [info@florhof.ch](mailto:info@florhof.ch)

**Hotel Arlette**, Stampfenbachstrasse 26, Switzerland CH-8001, tel. +41/01/25 20 032, fax 25 20 932, [hotel.arlette@bluwin.ch](mailto:hotel.arlette@bluwin.ch)

### Frankfurt Airport

**Steigenberger Esprit Hotel Frankfurt Airport**, CargoCity Süd, D-60549, tel. +49/069/69 70 99, fax 69 70 94 44, [frankfurt@esprit-hotels.de](mailto:frankfurt@esprit-hotels.de)

**Hotel Birkenhof**, von-Eiff-Str 37, Hanau-Steinheim, D-63456, tel. +49/06181/648 80, fax 64 88 39, [info@HotelBirkenhof.de](mailto:info@HotelBirkenhof.de), [www.hotelbirkenhof.de](http://www.hotelbirkenhof.de) (25-minute drive from airport)

**Hotel Dreieich**, Frankfurter Str. 49, Langen, D-63225, tel. +49/06103/91 50, fax 52 030. [hotel-dreieich@gmx.de](mailto:hotel-dreieich@gmx.de)

### Munich Airport

**Daniel's Hotel**, Hauptstrasse 11, Halbermoos-Goldach, D-85399, tel. +49/0811/55120, fax 551213, [info@hotel-daniels.de](mailto:info@hotel-daniels.de), [www.hotel-daniels.de](http://www.hotel-daniels.de)

**Hotel Hoyacker Hof**, Freisinger Landstrasse 9a, D-85748 Garching b. München, tel. +49/089/326 9900, fax 320 7243, [info@hoyackerhof.de](mailto:info@hoyackerhof.de)

### Zürich Airport

**Mövenpick Zürich Airport**, Walter-Mittelholzerstrasse 8, CH-8152 Glattbrugg, tel. +41/01/808 88 88, fax 808 88 77, [movenpick-zurich-airport.ch](http://movenpick-zurich-airport.ch)