

# Saxony-Anhalt



Saxony-Anhalt (Sachsen-Anhalt) is the German underdog, the economic runt of the litter. With the highest unemployment, the lowest birth rate and the biggest outward flow of people, this former GDR region often makes headlines for all the wrong reasons.

History hasn't always been so unkind. There's plenty of time-honoured appeal here, and the state is slowly showing signs of responding to treatment (including an injection of billions under the 'Aufbau Ost' federal regeneration project). More than 80 years after some of the world's most famous architects took up residence, Dessau has refurbished its iconic Bauhaus buildings. The capital, Magdeburg, has gone in another direction, adding a wonderful Austrian folly to its enclave of early 1900s terrace houses and ancient cathedral.

Immerse yourself in nature and pagan mythology in the Harz Mountains (p229). Though, in the era of a controversial, Prada-wearing German pope, it's interesting to reflect on how one of his countrymen launched the Reformation, and Protestantism, in 16th-century Wittenberg.

Biotech and other businesses still haven't filled the employment gap left when the East German districts of Magdeburg and Halle were merged to create Saxony-Anhalt in 1990, and their heavy industry was dismantled. However, with the air much sweeter these days, interest in the great outdoors has been revived – Germans now cycle enthusiastically along the Elbe River. And, on a wave of Ostalgie, sparkling wine from Saale-Unstrut has become fashionable.

It might have gone from the GDR's powerhouse to the new Germany's poorhouse, but Saxony-Anhalt is rich in under-appreciated treasures and its fortunes should only improve.

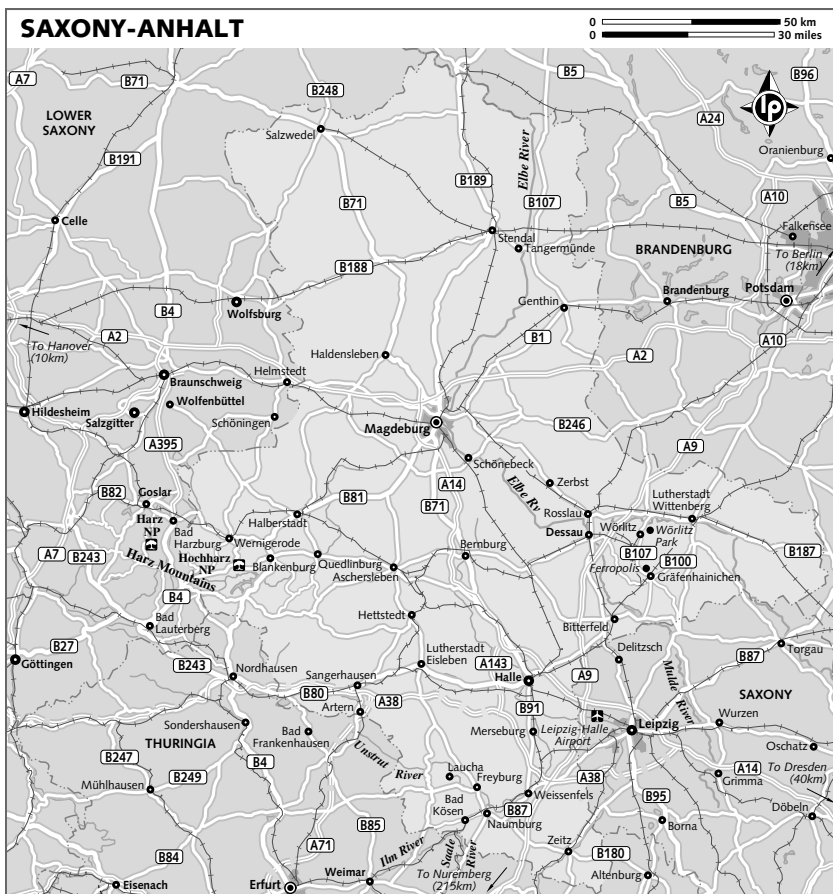
## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Grand Designs** Marvel at the sleek lines of Dessau's refurbished Bauhaus gems (p212)
- **Sweet Dreams** Book a night inside cult architect Hundertwasser's wacky Magdeburg building (p208)
- **Green Haven** Cycle through garden realms around Dessau and Wörlitz (p215)
- **Bar-Hopping** Sip cocktails in the historic enclave of Magdeburg's Hasselbachplatz (p209)
- **Pilgrimage** Retrace Martin Luther's footsteps around Lutherstadt Wittenberg (p217)
- **Offbeat experience** Sail high above the Elbe River outside Magdeburg (p208)



■ POPULATION: 2.58 MILLION

■ AREA:



**MAGDEBURG**

☎ 0391 / pop 228,775

Something old, something new: Magdeburg is constantly characterised by the juxtaposition of those two. Home to Germany's most ancient cathedral, the city now also boasts the newest – and last – of Austrian architect Friedensreich Hundertwasser's bonkers buildings.

And that's not the only marriage of anachronisms you'll find in Saxony-Anhalt's capital. While 90% of the city was destroyed by WWII bombing and rebuilt in the GDR style of wide boulevards and enormous concrete *Plattenbauten* apartments, a small enclave of early-20th-century terraces and cobbled streets survived around Hassel-

bachplatz; today, entering and leaving this historic district is like being transported in a time machine.

Chosen as the state capital over Halle at the time of reunification, Magdeburg has been the recipient of generous federal funding over the past decade. This doesn't completely disguise the underlying economic malaise downtown, but the plentiful bars around Hasselbachplatz and the city's series of leafy parks are more than enough to brighten the mood.

**Orientation**

The huge GDR-era street grid makes navigation easy. The best place to get your bearings is at the intersection of east–west-running Ernst-Reuter-Allee and the major

north–south artery of Breiter Weg. From here, Breiter Weg leads south to the cathedral and Hasselbachplatz, and north to the nearby Alter Markt (old market square) and eventually the university.

Ernst-Reuter Allee continues east across the Elbe River to the parks. The Hauptbahnhof (train station) lies west along the same street.

**Information**

**INTERNET**

**Internet & Game Café** (Kepler Passage, Keplerstrasse 9; per hr €2; ☎ 2pm-midnight)

**Moccc@** (☎ 734 6350; www.mymocca.de; Olvenstedter Strasse 45a; per hr €3; ☎ 10am to last customer Mon-Fri, from 6pm Sat)

**LAUNDRY**

**Anne's Waschparadies** (☎ 541 2593; Walther-Rathenau-Strasse 60; ☎ 9am-9pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat)

**MEDICAL SERVICES**

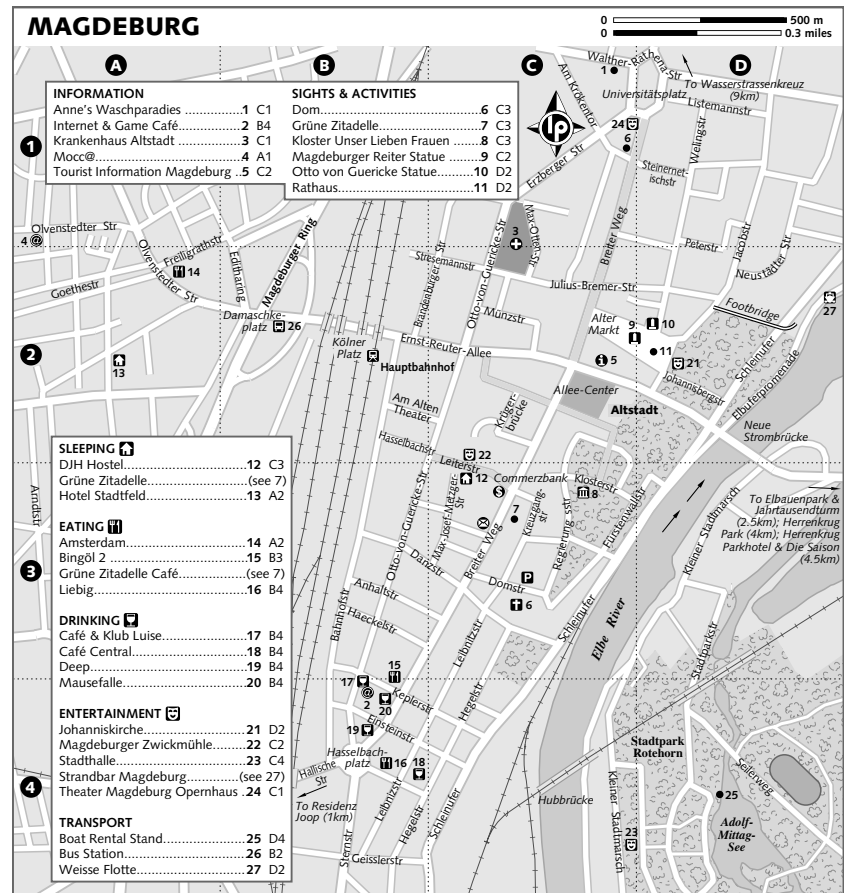
**Krankenhaus Altstadt** (☎ 591 90; Max-Otten-Strasse 11-15) Hospital with emergency services.

**POST**

**Post office** (☎ 01802-3333; Breiter Weg 203-206; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat)

**TOURIST INFORMATION**

**Tourist Information Magdeburg** (☎ 194 33; www.magdeburg-tourist.de; Ernst-Reuter-Allee 12; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat May-Sep, 10am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, to 3pm Sat Oct-Apr)



## Sights & Activities

### DOM

Magdeburg was established as a trading post by Charlemagne in 805, but the city was made great by King Otto I, whose **tomb** is found in its weather-beaten Gothic **cathedral** (☎ 543 2414; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Sat, 11.30am-4pm Sun). Apparently the first of its kind on German soil when it was erected between 1209 and 1363, the twin-towered Dom features an impressive high-ceilinged interior and art spanning eight centuries.

Highlights include a pensive **WWI memorial** by Ernst Barlach and, through the doors beside it – push hard, the latch jams – the sculpture of the **Magdeburger Virgins** (dating from the 13th century and undergoing renovation).

German-language **tours** (adult/concession €3/1.50; ☎ at 2pm daily, 11.30am Sunday) fill you in with more detail, or ask for an English booklet (€3).

### GRÜNE ZITADELLE

An irregularly shaped pink-and-white confection – with golden domes, asymmetrical windows and a grass-covered roof – now sits across the square from the iconic cathedral. Can you guess what it is yet? Fans of cult Viennese architect Friedensreich Hundertwasser will have by now recognised it as one of his organically inspired (or ‘green’) designs. In fact, design it was all Hundertwasser did, for the **Grüne Zitadelle** (Green Citadel; ☎ 400 9650; www.gruene-zitadelle.de; Breiter Weg 8-10; German tours €5; ☎ information office 10am-6pm, tours at 11am, 3pm & 5pm Mon-Fri, hourly 10am-5pm Sat & Sun) was only completed in 2005, five years after his death. All the same, it’s officially his last building.

In stark contrast to the Bauhaus designers in nearby Dessau, Hundertwasser didn’t believe in straight lines or minimalism. His final design might look like an iced birthday cake accidentally stuck in the oven for a few minutes, but it contains apartments, shops and a hotel – and you can tour it.

### HEGELSTRASSE & HASSELBACHPLATZ

Sometimes just turning the corner in Magdeburg can transport you into another century, metaphorically at least. Step onto tree-lined Hegelstrasse, for example, and you’ll find yourself back in the early 1900s, with pristine cobbled footpaths and immaculately restored terraced buildings. It’s worth continuing on

to Hasselbachplatz, where more pretty-as-a-picture historic streets radiate off the square. The whole area feels like a film set plonked down in the middle of a GDR town – as patrons in the cluster of trendy cafés and bars here would probably agree.

### WASSERSTRASSENKREUZ

Local boat firm **Weisse Flotte** (☎ 532 8891; www.weisseflotte-magdeburg.de, in German; Petriförder 1) has long run 1½-hour scenic cruises on the Elbe (adult/child €9/4.50). Now, with Magdeburg’s new Wasserstrassenkreuz (water intersection), it offers something more unusual. The world’s longest aqueduct – a ‘trough’ bridge, 918m long and full of water – has been built over the Elbe River, so you can sail across the river, high above it (adult/child €20/12; at 1pm daily from May to September). Tickets are available from both the company and the tourist office.

### JAHRTAUSENDTURM & ELBAUENPARK

Magdeburg has a fine scientific reputation, with the air pump (and hence vacuum technology) being invented here in the 1650s by physicist and Magdeburg mayor Otto von Guericke. Consequently, the **Jahrtausendturm** (Millennial Tower; ☎ 01805-251 999; www.elbauenpark.de, in German; Tessenowstrasse 5a; adult/child/family incl park & butterfly house €2.50/2/6; ☎ 10am-6pm, last entry 5.30pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct) museum of science history is entirely fitting.

The tower’s immediate appeal lies in its conical shape and external spiral walkway. It looks wonderful lit up at night, but German-speakers will also be attracted by the fun, hands-on experiments and physics exhibits within.

The surrounding **Elbauenpark** (☎ 9am-8pm May-Sep, reduced hours in winter) has rose, sculpture and other gardens, plus a **butterfly house** (☎ 10am-6pm, last entry 5.30pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct). Take tram 6 to Messegelände/Elbauenpark.

### STADTPARK & HERRENKRUG PARK

Just to the east of the Hubbrücke is the **Stadtpark Rotehorn**, with playgrounds, picnic areas, the Stadthalle concert hall and Adolf-Mittag-See (Adolf-Mittag Lake), where you can hire rowboats and there’s a major festival each May. Tram 6 stops about 300m north of the lake. Staying on Tram 6 until it reaches its terminus will take you to **Herrenkrug Park**, a popular spot to stroll and cycle.

## OTHER ATTRACTIONS

**Kloster Unser Lieben Frauen** (Cloister of Our Beloved Lady; ☎ 565 020; cloister admission free, museum adult/concession €2/1; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) is Magdeburg’s oldest building. Truthfully, there’s not much to it, but the front door, designed by popular local artist Heinrich Apel (b 1935), is fun: you knock with the woman’s necklace and push down on the man’s hat to enter.

At the southeastern end of the so-called old market, or Alter Markt (mostly rebuilt after WWII), is a gold-plated copy of the iconic **Magdeburger Reiter statue** (1240), which is variously said to be city champion King Otto and his two wives, or the king of Hungary and companions, or perhaps just any old king.

The bronze door to the **Rathaus** (town hall; 1698), depicting the city’s history to 1969, is by Heinrich Apel. Above the door is an image of the **Magdeburger Jungfrau** (Magdeburg Maiden), the city’s symbol. North of the Alter Markt, the **Otto von Guericke statue** commemorates the father of the vacuum (1602–86).

## Sleeping

**DJH hostel** (☎ 532 1010; www.jugendherberge.de/jh/magdeburg; Leiterstrasse 10; dm under/over 26yr €18/20/70; ☎ ☎ ☎) This large modern hostel is the total package – it’s close to the train station, is in the middle of town, and yet is on a quiet street. The friendly staff are on duty until the wee hours and, although the place is within easy reach of Berlin, it usually has good availability.

**Hotel Stadtfeld** (☎ 506 660; www.hotelstadtfeld.de; Maxim-Gorki-Strasse 31/37; s/d €55/70; ☎) You’re in your own little business-world bubble in this hotel atop an apartment building. The nonsense, masculine furnishings (dark wood and shades of blue) cater to a largely corporate clientele who enjoy the privacy and quiet.

**Residenz Joop** (☎ 626 60; www.residenzjoop.de; Jean Burgerstrasse 16; s €84-124, d €102-124; ☎) Although the owners are in no way related to German clothing designer Wolfgang Joop, their small place (not far from Hasselbachplatz) offers the same kind of discreet elegance and luxury. Stay in their small villa, and you’ll discover nothing is too much trouble for your hosts.

**Grüne Zitadelle** (☎ 620 780; www.hotel-zitadelle.de; Breiter Weg 9; r from €105; ☎ ☎) One of just two Hundertwasser hotels in the world and the only one within a city, this allows you to get inside the architect’s whirring mind and study at close quarters his penchant for

uneven, organic forms. Rooms, drawn up by the architect’s assistants, are reasonably restrained, so your sleep won’t be disturbed. However, the bathrooms erupt into wild tile mosaics that look like they’ve come down from the man himself.

**Herrenkrug Parkhotel** (☎ 850 80; www.herrenkrug.de; Herrenkrug 3; s €85-165, d €115-200; ☎ ☎ ☎) The four-star rooms are spacious and stylish – think black-and-white striped furnishing, or tartan features – plus you get the use of the spa included in the price. However, it’s the parkland setting and jaw-dropping Art Deco restaurant (Die Saison, below) that’s really appealing.

## Eating

**Grüne Zitadelle Café** (☎ 620 780; Breiter Weg 9; €3.20-4.20; ☎ 7am-7pm) Don’t come here with a big appetite, or you’ll be left hungry. However, if it’s a light snack of pasta, a sandwich or a slice of cake you’re after, this informal place towards the back of the Hundertwasser building hits the spot.

**Bigöl 2** (☎ 744 8640; Breiter Weg 226; mains €2-8.50; ☎ 10am-midnight, to 6am Fri & Sat) Night owls rely on this superior doner kebab shop for enormous portions of falafel, Turkish pizza, *börek* and grilled dishes. There’s a large sit-down section and frequently clumsy, if apologetic, staff.

**Amsterdam** (☎ 662 8680; Olvenstedter Strasse 9; dishes €4.60-14; ☎ 10am-midnight Sun-Fri, 3pm-1am Sat) There’s a slight Italian influence detectable in the bruschetta and paninis served in this fashionable modern bistro, but the cuisine also has its Californian touches, with the likes of tuna steaks, a dedicated vegetarian selection and smoothies.

**Liebig** (☎ 555 6754; Liebigstrasse 1-3; snacks €2.80-8.90, meals €4.90-15.90; ☎ 10-1am) Private alcoves and pleated curtains lining the walls create a feeling of warmth and privacy amid this trendy bar-café-restaurant. Mediterranean fare, curries and steaks are all served.

**Die Saison** (☎ 850 80; Herrenkrug 3; mains €18-30) Treat yourself to a marvellous meal within the ornately detailed dark-green walls of the Herrenkrug Parkhotel’s Art Deco dining room. They serve German cuisine with a modern international twist.

## Drinking

Although within Germany’s poorest state, Magdeburg has a large student population

and therefore a vibrant nightlife. Listings magazine *DATES* has further details (in German). Alternatively, simply head to the nightlife hub of Hasselbachplatz.

**Café Central** (☎ 544 2791; Leibnitzstrasse 34; ☎ from 8pm) Echoing the historic street on which it stands, this hip bar-cum-literary salon recreates the early 1900s, with velvet sofas, flock wallpaper and Persian carpets – all genuinely antique. There's comedy, public readings, films or lectures on many evenings, but the décor means it's always worth a visit.

**Deep** (☎ 544 2791; Breiter Weg 231, entrance Einsteinstrasse) This dimly lit basement bar is hip but extremely friendly, with DJs spinning discs on weekends.

**Café & Klub Luise** (☎ 597 5961, 544 6812; cnr Keplerstrasse & Otto-von-Guericke strasse; ☎ club from 9pm Fri & Sat) There's a young and relaxed vibe at this ever-so-slightly retro café where, despite the menu, most guests come to drink. The club below it has a wide-ranging programme, with everything from house, indie and 1960s flower power to karaoke and table-tennis competitions.

**Mausefalle** (☎ 543 0135; Breiter Weg 224) The crowds spilling out of here on weekends prove that Mausefalle's relaxed mix of drinks, music and the occasional bit of communal TV hits the spot.

## Entertainment

**Stadthalle** (☎ 593 450; Stadtpark Rotehorn) From Mozart to Motorhead – as Magdeburg's premier venue, this 2000-seat venue in the leafy central park has pretty well heard it all.

**Johanniskirche** (St John's Church; ☎ 593 4650; Jacobstrasse 1) Popular for classical music concerts, the atmospheric Johanniskirche dates back, in parts, to 1131.

**Theater Magdeburg Opernhaus** (☎ 540 6444; Universitätsplatz 9) The Magdeburg Philharmonic plays here, and it's also a venue for opera and ballet.

**Magdeburger Zwickmühle** (☎ 541 4426; www.magdeburger-zwickmuehle.com; Leiterstrasse 2a) This acclaimed cabaret will be appreciated by German-speakers.

**Strandbar Magdeburg** (☎ 0175-594 0059; Petriförder 1; ☎ 11am-midnight daily May-Sep) Magdeburg's small answer to Paris Plage, this city beach run by the local boat company has fast become a hot summer destination, with imported sand, deck chairs, food stalls, cocktails, film evenings and parties.

## Getting There & Away

Magdeburg is directly connected to Berlin-Hauptbahnhof (€22, 1½ hours) and Leipzig (€23, 1¼ hours). Trains to Dessau go regularly (€9.10, one hour).

The city is located just south of the A2 Berlin-Hanover autobahn, while the A14 runs to Leipzig.

## Getting Around

Bus and tram tickets can be bought from the machines at all stops. They cost €0.80 to go a few stops in the city, €1.50 for a normal single and €4 for a day ticket.

Free street parking is plentiful north and south of the centre. Parking near the Hauptbahnhof and bus station is by permit only.

Taxis wait outside the Hauptbahnhof (Kölner Platz exit), or call **Taxi Ruf** (☎ 377 373).

# THE ALTMARK

The Altmark is one of Germany's most idyllic and least populated regions, where flat fields stretch out in all directions and horses probably outnumber humans. Sleepy and out of the way, it's hard to imagine the place attracting many non-Germans visitors. However, if business or personal ties bring you this way, the place revolves around two towns.

## STENDAL

☎ 03931 / pop 39,000

In this 'town of red-brick Gothic', as it calls itself, the architecture is pretty, but also overwhelmingly provincial. A former Hanseatic trading post with a cluster of splendid medieval buildings, its contemporary landmarks are its remaining two **town gates**.

Built more for prestige than defence, these fancy brick portals look a bit lonely now that most of the town wall has gone, but they're still striking. The **Tangermünder Tor** is at the south of the old town and closest to the train station. The **Uenglinger Tor** (adult/concession €21; ☎ 10am-noon & 12.30-4pm Sat & Sun May-Sep) can be climbed for good views.

The old market square is dominated by the late-Renaissance **Rathaus** and an 8m-high statue of the legendary knight **Roland**, clutching a 4m-long sword. In early June, there's a town festival in Roland's honour.

However, Stendal's most fun attraction is the 16m-tall, 45-tonne **Trojan Horse** in the

grounds of the **Winkelmann-Museum** (☎ 215 226; www.winkelmanngesellschaft.de; Winkelmannstrasse 36-38; entry without/with horse €2.50/5; ☎ 10am-6pm, to 8pm Wed, closes an hour earlier Nov-Mar), an exhibition otherwise devoted to the father of modern archaeology, Johann Joachim Winkelmann. Kids and adults will love climbing into the belly of the horse (the world's largest replica, according to the *Guinness Book of Records*), just as ancient Greek warriors did. There's also a children's section to the museum.

The town is compact and easily seen on foot; town maps are available at the train station. The beginning of the Altstadt (Old Town) is a ten-minute walk northeast of the Hauptbahnhof along Bahnhofstrasse.

You'll find **Stendal Information** (☎ 651 190; www.stendal.de; Kommarkt 8; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat, plus 10am-1pm Sun Apr-Oct), which can help with accommodation, diagonally opposite the Roland statue, near the Hotel Schwarzer Adler.

Other sleeping options include **Pension am Mönchskirchhof** (☎ 715 599; www.pensionstendal.de; Mönchskirchhof 2b; s/d €35/50), inside an attractive Art Deco building, and the classical and central **Altstad Hotel** (☎ 698 90; fax 698 939; Breite Strasse 60; s €45-60, d €70-110; ☎), which is renowned locally for its traditional German restaurant.

**Hotel am Bahnhof** (☎ 715 548; Bahnhofstrasse 30; s/d €50/65; ☎) has much better, more modern rooms than you might expect for an establishment just across from the station.

The slightly motel-like **Hotel am Uenglinger Tor** (☎ 684 80; www.hotelstendal.de, in German; Moltkestrasse 17; s/d €45/60; ☎) is a good 15- or 20-minute walk from the train station, but its modern rooms (with balconies or attic windows) are roomy and extremely congenial.

Stendal is an important rail junction connecting north-south lines to east-west lines. There are IC services to Berlin (€25, 45 minutes) and Leipzig (€53, 2¼ hours), as well as cheaper regional trains. Regional services also run to Magdeburg (€9.10, 50 minutes). The B188 and B189 intersect in the south of town.

## TANGERMÜNDE

☎ 039322 / pop 10,000

Its location at the confluence of the Elbe and Tanger Rivers makes Tangermünde even prettier than Stendal – although it's even quieter still. The second home of Charles

IV, king of Bohemia during the 14th century, it is most notable for its surviving town walls, ostentatious towers (similar to those in Stendal) and a ruined castle, which now has a hotel inside.

The Altstadt is a five-minute walk south of the Hauptbahnhof, along Albrechtstrasse. The **tourist office** (☎ 223 93; www.tourismus-tangermuende.de; Kirchstrasse 59; ☎ 10am-6pm Apr-Oct, 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 1-4pm Sat & Sun Nov-Mar) can help with accommodation.

Trains run hourly from Stendal (€1.80, 17 minutes), some 10km northwest. **Reederei Kaiser** (☎ 3654, 0171-421 8162) runs two-hour scenic trips up the Elbe (€8), and also sails to Magdeburg (one-way/return €16/25).

# EASTERN SAXONY-ANHALT

## DESSAU

☎ 0340 / pop 78,950

The 'built manifesto of Bauhaus ideas', Dessau was the epicentre of the Modernist movement. Crucially, it wasn't just home to the 20th century's most influential design school, the Bauhaus, it was also the first place Walter Gropius and his cronies were actually allowed to practise their architectural principles. As a result, it still boasts some of their earliest buildings.

After being hounded out of Weimar in 1925 by right-wing conservatives, Gropius and colleagues – including the painters Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky – shifted reluctantly to industrial Dessau. However, after erecting their radical, purpose-built school in 1926, they went on to enjoy their most creative period here, and the block-faced logo 'Bauhaus Dessau' soon won them a place in history.

In 1932, the Bauhaus spent its last year in Berlin (see Bauhaus Archiv/Museum für Design, p112), but having refurbished buildings left to rot during the GDR period, Dessau is the true keeper of the flame.

## Orientation

The town is south of the confluence of the Elbe and Mulde Rivers. The leading Bauhaus sights are west of the Hauptbahnhof, all within easy walking distance. The town centre lies east, reachable on foot or by tram.

## DESIGN FOR LIFE

'Less is more,' asserted the third and final Bauhaus director, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Given that this school survived fewer than 15 years yet exerted more influence on modern design than any other, one has to bow to his logic. As Frank Whitford put it in *Bauhaus: World of Art* (1984): 'Everyone sitting on a chair with a tubular steel frame, using an adjustable reading lamp or living in a house partly or entirely constructed from prefabricated elements is benefiting from a revolution...largely brought about by the Bauhaus.'

Founded in Weimar in 1919 by Berlin architect Walter Gropius, this multidisciplinary school aimed to abolish the distinction between 'fine' and 'applied' arts, and unite the artistic with the everyday. Gropius reiterated that form follows function, and exhorted his students to craft items with an eye to mass production. Consequently, Bauhaus products stripped away decoration and ornamentation and returned to the fundamentals of design, with strong, clean lines.

Already, in Weimar, the movement had attracted a roll call of the era's greatest talents, including Lyonel Feininger, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, László Moholy-Nagy, Piet Mondrian and Oskar Schlemmer, plus now legendary product designers Marianne Brandt, Marcel Breuer and Wilhelm Wagenfeld. After conservative politicians closed the Weimar school in 1925, these artists all moved to Dessau.

Right-wing political pressure continued, however, against what was seen as the Bauhaus' undermining of traditional values, and Gropius resigned as director in 1928. He was succeeded by Swiss-born Hannes Meyer, whose Marxist sympathies meant that he, in turn, was soon replaced by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. The latter was at the helm when the school moved to Berlin in 1932 to escape Nazi oppression.

Mies ran the school as a private institution until it was dissolved by the Third Reich in 1933 and the Bauhaus' leading lights fled the country. But the movement never quite died. After WWII, Gropius took over as director of Harvard's architecture school, while Mies van der Rohe (the architect of New York's Seagram Building) held the same post at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago. Both men found long-lasting global fame as purveyors of Bauhaus' successor, the so-called International Style.

## Information

**Bauhaus Foundation** (☎ 650 8251; www.bauhaus-dessau.de; Gropiusallee 38; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri) For info on, and tours of, Bauhaus buildings (including in English).

**Internet café** (1st fl, Hauptbahnhof; per hr €2; ☎ 10am-10pm daily) Up the spiral stairs of the train station, to the right of the exit doors.

**Post office** (Kavaliertstrasse 30-32)

**Tourist office** (☎ 204 1442, accommodation 220 3003; www.dessau-tourismus.de; Zerbster Strasse 2c; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat Apr-Oct, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat Nov-Mar) Offers tours in German at 10am Saturday (April to October; adult/concession €5.10/4.10).

## Sights

### BAUHAUSGEBÄUDE

Across the world, many Modernist masterpieces have fallen into ruin. Although it too once looked like it might go that way, the seminal **Bauhausgebäude** (Bauhaus Bldg; ☎ 650 8251; Gropiusallee 38; exhibition adult/concession €5/4, combination ticket with Meisterhäuser €8/6; ☎ 10am-6pm) has

now been definitively rescued. Extensive refurbishment was finished in time to celebrate the 80th anniversary of its October 1926 opening.

If you consider its history, it's almost impossible to overstate the significance of this school building. Two of the three men said to have fathered modern architecture (Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe) worked here. (Switzerland's Le Corbusier completes the trio.) Gropius claimed that the ultimate of all artistic endeavours was architecture, and this was the first real example of his handiwork. It was revolutionary, bringing industrial construction techniques, such as curtain walling and wide spans, into the public domain and presaging untold buildings worldwide.

Furthermore, as the Bauhaus' Hochschule für Gestaltung (Institute for Design), it disseminated the movement's ideals of functionality and minimalism. The tubular steel-frame chair and other enduring industrial designs were born here.

Yet, perhaps more impressive than all these arguments is how fresh and modern the building looks after more than 80 years. Cubist, concrete and mostly white, it has three interconnecting rectangular wings boasting enormous plate-glass windows. The grey southern façade boasts the Bauhaus logo; the eastern side has quirky 'swimming pool' balconies.

A postgraduate **Bauhaus Kolleg** (☎ 650 8403; www.bauhaus-dessau.de) now uses many of the rooms, but sections are still open to the public, including an exhibition hall in the former workshop wing, which stages rotating shows. There's also a great gift shop here, selling books, posters, postcards and trinkets – from toys and egg cookers to ashtrays, wine glasses, crockery and lamps.

One-hour **tours** (adult/concession €4/3, in German) start at 11am and 2pm daily (and 4pm on Saturday, Sunday and during holidays). Even if you don't speak the language, they're instructive as you're allowed into some otherwise locked rooms. Alternatively, you can hire an audio-guide in English (€4).

The complex is a five-minute walk west of the Hauptbahnhof, via Schwabestrasse and Bauhausstrasse.

## MEISTERHÄUSER

On a picturesque leafy street in Dessau's north stand the **Meisterhäuser** (master craftsmen's houses; Ebertallee 63-71; admission to all three houses adult/concession €5/4; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun summer, to 5pm winter) where several 20th-century geniuses once lived together as neighbours. In the febrile environment of the 1920s, you could sit at home here with the Kandinskys, on furniture donated by Marcel Breuer, and with the possibility that Paul Klee or László Moholy-Nagy might drop over tea.

Designed by Gropius for the school's senior staff, these white cubist structures exemplify the Bauhaus aim of 'design for living' in the modern, industrial world.

They expose some of the movement's contradictions, too. Locals sometimes describe these them as 'villas', emphasising that while it focused on providing decent housing for all, Bauhaus still had its own elite. Another irony is that the interiors are largely bereft of original Bauhaus furniture, which is too expensive to replace today.

All this said, a visit here is an intensely satisfying aesthetic experience, with photos helping to conjure up past interiors.

Originally there was a stand-alone home for the Bauhaus director, plus three duplexes, each half of which provided a living/working space for a senior staff member and family. Sadly, the director's home was destroyed in WWII, along with one half of the neighbouring duplex (originally the Moholy-Nagy/Feiningerhaus).

The remaining **Feiningerhaus**, where artist Lyonel Feininger once lived, now pays homage to another German icon with the **Kurt-Weill-Zentrum** (☎ 619 595). There's a room devoted to Dessau-born Weill, who later became playwright Bertolt Brecht's musical collaborator in Berlin, and composed *The Threepenny Opera* and its hit 'Mack the Knife'.

In the **Muche/Schlemmer Haus** it becomes apparent that the room proportions and some of the experiments, such as low balcony rails, don't really cut it in the modern world. At the same time, you also realise how startlingly innovative other features are. The partially black bedroom here is also intriguing; look out for the leaflet explaining the amusing story behind it – Marcel Breuer apparently burst in to paint it when reluctant owner Georg Muche was away on business.

The **Kandinsky/Klee Haus** (☎ 661 0934) is most notable for the varying pastel shades in which Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee painted their walls (re-created today). There's also biographical information about the two artists and special exhibitions of their work.

To get to the Meisterhäuser, turn right (north) onto Gropiusallee from the Bauhausgebäude, and continue for a few minutes before turning left (west) into Ebertallee. Alternatively, buses 10 and 11 from the train station will drop you close by (they both stop at Gropiusallee).

A further 20-minute walk north on Elballee, on the Elbe, stands the **Kornhaus**, a beer-and-dance hall designed by Carl Flieger, a Gropius assistant. It is now a terraced restaurant with river views (see p215). From the Hauptbahnhof, take bus 10 or 11 to Kornhausstrasse and then walk.

## TÖRTEN

If the term 'housing estate' conjures up an image of grim concrete tower blocks, rubbish-blown courtyards and shutters flapping on the abandoned communal shop, leafy Törtten, in Dessau's south, might prompt a slight rethink. Built in the 1920s, it is *the* prototype of the

modern working-class estate. However, it's refreshingly low-rise, and you can just about see what the architects were trying to achieve. Although many of the 300-plus homes have been altered in ways that would have outraged their purist creator Walter Gropius (patios and rustic German doors added to a minimalist façade?), others retain their initial symmetry.

The **Stahlhaus** (Steel House; ☎ 858 1420; Südstrasse 5; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun, 10am-6pm Feb-Oct) is home to a Bauhaus information centre and the starting point for German-language **tours** (adult/concession €4/3; ☎ at 2pm Tue-Fri, 3pm Sat & Sun) of the Törten estate. These look inside one of the red-brick, balcony-access apartments by the second Bauhaus director, Hannes Meyer.

Other highlights include the **Konsumgebäude** (co-op building, still the site of a communal shop) and the **Moses Mendelssohn Zentrum** (☎ 850 1199; Mittelring 38; adult/child €2/1; ☎ 10am-7pm Mar-Oct, 1-4pm Sat & Sun Jan-Feb). Here you can learn about Dessau-born humanist philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, who was the grandfather of composer Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. It's also the only Walter Gropius building on the estate where you can look inside. Sure, it's small, but think of the tenements it replaced. Printed English-language descriptions of the architecture are available; just ask.

To reach Törten, take tram 1 towards Dessau Süd (€1.20). Alight at Damaschkestrasse, where there are signposts to the 'Bauhaus Architektur'.

## OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Dessau has recently reinforced its architectural reputation with the eye-catching new headquarters for the **Umweltbundesamt** (Federal Environment Agency; Wörlitzer Platz 1). Its two separate sections of green-coloured and flesh-coloured windows make a striking sight as your train pulls into town, but this energy-efficient building also boasts a wonderful, light-infused atrium, which can be visited on tourist office city tours.

Aviation fans will be wowed by the vintage aircraft at the **Technikmuseum Hugo Junkers** (☎ 661 1982; www.technikmuseum-dessau.de, in German; Kühnauer Strasse 161a; adult/concession €2.50/1.25; ☎ 10am-5pm). Take tram 3 or bus 16 to Junkerspark.

Dessau's centre is rather Eastern Bloc – uninspiring and a mere footnote to the town's Bauhaus attractions. The **Rathaus**, rebuilt in simplified form after the war, has a Bauhaus-

style clock. The **Anhaltisches Theater** (☎ 251 110; www.anhaltisches-theater.de; Friedensplatz 1a) is a rather pompous neo-Roman structure that was commissioned by the Nazis and is at odds with most of the town's architecture, whether it be Bauhaus or GDR.

Dessau also boasts some quite impressive parks and gardens, such as Georgium park; for more information on these see the Garden Realm (opposite).

## Festivals & Events

Although more closely associated with Berlin, and later New York, the composer Kurt Weill was born in Dessau. Every March, in his honour, the city hosts a **Kurt Weill Festival** (www.kurt-weill.de, in German), reprising and updating his collaborations with Bertolt Brecht such as *The Threepenny Opera*. Performances take place in Dessau and surrounds.

## Sleeping

**DJH hostel** (☎ 619 452; www.jugendherberge.de/jh/dessau; Waldkaterweg 11; dm under/over 26yr €15.50/17.20; ☎ Dessau's DJH hostel is pretty basic, and it also closes its doors early and is slightly tricky to reach without a car, so it's probably more convenient for most budget travellers to book a room at the Bauhaus dorms.

**Bauhaus dorms** (☎ 650 8318; oede@bauhaus-dessau.de; Gropiusallee 38; r per person from €28; ☎ ☒) Since the Bauhaus school was renovated in 2006, you can really live the Modernist dream, by hiring the former students' dorms inside. If the main building's booked out, opt for a taste of the GDR instead, by reserving a cheaper bed (€15) in the 1970s *Plattenbau* apartment complex at Heidestrasse 33.

**An den 7 Säulen** (☎ 619 620; www.pension7saeulen.de, in German; Ebertallee 66; s €50-55, d €65-75; ☎ ☒) Not the most luxurious option in town, but one of the most memorable, this pleasant *pension* has a garden and glass-fronted breakfast room overlooking the Meisterhäuser across the leafy street. Popular with cyclists and families, it now boasts a sauna, too.

**NH Hotel** (☎ 251 40, 0800 0115 0116; www.nh-hotels.com; Zerbster Strasse 29; r €65-105; ☎ ☒) Neutral white and grey tones somehow feel more stylish than clinical here, although the friendly service might have a helping hand in creating that impression. Set in one of the pedestrianised areas leading to the Rathaus and tourist office, the hotel is also reasonably well located.

**Hotel Fürst Leopold** (☎ 251 50, 00800 7846 8357; www.dessau.steigenberger.de; Friedensplatz; s/d from €100/130; ☎ ☒) Form certainly follows function in Dessau's most comfortable hotel. Stylish and spacious rooms are each decorated with chunky armchairs and a Kandinsky print, while there's a bar, excellent restaurant and pampering spa. Ask about the hotel's 'Roaring Twenties' packages, should you really want to get into the Kurt Weill-Bauhaus mood.

## Eating

In Dessau, you really can eat, drink and sleep Bauhaus. For a different diet, investigate the main thoroughfare of Zerbster Strasse. Restaurants are all much of a muchness, although we do suggest avoiding the cheap but unappetising canteen of the Umweltbundesamt.

**Bauhaus Mensa** (☎ 650 8421; Gropiusallee 38; mains €2.50-5.50; ☎ 8am-2pm Mon-Fri) Join students at the postgrad college for a cheap canteen meal, on the iconic but somewhat uncomfortable long benches and low stools.

**Bauhaus Klub** (☎ 650 8444; Gropiusallee 38; €3-7) Starting to see a pattern here? The occasional cool dude in black polo-neck jumper and horn-rimmed glasses can be seen among the broad mix of people in this basement bar of the Bauhaus school.

**Kornhaus** (☎ 640 4141; Kornhausstrasse 146; mains €7-13) Treat yourself to traditional local specialities and a refined evening in the curved Bauhaus dining room, with its striking 1930s patterned carpet. Alternatively, enjoy a light meal on the balcony overlooking the Elbe River.

## Getting There & Around

RE trains serve Dessau from Berlin-Hauptbahnhof (€22, 1½ hours). Regional trains come from Lutterstadt Wittenberg (€6.60, 40 minutes). Dessau is almost equidistant from Leipzig, Halle and Magdeburg (all €9.10, one hour). The Berlin-Munich autobahn (A9) runs east of town.

Single bus and tram tickets cost €1.20 (valid for 60 minutes). **Fahrradverleih Dieter Becker** (☎ 216 0113; Coswiger Strasse 47; per day €5-7.50) hires out bicycles.

## THE 'GARDEN REALM'

Bauhaus and Garden – as well as boasting iconic modern architecture, Dessau is surrounded by a verdant belt of landscaped parkland. Throughout this greenery is dotted a

series of palaces in varying styles, from English neo-classical to rococo.

This so-called **Gartenreich** (garden realm) owes its existence to the educated and well-travelled Prince Leopold III (Fürst Friedrich Franz von Anhalt-Dessau), who oversaw its creation between 1764 and 1800, in a quest to enrich the local cultural heritage. The Park Georgium is the easiest section to reach, being in Dessau itself, while Wörlitz is the most impressive and elaborate.

The whole landscape lies within the Unesco-protected **Biosphärenreservat Flusslandschaft Mittlere Elbe** (Riverland Biosphere of the Central Elbe; www.biosphaerenreservatmittlereelbe.de, in German). For nature lovers, there's an **information centre** (☎ 034904-4060; Am Kapenschlössen 3, Oranienbaum) on the way to Schloss Oranienbaum, and a nearby **beaver compound** (adult/child €1/0.50; ☎ 11am-5pm Sat & Sun May-Oct, by arrangement at other times), where you can watch the animals through a screen. Ask the Dessau Tourist Office for a free map of the entire region.

## Wörlitz Park & Schloss

With peacocks feeding on the lawn before a Gothic house, a tree-lined stream flowing towards a Grecian-style temple and a gap in a hedge framing a distant villa, the 112-hectare English-style **Wörlitz Park** (admission free) is a surprising find in eastern Germany. This is the tour de force of Prince Leopold's garden region, and its mosaic of paths, hedges and follies continues to woo numerous visitors.

Between May and early November, hand-cranked **ferries** (adult/concession €0.60/0.30) cross the Wörlitzer See, which lies between garden sections. During these months, 45-minute **gondola tours** (adult/concession €6/4) ply the lake, departing when eight people or more gather at the dock – this doesn't take long in summer; indeed the problem is more often too many customers for gondolas. Weekend concerts are another summer highlight.

On the edge of the park nearest the town lies Prince Leopold's former country house, **Schloss Wörlitz** (☎ 034905-409 20; admission by tour only adult/concession €4.50/2.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, to 5pm Apr & Oct, closed Nov-Mar, last tours 1hr before closing), which displays neoclassical English touches. Like the garden, it could almost be in England.

**Wörlitz-Information** (☎ 034905-202 16, room reservations 034905-194 33; www.woerlitz.de; Förstergasse 26; ☎ 9am-6pm Mar-Oct, 9am-4pm Mon-Fri Nov-Jan, 9am-4pm

### ON YER BIKE

You won't spend long in Saxony-Anhalt without noticing the large number of cycle tourists. After 1990's unification, many Germans wanted to rediscover the mighty Elbe River, large tracts of which had been off-limits to Westerners previously. The **Elberadweg** (Elbe River cycle path; [www.elberadweg.de](http://www.elberadweg.de)) is now among Germany's top three cycling routes, and wends its way some 860km west alongside the river, from the Czech border to Cuxhaven. The scenic 360km stretch in Saxony-Anhalt is particularly popular, helped along by low accommodation costs and a generally laidback pace of life. Tourist offices in the region have very specific guides of individual stretches; they're in German but mainly contain hotel and restaurant listings, plus route maps, so can be quite useful.

However, you don't have to set off on such an epic journey to enjoy wheeling around Saxony-Anhalt, as there are many shorter trails. One easy and immensely enjoyable route is the **Fürst Franz Garden Realm Tour** (60km), which travels between all the palaces around Dessau and Wörlitz, and passes along the Elbe River and the biosphere reserve information office. The Dessau Tourist Office (see p212) has a free pamphlet, while bike rental (p215) is available in the train station.

The grape-growing Saale-Unstrut region (see p225) also boasts a cycle-friendly **Weinstrasse** (Vineyard Rd; ☎ 034464-261 10; [www.natuerlich-saale-unstrut.de](http://www.natuerlich-saale-unstrut.de)) between some 750 of its vineyards. Local tourist offices sell copies of *Weinstrasse-Land der Burgen* (€5), a regional map showing the main route, as well as associated bicycle paths.

Mon-Fri 11am-3pm Sat & Sun Feb) can provide more details, plus a free map of the garden.

### GETTING THERE & AWAY

The train from Dessau to Wörlitz only operates Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday, from March to November, and then only makes five return trips a day, so check the train station timetable carefully. Bus 333 operates every two hours daily from around 7am to 6pm (€3.80, 30 minutes). However, you can sometimes travel in between times by using bus 12; ask at the information stand in front of the train station.

By road from Dessau, take the B185 east to the B107 north, which brings you right into town.

Wörlitz is only 23km from Lutherstadt Wittenberg; by car take the B187 west and head south on the B107.

The large lakeside car park charges more than the two other car parks in town.

### Other Parks & Palaces

None of Dessau's other parks is quite as stunning as Wörlitz, but visiting it does tend to give you a taste for more of the same, so head first to the **Georgium**. This sprawling 18th-century park is northwest of the Hauptbahnhof, within walking distance. At its heart stands the neoclassical **Schloss Georgium**, housing the **Anhalt Art Gallery** (☎ 0340-613 874; Puschkinallee 100; adult/concession €3/2; 🕒 10am-5pm

Tue-Sun), with paintings by the old masters, including Rubens and Cranach the Elder. The leafy grounds are also dotted with ponds and fake ruins. At the Georgium's eastern edge is the **Lehrpark**, an educational garden and zoo, with the huge domed **mausoleum** you can see from the train station.

Otherwise, the rococo **Schloss Mosigkau** (☎ 0340-521 139; Knobelsdorffallee 3, Dessau; admission €4.50; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, to 5pm Oct-Apr, closed Nov-Mar) lies southwest of central Dessau; take bus 16 to stop Schloss. The baroque Dutch **Schloss Oranienbaum** (☎ 034904-202 59; admission €4.50; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun Apr & Oct, closed Nov-Mar) is towards Wörlitz; take bus 331 or 333. **Schloss Luisium** (☎ 0340-218 3711; Dessau; admission €4.50; 10am-6pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun Apr & Oct, closed Nov-Mar) evinces a combination of neo-Gothic and classical styles; it's reached via bus 13 to Vogelherd.

You can even stay overnight in the elegant **Elbpavillon** (3-4 people €150-200) in parkland north of the Georgium. The Dessau tourist office (p212) is responsible for reservations.

### FERROPOLIS

Some 15km south of Wörlitz, Ferropolis answers that nagging question: 'What do you do with an abandoned open-pit GDR coal mine and leftover mining equipment that look like they were dispatched from some postapocalyptic nightmare?'

In 1991, some Bauhaus-inspired designers came up with a solution – a 25,000-seat concert venue and museum...of course! An amphitheatre was built, the mine pit was filled with water diverted from the Mulde River, and the monstrous machines (with charming names like Mad Max, Big Wheel and Medusa) were placed just so.

The **museum** (☎ 034953-351 20; [www.ferropolis.com](http://www.ferropolis.com); adult/concession €3.50/2.50; 🕒 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat & Sun summer, 10am-dusk winter) is an interesting monument to mining, and the changes wrought by industrial society. Most people go to Ferropolis, however, to watch old rock bands like Deep Purple play, or to attend musicals like *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Fortunately, the highlight of the calendar, the annual **Melt Festival** ([www.meltfestival.de](http://www.meltfestival.de)) is a great deal more hip. Check the website for more event details.

From Dessau, take bus 331 (in the direction of Gräfenhainichen) to the stop Jüdenberg B107/Ferropolis (€2.80 one way, 42 minutes); note that this is the third stop with Jüdenberg in its name. From here, it's a dusty 2km walk into the grounds. By car, take the B185 east to the B107 and turn south towards Gräfenhainichen (20 minutes in all); the entrance to Ferropolis is on your left, just past Jüdenberg.

From Lutherstadt Wittenberg, you can take a train to Gräfenhainichen (20 minutes) and then catch a bus heading towards Dessau or Oranienbaum to the Ferropolis gate. Driving from Lutherstadt Wittenberg, take the B100 to its junction with the B107 and turn north; the entrance is on the right.

### LUTHERSTADT WITTENBERG

☎ 03491 / pop 53,000

Wittenberg is the very crucible of the Reformation that led to the division of the Christian Church into Catholics and Protestants in the 16th century. A hotbed of progressive ideas then, it saw long-term resident Martin Luther write his famous 95 theses (see the boxed text, p219), priests get married, and educators like Philipp Melancthon argue for schools to accept female pupils.

Not a lot has happened since, but then with such a legacy it hasn't been needed. The town retains its significance for the world's 340 million Protestants, including 66 million Lutherans, as well as for those who simply admire Luther for his principled stand against authority.

As a result, Wittenberg's popularity has steadily grown since reunification in 1990 and – like it or not – even a nascent Luther industry has developed.

'*Hier stehe ich. Ich kann nicht anders*' (Here I stand. I can do no other), Luther once declared during a determined anticorruption campaign that changed the face of Europe and the course of history. Today, you can buy souvenir socks bearing the same credo.

### Orientation

Hauptbahnhof Lutherstadt-Wittenberg is the stop for trains to and from outlying regions, but smaller stations, such as Wittenberg-Elbtor, exist for local trains. Bus 304 (every 15 minutes) goes from the Hauptbahnhof to the city centre; otherwise it's a signposted 15- to 20-minute walk.

Most major sights can be found within the Altstadt ring. The main street, Collegienstrasse, runs east-west through the Markt and becomes Schlossstrasse at its western end.

### Information

**Internetcafé Dot.Komm** (☎ 437 927; Fleischerstrasse 6; per hr €3; 🕒 from 3pm)

**Paul-Gerhardt-Stiftung** (☎ 500; Paul-Gerhardt-Strasse 42) Hospital.

**Post office** (Wilhelm-Weber-Strasse 1)

**Wittenberg-Information** (☎ information 498 610/11, room reservations 414 848; [www.wittenberg.de](http://www.wittenberg.de); Schlossplatz 2; 🕒 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat, 11am-4pm Sun May-Oct, 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat, 11am-3pm Sun Nov-Mar) Offers a portable audio-guide to the town in several languages (€6, and your passport as deposit), two-hour city tours (€7; tours at 2pm May-Oct, in German) plus night tours, English tours and more.

### Sights & Activities

#### LUTHERHAUS

Extensively revamped a few years ago – to the tune of €17.5 million – the **Lutherhaus** (☎ 420 30; [www.martinluther.de](http://www.martinluther.de); Collegienstrasse 54; adult/concession €5/3; 🕒 9am-6pm Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar) uses a combination of antiques and modern displays; even those with no previous interest in the subject will be drawn in by its combination of accessible narrative (in German and English), personal artefacts (ie Bibles, cloak), oil paintings by Cranach the Elder and interactive multimedia displays. There's also an original room furnished by Luther in 1535, and decorated with a bit of royal graffiti from Russian Tsar Peter the Great in 1702.



An excellent addition to the museum is **Café Bora**, in the courtyard, overlooking archaeological finds.

The **Luthereiche** (Luther's oak), marking the spot where the preacher burned the 1520 papal bull threatening his excommunication, is on the corner of Lutherstrasse and Am Bahnhof, though the oak tree itself was planted around 1830.

### SCHLOSSKIRCHE

Legend has it that it was the door of the **Castle Church** (☎ 402 585; admission free; ☞ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 11.30am-5pm Sun, to 4pm Nov-Mar) that Luther nailed his 95 theses on 31 October 1517 (see the boxed text Luther Lore, opposite). There's no hard evidence that this happened, especially as the door in question was destroyed by fire in 1760. In its place, however, stands an impressive bronze memorial (1858) inscribed with the theses in Latin.

Inside is Luther's tombstone; it lies below the pulpit, opposite that of his friend and fellow reformer Philipp Melanchthon. Information sheets are available in several languages.

Next door, you can climb the city's landmark **Schlosssturm** (castle tower; adult/concession €2/1; ☞ noon-4pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun), but be warned that the floor feels a little shaky in parts, and the view is expansive rather than breathtaking.

### STADTKIRCHE ST MARIEN

If the Schlosskirche was the billboard used to advertise the forthcoming Reformation, its sister **Stadtkirche St Marien** (City Church of St Marien; ☎ 403 201; admission free; ☞ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 11.30am-5pm Sun, to 4pm Nov-Mar) was where the ecumenical revolution began, with the world's first Protestant worship services in 1521. It was also here that Luther preached his famous Lectern sermons in 1522, and where, three years later, he married ex-nun Katharina von Bora.

The centrepiece is the large altar, designed jointly by Lucas Cranach the Elder and his son. The side facing the nave shows Luther, Melanchthon and other Reformation figures, as well as Cranach himself, in biblical contexts. Unusually, though, the altar is painted on its reverse side. Behind it, on the lower

### LUTHER LORE

'When the legend becomes fact, print the legend,' a journalist famously tells Jimmy Stewart in the classic Western movie *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, and that is exactly what has happened with Martin Luther and his 95 theses. It's been so often repeated that Luther nailed a copy of his revolutionary theses to the door of Wittenberg's Schlosskirche on 31 October 1517, that only serious scholars continue to argue to the contrary.

Certainly, Luther did write 95 theses challenging some of the Catholic practices of the time, especially the selling of 'indulgences' to forgive sins and reduce the buyer's time in purgatory. However, it's another question entirely as to whether he publicised them in the way popular legend suggests.

Believers point to the fact that the Schlosskirche's door was used as a bulletin board of sorts by the university, that the alleged posting took place the day before the affluent congregation poured into the church on All Saints' Day (1 November), and the fact that at Luther's funeral, his influential friend Philipp Melanchthon said he witnessed Luther's deed.

But Melanchthon didn't arrive in town until 1518 – the year *after* the supposed event. It's also odd that Luther's writings never once mentioned such a highly radical act.

While it's known that he sent his theses to the local archbishop to provoke discussion, some locals think it would have been out of character for a devout monk, interested mainly in an honest debate, to challenge the system so publicly and flagrantly without first exhausting all his options.

In any event, nailed to the church door or not, the net effect of Luther's theses was the same. They prompted the onset of the Reformation and Protestantism, altering the way that large sections of the world's Christian population worship to this day.

ring, you'll see a seemingly defaced painting of heaven and hell; medieval students etched their initials into the painting's divine half if they passed their final exams – and into purgatory if they failed.

### CHURCH SERVICES

From April to October, the **Wittenberg English Ministry** (☎ 498 610; www.wittenberg-english-ministry.com; Schlossplatz 2) holds services in English from 6.30pm to 7.30pm on Saturday evening in either the Schlosskirche or Stadtkirche. Watch for notices, or ask at the tourist office. Services in English are also held at 4pm Wednesday and 11.30am Friday in the tiny Fronleichnamskapelle (Corpus Christi Chapel) attached to the Stadtkirche.

### HAUS DER GESCHICHTE

Another side to Luther-obsessed Wittenberg is shown at the **Haus der Geschichte** (House of History; ☎ 409 004; Schlossstrasse 6; adult/senior & student €4/2.50; ☞ 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 11am-6pm Sat & Sun), a heart-warming museum of everyday life in the GDR. The ground floor is devoted to temporary exhibitions, while living rooms, kitchens, bedrooms and bathrooms on the next two levels have been reconstructed in various styles from the 1940s to the 1980s. There's something

comforting about the homely lounge suites, clunky early consumer items, and the tins and jars that would have been gold-dust for the son recreating the good ol' East in the movie *Good Bye, Lenin!*

### HUNDERTWASSERSCHULE

Eastern Germans seem to be staunch fans of Friedensreich Hundertwasser's curvy organic architecture, the polar opposite of the boxy *Plattenbauten* tower blocks they grew up in. Magdeburg boasts the architect's last building (see p208), while Wittenberg's **Hundertwasserschule** (Hundertwasser School; ☎ 881 131; Strasse der Völkerfreundschaft 130; ☞ 1.30-5pm Tue-Fri, to 4pm Nov-Mar, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun) was his penultimate. Shortly before his death in 2000, Hundertwasser helped remodel a series of staid GDR concrete blocks into one of his signature buildings, with brightly coloured baubles, touches of gold, mosque-like cupolas and rooftop vegetation.

The school is a 20-minute walk northeast of the centre. From the Markt, follow Judenstrasse, turn left into Neustrasse and continue into Geschwister-Scholl-Strasse. Turn left into Sternstrasse, right into Schillerstrasse, and the school is at the next intersection on the left. Of course, it's possible to view the exterior





anytime, but tours of the interior (€2) wait for at least four participants before they start. Ring ahead for tours in English.

### OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Alongside the Lutherhaus, the former homes of two other Reformation stalwarts are now museums. The **Galerie im Cranachhaus** (☎ 420 1911; Schlossstrasse 1; adult/concession €4/3; ☹ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 1-5pm Sun, closed Mon Nov-Mar) is devoted to artist Lucas Cranach the Elder, who lived in Wittenberg during the Reformation and captured the action in fine detail. Meanwhile, the rather text-heavy **Melanchthon Haus** (☎ 403 279; Collegienstrasse 60; adult/concession €2.50/1.50; ☹ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, to 5pm Nov-Mar) discusses the life of university lecturer and humanist Philipp Melanchthon. An expert in ancient languages, Melanchthon helped Luther translate the Bible into German from Greek and Hebrew, becoming the preacher's friend and his most eloquent advocate.

The **Historische Druckerstube** (☎ 432 817; Cranach-Hof, Schlossstrasse 1) is a basement gallery selling ancient-looking black-and-white sketches of Martin Luther, both typeset and printed by hand.

### Tours

The **MS Lutherstadt Wittenberg** (☎ 769 0433; Schlossstrasse 16; €7.50) runs 1½-hour panoramic river cruises on the Elbe in summer. The booking office will fill you in about times and how to find the pier in Dessauerstrasse.

Meanwhile, ask at the tourist office about canoeing, which is offered in nearby villages.

To savour more of the same *Ostalgie* (nostalgia for the old East Germany) pedalled by the Haus der Geschichte, hire a Trabant East German car from **Event & Touring** (☎ 660 195; www.event-touring.com; Collegienstrasse 59a; per 3hr from €35-40). They also arrange Trabi 'safaris' or 'slaloms' for groups.

### Festivals & Events

Wittenberg is busiest during **Luther's Wedding festival** (Luthers Hochzeit) in early June, and on **Reformation Day** (Reformation Tag) on 31 October, the publication date of the 95 theses.

### Sleeping

#### BUDGET

**Brückenkopf Marina-Camp Elbe** (☎ 4540; www.marina-camp-elbe.de; Brückenkopf 1; adult & tent €7, car €2.50, hotel s/d/tr €40/60/90; ☎) How many camp-

ing grounds boast their own wine cellar? This well-equipped one does. But then it also offers a yacht harbour, a restaurant, simple huts, a hotel, holiday apartments, beach volleyball, table tennis, a sauna, a small grocery selection, modern wash facilities and more. On the banks of the Elbe, near the Wittenberg-Elbtour train station, the location is scenic, too.

**DJH hostel** (☎ 403 255; www.jugendherberge.de/jh/wittenberg; Schloss; dm under/over 26yr €16.80/19.50; ☎ ☎) Don't get carried away when you hear that this is in the town's castle building. The dimly lit interior is quite kitschy, with old linoleum floors, low ceilings, wood-laminate walls and plastic chairs. Still, once you've navigated the winding stairs, it's central and cheap.

**Pension am Schwanenteich** (☎ 402 807; Töpferstrasse 1; www.wittenberg-schwanenteich.de; s €32-38, d €54; ☎) Small and humble, but friendly and familiar, this pension has equipped its rooms with TV, hairdryer and internet connections, which is excellent for the price. With a restaurant and convenient location, it traditionally hasn't taken credit cards but is hoping to soon.

#### MIDRANGE & TOP END

**Stadthotel Wittenberg Schwarzer Baer** (☎ 420 4344; www.stadthotel-wittenberg.de; Schlossstrasse 2; s/d/q from €56/70/106; ☎ ☎) The modern rooms in this 500-year-old heritage-listed building (no lift) are light, airy and clean-smelling, with wooden floors and cork headboards. Staff are on the ball, too.

**Luther-Hotel** (☎ 3491 4580; www.luther-hotel-wittenberg.de; Neustrasse 7-10; s €65-100, d €80-115; ☎ ☎) Brand-new rooms here boast bathtubs, and there are two rooms for guests with disabilities. The huge reception space is impressive, as is the restaurant, but the place does welcome a lot of conference groups.

**Alte Canzley** (☎ 429 190; www.alte-canzley.de; Schlossstrasse 3; s €75-120, d €80-135; ☎) Even if you're not in need of the super-healthy non-smoking environment with non-allergic pillows, bedclothes and floors, the eight stylish apartments here will make you swoon. Six of them overlook the Schlosskirche and are generously sized, particularly the huge Linus Pauling apartment. In the town provost's former home, the hotel also has an organic restaurant with vaulted arches.

**Best Western Stadtpalais Wittenberg** (☎ 4250; www.stadtpalais.bestwestern.de; Collegienstrasse 56/57; s €95-115, d €105-115, breakfast €11; ☎ ☎ ☎) The

dark orange bedspreads and studded wooden headboards hark back to Luther's area, as do the lithographs on the wall, but this hotel is essentially about contemporary luxury. There's a sauna, a restaurant with touches of Asian décor and very helpful staff.

### Eating

Try some *Lutherbrot* – a gingerbread-like concoction with chocolate and sugar icing.

**Café Hundertwasserschule** (☎ 410 685; Markt 15; mains €5.50-14; ☎) There's a health-conscious streak at this café – from the no-smoking policy to the vegetarian options and fresh juices – but you're still free to indulge yourself with lamb, venison, home-made cakes or beer should you choose. Hundertwasser touches are dotted around the room.

**Tante Emmas Bier- & Caféhaus** (☎ 419 757; Markt 9; mains €8.50-16; ☎ closed Mon evening) Take a step back to 'the good old times' – from the no-smoking policy to the vegetarian options and fresh juices – but you're still free to indulge yourself with lamb, venison, home-made cakes or beer should you choose. Hundertwasser touches are dotted around the room.

**Zur Schlossfreiheit** (☎ 402 980; Coswigerstrasse 24; mains €9-14; ☎ dosed Sun) Traditional local dishes are all given historical themes in this cosy, wood-lined restaurant. Treats include *Lutherschmaus* (duck breast in orange and chocolate sauce, with sultanas) and the *Cranachteller* (grilled pork fillets with a gratin of *spirellini*, mushrooms, broccoli and hollandaise sauce).

### Drinking

**Brauhaus Wittenberg** (☎ 433 130; Im Beyerhof, Markt 6) This place – with a cobbled courtyard, indoor brewery and shiny copper vats – thrums with the noise of people having a good time on both summer and winter evenings.

**Barrik** (☎ 403 260; Collegienstrasse 81) Built more than 500 years ago, during Luther's lifetime, this wine bar really does feel like an upscale New York club.

**Marc de Café** (☎ 459 114; Pfaffengasse 5) Hidden away behind the tourist office, this trendy French café is a delight, with everything from cake and coffee to whiskey. It also has nice pictures on the wall and a quiet courtyard.

**In Vino Veritas** (☎ 7690 565; Mittelstrasse 3; ☎) from 6pm) Order a plate of antipasti (€9-14) as you sample the Italian, Spanish, French and Chilean wines at this upmarket *vinothek*.

A series of pubs at the eastern end of Collegienstrasse include **Sweet Apple** (No 38), where you can suck on a hookah pipe, and **Independent** (☎ 413 257; No 44).

See the listings magazine *Ingo* for further details.

### Entertainment

The Stadtkirche has organ concerts at 6pm Friday from May to October, while the Schlosskirche has choir and organ music at 2.30pm every Tuesday during the same period.

### Getting There & Away

Wittenberg is on the main train line to Halle and Leipzig (both €10, one hour). Both ICE (€25, 50 minutes) and RE (€17.60, 1¼ hours) go to various Berlin stations. Coming from Berlin, be sure to board for 'Lutherstadt-Wittenberg', as there's also a Wittenberge west of the capital.

### Getting Around

The main bus station is along Mauerstrasse just west of Neustrasse; single tickets are €1.30.

Parking enforcement is quite stringent, so use the car parks on the fringes of the Altstadt (such as near Elbtour and along Fleischerstrasse).

You'll find some rickshaw operators around town who are willing to take you to far-flung attractions such as the Hundertwasserschule. For bike rental, head to **Fahrradhaus Kralisch** (☎ 403 703; www.fahrradhaus-kralisch.de, in German; Judenstrasse 11).

## SOUTHERN SAXONY-ANHALT

### HALLE

☎ 0345 / pop 238,500

You can still feel the dread hand of the communera on Halle more than in many other Eastern cities. As an important GDR bastion – the centre of its chemical industry – some locals feel it has since been punished for its 'complicity'. It lost out on becoming the capital of Saxony-Anhalt in 1990, to the slightly smaller Magdeburg, and subsequently missed the government funding that accompanied that decision. Consequently, plenty of hideous

tower blocks remain planted between the frequently grimy medieval buildings of composer Georg Friedrich Händel's hometown.

Yet most people who've visited over the past decade agree that Halle has pulled itself up by its bootstraps, and is definitely improving. Indeed, its central shopping precinct is more lively than Magdeburg's, and it is famous for its cultural festivals. While local tram 1 travels to Frohe Zukunft (Happy Future), that's a destination all of Halle is still trying to reach.

## Orientation

The Altstadt lies northwest of the Hauptbahnhof and is circled by a road known as the Stadt Ring. To walk to the central Markt from the train station takes about 15 to 20 minutes; head left from the main entrance and turn left. Continue along pedestrianised Leipziger Strasse.

## Information

**Halle Tourist Information** (☎ 122 9984; www.halle-tourist.de; Leipziger Strasse 105; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat, 10am-2pm Sun) On the Markt.

**Halle Welcome Card** (1/3 days €7.50/15) Gives you free public transport and discounted museums entry.

**Speed/Eiscafé** (☎ 694 2727; Grosse Brauhausstrasse; per hr €3.50; ☎ 10am-midnight Mon-Sat, noon-midnight Sun) Internet access.

## Sights

### HÄNDELHAUS

As a paean to Halle's most famous son, the **Händelhaus** (☎ 500 900; www.haendelhaus.de; Grosse Nikolai Strasse 5-6; admission free; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Tue-Sun, to 7pm Thu) is a pretty static affair. It's the house in which Händel was born in 1685, and it charts the composer's life through his moves to Hamburg, Hanover, Italy and eventually London, where he achieved great fame before dying in 1759. The exhibition boards are in German, but call ahead and the museum will arrange a tour in your own language for no extra charge. There's also a collection of antique musical instruments, including an interesting 'glass harmonica' designed by the father of hypnosis, Franz Anton Mesmer.

If you're interested in the composer, it's best to come in the second week of June, when Halle hosts its **Händel Festival**.

### BEATLES MUSEUM

Imagine! The Continent's only full-time **Beatles Museum** (☎ 290 3900; www.beatlesmuseum.halle.de; Alter

Markt 12; adult/child €3/1.50; ☎ 10am-8pm Wed-Sun, last entry 7pm, closed Sep) is in the unlikely location of Halle (as a result of prohibitive rents in its first home, Cologne). Even in this roomy three-storey building, only a fraction of owner Rainer Moers's 10,000 items are displayed – from legendary photos, record covers and film posters to merchandise like wigs, jigsaws and even talcum powder. The gift shop sells many Beatles souvenirs.

### SCHLOSS MORITZBURG

In one tower of the atmospheric 15th-century Moritzburg Palace is the **Stadtmuseum** (Town Museum; ☎ 212 590; www.moritzburg.halle.de; Friedemann-Bach-Platz 5; adult/concession €5/3; ☎ 11am-8.30pm Tue, 10am-6pm Wed-Sun). Here you'll find a small but well-presented collection of German Expressionism and other contemporary art. Works include several by Franz Marc, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and influential Bauhaus devotee Lyonel Feininger. There are also single pieces by Edvard Munch and Emil Nolde, while temporary exhibitions occupy other halls. Do not confuse this Schloss Moritzburg with the much grander baroque palace in Saxony (see p179).

### HALLE-NEUSTADT

Reconstruction around the train station (as well as the Marktplatz and the Alter Markt) has given the city a new sheen, but it has taken away some of its quirky *Ostalgic* attractions, such as a huge concrete fist and Der Tunnel, an approach to the train station where every inch was covered in graffiti.

Halle-Neustadt, the communist satellite town built between 1964 and 1979 to house workers in the chemical industries, is unlikely to disappear any time soon. However, as home to 60,000 people, it's now only at half-capacity. More curious visitors might appreciate a visit to the 4 sq km of concrete *Plattenbauten* towers that compromises 'Hanoi' (as it's known, from Ha-Neu, the abbreviation of Halle-Neustadt) before it changes any more.

Take tram 2 to Soltauer Strasse, or trams 9, 10 or 11 to Göttinger Bogen. In fact, you needn't even alight from the tram to see the place, but it's more fun if you do.

### BURG GIEBICHENSTEIN

If it's a nice day, wander around the ruins of this **castle** (☎ 523 3857; Seebener Strasse 1; adult/child €2.10/1.30; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Fri, to 6.30pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct). Tram 7 will get you here.

**Reederei Riedel** (☎ 283 2070; www.reederei-riedel-halle.de; Giebichensteinbrücke, office on the ship Rheinpfalz; adult/child €4.50/2.50) runs a series of 45-minute river tours from the nearby bank, leaving on the hour between 10am and 6pm daily, May to September.

## Sleeping

**DJH hostel** (☎ 202 4716; www.jugendherberge.de/jh/halle; August-Bebel-Strasse 48a; dm under/over 26yr €17.50/21.20; ☎) Much of this hostel evinces 1970s kindergarten style, with old lino and plastic chairs. Not so the lovely dining room, where the carved wood harks back to the 1930s. The hostel's a 15-minute walk north of the centre but is close to the nightlife of Kleine Ulrichstrasse.

**Marthahaus** (☎ 510 80; www.stiftung-marthahaus.de, in German; Adam-Kuckhoff-Strasse 5; s €45-60, d €65-85; ☎) Run by the Christian mission that manages the retirement home next door, this hotel can seem quite hushed at times. Yet, as far as its furnishings go, it's the best three-star hotel in town, with soft carpet underfoot and cosy, well-furnished rooms. The stained-glass windows in the lounge, stairwell and beautiful dining hall only confirm this impression, as does the unusually pleasant neighbourhood. **Apart-Hotel Halle** (☎ 525 90; www.apart-halle.de; Kohlschütter Strasse 5-6; s/d from €70/85, ste from €100; ☎) Have a bit of fun in this theatrical hotel. Inside the red Art Deco building, with its amusing statue out the front, you'll find stylish standard rooms and suites themed around German cultural colossi. Although it's a little north of the centre, it sets the perfect tone if you're coming for the Händel Festival.

**Dorint Novotel Halle Charlottenhof** (☎ 292 30; www.accorhotels.com; Dorotheenstrasse 12; s/d from €80/100; ☎ ☎ ☎) Rooms blend Art Deco and contemporary features in this leading hotel. The dark colour scheme gives it a no-nonsense business feel.

**Kempinski Rotes Ross** (☎ 233 430; www.kempinski-halle.de; Leipziger Strasse 76; s €150-170, d €170-190, breakfast €17; ☎ ☎ ☎) Halle's only five-star hotel is decorated in a wedding-cake style, with lots of red, white and ornate detailing.

Also recommended: **Apartmenthaus am Dom** (☎ 500 980; Robert-Franz-Ring 4; s/d from €45/75; ☎) Simple but business-like apartments with kitchenettes. There's a sauna, too.

**City Hotel am Wasserturm** (☎ 298 20; www.cityhotel-halle.de; Lessingstrasse 8; s €55-70, d €75-80; ☎ ☎) Very pleasant modern hotel set over two buildings; rooms have kitchenettes.

## Eating

Many of the bars listed in this section can be relied on for a reasonably priced snack or meal.

**Lesecafé NT** (☎ 202 1770; Grosse Ulrichstrasse 51; dishes €2.10-8.50; ☎) closed Mon evening) This café is not just a good place to hit before an evening at the edgy Neues Theater (think Ibsen, Brecht and contemporary playwrights). Behind its eye-catching glass, imprinted with the names of literary greats, and its window display of teacups and tea sets, you can fuel up on breakfast, lunch and, most evenings, dinner.

**Wok Bar** (☎ 470 4588; Grosse Ulrichstrasse 41; mains €7.50-15) This upbeat noodle bar does a good job of keeping things ticking, with a regular programme of 'After Wok' parties, DJ events, cocktail and tempura evenings. It's also excellent for lunch or dinner, when you can design your own stir-fry meal by choosing your ingredients from a list of 30.

**Palais 5** (☎ 977 2651; Ankerstrasse 3c; mains €4.50-14; ☎) from 6pm Mon-Sat, from 10am Sun) From paella to pelmeni, by way of pasta, schnitzels and Argentine steaks – this rustic restaurant, in a large half-timbered house on the river, really does offer the 'jungle' of choices it promises. Although it's a local haunt, the chirpy owner loves to practise his English and has translated the menu. There's a waterside terrace in summer. Follow the signs through the business park.

**Ackerbürgerhof** (☎ 2798 0432; Grosse Klausstrasse 15; mains €4-11) As much a sightseeing attraction as a restaurant, this one-time stables building was converted into a house in the 13th century. Goethe and Händel are alleged to have supped within its six rooms, although probably not on the same modern international cuisine you'll be served.

Also recommended: **Ökoase** (☎ 290 1604; Kleine Ulrichstrasse 2; mains €3.50-6.50; ☎) Mon-Fri 10am-7pm) Cheap, healthy veggie bistro. **Café NöÖ** (☎ 202 1651; Grosse Klausstrasse 11; mains €4-6.50) Grungy, alternative caff with surprisingly tasty food and a rose-covered summer terrace. The sign says Reformhaus.

**Sushi am Opernhaus** (☎ 681 6627; August-Bebel-Strasse 3; dishes €1.70-15) Run by the same crew as the Wok Bar.

## Drinking

Kleine Ulrichstrasse is the first place to head, being lined with bars. These include the relaxed **Emilie** (☎ 202 5333; Kleine Ulrichstrasse 26) and

Russian-themed vodka specialist **Ютемкинъ** (Potemkin; ☎ 960 6491; Kleine Ulrichstrasse 27). **Lujah** (☎ 478 9900; Kleine Ulrichstrasse 36) is a hip and happening place – the name comes from Hallelujah!

Sternstrasse is another good place to drink, and is where you'll find the bar **Don Camillo** (☎ 290 1056; Sternstrasse 3) and others.

## Entertainment

For further listings, consult the free magazines *Aha!*, *Blitz* or *Frizz*.

## CLUBS

Mainstream discos include **Flower Power** (☎ 688 8888; Moritzburgring 1) and **Easy Schorre** (☎ 212 240; www.easyschorre.de; Philipp-Müller-Strasse 77-78). **Objekt 5** (☎ 522 0016; Seebener Strasse 5) and **Turm** (☎ 202 3737; Friedemann-Bach-Platz 5) are where to head for music events including jazz and tango.

## CLASSICAL MUSIC

Two of the most important venues during June's Händel Festival are the modern 1900-seat **Händel-Halle** (☎ 292 90; Salzgrafenplatz 1) and the more venerable, highly respected **Opernhaus** (Opera House; ☎ 511 00; Universitätsring 24).

For tickets, contact **Ticket-Galerie** (☎ 6888 6888; Stadtcenter Rolltreppe, Grosse Ulrichstrasse 50).

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

Leipzig-Halle airport lies between both cities, which are about 25km apart. It's a major link with Frankfurt, Munich and other major German and European cities. ICE trains head from the airport train station to Leipzig and Dresden in one direction and Halle, Magdeburg and Hanover in the other. RE and ICE trains run directly between **Leipzig-Halle airport** (www.leipzig-halle-airport.de) and Halle Hauptbahnhof (from €6, 13 minutes).

## CAR & MOTORCYCLE

From Leipzig, take the A14 west to the B100. A new extension of the A14 connects Halle and Magdeburg in about one hour. The B91 runs south from Halle and links up with the A9 autobahn, which connects Munich and Berlin.

## TRAIN

Leipzig and Halle are linked by frequent trains (€5.70, 35 minutes). To Magdeburg there are IC trains (€17, 50 minutes) and RE trains (€13.40, one hour, 20 minutes) and direct IC

trains go to Berlin (various stations, €34, two hours). Local trains serve Eisleben (€6.20, 40 minutes) and Wittenberg (€10, one hour).

## Getting Around

Trams 2 and 5 (at one stop) and 7 and 9 (at another) will all take you from the train station to the Marktplatz. Fares are usually €1.50 for singles (€1.10 for rides of up to four stops) and €4.10 for day cards. However, if you have an EC/Maestro debit card, buy tickets on the trams – they're cheaper.

For drivers, the one-way street system in Halle is fiendishly complex, and the streets busy. Your best bet is to park near the Hauptbahnhof, or at one of the municipal garages, and take trams.

## EISLEBEN

☎ 03475 / pop 24,500

It seems odd for a well-travelled man whose ideas revolutionised Europe to have died in the town where he was born. However, as native son Martin Luther himself put it before expiring here, '*Mein Vaterland war Eisleben*' (Eisleben was my fatherland). Whereas Lutherstadt Wittenberg has other distractions, this former mining town focuses on the devout follower these days. Every where you turn, it's Luther, Luther, Luther, in this town, which also answers to the double-barrelled Lutherstadt Eisleben.

## Orientation

Most sights are knotted together around the Markt, just southwest of Hallesche Strasse-Freistrasse (B80), the main thoroughfare. From the train station (turn left out of the main exit), it's a 10-minute walk north along Bahnhofsring and Bahnhofstrasse.

## Information

**Kreisinformationzentrum Mansfelder Land**

(☎ 667 790; www.mansfelderland.de; Markt 58; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, to 4.30pm Nov-Mar) Tourist information. Has a tendency to put a price on brochures.  
**Tourist Office Lutherstadt Eisleben** (☎ 602 124; www.eisleben-tourist.de, in German; Bahnhofstrasse 36; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Tue, 9am-noon Sat)

## Sights

### LUTHER MUSEUMS

Chock-full of Luther souvenirs from down through the ages, the annexe at the back is the most visually appealing feature of **Luthers Ge-**

**burts haus** (Luther's birth house; ☎ 602 775; Seminarstrasse 16; adult/concession €2/1; ☎ 10am-6pm Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar). The main house, where the reformer was born, is now sparsely furnished.

In the centre of town, just past the Markt, lies **Luthers Sterbehau** (Luther's death house; ☎ 602 285; Andreaskirchplatz; adult/concession €2/1), an altogether more reverential affair. There's lots of information (in German) about the Reformation downstairs, and upstairs Luther's reconstructed living quarters and death chamber include copies of his death mask and last testimony.

Luther returned to Eisleben to help settle a legal dispute over the family copperworks, but he was already ill and died a day after finalising an agreement, on 18 February 1546.

Although it was long believed that this was where the great man departed this world, new research has revealed that Luther died in the building now occupied by the Graf von Mansfeld hotel. With such a long tradition of people paying respects to him here, however, there are no plans to move the exhibition.

## MARKT & CHURCHES

See where Luther delivered his last sermons in 1546! That's the **St Andreaskirche** (☎ 10am-noon & 2-4pm Mon-Sat, 11am-1pm & 2-4pm Sun May-Oct), a late-Gothic hall church on the hill behind the central Markt. See where Luther stayed while district vicar! That would be the apartments of the **St Annenkirche** (☎ 1-3pm Mon-Fri May-Oct), 10 minutes west of the Markt. This church also features a stunning Steinbilder-Bibel (stone-picture Bible; 1585), the only one of its kind in Europe, and a wittily decorated pulpit. Finally, see where Luther was baptised – the **St Petri Pauli Kirche** (Church of Sts Peter & Paul; ☎ 1-3pm Mon-Fri May-Oct) near the Fremdverkehrsein.

By now, we think you get the picture of what Eisleben is about. The historic **Kloster Helfta** (Helfta Cloister; ☎ 711 400; www.kloster-helfta.de; Lindenstrasse 34) is undergoing further renovation, but the nuns still offer group tours by arrangement and organise religious workshops; there's also a hotel attached (see right).

## Sleeping & Eating

**Parkhotel** (☎ 540; fax 253 19; Bahnhofstrasse 12; s/d €40/55) The green metallic bathroom blinds and purple cushions seem to have been here since the '70s, but this pleasant enough family-run hotel is clean and has a pretty hill-top setting, across from a leafy park.

**Mansfelder Hof** (☎ 6690; www.mansfelderhof.de; Hallesche Strasse 33; s/d €50/80; ☎ ) Behind its vine-covered, faded green stucco façade, the Mansfelder Hof turns out to have modern but entirely forgettable rooms. The real draw is the restaurant serving local specialities, often with Luther-related names.

**Hotel an der Klosterpforte** (☎ 714 40; www.klosterpforte.com; Lindenstrasse 34; s/d €60/80; ☎ ☎ ☎ ) Eisleben's youngest hotel, built in 2002, features uncluttered modern rooms, a buffet restaurant and a brewery adjacent to the historic Kloster Helfta. It's a little out of the centre, though, and it's helpful to have your own transport.

**Graf von Mansfeld** (☎ 250 722; www.hotel-eisleben.de; Markt 56; s/d from €50/80; ☎ ) In a completely different class from anything else in this slightly depressed town, the Graf von Mansfeld has real style, with parquet flooring, rugs and four-poster beds – all with just a hint of rococo. The restaurant serves modern international cuisine (mains €8.50 to €17).

## Getting There & Away

There are trains to Halle (€6.20, 35 minutes), Leipzig (€11.70, 70 minutes), Erfurt (€14.70, 1¼ hours) and Weimar (from €17.20, two hours).

Eisleben is a half-hour drive west of Halle on the B80.

# SAALE-UNSTRUT REGION

It will never rival the likes of Bordeaux as a connoisseur's paradise, but the wine-growing region along the rivers Saale and Unstrut (pronounced *zah-leh* and *oon-shtrout*) nevertheless provides a wonderfully rural summer retreat. Europe's most northerly wine district, it produces crisp whites and fairly sharp reds, which you can enjoy at regular vineyard tastings. Bicycle and hiking paths meander through rolling, castle-topped hills and past small family-owned farms (see the boxed text, p216 for more details).

## NAUMBURG

☎ 03445 / pop 31,500

Like Cologne, Naumburg is famous for its huge cathedral. It's just that here the architecture is late Romanesque rather than Gothic

and the local accompaniment is wine, not beer. Famously, philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche spent some of his final years in this town. Aside from this, Naumburg's a quiet place featuring several ornate medieval buildings: the Rathaus, and the Portal von 1680 at the eastern end are examples of what's called 'Naumburg Renaissance' style.

### Orientation

The Hauptbahnhof is 1.5km northwest of the old town, which is encircled by a ring road. You can take bus 2 from the Hauptbahnhof to the Markt (€1.20) or walk along Rossbacher Strasse (keep bearing left and uphill). Doing the latter takes you past the cathedral. The bus station is at the northeastern edge of town on Hallesische Strasse.

### Information

**Post office** (Heinrich von Stephan Platz 6) Just north of Marienort.

**Tourist office** (☎ 273 112; www.naumburg-tourismus.de; Markt 12; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat, 10am-1pm Sun Apr-Oct, ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat Nov-Mar)

### Sights

#### DOM

In the western quarter of town, on a road in from the train station, stands the enormous medieval **Cathedral of Sts Peter & Paul** (☎ 201 675; Domplatz 16-17; adult/concession/child €4/3/2). Its size is impressive enough, but the cathedral is also rather unusual in having two choirs. The western choir, built from 1250 to 1260 in late Romanesque style, is the more interesting. Considered the magnum opus of the anonymous Master of Naumburg, it not only contains some of Germany's oldest and most valuable stained-glass windows, but also houses the celebrated 13th-century **statues of Uta and Ekkehard**, who were among the dome's many benefactors. Uta of Naumburg is a German icon and her serene face decorates souvenirs all over town.

The elevated eastern choir was built around 1330 in Gothic style. The staircase up to it is interesting, too, although it's a contemporary touch. Magdeburg artist Heinrich Apel has decorated the banisters with all sorts of farmyard animals, hobgoblins and fairy-tale characters.

An informative tour (in German) is included in the admission price, but you can

pick up a leaflet, or buy a brochure in English (€5.50), and walk around on your own.

### NIETZSCHE HAUS

The home of Friedrich Nietzsche's mother, who brought the philosopher here to nurse him when he was dying from syphilis, this requires a lot of concentration – just like the man's work itself. That's to say there's not much to the **Nietzsche Haus** (☎ 201 638; Weingarten 18; adult/concession €2/1.25; ☎ 2-5pm Tue-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun) apart from photos and reams of biographical text (all in German). The exhibition pointedly stays *stumm* (silent) on the controversy surrounding the man who wrote *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (Thus Spoke Zarathustra) and became a Nazi favourite.

### Festivals & Events

The normally sedate town goes wild on the last weekend in June with the **Kirschfest** (Cherry Festival; www.kirschfest.de), held at the Vogelwiese field at the southeastern end of town. It celebrates the unlikely medieval tale of the lifting of a blockade by Czech soldiers, when their leader, Prokop, gave in to requests by the town's children (dressed in their Sunday finest) to please leave and let the townsfolk eat again.

Tent stalls offer regional food, wine and beer, and there is live music. An enormous fireworks display and a parade, with actors dressed as Uta and Ekkehard, are held on the Sunday.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Camping Blütengrund** (☎ 202 711; www.camping-naumburg.de; Blütengrund Park; adult/tent/car €4.50/4/2) This large leafy camp site, 1.5km northeast of Naumburg at the confluence of the Saale and Unstrut Rivers, is very sports-orientated, with equipment hire and even canoe rental (from €25 a day) nearby.

**DJH hostel** (☎ 703 422; www.jugendherberge.de/jh/naumburg; Am Tennisplatz 9; dm under/over 26yr €14/16.70, breakfast €4) Naumburg's large and well-equipped hostel is 1.5km south of the town centre.

**Hotel Garni St Marien** (☎ 235 40; fax 235 422; Marienstrasse 12; s/d €45/85; P) You're guaranteed a good night's rest here, in rooms set well back from a not particularly noisy street. The generic décor won't keep you awake either. Nice touches in the public areas include a magazine rack and honour bar. Service is friendly, too.

**Hotel Stadt Aachen** (☎ 2470; www.hotel-stadt-aachen.de, Markt 11; s €50-70, d €80-100) With its country-style floral curtains, its patterned duvet covers and its heavy wooden wardrobes, the Stadt Aachen is the place for rustic German charm. The vine-covered façade is located right on the Markt, and the hotel's Carolus Magnus restaurant is also popular.

**Zur Alten Schmiede** (☎ 243 60; www.hotel-zur-alten-schmiede.de; Lindenring 36-37; s €45-60, d €60-85) Combining the friendly (very) and smiley service of a family-run business, with effortless unstuffy elegance, this is the most chic place to stay in Naumburg. Hearty fare is served in the ground-floor restaurant.

**Alt Naumburg** (☎ 205 294; Marienplatz 13; mains €3.60-12) Although many come here just for the local wines or fine beer, Alt Naumburg also serves a range of casual fare, from jacket potatoes and salads to fish and schnitzels. The outside tables on the cobblestones are packed in summer.

### Getting There & Around

There are regional trains to Naumburg from Halle (€6.80, 40 minutes), Leipzig (€8, 1¼ hours), Jena (€6.20, 35 minutes) and Weimar (€7.60, 30 minutes). A local line runs to Freyburg (€2.30, nine minutes) and Bad Kösen (€2.30, five minutes).

ICE trains serve Berlin (€41, two hours), Frankfurt (€55, three hours) and Munich (€71, 4½ hours).

By road from Halle or Leipzig, take the A9 to either the B87 or the B180 and head west; the B87 is less direct and more scenic, though it's the first exit from the A9.

### FREYBURG

☎ 034464 / pop 5000

With its cobblestone streets and medieval castle above vine-covered slopes, sleepy wine-growing Freyburg has a vaguely French atmosphere. It's the sort of village that puts the 'r' in rustic – or would it if it could stay awake to do so. Although it boasts Germany's most famous sparkling wine brand, and a rare example of ex-GDR commercial success, you wouldn't realise it from the exterior. The town only really comes alive for its **wine festival** in the second week of September.

### Orientation

To reach the town centre from the train station, turn right at the Fiedelak shop, left into

the park and cross the bridge over the river. For the castle, take the second road to the right (Schlossstrasse). Keep bearing left for the Markt and tourist office.

### Information

**Freyburg tourist office** (☎ 272 60; www.freyburg-info.de; Markt 2; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat)

### Sights

Established in 1856, and one of the best-known sparkling wine producers in the former GDR, the **Rotkäppchen sparkling wine factory** (☎ 340; www.rotkaeppchen.de, German only; Sektellereierstrasse 5; tours €4; ☎ tours at 2pm daily & 11am Sat & Sun) has enjoyed something of a (slightly *Ostalgie*-fuelled) comeback in the united Germany. Its *Sekt* (sparkling wine) is perhaps a little sweet for some tastes, but increased sales mean 'Little Red Riding Hood' has acquired enough muscle to buy several Western brands, including Mumm, in recent years. Before she was promoted to the top job, they proudly point out, German Chancellor Angela Merkel also made a VIP visit to this factory.

The usual (non-VIP) one-hour tours include the two-storey 120,000L Sekt barrel decorated with ornate carvings (no longer in use), a tasting, and the Lichthof – a glorious gymnasium-sized hall with 100-year-old skylights, where concerts are held year round. Telephone for details.

Between 10am and 5pm, you can also taste and buy a whole range of *Sekt* at the shop out the front.

Reached via winding woodland steps, the large medieval **Schloss Neuenburg** (☎ 355 30; www.schloss-neuenburg.de, in German; Schloss 25; adult/concession €3.50/2.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, to 5pm Nov-Mar), on the hill above town, houses an excellent museum. There's an unusual two-storey (or 'double') chapel, fascinating explanations of medieval life and a free-standing tower behind the castle, the **Dicker Wilhelm** (adult/concession €1.50/0.75; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct), which offers further historical exhibitions and splendid views. There's a fun Knight's Tournament in June, too.

### Getting There & Around

Trains run every hour (€2.30, eight minutes), as do buses (€2.30, 15 minutes), between Naumburg's Hauptbahnhof/ZOB and Freyburg's Markt; the services are drastically

curtailed on weekends. The well-marked bicycle route (Radwandern) between the two cities makes for a wonderful ride. Bikes can be hired from **Fiedelak** (☎ 7080; Bahnhofstrasse 4; per day €6).

Perhaps the most scenic way to get to Freyburg is by boat from Blütengrund, at the confluence of the Saale and Unstrut Rivers, just

outside Naumburg. The historic, 19th-century **MS Fröhliche Dörte** (☎ 03445-202 830) tootles its way up the Unstrut at 11am, 1.30pm and 4pm daily between May and September. The 70-minute journey costs €6 per adult and €3.80 per child one way, and €10 and €6 return. It runs back from Freyburg at 12.15pm, 2.45pm and 5.15pm.