

# *Tradesmen and rulers in the Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League*

*Bautzen · Görlitz · Kamenz · Luban · Löbau · Zittau*





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Many towers. Great views.

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Baroque beauty

## *The Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League*

*For many centuries, six Upper-Lusatian cities were attractive ports of call for business travellers from all over the world.*

*Nowadays, they are popular destinations for tourists from every corner of the globe.*



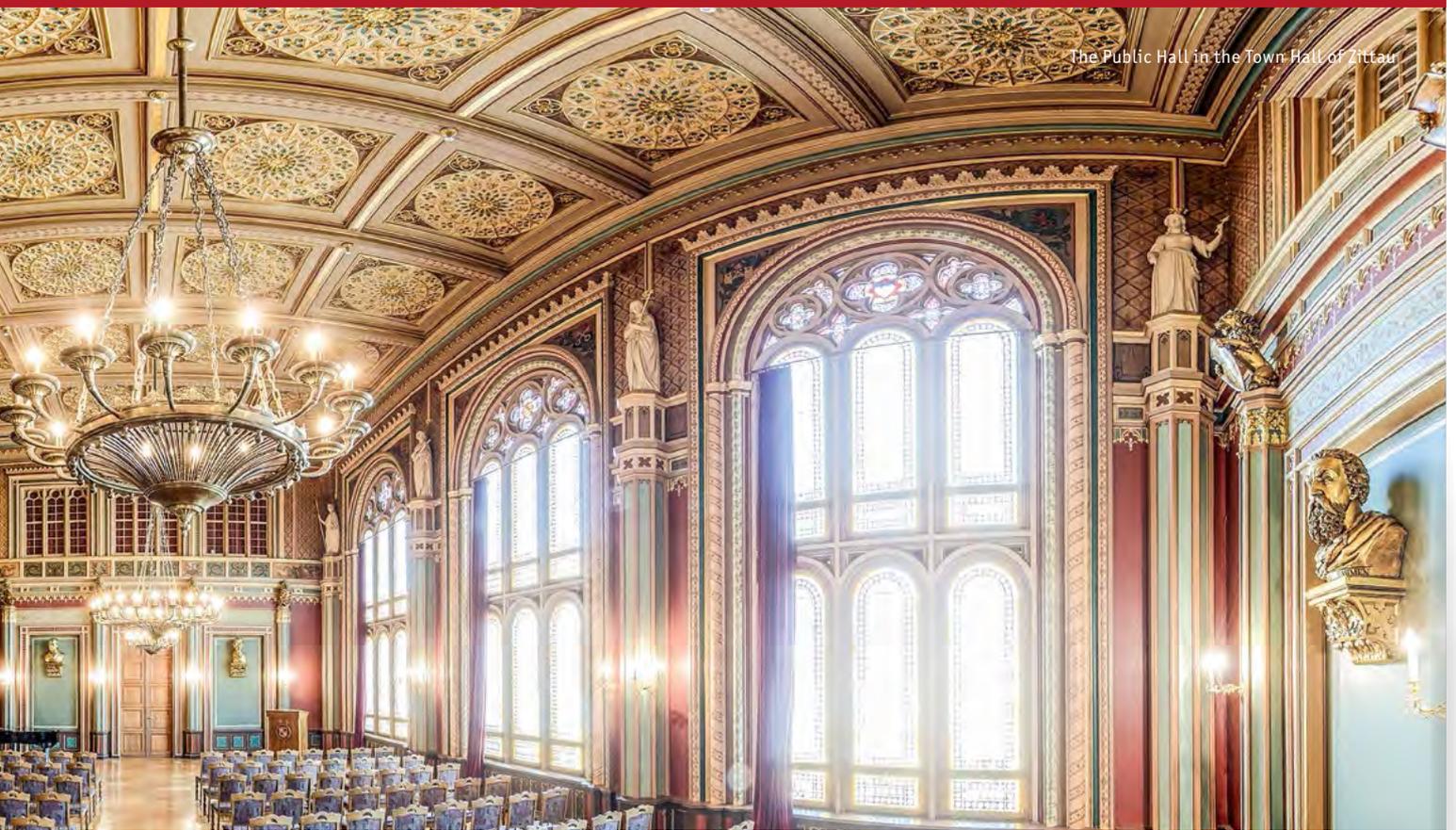


The Rietschelgiebel in Bautzen



The town-hall clock in Löbau





# A journey through time in Upper Lusatia

In the late Middle Ages, travelling was not something you did for pleasure. It was arduous and dangerous on the road, but for most traders and rulers in the 14th century it was just a “necessary evil”. The former needed to travel to trade lucrative goods, while the latter needed to show their presence in order to enforce their claims to power. However, this fact brought highwaymen and robbers on the scene who soon grew bolder in going about their “business” with the rich and powerful. For years, the cities tried to defend themselves with mutual aid agreements, but in 1346 they realised enough was enough: a better solution was needed.

Therefore, on August 21 1346 in Löbau, representatives of the trading cities of Bautzen, Görlitz, Kamenz, Luban, Zittau and Löbau came together. With the approval of the King (later Emperor) Charles IV, they founded the Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League. From that point on, the cities would join forces to campaign against everything to do with this flourishing business – shortly thereafter they were even granted authority to dispense justice “on the King’s behalf”. The troops of the Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League now stormed the robbers’ hideaways and brought marauding knights from impoverished noble families to justice. The heyday of Upper Lusatia had begun. The league existed for almost half a millennium and, during that time, each city matured like a small jewel.

It was not until 1815 that the Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League was dissolved as a result of the Congress of Vienna. In any case, it had fulfilled its original purpose. Nevertheless, Bautzen, Görlitz, Kamenz, Zittau and Löbau as well as Lubań, now in Poland, remain very special attractions for travellers from all over the world. They marvel at the magnificent town houses, proud churches and defensive fortifications from that era, all forging together these six cities.

You experience a diverse journey through time in all of Upper Lusatia.

And this journey begins ... now!

# Bautzen

Many towers. Great views.



The old waterworks

Bautzen (Sorbian: Budyšin) is the oldest city in the Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League. Visitors continually discover here traces of the existence of the Sorbs, the smallest Slavic population, whose home has been in Upper Lusatia for centuries.

“*Civitas Budusin*” – this is proudly emblazoned on the document from the year 1002 and mentions Bautzen for the first time by name. Probably even then the parish church stood on the granite plateau above the River Spree; its successor would go on to make Bautzen

a cathedral city. After 1213, following the establishment of the cathedral foundation, the construction of the first cathedral in honour of Saint Peter commenced. It formed the city’s skyline already at the time of the foundation of the Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League. Even today’s “Town Hall” at the main marketplace was there at that time; as the location of the Tourist Information Office, it is nowadays the first port of call for many visitors to Bautzen. Some 500 years earlier the representatives of the Upper Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League would meet here occasionally to concern themselves with the prosperity of the cities. In Bautzen there is something to experience at every turn; the “Bautzener history trail” passes through more than 60 points of interest.

**On the right** A cloth dealer, “Teda”, leads interested visitors through Bautzen.



The city offers around 1,400 monuments from all eras, but one is not overwhelmed by the choice, as together they create a fascinating ensemble to be seen while strolling through the historic streets. Here and there the view opens up of the deep valley, along the bottom of which rushes the River Spree. Highlights of the tour include, of course, Saint Peter's Cathedral, which received its current form of a late Gothic hall church after 1430, during the heyday of the Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League. And when the Fleischmarkt (meat market) is held at the cathedral, one feels slightly thrown back to times when world traders would be attracted to Lusatia and merchants would offer their goods for sale in the cities.

At that time another landmark of Bautzen arose: the "Old Waterworks". Wenzel Röhrscheidt's technological masterpiece of 1558 secured a reliable water supply for the city, which stands on impermeable rock. The wealthy trading town erected the costly seven-storey stone building for this purpose. Using the power of the Spree, it pumped water to Bautzen and up some 50 metres into the air, where it was then distributed through a pipe system to 86 public water troughs. Many of these can still be seen and even the technological sophistication of the "Waterworks" can still be admired.

But you can, of course, put aside the list of landmarks and simply drift through the ages. To do this, visit the historic inns with their fresh beer and Upper-Lusatian specialities, walk past the baroque façades or right into the Sorbian culture, all of which you can experience, enjoy and even taste around Bautzen.



St. Peter's Cathedral



Wjelbik

### Top 10 in Bautzen

- 1 Saint Peter's Cathedral
- 2 Bautzen memorial
- 3 The Old Waterworks
- 4 Kleinwelka Dinosaur Park
- 5 The "Reichturm" and the Old Town
- 6 Bautzen City Museum
- 7 The Sorbian Museum
- ◀ 8 "Wjelbik", a Sorbian restaurant
- 9 Senfstube, a mustard restaurant
- 10 Mönchshof, a traditional restaurant



Kleinwelka Dinosaur Park

### Bautzen/Budyšin

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# Görlitz

## The Sanctuary and the Low-German Houses

*The charm of this historic trading city is so vivid that film-makers from all over the world invent new fantasy worlds in Görlitz for the cinema. However, the reality here is often better than any film ...*

In 1071, the Slavic village of "Goreliz" was given to the Bishop of Meissen. The subsequent rise to one of the most important cities of the region was at that time not yet in sight, yet it mainly goes back to the "Via Regia"

or Royal Highway. People travelled on trade routes and pilgrimages, from Moscow or Kiev to Bruges, or via Santiago de Compostela all the way to the Atlantic coast of Spain. Many of these travelling traders, pilgrims and rulers stopped off in Görlitz, soon making the city on the River Neisse a bustling commercial centre. And as much as it is a lively "European city" today with its colourful culture and gastronomy, it was just as cosmopolitan and diverse at the time of the Upper-Lusatian Six

Towns League. What those travellers saw and experienced all those centuries ago in Görlitz is still available to residents and guests of the city to this day: bustling streets, visitors from all over the world and magnificent ruins such as the "Schönhof" at the Untermarkt. This is the oldest Renaissance building in the city and originally served as a hostel for travelling nobility.

**Top**

"Schönhof"

Low-German House

**Right**

The Untermarkt with the tower of the Town Hall

**Far right**

Görlitz department store



Nowadays, following wonderful restoration, it is home to the Silesian Museum. Around the Schönhof there are many typical "Low-German Houses", as were preferred by the rich traders at the time of the Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League – Goethe fittingly called the buildings "tradesmen's castles". Behind their often inconspicuous façades, business transactions were made, contracts were sealed and travels were planned – including the legendary trip made by the merchant's son Georg Emmerich. He returned from his pilgrimage to

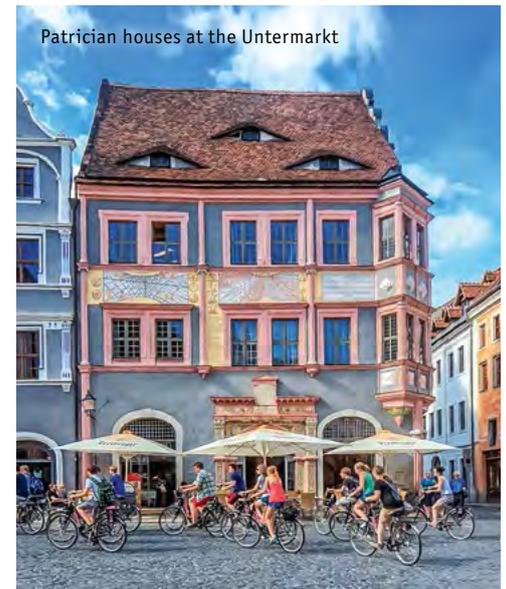
Jerusalem in 1465 with a plan to recreate the Holy Grave of Jesus in Görlitz. The Holy Grave has long since been considered one of the most important tourist attractions of Görlitz, along with the Town Hall built in the 14th Century and dozens of other Renaissance and Baroque buildings. From the picturesque old town and up over the River Neisse is another short stroll through a few centuries to the next heyday of the city. During the industrial revolution in the 19th century, industrial plants and housing estates sprang up just south of

the old town in the style of the Gründerzeit, a rare sight in Germany.

In fact, the short walk through the ages has attracted not only tourists to the city, but also film-makers time and again. Even Hollywood has filmed against the backdrop of "Görliwood" – although it is real through and through. And those who have come to search in Görlitz for the famous places from their favourite film can at the same time solve the following puzzle: On which building can you find all coats of arms of the six members of the Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League?



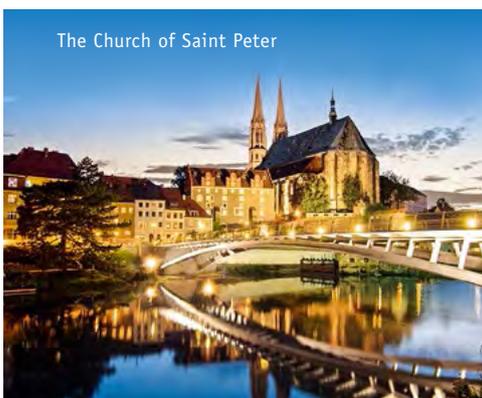
"Via Thea"



Patrician houses at the Untermarkt

### Top 10 in Görlitz

- 1 The old town with its Untermarkt
- 2 The Church of Saint Peter
- 3 The Holy Grave
- ◀ 4 **The street festival "Via Thea" in July**
- 5 The Silesian Museum in Görlitz
- 6 The bridge leading to Zgorzelec, Poland
- 7 Berzdorf Lake
- 8 Jazz days in May
- 9 Open day of the historical monuments
- 10 Silesian Christ Kindle Market



The Church of Saint Peter

## Görlitz

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# Kamenz

## Full of art and surprises

*Art has many faces in Kamenz: both big names and unknown masters, sometimes in the open and sometimes waiting to be discovered.*

Among the six cities of the league, Kamenz was neither the biggest nor the most significant, but it still profited from the security of the alliance. Above all, the medieval churches of the city testify to this period of growing prosperity. One particular example is the former monastery church of Saint Anne of the Franciscan Order. It was only granted a few decades shortly before the Reformation, but in Vladislav II of Bohemia the monks had a generous sponsor.

He commissioned for the new Franciscan church a magnificent high altar, which forms the centre of the sacral museum in Saint Anne, along with four other unique late Gothic carved altars by unknown artists: Formally still a place of worship, the church now also serves as a museum.

But even if Kamenz flourished during the time of the Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League, the city is renowned for its famous sons, most of all for Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. The poet was born here in 1729 and those looking for literary traces will find them in many places in Kamenz.

The market place with the town hall





The Abbey and Sacral Museum of Saint Anne

The Lessing Museum is recommended as a starting point. And those who would like to study the poet in more detail can do so on Lessing Days and at other different events. Another son of the city is less easy to find, although he also counts among the most important exponents of his art: Georg Baselitz. He took his *nom de plume* from his place of birth, Deutschbaselitz, now a district of Kamenz. For those who are inter-

ested, it is possible to see there and in the surrounding nature much of what inspired this painter's work.

Nature is also the dominant theme on the Hutberg mountain in Kamenz. The large parkland was designed by the landscape architect Wilhelm Weisse in the 19th Century. Since then, visitors have been inspired by an exuberant biodiversity of conifers, azaleas and rhododendrons, which dazzle us

in spring each year as a colourful carpet of flowers. For music lovers, the concerts on the Hutberg stage are always worthwhile. Other botanical treasures can be found all over Kamenz on the "Garden culture trail" – a perfect contrast to the historic stroll through the old town.



The Lessing Museum

### Top 10 in Kamenz

- 1 The Sacral Museum of Saint Anne
- ◀ 2 **The Lessing Museum**
- 3 Lessing Days in Kamenz
- 4 Museum of West Lusatia/Elementarium
- 5 The historic market place
- 6 Rhododendrons on the Hutberg
- 7 Hutberg stage during concert season
- 8 The Red Tower
- 9 The Kamenz Forest Festival
- 10 Fête de La Musique



Rhododendrons in bloom on Hutberg mountain

### Kamenz

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# A city of brewers and weavers

# Lubań

*The most easterly of all Germany, this city was called Lauban in the 14th Century and was a day's march away from Görlitz. Its prosperity was thanks not only to the traders passing through, but also to the skilled artisans and beer brewers.*

The Brothers' Tower rises 45 metres above the city, just as it did in the 14th Century at the beginning of the Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League. It has survived times of

constantly changing domination in which Saxon, Bohemian, Brandenburg or Silesian princes tore the sceptre from each other's hands time and time again. Just as diverse were the cultural influences in and around Lubań, which can still be found today. As the eastern outpost of the Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League, Lubań was on the *Via Regia*. The prosperity of the city at the time nourished itself on extensive trade privileges: The constraint of the highway

obliged all traders to offer their wares for sale also in Lubań – to quickly pass through was not an option. In addition, the city held the monopoly for the sale of meat, bread and beer within a mile. For the latter, Lubań's master brewers were so famous that their beer was even served in the town hall cellars in distant Wrocław. In addition to beer, cloth and woven fabrics from the Lubań area were also in great demand.

**Top**

Lubań market place

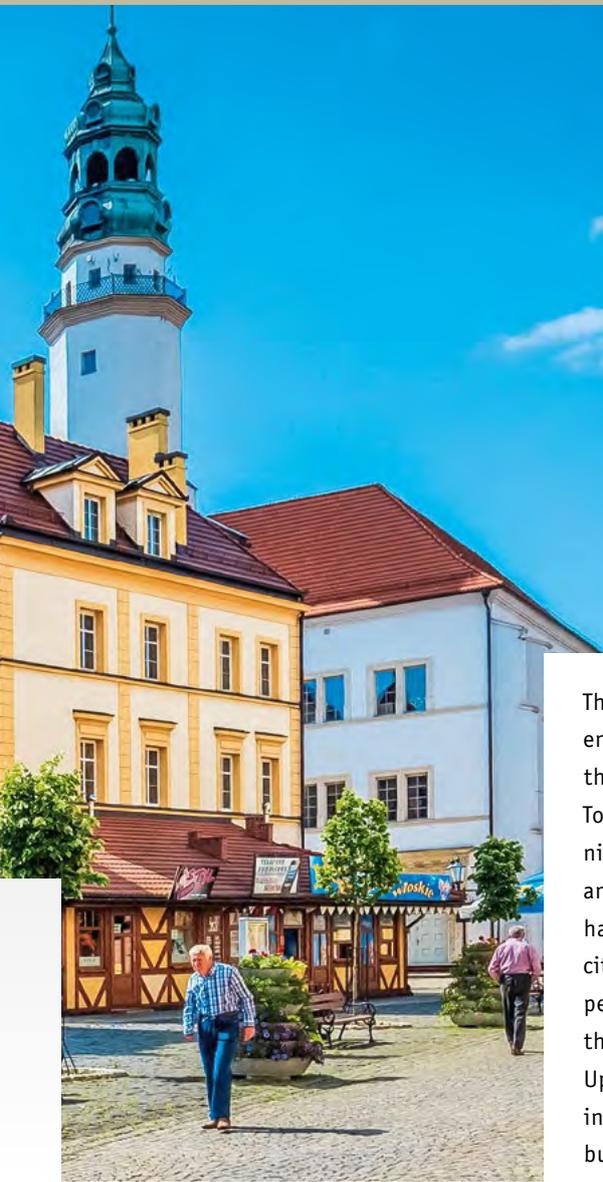
**Right**

Holy night of Saint John

**Far right**

The Lubań Days





The cloth dealers were accordingly influential, and particularly benefited from the security of the Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League. Not many of the once magnificent houses have been preserved, but an exemplary reconstruction programme has restored the charm of the medieval city centre in the last two decades. It is a perfect complement to all those buildings that actually do date back to the era of the Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League. These include the charming Church of Our Lady, built in 1384 on the outskirts of the city, the historic salt house and the splendid Renaissance town hall built in 1541.

The Jizera mountain range nearby makes the area surrounding Lubań a hot tip for nature lovers and people who prefer more active holidays. Attractions such as the "Path of Extinct Volcanoes" or the basalt cone on the Steinberg mountain bring to life several of Earth's historic ages. And to offset these city and historic Earth expeditions, cyclists, hikers and people who partake in winter sports can find such activities all over the region.



### Top 10 in Lubań

- ◀ 1 **The 45-metre-tall Brothers' Tower**
- 2 The Regional Museum
- 3 The Easter Market in March
- 4 "3 Days, 3 Countries, 3 Days of Hiking"
- 5 Night of the Museums in May
- 6 The Lubań Days in June
- 7 The Holy Night of Saint John in June
- 8 The "FolkArt" folk festival in July
- 9 The "Lubań Run" in August
- 10 The Christmas Market in December

### Lubań

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# Löbau

## Where the League began



*For centuries, the place where the Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League was founded was extremely important for the whole of Upper Lusatia. This was where the councillors met and even to this day remarkable evidence of these times can be found.*

The name of the small city probably comes from the Slavic word "lubij", meaning "the lovely one". And indeed, the charm of the small historic city cannot be denied. Pretty town houses surrounding the old market place and an imposing town hall arouse one's curiosity for the history of the city, in which the Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League was once founded. However, the councillors at the time of August 1346 hardly had an eye for the beauty of the city.



The Town Hall

After all, there was a problem to solve. This problem was specified in the foundation charter as "great intolerable damages" and wrote of "robbers and other nasty people". In the "Gasthof zum goldenen Löwen" (Golden Lion Inn), it was therefore decid-

ed to join forces to prosecute anyone who made trouble on the trade routes of Upper Lusatia. Those who robbed, stole, or murdered in and around the six cities should no longer feel safe anywhere.



The Arkadenhof Gallery



The Tower of King Friedrich August

Löbau then became the linchpin of the Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League for many centuries thereafter. Soon the delegates of the cities would meet in the newly built Town Hall and would hold not only negotiations there, but also feasts. Whoever sat at the table of discussion for the very first time had to follow the tradition of drinking dry a goblet of wine in one go. Not an easy task: the ornate glass drinking vessel can still be seen today in the Museum of the Artisans and Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League in Löbau – it holds about three litres...

Even outside the museum there are still traces from the time of this special alliance. These include the Town Hall with its Gothic tower, which received its present form after a fire in the city in 1714. Upon further exploration of Löbau you will be struck by the Church of Saint Nicholas and many beautiful residential and trading houses from various different eras. Points of particular interest: The Church of Saint John, the predecessor of which goes back to the 14th Century. Recently, the former monastery church, now a cultural centre, had a modern wing built to extend the building, and this now provides a space for a variety of events.

For those who appreciate architecture, there is plenty worth seeing just outside the city centre. In the Kirschallee there is the famous “Schminke House”, which was built in 1933 by architect Hans Scharoun in the modern style and is now an architectural, cultural and congress centre. A short stroll in the other direction takes you to the King Friedrich August Tower on the summit of the Löbau Mountain.



This is the world's only cast-iron observation tower and was built in 1854. From a height of 28 metres, it gives you a wonderful view of the Zittau mountains and beyond, and, with clear weather, you can even see the Jizera mountain range. From here you can also see the nearest cities of the Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League.



### Top 10 in Löbau

- 1 The King Friedrich August Tower
- 2 The historic town centre and Town Hall
- 3 Löbau mountain
- 4 The trade fair and events park
- 5 The Museum of the Six Towns League
- ◀ 6 **Architecture: the Schminke House**
- 7 The Löbau Machine House
- 8 The Herrmann lido
- 9 Löbau go-kart track
- 10 Cultural Centre at Saint John



## Löbau

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# Zittau

## Baroque beauty



*Zittau became the second richest city in the whole of Saxony in the time of the Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League. The city also had the enterprising cloth dealers to thank and their unique cultural treasures.*

Even the Dresden court is said to have looked enviously towards Zittau, where the well-travelled cloth dealers confidently named their city "the Rich City".

As early as 1312, the clothiers founded here the first guild of Upper Lusatia and soon it and the entrepreneurial traders were determining the destiny of the city. They provided work for weavers in the whole region. They later learnt the art of damask weaving and, as a result, were rewarded with lucrative export orders to as far away as America. The baroque houses around the market place still bear witness to these times.

Just a stone's throw away in the "new city", you can admire the Salt House. It dates back to 1389 and is among the oldest buildings in Zittau. Over the centuries it served as storage for the precious salt, as an armoury, stables or warehouse and is now home to a rustic inn.

### Top

View of the city of Zittau with the nature park Zittau mountain range in the background

### Right

The Great Lenten Veil of Zittau in the Church of the Holy Cross



What the Zittauers brought back from their world travels has been on display in the Baroque Hall of the City museum since 1709. There, in the former monastery of the city, the “chamber of wonders” displays a diverse and original collection, which is among the oldest of its kind in Europe. In addition, the City Museum, needless to say, offers impressive insights into the lives of the Zittau people over many centuries. Particularly noteworthy: the smaller of the two famous Lenten veils, which is on display here in a separate hall. The larger one can be admired in the former Church of the Holy Cross: 90 biblical motifs on a surface area of 8.20 metres by 6.80 metres make it a fascinating example of sacral art in the late 15th Century.

As the success of the cloth dealers lasted many centuries right into the time of industrialisation, Zittau’s journey through time follows a particularly large arc. It probably begins with the Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, the construction of which dates back to the Franciscans in the 13th Century. Baroque merchant houses in the city centre stand opposite the mighty Town Hall of 1845 and the magnificent Church of Saint John, a masterpiece by Karl Friedrich Schinkel. Nowadays, visitors, artists and artisans meet in the neoclassical arcades of Zittau’s meat market. Finally, on the periphery of the town centre, the houses and mansions from the Gründerzeit invite you to take a stroll. Then, at the end of this journey through time, if you look back, you will see an exciting history of success, which maybe would have taken a different path without the unifying power of the Upper-Lusatian Six Towns League.



A concert at the Great Lenten Veil



Bessersch House and the Monastery Church



Spectaculum Citaviae

### Top 10 in Zittau

- 1 The large and small Lenten veils of Zittau
- 2 The nature park of the Zittau mountains
- 3 The Gerhart Hauptmann Theatre
- ◀ 4 **The “Spectaculum Citaviae” pageant**
- 5 The Church of Saint John
- 6 The Zittau narrow-gauge railway
- 7 SAMS market for students
- 8 The Green Ring and the Flower Clock
- 9 Saint John’s Advent Market
- 10 The O-See-Challenge at Olbersdorf Lake



A bizarre exhibit: A prince's skull in the City Museum

## Zittau

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# After reading about this journey through time...

...you can begin the real journey!

The six Upper-Lusatian cities await your visit.

You will not only experience historical beauty there, but also wonderful nature full of diversity. Enchanted pond landscapes, forests and mountains or the Lusatian lakes, all full of life.

You will be amazed at Upper Lusatia's past and present.

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