

Southwest Germany Bike Trips

By **Judy Koutsky**

What better way to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the bicycle, than by riding through the black forest in Southwest Germany, where it was invented?



Sample Bike Route

Unless you're a serious biker or a Jeopardy contestant, you might not know that the bicycle was invented in an idyllic region, called [SouthWest Germany](#), in 1817 by a man named Baron Karl von Drais. The original was a simple, wooden, two-wheeled design with no pedals (learn more at The Technoseum museum in Mannheim, which is doing a major exhibit on the progression of the bicycle over the years). Luckily, SouthWest Germany is still an incredibly scenic destination to bike in, and you'll be a lot more comfortable than von Drais on a modern variation. Celebrate the bicentennial of his invention with a tri to this rider's paradise, with hundreds of recently restored bike routes that pass by vineyards and castle from the Black Forest to Lake Constance. Plus, there are trails designated for every type of traveler, from active to leisure. There's never been a better time to go for a ride.

Photography Buffs

A popular route that's great for bikers of all levels is the **Liebliches Taubertal—der Klassiker**. The gorgeous 60-mile route is one of the oldest in Germany and meanders past castles, monasteries and fortresses. Stop along the way at the Castle Weikersheim or the Bronnbach Monastery.

Wine Connoisseurs

For those looking to bike from vineyard to vineyard, **Württemberg Wine Route** is a good option. The route is over 200 miles (you don't have to do it all!) and travels from Hohenlohe, passing through Ludwigsburg, all the way through the Remstal valley to Tübingen. Take time to visit the local, family-owned wineries, the Besenwirtschaften (seasonal wine pubs) and guesthouses with regional cuisine. Sample wines made from local grape varieties, such as Trollinger, Riesling, Schiller and Müller-Thurgau.



Thrill Seekers

There are extensive mountain bike trails in **Swabian Alb**, a mountainous region that has steep off-road slopes and single lane trails for those looking for some adventure. Amateur geologists love this area for the caves and fossils.

Families with Kids

The **Kinzigtal Cycle Route for All** in the north region of the Black Forest National Park, Germany's large national park, has plenty of flat areas, making it easier for kids (or anyone looking for a more laid-back experience). While there, experience the world-famous Baden-Baden thermal baths, as well as Black Forest's beautiful cathedral churches and old town centers.

Less Active Cyclists

Not exactly in Tour-de-France shape? The e-bike (electronic bike) is a great way to see the **Stuttgart Region**; there are over 100 charging stations and 40 e-bike rental places. Stuttgart boasts 19 thermal springs, plus great museums, restaurants and theater.
