

Rail & Trail through the Harz Mountains

Tour Style: Rail Adventures

Destination: Germany

Trip code: HMLRL-8

Trip Walking Grade: 3



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Explore the green heart of Germany by both rail and trail with this holiday to the Harz Mountains. Hop across the English Channel by Eurostar before travelling through the history-rich Rhineland region to the spectacular landscapes of Lower Saxony. You'll spend time in captivating Cologne and explore no less than two UNESCO World Heritage Sites - medieval Goslar and royal Quedlinburg. To top it all you'll stay in showstopping Wernigerode where you can marvel at its dazzling fairytale-like castle and catch a steam train to the top of the Brocken, the highest peak in the Harz. Expect incredible walks led by our local HF Holidays Leader combined with a wealth of history, sightseeing, and culture.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return rail travel from London to Wernigerode
- Fully escorted travel with an HF Holidays Tour Manager
- Guided walks and sightseeing with a local leader
- 6 nights' accommodation in Wernigerode & 2 in Cologne

- 8 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 2 packed lunches & 8 dinners
- Guided tours of Cologne, Wernigerode, Quedlinburg, and Goslar

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Rediscovering a more romantic mode of transport
- Embarking on a more sustainable rail journey from London St Pancras
- Touring Cologne and staying close to its famous cathedral
- Discovering the royal history of Quedlinburg and mining past of medieval Goslar
- A heritage railway ride around northern Germany's highest mountain
- Scenic hikes in the Harz Mountains



ITINERARY

Day 1: St Pancras To Cologne

Meet your HF Holidays Leader at London St Pancras and board the Eurostar to Brussels for your onward journey to Cologne. After checking in at the hotel, a local guide provides a short walking tour of the city and its famous cathedral followed by a meal of traditional German fayre at a nearby restaurant.

Day 2: Cologne To Wernigerode

We will have breakfast in the hotel. Today we travel by train through central Germany via Hannover and Goslar to the medieval town of Wernigerode where we'll stay for the remainder of the week. After settling in at the hotel, there'll be a guided walking tour of the town to discover its narrow streets, half-timbered houses, and famous town hall. Tonight and throughout our stay at this hotel, dinner will be provided at the hotel.

Day 3: Hills And Castles Above Wernigerode

Departing directly from the hotel we'll head through a forest trail on the Zillierbach with a small detour to the top of Scharfenstein for great views of the Harz Mountains and the 1142m peak of Brocken. We continue climbing to the Kaiserturm Tower for impressive panoramas over the town before heading to Wernigerode

Castle where there's a guided tour. We'll return to the town either on foot or by the castle's railway. Lunch will be included each day we are in Wernigerode, either in a local cafe or as a packed lunch from the hotel.

Distance: 8 miles (13 km)

Ascent and Descent: 1300 ft (400m)

Day 4: Goslar And The Rammelsberg Mine

A 30-minute train ride takes us to the historic town of Goslar. Nestled on the north-west slopes of the Harz Mountains, this medieval marvel has been an important silver and copper mining centre for over 1000 years. Tour the town's charming old quarter and the nearby Rammelsberg mines – both UNESCO World Heritage Sites – and discover the royal past of Kaiserpfalz Imperial Palace (birthplace of Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV). There'll also be lunch in a brewery house. We return to Wernigerode by train.

Distance: 2 miles (3.21 km)

Ascent: Little to no ascent

Day 5: Brocken Mountain

The highlight of today is a steam train ride to the top of the Brocken, the highest peak (1142m) in the Harz. During the Cold War the Harz Mountains were divided by the Iron Curtain. While western Germany modernised, the Soviet side continued to use the narrow-gauge railway system and today the steam train is preserved like a working museum piece. Enjoy lunch with a view in the café at the summit before walking through the Steinerne Renne area and the idyllic Hasserode district back to Wernigerode.

Distance: 10.5 miles (17 km) (option to shorten available)

Ascent and Descent: 2800 ft (910m)

Day 6: Quedlinburg & Eselstall Forest

UNESCO-listed Quedlinburg is our destination on day six. Explore medieval streets and squares surrounded by half-timbered houses on our guided walking tour and stop for lunch in a traditional restaurant. Afterwards, we'll walk through the Münzenberg district and follow the Bornholzweg route into the Eselstall Forest. Ascending along a tree-lined path, we'll reach the Altenburgwarte observation tower for views over the sandstone Altenburg ridge before heading back to town via the remarkable Romanesque St Wipertikirche church.

Distance: 6.8 miles (11km)

Ascent and Descent: 138m (450ft)

Day 7: The Monastery Path To Ilsenburg

Our final day follows the so-called monastery path to Ilsenburg. Along the way, we'll tick off a trio of spectacular monastic sites. Marvel at the ruins of Himmelpforten Monastery, explore the gardens of Drubeck Monastery and visit the 1000-year-old hermitage in the medieval heart of Ilsenburg.

Distance: 9 miles (15 km)

Ascent and Descent: 920 ft (280m)

Day 8: Return To Cologne

Today we say goodbye to the Harz Mountains and head back to Cologne by train via Hannover and Goslar for a final night in the city and free time to explore. Tonight we will have dinner in the hotel.

Day 9: Cologne To London

Depart Germany and take a relaxing rail journey back to Brussels and then onward to London St Pancras aboard the Eurostar.

ACCOMMODATION

Wyndham Cologne, Cologne

Conveniently located steps from Cologne's central railway station, few places put you closer to the city's standout sights than the Wyndham Cologne. Just a short stroll from the spectacular Cologne Cathedral, this contemporary retreat offers tastefully decorated rooms, plus a hotel bar and restaurant serving buffet breakfasts as well as snacks and local beers throughout the day. The hotel also provides free access to its fitness centre gym.

Food & Drink

We will have breakfast in the hotel. On our first night in Cologne (day 1) we will have dinner in a local restaurant. On our final night in Cologne (day 8) we will have dinner in the hotel.

TRAVEL DETAILS

Wyndham Cologne,

Breslauer Platz 2,

50668 Cologne,

Germany

Tel: 00 49 (0)221 16510

Harzer Kultur Und Kongresshotel Wernigerode

This hotel boasts a standout location just a skip away from Wernigerode's historic old quarter and the well-connected train station for easy travel around the Saxony-Anhalt region. Comfortable rooms provide a relaxing stay, while no less than three restaurants and a bar cater to every refreshment need. It also has a wonderfully relaxing spa area complete with sauna, steam bath, and solarium.

Food & Drink

During our stay in Wernigerode we will have dinner every evening in the hotel. Lunch is included each day in Wernigerode, either in a local café / restaurant or as a packed lunch from the hotel.

TRAVEL DETAILS

Harzer Kultur und Kongresshotel

Pfarrstrasse 41

38855 Wernigerode

Germany.

Tel: 00 49 (0)3943 9410

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

Joining Instructions (With Rail)

Rail travel will be from St Pancras International Station, London and onward to Germany via Brussels. Your group meeting point at St Pancras will be the Sir John Betjeman statue on the upper level of the station, 2 hours before departure time. Here you will join the rest of your group and meet your HF Holidays Tour Manager who will guide you throughout your journey. You will then make your way to the ticket gate as a group.

A suitcase with wheels is strongly recommended as you will be responsible for carrying and lifting your luggage on all parts of the journey. All luggage will be scanned at the departure gate and needs to be clearly labelled.

You will need to be responsible for your luggage and belongings at all stages of your journey so it's advisable to have it within eyesight when travelling on the trains and be extra vigilant when moving through busy railway stations.

Please refer to the website below for the latest information on luggage requirements for your journey and trip information: <https://www.eurostar.com/uk-en>

Joining Instructions (Without Rail)

Guests who choose to make their own travel arrangements (land only package) will join the holiday on the afternoon of day 1 at the Wyndham Cologne. They will depart the holiday after breakfast at the Wyndham Cologne on day 9. The hotel is conveniently located opposite Cologne's main railway station.

Essential Information

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing.

Essentials

- Walking boots
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Insulated jacket/top
- Walking clothing
- Walking socks (plus spares)
- Sunhat
- Gloves/mitts and warm hat
- Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity)
- Headtorch
- High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30)
- Sunglasses with a dark lens
- Rucksack (15-30 litres)
- Mobile phone
- Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.)
- Passport
- Visa (if applicable)
- Copy of your travel insurance policy
- UK Global Health Insurance Card (**formerly known as EHIC**)

Recommended

- Collapsible walking poles

- Swimwear and travel towel
- Snacks
- Dry bags
- Rubbish bags
- Insect repellent

Optional extras

- Camera
- Sit mat
- Flask for hot drinks
- Durable lunch box
- Gaiters
- GPS device

Useful Information

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so, and advise us of the insurance company and policy number.

We work with Campbell Irvine to provide you with competitive single and annual multi-trip insurance. Please see our website for more information and details of how to contact them for a quote:

<https://www.hfholidays.co.uk/about-us/booking-information/insurance>.

For more information about healthcare abroad and its costs, please visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/>.

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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