

## Press Release

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# Almost a thousand years of history Wartburg Castle, a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site

Wartburg in Eisenach was the first German castle to be added to UNESCO's list of World Heritage sites. It has been shaped by many historic events and figures over the centuries. Figures such as Walther von der Vogelweide, Saint Elisabeth of Thuringia, Richard Wagner and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe have all contributed to its considerable historical significance. The castle is one of the best-preserved secular buildings of the late Romanesque period north of the Alps and provided, among other things, the blueprint for Neuschwanstein Castle in Bavaria.

### **Martin Luther at Wartburg Castle**

Martin Luther's stay here in 1521 is without doubt a key event. The persecuted church reformer found refuge in the castle and translated the New Testament from the original Greek into German. The room in which Luther lived and worked has been a destination for countless pilgrims ever since, and it is widely considered to be the cradle of written German.

### **Musical tradition at Wartburg Castle**

In the Middle Ages, Wartburg Castle was the site of the legendary Singers' Contest. The castle is still a popular venue today, as the exceptional acoustics in the ceremonial hall are a draw for music lovers from around the world. The performances of Wagner's opera 'Tannhäuser and the Singers' Contest at Wartburg Castle' are the stuff of legend – after all, you are experiencing this romantic opera in its actual setting. The castle is also the venue for the MDR Summer of Music, the largest music festival in central Germany.

### **Fraternity meetings in the 19th century**

In the 19th century, students from across the German states converged on Wartburg Castle with the aim of uniting as one nation. It was at these meetings that the colours and the design of the German national flag were chosen.

### **Visit to Wartburg Castle**

The walk up to the castle on foot, or a ride on the back of a donkey for younger visitors, is rewarded with magnificent views of the Thuringian countryside. During the festive season, visitors can enjoy the historical Christmas market, where artisans of almost-forgotten crafts, including candle, soap, robe and lantern makers, stonemasons, herbalists, pewterers and travelling traders, offer their goods for sale. On a guided tour of the castle's rooms or a visit to the museum – with its famous paintings by Lucas Cranach, priceless tapestries and furniture, Tilman Riemenschneider sculptures and

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Renaissance arts and crafts – you are surrounded at every step by history, culture and the arts. The castle can only be visited as part of a guided tour, for which audio guides are available in a number of languages. The five-star Wartburg Hotel guarantees a memorable stay just a stone's throw from the castle.

Information and brochures on the holiday state of Thuringia, accommodation and travel programmes, event information, tickets and last-minute offers are available from the Thuringia Tourist Board on the hotline +49 (0) 361-37420 or on the internet at [www.visit-thuringia.com](http://www.visit-thuringia.com).

### **Thüringer Tourismus GmbH (TTG)**

The company Thüringer Tourismus GmbH (TTG) is the tourism marketing organisation of the Free State of Thuringia. Its main activities and objectives include external marketing, image and product advertising and providing services in the tourism market. With nearly 10 million overnight stays, a gross turnover of more than 3.1 billion euros and over 100,000 jobs, the tourism industry represents an important economic factor for the state. The State of Thuringia is the sole shareholder of the company Thüringer Tourismus GmbH.