

Stuttgart

Germany's best kept secret.

Lyssiemay Annoh is enchanted by the City of luxury cars, fine wine, art and festivals

I only flew into Stuttgart from London Stansted via Germanwings for a weekend break of Jazz and fun but by the end of my break, I had understood why Gottlieb Daimler wrote a postcard to his wife in 1872 marking a star at where he was living at the time with the saying "From here a star will go out...". He knew then that Stuttgart will be putting Germany on the map as the cradle of the automobile.

Today, Stuttgart, the state capital of Baden-Württemberg and birthplace of automobile is home to two of the World's finest automobiles and their museums – Mercedes-Benz and Porsche. It may be true that the surgeon has advised us all not to drink and drive but Germany's automobile cradle is also a City of wine. Viniculture has been part of Stuttgart's culture since the 3rd century AD. Only the Germans can control wine and automobile so efficiently.

Everything Stuttgart considers important to talk about is worth travelling there to see. Let's face it, there is not much you can hate about a city which offers beautiful and fast cars, museums, shopping, sightseeing, zoological botanical gardens or nightlife and then when you hear that it also hosts some of the best jazz festivals in Europe then maybe you can be forgiven to think that God is not fair.



Scene from a jazz festival on a very rainy day

The people of Stuttgart will enjoy a good jazz festival come rain or shine and during my visit, the torrential rain did not stop them from enjoying a live jazz event courtesy John Scofield Pieti Street/Lee Ritenour & Friends at the Mercedes-Benz Museum.

The Spectacular world of Mercedes-Benz

The building that houses the pioneering invention of Gottlieb Daimler and Karl Benz introduces an architecture that fascinates visitors from all over the world. The museum which opened its doors to the public in May 2006, provides an exhibition area of 16,500 sq m spread of nine levels. Every inch of Mercedes-Benz's 120-year history has been captured in this space. There are 1500 exhibits illustrating the development of the automobile from its



Princess Diana's red SL and the "Popemobile" which was used by Pope John Paul II

origins through to the present day. This is the only place where you are sure to find the legendary “Silver Arrow”, the “Popemobile” which was used by Pope John Paul II, the large type 770 Mercedes used by Emperor Hirohito and Kaiser Wilhelm II, Konrad Adenauer’s last official limousine, LP333 pick up truck also known at the “Millipede”, or Princess Diana’s red SL. Tickets cost from 8 euros – concessions 4 euros. There are guided tours available. <http://www.mercedes-benz.com/museum>

The thing about the new Porsche Museum

From classic cars to sports cars; Porche is one of the smallest independent automobile producers and unsurprisingly one of the most famous in the world. At its Porscheplatz central location in Zuffenhausen, the new Porsche museum building designed to cause a stir by Delugen Meissi offers 5600 sq.m of exhibition of some of Porche’s most important vehicles, main race rankings, and technical innovations. Here, they have linked historical development to the distinctive “Porche idea”. The exhibition of 80 vehicles at a time changes regularly to accommodate the more than 3000 museum vehicles in preparation for the travels all over the world as part of a “rolling museum”. Tickets cost from 8 euros – concessions 4 euros. There are guided tours available. <http://www.porsche.de/museum>.

Shopping in Stuttgart.

Koenigstrasse in Stuttgart is a busy shopping boulevard, which is over one kilometre long. It has specialist shops, department stores, international chains, cafés and restaurants as well as a relations area, all designed to make shopping a delight. The location is perfect, opposite the main railway station with trains which run right through the heart of the city.



Breuninger

If you really must shop till you drop and then on the right and left of Koenigstrasse you can find elegance and style on Eberhardstrasse, the Siftstrasse, Calwerstrasse or visit the Gerberviertel (Tanners’ Quarter) and then plunge into arts and crafts in the picturesque Bonenviertel (Bean Quarter).

Rumour has it that Breuninger, the large store on the Market place along with cafés in the “Karlspassage” is the place to go if you want to see and be seen in the latest fashion trends.



The Porche Carrera

“Everything Stuttgart considers important to talk about is worth travelling there to see”.



The Wine Market in Stuttgart

Markets

Stuttgart is a city with a traditional market every Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday. The traditional market is the best place to buy fresh seasonal fruit and vegetables, flowers, and homemade produce such as jams, honey and pickles. Other specialist markets include the Flea or Asparagus Market.

Nevertheless, the most reputed of all is Stuttgart’s Market Hall which was built in 1914. The ground floor alone has 38 stalls of a variety of goods from across the world.

Wine, Wine Growers and Festivals

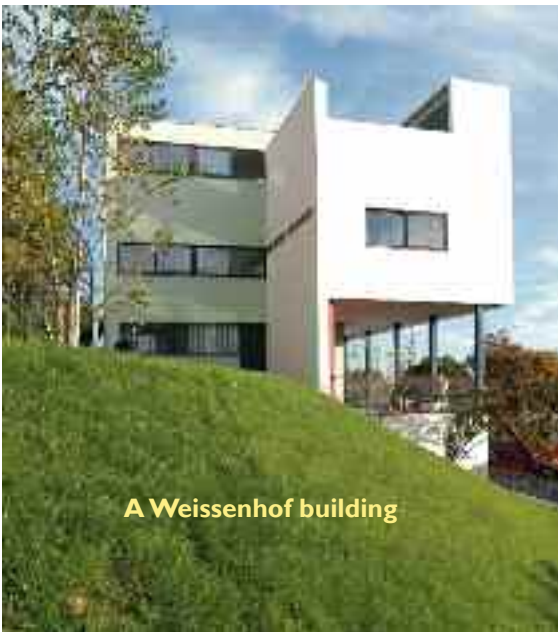
I would normally leave the subject of wine to the connoisseurs but Baden-Württemberg, Stuttgart’s state capital is the largest wine-growing community in Germany and also home to Germany’s nicest wine village. Every end August, connoisseurs and wine lovers from all over the world meet at the popular “Stuttgart Wine Village” for Germany’s biggest and finest wine

festivals. At this festival excellent wine is served and sold. Local restaurants offer a selection of Swabian specialities like Kaesspaetzle (noodles with cheese), Maultaschen (pasta squares) or Schupfnudeln (potato noodles) with sauerkraut.

If you cannot make the festival, there is always an opportunity to enjoy one of the finest views of Stuttgart's vineyards and the idyllic Neckar valley from a historic hill known as Württemberg. During the 11th century, this was home to the Castle of the founder of Württemberg. In 1820, following the premature death of his beloved consort, the Grand Princess Katharina of Russia, King Wilhelm I erected a burial chapel there. The mausoleum itself is worth a visit. It was built according to the designs of architect Giovinetti Salucci between 1820 and 1824. Inside are the tombs of Queen Katharina (1819) and King Wilhelm (1864) of Württemberg. There is also an opportunity to visit the Wine museum, and walk around two thousand years of viticulture and follow the wine route on foot.



Architecture



A Weissenhof building

Stuttgart has buildings from any centuries. The choice is very wide from Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo, Classicism, Historicism, a little Art Nouveau and the Weissenhof Estate, which is an icon of modern architecture. Architectural enthusiasts can add a visit to the Weissenhof Estate and the Weissenhof Museum to their list. The circular tour of the museum takes visitors through both halves of the house.

How to get there

We flew Germanwings, which operates a fleet of Airbus 319 and has daily flights to Stuttgart at budget prices. Just like most low-cost carriers, in-flight catering is sold aboard Germanwings; passengers can choose from a selection of warm and cold drinks, sandwiches and snacks.

<http://www.germanwings.com>

Where to stay

Stuttgart has a good selection of hotels. We stayed at the Maritim Hotel, a real German success story. The Stuttgart Maritim is located in the middle of the city next to the famous Hoppenlau

Park. The hotel features a restaurant, bar, swimming pool and fitness room. Room amenities include minibar, safe, telephone and television. The collection of hotels which is celebrating its 40 years offers first class accommodation in the Stuttgart Maritim from 189 euros per person in a double junior suite. The Stuttgart Maritim is the event organiser's haven with Ballrooms and a good selection of meeting rooms. The hotel's motto of "meetings and accommodation under one roof" ensures that events are managed professionally and catered for at very high standards. <http://www.maritim.com>

A place to enjoy lunch

While in Stuttgart, hold off lunch until you are at the edge of the lush Schlossgarten Park and then make a whistle stop at Le Méridien Stuttgart for lunch. The hotel's restaurant, "Le Cassoulet", offers a plethora of regional and French dishes, and the hotel's bar, Lillet, is a sleek refuge.

How to explore Stuttgart:

Arm yourself with a STUTTCARD at 9.70 euros or a combination of a VVS 3-day Ticket/City Centre at 20 euros and at 22 euros with the regional network. The card allows you to discover the city cost-effectively and offers free entry to a list of attractions. You can always visit the Tourist Information Office at Stuttgart Airport Terminal 3 for assistance or visit them online at <http://www.stuttgart-tourist.de>

Events in Stuttgart:

164 Cannstatter Volksfest :

25th September to 11th October 2009

24th September to 10th October 2010

Stuttgart Christmas Market:

25th November to 23rd December 2009

24th November to 23rd December 2010

72nd Stuttgart Spring Festival

17th April to 9th May 2010

Stuttgart Summer Festival

5th to 8th August 2010

33rd Stuttgart Wine Village

25th to 5th September 2010

May – October Stuttgart for Wine Enthusiasts

July - Original Hamburger Fischmarkt in Karlsplatz