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Pictures and additional information are available at:

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Coburg – dynamic city, rich in history

The former residential town is situated in the North of Bavaria among picturesque rolling hills between the Thuringian forest in the north and the Main River in the south. The former duchy Saxe-Coburg and Gotha has attracted worldwide attention due to its famous marriage policy: nearly every European monarchy is related to the Coburgs’.

The dukes were passionate collectors, so today Coburg is full of famous art collections and monuments. You won’t find another region with so much castles and palaces. The most famous are the 4 Ducal Castles Callenberg, Ehrenburg, Rosenau and Veste Coburg.

Famous people stayed in Coburg – Richard Strauss, Nicolo Paganini, Franz Liszt, Queen Victoria... – also nowadays you could meet members of the European aristocracy visiting Coburg.

For nearly 6 months Martin Luther had his refugee in the fortress Coburg, and the king of waltz, Johann Strauss, even became Coburg citizen to marry the love of his life.

Coburg is a treasure box full of art and culture, events, classic and modern concerts, open air concerts on the palace square, operas, operettas, plays and musicals in the former court theatre – even the biggest Samba festival outside of Brazil. Not to forget the medieval “travel to the past” on the fortress, North Bavaria’s biggest gourmet party open air and Coburg’s Christmas Market with daily performances of local handicrafts.

There are numerous possibilities for leisure activities and for health and wellness you can find four thermal spas in the region.

Regional and international cuisine and accommodation even in palaces make your stay perfect.

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Let yourself be charmed by a very special town in North Bavaria

The Upper Franconian town of Coburg is situated between the Upper Main Valley to the south and the Thuringian Forest to the north in what is known as the green heart of Germany. The former seat of the Dukes of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha has a population of roughly 41,000 people, but has a wealth of treasures and architectural monuments that would be fitting of many a larger city. Owing to the fact that there are many castles and palaces in Coburg and its surrounding areas, the town is rightfully located on the so-called Burgenstraße (road of castles). We can thank the former duchy of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha for all these things. It created links with royal families all over Europe through its wide-spread marriage policy. The most famous marriages being those of Queen Victoria to her cousin, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, and Princess Sibylla of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha to the Swedish King, Gustaf Adolf, which took place in Coburg in 1932.

But other famous people have also stayed here in Coburg: Richard Strauss, Hektor Berlioz, Nicolo Paganini, and Franz Liszt all stayed in the Landestheater (State Theatre) at some time; Friedrich Rückert and Jean Paul both lived and worked in the town; Martin Luther, who sought refuge at the Veste for 6 months, preached at St Moriz church; and also Johann Strauss (son) who, due to an affair of the heart, gave up his Austrian citizenship and became a citizen of Coburg. Lots of cultural events take place in the town, such as classical and modern music concerts in the theatre or on the Palace Square; Operas, operettas, musicals, ballets, and plays can be seen in the beautiful State Theatre and the Reithalle (former indoor riding arena); organ concerts; Europe’s biggest Samba festival; and the summer jazz festival at Callenberg Castle. And for those who enjoy their food there are restaurants of nearly all categories as well as the “Palace Square Festival”, which is said to be northern Bavaria’s biggest gourmet party. There are also possibilities for wine- and beer-tasting.

Coburg is also a centre of the doll- and toy-making industry. Therefore, you will come across several interesting museums, a doll and teddy bear market, as well as the International dolls’ Festival in Neustadt bei Coburg.

Come wind, rain or shine, there is a lot to do in Coburg: hiking, cycling (why not cycle the 45kms to Bamberg and then return to Coburg by train), swimming, golf, inline-skating, and much more.

If you have any further questions please contact:
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Coburg’s four ducal castles – right out of a picture postcard

Veste Coburg, Schloss Ehrenburg, Schloss Rosenau, Schloss Callenberg are castles abundant with art treasures and full of history.

The Veste Coburg fortress, the so called “Fränkische Krone - Franconian Crown” is visible from afar and is Coburg’s landmark with its massive walls and towers. At the beginning of the 16th century this medieval fortress reached its peak as castle of the Saxon electorate. Martin Luther stayed here in 1530. Nowadays the fortress has been redesigned. The residence of the last regnant Duke Carl-Eduard of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha has been installed in the Fürstenbau at the beginning of the 20th century. The Veste also houses several internationally-acclaimed art collections – such as print room, precious Venetian glass, historic weapons, the worldwide oldest carriages and baroque sledges and famous oeuvres of Old German art – among others of Cranach, Dürer and Grünewald.

Those who want to get more information about the world-famous Duchy of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha and its wide-spread marriage policy should continue their visit with the Schloss Ehrenburg Palace. This palace has a neo-Gothic façade and offers a view into the noble living quarters and bedrooms of the Coburg dukes, for example Queen Victoria’s splendid apartments and the rooms in which lived Leopold I the first King of Belgium. Queen Victoria met the Austrian Emperor for the first time in the renowned Riesensaal (Giant Hall). Johann Strauss (son) married his third wife in the chapel of the palace.

Rosenau castle, the birthplace of Queen Victoria’s beloved husband Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha was her favourite destination. This castle is located in an enchanting English park out-of-town. It is one of the most romantic spots with gorgeous parquet floors and wonderful inventory. In the castle’s former orangery, there is the European Museum of Modern Glass Art.

And last but not least Callenberg castle which was another residence of the Coburg dukes. This is the castle where Sibylla and Gustav Adolf the parents of today’s King of Sweden celebrated their engagement. The “royal” roses which are blooming in all summer, the furniture by Roentgen, clocks, the 400 years old chapel and many other precious objects make this castle worth a visit. Furthermore one wing houses the German Marksmen Museum.

Take a break from everyday life and gain an insight into the aristocratic world by visiting Coburg’s ducal castles.

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Coburg – Land of castles and palaces

Coburg is located on the so-called “Burgenstraße” (“road of castles”) and that is justified, because there is no place in the whole of the former duchy of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, that does not have or did not at one time have a palace, castle, fortress, or manor. Counting only the ones that are still around today, there are more than 10 abodes, which formerly belonged to the aristocracy, in the town of Coburg itself and a good 30 in the whole of the Coburg region. It must be said that not all of them are splendid palaces or castles with towers and merlons, such as you would find in a book of fairy tales. Some of them really are quite inconspicuous and others are simply no longer recognizable as being castles/palaces because of having to be, at least in part, rebuilt. However, there certainly are some real gems in Coburg and its surrounding areas that really are well worth visiting.

The Veste Coburg fortress, which is visible from afar and is Coburg’s landmark, sits on top of a 464m high hill. Over the course of the centuries it was continually enlarged and became one of the largest fortifications in the Holy Roman Empire. This enormous construction with its towers, walls, and bulwarks was for centuries the residence of the reigning dynasty. Some other people of historical importance also stayed within its walls at some time or another. Probably the most well-known of these was the reformer, Martin Luther, who sought refuge there for almost six months in 1530. Today it houses internationally-acclaimed art collections from the private collections of the Coburg dukes. Among other things, there are collections of glassware, historical weapons, and magnificent carriages and sledges. There is also a major collection of pictures, which includes around 350,000 prints and drawings and is therefore one of the most significant collections of artwork in the whole world.

Ehrenburg Palace was the main residence of the Coburg dukes in the town itself. When looking at it from the Schlossplatz (Palace Square) you can see the 19th century neo-Gothic façade. The rooms that can be visited bring that style of living and that particular era to life for the visitor, and the numerous portraits hanging on the walls enable the visitor to appreciate the impressive and wide-spread relationships of the Coburg dukes. Also worth seeing are Queen Victoria’s former living quarters and bedroom. Johann Strauss (son), the Waltz King, married his third wife in Ehrenburg’s Hofkirche (court church). The Riesensaal (Giant Hall), where many concerts and lectures take place, is especially impressive.

The former summer residence of the dukes, Callenberg Castle, which is where Princess Sibylla of Coburg became engaged to Crown Prince Gustav Adolf of Sweden, is also worth a visit. Changing exhibitions here give an insight into the lives of the dukes as well as their collections, which include, among other things, priceless antique grandfather’s clocks and the Schlosskapelle (castle chapel). Furthermore, the castle houses the German Marksmen’s Museum.

…
Prince Albert’s birthplace, Rosenau Castle, where his cradle can still be seen today, is located in an enchanting park roughly 6 kms to the north of the town. Queen Victoria loved this castle and in 1845 she wrote, “If I were not what I am, this would have been my real home”. Near the castle there is the Museum of Modern Glass Art, which is part of the Veste Coburg’s art collections.

The imposing baroque castle of Schloss Tambach, which is around 15 km to the southwest of Coburg and has been the setting for many an “aristocratic romance” in films, is home to the Museum of hunting and fishing, which is particularly fun for children. The 50 hectare castle park is home to one of the largest deer parks in northern Bavaria as well as the Bavarian falconry centre.

Many of the other palaces and castles are now in private ownership and can, therefore, only really be looked at from the outside, such as, for example, Niederfüllbach Castle, which was King Leopold I of Belgium’s favourite residence, the idyllic Wasserschloss Untersiemau (Untersiemau’s moated castle), and Geyersberg Castle near Seßlach. You can follow a nature trail while on your way to the Lauterburg ruins. Hohenstein Castle, which is a particular favourite among bridal pairs, is everything everyone would expect from a romantic medieval castle. The castle houses an exquisite restaurant and a hotel. And even Coburg’s youth hostel (temporarily closed) is something special: Ketschendorf Castle.

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A duchy makes world history

The Coburg dukes were descended from the Wettin dynasty, one of the oldest (and at one time the most powerful) German aristocratic families. The Wettins reigned over Coburg from 1353 until 1918. The House of Wettin split into the Ernestinian and Albertinian lines in 1485. Coburg became part of the former and in 1572, following another partition of the “estate”, the independent duchy of Saxe-Coburg came into existence with Duke Johann Casimir as its sovereign. The duchy of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld with Coburg as its main seat was formed in 1735. In the following two centuries the duchy was relatively insignificant. However, that all changed at the beginning of the 19th century. Other noble families and royal families tried to increase their power and influence by resorting to violence and war. However, within a relatively short period of time, the small duchy of Coburg managed to rise to the status of “European dynasty” by peaceful means. “Others may wage war, but you, lucky Coburg, marry!” was a maxim that was often said about Coburg. Thus in the course of the 19th century sons, daughters, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren married into a great number of the European royal families and in many cases still reign over many of those countries today.

It all began with Duke Franz Friedrich Anton and his wife, Auguste Caroline Sophie, who are both laid to rest in the ducal tomb situated in the Hofgarten (court garden). The duchess married off her daughter, Juliane, with one of Tsarina Catherine II of Russia’s grandsons, and in so doing laid the foundations for the dynastic rise of the ducal House of Coburg. The daughter Victoria’s second husband was the British duke, Edward of Kent. Their only child, Victoria, succeeded to the British throne and married her cousin, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg (who was one of Duke Franz Friedrich Anton’s grandsons), and their children and grandchildren ruled (and in some cases still rule) over Germany, Greece, Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Norway, Romania, Yugoslavia, Denmark, Sweden, Spain, and Russia.

However, by marrying the Hungarian princess, Marie Antonie of Kohary, Franz Friedrich Anton’s son, Ferdinand, created the Catholic line, which later became the House of Braganza in Portugal and Brazil, the House of Bourbon-Orleans in France, and the House of Kohary in Bulgaria. And finally there was also Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg. This son of Franz Friedrich Anton was known as “Uncle Europe”, for it was he who arranged the numerous marriages of his nieces and nephews. He himself was the first King of Belgium, and his wife, Luise Marie of Orleans, was a daughter of the French Citizen King. His descendants gained a foothold in the royal families of Luxemburg, Italy, Austria, and Mexico.
There are many streets, squares, and buildings all over the world that have been named after Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, and this is, in no small part, due to the fact that Queen Victoria reigned over Great Britain and Ireland (and also the Commonwealth) for such a long time. Unfortunately, very few people actually know that all this is to do with Coburg and the dukes of Coburg, because, in 1917, due to the events of the First World War, the “House of Saxe-Coburg” in Great Britain became the “House of Windsor”.

You can follow the footsteps of the Dukes of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha here in Coburg and its surrounding areas. European history comes alive here.

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The Dream Couple of European Aristocracy

During the 19th century - as before and after that time - there were many reasons for the aristocracy to join women and men in marriage. In fact, sometimes they were very young girls and boys. Love - today’s main reason for marriage - was not a motive then. It is therefore somewhat surprising that the 19th century’s most famous love story occurred in that century’s most powerful monarchy, the British, - the love story of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha.

The marriage of the youthful Queen - who had ascended the throne at only 19 years of age - to her cousin Albert was originally not an act of love, but rather dynastic planning. Victoria’s uncle Leopold, a Coburg Prince who in 1831 became the first king of the Belgians, had made plans for that union well in advance, as told by his biographer.

“The new Queen was not averse to these plans”, he said. "When she saw him again at age 20, she fell spontaneously in love and, in keeping with her higher position, proposed marriage to him." The wedding on February 10, 1840 was followed by 21 years of harmonious married life. Nine children, five girls and four boys were born to the couple. Historians vary in their opinion if love was equally intense on both sides. It is said that the Queen had deeply fallen in love with her German cousin but that he had not.

There is no doubt, however, that they were a faithful couple, faithfulness being at that time by no means the rule in blue-blooded circles. It is also uncontested that Victoria and Albert proved to be a windfall for 19th century England. They helped the English monarchy gain new prosperity and respect. Albert, who as Prince Consort was to have played only a secondary role in English politics, made a definite contribution. The English Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli is said to have honoured Albert by saying "This German Prince has ruled England for 21 years with a wisdom and energy never before shown by our kings."

Albert died unexpectedly in 1861 at age 42. Victoria remained faithful to him for the rest of her life. In deep mourning, she withdrew for years from public life and strove to preserve her husband’s memory among the public by memorials, biographies and other means. She retained strong ties with Coburg, her husband’s birth place, and visited Rosenau Castle several times. Albert’s cradle stands there to this day. Queen Elizabeth said about Coburg in 1845: "Were I not what I am, this would be my real home."

More Information:
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The Veste Coburg fortress and its art collections

Visible from afar, the Veste Coburg fortress sits like a crown on top of the 464 metre high hill. During the course of centuries past, Veste Coburg became one of the largest castle fortifications of the former Holy Roman Empire.

Weather permitting, there are magnificent views in all directions: to the north, you can see the Lange Berge mountains and the foothills of the Thuringian Forest; to the east, the peaks of the Frankenwald (Franconian Forest) and the Fichtelgebirge can be seen; to the west, you can see the peaks of Straufhain and the Hassberge; and to the south and the southeast, the mountain ranges of the Steigerwald and the Fränkische Jura are just about visible. The Veste Coburg is called “the Franconian Crown” not only because of its dominating location, but also because this mighty structure with its towers, walls, and ramparts was for centuries the residence of rulers, and also counted among its guests several historically significant people. The most significant of these “guests” was Martin Luther, who sought refuge here for nearly six months in 1530.

The Veste Coburg is also a very important art centre, as it is home to the private collections of the dukes of Coburg. The collections are today housed over an area of 4,000m² in the Veste’s three interconnected historical wings.

In the “Steinerne Kemenate”, you will find the Luther Room, the Hunting Room with its marquetry dating back to 1632, the Great Court Banqueting Hall, and a collection of pictures by old German masters from the time of Dürer, including paintings by Lucas Cranach the Elder.

One of the most important international collections of its kind is the glass collection housed in the Carl-Eduard wing of the fortress. Venetian glass (15th to 18th century), colourfully painted enamelled glassware (16th to 18th century), cut-glass chalices (17th and 18th century), as well as decorative glassware from the Art Nouveau period are all on display here.

(Contemporary glass art from around the world is exhibited at the Museum of Modern Glass Art near Rosenau Castle).

Collections of objects made from ceramic, pewter, porcelain, and faience can also be found in the Carl-Eduard wing. The collection of copperplate engravings consist of about 330,000 sheets of graphic art prints and 5,000 drawings and is one of the world’s most important graphic collections.

The “Herzoginbau” (Duchess’s building) houses the collection of historical weapons, as well as magnificent carriages (including the oldest stagecoach still in working order in Europe). Sledges dating back to the 16th to 18th centuries are also on shown in this wing.

The Tourist Information provides free brochures in English and German about the fortress and a specified booklet for a small fee.

For more information please contact:
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www.kunstsammlungen-coburg.de, email: sekretariat@kunstsammlungen-coburg.de
The meeting place of European Aristocracy – Coburg’s Ehrenburg Palace

Ehrenburg Palace has been the residence of the dukes of Coburg since 1547. From Palace Square (Schloßplatz) you can see the 19th century Neo-Gothic façade. Duke Johann Ernst had the three-winged building erected here by 1543, in the place of the Franciscan monastery which was closed during the Reformation. The palace was named “Ehrenburg”, or “palace of honour”, because it had been built without the use of forced labour. Duke Johann Casimir had the palace extended. The structural extension, designed by architect Giovanni Bonalino, is still visible today in the inner courtyard of the palace and is considered to be one of the most avant-garde examples of Renaissance architecture north of the Alps. Following a fire in 1690, Ehrenburg Palace was rebuilt by Duke Albrecht in a Baroque style. The ornate stucco-work, the Hofkirche (the court church), and the Giant Hall (Riesensaal) are all imposing testimonies to this architectural period. In the 19th century under Duke Ernst I, Ehrenburg Palace was renovated with a Neo-Gothic facade, based on the designs of the Berlin architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel. The rooms, including the apartment used by Duke Ernst I and his wife, convey even to this day an authentic impression of the style of living at that time. There are a large number of portraits, which show the extraordinary family ties of the dukes of Coburg. Queen Victoria’s bedroom reminds visitors of the dukes’ most famous ties: the marriage of Prince Albert to his cousin, the Queen of England. One of Europe’s first water closets is also to be found here, and its panelling is made from mahogany no less. Along with the above-mentioned, visitors can also admire two of the dukes’ art galleries, both of which are home to some valuable pieces of art, such as a collection of paintings by Lucas Cranach the Elder. As well as well-known members of the European aristocracy, who have assembled in the Giant Hall, and who still meet here today, there was another famous person who came to Ehrenburg Palace for a special purpose, namely Johann Strauß, who married his bride, Adele, here on 15th August 1887.

From time to time the palace’s Giant Hall is used for concerts and lectures.

For more information about the palace and guided tours please contact:
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Coburg’s Callenberg Castle – a neo-Gothic jewel

Callenberg castle is the perfect combination of nature and cultural experience. It lies among rolling wooded hills in the northeast of Coburg. A small game preserve is located nearby.

The history of the castle can be traced back to the High Middle Ages. In 1122 a certain "Thiemo de Chalwinberch" is mentioned in a document. Through the centuries the owners of the castle changed. In 1592 it became property of duke Johann Casimir of Saxe-Coburg who used it as a hunting seat and constructed the chapel of the castle. Today the chapel is still used for weddings and baptisms. In the 19th century duke Ernst II of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha gave the castle as a wedding-present to his wife Alexandrine. The lower part of the castle was altered in the taste of the century and became a neo-Gothic jewel, surrounded by an English landscape parc. Until 1945 the castle was the summer residence of the Coburg dukes. After extensive restoration the castle was reopened to public in 1998. It houses the collection of the ducal art treasures, with precious pieces of furniture, paintings, porcelain, traditional handicrafts and a selection of weapons from four centuries. The architecture and equipment show the ducal home of the 19th century and tell how the small duchy made world history due to its marriage policy. Special exhibitions take place in the castle as well as concerts. The chapel is still used for services, weddings and concerts. The Red Salon of the castle can be booked for private celebrations.

The Western wing houses the German Marksmen Museum of the German Marksmen Association. The exhibition tells about the history and development of the marksmanship.

For information and guided tours please contact:
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The Coburg citizen Johann Strauss

The Viennese may consider this to be a joke, but it isn’t. Johann Strauss, the “waltz king”, was a Coburg citizen until the end of his life, even though he was born in Vienna in 1825.

The liaison between the director of the court orchestra and the seat of the dukes of Coburg in the north of today’s Bavaria began on 24th May 1886. It was on that day that Johann Strauss applied for citizenship of the Duchy of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. Duke Ernst II, a music enthusiast who admired Strauss and who would himself occasionally pen his own compositions, did not hesitate in accepting. And on 28th January 1887, Johann Strauss officially became a Coburg citizen.

Of course there was a reason as to why Strauss left his hometown and did not later try to return to the bosom of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The reason was Adele Strauss. The respected director of the court orchestra met the widow, who incidentally already carried his name, in 1885 and fell immediately in love with her. But no-one was willing to grant him a divorce in Catholic Vienna. Although Strauss had been living apart from his unfaithful wife, the actress Angelika Dittrich, the State and Church there would offer him only a separation, but certainly not a divorce. He wanted to find a way out of this situation. The liberal duke, Ernst II of the protestant duchy of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, was willing to do Strauss the favour of dissolving his marriage to Angelika Dittrich, provided that Strauss became a Coburg citizen. Strauss agreed gladly.

In 1886, Johann Strauss gave up his Austrian citizenship and left Vienna. In January 1887, he swore an oath of allegiance to the constitution of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha in Gotha, the second seat of the Coburg dukes.

Sometime later, the “waltz king” was divorced by ducal edict and was finally able to marry Adele in Coburg’s town hall on 15th August of that year. Even though the couple left Coburg some time later, Strauss remained a Coburg citizen until his death. The Viennese were so unhappy about this that it was a long time before a memorial in his honour was erected there.

A brochure about Johann Strauss (only in German) is available at:
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The reformer Martin Luther in Coburg

Martin Luther spent almost half a year, from 24th April to 4th October 1530, waiting for the outcome of the Diet in Augsburg, which had been convened by Emperor Karl V, in order to settle some of the most urgent issues raised by the Reformation.

Luther's stay in Coburg has been remembered and commemorated for five centuries, and today the Veste Coburg fortress and St. Moriz church are among the most important Luther memorial places in Germany. Martin Luther had already visited Coburg several times before in the years of 1510, 1511, and 1518 during his travels to Heidelberg, Augsburg, and Rome. In 1521 he was excommunicated and put under the ban of the Empire. On 15th April 1530, Luther came back to Coburg in the entourage of Elector Johann der Beständige. The Elector stayed in Coburg with about 200 people while on his way to Augsburg, which he left for on 24th April. At that time, Coburg had a population of about 2,000 people. Luther was expected to travel to Nuremberg in order to be in close contact with the Elector, but as he had already been excommunicated by the Church and put under the ban of the Empire, the Free City of Nuremberg refused to let him stay there. Therefore, Luther stayed in Coburg. At first he lived in the town, but on 24th April he moved to the safety of the fortress along with his secretary until the Elector's return. While living in the town, Luther preached several times in St. Moriz church over the Easter period. Thanks to the reports of his secretary, Veit Dietrich, and Martin Luther's letters, as well as to the accounts of many visitors and friends, the time the reformer spent in Coburg is one of the best documented periods of his life.

During his stay in the fortress, Martin Luther succeeded in doing an astonishing amount of work. He worked on the translation of the Bible, and wrote around 100 letters, including one to Philipp Melanchthon, and one to his four-year-old son "Hänsichen", which is perhaps the most famous of all his private letters and is also a truly charming example of a father's love for his son. When the Elector, Johann der Beständige, and his entourage returned to Coburg on 1st October, he had no definite result. The compromise they had been striving for had not been achieved. But the Protestants had at least had an opportunity to present their view of the new Christian teachings to the Emperor and the Empire. Luther delivered his last sermon in Coburg on 2nd October and then left for Wittenberg on 4th October 1530.
Today the Luther memorial rooms and the Luther chapel remind visitors of the reformer's stay at the Veste Coburg. The Luther memorial rooms give a vivid impression of the Reformation era. There are pictures painted both at the time and more recently of people and events from that specific period on display here. An example of which is Lucas Cranach the Younger’s full-length portrait of Luther. The famous "Hedwigsbecher", a precious goblet made from topas-coloured glass that was presented to Luther by Elector Johann Friedrich, is also housed in this section of the Veste. Luther’s original letters are housed in the Veste and in Coburg’s Public Records Office (Staatsarchiv). The State library of Coburg possesses about 700 of Luther’s documents from the 16th century as well as valuable Lutheran Bibles. There is a realistic bust of Luther in St Moriz church.

The Tourist Information Coburg offers a free brochure and a booklet on Martin Luther’s time in Coburg for a small fee – both in English:
Tourismus und Stadtmarketing/Citymanagement Coburg,
Herrngasse 4, 96450 Coburg, Germany
Tel. +49 (0)9561 89-8000, Fax +49 (0)9561 89-8029
www.coburg-tourist.de, email: info@tourist.coburg.de
Coburg’s theatre tradition dates back to 1683, when Duke Albrecht had an auditorium constructed in the arsenal. Touring companies gave performances there. Under Duke Ernst Friedrich, the Ballhaus (a building where balls were held), which was located where the present arcades are on Palace Square, was turned into a theatre in 1764. In 1827, Duke Ernst I founded the Ducal Court Theatre here. It had its own theatre ensemble, and all this in a town which at that time had a population of about 8,000 people. The current theatre building has not altered since 1840. Besides having its own troupe of excellent performers, the Ducal Court Theatre also hired some of the most important singers, actors, instrumentalists, and conductors of the time, such as Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient, Marie Seebach, Charlotte Birch-Pfeiffer, Friedrich Haase, Franz Liszt, Nicolo Paganini, Hector Berlioz, and Richard Strauss. Even today, the city of Coburg with its population of almost 41,000 people is able to maintain a theatre employing roughly 230 permanent and 100 contract staff. The financing of the theatre is based on the state treaty concluded with Bavaria when Coburg voted to become a part of it in 1920. In the treaty, the Free State of Bavaria, as the new owner, made a commitment to maintain Coburg’s State Theatre at as high a level as had been the case up to that time and to pay “20,000 Goldmark as an advance subsidy” as well as to guarantee a further 40% of the “remaining deficit”. Since the founding of the Ducal Court Theatre up to this day, more than 200 different operas, 150 operettas and musicals, as well as 700 plays have been staged at the State Theatre. The auditorium can seat up to 550 people. The studio theatre, “Theater in der Reithalle” (theatre in the former indoor riding arena), seats 99 people and is home to one of the rehearsal stages. Around 300 performances of 18 productions of operas, plays, operettas, and musicals in the State Theatre (“Großes Haus”), and 140 performances of 8 to 10 productions in the “Theater in der Reithalle” are attended by roughly 150,000 theatregoers every year.

Information, programmes, and tickets are available:
Landestheater Coburg, Schloßplatz 6, 96450 Coburg
Tel. +49 (0)9561 898989, Fax +49 (0)9561 898988,
www.landestheater-coburg.de, email: info@landestheater-coburg.de
In Coburg...there's one event after another

Almost no other city of comparable size offers such a surprising diversity of lifestyle- and culturally-oriented events as Coburg. As a professor of city planning put it, Coburg gives one the “big city feel.” But...that’s hardly surprising. Especially during the summer, there's one event after another in Coburg. When Coburg isn’t celebrating the biggest Samba Festival outside Brazil, then it's featuring stars from the worlds of rock, pop and classic. Or, the Schlossplatzfest (palace square festival) is hosting the biggest gourmet party in northern Bavaria. The spectrum of events is simply enormous. There are not only large events that attract many visitors, but also more intimate ones as well.

The opening shot for the summer celebrations is at the end of April. It begins with the Frühlingsfest (a folk festival). Carnival rides, show booths and a party tent attract many visitors to the Ketschenanger. At this same location, between July and August there's the Vogelschießen (Coburg marksmen’s festival). This celebration has the longest tradition in Coburg and always opens with the ceremonial tapping of the beer barrel and a grand fireworks display.

In May, the dolls will be dancing in the town of Neustadt bei Coburg. This Bavarian doll city, which, together with the neighboring town of Sonneberg, is the center of the toy industry in Germany, invites everyone to the International Doll Festival.

For those with a creative touch, the Coburg Design Days is sure to inspire. In May/June Coburg students majoring in integrated product design, interior design, architecture, and civil engineering, will present their creations to the public at large. Lectures, speeches, workshops and small events will accompany the presentations. Art objects and light installations will also supplement the program.

Get ready for three days of wild partying! In the middle of July Coburg will host the world's biggest Samba party outside of Brazil. Hundreds of thousands of visitors will stream again into the fortress city to experience this gigantic spectacle. All over the city there will be dancing, drumming and celebrating. Musicians and dancers will come, not only from Brazil, but from all over Europe and transform Coburg into a bubbling cauldron of activity.

On a somewhat softer note, is the Coburger Schlossplatzfest (the Coburg Palace Square Festival) in July Coburg will celebrate with the biggest open air gourmet party in northern Bavaria. In a breathtaking setting, Coburg's best caterers will offer their finest specialties.
In addition, every night, music will be featured from a variety of top bands, as well as performances by international cabaret artists.

Even more top bands and comedians will be on stage of the romantic palace courtyard at the Tambach Summer.

The musical highlight in Coburg is the Open Air Summer in August. Every year concerts with national and international superstars take place.

The fortress city of Coburg is also renowned for its many markets. Week after week they are a meeting point - not only for the locals. The seasonal markets are a particular highlight. For example, during the flea market on June dealers will present their treasures throughout the historic city all night long. At the onion market in September, visitors will be indulged with tasty onion pie and Federweißer (a young fermented wine). During this time, many Coburg shops attract guests with onion market specials. A real insider’s tip is the Coburg Christmas Market, with its romantic boutiques, artfully arranged on the historic Coburg market place. Between the end of November and December 23th, the doors to this unique event will be opened for the enjoyment of regional art work, musical performances, carriage rides and to indulge in countless Christmas treats!

All year long the Coburger Landestheater (the Coburg regional theatre) presents musicals, operas, plays and ballet. Every performing division has its own dedicated ensemble. All actors, singers and dancers are professionals...and top performances are guaranteed! And not only what happens on the stage is worth a look. The building itself - inside and out - is fascinating.

More Information:
Tourismus und Stadtmarketing/Citymanagement Coburg,
Herrngasse 4, 96450 Coburg, Germany
Tel. +49 (0)9561 89-8000, Fax +49 (0)9561 89-8029
www.coburg-tourist.de, email: info@tourist.coburg.de
Samba fever in Coburg

Thousands of drummers, dancers, singers, and musicians descend on Coburg, the “Franconian Crown”, on the second weekend in July and turn it into a marvel of colour and music. Samba in Coburg means three days full of the joys of life, unlimited fun, and an intoxicating atmosphere. Fiery rhythms, compelling drumbeats, and exotic dances turn the town into a seething inferno. You won't be able to keep your feet still. People dance, sing, and celebrate on the streets, in the squares, in the pubs and cafés. More than a hundred thousand Samba fans from near and far take part in this festival.

A feast for the eyes, the ears, and the palate. The Samba festival in Coburg really does have it all: Vivacious dancers in colourful costumes, energetic Capoeira dancers, Brazilian Samba on the streets, fantastic shows, children’s samba, dance and costume competitions, a huge Samba parade, and much more. This is a unique event in Europe. Exotic and fiery rhythms in the heart of the enchanting old town give the festival a particular flair. People from all over the world come to celebrate at a truly unforgettable festival, which radiates harmony, fun, and love of life. The big Samba parade takes place on Sunday afternoon. Dance and costume competitions are staged on Friday and Saturday nights and continue into the early hours.

The programme of events, which also contains details about the Samba schools taking part, and the workshops (percussion, Afro-Brazilian dance, and Capoeira) will be available to buy from the end of April/beginning of May.

Information and brochures are available from Sambaco GmbH (the organizer), Rodacher Str. 44, 96450 Coburg
Tel. +49 (0)9561 705370, Fax. +49 (0)9561 7053729
www.samba-festival.de, email: info@samb-festival.de
The Magic of Christmas in Coburg

During the Christmas season, Coburg develops a unique magic. The market place transforms itself into a little city of Christmas boutiques, all contained between the historic city hall and the old ducal chancellery. The Coburg Christmas market is among the most atmospheric in Franconia. That's not only because of the picturesque setting and the beautiful lighting design, but also because of the many special accompanying activities. In addition to the classic store booths - where, by the way, exclusively Christmas products from the Coburg region are offered - many artisans from the region are also in attendance. Those who think that they've "been here, done that" haven't seen everything yet! The performances and programs that are part of the Christmas market change every year. And if you'd like to "mingle" with the locals, the quickest way is by having a cup of Glühwein (mulled wine) beneath the starry skies and next to the statue of Prince Albert! The British have Albert - perhaps the most famous of all "Coburgers" - to thank for introducing the Christmas tree to England. Every year on Christmas Eve, Prince Albert was adamant about maintaining the traditions that he had learned as a child in the fortress city. Visitors to the Christmas market can also experience a ride in a historical carriage with real horsepower! through the inner city.

More information:
Tourismus und Stadtmarketing/Citymanagement Coburg, Herrngasse 4, 96450 Coburg, Germany
Tel. +49 (0)9561 89-8000, Fax +49 (0)9561 89-8029
www.coburg-tourist.de, email: info@tourist.coburg.de
Kongresshaus Rosengarten – The perfect venue for your conferences and meetings

If you’re planning a meeting or any other event, you will appreciate the professional organization, attractive architecture and the layout of the rooms offered by Coburg’s conference centre. The Kongresshaus Rosengarten has it all. It is centrally located and was designed for meetings and even political and cultural events.

The open-plan design of the building means that there is a certain amount of flexibility. Ten meeting rooms (each a different shape and size) can be arranged in 16 ways. The Great Hall seats up to 1,100 guests. All the conference rooms have windows and are equipped with the most modern technology. The spacious design, the well-lit and airy foyers, the conservatory, and the agreeable layout of the rooms all combine to create a relaxing ambience. The whole complex also comprises a restaurant, a terrace café, and a roof terrace. Event organizers can take advantage of the six changing rooms (each with their own shower and WC). The efficient conference centre staff are always happy to be at your service and will strive to fulfil your requirements.

For further information please contact:
Kongresshaus Rosengarten, Berliner Platz 1, 96450 Coburg,
Tel. +49 (0)9561 82830, Fax +49 (0)9561 828384,
www.coburg-kongress.de, email info@coburg-kongress.de
Where Prince Albert was born – Rosenau Castle near Coburg

Queen Victoria’s favourite travel destination was the romantic Rosenau Castle near Coburg. This is where, in 1819, Prince Albert, her prince consort, was born and where he spent the major part of his youth. Even today, the renovated Rosenau Castle, which is furnished in the style of Victoria and Albert’s time, is one of the most romantic spots in the whole of the Coburg area. The journey there takes you along a street lined with old chestnut trees. Suddenly the row of trees becomes less dense and a green meadow spread over a hill comes into view. Perched on the hill is the small white castle of Rosenau. When Queen Victoria saw Rosenau Castle for the first time, she took out her sketchbook and painted a watercolour thereof in order that she had a constant reminder of this unique view. Albert spent the happiest days of his childhood in Rosenau. Victoria longed to visit the place, where Albert had frolicked and studied. But it was many years before Victoria and Albert could finally embark on the long journey from England to Rosenau. In spite of its small size, Rosenau Castle was no disappointment for the Queen. “I cannot describe what I feel here – it is a feeling as if I had spent my youth here,” Victoria wrote. Today, visitors to Rosenau Castle can take a rest near the fountain at the castle, just as Albert and Victoria had done some 150 years beforehand on one moonlit night. Although Albert’s family had a large residence in Coburg – Ehrenburg Palace – Rosenau was the family’s rural retreat. Albert’s father, Duke Ernst I, had the original castle, in which there were no more than 20 rooms, renovated in the Neo-Gothic style that was so loved at that time. Victoria enjoyed the relaxed, informal atmosphere of the castle and its surroundings, especially during her walks in the park with Albert. She said at the time, “were I not what I am, this would be my real home.”

Concerts also take place in Rosenau Castle.

For information about the castle and about guided tours please contact
Schloss Rosenau, Rosenau 1, 96472 Rödental
Tel +49(0)9 63 308413, Fax +49 (0)9563 308429
www.sgvcoburg.de, email: sgvcoburg@bsc.bayern.de
Coburg: A living historical reminder of a divided Germany

There are few regions in Germany that speak to contemporary history as vividly as the Coburg region. Until 1989 Coburg was border land, surrounded on three sides by East Germany. Even today, the past is everywhere in evidence, reminding us of the separation of Germany.

There is, for example, the Zweiländermuseum (the two country museum) in the town of Rodachtal in Streudorf. Here, visitors will get a fascinating look into the over 100-year history of the Rodach Valley, once part of Franconia in the West and Thuringia in the East. Yet visitors can experience the separation of the two Germanys even more intensely in Mödlareuth. In this village of 50 inhabitants, two completely different worlds developed in the most intimate space...so close, but so far. The East German border went through the middle of this tiny village. For this reason, the Americans dubbed the area—situated half in Bavaria and half in Thuringia—"Little Berlin." Even today, a vivid impression of the different lives and fates of the inhabitants is made possible by the open-air museum that contains a part of the original wall, as well as separation barriers and watch facilities. Mödlareuth can be reached by car from Coburg in 1.5 hours.

If one can speak at all of a positive aspect of Germany’s separation, then it would surely be the untouched nature of the border area. There, where the death strip used to run, one can see nowadays a green ribbon. Here, rare animal and plant species are being preserved. Where once concrete walls, barbed wire and watch towers separated Germans from Germans, visitors on their excursions can now experience a small nature paradise. Along the way one can find, even 20 years after the fall of the wall, many monuments and wall charts, remembrances of failed escape attempts. Walkers and bicyclists can pass over remnants of bulldozed villages that were destroyed under the East German regime.

These devastated villages tell stories of people who were expelled from their homeland and whose houses were bulldozed for the purpose of expanding the border. Shortly before reaching the Thuringian village of Görsdorf there is still a piece of the East German wall, which nowadays is a refuge for bats and butterflies.

The so called "Gebrannte Brücke" (burnt bridge) between Neustadt and Sonneberg is another symbol, as well as an emphatic reminder, of the separation of the two Germanys. Only a few meters separated East and West. And, although one could see the other part of Germany so closely, it was still a world away. It was here, on June 1, 1990, that the treaty for the abolition of border controls for the interior of Germany was signed.

...
Historical background:

Because of its position directly at the inner-German border (nowadays the border to the state of Thuringia), the Coburg region became, in November 1989, a focus of a number of important events. When the iron curtain fell, it was in Coburg where the inhabitants especially hugged and celebrated. For 40 years after World War II, Germany was divided into four zones of occupation. After World War I, and the fall of the monarchy in Germany, the majority of Coburgers voted, in a 1919 referendum, to become part of Bavaria. Subsequently, in 1920, Coburg became formally connected with the Free State of Bavaria. The luck of this decision was made clear only many years later. Because, had Coburg remained in Thuringia, the city, as well as its surroundings, would have become part of the Soviet occupation zone. Therefore, even today, Coburgers are sometimes called the only real Bavarians—because the citizens of Coburg actually voted to join the Bavarian State.

Moe Information:
Tourismus und Stadtmarketing/Citymanagement Coburg, Herrngasse 4, 96450 Coburg, Germany
Tel. +49 (0)9561 89-8000, Fax +49 (0)9561 89-8029
www.coburg-tourist.de, email: info@tourist.coburg.de
Creative Coburg: Stronghold of design and ideas

Coburg has a reputation as a stronghold of design, with a charisma that radiates far beyond the region. It is especially during Coburg Design Days where creativity finds its true significance. The program is organized by the Coburg Design Forum of Upper Franconia. It is a unique event, especially for those interested in every facet of design.

For the students of the design faculty of the University of Applied Sciences the design days are a fantastic opportunity to showcase their know-how. And, indeed, year after year, tremendous design creativity is on display, with many of these inspirations becoming marketable products.

Meanwhile, the creativity of Design Days radiates throughout the Coburg inner city. Many Coburg shops, with the motto, "Design findet Stadt," become a setting for installations and exhibitions. Also, directly on the market place, at Herrngasse 7, a Design Days shop is open. Here, the visitor will find a colorful selection of furniture, lamps, clothing, toys and accessories. Also on the program are world-class speeches, workshops, and discussions. And in the evening there's always an exciting get together with live music.

But it's not only during Design Days that Coburg reveals itself as a design stronghold. In October of 2008 the European Museum for Modern Glass was established at Schlosspark Rosenau (the Palace Park at the Rosenau), opposite to the Orangerie. The exhibition contains one of Europe's biggest collections of contemporary glass (covering about 1300 square meters). The glass works are part of the art collections of the Veste Coburg (the Coburg fortress/castle). This museum is one-of-a-kind in Germany, with more than 300 exhibits from all over the world, from the 1950s to today. In addition to everyday glassware, there is also a variety of sculptures and other objects. On the first floor the visitor can learn about the history of studio glass from the 1960s until today. And, via a glass staircase, guests can reach the lamp glass studio. Here, periodically, special exhibitions take place. The museum also offers the perfect ambience for a variety of events, for example concerts by musicians playing glass instruments.

Glass is not only on display in Coburg, but is also made here. Numerous artisans and craftsmen live in the Coburg region. Many are not only masters of the art of glass blowing, but also weave baskets, paint porcelain and carve objects out of wood. Quite a few of these craftsmen also demonstrate their artistry in living workshops, for example at the Coburg Christmas Market.

Culinary Coburg: Bratwurst, beer and the art of baking

Nowhere in the world are there as many butcher shops, bakeries and breweries as in the Coburg "Region of Culinary Delights"

When nearing the Coburg market place, at first one often sees nothing but a large cloud of smoke, which, simultaneously, emits a wonderfully inviting smell. If this aroma is followed, one quickly realizes the source of the "fire". It is coming from the small bratwurst stands, where Coburg’s most famous specialty is sizzling on the grill over smoldering pine cones - the Coburger bratwurst. This bratwurst was recently chosen by a jury, on the German TV-network VOX, as the best bratwurst in all of Germany. Even with strong competition from Nuremberg and Thuringia, the Coburg bratwurst left them all behind! And if, while eating a Coburger bratwurst, the question should arise at to its exact length, then one only has to take a look at the roof of the city hall for an answer. There sits, enthroned, the Coburg Bratwurst Moor, holding his marshal’s baton, which, according to legend, shows exactly how long the bratwurst must measure. But we don't recommend that you completely eat your fill of these tasty brats. Because dessert is waiting just a few meters away - the famous Coburger Schmätzchen (little Coburg kisses) of the Hofbäckerei (court bakery) Feyler. For more than 100 years these have been baked, according to a traditional family recipe, from honey, almonds, hazelnuts and a special blend of spices. They are available as natural, or as gold kisses, covered with chocolate. They are then decorated with a swath of real gold foil. (By the way, these also make an ideal gift or souvenir for those still waiting at home!)

And, when you're feeling thirsty after all that food, don't hesitate to treat yourself to a cool beer. The selection seems endless. With its over 200 breweries, which, together, make more than 1000 different beers, Upper Franconia is the true center of Bavarian "beer culture". And not only in beer are the Upper Franconians leading the way, because nowhere in the world is there such a density of bakeries and butcher shops as in that "region of culinary delights" - Coburg.

With such a treasure trove of culinary specialties, it is only natural that the biggest gourmet festival in northern Bavaria takes place in the fortress city. Every year in July, the Coburg Schlossplatz (Coburg palace square) transforms itself into a unique gourmet temple. In the beautiful ambience of the Ehrenburg palace, the Landestheater (regional theater) and the arcades, one will find, in addition to the regional gastronomic delights, such specialties as lobster, sushi, salmon, prosecco, and cocktails. And, while feasting, visitors will be entertained on two show stages with live music, acrobatics and comedy-art.

More Information:
Tourismus und Stadtmarketing/Citymanagement Coburg,
Herrngasse 4, 96450 Coburg, Germany
Tel. +49 (0)9561 89-8000, Fax +49 (0)9561 89-8029
www.coburg-tourist.de, email: info@tourist.coburg.de
Culture and Nature – Welcome to Bicycling in the Coburg Region!

Culture and sport. Nature and culinary delights. Play and fun. Welcome to bicycling in the Coburg region! Few areas have such a rich diversity of bicycling paths as the Coburg region. The variety of low mountain ranges not only provides families countless spare time possibilities, but professional bicyclists and mountain bikers will also find themselves challenged. At the transition point from the Franconian countryside to the Thuringian forest, a rich selection of routes is open to friends who love bicycling together. There are flatter paths alongside vast meadows, as well as pastures with gentle hills. There are also sportier routes with challenging paths and steeper slopes that reward the extra effort with imposing views of the countryside. In addition, there are country lanes, dirt roads, as well as forest paths and hillsides with steep inclines. No matter your personal level of performance...and interest...here, everyone finds a match.

A bike tour through the bicycling region of Coburg is more than just an ordinary bike trip. Different theme-oriented tours turn biking excursions into true experiences. For example, when biking with children, a "Tour into the Dolls' Paradise", or one of many "Kids' Playground Tours" are available. Fans of culture will be enthralled by the “Romantic Castle Tour” or the “Half-timbered Romantic Tour”. The fascinating “Four Castles Tour” begins and ends at the Ehrenburg Palace in the Coburg inner city. From here, the tour goes to the top of Coburg, the fortress castle, Coburg's landmark. Beautiful forest paths then lead bikers to the Schloss Rosenau (the Rosenau Palace). Via meadows and fields, the tour continues to Schloss Callenberg (Callenberg Palace) and back into the inner city. For those who like to take frequent breaks along the way, the “Culinary Delights Tour” is just right. This tour offers numerous opportunities to stop for a bite to eat. And with the “Biking Tour Through a Divided Germany” one can even experience a piece of contemporary history.

Those planning a longer vacation, or even just a weekend trip, will find in the Coburg region numerous cycling package deals. “Love of Life” for bikers, for example, consists of a three day stay in beautiful neighboring Bad Rodach. The package includes two nights lodging (with two meals per day) and numerous possibilities to relax. After a sporty day on the bicycle, the ThermeNatur (hot springs) provides pure relaxation for its guests. Admission to the baths is included in the package. And, to prevent muscle aches after a hard day of cycling, guests can treat themselves to a free massage! More offers can be found on the Internet at www.coburg-tourist.de/radregion.

Further information and maps:
Tourismus und Stadtmarketing/Citymanagement Coburg,
Herrngasse 4, 96450 Coburg, Germany
Tel. +49 (0)9561 89-8000, Fax +49 (0)9561 89-8029
www.coburg-tourist.de, email: info@tourist.coburg.de