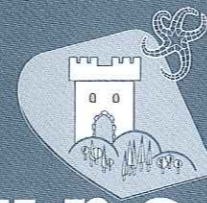


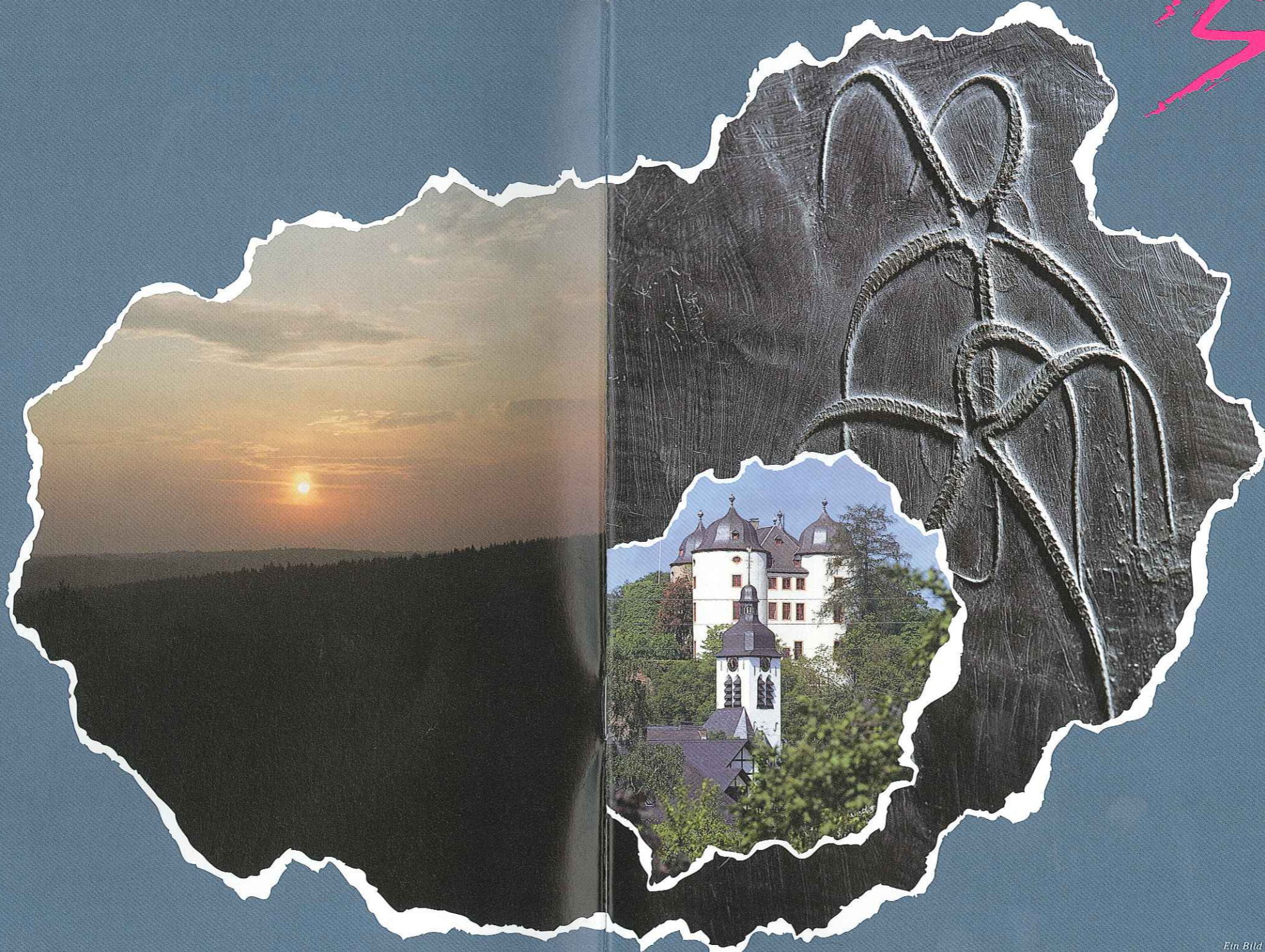
Hunsrück

SCHIEFER-  
BURGEN-  
STRASSE



Hunsrück

SCHIEFER-  
BURGEN-  
STRASSE



Activity tours  
in the  
Hunsrück  
and the  
Nahe valley



Förderung durch das  
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naheland

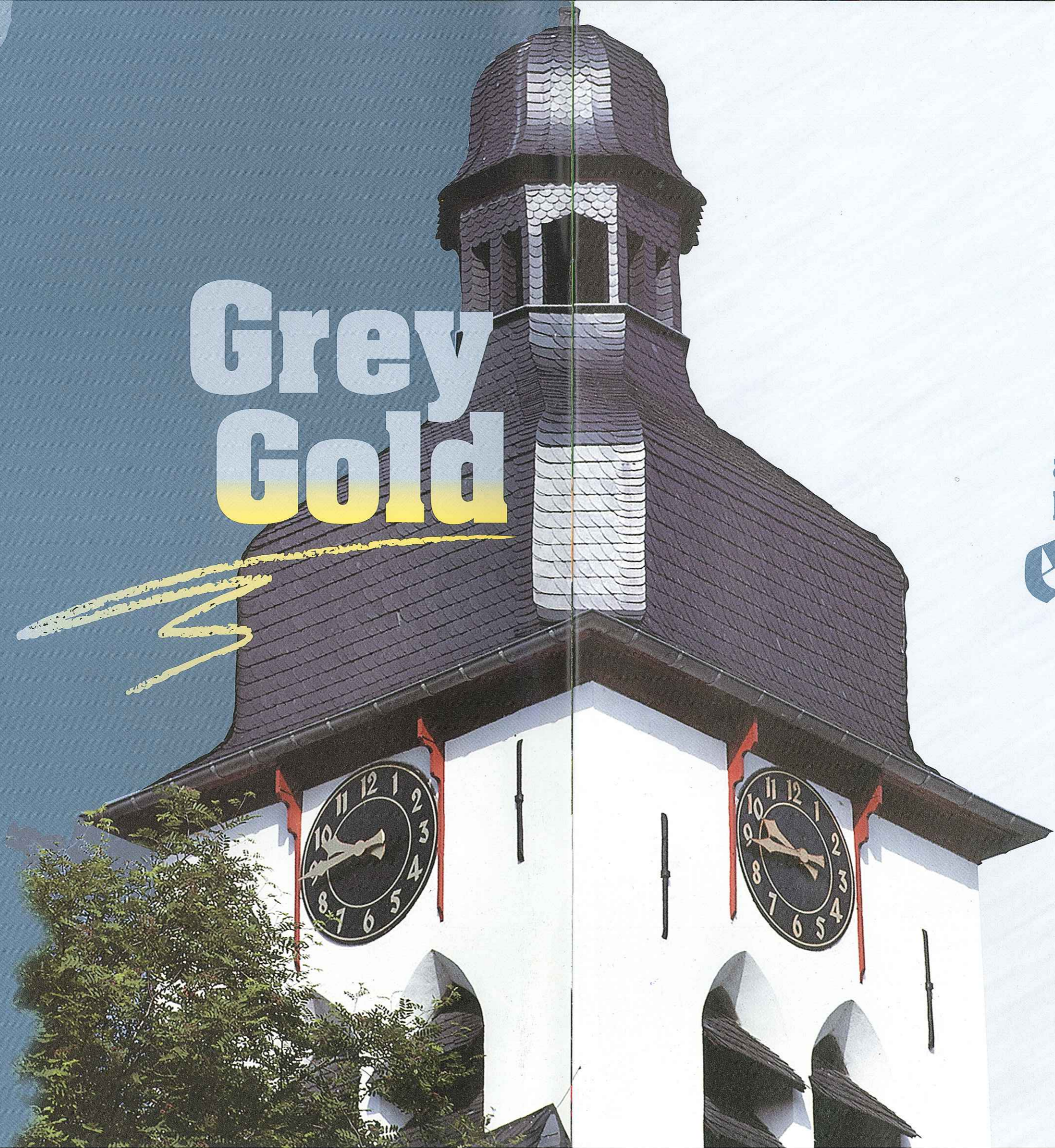
Ein Bild von einem Land

DAS VIELFALTLAND

[www.naheland.net](http://www.naheland.net)

HUNSRÜCK  
SCHIEFER  
BURGEN  
STRASSE

# Grey Gold



## and proud earls

### A new historical route in the "Hunsrück"

*Although more or less hidden and almost invisible at first sight, the so-called "Hunsrück Schiefer- und Burgenstraße"*

*– a new tourist route in the southern Hunsrück and the Kirn-Nahe-valley that leads through a region characterised by slate and fortresses – has a lot to offer. It is one of the most beautiful and interesting areas of the Rhineland-Palatinate.*

*Many features that make this holiday-region so quaint and unique do not impose themselves on the visitor but must be discovered. Visitors exploring the region will find many remnants of historical and geological interest.*

*There are numerous castles, churches, fortresses and manor houses along the road that reflect the culture of our ancestors and thus create a direct link between the history and geology of the area.*

# Diving into an endless area of woods and meadows

Besides the various possibilities of experiencing history and nature the visitor can participate in many creative leisure activities. The particular charm of the Hunsrück Schiefer- und Burgenstraße especially attractive, however, lies in its varied landscape. It also has one of the most favourable climates in Germany and each season has its own attractions for the nature lover.

The new route is a link to the so-called German Edelsteinstraße (route of precious stones) and also a connection to the wine-growing area of the Nahe Valley.

Departing from here you can easily explore the town of Idar-Oberstein, which is popular for its precious stones, and the wine-growing area around the river Nahe with its spas Bad Münster am Stein/Ebernburg and Bad Kreuznach.

The central position of the new route offers many attractive destinations in all directions, such as the Bostalsee in the Saarland, the cities of Trier or Mainz, the valleys of the Moselle and the Rhine with their fortresses, little villages and...and...and...

The new tourist route is a network with links to many attractive sites and unique landscapes that can be explored on foot or by bike, giving the visitors the freedom to choose their own itinerary. There are seven different routes.

## The 7 routes



**Route 1**  
Geology and lost cultures  
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**Route 2**  
Slate protection and ornament  
Page 11



**Route 3**  
Kirn - a town reveals its modern and historical face  
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**Route 4**  
Much history in a very small area "Mulum in parvo"  
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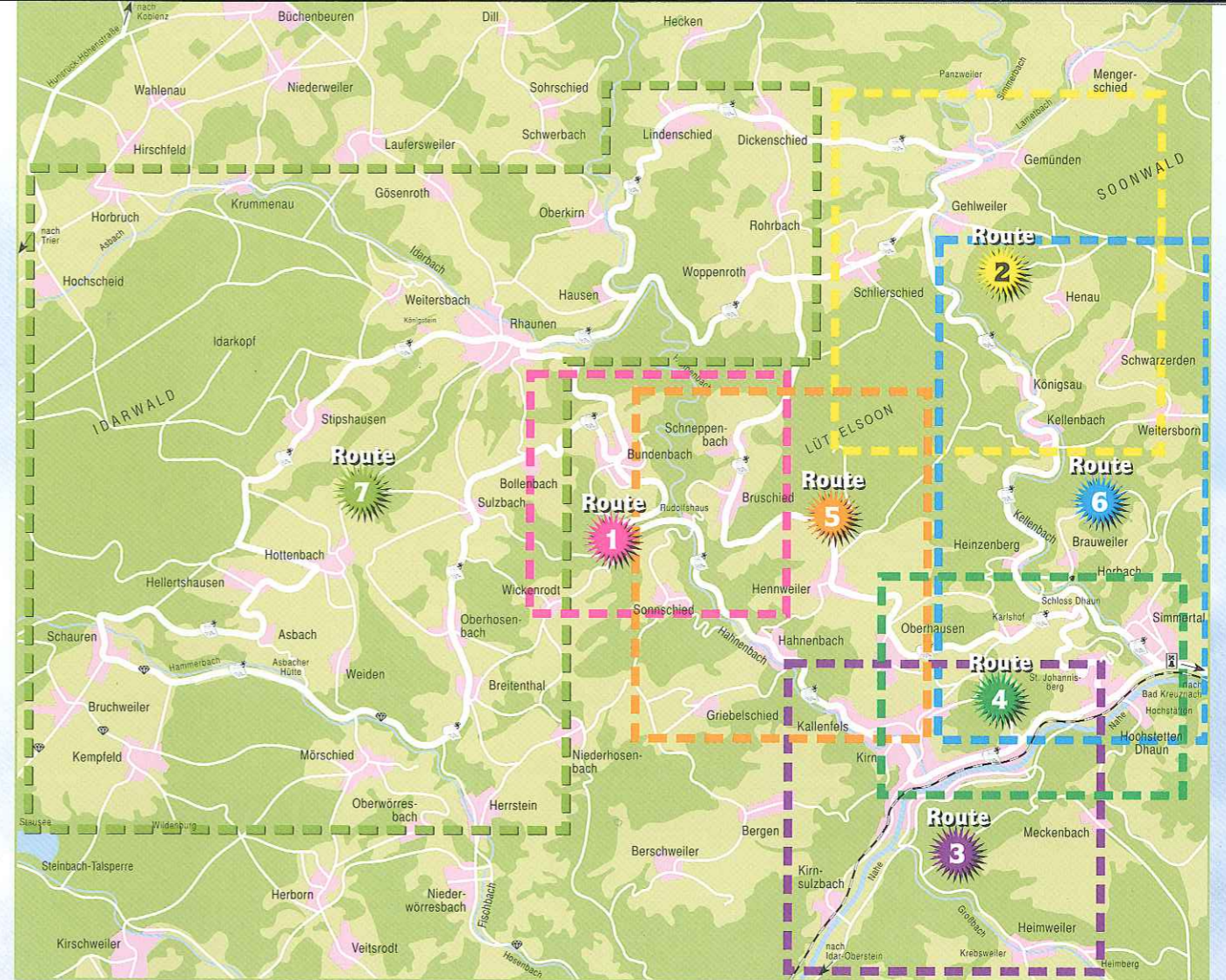
**Route 5**  
Quiet meadows and dizzy heights  
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**Route 6**  
Through the wild and romantic valley of the Kellenbach  
Page 16



**Route 7**  
Handycrafts - art and precious stones  
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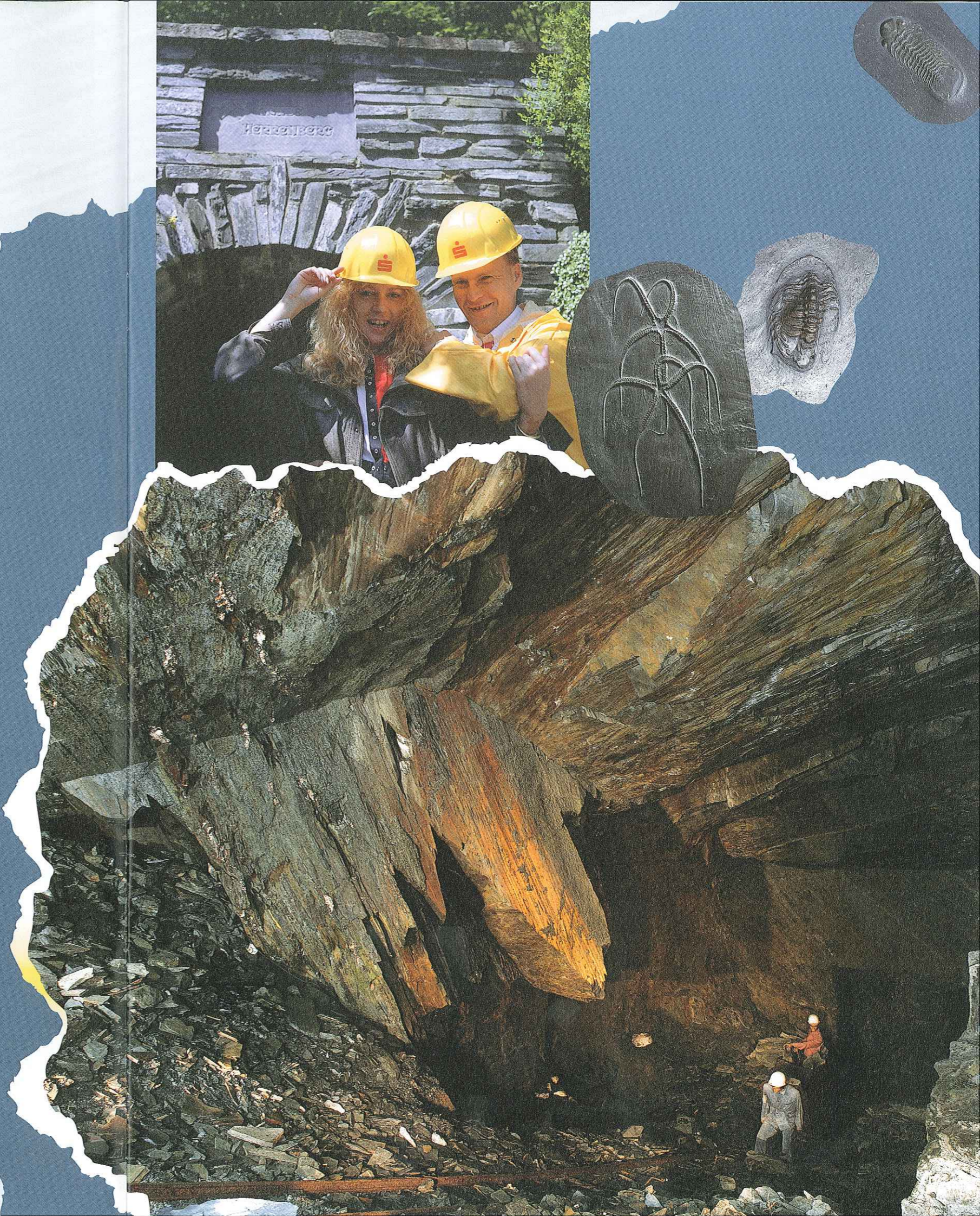
# Tracing back millions of years

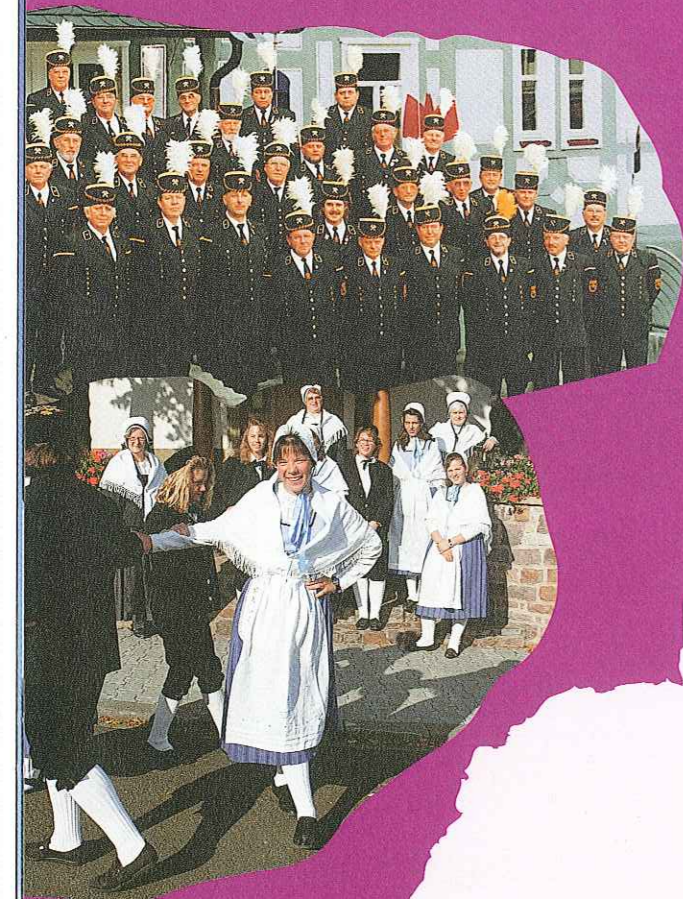
## Experiencing primeval history during an excursion

The formation of slate in the Hunsrück happened about 400 million years ago. Since the early Middle Ages slate has been mined and quarried. It has always been an important building material in this region and has strongly influenced its architecture. Today there is only one mine left, "Bocksberg-Eschenbach" near Bundenbach, which is still working.

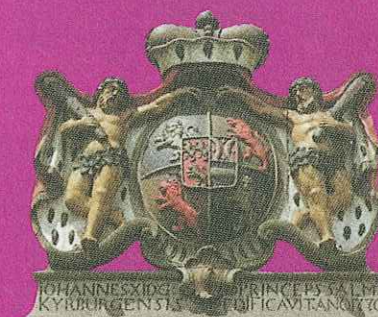
Two ancient quarries have been opened up to visitors and bear witness to the heyday of slate-quarrying in the 19th century. Not only do they show the historical quarrying of slate but also have a huge collection of fossilised marine creatures enclosed in the slate.

In the area of this new route there are three museums which give insight into the life of the past as well two geological trails which inform the visitors of the complicated geological evolution of the Hunsrück and its foothills.





*Culture, tradition and customs are still as important in the Hunsrück areas as they used to be centuries ago – it is a world in which people with warm hearts and open friendliness prove what hospitality means.*



# Culture and History beyond the Great Museums

There are not many historical landscapes in which castles and fortresses are concentrated so numerous in such a small area is the case in the Hunsrück-Schiefer- und Burgenstraße area. The route derives its name from the most important features of the region: fortresses and slate. It opens up a region in which settlement began long before Roman times.

Celts, Romans, Franconians and later the earls and princes of the Middle Ages have strongly influenced the territory and left their traces everywhere.

Most of the castles are today reduced to ruins so that the visitor can only guess how important and powerful they used to be, but some have kept much of their outer appearance and are now used as cultural or educational centres.





# Geology and ancient culture

Visitors seeking relaxation in nature will find several sites worth seeing in the romantic valley of the Hahnenbach and the so-called "Bundenbacher Switzerland". They can all be found in a relatively small area and show the relationship between geological and cultural history.

## D Keltensiedlung Altburg



The Celtic settlement of „Altburg“ was occupied from 170 to 50 BC. It was excavated in the 70s. In the 80s it was partly restored and can be visited today as an open-air museum.

## A Besuchergrube Herrenberg

The former slate quarry Herrenberg is open to visitors and gives an impressive insight into historical ways of slate-quarrying. The old mine shafts and a little mining museum give visitors an idea of the difficult conditions under which miners had to toil for centuries in the slate mines.



## C Ruine Schmidtburg

The „Schmidtburg“ in the Hahnenbach valley is the oldest castle in the region. It was founded in 926 and used to be an ancestral seat of the earls in the Nahe-valley until the Archbishop Balduin of Trier bought and extended it in 1324. The castle lost its military importance in the wars of reunion in the 17th century., when French pioneers blew it up in 1688. The ruins of the castle were dug out and made safe again in the 1980s so that visitors can get an idea of its former size and importance.



## B „Bocksberg-Eschenbach“ mine

This is the only working mine in this area. It has run profitably for 150 years although the open-cast-mining method takes up a large area.



## A The castle of Gemünden

The eye-catching sight in the old village of Gemünden is its baroque castle which belonged to the baron of Salis-Soglio. It has its origin in a fortress that was built in the 12th and 13th century by one of the earls of Sponheim. In the 16th century the castle changed possession and was then owned by the knights of the Schmidtburg. After the destruction of the castle in 1689 the grounds were rebuilt in the 18th century. The artistic slate roof of the castle and the numerous timbered houses in the village are a further proof of the long tradition of the exploitation of slate.



## B Geological trail - the ancient mine Kaisergrube - the museum of fossils

The nature trail with its signposts and informative noticeboards explains in an understandable way the complicated geological development of the Hunsrück in the last 400 million years. The highlight of the circular trail, which is 4 km long, is the ancient mine Kaisergrube that closed down in 1961. It was one of the biggest slate mines and has reopened to visitors who want to find out what it used to be like. There are many fossilized marine creatures which are embedded in the slate and can now be seen in the small museum at the Kaisergrube.

# Slate - protection and decoration

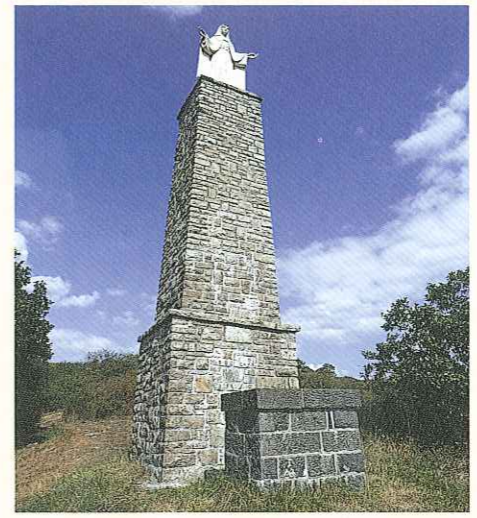


## C Nature Trail

When following this 5 km long circular path through the forest (Soonwald) the visitor can gain insight into the variety of animals living here. The forest stretches from the Rhine-valley to the Hahnenbach valley near Kirn. There are 48 stations with signposts and illustrations which convey detailed information about the local ecology, the forest itself and its cities.

## D Mariensäule

The monument was erected in 1957 by a family from Gemünden who wanted to show their gratitude that the village had not been destroyed in the second World War. From here one has a beautiful view on the village of Gemünden. The monument is illuminated at night.



## E Ruine Koppenstein

The ruins of the fortress of Koppenstein date from the 12th century and are situated near Gemünden and the village of Henau. They can be reached via a footpath and offer a panoramic view over the forest of Soonwald at an altitude of 565 m.



## A The town of Kirn

Kirn is the centre of the "Hunsrück Schiefer- und Burgenstraße". It was first mentioned in documents of the monastery of "Fulda" in 841. The town got its name from a little stream formerly known as Kira. Its present name is Hahnenbach.

There has always been industry in Kirn, e.g. **leather- and brewing industries**. Although the plastic industry has overtaken the **trade in leather**, the latter is still quite important.

Kirn has been redeveloped extensively and is now an attractive town where the old meets the new. Many sites and buildings are worth seeing and are of historical importance.

There are two buildings left the 18th century regency period: **the brewery and a former monastery**. Both were built as baroque buildings by Johann Thomas Petry.

## E The Kirn town hall - St. Pankratius church



The **town hall** was also built as a monastery. Together with the Protestant church (**the former St. Pankratikus church**) it gives the town its typical appearance.

The **Catholic church of Pankratikus** is an example of a more recent building, but from an architectural point of view it is as interesting as the Protestant one.

# Kirn - a town shows its modern and historical face

## C The ruins of Kyrburg castle

The symbol of the town of "Kirn" can be seen from far away: it is the old fortress "Kyrburg", which was built in 960 by Earl Emicho. After a long history of several occupations it was destroyed by the French in 1734.

The **watch-tower** was built after the destruction and has been changed into a **restaurant** today. From its terrace you can enjoy a wonderful view over Kirn and the Nahe-valley. In a deep cellar under the watch-tower you can visit **Germany's whisky-museum**.



The fortress and its premises have been completely restored and offer you a great viewpoint from the top of the mountains over Kirn and the Nahe-valley up to the southern heights of the Hunsrück. The old walls offer a beautiful background for the **open-air theatre** which is situated there and where each year opera performances take place attracting people from all over the area and from far away. Moreover, visitors wanting to get married have the chance to do so in a medieval atmosphere in the so-called "**Trauzimmer**" (wedding room), which is really restored vault inside the castle.

## D Market square

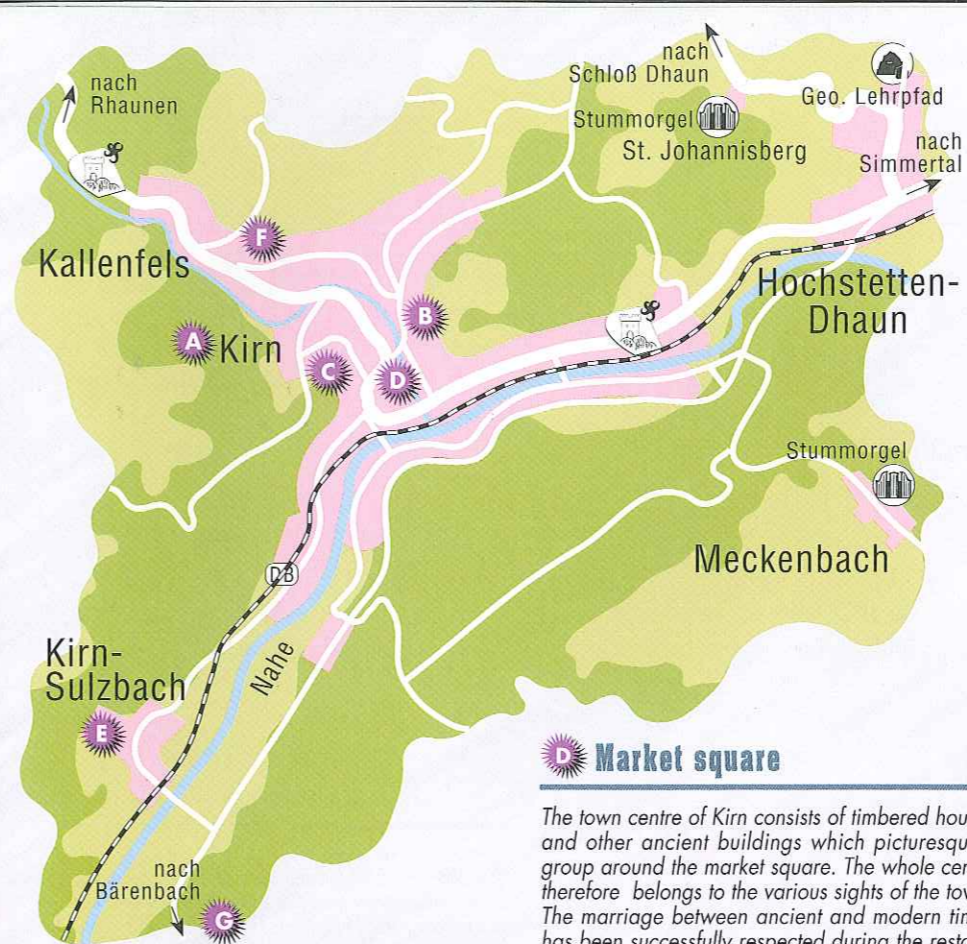
The town centre of Kirn consists of timbered houses and other ancient buildings which picturesquely group around the market square. The whole centre therefore belongs to the various sights of the town. The marriage between ancient and modern times has been successfully respected during the restoration of Kirn and now provides the frame for the famous markets of the town, such as the so-called "Krammarkt" that is held on the first Monday of each month and ranks as one the biggest markets of the Rhineland-Palatinate.

The markets of Kirn have known a long tradition. In the 16th century the lords of Steinkallenfels raised taxes on the profits.

## F Kirn-Sulzbach

The village of Sulzbach is situated west of Kirn and was officially mentioned for the first time in 1325. Since 1969 it has been a borough of the town of Kirn. The prefix "Sulz" refers to the former mineral sources of the village.

In the local Catholic church you can admire valuable **baroque altars** which originally stem from the former church "St. Pankratius" in Kirn.



## F Kallenfels

Today the little villages of Sulzbach und Kallenfels belong to Kirn. The latter huddles cozily against the gigantic rockface of the fortress in the Hahnenbach valley.



## G The ruins of Naumburg

The town of Bärenbach with its beautiful medieval ruins of the Naumburg is also integrated into Kirn.



# Much history in a very small area "Multum in parvo"



## A Dhaun castle

This historical building which also serves as an educational centre in the community of Hochstätten-Dhaun is a very popular attraction. Built at the beginning of the 12th century, the "castrum de Dune" used to be a fortress in the Middle Ages. In 1340 it was the centre of a war between Archbishop Balduin from Trier and the Earl Johann von Dhaun, who fought over the so-called Schmidtburger Erbe (inheritance of the Schmidtburg). During this war, also known as "Dhauner Fehde" (feud of Dhaun), two more fortresses, Martinstein and Johannisberg, were built in front of the castle as counterparts to Dhaun. The feud ended in favour of the Archbishop.

In 1350 the Rhenish Earl Johann von Stein became the founder of the Rhenish Earl's House of Dhaun. In the 16th century the castle was extended and fortified. Later on it was transformed into a baroque castle by its new owners, Earl Carl and his wife, who also laid out the large gardens.

In 1794 French revolutionary troops occupied and plundered the castle and finally sold it as national estate in 1804. From 1886 until 1954 the castle was in the possession of a manufacturing family from Dhaun. After that the pressure group "Schloss Dhaun" bought it and renovated it to be used as an educational centre. Since 1957 evening courses for adults and young people have been held in it.

## B Geological trail



The trail is 3,5 km long and consists of 11 stations, where noticeboards provide information on the geology of Kirn and the economic exploitation of rocks and stones of the area, of which a wide variety can be seen on the trail.



## C The Collegiate Church "St. Johannisburg"

The church was probably built in the 2nd half of the 13th century and is closely linked to the castle of Dhaun. It was made a collegiate church by the Archbishop of Mainz in 1318. Today it is well-known for its large collection of historically and artistically valuable buildings and gravestones which bear witness to the development of sculpture spanning four centuries.



# Quiet meadows and dizzy heights

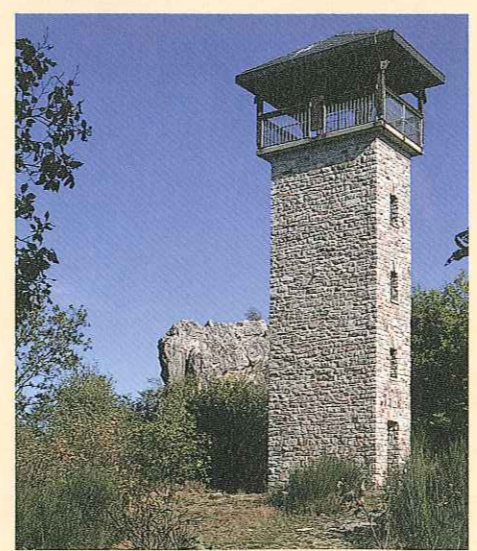


## A The Oberhauser rocks

The Oberhauser rocks (also called the Kirn Dolomites) rise above the Hahnenbach valley near the Steinkallenfels castle in Kirn. They form the southern border of the Lützelsohn. The bizarre rocky mountain range consists of quartz which also forms the heights of the Lützelsohn and the Soonwald. While the softer slate has been eroded by weathering, the more robust quartz has survived in the form of steep jagged peaks and beckons would-be mountaineers.

## B The natural monument of Devil's Rock (Teufelsfels)

The so-called Devil's Rock near Bruschied/Hennweiler is an imposing geological monument in the Lützelsohn. The "fat stone" as this "Quarzitährtling" was called in the vernacular has stood up to weathering to which the quartz has been exposed for over 300 million years. From the platform of the lookout tower the visitor has an impressive panoramic view.



## C The Wartenstein castle mit Naturerlebnispfad

Wartenstein castle has got its origin in a fortress called Wartenstein which was built by the Knight Tilmann of Stein (Stein-Kallenfels) around 1356/57. In the late Middle Ages the castle was subterfuge for different houses of the Rhenish nobility and was part of the fiefdom of the Archbishop of Trier. After the French had destroyed the castle in 1688 it was rebuilt by Lothar Friedrich von Warsberg. The dates 1704 and 1728 mark different periods of construction. The castle was the residence of the "Reichsherrschaft Wartenstein" which consisted of the parts Hennweiler and Hahnenbach (Weiden). The grounds with long building of rough undressed stone high above the Hahnenbach valley are the property of the baronial house of Warsberg-Dort.



## D The townhall in Hahnenbach

The old townhall in Hahnenbach is an attractive spectacle in picturesque surroundings. The two-storey building of rough undressed stone with half-timbering and slate was originally built in 1939 as a fire station.





# Through the romantic Kellenbach valley



### C Nature and forest trail

In the open countryside nature-lovers and hikers can head for several destinations. The best starting point is the hiker car park at the entrance of Simmertal. In the so-called „Felsengarten“ a nature and forest trail invites you to get to know the flora and fauna of the region.

### B Historical Town hall with Natural history museum

Additional museums can be found in the old centre of Simmertal. There the old townhall which was built in 1499 houses a natural history museum with exhibitions of fossils, minerals, plants and birds.



### A Kellenbach valley

In the eastern part of the Hunsrück Schiefer- und Burgenstraße the holiday route leads via the B 421 through the romantic Kellenbach valley (Simmertal valley) with its bizzare rock formations and idyllic meadows. The attractions of landscape and natural history are not the only ones this valley has to offer. There Wilhelm von Heinzenberg, one of the most important minstrels of the Middle Ages, had his ancestral seat.



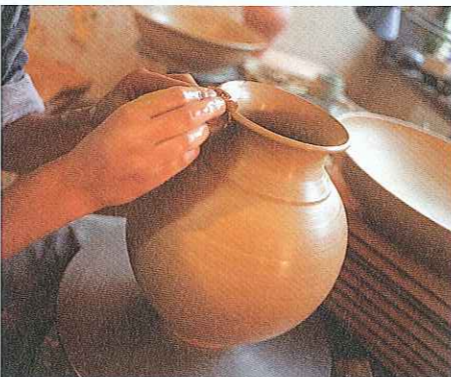
### D Ruine Brunkenstein

Those who are interested in following the tracks of the „Wild- und Rheingrafen“ will find easypaths up to the castle via the castles of Rotenberg and Brunkenstein.



### E Pottery

The route leads via Heinzenberg and Kellenbach to Königsau where nowadays a very old craft – pottery – enjoys a new heyday. It has one of the biggest exhibition areas in the Rhineland-Palatinate.



The Kellenbach route comes to an end in Gemünden.

# Crafts - art and precious stones

In the small towns and villages along the holiday route several historical art treasures can be found. Especially in the western part of the “Hunsrück route”, where, in the 19th century, mining, iron and steel industries used to be of great importance, there are a number of churches and town houses worth seeing. Their construction and furnishing show the skilled craftsmanship of earlier times.



### A The historical townhall

Numerous secular buildings in the villages round the “Idarkopf” are impressive. One example is the old townhall in Rhaunen, an ancient town with a court. The upper floor, built in 1723, is completely clad with slate and is supported by four strong oak pillars on one side. The result is an open entrance hall which looks like an arbour.

### B The church in Hottenbach



An example of a successful marriage between medieval and modern architecture is the Protestant church in Hottenbach. It was rebuilt on the old foundations of a previous building in 1904, keeping the massive 13th century choir tower and reusing old material. A Roman “Viergötterstein”, a Gothic fresco in the choir tower, a carved pulpit from the year 1701 as well as an organ built by the Stumm family show the art from different historical periods.



### C Organs and

### D Painting

The churches of Hottenbach, Krummenau, Schauern and Stipshausen show how closely related art and craft are. Except for Hottenbach, the remaining three churches belong to the places of worship in the Hunsrück which form an important part of the religious art collection in the area due to the baroque wall paintings which have survived in their entirety. Almost all the churches house instruments built by the Stumm family from Sulzbach famous for building organs.

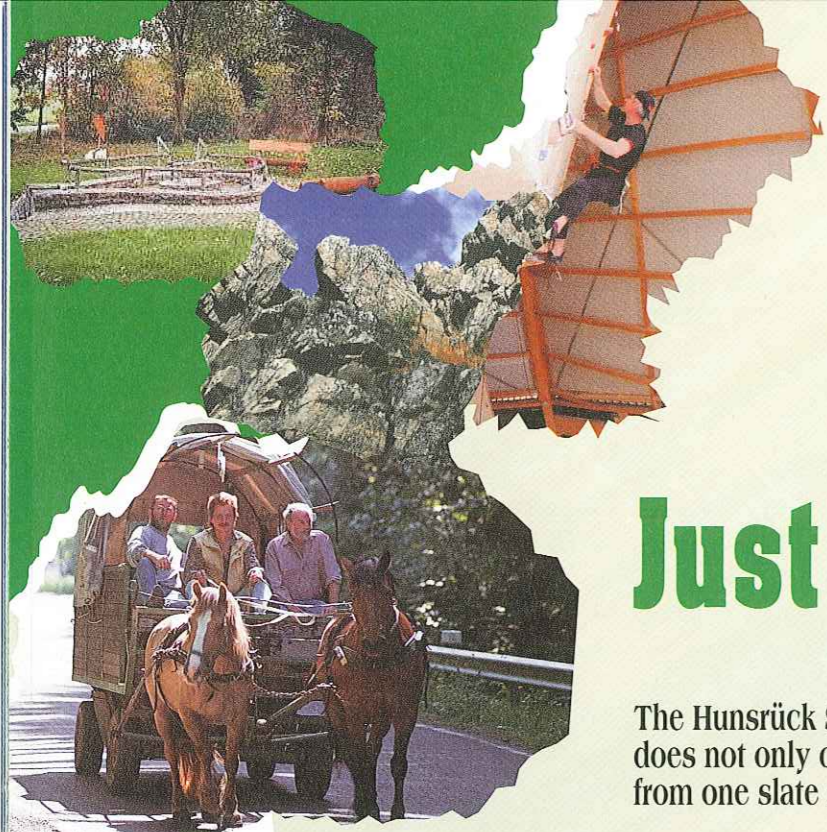
In the Protestant church in Rhaunen you can find an organ built by Johann Michael Stummin 1723, the oldest instrument made by him.



### E Cutting precious stones and Gold work



Intricate craftsmanship is still cultivated in the villages of the Idarwald but the centre of the centuries-old jewellery and precious stones trade is Idar-Oberstein. You can see how people used to cut precious stones 150 years ago in the Ansbacher Hütte. For those who are interested in modern cutting of precious stones and who would like to watch the cutter and the goldsmith at work, then Stipshausen is the place to go. Visitors can watch a different form of metal processing in Krummenau, where pewter is made.



## Cultural Highlights

- musical and culinary highlights are for example the so-called "Schlosstage" at the castles of Dhaun and of Wartenstein
- the festival at the celtic-castle of Bundenbach
- the open-air theatre at Gemünden
- the festival at the fortress of "Kyrburg"

# Just a minute!

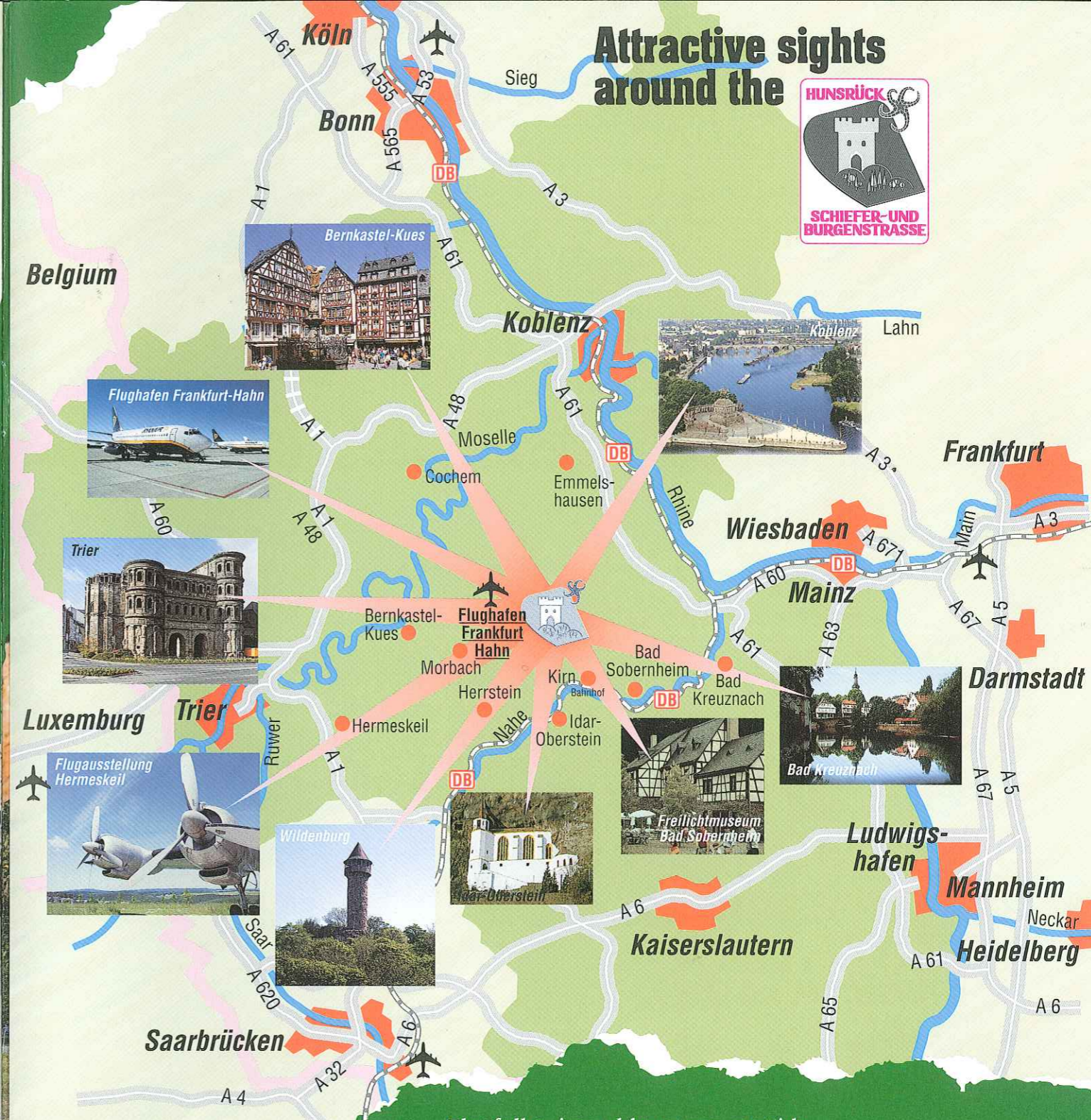
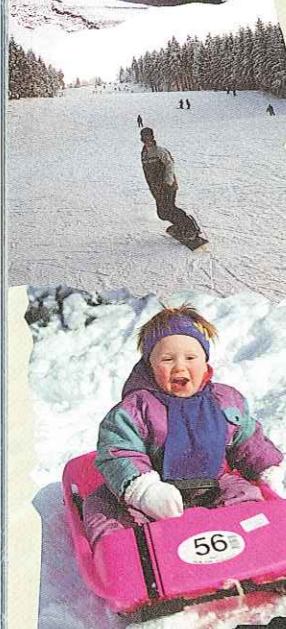
The Hunsrück Schiefer- und Burgenstraße does not only offer history, culture and hiking from one slate rock to the next...

## Activities

- rock-climbing in Oberhausen
- climbing-wall in Kirchberg (indoor climbing)
- skiing, sledging, snowboarding
- treading water
- cycling
- hiking
- eating and drinking

## Accommodation

There is a great variety of places at your disposal, offering accommodation for different tastes: rustic or noble style, inexpensive or high quality style. You are sure to find a suitable place for you to stay.



## Attractive sights around the



The following address can provide further information:

Förderverein Hunsrück Schiefer- und Burgenstraße e.V.

Postfach 49 • D-55601 Kirm  
Bahnhofstraße 31 • D-55606 Kirm

Tel. 0 67 52 / 138-31 - Fax 0 67 52 / 138-60 und 138-62

Verbandsgemeinde Kirchberg

Postfach 11 60 • D-55477 Kirchberg  
Marktplatz 5 • D-55481 Kirchberg

Tel. 0 67 63 / 910-214  
Fax 0 67 63 / 910-299

Postfach 1145 • D-55622 Rhaunen  
Zum Idar 23 • D-55624 Rhaunen

Tel. 0 65 44 / 181-30 • Fax 0 65 44 / 181-43

eMail: [hsb-info@kirm-land.de](mailto:hsb-info@kirm-land.de)

Internet: [www.hunsrueck-naheland.de](http://www.hunsrueck-naheland.de)

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Kirchstraße 3 • D-55606 Kirm

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Fax 0 67 52 / 135-250

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# A Rendez-Vous with nature...

Discover interesting sites from the past

On a length of 100 kilometres the "Sirona-Weg" leads you into the world of the Celts and the Romans. In the north it joins "Ausoniusstraße" (Ausonius Street) with the "Belgium" and in the south-west the Celtic ring wall of Otzenhausen. Sirona was the Celtic and Roman Goddess who protected rivers, streams and wells. As a statue of the Goddess was found in the forest "Idarwald", you will see the symbol of Sirona all along the way. The Celts had already settled in the Nahe-Hunsrück area in the 6th century BC. There is much interesting information about archaeological sites to be found in little pavilions built in Roman style. The "Altburg" near Bundenbach, a restored Celtic settlement, is certainly one of the most attractive archaeological sites in Germany.

There is another Celtic hiking trail on a length of either 56 or 67 kilometres: The so-called "K-Weg". It leads you from Kirn via Kirchberg down to the Moselle: either to Senheim or to Karden. This trail also dates from Celtic and Roman times. From Kirchberg you can choose between two possible routes. In Kirchberg you will cross the "Ausoniusstraße" which stretches from Bingen to Trier. Taking this route you will discover informative notice boards, Roman Games and the reconstruction of a Roman Street Station. Nature at its best can be experienced in the so-called "Trübenbachtal", where a circular trail runs from Kirn to Bergen and back (about seven kilometres). It starts below the Kyrburg in Kirn and leads you through one of the most idyllic valleys of the Hunsrück: the valley of the Trübenbach, a fascinating little stream with its washed-out bed and several natural waterfalls.

Visitors easily fascinated by nature and impressive landscapes will love the "Hunsrück Schiefer- und Burgenstraße" with its picturesque valleys and bizarre rock formations in the hills of the Hunsrück. They are certainly worth visiting for bikers, hikers and friends of nature.

## Adventures for granted

There are as many as four main biking lanes and several regional ones for mountain-bikes. It is not surprising that the area of the Nahe-Hunsrück has become the land of bikers. After all the inventor of the first bicycle, Karl Friedrich Christian Ludwig earl of Drais from Sauerbrunn, spent parts of his childhood in the Hunsrück. A ride on a "Draisine" through the area will certainly be a unique experience.

The European Hiking Trail (Europäischer Fernwanderweg) follows the top of the Hunsrück on 220 kilometres. It stretches from Saarburg to the "Erbeskopf" via Morbach, then goes on to the "Idarkopf", to Rhaunen, to Gemünden and finds its end in Bacharach on the river Rhine. There are several nature trails on which hikers can discover interesting geology. On the two trails in Gemünden and in Hochstetten-Dhaun, for example, you can learn something about the geological development of the earth and discover slate which is more than 400 years old. If you are lucky, you can even find remarkable fossils on former slate mounds. The most famous fossils were found in Bundenbach (Nahecaris) and in Gemünden (Gemündina).

Nature and forests in their purest form can be experienced on four activity trails which you can find at the castle of Wartenstein (near Kirn), the castle of Dhaun, in Gemünden and on the "Idarkopf" near Stipshausen.

### The castle of Wartenstein

The castle can be easily reached from the villages of Hennweiler, Oberhausen, Hahnenbach or Kallenfels (Kirn), where you will find signposts showing the way to the activity trail. All along this trail you will discover many secrets and miracles of our forest with its rich variety of plants and animals.

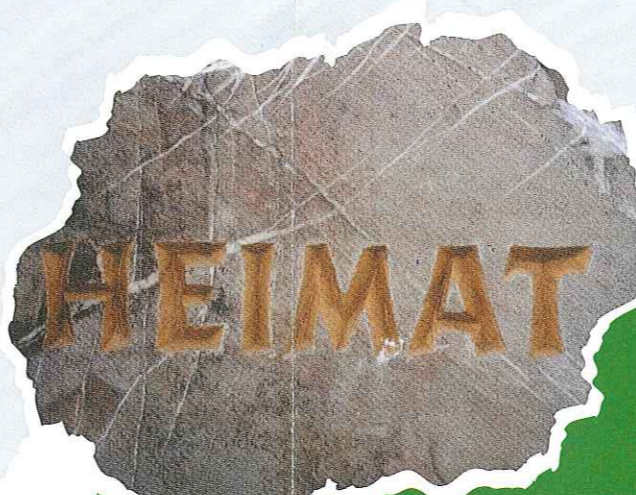
Once at the castle, you will be led into the mysterious world of Johannes Bückler, also known as "Schinderhannes". The notorious robber himself will show you the world of the forest (Niederwald). You can follow him down into the vaults of the cellar, where fossils and millions of year-old stones of the Hunsrück are waiting for you. And in the stables of the castle you can learn more about the various structures and sights of the nature park "Soonwald-Nahe".

### Tour of the Mills from Hochscheid to Rhaunen – across the Idarbach valley

The valley of the stream Idarbach, situated in the northern part of the forest Idarwald is one of the most beautiful valleys in this area. The water from the Idarbach was intensively exploited in the past. On our tour from Hochscheid to Rhaunen there used to be 14 mills, 13 of them being corn mills. Today there is only one of them left that is still used as a mill: "Weitersbacher Hütte" or "Lorenzmühle". It is run by a family and opens for visitors who can watch the miller's wife at work and by home-made products in the little shop. Two other mills, "Bergmühle" and "Weitersbacher Mühle" have been changed into inns where you can eat, drink and relax. A little off the route there is another site worth visiting: the "Gerwertsmühle" near Stipshausen.

### Nature-trail "Hahnenbachtal"

This water-trail starts at the ruins of the former castle "Schmidtburg" which has already impressed many visitors by its enormous size. But the trail can also be reached from the Celtic settlement "Altburg" or the former slate quarry "Herrenberg" nearby. Once at the Schmidtburg, hikers will just have to follow the signposts of the "Hunsrück-Höhenweg", respectively the "Fernwanderweg 3", which will then lead them to waters in their purest form in the midst of unspoiled nature and far from any traffic noise. Hiking along this route you will learn a lot about water. The idea behind the trail is to let hikers experience water with all their senses. Of course, there are also enough occasions for adults to relax and for the little ones to play.



The little hamlet of Woppenroth has been the setting of the famous film "Heimat" by the Hunsrück author and director Edgar Reitz. Lots of fans visit Woppenroth, or "Schabbach", as it is called in the film, every year. It is a unique experience to walk along the original tracks of the "Simon" family and admire the historical scenery of the film. The inhabitants of Woppenroth, some of them having acted in the film themselves, are always proud to let tourists know the most important facts and details about their little Hollywood in the Hunsrück.

