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- 1) View into the Eller valley from the Ellenstein near Tiefenellern. Photo Eulenstein: Kopfwerk
- 2) "The unfinished dream" one of the sculptures to be found on the "Figure in Focus" trail near Memmelsdorf. Photo sculpture: Franconian Tuscany
- 3) Franconian snack at the beer cellar. Photo: Franken Tourismus / A. Hub

## Beer, art work, culture and hiking: insider tip Franconian Tuscany

Traditional brewing and exciting works of art and culture before the gates of Bamberg -

Hiking from brewery to brewery through picturesque timber framed villages

**Litzendorf / Franconian Tuscany, November 2020: Franconian brewing and gastronomy, international art in natural surroundings, music and culture from former epochs, the delights of hiking from brewery to brewery through the gently rolling hills, directly in the neighbourhood of the world cultural heritage site, the city of Bamberg. All this combines to make the holiday region Franconian Tuscany an insider tip amongst the wealth of holiday destinations in Bavaria.**

The writer and expert on the local Bamberg dialect, Dr. Gerhard C. Krischker used the title "My Franconian Tuscany" for one of his stories in 1991 to describe the gentle rolling hills and the cultural and gastronomic delights of the picturesque Ellertal near Litzendorf which he considered reminiscent of the Italian region. The small but charming holiday region around the villages of Memmelsdorf, Litzendorf and Strullendorf are a veritable insider tip. The location between the world cultural heritage centre Bamberg, only 6 kilometres away and Franconian Switzerland with its castles and caverns offers a wide range of attractions for both lovers of town and culture on the one hand with open countryside and unspoilt nature on the other. The move from the foothills of the Franconian Jura to the Franconian Switzerland-Veldensteiner Forest national park is marked by a transition from rolling countryside studded with jagged rock formations to shady deciduous forests with rushing streams. And just as the Italian archetype there is a wealth of gastronomic delights crowned by a dozen

**Press contact:**

Tourist-Information Franconian Tuscany  
 Bianca Mueller, Tourism Manager  
 Am Wehr 3  
 96123 Litzendorf / Germany  
 Tel. +49 (0)9505-80 64 106  
 mueller@fraenkische-toskana.com  
[www.fraenkische-toskana.com](http://www.fraenkische-toskana.com)



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small breweries which, in addition to traditionally brewed beer, also offer Franconian food of the finest in the restaurants or the beer gardens.

The Franconian **beer and brewing culture** is still alive here. It is not for nothing that the three municipalities were awarded the 13-Brauereien-Weg as one of "100 Places of Enjoyment in Bavaria" in 2018 by the Bavarian State Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Forests and the Bavarian State Institute for Viticulture and Horticulture. With 13 traditional breweries, an abundance of beers (at least 86!), real craftsmanship beyond industrial production (partly open refrigerated ship), numerous adventure offers (brewery tours, beer culinary delights, beer connoisseur tour) and many events (beer culture festival in May, brewery run in September, Schammelsdorf beer days on Whitsun, traditional festivals) one could score points with the jury. Despite the strong competition in the Bavarian staple food beer, the application was convincing, so that the three communities along the 13-Brauereien-Weg can now officially call themselves "Genussort".

The "**Franconian Tuscany Brewery Run**" takes place every two years. At the premiere of this Franconian pleasure marathon in 2018, over 1000 runners from all over Germany came to experience the unique combination of sport, enjoyment and Franconian conviviality. After the COVID related cancellation in 2020, numerous runners will again explore the landscape in the Ellertal jogging on Saturday, September 25, 2021. That would be something special in terms of the beautiful landscape, but nothing really new. What is unique, however, is that the runners come through many traditional breweries, restaurants and beer cellars on the marathon, half marathon or 10 km route. In addition to iso drinks and muesli bars, there are Franconian beer and culinary specialties - such as Schäufelr and sausages - during the stops. With the "Kloß und Soß' party", a finisher party with a live band and a hearty morning pint at the end of the event weekend, enjoyment and conviviality are guaranteed.

Between Memmelsdorf and Litzendorf various paths lead to a symbiosis of **art, culture and countryside**. For lovers of modern art there are several routes to be followed. The sculpture trails "Figure in focus" (Memmelsdorf to Pödeldorf), "Rural Monuments" (Litzendorf to Melkendorf), the Franconian Sculpture Trail (Lohndorf-Tiefenellern), the "Art and Senses Trail" (Lohndorf) and the "River Meadow Trail Upper Main" (Litzendorf to Bad Staffelstein). Local artists, painters and sculptors regularly open their studios to allow interested visitors to watch and discuss the creative process. Baroque art and architecture can be admired at **Schloss Seehof**, the former Summer Palace of the Prince-Bishops of Bamberg, surrounded by a park and water features. Several times a year classical concerts are performed in the Orangery and the palace parks. At

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**Wernsdorf Castle** not only can a museum of musical instruments to be visited, the original sound can also be heard at the concerts of the “Capella Antiqua Bambergensis”. The “Candle Light Concerts” in Litzendorf and the “Autumnal Cultural Events” in Ellertal with revue and comedy in the brewery have gained renown beyond the region. Many local churches such as Maria Himmelfahrt, Memmelsdorf, Saint Wenzeslaus, Litzendorf or the Slavenkirche in Amlingstadt are well worth seeing.

**Franconian traditions** are kept alive and well the whole year round. Fasching (Carnival, Shrovetide) is especially popular in Memmelsdorf and Strullendorf but other villages also have processions through the streets along with parties and dancing. At Easter the wells in the villages are dressed, in Summer almost no weekend passes without a Kerwa (parish fair) in at least one village. In October the church still celebrates Harvest Festival and the breweries tap their freshly brewed, high alcohol content Bock beer. Around the feast of St. Martin in November the parishes organise Martin's parades to the delight of the young children whilst the grown-ups can look forward to a solid meal of roast goose accompanied by the traditional potato dumplings and red cabbage. Small but very attractive Christmas markets are held in Memmelsdorf, Strullendorf and Litzendorf and exhibitions of lovingly created cribs such as the baroque crib in Kremmelsdorf bring the year to a close.

**Hiking trails** from easy to moderately difficult take the hiker through rolling hilly landscapes, across open meadows, through shady woodlands and past traditional timber framed houses with splendid views across the Eller valley from the Eulenstein rock formations. A hiking tour from brewery to brewery along the popular **13 Breweries Trail** should not be missed by any enthusiast of traditionally brewed ales. The total route covers 32 kilometres from Memmelsdorf via Tiefenellern to Strullendorf (or vice versa, of course) visiting 13 breweries, several other hostleries and beer-cellars. Families will find a detour to the **Nature Discovery Trail** at Melkendorf that was opened in October 2015 worthwhile. 16 stations along a 6 kilometre trail provide interesting information about the local flora and fauna. Wild cats still inhabit the woods around Melkendorf which is why Waldemar the wild cat appears on the sign posts along the way. Interactive attractions such as the balancing tree, tree telephone, sound creator and the fairy world can entertain both young and old. The **Old Rossdorfer Town Trail** (from Bamberg to Rossdorf by the Forest) is the old footpath along which goods and wares were transported from Rossdorf through the woods to Bamberg. The **Zeegenbachtal Circuit** is a new, 15 kilometre long, circular hiking trail (opens Summer 2016) which joins the villages of Amlingstadt and Zeegendorf passing Wernsdorf Castle and the chapel of pilgrimage Am Steinknock in its idyllic surroundings. Along the way information panels provide facts about the beavers in the Zeegenbach, the flora and fauna in the woodland clearings and the historic mill in Leeston. The **Settlement History Trail** covers 8 kilometres and explains the development of settlements in Franconian Tuscany. From the Slavic church in Amlingstadt along

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the military route from the Carolingian period, past the early Celtic burial mounds near Geisfeld to the baroque church of St. Wenzeslaus in Litzendorf. Examples of supra-regional hiking trails that pass through Franconian Tuscany are the **Seven River Trail**, the **Bamberg Rennsteig Trail** and the **Franconian Trail** (from Rennsteig to the Swabian Alps). Information about individual tours, interesting things to see along the route, places to stop and eat and travel connections or downloads of GPX information can be found at <http://www.fraenkische-toskana.com/>

Cyclists usually prefer the 16 kilometre long **Strullendorf Beer Cellar Circuit** (Strullendorf to Geisfeld and Leesten), with inviting breweries and shady beer cellars and a series of bike shops and specialists who can provide the services needed for an unproblematic tour. The regions Franconian Switzerland and Steigerwald are connected by the **Regnitz CycleTrail** on two parallel routes between the towns of Bamberg, Forchheim, Erlangen, Fürth and Nuremberg. The 85 kilometre long Valley route through villages full of typical Franconian timber framed façades passes Strullendorf on the western edge of Franconian Tuscany.

**More information about places to stay, events, hiking and biking tours as well as information brochures can be obtained by telephone: +49 (0)9505-80 64 106 or at [www.fraenkische-toskana.com](http://www.fraenkische-toskana.com).**

Letters: 9.355 / Words: 1431

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Tel. +49 (0)9505-80 64 106  
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