

Rail & Trail through the Harz Mountains

Trip style: Rail Adventures

Destination: 📍 Germany

Trip code: HMR08-LRL09

Grades: 1, 3

Carbon Footprint: 🌳 248kg CO2



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Explore the green heart of Germany by both rail and trail with this holiday to the Harz Mountains. Hop across the English Channel by Eurostar before travelling through the history-rich Rhineland region to the spectacular landscapes of Lower Saxony. You'll spend time in captivating Cologne and explore no less than two UNESCO World Heritage Sites - medieval Goslar and royal Quedlinburg. To top it all you'll stay in showstopping Wernigerode where you can marvel at its dazzling fairytale-like castle and catch a steam train to the top of the Brocken, the highest peak in the Harz. Expect incredible walks led by our local HF Holidays Leader combined with a wealth of history,

sightseeing, and culture.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Rediscovering a more romantic mode of transport
- Embarking on a more sustainable rail journey from London St Pancras
- Touring Cologne and staying close to its famous cathedral
- Discovering the royal history of Quedlinburg and mining past of medieval Goslar
- A heritage railway ride around northern Germany's highest mountain
- Scenic hikes in the Harz Mountains

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return rail travel from London to Wernigerode
- Fully escorted travel with an HF Holidays Tour Manager
- Guided walks and sightseeing with a local leader
- 6 nights' accommodation in Wernigerode & 2 in Cologne
- 8 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 2 packed lunches & 8 dinners
- Guided tours of Cologne, Wernigerode, Quedlinburg, and Goslar

ITINERARY

Day 1: St Pancras to Cologne

Meet your HF Holidays Leader at London St Pancras and board the Eurostar to Brussels for your onward journey to Cologne. After checking in at the hotel, a local guide provides a short walking tour of the city and its famous cathedral followed by a meal of traditional German fayre at a nearby restaurant.

Day 2: Cologne to Wernigerode

We will have breakfast in the hotel. Today we travel by train through central Germany via Hannover and Goslar to the medieval town of Wernigerode where we'll stay for the remainder of the week. After settling in at the hotel, there'll be a guided walking tour of the town to discover its narrow streets, half-timbered houses, and famous town hall. Tonight and throughout our stay at this hotel, dinner will be provided at the hotel.

Day 3: Hills and castles above Wernigerode

Departing directly from the hotel we'll head through a forest trail on the Zilberbach with a small detour to the top of Scharfenstein for great views of the Harz Mountains and the 1142m peak of Brocken. We continue climbing to the Kaiserturm Tower for impressive panoramas over the town before heading to Wernigerode Castle where there's a guided tour. We'll return to the town either on foot or by the castle's railway. Lunch will be included each day we are in Wernigerode, either in a local cafe or as a packed lunch from the hotel. Distance: 8 miles (13 km) Ascent and Descent: 1300 ft (400m)

Day 4: Goslar and the Rammelsberg Mine

A 30-minute train ride takes us to the historic town of Goslar. Nestled on the north-west slopes of the Harz Mountains, this medieval marvel has been an important silver and copper mining centre for over 1000 years. Tour the town's charming old quarter and the nearby Rammelsberg mines – both UNESCO World Heritage Sites – and discover the royal past of Kaiserpfalz Imperial Palace (birthplace of Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV). There'll also be lunch in a brewery house. We return to Wernigerode by train. Distance: 2 miles (3.21 km) Ascent: Little to no ascent

Day 5: Brocken Mountain

The highlight of today is a steam train ride to the top of the Brocken, the highest peak (1142m) in the Harz. During the Cold War the Harz Mountains were divided by the Iron Curtain. While western Germany modernised, the Soviet side continued to use the narrow-gauge railway system and today the steam train is preserved like a working museum piece. Enjoy lunch with a view in the café at the summit before walking through the Steinerne Renne area and the idyllic Hasserode district back to Wernigerode. Distance: 10.5 miles (17 km) (option to shorten available) Ascent and Descent: 2800 ft (910m)

Day 6: Quedlinburg & Eselstall Forest

UNESCO-listed Quedlinburg is our destination on day six. Explore medieval streets and squares surrounded by half-timbered houses on our guided walking tour and stop for lunch in a traditional restaurant. Afterwards, we'll walk

through the Münzenberg district and follow the Bornholzweg route into the Eselstall Forest. Ascending along a tree-lined path, we'll reach the Altenburgwarte observation tower for views over the sandstone Altenburg ridge before heading back to town via the remarkable Romanesque St Wipertikirche church. Distance: 6.8 miles (11km) Ascent and Descent: 138m (450ft)

Day 7: The Monastery Path to Ilsenburg

Our final day follows the so-called monastery path to Ilsenburg. Along the way, we'll tick off a trio of spectacular monastic sites. Marvel at the ruins of Himmelpforten Monastery, explore the gardens of Drubeck Monastery and visit the 1000-year-old hermitage in the medieval heart of Ilsenburg. Distance: 9 miles (15 km) Ascent and Descent: 920 ft (280m)

Day 8: Return to Cologne

Today we say goodbye to the Harz Mountains and head back to Cologne by train via Hannover and Goslar for a final night in the city and free time to explore. Tonight we will have dinner in the hotel.

Day 9: Cologne to London

Depart Germany and take a relaxing rail journey back to Brussels and then onward to London St Pancras aboard the Eurostar.

Harzer Kultur und Kongresshotel Wernigerode

This hotel boasts a standout location just a skip away from Wernigerode's historic old quarter and the well-connected train station for easy travel around the Saxony-Anhalt region. Comfortable rooms provide a relaxing stay, while no less than three restaurants and a bar cater to every refreshment need. It also has a wonderfully relaxing spa area complete with sauna, steam bath, and solarium.

CityClass Hotel am Dom

Conveniently located a short walk from both Cologne's central railway station and the spectacular Cologne Cathedral, CityClass Hotel Am Dor is in the heart of this fascinating city. This contemporary retreat offers tastefully decorated rooms, plus a hotel bar and restaurant serving buffet breakfasts as well as snacks and local beers throughout the day. Guests staying at CityClass Hotel Am Dor have free entry to a Finnish sauna and a steam room sauna which are located at a sister property approximately 10 mins on foot from the hotel.