

Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation

In the 16th century Martin Luther's challenging theological ideas inspired the Protestant Reformation and changed the course of Western civilization.

A brief introduction of Luther sites in Saxony, Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt:

* **Luther town Eisleben:** Eisleben is a small town in the Saxony-Anhalt's district Mansfeld, where Martin Luther was born in 1483 and where he died in 1546. The Luther Houses in Eisleben are UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Sites.

* **Eisenach:** Eisenach is a historic small town in the scenic Thuringian forest, where he attended the St. Goerg's school until 1501 and where he sang in the church's boys choir. Later in his life in 1521, Luther was forced to live in the Wartburg castle in protective custody. He assumed the name of Junker Joerg and translated the New Testament from Greek into German. The magnificent Wartburg fortress is a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site.

* **Erfurt:** Erfurt was founded in 742. Today it is Thuringia's capital with one of the largest listed historical city centers in Germany. From 1501 to 1505, Martin Luther was a student at the University of Erfurt, which is the third oldest university in Germany. He was admitted to the Augustinian Monastery in 1505, where he was ordained to the priesthood in 1507 and where he stayed as a monk until 1511. It is said that Erfurt was the young Luther's spiritual home.

* **Luther town Wittenberg:** Wittenberg is a city in Saxony-Anhalt, first documented in 1183 and a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site. In 1508 Martin Luther received the Bachelor's degree in Biblical studies and started teaching theology at the University of Wittenberg, where he spent his life time carrier. In 1512, he was awarded his Doctor of Theology and called to the position of Doctor in Bible. It was in Wittenberg where Luther held the very first service in German and where he posted his famous 95 theses. The Luther House, where Martin Luther lived for almost 35 years and where he and his wife, Katharina von Bora, raised their six children, today accomodates the world's largest museum relating to the history of the Reformation.

* **Leipzig:** The famous "Leipzig Disputation" started here with a church service at St. Thomas Church on June 27, 1519. In the summer of 1519, Leipzig's Pleissenburg castle became the site of a public debate between Luther and Johann Eck. Martin Luther's last visit to Leipzig was in August 1545 when he consecrated the University Church as a Protestant church. Leipzig was particularly significant for the rise of the Reformation movement, because Martin Luther's writings were distributed in large numbers from this - until today - important city of trade, printing shops and publishing houses in Saxony.

* **Torgau:** The chapel in Torgau's Hartenfels castle was the first Protestant church ever built in Germany. It was consecrated in 1544 by Martin Luther himself. Martin Luther's wife, Katharina von Bora, is buried in Torgau's St. Mary's Church.

* **Dresden:** The recently reconstructed Frauenkirche church in Dresden is the largest Protestant church on German soil. The capital of Saxony, Dresden is world famous for the spirit and treasures of former Saxon princes and kings, and for the beautiful skyline of the Old Town along the scenic river Elbe valley.

* **Schmalkalden:** Schmalkalden is a small historic town in the heart of the Thuringian forest. In 1537, Martin Luther presented here his articles of faith, which were incorporated into the Book of Concord of the Evangelical church as the Schmalkaldic Articles and form the basis which Lutheran pastors are ordained.

Martin Luther died in 1546 in his hometown Eisleben. He is buried under the pulpit in the Castle Church of Wittenberg.