

HERITAGE OF GERMANY

From Luther and Bach to Dresden and Berlin



May 5 – 17, 2025

50
YEARS
OF EXCEPTIONAL
TRAVEL

Led by Dr. James Bratt and Dr. Suzanne Bratt

witte




Join Calvin University alumni and friends on a 13-day exploration of the history and culture of Germany! Our time includes a strong musical component—particularly Johann Sebastian Bach, a towering figure in the history of music and an icon of German culture and identity. Visit the principal places he lived to trace the development of his music, while taking in major sites of German history. Our interesting journey follows the arc of German cultural development from the Reformation to the end of World War II.

Don't miss this unique opportunity!

Tour Cost

\$5,145 per person from Grand Rapids, based on double occupancy.

Other departure cities available upon request.

Register online at

bookings.wittetravel.com

use booking code **050525BRAT**

or complete and return the printed registration form.

Led by

Dr. James Bratt



Jim Bratt, professor of history emeritus, will offer insights to places connected with the Protestant Reformation, the Enlightenment, and Romanticism—tracing how these three movements influenced American intellectual and religious history.

(616) 446-3956 • james.bratt@calvin.edu

Dr. Suzanne Bratt



Suzanne Bratt, Jim's daughter, is a music librarian at the University of Cincinnati who has a PhD in musicology. Suzanne wrote her dissertation on J.S. Bach, and she will share her knowledge with us on tour.



2

Inclusions:

- Flights from Grand Rapids, MI to Frankfurt and returning from Berlin. (other departure cities available upon request)
- Land transportation by deluxe, air-conditioned motorcoach
- Accommodations for 11 nights in first-class hotels
- Breakfast daily, one lunch, and six dinners
- Experienced European tour manager to accompany the group throughout, with local guides assisting as needed
- Talks by Jim Bratt and Suzanne Bratt
- Sightseeing and admission fees in accordance with the itinerary
- Tipping & taxes for all services, including tour personnel gratuities
- Whisper guides (headsets)

Tour Pace



ACTIVE – Activity levels vary from day to day. Sightseeing is often a brisk walk over distances of several miles on cobblestone streets and uneven ground.

MAY 2025

Monday, May 5

Departure

The day of departure has arrived! Meet at the Grand Rapids Gerald R. Ford International Airport to check in for the flights to Germany. Our adventure is beginning! (D-in flight)

Tuesday, May 6

Arrive in Frankfurt > Eisenach

Guten Tag, and welcome to Frankfurt! After collecting our luggage, we meet our tour manager and board the waiting motorcoach. The first drive of our tour takes us to Eisenach, located on the northwestern edge of the Thuringian Forest, where Luther went to school and where Bach was born and spent the first ten years of his life. Upon arrival, visit St. George's Church, where Bach was baptized, and the Luther Museum, housed in one of the oldest surviving half-timbered houses in Thuringia. We may also see remains of the Dominican Latin School, attended by both Bach and Luther. Enjoy a welcome dinner and a good night's sleep at our hotel in Eisenach. (B-in flight, D)

- 1 Wartburg Castle, Eisenach
 - 2 Krämerbrücke, Erfurt
 - 3 Luther's desk at Wartburg Castle
- Cover: Reichstag on the Spree River, Berlin

Wednesday, May 7

Eisenach > Erfurt

After a hearty German breakfast, impressive Wartburg Castle awaits! Perched on a rocky spur above town, it was here that Luther worked on his translation of the New Testament from the original Greek into German. See the Knights' Hall, dining room, Wartburg Museum, and Luther's room. Then we head to Erfurt, the "Town of Flowers." Upon arrival, visit the Augustinian Monastery to see where Luther once lived and worked. Also see Erfurt Cathedral, the largest and oldest church in the city. Have some free time to peruse the Krämerbrücke (Merchant's Bridge), a medieval bridge structure lined with houses and shops. After a group dinner, Suzanne and Jim will give an evening lecture. (B, D)





Thursday, May 8

Erfurt > Weimar > Erfurt

Today we take an excursion to Weimar, a city known for its cultural heritage. Bach spent more of his career here than in any other place besides Leipzig. It later became the center of the Golden Age of German culture, symbolized by influential writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Visit the City Church of Saints Peter and Paul (Herder Church), a major Protestant monument and the place where five of Johann Sebastian Bach's children were baptized, and the Goethe Residence. Goethe lived in this Baroque house for more than 50 years, and the museum contains exhibits from his massive collection of treasures. Return to Erfurt, where the evening is free for an independent dinner. (B)



Friday, May 9

Buchenwald > Jena > Leipzig

Visit nearby Buchenwald this morning, one of Nazi Germany's largest concentration camps where almost 300,000 people were interred. Following this sobering visit, we venture to Jena, a gathering spot for the most important German Romantics. While here, visit Friedrich Schiller's Garden House at the university as well as the Romantikerhaus Jena, a museum located in the former home of philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte. Then continue to Leipzig, a city steeped in musical tradition. It was here that Johann Sebastian Bach spent his most productive years, Richard Wagner was born, and Friedrich von Schiller composed his "Ode to Joy" in a house outside town. Check in at our hotel for a three-night stay and dinner. We plan to attend a classical music concert this evening (subject to availability). (B, D)

Saturday, May 10

Köthen > Leipzig

During an excursion to Köthen today, take a walking tour past Bach's home and St. Agnus-Kirche, where he worshipped. Also visit Köthen Castle, where Bach led the court orchestra and much of his secular music debuted. Built in the 13th century, the castle was almost continuously used as a home by noble families. Return to Leipzig for a free evening. (B)

Sunday, May 11

Leipzig

Our day in Leipzig includes free time to attend a morning worship service (or other options noted below), lunch at a beer garden, and a guided walking tour of the city, during which we see the Old Town Hall and visit St. Thomas Church. It was here that Bach was cantor for 27 years and Luther's sermon in 1539 introduced the Reformation to this part of Germany. Also visit the Bach Museum, an interactive, multimedia exhibition of the life and work of J.S. Bach. Free time options include walking Leipzig's Music Trail or visiting St. Nicholas Church (rendezvous point for the "Peaceful Revolution" in 1989), the Mendelssohn House, the Wagner Museum, or the Monument to the Battle of the Nations. (B, L)





Monday, May 12

Dresden

Travel to lovely Dresden, the capital of Saxony and a center of culture. Although it was nearly destroyed towards the end of World War II, Dresden's architectural masterpieces, dating from the 18th century, have been successfully restored. Here we visit the Frauenkirche (Church of Our Lady) and see the Semper Opera and Albertplatz. Also visit the Residenzschloss (Royal Palace), the seat of Saxon electors and kings since 1485. The inside of the palace has been reconstructed to present various periods of the palace's long history. Following some free time, we reconvene for dinner, and we hope to attend a concert or opera performance (subject to availability). (B, D)

Tuesday, May 13

Meissen > Dresden

Enjoy a relaxing cruise on the Elbe River, and an excursion to nearby Meissen today. Meissen is known around the world for its beautiful Meissen porcelain made from kaolin, which is still mined nearby. During a visit to the Royal Saxon Porcelain Manufactory, which opened in 1710 and moved to its current location in 1865, see demonstrations of the painting, fabrication, and firing process, as well as a large collection of the finished product. Afterward, we return to Dresden, where the rest of the day and evening are free for individual pursuits and an independent dinner. (B)

Wednesday, May 14

Potsdam > Berlin

Head to Potsdam today, an attractive city on the border with Berlin. Here we visit the ornate Sanssouci Palace, a Rococo masterpiece and UNESCO World Heritage Site. It was the summer home of Frederick the Great, the former King of Prussia, who challenged Bach to a composition showdown here in 1747. Also visit Schloss Cecilienhof, where the Potsdam Conference took place in 1945, attended by Harry S. Truman, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin. Our journey continues to Berlin, Germany's cosmopolitan capital, where we check in at our hotel for a three-night stay. This evening, we hope to have a representative of the Berliner Stadtmission join us for dinner and a talk about their mission to the displaced and refugees in Berlin. (B, D)

- 1 Old Town Hall, Leipzig
- 2 Semper Opera, Dresden
- 3 Herder Church, Weimar
- 4 St. Thomas Church, Leipzig

Thursday, May 15

Berlin

Our day begins with a bus and walking tour of Berlin, during which we see such famous sites as Unter den Linden, the Brandenburg Gate, Museum Island, the Reichstag, and the Kurfürstendamm—an area filled with cafés, restaurants, and fashionable shops. Stop to visit Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, a symbol of peace and reconciliation in the city. The afternoon is free to continue exploring the city, with the option of joining Jim and Suzanne to view some of Johann Sebastian Bach's manuscripts. The evening is free to choose from one of Berlin's many restaurants. (B)

Friday, May 16

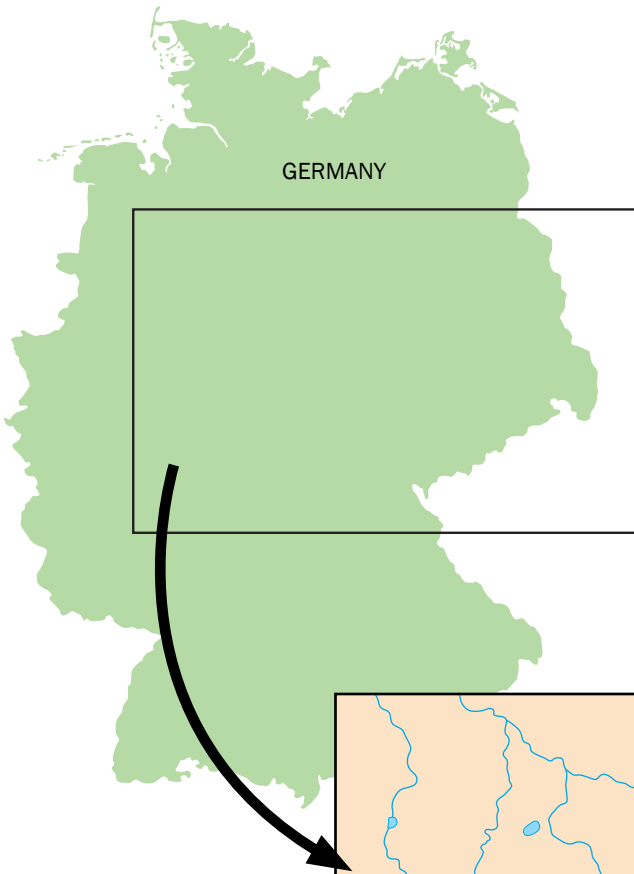
Berlin

We continue our exploration of Berlin, beginning with visits to the Berlin Wall Memorial and the Checkpoint Charlie. This museum contains exhibits about attempts to cross under, over, or through the Berlin Wall, which separated the city from 1961 to 1989. The afternoon is free to sightsee and shop on our own—the options are endless! In the evening, we celebrate the end of a wonderful tour of Germany with a farewell dinner. (B, D)

Saturday, May 17

Return

Transfer to Berlin's airport this morning to check in for our flights back to Grand Rapids. (B, L-in flight)



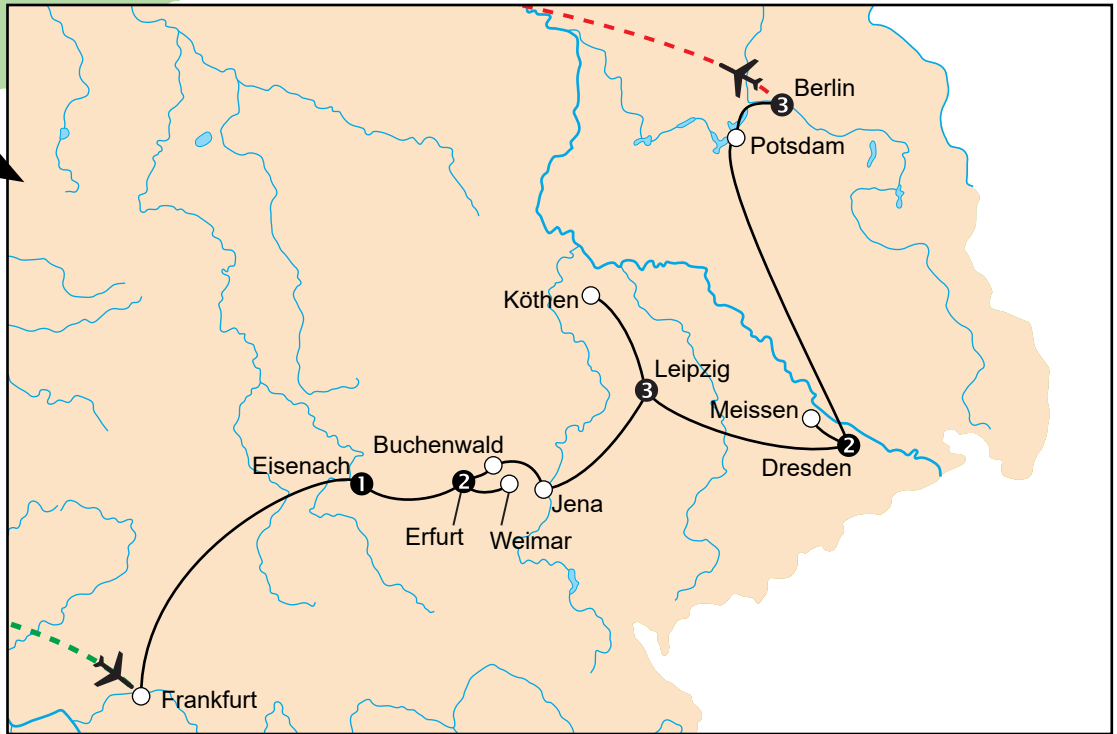
RESERVE YOUR SPOT TODAY!

REGISTER ONLINE AT

bookings.wittetravel.com

use booking code

050525BRAT



In 2025, Witte celebrates 50 years of helping our clients experience the world.

Join us on this exploration of the heritage of Germany.

Be part of celebrating our past, and exploring the future.

As our president, Nate Barendse says, *"Fifty years and we're just getting started!"*



3250 28th Street SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49512
616.957.8113 | 800 GO WITTE
groups@wittetravel.com | wittetours.com

