

● in the thick of things ●

# Hesse

Discovering the Heart of  
Germany with a Youth Group

Young people exploring a  
European region

● in the



Hessischer  
Jugendring



# Planning

# Planen

Still have no idea where to go on holidays? Want to discover something new? What about Hesse? Your partner region at the heart not only of Germany but also of Europe. Any wonder that, from the state capital in Wiesbaden, the Hessian state government maintains so many regional partnerships in Europe: Aquitaine in France, Emilia-Romagna in Italy, Wielkopolska in Poland and Yaroslavl in Russia. As a non-governmental youth board, we are engaged in information, participation, and in lobbying the interests of young people in Hesse. With this flyer, the Hessischer Jugendring, regional youth council of Hesse and umbrella organisation of all the Hessian youth associations, is inviting you to come to the centre of Europe and get to know Hesse.

You've already been beaten to it by a large number of very famous people: Goethe himself was born in Frankfurt, and fell so madly in love with a Charlotte in Wetzlar that he was simply forced to put pen to paper and record his lovesick sentiments in "The Sorrows of Young Werther". And the Brothers Grimm lived and taught in Hesse and it was here, in this fairytale landscape, that they gathered their enthralling tales.

Hesse is a major transportation hub, trading centre and finance market for Germany and Europe. The international centre located between Rhine and Main and around Frankfurt is the second largest business centre in Germany and also home to the Frankfurt stock-exchange. The world's most important Book Fair and the International Automobile Exhibition attract hundreds of thousands of visitors from all over the world to Frankfurt. Frankfurt, with its gigantic skyscrapers in concrete and glass, is often called "Mainhattan".

So why not take the heraldic Hessian lion by the leash and set off, to discover Hesse and get to know its young people! We would be very glad to help you with the planning!

*Your Hessischer Jugendring*

# Travel + Sleeping

## Transportation

Many roads lead to Hesse! Whether you travel by train, bus, plane, or car, Hesse lies at the centre of Europe and can be easily reached from all sides thanks to Frankfurt's international hub. You will find the relevant train connections (in English, French and Italian) under [www.bahn.de](http://www.bahn.de). There are special prices and offers and early booking reductions for teens and twens. Or do you prefer to travel by bus? That takes longer, but costs less and usually gets you to your destination over night: [www.deutsche-touring.com](http://www.deutsche-touring.com).



Needless to say, a flight to Germany's largest airport in Frankfurt is much faster, but also a luxury which the ordinary exchange candidate and/or backpacker can scarcely afford. But there are bargains available for air travel enthusiasts from Emilia-Romagna! Ryanair flies the route Bologna/Forlì – Frankfurt/Hahn for 0.01 € and upwards. But be careful, the airport is “way out”, about 120 km from Frankfurt's city centre, and the shuttle bus costs about another 12 €.

Then of course there is the car. Environmental damage and petrol costs can be reduced by car share services: [www.mitfahrgelegenheit.de](http://www.mitfahrgelegenheit.de).

## Camping

The state of Hesse has deciduous forests and low mountain ranges; 42% of the area of Hesse is covered by trees, making it the federal state with the most woods. So camping is on the agenda! Outdoor freaks and nature enthusiasts will find 26 different so-called “Waldjugendzeltplätze in Hessen”, campsites for young people located in the woods; 16 of them are in Hesse's 10 nature reserves. They cost about 2.5€ per person per day. So pack your compass, sleeping bag and tent and off you go! The brochure entitled “Waldjugendzeltplätze in Hessen” can be easily ordered from the Hessischer Jugendring under [www.hessischer-jugendring.de/infos/allg/info/freizeiten/zelt/htm](http://www.hessischer-jugendring.de/infos/allg/info/freizeiten/zelt/htm), and once you have it, nothing can go wrong during your survival training in the great outdoors.

## Youth Hostels

If that sounds like too much adventure and nature, then the 37 youth hostels in Hesse are a genuine alternative. You pay between 14-23€ for bed-and-breakfast, and between 19-29€ for full-board. Your admission ticket to these youth hostels is a valid membership card in the Deutsche Jugendherbergs-



# Fahren + Schlafen

work or the International Youth Hostel Association. For a brief survey of all youth hostels in Hesse see [www.djh-hessen.de](http://www.djh-hessen.de).

## Youth Education Centres

What these Jugendbildungstätten (Youth Education Centres) offer can be compared with an all-inclusive holiday, meaning, that for an organised youth exchange you usually pay a lump sum (small amount) covering travel, accommodation and education programme. Advantage: You really get to know the location and its people, have no hassle organising, and are guaranteed fun! In some cases you can just take a room and leave the educational programme. The prices are similar to those at youth hostels. For a list of all the Youth Education Centres and congress centres in Hesse see: [www.hessischer-jugendring.de/infos/allginfo/freizeiten/bild.htm](http://www.hessischer-jugendring.de/infos/allginfo/freizeiten/bild.htm).

## Subsidies

Because international youth encounters are not just great fun, but also promote intercultural exchange, and with it understanding among nations, certain organisations can be applied to for financial support for your youth exchange.

- ▶ German-Polish youth exchange: [www.pnwm.pl](http://www.pnwm.pl)
- ▶ German-French youth exchange: [www.ofaj.org](http://www.ofaj.org)
- ▶ EU youth programme:  
[www.jugendfuereuropa.de/service/nationalagenturen](http://www.jugendfuereuropa.de/service/nationalagenturen)
- ▶ Hessian youth programme:  
[www.sozialministerium.hessen.de/ca/i/bbo](http://www.sozialministerium.hessen.de/ca/i/bbo)

Your partner organisation should look into the matter of funds on the German and/or Hessian side. But you could also inquire at your regional administration. Perhaps funds are available there too for youth exchanges with the partner region Hesse. Sometimes it pays to ask!

# Learning

## The Cradle of Democracy and the Youth Movement

Located at the heart of Germany, Hesse has often been the scene of historical events. Here you will find the cradle of German democracy: in 1848/49 the first democratically-elected National Assembly convened in Frankfurt's Paulskirche to prepare the way for a modern democracy.



The German Youth Movement also has its roots in Hesse. On the Hohe Meißner mountain near Kassel different associations of the German Youth Movement met for the First Free German Youth Day in 1913. Today, the Jugendburg Ludwigstein still houses the archives of the German Youth Movement: [www.burgludwigstein.de](http://www.burgludwigstein.de).

## Hesse under the Swastika

Anne Frank spent her early childhood in Frankfurt before she and her Jewish family had to flee to Amsterdam, where she wrote her world famous diary. An exhibition at the Anne Frankfurt Youth Encounter Centre in Frankfurt documents her life story: [www.jbs-anne-frank.de](http://www.jbs-anne-frank.de).

# Lernen

The so-called IG Farben House in Frankfurt was once the administrative headquarters of the world's largest chemical company and came to symbolize the links between the NS system and industry. After 1945, the IG Farben building became the American Forces headquarters. It was here that US General Eisenhower handed over the inauguration documents for the new state of Hesse. Today, this impressive building also houses the Fritz Bauer Institute, which focuses on the history and impact of the Holocaust: [www.fritz-bauer-institut.de](http://www.fritz-bauer-institut.de). In other places linked with the history of the NS period, you will find memorial sites, for example, in Breitenau, a former concentration camp and later labour camp, or in Hadamar, which has come to stand for euthanasia. For a survey of all the memorial sites see [www.memorial-museums.net](http://www.memorial-museums.net).

## Hesse during the Cold War

After the Second World War, 269 km of the German-German border ran between Hesse and Thuringia, turning parts of the centrally-located Hesse into a peripheral area. The economy and infrastructure of north-eastern Hesse are still suffering from the 40-year division, even after the unification of the GDR and the BRD in 1989. Along the former border you will find memorial sites and border museums like Point Alpha near Rasdorf/Rhön: [www.pointalpha.com](http://www.pointalpha.com).

## Hesse within Europe

Since German unification, Hesse has been again at the heart of Germany and of Europe, and the process of European integration is very tangible in Hesse. The European Central Bank is headquartered in the finance centre Frankfurt, and the European Space Operations Centre (ESOC) of the European Space Agency (ESA) is in the university city of Darmstadt. Be it at the Europa Office in Frankfurt ([www.hessen-europainfo.de](http://www.hessen-europainfo.de)) or the European Information Centre in Darmstadt ([www.eiz-hessen.de](http://www.eiz-hessen.de)), you will receive more information.

# Living + Celebrating

“Erbarme, zu spät, die Hesse komme” sing the Rodgau Monotones in their broad Hessian dialect. The best way to hear this unofficial Hessian anthem is with a jug (Bempel) of apple wine (Äbbelwoi or Stöffche) and some regional dishes, such as Frankfurter sausages, a rib of pork with Sauerkraut, green sauce (a herb sauce) with hard boiled eggs, or Handkäse mit Musik (a marinated low-fat cheese served with raw onions!). And one of the best places to do this is in Frankfurt's pub sector, Sachsenhausen. Or at one of the many local wine festivals or parish fetes.



Hesse also has a lot to offer the culture vulture: the Jugendstil centre Darmstadt, with the artists' colony on the Mathildenhöhe; the museum bank festival and the “Long Night of the Museums” in Frankfurt; the festival in Bad Hersfeld featuring famous stars from the world of opera and theatre, and one of the world's most famous exhibitions of international contemporary art, the documenta in Kassel. Apropos contemporary art, the Open Flair in Eschwege is a music festival with great cult status – you can't fail to be infected by the festival mood if you happen to be camping on the banks of the river Werra near the stage!



## Leben + Feiern

After World War II the newly created state of Hesse, with one million refugees and expellees from former eastern territories, had difficulties developing a Hessian identity, and so original, identity-promoting highlights were inaugurated, such as the Hessentag, which is celebrated every summer, since 1961, for several days at different venues.

In the south of Hesse the economy is thriving, as is the service sector around Frankfurt; whereas the north, with its traditionally rural highland areas, is struggling with a drift to the cities, higher unemployment and less infrastructure. The south has a number of bigger cities close to one another and the largest part of Hesse's approx. 6 million inhabitants live in the Rhine-Main region. Kassel – northern Hesse's big city – is surrounded by wide-ranging forests and low mountains and is thus the state's green lung. Below the city's landmark, the 9-metre high Hercules, there is Europe's largest mountain park, Wilhelmshöhe, scheduled to become part of the UN World Heritage. Not far away is the national reserve Kellerwald-Edersee. You can find out more about life in Hesse, past and present, in the open air museum Hessenpark: [www.hessenpark.de](http://www.hessenpark.de).



# Sweating

# Schwitzen

## In the snow

For skiers, snowboarders or tobogganists, the Hessian highlands (Rhön, Taunus, Odenwald, Vogelsberg, North Hesse and Willingen) – from 400 metres upwards – are a winter sports Eldorado. In summer, on the other hand, you can break the sound barrier on the summer toboggan run.

## In the water

On the rivers that wind their way through the state you will find canoes and rowing boats of all kinds. So why not pack your tent and explore Hesse by river. Starting from the Lahn or Werra, you can enjoy the landscape by day and a barbecue sausage around a campfire by night. Swimming, sailing and even surfing are allowed on Hesse's largest reservoir, the Edersee in northern Hesse.

## On land

Hesse is also lined with cycle tracks and hiking trails; lately, these are also being increasingly used by inline skaters because of their ideal surfaces. In larger cities the roads are regularly closed to everything that has not got inline skates on! Every Tuesday from March to October Europe's fastest and longest Night Skating event takes place in Frankfurt. For more information, also in English, French and Italian, see [www.t-n-s.de](http://www.t-n-s.de).

## In the air

Discovering Hesse from a height is best done in the Rhön. Gliders, paragliders and hang gliders can take off from the Wasserkuppe, Hesse's highest mountain (950 metres). Mountain walkers can climb on ropes course and the Felsenmeer (Sea of Cliffs) in the Odenwald, while more advanced climbers can scale the Eschbacher Cliffs in the Taunus or the Poppenhausener rock face in the Rhön.

# Meeting

# Treffen

## International Youth Exchange

The best and often the cheaper and least stressful variant for making direct and personal contact with young people in Hesse is on an organised youth exchange. The youth organisations take on the work of planning, and a large part of the costs for you. The Youth Council of Hesse can mediate contacts to all sorts of youth groups, from scouts, nature friends, the Hessian sport youth, the trade union youth and the church youth associations to the Youth Fire Brigade and the Youth Red Cross and many more. Just ring 0049 (0) 611 990 83-0; or email [info@hessischer-jugendring.de](mailto:info@hessischer-jugendring.de). Such encounters are best organised during the school or semester breaks. The latter usually are between February and April and July and September. You will find the dates of the school holidays in Hesse under: [www.hessisches-kultusministerium.de/downloads/Ferientermine.pdf](http://www.hessisches-kultusministerium.de/downloads/Ferientermine.pdf).

## Voluntary work and au pairing

For volunteer work you can go through the Europäische Freiwilligendienst (EVS). Look under [www.europa.eu.int/comm/youth/program/sos/hei/hei.en.cfm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/youth/program/sos/hei/hei.en.cfm). There you'll find several projects in Frankfurt, Darmstadt, Wiesbaden, Kassel and other places in Hesse. A regional association promoting the EVS has been founded in northern Hesse and several projects are in progress there. Look under [dtillack@web.de](mailto:dtillack@web.de).

## Studies and internships

If you want to study in Hesse or do an internship here, this German link will help: [www.hmwk.hessen.de/studiumausbildung/hessen](http://www.hmwk.hessen.de/studiumausbildung/hessen). In Hessian university towns like Marburg, Gießen, Kassel or Darmstadt, the entertainment on offer and the university flair can often be a great distraction from studies, so be careful. A stock exchange for international student internships can be found under [www.hessennetworks.de](http://www.hessennetworks.de).

# Talking

# Sprechen

You will not be at a complete loss in Hesse if you can't speak German. English is the first foreign language taught at Hessian schools, so getting by with English is not a major problem. 62% of Hesse's school pupils try their hand at French when they are at school. So communicating is no great hassle, above all in the conurbation areas, like the multicultural Frankfurt, which is home to approximately 170 nationalities and venue for the Frankfurter Jugendring's Parade of Cultures (every May), an international parade with presentations by people with what is called a migration background living in Frankfurt.



The people of Hesse are accustomed to communicating in English or with their hands and feet. But they are also delighted if someone gives German a try and they often acknowledge this with a broad smile. The German Goethe Institute has made it its business to familiarize you with the German language and culture. You will surely be able to find a Goethe Institute close to where you live and perhaps do a German course in preparation for your trip to Hesse. See under: [www.goethe.de](http://www.goethe.de). What you won't be able to learn there, however, is the Hessian dialect!

# Information

# Information

Hessischer Jugendring is at your disposal for questions you may have about trips, youth exchanges, contacts and possible subsidies. Hessischer Jugendring is a local Eurodesk relay. For more information look at [www.eurodesk.org](http://www.eurodesk.org).

► **Contact person in Wiesbaden:** Dr. Manfred Wittmeier  
0049 (0) 611-99083-0; [wittmeier@hessischer-jugendring.de](mailto:wittmeier@hessischer-jugendring.de)  
If you are still at the planning stage, then simply e-mail us for your information package (containing addresses of youth hostels and camping sites, etc.).

There are persons, most of them at NGO-level, you can contact for help about the Hessian EU-partner regions:

- **Wielkopolska:** Agnieszka Nowakowka  
Tel. 0048-505 137 900, [aganowakowska@yahoo.com](mailto:aganowakowska@yahoo.com)
- **Aquitaine:** Maren Thomas  
Tel. 0033 56 56 38 24, [Maren.Thomas@aquitaine.fr](mailto:Maren.Thomas@aquitaine.fr)
- **Emilia-Romagna:** Matthias Durchfeld  
Tel. 0039-0522-58089, [esteri@istoreco.re.it](mailto:esteri@istoreco.re.it)

For general information on accommodation, excursions and events see the official English tourism site of the State of Hesse: [www.hessen-tourismus.de](http://www.hessen-tourismus.de). The official state portal [www.hessen.de](http://www.hessen.de) is for people with a knowledge of German, but it provides information on culture, leisure activities and even politics. Maps of Hesse and Germany can be collected free-of-charge from the Hessische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung in Wiesbaden, see [www.hlz.hessen.de](http://www.hlz.hessen.de). They also have a number of books and magazines on Germany and Hesse (in German). Whether you are a holiday-maker, a participant in a youth exchange programme, a volunteer, an internee or a student – Hesse offers all sorts of possibilities for shorter or longer stays. The Hessische Jugendring looks forward to getting to know you and, for the moment, says

*Tschüss und Auf Wiedersehen!*

**Finding**

**Finden**

# Hesse

*EU-Partner Region of Wielkopolska,  
Aquitaine and Emilia-Romagna*



## Imprint

**Publishers:** Hessischer Jugendring e.V.

Schiersteiner Straße 31-33, 65187 Wiesbaden

Phone 0049(0)611-990 83 0, Fax 0049(0)611-990 83 60

info@hessischer-jugendring.de, www.hessischer-jugendring.de



**Editor:** Manfred Wittmeier

**Copywriter:** Christine Schmitt

**Translator:** Pauline Cumbers

**Layout:** www.grafikbuero.com **Printing works:** Printec, Kaiserslautern

Production of this brochure was subsidised by the Hessisches Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kunst, Wiesbaden. We are more than grateful.

Wiesbaden 2006