



Germany Travel Planning Podcast

Ep 12 – Seven Essential Tips for Visiting Neuschwanstein Castle

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Are you thinking about visiting Neuschwanstein Castle on your trip to Germany? Maybe you're wondering if it's worth the hype, how to actually get there, or the best time to see it without the crowds. This is the Germany Travel Planning Podcast, the show that helps you plan a super fun trip to Germany. My name is Cate and I'm your Germany Destination Specialist.

Today we're talking about one of the most iconic castles in the world, Neuschwanstein Castle. And yes, it is hard to pronounce. Known for its fairytale architecture and breathtaking surroundings, this castle is a must visit destination for many of our clients. So to help you make the most of your trip, here are seven essential tips that will ensure your visit is as magical as the castle itself.

Tip number one, book your tickets in advance. If there's one thing you take away from this episode, let it be this, book your tickets to tour the inside of the castle well in advance. Neuschwanstein Castle is one of Germany's top tourist destinations and the ticket sales reflect that. So if you just show up without a reservation, you might get lucky and you might score last minute tickets, but it's a huge risk, especially during peak seasons like summer or school holidays.

There's a couple different options when you book your tickets. You can book a live German tour, a live English tour, or you can book an audio tour in a variety of languages. I've done all three tours. and you know, the live English tour was pretty good, but there's only a few of them per day, so if it doesn't really line up with your



schedule for the day, or if there's no tickets available, don't hesitate to book the audio guide.

With the audio guide, everybody's listening to it in their own language, but you still have a person who's taking you from room to room. When we did the audio guide, we did that one when we visited Hohenschwangau recently, we were still able to ask questions in English. I think it's just as good as the live English tour and there's a lot more time slots available for the audio tour.

Remember the tickets sell out very quickly. So as soon as you know the date that you're going to visit Neuschwanstein, I would just go to the website and get your tickets. To get tickets, you'll want to go to the official website. So check the show notes for this episode and I will link that up for you.

If you're visiting off-season, ticket demand is lower, but I still recommend booking ahead because you just never know what day is going to be super busy. And you don't want to go all that way just to be turned away at the gate because you didn't get tickets in advance. So I still recommend booking in advance.

Tip number two, arrive early or late to avoid the crowds.

If you want the best experience, timing is everything. Neuschwanstein can get really, really busy, especially between like 10 or 11 a.m. to about 3 to 4 p.m. because that's when a lot of tour buses from Munich roll in. So if you can, arrive early, ideally before 9 a.m. or later in the afternoon, and then that way you're likely to avoid the worst of the crowds.

Mornings are fantastic for a few reasons. First, there's likely going to be fewer people. And so you'll have a more peaceful experience. You know, it won't be crowded. It'll be easier to take pictures. And depending on when in the morning you arrive, you might



have that beautiful morning light that makes for really, really nice photos of the castle. And it'll be easier to visit Mary's Bridge, which can get super crowded.

We like to go early in the morning, but we've had clients who have gone later in the afternoon and they've said that it was a really good time to visit Mary's Bridge and it wasn't crowded. But again, you never quite know day to day. So these are general guidelines.

If you're visiting in the winter, do remember that it gets dark around 4-4.30 p.m. in December and January. Plan your visit accordingly.

And here's another tip. If you have our DIY Germany travel planner, be sure to check our detailed guide for planning your visit to Neuschwanstein and Hohenschwangau Castles. There are videos and timelines that I've planned out so that you can time your day just right and a lot more information that will help you plan a day trip from Munich or you know how to spend a couple of days in that area or come over from Garmisch to visit the castles.

Tip number three, consider the season because each one is unique. Neuschwanstein is magical year round. Seriously, it is fun to visit no matter what time of year it is. But each season has its perks and its drawbacks.

During spring and summer, you'll find lush green landscapes, warm or even hot weather, and longer daylight hours. In the summer, it won't get dark until maybe 10 p.m. But it is also peak tourist season, so expect more crowds.

During the autumn season, there could be fewer crowds depending on the day and the weather. You'll start to see stunning fall foliage and you could have that beautiful crisp autumn weather.



However, some facilities and trails may start to close as winter approaches. So Mary's Bridge might close and some of the hiking trails may not be accessible depending on what the weather is like.

And then we have winter. In the winter, the castle and the mountains behind it can be covered in snow. And when that happens, it is truly a fairy tale sight. I will post some pictures of what it looks like on the show notes, because last time we were there in the winter, it had just snowed. And my God, it was. absolutely beautiful.

There could be fewer tourists, so you might have a little bit more of a mellow experience. When we were there in the winter, there still were quite a few people, but definitely not as many as when we were there in the summer.

But the downside is that Mary's Bridge will most likely be closed. It definitely was when we were there. And it can get very cold. So I highly recommend thinking about what kind of experience you want when you're thinking about when to visit. If you're after that classic Disney-style castle in a winter wonderland type of thing, then go in December, January, February, maybe March, you know, the months when it typically snows.

If you prefer leafed out trees and greenery and warm weather and hopefully blue skies, then late spring, summer and into early fall is the ideal time to go. Just be prepared for the crowds.

Tip number four, definitely wear comfortable shoes.

Neuschwanstein is not the easiest castle to reach. You can't just drive and park right up at the castle. The walk from the ticket center, the parking lot, and the bus stop in Hohenschwangau is about one and a half kilometers, maybe about a mile, and it takes about 40 minutes, and it's on a steep incline.



Now what I recommend to all of our clients is that you allow an hour to get from the bus stop or the parking lot up to the castle. It may not take you a full hour to get up there, but you may want to walk up to the castle at a leisurely pace that's enjoyable.

You may want to stop and take pictures and you're probably going to want to just stop to just take it all in, just soak in the experience because it is so beautiful in that area.

And take it from me, it is so much more enjoyable to walk up knowing you have plenty of time to get to the castle than have to run up because you're worried you're going to miss your timed entry. I have done both and it is much better to have enough time.

So just allow yourself an hour. If you get up there and you have extra time, don't worry about it. You can get a snack, a drink. There are free toilets up there. There's places to sit and the views are absolutely beautiful. So you can get some pictures of the castle and yourself with the castle before going on your inside tour.

If you don't want to walk up to the castle, you have a couple of options. One is a shuttle bus and it goes up to Mary's Bridge or Marienbrücke but keep in mind that that doesn't drop you off right at the castle. You still will need to walk a little ways to the castle. But if you take the shuttle bus up to Mary's Bridge, you can walk down the hill to the castle.

The other option is taking a horse-drawn carriage. This is a charming way to go up, but remember that it still requires a walk uphill at the end to actually get to the entrance of the castle. And every time I have gone, I've wanted to take the horse-drawn carriage up to the castle, but the line has been so long that, you know, I was like, I don't want to wait and potentially miss my ticket entry.



Now, if you want to do the horse-drawn carriage, but you don't take it up to the castle, you can take it on the way down. It's half the price to go down, and there are far fewer people who do want to take the horse-drawn carriage down. It's a fun experience, so you might want to work it in on one end or the other.

If you do choose to walk, make sure you wear proper shoes. Sneakers or sturdy sandals in the summer are ideal. If you're visiting in the winter, make sure your shoes have good grip because the road can get icy and it can be a little bit slippery.

If you're going to do some hiking in the area and you're going to get off the main roads and go onto the trails, then you might want to consider having some hiking boots. But if you're just going up to the castle and back down, you don't need those. Regular sneakers are totally fine.

Tip number five, for the best views, don't miss Mary's Bridge. If you want that classic postcard shot of Neuschwanstein, Marienbrücke, or Mary's Bridge in English, is the place to go. From here, you will get an unbeatable panoramic view of the castle and the valley behind it and all the surroundings of the mountains. It is a must-see. But here's a few things to note.

One, the bridge gets very crowded, especially at midday. The last time we went in the summer, we got to the bridge, I think we got up there at about 10, 10, 15, and it was already getting crowded. By the time we left about 45 minutes later, because we went across the bridge and walked around on some of the trails, by the time we came back 45 minutes later, the bridge was so crowded and there was a line to get on. And I'm not even sure we would have been able to get onto the bridge or it would have taken quite a long time to wait in that line to get onto the bridge. So it can get very crowded. So I recommend, go in the morning or go in the later afternoon or just be prepared to wait.



If you don't like heights, you might not want to spend too much time on the bridge. But if you can, I definitely recommend go out at least a little bit for a few minutes so that you can see the castle and get some really good pictures. I'm someone who does not like heights, but I felt like it was totally worth it to go out onto the bridge to see the view and get some pictures.

In the winter, it may be closed due to snow and ice. So you might want to check ahead before heading up to the bridge.

And if you're up for a challenge, there's a steep hiking trail behind a bridge that leads up to an even higher viewpoint with breathtaking views. We hiked up there and it wasn't too difficult to get up. It was a little steep, a little narrow, a little bit rocky, but it was fine just wearing our normal Nikes. And there are other trails that you can go on if you do want to do some more hiking.

Tip number six, explore the surrounding area. While Neuschwanstein is definitely the star attraction, the surrounding region has so much to offer, like nearby Hohenschwangau which is where King Ludwig spent summers as a child. And it provides additional historical insights.

Similar to Neuschwanstein, to tour the inside of Hohenschwangau you do need to have a timed entry ticket, but you can just explore the outside free of charge. They have gardens and really pretty views, so it's worth it going up there just for that.

And one more thing. People always ask me, should I just go into Neuschwanstein or should I also go into Hohenschwangau?

My view is if you have the time, go into both, especially if you don't know if you'll be able to make it back at another time. And you never know. The castles are each a little bit different.



and the tours are only about a half an hour. And so it is pretty easy to fit both of them into a visit if you're going for the day.

Now in the area, there's also the charming town of Füssen, which is also worth a visit. It has really cute little streets and an old town and lots of places to eat.

There's also a Tegelberg Cable Car that's not too far away from the castle. And right next to the cable car, there's a small but super fun Alpine Coaster. And nearby there are beautiful historic churches, there are lakes and a little bit further away there's also Zugspitze which is the highest peak in Germany, Linderhof Palace, Partnach Gorge, Oberammergau, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Mittenwald, lots of cable cars and mountains and hiking. There is so much in this area. You will definitely find lots of fun things to do.

So while you can do a day trip to the castles, consider extending your trip to this area so you can fully immerse yourself in the Bavarian Alpine experience and the absolutely gorgeous area.

Staying overnight in Füssen for example, allows you to have a more relaxed castle visit and the opportunity to explore the area at your leisure.

If you're wondering where to stay in this area, you can take a look at our website. We have accommodation guides. And if you have our DIY Germany trip planner, take a look at our planning map. We have the best hotels marked on the map. So you can see where they are in relation to other sites that we recommend and the castles.

Okay, last tip. Tip number seven: be prepared for weather changes and pack accordingly.



The weather in the Bavarian Alps can sometimes be unpredictable, so it's a good idea to think ahead about what you're going to pack and wear so that you're prepared and you bring the right things with you.

In the summer, make sure to pack sunscreen and a hat and sunglasses are also a good idea. It can get hot on that uphill walk, so you might want to bring some water with you or buy some right before you start walking up.

But even during the summer, there can be rain showers, the temperature can drop, and it can be cloudy. So it's always a good idea to be prepared for rain and bring a rain jacket or bring an umbrella unless the weather report is showing absolutely clear and beautiful blue skies the entire day.

In the spring and fall, dress in layers because it can go from chilly to warm to chilly very quickly. And it of course can also rain. So make sure you carry a lightweight waterproof rain jacket or an umbrella so that you can stay comfortable throughout your visit.

In the winter, it's a good idea to bundle up because it can get cold, especially when it snows. And remember, you're going to be spending a lot of time outside when you visit the castles. So make sure you have a warm coat, you have a hat, gloves, scarf, maybe hand warmers, and dress in layers so that you can adjust to the weather.

The last time we were there in the winter, it snowed and my God, I don't know if I have been that cold in quite a while. And check the weather report before you head out so you can make any last minute adjustments.

Okay, that wraps up our seven essential tips for visiting Neuschwanstein Castle.

If you're still planning out your visit, whether a day trip from Munich or planning to spend a few days in the area, if you have our DIY Germany travel planner, be sure to



check out the Neuschwanstein planning guide for more tips, information and videos to help you plan the perfect trip.

Thanks so much for listening to the Germany Travel Planning Podcast. If you enjoyed today's episode, please leave us a review. Leaving a review is a fantastic way to support the podcast because it helps others discover our Germany travel content and trip planning tools. We also encourage you to share this podcast with your fellow travelers. Be sure to check out the show notes for the links and resources I mentioned in today's episode. And visit our website, mygermanyvacation.com for expert travel resources that make planning your Germany trip easier and stress-free, including free travel guides, our step-by-step DIY Germany travel planner, and personalized services like custom itineraries, one-on-one trip planning consults, and itinerary reviews to ensure that you make the most of your time and enjoy the best of Germany. Until next week, happy travel planning!