

The Town of Oberammergau

The Passion Play is the reason that most visitors will come to Oberammergau in 2010. But to fully experience the tiny town of Oberammergau, you'll need three things. Your camera, your Christmas list, and your appetite. World known for its art, particularly high quality wood carvings since the 1200's, and more recently influenced by the flamboyant King Ludwig in the 1800's, Oberammergau is a treat for the eyes. Set high in the Ammergau Alps, (Ober is the German word for over) this small town of 5000 people is a living art gallery. The surrounding mountains are home to the Ettal Working Cheese Deli, maker of fine cheese.

The term fresco may bring to mind images of Italian art, but the town of Oberammergau in Germany's Bavaria region is decorated with life size frescos, known in German as "Lüftlmalere," on homes, hotels, and stores. Entire buildings are covered with captivating religious, festive, and traditional scenes. Some facades seem to open up to scenes inside, employing the French technique of tromp l'oeil, which means to "fool the eye." Everywhere you turn in this small town you'll see traditional Bavarian houses with wooden balconies and detailed frescoes, set against the breathtaking the tableau of the Ammergau Alps peeking behind.

The second thing you may want to have with you is your Christmas shopping list. Local artists skilled in the traditional arts of wood carving, stained glass, pottery and drum making use methods employed over 100 years ago. To see artists working in studios open to the public, visit the Pilotushaus, named for the Lüftlmalerei over the front door of Jesus being sentenced by Pontius Pilate. Upstairs, highly skilled artists have open studios where you can watch them craft their products. The artists are happy to answer questions. There is a shop in the same building.

The streets are lined with quaint shops offering cuckoo clocks, Christian carvings, mugs, stained glass, wool sweaters, wooden toys and other unique gifts. In just a few hours, you can have all of your Christmas shopping completed with items that will share your travels with friends and family. Shops will be happy to ship your purchases home for you. Wallace Wilcox, CEO of Wilcox Travel and Tours, particularly enjoys shopping at der Heinzeller's Store for traditional German gifts like cuckoo clocks. For a treat to remember Oberammergau throughout the years, visit the Käthe Wohlfahrt's Christmas Gift Store for Christmas items, even in July. You'll always remember your trip to Oberammergau when you see the hand-decorated ornament on your tree or manger scene meticulously handcrafted by a local artist.

The third thing you'll need is your appetite. While Germany is known for hearty lunches and dinners, breakfast is the specialty of Ammergau Alps region. The Turmwirt Hotel will provide all of your meals, including an ample breakfast buffet. In your free time, sample cheese from the local Ettal Working Cheese Deli, where cows are free to range on a variety of fresh greenery, giving their cheeses a rich, fresh taste. Imbibe a hot chocolate or indulge in an ice cream at a local cafe. With local, organically produced cheese, yoghurt, honey, milk, and bread available, you'll eat very well.

Everything else is taken care of with your Wilcox World Travel and Tour that includes Oberammergau and the Passion Play Whether you choose the 2 Night Independent Tour, the 10 Day Switzerland, Italy, Austria, and Germany Tour, the 10 day Austria and Germany Tour, or the 10 day Germany and Czech Republic Tour, you'll come home with pictures and memories to last a lifetime. Your flights, first class hotels, Section 1 seating for this once in a decade theatrical marvel, knowledgeable and capable guides, and sweeping tours of Europe are only a phone call or email away. All you need to do is choose a tour and a date, and leave the rest up to Wilcox World Travel and Tours. Call, email, or fill out a reservation form today.