

Zittau – ten things not to miss

1. Walk round the whole town

Where the old town walls once stood, and in places still do, is now a green belt around the whole of the ancient town centre. Walk all the way round and marvel at the gardens and architectural delights including the “Johanneum” (look out for the huge fossilized tree by the front door!), the newly-refurbished theatre, the fortress-like “Fleischerbastei” and the amazing former Royal Saxon School of Architecture.

2. Go underground

Take a tour of the ancient cellars underneath Zittau's market square. Mysteriously sinister.

3. Go north

Just north of the old town is a residential area full of beautiful old villas, most of which have been restored. Behind some of these villas you will see the chimneys of the villa owner's factories still standing.

4. Go abroad

Just a couple of kilometres from the centre of Zittau is the border with Poland, cross the river Neisse into Poland, walk along and before you know it, you're in the Czech Republic. Take the path to the right straight after the border and you'll see some flags marking the spot where Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic meet - you can't stand on it, though, as it's in the middle of the river. Plans are afoot to build a circular bridge!

5. Visit the Fastentücher

Strange, intricately painted pieces of cloth depicting religious scenes used as covers for altars, or as sauna towels by unknowing Russian solidiers.

6. Be cultural

Visit the Kunstlade gallery in Lindenstraße or go to a reading or jazz-jam at the Hillersche Villa on the green ring.

7. Leave town

Take the narrow-gauge railway off to the mountains for the day. From the main station you can reach the pretty villages of Jonsdorf and Oybin by steam.

8. Feel like you're in Italy

Walk through the inner courtyard of the italianate town hall on the market square and if you have time visit the ornate "Bürgersaal" room inside.

9. Promenade in the park

Walk down the elegant Weinäuallee to the Weinäu Park, laid-out in the 19th century, a former spa park.

10. Climb a tower

Probably the best tower to climb in the centre of Zittau is the 60m high tower of the St. Johannis church. The current church was designed by Schinkel although the original dates from 1230. Great views from the top and there's a small room at the top where you can sometimes get a cup of tea!