



Discovery Map
around and about the

Goseck Solar Observatory

Two Paths to the Sky



In the Saale-Unstrut region – more precisely, located between Weißenfels and Naumburg – the idyllic village of Goseck with its palace nestles harmoniously into a landscape characterised by wine-growing and numerous castles and palaces.

The fortress known as “Gozzesburg” was first mentioned in writing as early as the 9th century AD. It was converted into a Benedictine monastery in the 11th century, which was partially overbuilt in the 17th century in favour of a Renaissance palace. The eastern parts of the former monastery church and later palace church that are preserved today are architectural highlights. In 2013 their renovated parts could be made accessible to visitors and their inclusion in the “Romanesque Road” realised.

Already before, another form of monumental architecture had been erected in the immediate vicinity: seven millennia ago the local people already knew how to architecturally map and ritually manifest the annual course of the sun with the help of a circular ditched enclosure made up of ditches and rings of palisades.

The palace church and the solar observatory correspond in a spiritual and architectural orientation towards the sky. They are the centre of an exciting and diverse cultural landscape.



Weißfels
10.9 km

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10.9 km

Ferry bridge
2.3 km

Freyburg 10.6 km
Naumburg 12.9 km

Goseck
Solar Observatory

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Oststraße

Innenstraße

Weststraße

Waldweg

Mühlweg

Saale river

Saale Cycle Route

Route ca. 5 km, duration 4 hours

Best explored on foot or by bicycle, the route offers you the following stations.

Start and end point of the excursion is the

- 1 **Ginkgo tree in Goseck Palace courtyard** 
- 2 **Goseck Local History and Cultural Association**
- 3 **Goseck Solar Observatory Information Centre**  
- 4 **Goseck Palace and Palace Church**   
- 5 **Scenic viewpoint from the palace** 
- 6 **Castle view** 
- 7 **Kaiserblick and Dechantenberg hill** 
- 8 **Goseck Solar Observatory**  



You can arrive comfortably by bicycle via the Saale Cycle Route. Coming from the direction of Naumburg or Weißenfels, you can use the ferry bridge at Leißling to cross the river. From there a path on the north bank leads you up to the palace.

If you plan to travel by train, it is advisable to choose Weißenfels as the last stop. From there a bus line runs regularly to Goseck and back. When arriving by car, parking spaces are available in front of the palace courtyard and at Goseck Solar Observatory.

1 Palace Courtyard

In the centre of the palace courtyard the approximately 180-year-old gingko tree rises to the sky. Here you can get a first impression of the entire palace complex and strengthen yourself for the upcoming tour of discovery.

2 Goseck Local History and Cultural Association

Today the local museum is located in the baroque administrator's house on the north side of the courtyard. There, the society has lovingly recreated a typical apartment from the 1920s using original interiors. The parlour can only be visited irregularly or by appointment.

3 Goseck Solar Observatory Information Centre

Next to the local museum you will find the information centre for the circular ditched enclosure in Goseck. Here you gain useful information on the layout, conception, and functions of such constructions and especially that in Goseck.

4 Goseck Palace and Palace Church

On the opposite side of the courtyard you will recognise the heterogeneous ensemble of buildings of the palace and the former monastery and later palace church, which you may already have spotted from the cycle path.

In connection with this area a "Gozzesburg" was first mentioned as early as the 9th century. This designation can be found in a tax list of towns and castles, the Hersfeld Tithes Register. Inhabitants of this castle were the counts of Goseck, who since 1003 were entrusted with the dignity of the Palatinate of Saxony established by King Otto I.

Unfortunately, despite archaeological investigations, no details are known about the appearance of this border castle. Later the eastern part of this castle was converted into a Benedictine monastery. The eastern parts of the monastery church, consecrated by Archbishop Adalbert in 1053 and rebuilt in the 13th century, are still preserved today. These include the transept, the choir, and the crypt. The latter is quadratic and designed as a so-called one-pillar room which was a rarity at the time with its filigree structure.

You may relive the history of the church in an exciting exhibition in which various media illuminate the transformation from the initial castle to a monastery and later a palace. You reach the exhibition by following the planting of the palace courtyard, which takes up the dimensions of the former nave. In addition, the premises are used as a concert hall by the Goseck Palace Music and Cultural Centre. Here you can listen to unique and top class "early music" palace concerts with historical instruments and international artists.

The Goseck noble family is closely interwoven with a dramatic love story, at the centre of which is Louis the Springer. He resided at Neuenburg castle near Freyburg in the immediate vicinity of Goseck. And with good reason: he had lost his heart to the beautiful Adelheid. What sounds like the beginning of a wonderful romance, however, had a catch: Adelheid was the wife of Frederick III, the Count Palatine of Goseck. When he died unexpectedly on a pig hunt in 1085, Adelheid fell into Louis's arms. Thereupon he was suspected of being responsible for the death of the Goseck count palatine. The legend was continued in Halle at Giebichenstein castle, where Louis was locked in a dungeon after the alleged crime. In anticipation of his conviction he fled with a courageous leap into the river Saale. It was this spectacular escape that earned him his nickname.

5 Scenic viewpoint from the palace

Through the small archway next to the palace you have a wonderful view over the Saale valley to Schönburg castle and to Naumburg (Saale). Already in 1791 the vista was described by the romantic poet Novalis.

6 Castle view

The Mühlberg (Mill Hill) begins at the car park in front of the palace courtyard where a path leads you east to the castle view. Be sure not to miss this view of the castle and the Saale valley.

7 Kaiserblick and Dechantenberg hill

Up river to the west the path leads you along the slope on the riverside to the vineyard on the Dechantenberg hill. On the way there, a brief stop at the "Kaiserblick" (Emperor's vista) is worthwhile. After that, the route resembles a maze. However, if you move west in the forest, leaving the sports field on your right, and follow the path for a while, you will find access to the vineyard through a wooden gate. The view of the valley that now presents itself compensates for the somewhat arduous path. The terraced vineyard has been cultivated by the monks of the Benedictine monastery of Goseck castle since the late 11th century. Still today, the varieties White Riesling and White Burgundy are grown on red sandstone. Now you follow the signs towards the solar observatory, which you must have noticed on your way to the vineyard.



8 Goseck Solar Observatory

In 1991 an exciting discovery was made at Goseck: during aerial archaeological surveys discolorations in the ground were noticed, which turned out to be traces of an almost 7,000-year-old circular ditched enclosure from the beginning of the Neolithic period. These ring-shaped monuments, which are composed of ditches and rings of posts, were erected in large parts of central Europe at that time. In Middle Germany alone, 15 of them have been discovered to date.

Such enclosures could reach a diameter of up to 200 m. The 75 m of Goseck make it one of the simpler and smaller examples. However, it is the oldest and so far the only completely excavated and reconstructed circular ditched enclosure from that time. The oldest Sky Path station has been open to visitors since 2005.

The special architecture creates impressive acoustics inside: Noise generated from outside is barely perceptible, while one's own spoken word is amplified by the echo resounding off the palisades. If there are two of you, the noises emanating from the centre can be heard particularly clearly in front of the inner palisade. Give it a try!

Have you noticed the gaps in the two palisade rings? In the evening of the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year, the sun sets in the south-west entrance and rises up again the next morning in the south-east entrance. These openings are precisely aligned to the position of the sun and thus have a clear astronomical reference. What the northern entrance referred to, however, is still unclear. The day of the winter solstice as well as the summer solstice is also depicted on the 3,600-year-old Nebra Sky Disc. This world-class find, bearing the oldest concrete representation of the cosmos, is on show in the State Museum of Prehistory in Halle (Saale).

7,000 years ago the view to the south was not obstructed by forest, which also due to slightly sloping ground would have allowed a clear view of the delightful panorama of the Saale valley. The open surroundings as well as the position of the earthen walls outside the ditches, and not the other way round as usual, rules out the circular ditch at Goseck from having a protective and defensive function. The monumentality of the structure and its astronomical orientation rather suggest a place of regular ritual and cultic acts.



Further sights

Distance as the crow flies



Naumburg Cathedral St Peter and St Paul 6.5 km

The Romanesque-Gothic cathedral is a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2018.

The renowned statue of Uta von Naumburg is one of twelve animated donor figures in the cathedral. She is considered to be the most beautiful representation of a woman of the Middle Ages.

Baroque Palace Neu-Augustusburg 7 km

One of the largest early baroque palaces in Middle Germany is located in Weißenfels to the east of Goseck. In addition to the town museum, this three-wing building houses an important collection on the subject of shoes.

Freyburg (Unstrut) 7.5 km

Based on the Neuenburg castle, which was built in the 11th century, this picturesque town developed into the centre of the Saale-Unstrut wine-growing region west of Goseck.

Neuenburg Palace 7.3 km

One of the largest early baroque palaces in Middle Germany is located in Weißenfels to the east of Goseck. In addition to the town museum, this three-wing building houses an important collection on the subject of shoes.

Rudelsburg and Saaleck Castles 15 km

Only a few hundred metres apart these two High Medieval castle ruins rise upstream from Goseck.



Pömmelte

Halle (Saale)

Nebra

Langeneichstädt

Goseck

**Informationszentrum
(Information centre) zum
Gosecker Sonnenobservatorium**
Burgstraße 53 / Schloss Goseck
06667 Goseck
03443 8206110

Sonnenobservatorium Goseck
51°11'54.1"N 11°51'52.6"E

The Sky Paths in Saxony-Anhalt combine five extraordinary archaeological locations around the Nebra Sky Disc. They invite you on a journey into millennia long past and open up new vistas into the sky.

www.emuseum-himmelswege.com



Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung
für Kultur und Medien



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