

# 48 hours in...



# STUTTGART

One of Europe's most vibrant and historic cities, Stuttgart is the place to go for some serious retail therapy, say STEVE DAVISON and SIMON C

### WHY GO NOW?

The thriving capital of the Baden-Württemberg has one of the busiest cultural calendars in Europe. All year round, Stuttgart plays host to a vast range of festivals, with Oktoberfest, the world's largest beer and folk festival (and more refined than its Munich counterpart), in full swing right now. The city is also a veritable paradise for shoppers and, if you're visiting next month, make sure to drop in on its 300-year-old Christmas fair – the biggest in the world where you can do all your festive shopping in one fell swoop.

For more information, contact the German National Tourist Office on 1800 48 44 80 or on [www.germany-tourism.de](http://www.germany-tourism.de).

### WRITE A POSTCARD

Grab a chair at one of the many cafes and indulge in the favoured pastime of Kaffee und Kuchen (coffee and cake) as you compose your dispatch. The cafes around the Schlossplatz, (10), such as Cafe Konigsbau and Bistro Terrazza, are popular.

### BRACING BRUNCH

The traditional German breakfast or fruhstuck is substantial and includes cheese, sliced meats, boiled eggs and sometimes cereal, fruit and yoghurt. Try either Cafe Stella (19) at Hauptstatter Strasse 57 or Cibo Matto (00 49 711 236 9851) just down the road at Wilhelmplatz 11. Both of these popular cafe-bars serve breakfast from 9am to 3pm on Sundays. Expect to pay around €12 for a grosser fruhstuck. For a more central choice, go for Cafe Kunstlerbund in the Schlossplatz (10), where a Big Time breakfast costs €11.

### CULTURAL AFTERNOON

The Staatsgalerie (22) (00 49 711 21 24 050; [www.staatsgalerie.de](http://www.staatsgalerie.de)) deserves a day on its own. The highlight is the Neue Staatsgalerie, a postmodern building designed by James Stirling that has the largest Picasso collection in Germany. It also traces the progress of German art during the 20th century, featuring such works as the Expressionist Otto Dix's Matchstick Seller. The Alte Staatsgalerie houses masterpieces from the Middle Ages to the 19th century. Admission €4.50 (free Wednesdays) covers both parts.

### SUNDAY MORNING: GO TO CHURCH

Stuttgart's late-Gothic Stiftskirche (17) has been under wraps for years and is not expected to reopen until later this year. However, just across the square is the Renaissance Schloss Kirche in the Altes Schloss (00 49 711

### BEAM DOWN

The fastest and cheapest way to get there from Dublin is via Zurich with Aer Lingus (0818 36 51 23/ [www.aerlingus.com](http://www.aerlingus.com)). Fares start at €309 return with seven days advance purchase required. Leaving Dublin at lunchtime, you'll be in Stuttgart by early evening. Echterdingen airport

is eight miles south of the city centre, linked by four S-Bahn trains every hour (lines S2 and S3) to the main railway station, the Hauptbahnhof (1). The one-way fare is €2.60, which allows connecting travel by bus, tram or S-bahn to just about anywhere in the city centre.

### AN APERITIF

Cafe culture is thriving in Stuttgart. Some of the hippest venues are located in diminutive Geisstrasse (14), such as Hans im Gluck, Max und Moritz and the popular Deli. A popular aperitif is schnapps, and there is excellent beer from three local breweries: Stuttgarter Hofbrau, Dinkelacker and Schwabenbrau.

### LUNCH ON THE RUN

The Markthalle is an excellent place to pick up some German fast food, wurst is the best. For vegetarian options, try Iden (9) at Eberhardstrasse 1 (00 49 711 235 989). For a snack, try the Swabian pretzel, which is on sale at shops and small kiosks throughout the city.

### TAKE A RIDE

Catch the Zahnradbahn cog railway from Marienplatz (20). Built in 1884, and lovingly known as 'Zacke', the train clatters its way up the hill offering great views. Get off at the Zandradbahnhof stop and follow Jahnstrasse, or jump on bus 70, to reach the Fernsehturm, or TV tower – one of Stuttgart's landmarks. For €3, a lift whisks you up to the observation level, 500ft up, for a fine view across the city.

### A WALK IN THE PARK

The Schlossgarten (21) forms a large swathe of greenery in the heart of the city, complete with meandering walkways, fountains, lakes and beer gardens. Beyond lies the Rosensteinpark, dominated by the Schloss Rosenstein, now housing the city's natural-history museum. On the northern edge is the Wilhelma zoo and botanical gardens (Neckartalstrasse; admission €8 or €6 in winter), developed for King Wilhelm I in 1848 in the style of a Moorish garden.

### DINNER WITH THE LOCALS

The city's traditional dish is the Gaisburger Marsch (beef and vegetable stew) with spatzle (a type of noodle). Other dishes include the autumn favourite, Zwiebelkuchen or onion quiche, Maultaschen (spinach and meat ravioli) and Linsen mit saiten (lentils with sausage). Wash it all down with some local Württemberg wine – reisling (white) and trollinger (red). For a traditional tavern or

gaststube, head for Restaurant Taubergquelle (15) at Torstrasse 19 (00 49 711 235 656). The food on offer is typically Swabian and single dishes range from €5 to €30. In the Bohnenviertel district is Weinhaus Stetter (16), Rosenstrasse 32 (00 49 711 240 163), a typically Swabian weinstube or wine tavern with a huge range of wines and good traditional food.

### GET YOUR BEARINGS

The Hauptbahnhof (1) is the perfect place from which to get your bearings, because it is the location for the Mercedes tower – the pinnacle on the south-east corner of the station with a revolving Mercedes symbol, 180ft above the city. A free lift will whisk you to the viewing platform at the top, which opens 10am-10pm daily. From here, you can appreciate Stuttgart's setting in the picturesque Neckar valley, sur-

rounded by gentle hills that are swathed in trees and vineyards. The main tourist office (2), which calls itself 'i-Punkt', is at Konigsstrasse 1A (00 49 711 222 8240; [www.stuttgart-tourist.de](http://www.stuttgart-tourist.de)). Here you can pick up a great bargain for any weekender: a three-day 'Stuttcard', price €14, that entitles you to unlimited public transport on the extensive VVS network and free admission to museums and galleries.

### CHECK IN

For ultimate luxury, and expense, try the five-star Steigenberger Hotel Graf Zeppelin (3), Arnulf-Klett-Platz 7 (00 49 711 20480; [www.stuttgart.steigenberger.de](http://www.stuttgart.steigenberger.de)). This recently renovated hotel, opposite the Hauptbahnhof, has sumptuous doubles from €141. A good mid-range choice is the Wirt am Berg (4), Gaisburgstrasse 12A (00 49 711 241 865), run by the Klink family since 1953. The hotel offers en-suite double rooms in a quiet location for €80. The youth hostel (5) is at Haussmannstrasse 15 (00 49 711 24 1583). Bed and breakfast costs €13.35 for under-27s, €16.05 for anyone older. Or you can use the efficient tourist-office booking service: 00 49 711 222 8233.

### WINDOW SHOPPING

This being Germany, any weekend shopping has to be done by 4pm on Saturday – but to make the most of two impressive markets, you should start much earlier in the day. Konigsstrasse is Germany's longest pedestrian street, and it is lined with a variety of shops and department stores. The elegant shops of Eberhardstrasse lead to Karls Passage and the Breuninger (6) department store – Stuttgart's answer to Brown Thomas. On Saturdays, a flea market takes place nearby, at Karlsplatz (7), and also close by, at Dorotheenstrasse 4, the elegant Art Nouveau Markthalle (market hall) (8) is well worth visiting.

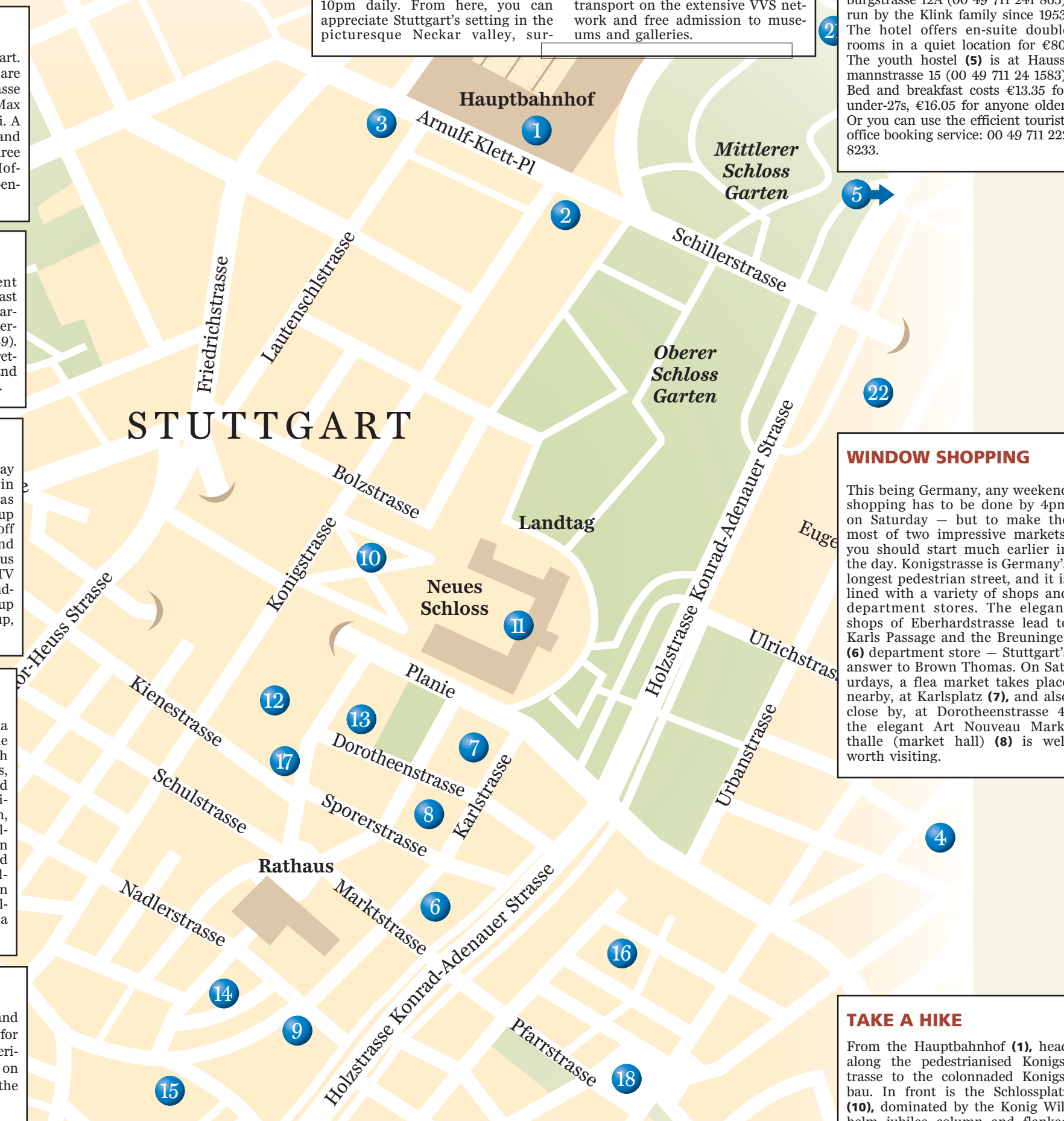
### TAKE A HIKE

From the Hauptbahnhof (1), head along the pedestrianised Konigsstrasse to the colonnaded Konigsbau. In front is the Schlossplatz (10), dominated by the König Wilhelm jubilee column and flanked by fountains. Beyond lies the Neues Schloss (11), former residence of kings Friedrich I and Wilhelm I. Close by is Schillerplatz (12) – named after the poet-dramatist Friedrich von Schiller – and the Altes Schloss (Old Castle) (13), former residence of the dukes of Württemberg, which now houses the interesting Württembergisches Landesmuseum. An excellent two-hour guided tour of the city centre in English (and German) sets off daily at 2pm from the tourist office (2), price €17.

### ICING IN THE CAKE

Even those who prefer two wheels to four will find the Mercedes-Benz Museum (00 49 711 172 2578) fascinating – and getting there is a journey full of intrigue. You make your way, for example on bus 56, to the terminus at Martin-Schrenk-Weg, where a free shuttle bus is waiting to pick you up daily, except Mondays and public holidays from 9am to

4pm. You then drive through into the Mercedes complex, and are dropped outside the gleaming steel-and-glass museum under the watchful eye of security staff, who make sure you enter the museum. Inside, the collection emphasises that the motor car was conceived in this part of Germany, but skates over events in the Thirties and Forties.



## DESTINATIONS: Gemma O'Doherty

# Meeting Mickey can be fun for adults too

►The prospect of going en famille to Disney World might seem like the ultimate sacrifice a parent can make, but the planet's best known theme park is still every child's dream destination. Yes, it's as tacky as ever, but I've yet to meet one parent who hasn't said they'd go back 100 times over just to relive their children's excitement.

Fifty square miles, Florida's Walt Disney World is becoming more magical all the time. It now consists of four theme parks: the Magic Kingdom, home to Mickey et al; the amazing Epcot Centre where technology's latest gadgets can be put to the test; the Animal Kingdom, as close to an African safari as you'll find; and MGM Studios, a behind-the-scenes look at some of the world's favourite movies.

American Holidays has just launched its 2003 brochure and the section on Disney is worth a look. It sells the entire range of accommodation and admission passes to Disney and there's a package to meet most tastes and budgets. They also stock the brand new Disney Fastpass.

A six-night room-only stay in a three-star resort starts at €800 per person, including return flights and car hire. You'll also have to fork out for tickets to the park which start at about €200 a piece.

►Some of Northern Ireland's best hotels are slashing their prices for the October Bank Holiday weekend. The five-star Culloden Hotel in Belfast, a member of the elite Small Luxury

Hotels of the World group, is offering two nights B&B plus one dinner for €200 per person sharing.

The hotel has an exclusive health and fitness centre and golfing guests have access to the nearby Royal Belfast Golf Club. Another good offer is with the McCausland Hotel in Belfast city centre where two nights B&B plus one dinner costs €125 per person. For full details of all hotels included in the special offer, contact the Northern Ireland Tourist Board on 1850 230 230 or [www.gonorth.ie](http://www.gonorth.ie).

►Ab Fab fans and wanna-be Sloane Rangers can stay in their own pads in Chelsea and Belgravia, thanks to an innovative service available to London's tourists. Uptown Reservations

has a portfolio of some of the city's most upmarket houses, whose owners are willing to take in guests on a B&B basis. The average host is pretty upmarket too, with lords, ladies, diplomats and artists among those on the client list. All of the properties are located in ultra-fashionable parts of London, proximity to Harrods an essential feature, and the accommodation is typically five star.

Some of the houses offer private sitting-rooms for guests, who are free to join the host family or do their own thing. Prices start from €135 for a double room, which is about the lowest you can pay for luxury in London these days. Contact Uptown Reservations on [www.uptownres.co.uk](http://www.uptownres.co.uk) or 00 44 20 7351 9383.



Home from home: you can enjoy luxury accommodation in London with Uptown Reservations