

Splendors of Saxony

The Architectural Heritage of
Leipzig, Meissen & Dresden

June 9–16, 2025



HIT
Heritage Tours
by American Ancestors


DICAMILLO
TRAVEL

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Monday, June 9

Arrive in Leipzig, the largest city in the state of Saxony, and transfer independently to the five-star **Steigenberger Icon Grandhotel Handelshof** in the heart of the historic downtown. In the late afternoon, we'll gather for a walking tour of the **Old Town** led by our expert guide, Stefan Albrecht. We'll visit the historic **St. Thomas Church** (Thomaskirche), an architectural and engineering marvel noted for its steeply pitched, gabled, 63-degree roof dating from 1486. Martin Luther preached at the church and Johann Sebastian Bach served as the choirmaster here from 1723 until his death in 1750. In 2000, the 250th anniversary of Bach's death, the organ was reconstructed to more accurately match the sound of the organ on which he composed his work. Next is the 12th century **St. Nicholas Church** (Nikolaikirche), site of the demonstrations that helped bring down the communist regime during the Cold War. This evening we'll toast our week together in Saxony at a welcome reception and dinner featuring fresh spring fare and local German wines.

Tuesday, June 10

This morning we'll visit the city's preeminent art collection at the **Leipzig Museum of Fine Arts** (Museum der bildenden Künste), one of the largest collections of fine art in Germany. Established by passionate collectors of contemporary art in the mid-19th century, this vast collection spans 600 years of European art history, from Old Masters Lucas Cranach and Frans Hals to Romantic artists like Caspar David Friedrich. Next, we'll travel by private coach to **Halle**, a historic city on the banks of the River Saale, where we'll have lunch and stroll through the bustling **Marketplatz**. After lunch we'll tour the **home of Georg Frideric Händel** and visit the **State Museum of Prehistory** (Landesmuseum für Vorgeschichte), where we'll see the 3,600-year-old **Nebra Sky Disc**, one of the most important archaeological discoveries of the last century. In the late afternoon we'll return to Leipzig for time to relax before a dinner of local specialties at a city center restaurant.

Wednesday, June 11

Today we'll drive north to **Gartenreich Dessau-Wörlitz**, the 18th century garden wonderland of Leopold III, Duke of Anhalt-Dessau, more commonly known as Prince Franz. Inspired by his travels to England and Italy, the duke returned to Germany and began a decades-long project that created continental Europe's first English style landscape garden. Today a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the garden is a perfect example of the combining of buildings with the landscape as part of the Enlightenment



Statue of Johann Sebastian Bach at St. Thomas Church



St. Nicholas Church



Gothic House at Park Wörlitz



Schloss Wörlitz



View of Dresden from Marienbrücke (photo by Jiuguang Wang)



Zwinger Palace

concept of integrating art, education, and philosophy. After a tour of the garden, we'll be guided through the interior of the most outstanding building in the landscape—**Schloss Wörlitz**, Germany's first Neoclassical building. Built for the duke between 1769 and 1773, the schloss retains its original lavish interiors and features important collections of Wedgwood, Old Master paintings, and ancient art. Following lunch we'll tour the **Gothic House** (Gotisches Haus), one of the oldest examples of neo-Gothic architecture in Europe. The house features a remarkable collection of Swiss glass paintings and exquisite neo-Gothic furnishings. Late in the afternoon we'll return to Leipzig, where you will have the rest of the day and evening on your own.

Thursday, June 12

This morning we'll check out of our hotel and drive to the foot of the Ore Mountains for a **private luncheon at a restored castle** hosted by the owners, who have painstakingly restored the property in the years since German Reunification. We'll continue to **Dresden**, the capital of Saxony and one of the most cultured and art-filled cities in Europe. The splendor that was Dresden has been remarkably reconstructed after the city's near-complete destruction in the February 1945 Allied bombing campaign during World War II. Our home for the next four nights will be the five-star **Hotel Taschenbergpalais Kempinski**, located in the historic old town and within walking distance of the city's most important sites. This afternoon, we'll enjoy a private, guided tour of the historic **Semperoper**, the magnificent High Renaissance style opera house on the River Elbe. There will be free time to settle in at our hotel, or to meander through the old town, before we gather for dinner.

Friday, June 13

We'll begin today at the newly restored historic rooms of the **Green Vault** (Grünes Gewölbe), which contains the largest treasure collection in Europe. Founded by Augustus the Strong in the 18th century, each sumptuous room is filled with artworks of gold, silver, precious gems, ivory, bronze, and amber. Next, we'll visit Dresden's **Old Masters Picture Gallery** (Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister), housed in the Semperbau wing of the **Zwinger Palace**, one of the most important Baroque buildings in Germany. A private guided tour of the Renaissance and Baroque collections, including Raphael's famous *Sistine Madonna*, will be followed by a relaxing lunch in the courtyard of the Theaterplatz. You will have the rest of the afternoon and evening on your own. This evening there is the opportunity for an optional visit to the **Semperoper** (the Dresden Opera House) for the performance of Händel's oratorio *Saul*.

Saturday, June 14

This morning we'll drive to **Meissen**, the charming town on the River Elbe that has been the capital of European porcelain since the 18th century. We will begin with a private, guided tour of the High Gothic **Meissen Cathedral** (Meißner Dom), where we'll see works of art by Cranach, Dürer, and the Naumberg Master. Next, we'll have a special tour of the adjacent **Albrechtsburg Castle**, the ancient building that was once the residence of the margraves of Meissen. The castle was abandoned from the 1630s until 1710, when Augustus the Strong set up the first Meissen porcelain factory inside its walls. After lunch we'll have a private tour of the **Meissen Porcelain Museum**, which, not surprisingly, features the most important collection of Meissen in the world. The painstaking craft of painting on porcelain was begun by Meissen in 1720 and it continues to be taught at the factory today. We'll leave Meissen for a drive into the hills overlooking the town to visit the **Schloss Proschwitz Vineyard**, where wine has been cultivated for 850 years. Here we'll sip sparkling wine while learning about the unique terroir of the region, followed by a four-course dinner paired with the winery's finest varietals.

Sunday, June 15

This morning we'll follow the winding River Elbe southeast of Dresden to **Pillnitz Palace** (Schloss Pillnitz), where we'll have a private tour of the **Arts and Crafts Museum**, which traces Saxon and European arts over the past three hundred years. On the grounds of Schloss Pillnitz we'll visit the early 19th century Neoclassical style **New Palace**, famous for its domed interior, where there's an exhibition on the history of this royal Saxon summer retreat. There will also be time to visit the extensive garden, most notable for its 250-year-old camellia tree that lives in a custom-designed glass house. We'll break for an independent lunch in the enchanting valley town of **Pirna**, which was the subject of eleven paintings by the renowned Venetian landscape painter Canaletto between 1753 and 1755. In **Glashütte**, the birthplace of the German watchmaking industry, we'll tour the **German Watch Making Museum**. Tonight, we'll celebrate our travels through Saxony at a festive farewell reception and dinner.

Monday, June 16

Our tour comes to an end this morning after breakfast at the hotel. Each participant should arrange independent transfers to the airport for flights home, or to an onward destination.



Meissen Cathedral (photo by Lvova Anastasiya)



Meissen from Schloss Proschwitz Vineyard



Hillside Palace, Pillnitz Palace (photo by Allie Caulfield)

ABOUT OUR TOUR LEADERS

Stefan Albrecht

Originally from Hesse, Stefan moved to Berlin in 1994 and became entranced by the city's Prussian history and its unique architecture and city planning. He studied art history and classical archeology at Humboldt University and founded his own travel company in 1999 that specializes in luxury tours of Berlin and beyond.

Curt DiCamillo

Curt is the Curator of Fine Art at American Ancestors. Before he came to American Ancestors he worked for the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the National Trust for Scotland. Curt is a noted historian and a recognized authority on the British country house, about which he has written, lectured, and taught in the U.S. and abroad. Since 1999 he has maintained an award-winning database on the web, *TheDiCamillo.com*, which seeks to document every English, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish country house ever built, standing or demolished. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, is listed in *Who's Who in America*, *Who's Who in the World*, is a Fellow of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and a member of the Council of the American Museum in Britain.



ACCOMMODATION

LEIPZIG

Steigenberger Icon Grandhotel Handelshof

Our base in Leipzig is the Steigenberger Icon Grandhotel Handelshof, a modern luxury property housed within the city's former trade fair building. The hotel is located within the historic city center—just a short walk to the pedestrian zone and the historic sites of the downtown area.



DRESDEN

Hotel Taschenbergpalais Kempinski

In Dresden we'll stay at the five-star Hotel Taschenbergpalais Kempinski, ideally located in the restored city center. The hotel reopened in February 2024 after an extensive renovation and features an indoor pool and spa where you can relax after a long day.



American Ancestors/New England Historic Genealogical Society is America's founding genealogical organization, the most respected name in family history, and one of the leading non-profit organizations in the field. We create enriching opportunities for members and the public to research their own family history, attend educational programs and tours, exhibitions, and other inspirational experiences that communicate the power and importance of family history.

To learn more, visit [AmericanAncestors.org](https://www.americanancestors.org): <https://www.americanancestors.org>

SPLENDORS OF SAXONY

June 9–16, 2025

Tour Cost:

Land Package: \$9,995

Single Supplement: \$1,295

Tour price is per person, based on double occupancy, with a minimum of 15 paying participants.

Deposit & Final Payment: A deposit of \$1,500 per person is required to reserve a spot on the tour. Deposits are payable by check or credit card (MasterCard, Visa, or American Express). Final balance will be invoiced and is due on or before February 28, 2025. Final balance payments are payable by check, bank wire, or ACH transfer to International Seminar Design, Inc. Registrations will be accepted beyond this date on a space-available basis.

Activity Level: Moderate to strenuous; good walking ability is advised. Some museum and palace visits require use of staircases, and there will be a moderate amount of walking on uneven ground.

Flights: Airfare is not included in the tour price. Participants are responsible for all aspects of their round-trip air arrangements to Florence. Please do not purchase airline tickets until the operation of the tour is confirmed.

Terms & Conditions: Upon receipt of registration, ISDI will send registrant a Participant Tour Agreement detailing the full terms and conditions for this tour. This document must be signed and returned to ISDI before participant's registration is considered complete and any arrangements can be confirmed.

COVID-19 Policy: American Ancestors and ISDI follow guidelines and mandates issued by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Tour participants are no longer required to wear face coverings during the tour. Proof of vaccination status is not required, nor is social distancing mandated. In line with CDC guidance, we advise anyone who is unvaccinated (and encourage anyone who feels more comfortable) to continue wearing a mask. We appreciate your adherence to this policy.

Travel Insurance: Travel Insurance is not included in the tour cost, but participants are strongly encouraged to purchase a travel protection plan in conjunction with this tour, including coverage of trip cancellation, trip interruption, emergency evacuation/repatriation, medical expenses, lost or damaged baggage, and other expenses and/or losses incurred due to unexpected situations. Should a participant cancel at any time after registering for the tour, American Ancestors and ISDI must strictly abide by the cancellation policy outlined herein. Travel insurance information will be sent upon tour registration.

Tour Price Inclusions:

3 nights' accommodation at the Steigenberger Icon Grandhotel Handelshof, Leipzig; 4 nights' accommodation at the Taschenbergpalais Kempinski, Dresden; breakfast daily at the hotels, 5 lunches, 5 dinners, 2 receptions (welcome and farewell), 1 wine tasting; non-alcoholic beverages, and wine with all included lunches and dinners; land transportation by private midicoach; entrance fees to sites and visits listed in the itinerary; leadership of Stefan Albrecht and Curt DiCamillo for duration of the tour; services of an American Ancestors tour manager; expert local guides for all touring; gratuities for guides and drivers and at included meals; handling of 2 pieces of luggage per person upon arrival and departure from the hotel; bottled water on coach; service charges and taxes.

Tour Price Exclusions: Airline tickets, airline taxes and surcharges, and baggage fees; airport portage; airport transfers; passport, visa, or ETIAS fees; meals other than those specified in the itinerary; gratuities for hotel housekeeping; personal items such as telephone calls, room service, valet service, à-la-carte orders, specialty wines and liquors, laundry charges, travel extensions, or tour deviations; entry or departure fees levied by local governments; travel insurance; any other items not specifically included in the itinerary.

Cancellations & Refunds: Cancellation by participant must be made in writing to American Ancestors and is effective only upon acknowledged receipt by American Ancestors. There is a non-refundable registration and planning fee of \$500 per person regardless of cancellation date. Written cancellation received by American Ancestors on or before February 28, 2025: full refund minus \$500 per person registration and planning fee. Written cancellation received by American Ancestors between March 1 and April 25, 2025: full refund minus \$5,000 per person cancellation fee (includes registration and planning fee). Written cancellations received by American Ancestors on or after April 26, 2025: no refund. Tour registration is non-transferable. In the case of cancellation, substitutions are not allowed. After the tour has commenced, no refunds will be issued for any reason including, but not limited to, unused portions of tour. If the tour is cancelled by American Ancestors or ISDI due to low enrollment, active registrants will receive a full refund of all tour payments.

For more information:

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