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Suggested day trip plans for 1, 2 or 3 days

From our guide **Top 10 Best Day Trips from Frankfurt**. Print it or save it to your phone.



Day 1: Castle and old town

Take a direct train to Heidelberg in the morning and walk up to the castle. Have lunch in the old town, cross the Old Bridge and follow the Philosophers' Walk before an evening train back to Frankfurt.

Day 2: Rhine wine and river

Take the regional train along the river to Rüdesheim. Ride the cable car to the Niederwald Monument, then take a river cruise for part of the valley. Return by train in the evening, or break the day with a stop at Bacharach.

Day 3: Cathedrals and cities

Pair Mainz and Wiesbaden, using the local train between them. Start with the cathedral and St Stephan's in Mainz, have lunch in the old town, then take the short train to Wiesbaden for the Kurhaus and the Nerobergbahn. If you prefer a longer ride, take the ICE to Cologne for the cathedral and the Rhine bridge.

For one day, choose Heidelberg. For two, add the Rhine. For three, add the cathedral pair or Würzburg.

If you are also visiting Bavaria, our guide to the best day trips from Munich covers castles, lakes and Alpine towns on the other side of Germany. For a similar rail-based format in another country, see our guide to the best day trips from Paris.

The 10 places at a glance

1. Heidelberg

How to get there: Direct train from Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof to Heidelberg Hauptbahnhof, then a bus or a walk of about 20 to 30 minutes into the old town.
How long to spend: A full day, or a long half day for the castle and old town.
Best time to go: Spring and autumn for good light, or December for the market.
Tip: Walk up to the castle and ride the funicular down, because the stairs and cobbles are steep.
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2. Rüdesheim and the Rhine Valley

How to get there: Regional train from Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof along the Rhine to Rüdesheim, then a boat or train for the valley.
How long to spend: A full day with a cruise.
Best time to go: Late spring to early autumn, with the wine festivals and cruises at their busiest in summer.
Tip: Plan the boat leg one way and the train back, which avoids watching the clock for the last sailing.
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3. Mainz

How to get there: S-Bahn from Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof to Mainz Hauptbahnhof, then a short walk to the old town.
How long to spend: Half a day to a full day.
Best time to go: Any season, with the Christmas market in December and wine events in late summer.
Tip: Visit St Stephan's in the morning light, when the blue windows are at their strongest.
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4. Wiesbaden

How to get there: Regional train or S-Bahn from Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof to Wiesbaden Hauptbahnhof.
How long to spend: Half a day, or a full day with a spa visit.
Best time to go: Spring and summer for the park and the hill, or winter for the thermal baths.
Tip: Take the Nerobergbahn up and walk down through the woods and vineyards.
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5. Würzburg

How to get there: Direct ICE or regional train from Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof to Würzburg Hauptbahnhof.
How long to spend: A full day.
Best time to go: Late spring to early autumn, when the bridge and the vineyards are at their liveliest.
Tip: Book a Residence tour in advance in summer, because slots can fill up.
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6. Darmstadt

How to get there: Regional train or S-Bahn from Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof to Darmstadt Hauptbahnhof, then a tram or a walk.
How long to spend: Half a day.
Best time to go: Spring to early autumn for the gardens.
Tip: Combine Darmstadt with a morning in Frankfurt, because the trip is short.
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7. Marburg

How to get there: Regional train from Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof to Marburg, then a walk or bus into the centre.
How long to spend: Half a day to a full day.
Best time to go: Spring and autumn for walking, or summer for the riverside.
Tip: Use the town lift to start at the top, then walk down through the old streets.
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8. Cologne

How to get there: ICE from Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof to Köln Hauptbahnhof, which is next to the cathedral.
How long to spend: A full day.
Best time to go: Any season, with the Christmas markets in December.
Tip: Climb the cathedral tower early, as the queue and the stairs are easier before midday.
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9. Rothenburg ob der Tauber

How to get there: Train with changes, usually via Würzburg or Ansbach and Steinach, using the Deutsche Bahn planner.
How long to spend: A full day, or better an overnight stay.
Best time to go: Spring and autumn for fewer crowds, or December for the Christmas market.
Tip: Stay for the evening, when the day visitors leave and the lanes are quiet.
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10. Bad Homburg

How to get there: S-Bahn line S5 from Frankfurt to Bad Homburg, then a bus to the Saalburg.
How long to spend: Half a day.
Best time to go: Spring to autumn for the park and the Roman fort.
Tip: Visit the Saalburg first, then spend the afternoon in the park and palace.
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Getting around from Frankfurt

Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof is the hub for almost every trip. Regional trains and S-Bahn services leave from the main station, and ICE trains cover the longer routes to Würzburg and Cologne. The Deutsche Bahn website and app show live times and tickets.

Regional day tickets, such as state tickets valid on local trains, can be good value for groups, but rules and zones change, so check the official sites. Local transport in the Rhine-Main area is run by RMV, whose website explains regional fares. Keep your ticket validated if the rules require it, and plan the last return train before you leave.

Opening times, prices and transport change often, so check with each venue or operator before you go. For the full guide, photos and FAQs, see https://toptravelinsider.com/top-10-best-day-trips-from-frankfurt/.