



From
\$14,444 NZD

Single Room

\$16,502 NZD

Twin Room

\$14,444 NZD

Prices valid until
30th December 2025

16 days

Duration

Germany

Destination

Level 2 - Moderate

Activity

Bach Classical European Music Festival small group tours

Jun 10 2025 to Jun 25 2025

Exploring the life and work of Johann Sebastian Bach

Odyssey offers easy, convenient, and relaxed escorted small group tours across Western Europe and beyond. We explore Germany's incredible natural beauty, its city state and imperial heritage, World Heritage Sites, and world famous cities, all with some truly spectacular



Bach Classical European Music Festival small group tours

<https://www.odysseytraveller.com>

11-May-2025

scenery along the way. This and more is all waiting to be explored on one of Odyssey's small group tours of Germany, designed for the senior traveller, and led by experienced, and enthusiastic like minded people.

While Johann Sebastian Bach is renowned as one of the greatest composers of all time and his compositions receive worldwide acclaim, the man himself is somewhat of a mystery. Born in Eisenach, Germany in 1685 to a family that already had significant music credentials, his use of counterpoint, harmonic and motivic organisation transformed the music of the 18th century and beyond. But what led him to become one of the greatest composers in history? Our Bach small group tours seek to answer this question for music lovers and history lovers. We trace the footsteps of the German composer with our Program Leader and local tour guide, visiting the cities and destinations with which he is best associated. We will return with a greater understanding, and even deeper appreciation, of Johann Sebastian Bach.

This small group tour starts in Berlin and finishes in Hamburg. These Bach small group tours also include the Bach Music Festival in Leipzig. Odyssey Traveller has created a 16-day tour with 6 world-class concerts. During our journey exploring the life and work of Johann Sebastian Bach, we will spend time in Berlin (3 nights), Dresden (2 nights), Leipzig (3 nights), Weimar (3 nights), Halberstadt (1 night), and Hamburg (2 nights).

The group will travel to the major locations that influenced Bach as he grew up and where, as an adult, his influences were quickly established. In order to ensure an informative experience, visits with knowledgeable local guides have been arranged. Therefore, you will have access to genuine enthusiasts who will share their interest in the man and his music.

The concerts and recitals attended by the group are influenced by those offered by the Bach Festival. Concerts listed on the itinerary are



indicative only and based on previous years' offerings.

Due to the special nature of this tour including the Bach music festival, the group is usually limited to 14 participants.

This Bach Music Festival small group tour is fully escorted, offering a fabulous experience for all lovers of Bach's music.

For more details, click the 'Top 5' or 'Itinerary' buttons above! If you're keen to experience this tour, [please call](#) or [send an email](#). Or, to book, simply fill in the form on the right hand side of this page.

Learn more about Germany and Bach

Links to learn more about Bach

- [Books about Johann Sebastian Bach](#)
- [Learn more about Germany](#)
- [Johann Sebastian Bach Biography](#)
- [Bach's Vocal Music](#) – The New York Times
- [The young Bach](#) – The Guardian

Tours to Europe by Odyssey Traveller

- All small group tours to [Europe](#)

Tour Notes

- Concerts listed are indicative only and subject to change pending on this year's offerings and schedule. Selected concerts will be advised closer to departure,

Highlights

1. Spend 2 weeks in Germany immersed in the music of Bach.

Bach Classical European Music Festival small group tours

<https://www.odysseytraveller.com>



2. Learn about Johann Sebastian Bach and his influence on European music.
3. Enjoy a mix of 6 classical concerts and vocal music composed by Bach.
4. Experience the places Bach lived and attend the Bachfest in Leipzig.
5. Explore the cities of Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden, Weimar, Erfurt, Eisenach, Arnstadt Köthen and Hamburg.

Itinerary

Day 1

Locations: Berlin

Overview:

Upon arrival in Berlin we will check into the hotel. In the late afternoon, we have a welcome drinks followed by dinner.

There will be time to visit some of the city's fine art galleries as well as to learn about its more recent past for those who arrive early.

Accommodation:

3 nights at Hotel Maritim Pro Arte or similar.



Day 2

Locations: Berlin

Overview:

Our day begins with a city tour of Berlin including visits to the Berlin Wall and Brandenburg Gate. The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure.

In the evening we go to Berlin's Konzerthaus for a piano concert by Sir Andras Schiff where he'll play:

Johann Sebastian Bach "Concerto nach italienischem Gusto" F-Dur BWV 971

Ludwig van Beethoven "Konzert für Klavier und Orchester Nr. 1 C-Dur op. 15"

Béla Bartók "Konzert für Orchester"

Accommodation:

Hotel Hotel Maritim Pro Art or similar.

Day 3

Locations: Berlin

Overview:

We will take a day trip to Potsdam to explore the UNESCO listed Palaces and Parks of Fredrick the Great. J.S. Bach visited Fredrick the Great at Potsdam in 1747. Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, J.S Bach's fifth child and second (surviving) son, was employed as a court musician at Potsdam between 1738 and 1768.

Accommodation:

Hotel Hotel Maritim Pro Art or similar.



Day 4

Locations: Berlin to Dresden

Overview:

After breakfast, we enjoy a guided tour of the Berlin Philharmonic Concert Hall.

Later we transfer to Dresden by coach. After checking-in we'll make our way to visit the Historic Green Vault, which holds a spectacular collection of treasures, and is Europe's first public museum, and complete the day with a guided tour of Semperoper, Dresden's grand opera house.

In the evening we have a group dinner at our hotel.

Accommodation:

2 nights at Holiday Inn Express Dresden or similar.

Day 5

Locations: Dresden

Overview:

This morning we have a guided tour of the city of Dresden on foot including a visit to Dresden's Frauenkirche. We will have some free time for lunch in the city (own arrangements) and we will then have a guided tour of the Semperoper.

Accommodation:

Holiday Inn Express Dresden or similar.

Day 6

Locations: Dresden to Leipzig

Overview:

In the morning we travel to Leipzig by coach. In the afternoon we have a walking tour of the city including Nikolaikirche, Thomaskirche and the Bach monuments. His monument looks over to the Bach Museum, where his musical heritage is maintained and intensive research of his

works is performed. We will then have dinner at a local restaurant.

J.S. Bach lived in Leipzig between 1723-1750 after being appointed as Thomaskantor, Cantor of the Thomasschule at the Thomaskirche (St. Thomas Church).

This evening we will attend the Bachfest event:

“Passion” at Nikolaikirche

Dinner this evening will be at a local restaurant.

Accommodation:

3 nights at NH Zentrum or similar.

Day 7

Locations: Leipzig

Overview:

We start this morning with a guided visit to the Bach Museum. No other German city has such a grand musical tradition as Leipzig. Many composers have a close connection with the city: Wagner was born here and pianist Clara Wieck achieved enormous success here. This is not only where Mendelssohn and Schumann composed many of their most important works, but also where they intensively studied the works of J.S. Bach. Bach, presumably the city's most famous resident, lived and worked in the city of Leipzig for 27 years. Here he composed works such as the “Mass in B Minor” and the “Art of Fugue”; this is also where the St. Thomas' Church is located, his main creative domain and his grave.

In the afternoon we visit the Leipzig History Museum, including the council chambers where Bach signed his employment contract.

Tonight's Bachfest performances we'll attend are:

“Jagd und Schäferkantate” at Kupfersaal

“Familienduell” at Alte Börse

Accommodation:

NH Zentrum or similar.

Day 8

Locations: Leipzig

Overview:

Today we continue exploring Leipzig and visit the Mendelssohn Museum, the house in which Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy lived and died. Built in the late classicist era, the house has been carefully restored. It was the composer's last private address, and the only one of his residences that can still be visited. Mendelssohn was active here not only as a composer and music director, but also as a cultural politician and piano virtuoso. Here, we can experience the authentic atmosphere of the apartment on the second floor where the Mendelssohn family lived from 1845 and which is furnished in the style of late Biedermeier.

As a group today, we will be attending as part of Bachfest "Weimarer Kantaten 1" at Thomaskirche and "Triplekonzerte" at Evangelisch Reformierte Kirche.

Accommodation:

NH Zentrum or similar.

Day 9

Locations: Leipzig to Weimar

Overview:

Today we travel from Leipzig to Weimar. We take a walking tour of the city, and visit Bachkirche and the wonderful Duchess Anna Amalia Library.

J.S. Bach came to Weimar more than 300 years ago and spent 9 important years of his life there. His sons Wilhelm Friedemann and Carl Philipp Emanuel were born in Weimar. This is also where he composed three-quarters of his organ works as well as numerous cantatas and harpsichord works. He was court organist and concertmaster, it was the first time he had a trained orchestra at his disposal. In Weimar he began working on his "Orgelbüchlein" (Little Organ Book). Numerous events, such as the Bach Festival in Thuringia in March and April, the Bach Biennale in July, and the organ concerts in the pre-Christmas period pay

homage to the great composer.

Accommodation:

3 nights at Dorint AM Goethepark or similar.

Day 10

Locations: Eisenach

Overview:

Today we take a day trip to Eisenach. Wartburg Castle, which has been on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1999, was once the residence of St. Elisabeth of Thuringia. This was where Martin Luther translated the New Testament and Richard Wagner was inspired to compose his opera "Tannhäuser." Martin Luther spent 3 years of his time at school in the house of the patrician Cotta family, which is now called Luther's House. In Eisenach, visitors can find traces of European music history.

The world's oldest and largest Bach Museum is located in Johann Sebastian Bach's birthplace. Every hour there is a small concert performed on original historical instruments – it is not surprising that the Bach House is one of the most popular music museums in Germany. Inside the 500-year-old timber-framed house, which was furnished in 1907 by the Weimar court antiquary himself, Bach's life story can be experienced up close. In Johann Sebastian Bach's birthplace, 4 organists from his family worked at the Georgenkirche, in which he was christened. This was where Pachelbel played the organ and court band master Georg Philipp Telemann performed his religious works at the beginning of the 18th century.

Accommodation:

Dorint Am Goethepark or similar.

Day 11

Locations: Erfurt

Overview:

Today we take a day trip to Erfurt. We enjoy a guided walking tour of the city visiting its main sights, including the Predigerkirche, Kramerbrücke,

the Cathedral and Severi Church.

No other city was as connected with the Bach family as the present-day capital of Thuringia. In the 17th century, Erfurt's musical life was heavily influenced by various members of the Bach family, several of which were head of the Erfurt Orchestra or musicians. Sixty one children of the widely ramified Bach family were christened in the Kaufmannskirche in Erfurt and 12 Bach couples married here, including Johann Sebastian's parents. Most members of the family lived in Erfurt, and it is from here that their music spread across all of Central Germany. In 1716, Johann Sebastian examined the organ of the Augustinian Church.

Accommodation:

Dorint Am Goethepark or similar.

Day 12

Locations: Arnstadt

Overview:

Today we have a morning excursion to Arnstadt. We will have a guided tour of the Johan Sebastian Bach Church, where we will listen to an organ recital.

At the age of 18 years, Johann Sebastian Bach accepted his first post as organist of the New Church in Arnstadt. In Arnstadt, the young Bach not only fell in love with his first wife, Maria Barbara, but it is also known that he had some amorous adventures in the residential city. He arbitrarily extended a holiday for a 4 week study trip to Lübeck to over 3 months. His organ playing also came under criticism. "He changes the key too often, plays dissonant chords and consternates the congregation with unusual sounds." His records point to other emerging streaks in his youthful and dynamic nature: he accompanied an unknown damsel into the church gallery and had a vehement argument with his chorister, Geyersbach, at the marketplace. In Arnstadt, visitors can experience a young Bach at the beginning of his international career.

The afternoon is free to explore Weimar at your own pace.

Accommodation:

Dorint Am Goethepark or similar.

Day 13

Locations: Weimar to Köthen, then Halberstadt

Overview:

Today we travel to Köthen, where we enjoy a guided walking tour of the city, including visits to Köthen Castle and St. Agnus Church.

J.S. Bach lived in Köthen between 1717 and 1723 as Director of Music for Prince Leopold. As court conductor, Bach spent many eventful and productive years in the Imperial City in the service of the musically well-educated Prince Leopold. Famous works such as the Brandenburg Concertos and the first part of the Well-Tempered Clavier were created, and there were also significant changes in Bach's life. Köthen is where his first wife, Maria Barbara, lies buried, but it is also where his wedding with his second wife Anna Magdalena took place. Visitors travelling in Bach's footsteps will discover great variety in this county seat with its lovingly restored Old Town. Be it the Bach Church of St. Agnus, the palace with its exhibitions, or a concert at the event centre, this is where Bach can be experienced!

After Köthen we travel to Halberstadt, where we check into our hotel. Dinner at the hotel is included.

Accommodation:

1 night at Park Hotel unter den Linden or similar.

Day 14

Locations: Halberstadt to Hamburg

Overview:

After breakfast we travel to Hamburg, on arrival we'll check-in to our hotel and the remainder of the day is at leisure.

Hamburg was once described by the composer Georg Philipp Telemann as a place "where music seems, as it were, to have its homeland." The many-faceted Baroque composer was municipal Director of Music here for 46 years. Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, the "Hamburg Bach," and Telemann's godson, succeeded him in 1768. C.P.E Bach moved to Hamburg from Potsdam in 1768 and succeeded his godfather Telemann as Musical Director of Hamburg's 5 Lutheran churches. He died there

in 1788.

Mendelssohn was born in Hamburg in 1809. He was celebrated by his contemporaries as an “original genius” and lived in the city up to his death in 1788. The Bergedorf-born composer Johann Adolf Hasse also began his meteoric rise to international fame at the Hamburg Opera House on Gänsemarkt, going on to be the toast of such cities as Naples, Dresden, and Venice.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the immensely musically gifted siblings Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn were born in Hamburg. Johannes Brahms, born in the Gängeviertel, made his debut as a pianist and composer here. Brahms achieved worldwide fame outside his home city, which awarded him honorary citizenship in 1889.

In 1891 Gustav Mahler came to Hamburg to take up a position as First Conductor at the Hamburg Stadt-Theater. He brought operatic and concert music here to new, unparalleled heights of excellence.

Accommodation:

2 nights at Hyperion Hotel Hamburg or similar.

Day 15

Locations: Hamburg

Overview:

Today we explore Hamburg with our local guide. We start with a walking tour of the historic centre in the morning and in the afternoon we visit the Brahms Museum and Komponistenquartier. Here we learn about Georg Philipp Telemann, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Johann Adolf Hasse, Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn, Johannes Brahms, and Gustav Mahler in an attractive, lively, and educational venue.

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At the end of 2014, new museums dedicated to the "Hamburg Bach" and his contemporary Johann Adolf Hasse opened for the public. For the first time, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach will thus, in the year of the tricentenary of his birth, receive recognition befitting his rank, close to the places where he lived and worked and not far from his last resting place in the crypt of St. Michael's Church. Museums for Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn and for Gustav Mahler will then be added in a second construction phase.

The musical tradition of the Hanseatic city from the Baroque to modern times will be presented in a way which makes it come vividly to life.

In the evening we have our farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

Accommodation:

Hyperion Hotel Hamburg or similar.

Day 16

Locations: Hamburg

Overview:

The tour concludes after breakfast.

Inclusions / Exclusions

What's included in our Tour

- 15 nights of accommodation in 4 star hotels

- 15 breakfasts and 5 dinners.
- Tickets to 6 concerts.
- All excursions, sightseeing, and entrance fees as per the tour.
- Gratuities and necessary tips.
- Detailed preparatory material.
- Odyssey Program Leader throughout the tour.

What's not included in our Tour

- Return international airfare and departure taxes.
- Comprehensive international travel insurance.
- Items of personal nature such as laundry and phone calls.

Level 2 - Moderate

Participants must be able to carry their own luggage, climb and descend stairs, be in good health, mobile and able to participate in 3-5 hours of physical activity per day, the equivalent of walking/hiking up to 8 kilometres on uneven ground.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.