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# Baden-Baden and the *Great Spas of Europe* the road to World Heritage Status

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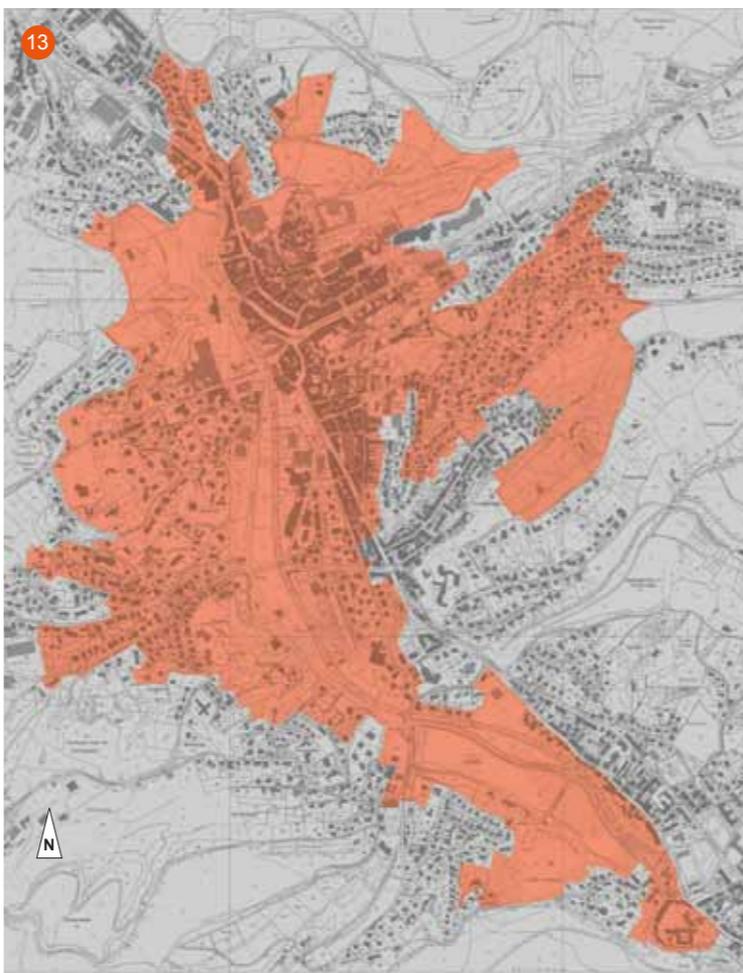
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## Nominated World Heritage site of Baden-Baden (draft, May 2015)



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- 2 State bathroom in the palace of Neues Schloss, c. 1660 (Bruno Krupp, 1996).
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- 4 Casino staterooms in the Kurhaus, 1853-55 (Baden-Baden Kur- und Tourismus GmbH, 2008).
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- 6 View from the palace terrace, with the Stiftskirche on the left (Christiane Bäumer, 2015).
- 7 Oos footbridges in the landscape park of Lichtentaler Allee (Markus Brunsing, 2009).
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## Historical development of Baden-Baden

### The origins: The medicinal springs

Baden-Baden looks back on almost two thousand years as a spa town. It was the hot springs that induced the ancient Romans to establish the first thermal baths on the site; even today, parts of the structures survive as ruins. Throughout history, the thermal springs have provided the main source of the town's prosperity, attracting generations of spa visitors to Baden-Baden. For the well-being of their customers, the "bathing inns" of the Middle Ages and the Early Modern era constructed a sophisticated network of wooden pipes supplying the medicinal water for their tubs. From the late 14th century onwards, the Margraves of Baden built their residential palace just above the thermal springs on Florentinerberg hill, and during the Baroque era they added a state bathroom considered one of the most magnificent of its kind.

### „The summer capital of Europe“

Baden-Baden's heyday as a European "fashion spa" arrived during the 19th century. In the course of only a few decades, a new spa district took shape outside of the old city walls. Eminent architects and landscape gardeners oversaw the creation of the Konversationshaus, the spa promenades, the Pump Room, the theatre and the famous landscape park of Lichtentaler Allee. The casino with its State-granted gambling concession became a veritable magnet for international visitors. Under the management of its French leaseholders, the Bénézet family, the town of Baden-Baden developed into the "summer capital of Europe", attracting spa visitors from abroad in ever-growing numbers. Many of them became permanent residents, settling in the newly laid out, upmarket residential areas on the slopes surrounding the town. Numerous magnificent mansions surrounded by park-like gardens were built with a view to renting them out to visitors. The suburban mansion districts developed from the second half of the 19th century.

Whether you look at the Greek Chapel, the Russian or the English Church, the hotels of Badischer Hof, Europäischer Hof, Russischer Hof or Hotel Viktoria - its more than one thousand cultural monuments, and even more its fully preserved urban layout, still testify to Baden-Baden's importance as the archetypal model of the 19th-century German gambling spa. When a gambling ban was issued in 1872, it only took the town a few



years to reposition itself once again as an international resort, resurrecting its spa traditions with elaborate modern bathing facilities such as the Friedrichsbad, sanatoriums, and lavish hotels.

### The spa tradition today

Even today it is easy to recapture the unique charm of Baden-Baden in its remarkable spa landscape, the Baden-Baden Festival of Music, the Iffezheim racecourse, and the gambling in the original, magnificent casino halls of the Kurhaus. However, without its historical neighbourhoods, its characteristic spa architecture and green spaces, and the well-maintained gentle transition of the townscape into the surrounding landscape, the place would lose just those traits that account for its international attraction. It is our responsibility to preserve this historical treasure, the foundation of the city's affluence, to maintain it and to develop it with care and foresight.

The inscription on UNESCO's World Heritage list as a *Great Spa of Europe*, that Baden-Baden is striving for, along with 15 other 19th-century European spa towns, would be more than a very special distinction: even now it is an incentive for the city and its residents to reconnect with their heritage and devise carefully tailored concepts for preserving and developing it.

## UNESCO World Heritage: What does it mean?

In 1972, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, or UNESCO in short, passed the so-called World Heritage Convention during its General Conference in Paris. Today 190 states have adopted this convention to protect the cultural and natural heritage of the world. By doing so, they acknowledge that there are properties both cultural and natural of such outstanding rank that they should be considered important not only to individual nations but to humankind as a whole.

### How large is the World Heritage today?

UNESCO's list of World Heritage properties comprises 1.031 monuments in 163 countries (as of July 2015). At present, Germany owns 40 World Heritage properties, four of which are located in the state of Baden-Württemberg: the monastery of Maulbronn (inscribed 1993), the monastic island of Reichenau (inscribed 2000), parts of the Upper German-Raetian Limes (inscribed 2005) and parts of the Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps (inscribed 2011).

### What obligations are accepted on inscribing a World Heritage site?

States nominating a property for inscription commit themselves to protecting and maintaining the property in accordance with the Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention for the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage, and to implementing sustainable concepts for development and tourism in order to preserve it for future generations. They will use the applicable national legislation and protection measures such as monument protection, building and planning acts as UNESCO does not create its own legislation. A monitoring process ensures that World Heritage sites are reviewed on a regular basis both internally and by international expert committees.

### What will Baden-Baden's road to World Heritage status look like?

The process by which Baden-Baden will become a recognised World Heritage site will take years, especially as a serial transnational nomination on this scale has rarely been proposed so far. It therefore represents a contentual, conceptual, political and not least communicational challenge for all concerned. A crucial first step was taken when Baden-Baden along with the other participating spa cities was inscribed on UNESCO's Tentative List in July, 2014. Our aim is to file our common nomination with the World Heritage Centre in Paris early in 2017.



Baden-Baden's contribution to the *Outstanding Universal Value of Great Spas of Europe* lies in the fact that the city has experienced, and left its own mark on, every significant phase of a European spa town from antiquity to the present day. All of them have been preserved in the historical urban layout and building stock. Moreover, due to state-licensed gambling Baden-Baden also developed into a prototype of the German gambling spa of international renown.

## Who are the Great Spas of Europe?

Baden-Baden does not apply for inscription on the World Heritage list by itself. The city's application is part of a serial transnational World Heritage nomination entitled Great Spas of Europe. This term aims to characterise major European resorts of international appeal that enjoyed their heyday predominantly during the 19th century. A specially commissioned global comparative study attached to the nomination will determine which spa towns are representative of this type, complement each other in a meaningful manner, and will have to be inscribed as a group. The overall responsibility for overseeing and submitting the nomination rests with the Czech Republic.

At present, *the Great Spas of Europe* are represented by 16 spa towns in seven European countries. Spa · Baden-Baden, Bad Ems, Bad Homburg, Bad Kissingen, Bad Pyrmont und Wiesbaden · Vichy · Bath · Montecatini Terme · Baden bei Wien, Bad Ischl · Františkovy Lázně, Karlovy Vary, Luhačovice und Mariánské Lázně

