



Baroque & Rococo

In Southern Germany

5–13 August 2026 (MM 127)

9 days • £4,390

Lecturer: Tom Abbott

Some of the most uplifting and spectacular buildings in Europe.

Glorious countryside, unspoilt towns, charming villages, all well maintained.

Led by Tom Abbott, a specialist in architectural history from the Baroque to the 20th century.

Baroque and Rococo reached a triumphant fulfilment in the churches and palaces of southern Germany, and the styles are manifested in the region. It is astonishing that these marvels are not better known, but the artistic heritage of Germany continues to be sadly undervalued. Moreover, many of the choicest items on this tour are not easily accessible, being situated deep in the countryside.

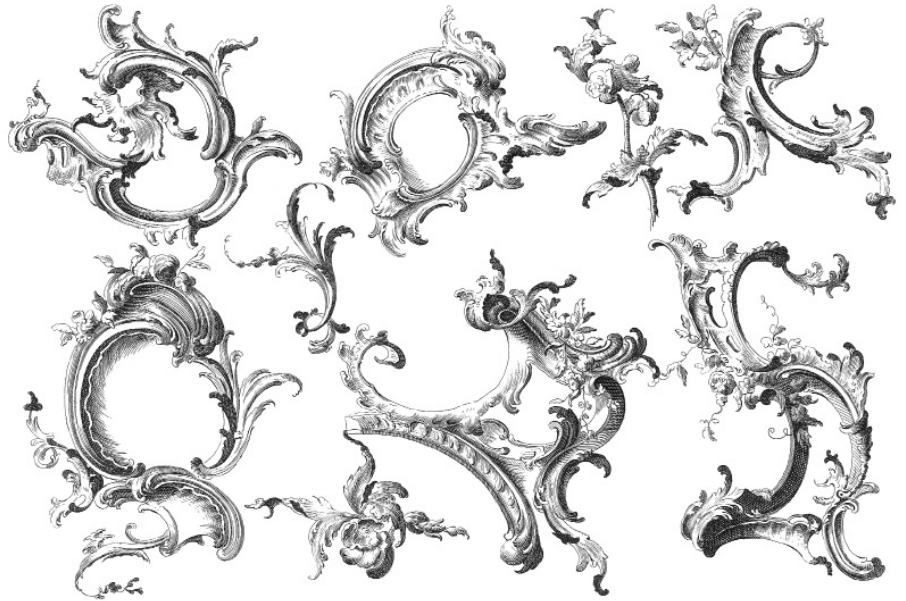
Around the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there was something of an economic miracle in the German lands, accompanied by a frenetic upsurge in building activity. This followed nearly a whole century which was blighted by wars and economic collapse. At the end of it the Catholic Church emerged revitalised, wealthier than ever and triumphant in its defeat of Protestantism. In the temporal sphere, the creed of absolutism, which imposed few constraints on the power of the prince or local lord, was at its height.

The Baroque style was the perfect expression both for the Church Triumphant and for the temporal ruler who, taking his cue from Louis XIV at Versailles, wished to overawe his subjects and impress on all visitors the might and magnificence of his person.

The Rococo, which arrived in Germany in the 1730s, was delicate and light-hearted by comparison with the imposing magnificence of High Baroque, but produced some of the most exquisite interiors in the history of art.

Itinerary

Day 1: Zwiefalten, Weingarten. Fly at c. 8.30am (British Airways) from London Heathrow to Stuttgart. Visit the double-towered church of Zwiefalten by J.M. Fischer followed by a visit to the magnificent Baroque basilica of Weingarten Abbey, 'the St Peter's of Germany'. First of two nights in Weingarten.



'Rocaille' cartouche, engraving c.1750

Day 2: Steinhausen, Bad Schussenried, Birnau. Begin with a visit to the oval church at Steinhausen, built and decorated by the Zimmermann brothers then on to the glorious library hall at Bad Schussenried convent with abundant imagery. Finally, to Birnau, among vineyards above Lake Constance and one of the most delectable of Rococo churches. Overnight Weingarten.

Day 3: Ottobeuren, Wies. A pinnacle of Baroque and Rococo emotional power is achieved at J.M. Fischer's church and abbey at Ottobeuren. The pilgrimage church of Wies in the foothills of the Alps, created by the Zimmermann brothers, is of astounding beauty. First of three nights in Munich.

Day 4: Nymphenburg, Augsburg. On the outskirts of Munich, the palace, pavilions and gardens of Nymphenburg, summer residence of the Electors of Bavaria; the Amalienburg pavilion is the apogee of secular Rococo interiors. Continue to the magnificent Schaezlerpalais in Augsburg. Its sumptuous gilded, mirrored, ballroom, built between 1765–70, has survived in its original condition. Overnight Munich.

Day 5: Munich. Visit the Italian-built Theatinerkirche, one of the first Baroque churches north of the Alps. The little church of St John Nepomuk, created by the Asam

brothers for their own use. The Residenz, palace of the Electors of Bavaria, with sumptuous Rococo interiors and recently restored theatre by the architect Cuvilliers. Free afternoon. Overnight Munich.

Day 6: Weltenburg, Rohr, Pommersfelden. Two abbey churches by the Asam brothers: Rohr, with the altar of *The Assumption*, highpoint of Baroque sculpture, and Weltenburg, with controlled lighting and rich decoration suggestive of transcendental theatricality. Take a short cruise along the Danube. Visit Schloss Pommersfelden, a splendid country house with one of the grandest of Baroque staircases. First of three nights in Bamberg.

Day 7: Bamberg. One of the loveliest and least spoilt of German towns, Bamberg has fine streetscape, riverside walks and picturesque upper town around the Romanesque cathedral. The Diocesan Museum has outstanding mediaeval textiles, the Baroque former town hall built on a bridge houses a porcelain collection. Free afternoon. Overnight Bamberg.

Day 8: Bayreuth, Vierzahnheiligen. An enchanting version of Rococo decoration developed in Bayreuth in the town palace and at the Hermitage, a complex of gardens, palaces and pavilions and the wonderful Baroque opera house (by Giuseppe Bibbiena). Visit

Baroque & Rococo
continued

the pilgrimage church of Vierzehnheiligen (Balthasar Neumann), perhaps the greatest of Rococo churches. Overnight Bamberg.

Day 9: Würzburg. Visit the Residenz in Würzburg, the Archbishop's palace, the finest Baroque palace in Germany, designed by Balthasar Neumann with frescoes by G.B. Tiepolo. Fly from Frankfurt, arriving Heathrow c. 6.30pm.

Lecturer

Tom Abbott. Specialist in architectural history from the Baroque to the 20th century with a wide knowledge of the performing arts. He graduated in Psychology and Art History from Carleton College, Minnesota and studied at the Louvre School of Art History in Paris. Since 1987 he has lived in Berlin and has organised and led many academic tours in Germany. Tom has a particular interest in the German and American architectural and artistic modern including the Bauhaus and Expressionism.

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £4,390 or £4,130 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £4,950 or £4,690 without flights.

Included: air travel on scheduled British Airways flights (Airbus A320); travel by private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 light lunch and 6 dinners with wine; all admissions; all taxes; all tips for waiters, drivers; the services of the lecturer.

Accommodation. Hotel Altdorfer Hof, Weingarten (altdorfer-hof.de): a quiet 4-star hotel with a good restaurant. **Platzl Hotel, Munich** (platzl.de): 4-star hotel located in the heart of the old city. **Hotel Villa Geyerswörth, Bamberg** (villageyerswoerth.de): 4-star hotel, elegant and quiet. *Single rooms throughout are doubles for sole use.*

How strenuous? There is a fair amount of walking on this tour. It would not be suitable for anyone with difficulties with everyday walking and stairclimbing. Average distance by coach per day: 86 miles.

Group size: between 10 and 22 participants.