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Protestant Reformation Tour Germany

See firsthand the venues where Martin Luther the Reformer changed history. Get a view of modern East Germany more than 500 years after the Reformation. Follow the Luther trail. Experience the music in the places where J. S. Bach, Mendelssohn and many others worked and changed the course of music. Enjoy social and cultural exchange with Germans.

Day 1: Arrive Frankfurt airport. Welcome to Germany! Meet your English-speaking German tour escort and transfer by private bus to Eisenach, birthplace of Johann Sebastian Bach. You'll stop in **Mühlhausen**, with one of the largest remaining medieval city centers in Germany, where Bach once worked as organist. Continue to Eisenach for check in and welcome group dinner.

Day 2: Guided walking tour of **Eisenach**, including visits to the Luther house, one of the oldest and loveliest half-timbered houses in Thuringia, and Bach's birthplace. Continue to **Erfurt**, the young Luther's spiritual home and capital of the land of Thuringia. Your sightseeing includes a visit to the Domberg (Cathedral Hill) with its two main churches, as well as the Augustinian Monastery, where Luther was a student of philosophy from 1501 to 1505. Overnight in Eisenach.

Day 3: Today, visit stunning Wartburg Castle, one of Germany's best-preserved medieval castles. The Castle embodies centuries of German history but is perhaps best known as the place where Martin Luther sought sanctuary after his excommunication, and where he translated the New Testament from the original Greek texts into German. The sparsely furnished room where he lived and worked is now known as the Luther Room. Continue to **Leipzig** with a stop in **Weimar**, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its rich cultural heritage: cradle of the Weimar Classicism literary movement, represented by Germany's most renowned 18th century authors, Goethe and Schiller, as well as the birthplace of the Bauhaus architecture and of the Weimar Republic democratic constitution. Meeting with members of a local music society. Continue to Leipzig, home to one of Germany's most important universities, has always been a major musical center as well as center for publishing. Richard Wagner was born here in 1813, and Johann Sebastian Bach and Felix Mendelssohn are both closely associated with the city. Overnight in Leipzig.

Day 4: Guided walking tour of "Bach's Leipzig", seeing the Thomaskirche, where the monumental composer served as chief organist and director of music for the last 27 years of his life. You'll also see the baroque Nikolaikirche, another of Bach's posts and the site for the premiere of his St. John Passion and other works. Visit the Bach Archives as well. During leisure time you might want to visit the Mendelssohn House, where that composer stayed while bringing about the important revival of Bach's music. Be sure to stop in the Auerbachs Keller restaurant, immortalized in Goethe's Faust, as well as the baroque cafe-restaurant Zum Arabischen Coffe Baum, which opened its doors in 1694 and has served as a meeting place for many (including Robert Schumann, Richard Wagner, and Goethe) through the years. Visit the Reformed Church which the Mendelssohn family attended.

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Day 5: Today you will enjoy an excursion to **Wittenberg** and **Eisleben**, two towns in the Leipzig area that are deeply connected with Martin Luther's life and work. Luther established himself in Wittenberg after leaving the monastery in Erfurt. The small town is known as the cradle of Reformation, with many fascinating historical buildings including the Luther House, the Cranach Houses, the historical City Hall and the Castle Church, where Luther published his 95 theses on October 31, 1517 by nailing them to the door. Though the original Castle Church burned in 1760, the rebuilt church contains the text, cast in bronze in 1855, as well as Martin Luther's tomb. Eisleben is a small mining town where Martin Luther was born and died. The house where he lived can still be seen, as well as the church where he worshipped. Overnight in Leipzig.

Day 6: Transfer to **Dresden**. This capital city of Saxony along the graceful Elbe River was long considered a Kunststadt (City of Art). Most of Dresden was reduced to rubble by the Allied air raid of February 13, 1945. Though neglected during the years of Communist occupation, much of Dresden's glorious architecture was reconstructed in honor of the city's 800th anniversary in 2006. You will have a guided tour of the highlights of the city including the Kreuzkirche, home to the city's famous church choir, located just off the main square known as the Altmarkt, and the elegant Zwinger, a palatial complex once home to the Duke of Saxony and King of Poland, Augustus the Strong, a patron of the arts. Meet a local artist and contemporary witness of the GDR times to learn about life during this period and the peaceful revolution in Germany 30 years ago.

Day 7: Excursion today to the charming town of **Meissen**, famous for its porcelain and the Albrechtsburg Castle, one of the finest secular buildings of the Late Gothic period. Visit Meissen's impressive Gothic Cathedral and the Meissen porcelain manufacture. Attend an evening concert in Dresden. Overnight in Dresden.

Day 8: This morning you'll transfer to **Rothenburg**, traveling along a portion of the **Romantische Strasse** (Romantic Road). The succession of picturesque villages and towns, some with their medieval fortifications still intact, make this one of the most scenically beautiful routes in Germany. If time permits, stop in Bayreuth, site of the Wagner Festival, for a glimpse at the Margravian opera house. Arrival in Rothenburg with some free time to explore the town on your own. Tonight you may want to have a walking tour "medieval style" guided by the Nightwatchman.

Day 9: Rothenburg is one of the most charming, wonderfully preserved medieval towns in all of Europe. This morning you will have a guided walking tour of the old town, inside the 13th century city walls.

Day 10: Transfer to **Worms**, where you will spend your final day. Guided tour of the town following in the traces of Martin Luther. Luther was summoned before the "Diet of Worms" after a Papal Bull condemning his theses. Refusing to retract his beliefs in his defiant, "Here I stand..." words he was banned to the outer parts of the Empire. Visit the Cathedral Dom St. Peter, a Romanesque, four-towered structure, completed in 1230, and one of the finest Romanesque creations in Germany. Tonight you'll enjoy a festive farewell dinner in a fine local restaurant to reflect and celebrate together!

Day 11: Transfer to Frankfurt airport for your return flight.

*Program can be adapted to your wishes.
Good will concerts for amateur music groups can be arranged.
All services are subject to availability at the time of booking.*

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