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1 The Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle

Blossoming gardens and eventful tourism history

Since 2001, plants from around the world have prospered on the sun-blessed slope overlooking Merano at The Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle. In the centre of the gardens stands the castle, which Count Trauttmansdorff had rebuilt from medieval ruins in 1850. Today the castle houses a museum entertainingly chronicling 200 years of alpine tourism history in Tyrol.

It was with Sissi, as Austria's Empress Elisabeth was affectionately called, that tourism in Merano experienced its first bloom. Even today, a promenade reminiscent of her walks and the terrace before the castle (with a unique view of the south) pay tribute to her throne.

Traces of Nobility

It was in autumn of 1870 that Empress Elisabeth first arrived here by coach to make her winter residence for her health. With its many visitors, the town of Merano became a health resort of great renown: Whoever could afford it made their holidays here, where the noblest of aristocrats were to be found.

2 Pienzenau Castle

Hidden treasure

The path to this castle, first documented in 1394, leads past a lush park with venerable sequoias, cedars and pines. In 1870, when Empress Elisabeth and her attendants first arrived in Merano, Pienzenau's outbuildings were restructured to house her sizeable fleet of vehicles and the 27 horses brought from Vienna. In addition, a special telegraphic connection between Pienzenau, Rubein and Trauttmansdorff Castles was established.

3 Rubein Castle

A fabulous refuge

This castle, completed in the 12th Century, stands in the centre of an expanded park. Upon Sissi's visit in autumn 1870, her royal entourage of 102 people was quartered here, at present-day Via Christomannos Theodor. Incidentally, Christomannos played a large role in the development of tourism in the Dolomites. His cousin Constantine was Sissi's courtly reader and constant companion for many years.

4 Reichenbach Residence

A therapeutic domicile

The attractiveness of a health resort depends greatly on the reputation of its doctors. Merano's renowned physician Dr Franz Tappeiner resided in this 14th Century abode from 1854 to 1902. He served as medical advisor to Mayor Johann Valentin Haller, and in this capacity was one the pioneers of the health resort business. It was he who conceived and cofinanced the "Tappeinerweg" overlooking Merano.

5 Piazza Fontana

Local Hospitality

In first decades of the 19th Century, the early days of the health resort industry, lodging was scarce in Merano; the noble patients found their accommodations mainly in the medieval residences of the present-day quarter of Maia Alta (Obermais). In 1869, Merano's first hotel (the "Erzherzog Rainer") was established at Piazza Fontana (or "Brunnenplatz"), formerly known as "Archduke Karl Ludwig Square" after Sissi's brother-in-law.

6 Rottenstein Castle

Accommodation by rank

Here too, at her brother-in-law's castle, Sissi spent one of her stays in Merano. First documented in the late 13th Century, Rottenstein Castle was acquired in 1863 by Archduke Karl Ludwig, governor of Tyrol and brother of Kaiser Franz Josef.

7 Hotel Bavaria

Reminiscence of Bavaria

Two lions flank the entrance to the hotel Bavaria. The Bavarian coat of arms animals recall Karl Theodor, Sissi's favourite brother. The Bavarian Duke was held in high esteem in Merano and the surrounding area: As an optician, he provided free operations to the needy, granting eyesight to many.

8 Steinern Bridge

Overpass for strolling

Since the late 19th Century, this bridge has provided a comfortable connection between the greenery of Maia Alta and Merano's city centre. It replaced a narrow, wooden 17th Century bridge, making it the oldest crossing of the Passer River. Upstream, across the river gorge, stand historic Zenoburg Castle.

9 Foyer

Promenading throughout the year

Dr Franz Tappeiner contributed this art nouveau foyer to the winter promenade in 1889. The busts, plaques and large pictures here honour those who performed special services for the resort town.

Patients happily visited the sunny, wind-shielded promenade in the course of their therapy, particularly in the winter. The shady summer promenade continues on the other side of the river.

10 Empress Elisabeth Park

A majestic trail

Planting of cedar, pine and linden began along these walkways in 1860. On the occasion of visit of the Austrian court in 1870, the park was named for Empress Elisabeth's daughter Marie Valerie. In the following years, it was adorned with trick fountains and a music pavilion. Today it is called Empress Elisabeth Park, and is part of the summer promenade. On oppressive summer days the park offers pleasant freshness. The marble statue of the Empress by Viennese artist Hermann Block was unveiled in 1903.

11 Cure Promenade and Spa House

To see and be seen

Since 1850, the cure promenade has been the lifeblood of tourism in Merano. Until 1918, it was called the "Gisela Promenade" in honour of Empress Elisabeth's daughter. Sissi could be seen almost every day at the health spas with her Gisela and her younger sister, the Duchess Sophie of Alençon.

Centrepiece of the resort town

With the opening of the spa centre in 1874, Merano had a new attraction. In 1914, these neoclassical buildings were expanded in the decorative art nouveau style based on the plans of renowned Viennese architect Friedrich Ohmann, who had designed, among other things, the courtyard of the Hofburg in Vienna.

Merano has many stories, among them the tale of the beloved Austrian Empress Sissi and her love for the town of Merano. Inspired by the mild climate and the wealth of Mediterranean vegetation, the empress stayed in the emergent resort town on several occasions. Sissi enjoyed extended walks in and around Merano.

Through quiet corners and old parks, past stately mansions and noble residences, Sissi's Path leads from The Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle into Merano's city centre - or in the opposite direction. The trail is clearly marked with the title "Sissi's Path", and can easily be travelled with baby carriages or by wheelchair.

We wish you an enjoyable time as you explore the trail and discover Merano's unique flair.

The Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle
 Via San Valentino, 51a
 39012 Merano - Italy
 Tel. +39 0473 235 730
 www.trauttmansdorff.it
 Open daily from 1 April through 15 November

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This project was realised by the city council of Merano and the Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle.

www.reichert.it

- 1 The Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle
Via S. Valentino, 51a
- 2 Pienzenau Castle (privately owned)
Via Pienzenau, 6
- 3 Rubein Castle (privately owned)
Via Theodor Christomannos, 38
- 4 Residence Reichenbach (privately owned)
Vicolo Reichenbach, 4
- 5 Piazza Fontana
- 6 Rottenstein Castle (privately owned)
Corner Piazza Fontana/Via Scena 6
- 7 Hotel Bavaria
Vicolo della Chiesa, 15
- 8 **Steinerner Steg**
- 9 **Wandelhalle**
- 10 Empress Elisabeth Park
- 11 Cure Promenade and Spa House

Sissi's Path
 Pure walking time: 45 min
 Total length of path: 3 km
 Altitude difference: 45 m

Legend

Castle	Car park
Church	Taxi stand
Museum	Public toilet
Tourist Info	Hospital
Town Hall	Camping area

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Sissi's Path

On the trail from The Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle to the heart of Merano



Empress Elisabeth (1837 - 1898)