

Heritage Trail Kienbergweg

Tour approx. 1,5 hours



Tourist-Information • 82496 Oberau • Schmiedeweg 10
+49 (0) 8824 93973 • Telefax +49 (0) 8824 8890
info@oberau.de • www.oberau.de

The Kienbergstrasse, once the most dreaded part of the ancient trade route Venice - Augsburg, is a symbol of many centuries of communication between Italy and Upper Germany. For many famous people it was part of their travel route. Waggoners, messengers on horseback and merchants used it for exchanging goods and information. The educational trail displays the milestones of their history and at the same time the history of the country –of the former Monastic Court of Ettal and the County of Werdenfels, into which it is embedded.

The history of the County of Werdenfels and the former Monastic Court of Ettal, which Oberau was part of, on the one hand is an example of setting up man-made borders and customs barriers, which have long been dismantled, and on the other hand an example of many centuries of connection between two European cultures. For about 500 years, until 1802, a different state territory started in the south of Oberau. There was continued controversy - however, only by ink and paper - about the border which separated the Duchy of Baiern or the Electorate of Bavaria from Werdenfels, the territory of a European small state, the Hochstift of Freising. The steep Kienbergstraße running from Oberau to the Ettaler Sattel and being one of the most dreaded parts of the ancient trade route Venice – Augsburg, however, was a part of the connection between the Mediterranean and German cultures for many centuries, between Germania and Romania, as once expressed by a historian. Kings and princes used the Kienberg to travel to Italy or to return back from there.



Pilgrims walked to Rome on this mountain road. Merchants and waggoners transported goods from the Orient into the territories north of the Alps and supplied the South of Europe with goods from the North.

The messengers of the Augsburg merchants used the route to pass their urgent messages on horseback. In times of war, marauding soldiers used the Kienbergweg, harassed local residents and supplied themselves in the surroundings. As a matter of course, the local residents also took benefit from the ancient transport connection. The Oberau farmers took benefit from the harness service required due to the steep road, the Oberammergau and Partenkirchen transport trade, who transported the merchants' goods, took benefit from the "Rott", the medieval transport system. But there was competition with the Obere Strasse, which, like the Untere Strasse, led to Venice via 24 "Rott" transport stops via the Fernpass and Reschenpass roads, and which stole transport business and thus reduced the income of the local inhabitants.

When global trading was shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, the Kienbergweg lost more and more importance. The "Rott" transport trade, a sideline business for farmers, disappeared. In 1889, the Neue Ettaler Bergstrasse [new Ettal mountain road], the B 23, was solemnly opened. At the same time, the railway line Murnau – Garmisch went into operation.

