

The oldest chairlift in the Palatinate, a castle ruin and a deer enclosure—close to the Villa Ludwigshöhe

Length of the tour: 8 km | Duration: 2 hours | Ascent: 311 m | Incline: 318 m

Standing at the valley station of the Rietburgbahn, there are two opportunities: We can either save ourselves the first 230-metre ascent and take the oldest and only chairlift in the Palatinate. Or we follow the path underneath the chairlift along the blue and yellow markings. To get to the castle we have to take a narrow and stony way up, which includes two short sections that require carrying the pram. The route to Rietburg castle is signposted. Having followed the ascending roadway for 600 metres, we leave it and turn left into a little and narrow path. After 400 metres, this path leads us to a Ludwig I memorial stone. On the left, there is a great viewpoint. At this point, we follow the route uphill to the right. The chairlift is right above us. Then, we must overcome three sandstone steps in order to stay on the narrow path that becomes even narrower and very stony (mind the width of the pram). After that, we have to overcome another 13 sandstone steps to reach the castle and enjoy a magnificent view on the Rhine Rift Valley. The ascent takes half an hour and is very demanding.

Once at the top, the pleasant part of the hike begins. We follow a wide roadway along the blue and yellow markings. Later, however, we no longer follow them but stay on the roadway instead, because the markings branch off to the right along a very stony section. We then take the first option to turn right on the roadway and recognize the blue and yellow markings again after a few metres. They point us to a narrow path on the left and now we are on our direct way to the highest point of the entire tour with 605 metres, which we reach after about 30 minutes. A shelter and seats invite us for a rest. The view from the tower should be enjoyed on fine-weather days and is worth the exertion during the ascent. The cultural monument was built in 1883 by the Verschönerungsverein Edenkoben club.

After taking a rest, we continue to hike straight ahead and follow the signs to the Schweizer Haus. The path becomes narrower and loses height quickly. This

section is very stony and can only be done with an off-road pram. After 400 metres, we have overcome this tricky section and continue to follow the roadway for about 30 metres to the left. A sign points us the way to the Schweizer Haus, which we reach after about 20 minutes via a narrow path leading to the right and downhill. The house is actually very small, but the intimate atmosphere and the house's situation with a view on Karlsruhe and the Rhine Rift Valley are very attractive and we enjoy it.

The way back leads completely along a wide and well-developed roadway. We decide to follow the route number four, marked by red lines. A soft forest path runs downhill all the way and brings us right to Rietaniahütte hut after about 1.4 kilometres. From here we follow the signs towards Rietburgbahn chairlift and the Villa Ludwigshöhe. Just below the forest restaurant we turn left and reach Villa Ludwigshöhe after about 800 metres—back at the starting point. Unfortunately, the Villa Ludwigshöhe is not accessible at the moment, because it is being renovated.

To be considered: If you take a normal pram for the tour, as opposed to a stroller, you should hike from the car park directly to Schweizer Haus. This section is suitable for all kinds of prams, because it is a roadway for the entire way. This way, you can even ascend Rietburg castle, following the forest trail with the name "Rietburgstraße" to the right and uphill from in front of Rietaniahütte hut. This tour is really suitable for all kinds of prams—you hike along on a well-developed forest trail for the entire way.

Excerpt from the book: Christina Fuchs-Riesch, Philipp Fuchs: Mit dem Kinderwagen durch die Pfalz, Knecht Verlag, Landau 2020, 16,90 Euro. ISBN: 978-3-939427-54-4