

An illustration of a meteorite impact. A yellow meteorite is shown entering from the top left, leaving a bright yellow and orange trail. Below it is a large, glowing orange and red crater. The entire scene is set against a dark blue background with white stars and is enclosed within two concentric white circles.

GEPARK RIES
Europe's Giant Meteorite Crater

Geopark Ries

Clear and concise

A wide-angle landscape photograph of the Geopark Ries region. The foreground shows rolling green hills and fields. In the middle ground, there are several prominent, eroded rock formations (buttes) with reddish-brown soil. In the background, there are more green hills and a small village with red-roofed houses. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

UNESCO Global Geopark Ries



www.geopark-ries.de

UNESCO Global Geopark Ries



Clearly visible in the landscape of the UNESCO Global Geopark Ries, the crater rim offers fascinating views over and into the Ries Crater.

On the trail of a cosmic catastrophe

The UNESCO Global Geopark Ries is a fascinating place, created by cosmic catastrophe. Embark on an exploratory journey—in the Adventure Geotopes, along the Geopark hiking and biking trails, in the RiesKraterMuseum, or on a culinary tour through the asteroid-impact crater.

Journey through Earth history

Geoparks are true treasures that combine unique natural and cultural landscapes. Here you can trace Earth history and experience how nature is sustainably preserved. Prepare to be captivated by unforgettable natural experiences!



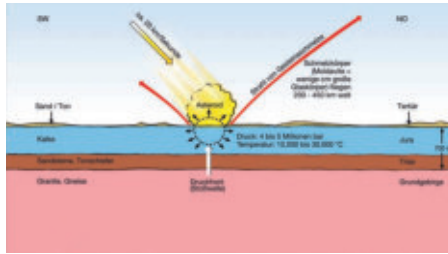
An initiative to designate national geoparks began in the 1990s. In Germany, 19 geoparks bear the National Geopark seal of quality.



Eight German geoparks are also designated as UNESCO Global Geoparks. The Geopark Ries first earned this certification in 2022, and the status is reviewed every four years.

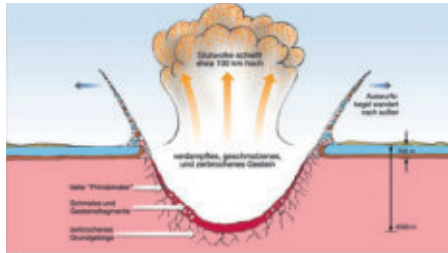
From asteroid to crater

From inferno to cultural landscape: About 15 million years ago, an asteroid from space struck the Earth's surface with a gigantic explosion and created a crater. The effects shape the landscape of the UNESCO Global Geoparks Ries to this day. About 25 kilometers in size, the almost circular Ries Crater is one of the best-preserved craters on Earth and has the largest Suevite deposit worldwide. In the 1970s it served as a training ground for Apollo astronauts preparing for their major Moon missions.



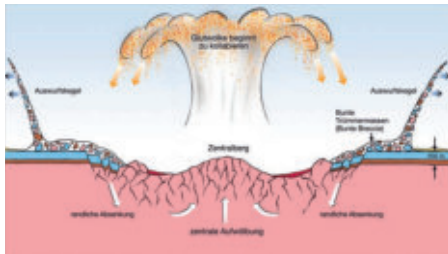
1

10 milliseconds after impact.



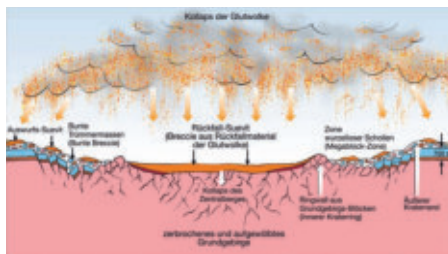
2

Formation of the deep "transient crater" after about 10 seconds.



3

Collapse of the "transient crater" and deposit of ejected rock masses after 1 minute.



4

End of crater formation and deposit of Suevite after 10 minutes.

Tip: The RiesKraterMuseum in Nördlingen

The museum in the Ries Crater explains what happened here and what can still be seen today. Topics such as our Solar System, comets, asteroids and meteorites demonstrate the connections and significance of cosmic impacts.

A spectacular exhibit is a piece of Moon rock from the Apollo-16 mission.

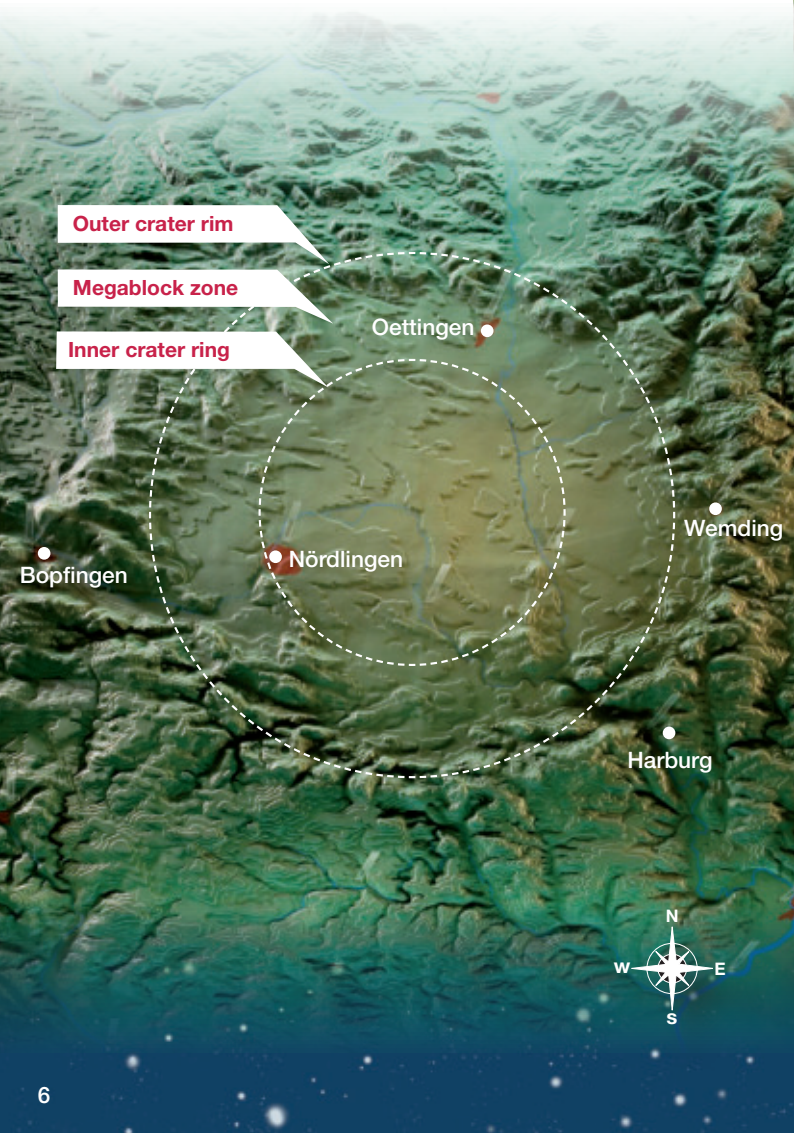
Individual museum tours (from primary-school age) are among the offerings

www.rieskrater-museum.de



Experience a unique heritage

Inhabited Ries: The impact crater consists of the inner crater ring, the megablock zone and the clearly visible outer crater rim. Traces of the cosmic inferno that have turned to stone have made the region a magnet for geoscientists and an exciting destination for excursions. Former quarries, developed into Adventure Geotopes with educational nature trails, tell fascinating stories of the UNESCO Global Geopark Ries.



Continuously marked nature trails lead through the Geopark Ries Adventure Geotopes with informative and scientifically based info panels.

Tip:

Adventure Geotopes in the Geopark Ries

Eight unique Adventure Geotopes open windows into Earth history, providing a view that is otherwise hidden. Here, the consequences of the meteorite impact become visible.

- Lindle, Nördlingen-Holheim
- Kalvarienberg, Gosheim
- Glaubenberg, Großsorheim
- Klosterberg, Maihingen
- Kühstein, Mönchsdeggingen
- Kalvarienberg, Wörnitzstein
- Daiting
- Amerdingen

www.geopark-ries.de/lehrpfade



The mascots Suevie and Riesie accompany kids in the Lindle und Daiting Geotopes on nature trails with kids' info panels.



Diverse nature meets cultural landscape

The open expanse of the crater basin, the sparse heathland of the crater rim and the elevations of the megablock zone entice visitors to walk and hike through the UNESCO Global Geopark Ries. Well-signposted routes with info panels on general topics and local special features enable a variety of excursions through nature with unique views, from stages of the Ries Panorama Trail to the Shepherd's Way and the 7-Hills Trail.

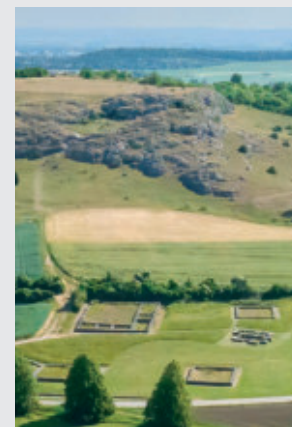


Bockberg near Harburg

Tip: Geopark Ries themed hiking trails

The Geopark Ries can be wonderfully explored on foot. Geopark hiking trails link geologically, historically and naturally relevant features in the UNESCO Global Geopark Ries.

- **Ries Panorama Way**
- **Shepherd's Way**
- **Saga Way**
- **7-Hills Way**
- **Swedes' Way**



Villa rustica and the Ofnet caves at the Riegelberg near Holheim

www.geopark-ries.de/wander-und-radwege



On the trail of history

The landscape in the UNESCO Global Geopark Ries was settled early in human history. Stone-Age peoples and Celts have left their traces here, as have Romans, Alemanni and medieval noble families. Among the exciting places reflecting this are the Ofnet Caves, used by humans since the Stone Age, and the Roman *Villa rustica* located lower on the Riegelberg, as well as the former Celtic princely site on the Ipf plateau, Nördlingen's fully walkable medieval city wall, and the numerous castles and fortresses.

Easily recognizable from the air: Early Celtic princely seat on the Ipf, a large open-air site.



Pilgrimage church Maria Brunnlein in Wemding

Tip: Geopark Ries cycling routes

The Geopark Ries cycling routes connect unique geological sites: The "From Crater to Crater" route leads from the Ries Crater to the Steinheim Basin in the UNESCO Global Geopark Swabian Alb, while the GeoBikeTrail Altmühltal connects fascinating geo-highlights from Nördlingen to Kelheim in the Altmühltal Nature Park.

- From Crater to Crater cycling route
- GeoBikeTrail Altmühltal

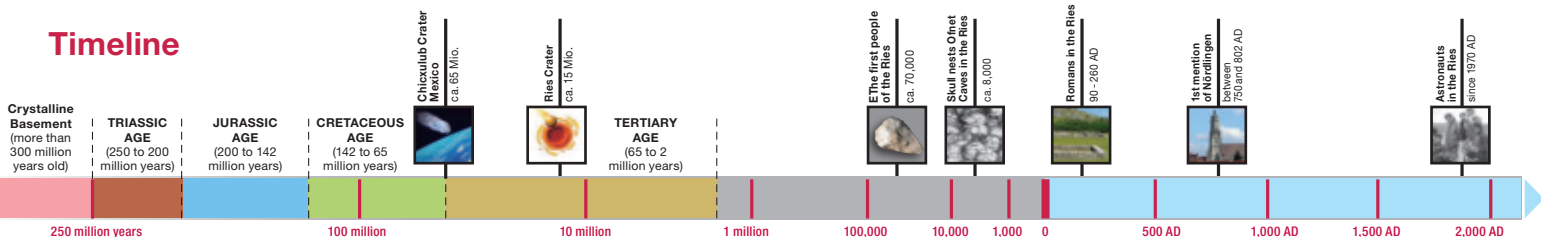


www.geopark-ries.de/wander-und-radwege



The circular town of Nördlingen surrounded by a completely walkable wall.

Timeline



Get insider knowledge

The recommended first points of contact in the UNESCO Global Geopark Ries are the Info-Centers and Info-Points, which provide a compact overview to help plan visits to local highlights.

Info-Centers offer visitors all the essential knowledge about the UNESCO Global Geopark Ries. Info-Points provide a brief summary of the Ries event.

At Kids' Info-Points, kids can enjoy themselves and learn astonishing facts about the best-preserved impact crater in Europe.



Geopark Ries Info-Centers in Nördlingen, Oettingen and Treuchtlingen



Geopark Ries indoor Info-Points in Nördlingen and Wemding; outdoor Info-Points in Deiningen, Harburg, Kirchheim, Monheim and Nördlingen



On the trail with the Geopark Ries guide

Tip: Guided tours in the Geopark Ries

Whether on foot or by bike, car or bus, for visitors of all ages, individually or in groups of any size: Exciting, themed tours of the UNESCO Global Geopark Ries offer you the knowledge and local expertise of certified Geopark guides.

www.geopark-ries.de/fuehrungen



All around and right in the middle

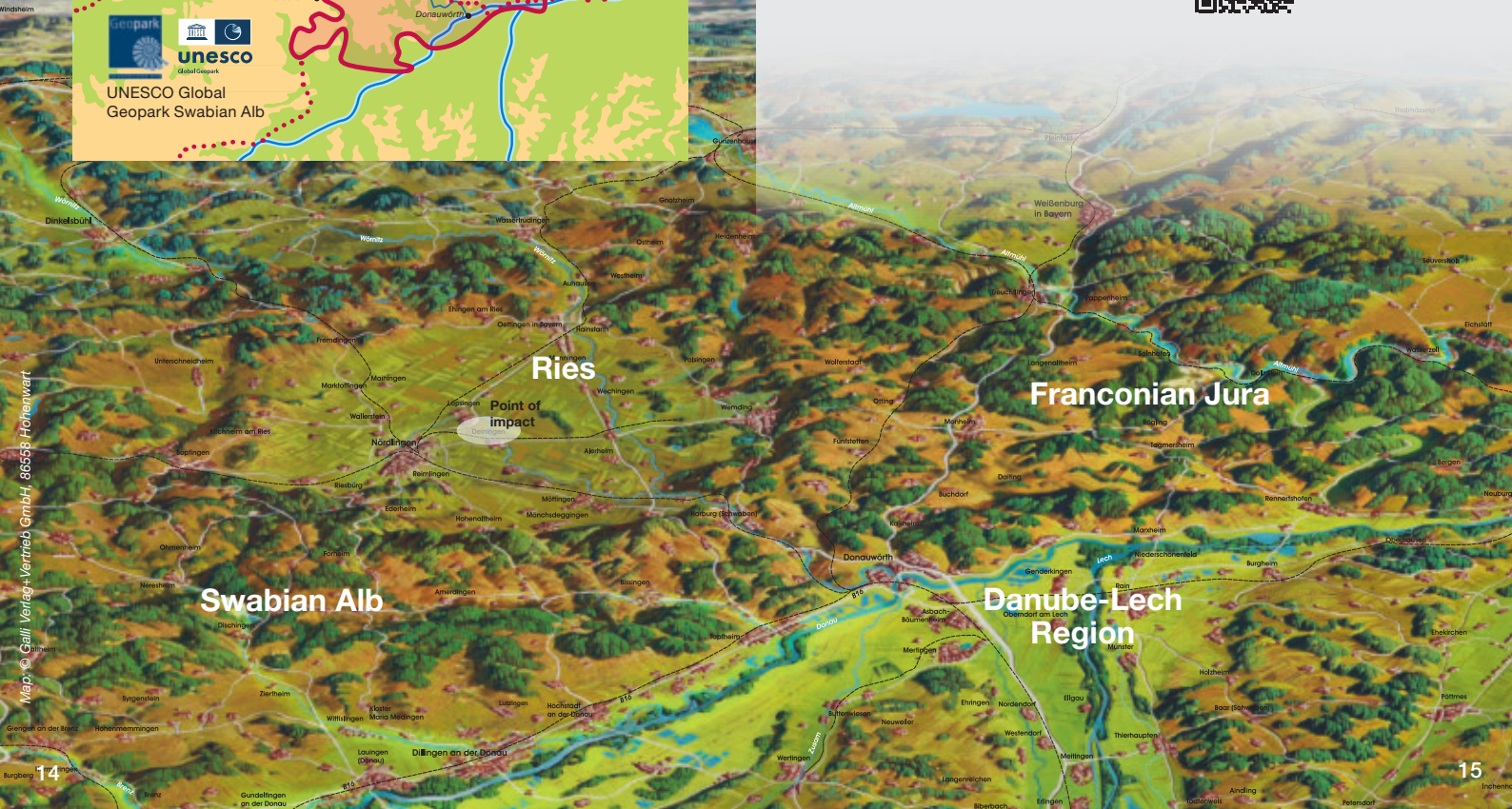
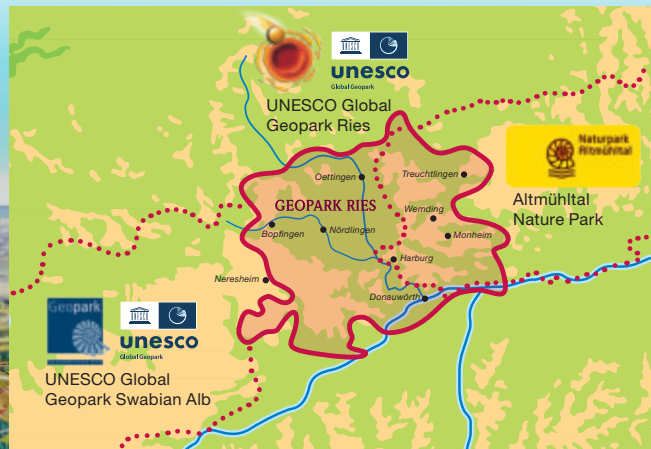
In the immediate vicinity of the UNESCO Global Geopark Ries are the UNESCO Global Geopark Swabian Alb to the west and the Altmühltal Nature Park to the east. The lush green valleys of the Danube and the Lech beckon to the south, while Franconia begins in the north. More impressive sights and imposing natural wonders await you there. Discover the magical places outside the crater rim—and the adventure continues.



Tip: Culinary Geopark Ries

Stop for a bite to eat and enjoy typical Ries cuisine! Gourmets love to feast and shop at regional hosts and local producers in the UNESCO Global Geopark Ries.

[www.geopark-ries.de/
geopark-ries-kulinarisch](http://www.geopark-ries.de/geopark-ries-kulinarisch)



Map © Gall Verlag + Vertrieb GmbH, 88658 Tübingen

Location in Southern Germany



unesco

Global Geopark

GEOPARK RIES

Geopark Ries e. V.

Pflegstraße 2 · 86609 Donauwörth

Telefon +49 906 74-1901

info@geopark-ries.de

www.geopark-ries.de

Photos: D. Denger, Studio Herzig, KALOO Images, M. Kleebauer, W. Paa, Regierungspräsidium Stuttgart, Stadt Nördlingen, Stadtmuseum Nördlingen, F. Steinmeier, USIS: NASA

Design: Böker & Mundry Werbeagentur GmbH, 91522 Ansbach

Status: 7th Edition, Print: December 2024



www.geopark-ries.de

Premium partner:

