

Bertha Benz Memorial Route

Did you know that the first long-distance trip in a car was successfully completed by a brave woman along a route dedicated to her known as the *Bertha Benz Memorial Route*?

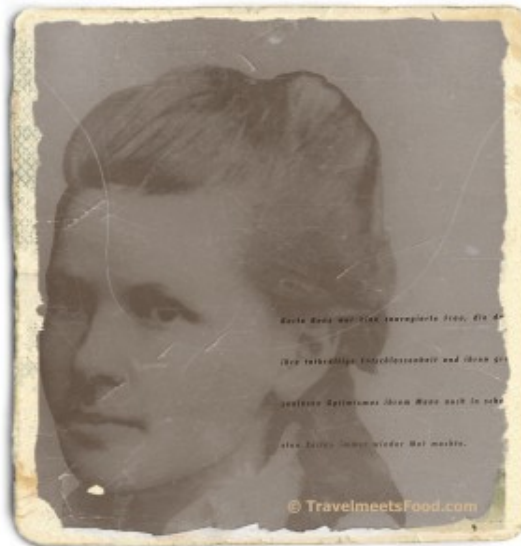


Bertha Benz Memorial Route

When Karl Benz invented the automobile in 1888 in Mannheim, Germany he was too afraid to test it. Even though Benz was later granted a patent for the automobile, people still had reservations since the horseless carriage had only covered very short distances.

A Woman Makes Automobile History

Without her husband's knowledge, Bertha Benz set out to prove that her Karl's invention was safe enough to put on the road. On August 5, 1888 Bertha and her teenage sons planned a surprise visit to her mother's home using the Model 3 designed by her husband.



Bertha Benz

She knew her husband wouldn't approve saying "But Karl would never have allowed that. So, the two 13- and 15-year-old boys and I hatched a real conspiracy. We left early in the morning and had already traveled a couple of hours before daddy woke up."

The First Filling Station

Along the route, today known as the *Bertha Benz Memorial Route*, Bertha encountered some problems. She ran out of fuel and had a minor breakdown on roads which existed mainly for farm animals.



First filling station,

Wiesloch, Germany

You see, Karl Benz had only estimated fuel consumption for short trips on paved roads so the Benz family needed to refuel. The only problem was that there were no filling stations at that time. They stopped at the pharmacy in Wiesloch, Germany to obtain Ligroin, a detergent used as a fuel at that time. Therefore, the Wiesloch pharmacy (which still exists today) became the world's first filling station.

Never Leave Home without Hairpins and Garters

With no navigation system to guide them or colorful dashboard sounds and symbols to warn of mechanical errors, the brave travelers along today's *Bertha Benz Memorial Route* listened for potential break-down sounds.



Replica of Carl Benz auto

Bertha Benz recalls “The first time, the fuel line was clogged – my hairpin turned out to be helpful there. The second time the ignition was broken. I used my garter to fix it.” Now that’s what I call ingenious!

Do Women Make Better Drivers?

Upon Bertha’s return her husband said, “She was much more courageous than me, and went on a decisive trip for the

further development of the motor carriage.” The idea of the automobile quickly became more marketable since it was safe enough even for the wife and kids.

Not only did she manage to take the first long-distance auto trip but she fueled and repaired the auto. And the answer to that long-standing question is “Yes”, of course woman make better drivers and mechanics too!

The [Bertha Benz Memorial Route](#) is 194 kilometer (120 mile) scenic drive from Mannheim to Pforzheim, Germany in the Black Forest. Along the route you’ll pass historic castles, medieval cities, and vineyards.

Enjoy the ride, don’t forget to fill up before you go, and pack several [Pan Bagnat](#) sandwiches in case you get hungry.