

Press Kit - Rothenburg o.d.T. 2025

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1. Rothenburg in general

1.1 Rothenburg – an overview



Rothenburg – the town counts a mere 11.500 inhabitants – certainly may take the credit for being the best known small town in Germany. Visitors from all over the world relish a medieval idyll, discover the town's romanticism on every step they take and pursue history on the small cobblestoned lanes.

A walk through the town, back and forth between old and new: The fascinating appeal of Rothenburg in County Ansbach is made up by the interlace of contrasts between the various periods of history. Strolling along gates, belfries and mighty fortifications, under Renaissance facades, takes the visitor back to times long gone by. Palaces, churches and squares, parks, gardens and museums invite to discovery tours through the past. Vineyards, gently rolling hills and the picturesque landscape of Tauber valley ask to take a time-out from the restless daily business. Rothenburg enjoys a reputation of internationality, open-mindedness and of course the convenience of a well-known tourism oriented town. More than three thousand beds of all categories will meet any requirement. A rich mixture of shops and boutiques invite to a personal shopping spree.



Culture and art: For centuries artists found their inspiration in Rothenburg – and nowadays they still do!

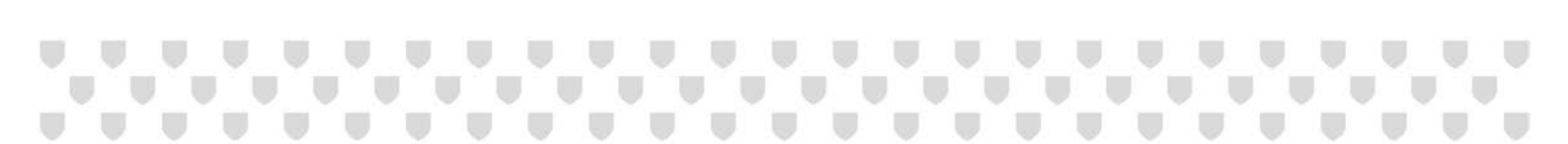
Well established in the annual course of events: Traditional festivals like “Der Meistertrunk (The Master Draught)”, the Hans-Sachs-Festival, the historical “Shepherds’ Dance” and the celebration of the Imperial town of Rothenburg.

The Toppler Theatre, opened only in 2008 in the idyllic Northern Court of the Imperial Museum, complements the theatre scene with a small yet exclusive program. But – Rothenburg offers a great deal more beyond that: Events in the Korn Hall of Culture, ambitious concerts of sacred music, the Taubertal-Festival presenting the more modern kind of music, and last but not least numerous offers of the local cultural society.



The connoisseur of arts finds a vibrant scene, offering an abundance of arts, crafts and small galleries.

Rothenburg
ob der Tauber



River Tauber Valley: The famous “Romantic Road” and the “Burgenstrasse” (Castle Road) link near Rothenburg, making it an ideal starting point to explore the attractions alongside the routes. The charming Tauber-valley itself attracts visitors from all over the world. Appealing offers suggest a variety of ways to spend a relaxed time – if nothing else a superb network of biking and hiking trails. A regional specialty: The Watermill trail!

Hiking along one of the various pilgrimage routes crossing the area may be an experience out of the ordinary.

Winegrowing and wine culture: Wine growing on the steep slopes of Tauber valley adds to the romantic and picturesque charm of the region. Wine growing and wine cultivation, very ingredients of Rothenburg culture, first mentioned as early as 912. Franconian wines await their discovery during a wine tasting seminar or a guided tour through the vineyards. The annual highlight for wine connoisseurs: Rothenburg wine village, to be held in mid-August.

Cuisine: Traditional inns and Franconian hospitality, a delightful combination! Local inns and restaurants cater for all culinary tastes – from hearty cold platters to exclusive haute cuisine. A very special dessert made from shortcrust: Rothenburg snow balls. By the way, numerous inns are members of the initiative „Regional Buffet“, which aims to boost the typical Franconian kitchen and to use only local foods. An insider's tip: Christian Mittermeier, Chef of the restaurant “Die blaue Sau” (The Blue Hog) creates a straightforward cuisine of yet highest quality.



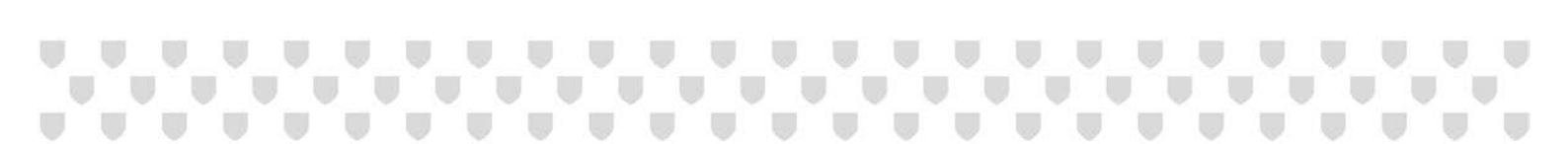
1.2 Rothenburg – the history

How it all began: The era of the Hohenstaufen Dynasty: The perfect location: A narrow hill crest provided the optimum location to build a new castle, new fortifications. The earls of Kochergau built the new fortress on top “ob” of the river Tauber, on a piece of land called *Essigkrug*, which allowed a spectacular view over the countryside – and would not permit enemies to proceed undetected. When the line became extinct, Konrad III took advantage of the situation and expanded his Hohenstaufen area of influence into the new territory. In the year 1142 the Hohenstaufen emperor decided to have the “Red Castle” built high above the river Tauber. Only 15 years later it was first noted as “Castrum imperial”, imperial castle. Over the years, a small settlement developed next to the castle – the origin of today's Rothenburg.

The rise to an Imperial Town: The small settlement grew up to a large town, a city almost. 1241 the town was first labeled “civitas”. In 1274 King Rudolf granted a large number of privileges, amongst others the right to hold markets. This was Rothenburg's stepping stone towards becoming an imperial town, and, hence, the way into autonomy. At the time, Rothenburg already had its first ring of fortification firmly in place and the town was home to a Dominican Convent and a Franciscan Monastery, two orders of knights, a principal church and a market place.

In the middle of the 14th century an earth quake rocked the town, leaving devastation and two destructed castles... However, the Emperor granted the citizens the right to use the stones of the demolished castles to reconstruct the town. Around 1400, more than 6000 people used to live in Rothenburg, at the time one of the most important towns of imperial status. The towns territory comprised a stately 400 square kilometers and 167 villages, since 1430 all protected by the “Landhege”, i.e. a special fortification to protect the perimeter. Till the end of the “old empire” the Rothenburg upper class ruled the town's fates, only shortly interrupted by the craftsmen revolt (1451 till 1455).





Mayor Heinrich Toppler: Born around 1430, deceased in June 1408, probably the richest and most powerful “civilian” of the era, say the historians. His functions: Field Marshall, diplomat of the imperial towns of Dinkelsbühl, Nördlingen and Ulm, member of the Inner Council and Mayor of Rothenburg. Toppler systematically purchased land from the impoverished gentry to add to imperial Rothenburg, he encouraged the settlement of Jews, at the time the only people entitled to provide loans; he optimized the town’s fortifications. During the clashes with Würzburg’s Arch Bishop and the Nuremberg Margraves he proved to be a clever tactician, thus successfully maintaining the town’s imperial status. Also, during the war with the Hohenzollern dynasty, the imperial town maintained a strong military stance and stood its ground. The peace of 1408 left Rothenburg territory almost unscathed. Nonetheless, amidst a meeting of the town’s council, Toppler was arrested and incarcerated. Toppler had openly sympathized with former King Wenzel, a conflict in attitudes that brought Rothenburg close to financial ruin, so he conveniently served as a scapegoat. The principal charge was – amongst others – that Toppler allegedly had stolen from the town, when he moved wife, children, money and valuables to Nuremberg without paying any taxes. Historians believe: The council just wanted to get rid of an outsider and nonconformist. Financial reasons may have played a role too. After Toppler’s death, King Rupprecht and the town split the substantial assets of the former Mayor. Toppler died on the 13th June 1408 in the dungeon underneath the Town Hall.

Rothenburg in the early modern times: At the onset of the modern ages several riots upset the imperial town high above river Tauber: Till 1521 the members of the influential Jewish community were expelled from Rothenburg. As of 1525 social unrest and impairment as a result of the civil war prevailed. The Protestant Reformation however took place without any major complications. Curate Teuschlein just switched to the Protestant sermon, with a Protestant minded priest to assist him. Over the next two years, almost the whole population converted to the new faith, the two monasteries were suspended. With hindsight, the relatively uneventful transition was a blessing for the town. Despite the era’s iconoclastic tendencies, altars like Tilman Riemenschneider’s famous “Heilig-Blut-Altar” survived unscathed. But, as a





result of the Thirty-year-war Rothenburg's importance eventually subsided. 1757 a few handfuls of soldiers, 35 hussars only, conquered and looted the once so influential town.

The “Meistertrunk”-Legend, the Master Draught Legend: The so-called Meistertrunk-Legend was first reported as early as the beginning of the 18th century – nowadays it is a fixed prominent date in the annual course of festivals. And – a scene of it is depicted as part of the clock on the councils “Ratstrinkstube”, the former town's Councilors Tavern. Originator of the legend supposedly was Heinrich Schaffert, chronicler of the era – the local author Adam Hörber eventually transformed the topic into a play, first performed in 1881: During the 30-Year-War, Imperial Commander Tilly intended to have the town destroyed and the entire council executed. But when Tilly marched into the town, he was generously met with a welcome drink – a three-and-a-quarter liter tankard of wine, almost one gallon, which immediately brought up the idea to spare the town if only a citizen of Rothenburg would find the power and courage to down the whole three-and-a-quarter liters of wine in one single gulp. The former Mayor Nusch grabbed the tankard, downed it in one swallow - and thoroughly impressed Tilly, so that he decided to spare Rothenburg from destruction.

Rothenburg in the 19th Century: As a result of the re-scaling of the European map by Napoleon, Rothenburg was incorporated into the Kingdom of Bavaria in 1802. Slowly the romanticists begin to discover the town behind the stone fortification, enthusiastically picturing the idyllic medieval scenes. Rothenburg's international reputation as “the epitome” of a medieval German town has its roots in this era. 1873 the train tracks reached the Tauber town – basis for an economic rebound and for tourism to find its way into Rothenburg.

Rothenburg in the 20th Century: During the National Socialism, Rothenburg played a rather disreputable role, because ever since 1933 the little town was regarded as the “model” town of the Third Reich's “Cultural” achievements. The small Jewish community that had eventually settled down again after 1871 was dispelled in 1938. A devastating blow hit Rothenburg during the last weeks of World War II: More than 40





percent of the town, including the medieval fortification and towers was laid to waste by bomb attacks of the American Forces. The reconstruction in the years after the war certainly was by far the most important achievement in Rothenburg's recent history.



1.3 Festivities and events throughout the year

A visit to Rothenburg is worth the effort – any time of the year. There is no “off season” in Rothenburg. Cultural events of all kinds add to Rothenburg's program throughout the year. Visitors from all over the world travel to the Tauber valley to experience living history, e.g. the “Meistertrunk” festival, the historical “shepherds dance” and the celebration of the Imperial town of Rothenburg. In late summer the focus of attention shifts towards the “Franconian Wine Festival”. In autumn, and also in spring, locals and guests meet for the Hiking weeks. The year ends with the Rothenburg “Fairy Tales” and the enchanting Christmas market, the so-called “Reiterlesmarkt” on the historical market place.

The events: an overview

Rothenburg Spring Awakening: In late March the town welcomes the first warm days with the traditional Rothenburg Spring Awakening. The region enjoys a very mild climate; spring arrives much earlier than in other Bavarian regions. A great many typical Franconian “spring” traditions have survived till today's time. A typical example: The “Easter-fountains”, colorfully decorated with Easter eggs, ribbons and flowers. During special theme guided tours visitors can learn a lot about old customs and habits, typical spring traditions – like fasting beer and said Easter-fountains. Also: Culture, family events and exhibitions. Another highlight: The weekend of „Spring atmosphere all over the town”, the “Stadtmosphäre”. The springtime hiking week pleasantly wraps up the Rothenburg Spring Awakening.

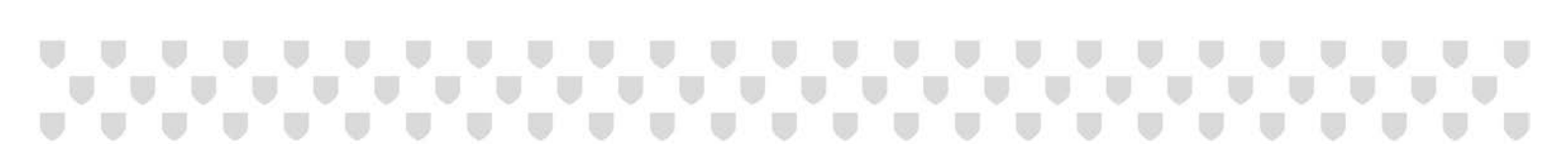




Rothenburg springtime hiking week: Twice a year, in spring and in autumn, Rothenburg hosts the hiking week. Guided tours offer active recreation amidst nature, and the best of all – it's for free. Both, locals and guests enjoy these tours. Traditional Franconian hospitality in the local inns and a rich selection of cultural events meet in a relaxed and casual program, catering for all tastes.

Spring atmosphere all over the town, the “Stadtmosphäre”: One weekend in April, the historic town invites to join events for the entire family, with music, art actions and of course delicious foods. On the year's first Sunday with all shops opened, retailers and service providers invite to indulge in a shopping spree.



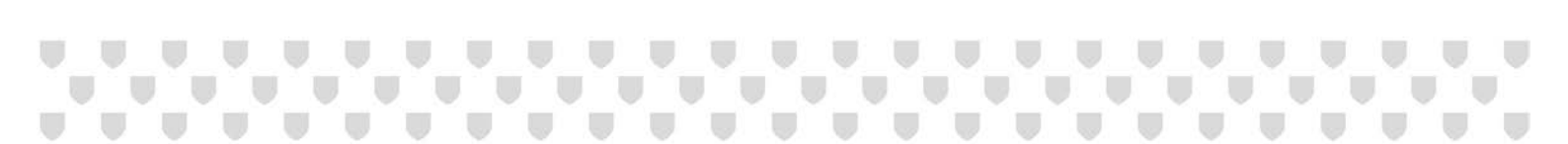


Church Concerts: Sacred Music in St. Jacob's Church enjoys a long-standing tradition. Nowadays it's mainly the grand Rieger-Organ with six key boards, 69 registers and more than 5000 organ pipes that attracts an appreciative audience into the church. Almost one hundred concerts with top-class soloists and ensembles, both from Germany and abroad will be played every year. This year's highlights are "One Week of Church Music" in July and the New Year's Eve concert on December 31st.

Festival "Der Meistertrunk", the "Master Draught": Always on Friday before Whitsun General Tilly returns to Rothenburg. For four days, the town above river Tauber celebrates the miraculous rescue from his henchmen during the Thirty Year's War. The legend has it, that Tilly had decided to burn down the Protestant town in 1631, but refrained from it, all because of hard drinking former Mayor Nusch. Why: When the General marched into the town, the official cellar master welcomed him with a tankard of wine, a full three liter and a quarter. The General promised mercy, if any of the councilors would succeed in downing the tankard in one single gulp. During the festival "Der Meistertrunk", amateur actors relive the scene on stage, whilst – quite authentically - the hostile armies "rage" in the town's streets. Every year, the festival's highlight is the army's triumphant march on Sunday. <http://www.meistertrunk.de>

Toppler Theatre: Ever since 2008, the small, professionally run, open air theatre in the northern court of the Imperial Museum, thrills its audience with both, own and adapted productions. The repertoire includes modern light comedies, music, cabaret and the by now well established Hans-Sachs-Plays. (In German only)
<http://www.toppler-theater.de>





The Hans-Sachs-Plays: The Nuremberg-born singer, poet and playwright was a highly-regarded person already in his own lifetime. In 1921 Theodor Schletterer initiated the Hans-Sachs-Plays in Rothenburg – and till this date, the whole town dedicates itself to the music and comedies of the son of a tailor. Renaissance revives with humor and wit every year during the Hans-Sachs-Plays in Rothenburg.

<http://www.hans-sachs-rothenburg.de>

The Historical Shepherds Dance: Ever since 1517 the Rothenburg Shepherds Guild has been enjoying the privilege of an own special holiday, to be celebrated with lots of music, wine and selected foods, and dancing. The tradition was eventually restored in 1911. Every Easter, for Whitsun and also during the Imperial Town celebrations, the colorful spectacle is staged on the historic Market Place.

www.schaefertanzrothenburg.de

Rothenburg Fair and Street Market: Parish Fairs are deeply rooted in Franconia. In summer, the Rothenburg Fair with Street Market awaits guests from both, the region as well as from far away: Stage and festival program, beer hall, amusement park for young and old and brilliant fireworks. The Street Market typically offers traditional Franconian merchandise and household goods.





Ambassadors of Music: No matter whether the solitary busker, or a chorus or an entire orchestra – the Rothenburg Market Place enjoys the highest reputation with musicians for both, spontaneous sessions as well as elaborate concerts. By now fully integrated into the Rothenburg Summer Program: The concerts of the “Ambassadors of Music”. Every year, young musicians from the United States travel to Franconia to please an attentive audience with their concerts.

Taubertal Festival: The medieval backdrop makes up the special appeal of the Taubertal-Festival, well known way beyond Rothenburg. Thousands of fans celebrate a huge open-air party on Eiswiese in the valley just underneath the town – the festival has seen celebrities like “Pink”, “Jan Delay” or “die Fantastischen Vier”. Three stages provide the perfect setting for renowned artists – life feeling guaranteed – for almost 20 years by now, an iconic must for rock fans

<http://www.taubertal-festival.de>





Rothenburg Wine Festival: During summer time, the “Green Market” – Grüner Markt – in the historic center transforms into the “Rothenburg Wine Festival”. Winegrowers and innkeepers serve Franconian quality wines – from tangy “Silvaner” to dry “Domina” - and of course delicious regional food specialties. The perfect setting for casual get-togethers on warm summer nights.

Imperial City Days – Celebration of the Imperial Town: Preserve history, relive it – that is loosely translated the motto of the “Imperial Town” celebrations. A thousand players bring the town’s historic past back to life. It all starts out on Friday night when the historic groups parade towards the market place in a torch-lit procession. Fireworks, emphasized by music, illuminate the night skies and the historic facades. Saturday and Sunday is dedicated to a medieval market of craftsmen - add to it jugglers and wrestlers and magicians. Eventually the whole old center turns into one grand stage for historic scenes; Horseback riders, the “Meistertrunk” spectacle, the “Hans-Sachs” play, music and historic dances attract innumerable visitors. The highlight: Saturday night, the grand fireworks: “Rothenburg Skies ablaze”.





Autumn Hiking Week: Hiking in fall or in springtime.

Guided tours in a romantic, sometimes dramatic scenery: Pleasant company and plenty of outdoor exercise. The tour guides may give away quite a few insider tips and secrets about Rothenburg and the Tauber – valley. The hiking weeks are accompanied by an attractive supporting program.

“The spell of fairy tales”: November starts out with the famous words: “Once upon a time.....” Fairy tales, legends, mythology For a whole week Rothenburg hosts the world of fairy tales. The program includes special guided tours, readings, museum events and of course magical culinary attractions. Seminars for adults attempt to fathom the significance behind the tales; special workshops are directed towards children and families. And perhaps, maybe one or the other fairy tale may actually become true in romantic Rothenburg.





“Reiterlesmarkt” – the Christmas Market. Every year Rothenburg transforms into a winter dream – ever since the late medieval ages. Reiterlesmarkt stands for more than 500 years of living tradition. Nowadays it is accompanied by numerous cultural events. The highlight: The appearance of the Rothenburg “Reiterle” (horseman). In former times the “Reiterle” was considered a messenger of another world, carrying the souls of the dead to the other side. However, over the centuries the once so scary spook turned into the friendly guy that opens the Christmas Market every year.



2. Points of interest, Sightseeing Highlights

2.1 Buildings, churches and town squares

Turrets, bay windows, lovingly restored half-timbered houses, but also splendid Renaissance house fronts characterize the Rothenburg picture and invite to take a leisurely walk through times long since gone. Even on crowded days it is hard to escape the medieval atmosphere. Buildings, town squares, but also churches of special architectural interest witness the creativity of the ancestors, historic stone walls tell old stories about emperors and kings, patricians and craftsmen guilds.



St. James: Rothenburg's most prominent points of interest include: Gothic St. Jacob's Church with its famous altar "Heilig-Blut" (Holy Blood) by Tilman Riemenschneider, the Town Hall, the fortifications with their parapet walks and last but not least the castle garden (Burggarten). Nonetheless, not only the grand attractions deserve



attention – visitors may wish to stroll through the cobblestoned lanes and discover remains of an era long gone by, witnesses of the lifestyle of common people in the medieval era. One of the most picturesque spots in town: **Plönlein** – a street fork, one street leading up towards Sieberstor, the other down towards Kobolzeller Tor - and certainly one of the most enchanting medieval vistas to be found.

Even in the early Hohenstaufen era, the most important street used to be Herrngasse, then leading from the castle towards Nuremberg. During the High Middle Ages it accommodated the cattle market; later on it was expanded into a rectangular square, the **Market Square**, center of ancient Rothenburg. With each building to be added there, the town demonstrated its ever increasing importance.



 **Rothenburg**
ob der Tauber

The architectural highlights, an overview:

Town Hall: The impressive Town Hall comprises two parts – the Gothic main building with its tower, dating back to the era 1250 till 1400 and the Renaissance extension, added between 1572 and 1578. Finally, the front arcades were added as late as 1861. An atrium interconnects the buildings. The entryway shows a display of the old Rothenburg units of measurement, since Rothenburg, as any other Imperial Town of the time, had its own individual system of measurement units. The viewing balcony on the belfry offers a stunning view over the historical town.

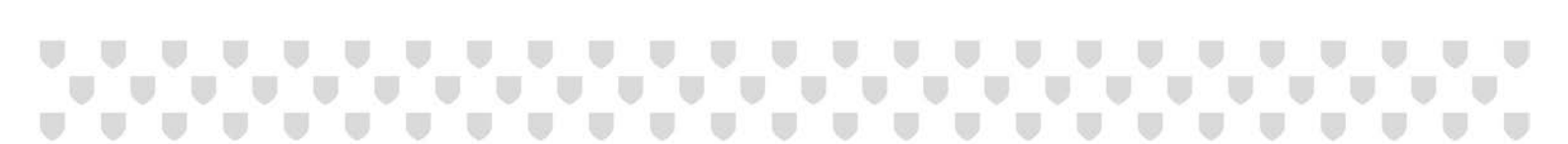
Ratstrinkstube “the Councilors Tavern”, built in 1466 is amongst Rothenburg's most famous buildings, its facade decorated with a selection of various big clocks. Originally, only the members of the council were admitted. Nowadays, a great number of spectators assemble regularly in front of it to watch the hourly display of the “Meistertrunk” story, from 10a.m. to 10 p.m.



St. Jacob: Rather unostentatious in appearance, its slender steeples still tower over all other buildings. Built in the 14th and 15th century, the basilica was intended to serve as the town's parish church, pilgrimage church and last but not least, home to the relic "Heilig-Blut". (Holy Blood) Valuable art treasures and an imposing variety of art objects witness the churches importance to pilgrims. The biggest treasure: The altar "Heilig-Blut". Created by Tilman Riemenschneider between 1499 and 1505, its wood carved scenes from the "Lord's Supper" rank amongst the most impressive carving works. Also worth seeing: The "Zwölfboten" (Twelve Apostles)-altar by Friedrich Herlin. It depicts the oldest panorama of Rothenburg.

www.rothenburgtauber-evangelisch.de





St. Wolfgang: Strong and proud on the outside, delicate on the inside. The solid Gothic church supports the fortifications at Klingentor. Its defensive character even shows up in the interior: Both, apse and registry are armed with crenels, and underneath it houses casemates and a dungeon. The church's main nave, though, impresses with late Gothic tracery. Also worth seeing: The altar of St. Wolfgang, St. Wendelin and St. Mary – all dating back to the times around 1500. Today the church's gatehouse is home to “Shepherds-Dance-Museum”, because the church was originally built by the shepherds’ guild between 1475 and 1493.

www.schaefertanzrothenburg.de

Other noteworthy buildings:

- **The “Baumeisterhaus”** in Obere Schmiedgasse is considered the most beautiful private house of the Renaissance era.
- **The “Feuerleinserker”** - Feuerleins-bay-window in Klingengasse, popular motif with innumerable photographers.
- **„Fleisch und Tanzhaus“**, built on the foundation of the old town hall. Together with Marienapotheke and St. Georges fountain it makes up a gorgeous ensemble. The Marienapotheke with its half-timbered front was once called “Jagstheimerhaus”. It was home to high-ranking guests like Emperor Maximilian I, also legendary Mayor Nusch used to live in the house.
- **The Franciscan Church** “Franziskanerkirche” was once established as a monastery church (1285).
- **The Old Forge “Gerlachschieme”**, completely destroyed during World War II. After careful reconstruction it is now considered one of the most beautiful half-timbered houses in Rothenburg.
- **The “Hegereiterhaus”** – right in the middle of Spital courtyard – a captivating view with its pointed tent-like roof and the slender round turret.



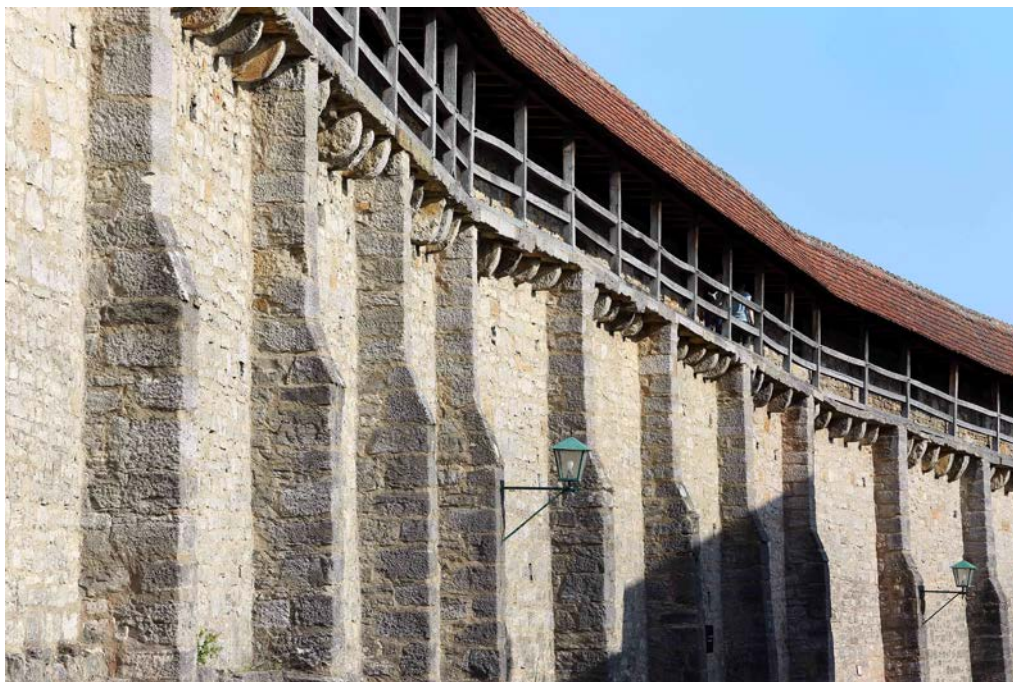
- **The hospice “Spital”** with its Holy-Spirit-Church “Heilig-Geist-Kirche” was founded based upon a donation (1280). A peculiarity: The so called sacrament housing, dating back to 1390.
- **The massive Horse Mill “Rossmühle”** guaranteed the town's supply with flour and cereals in case of emergency – namely when the watermills in the Tauber valley ceased work due to low water level. Today it houses a youth hostel.
- **St. Peter and Paul**, a short twenty minutes' walk away from the historic center towards Detwang. Home to the Altar-of-the-Holy-Cross, “Heilig-Kreuz-Altar” which is being attributed to the workshop of Tilman Riemenschneider.
- **The Staudt House**, dating back to the 12th century, is the oldest house that remained unchanged throughout the centuries. A plain façade perfectly covers up the elegance of former bourgeois splendor.
- Famous Rothenburg Mayor Heinrich Toppler had the so **called Toppler-Chateau “Toppler-Schlösschen”** built in 1388. It served as both, a home, and with the moats flooded as a defence tower. 30 minutes' walk from the castle garden.

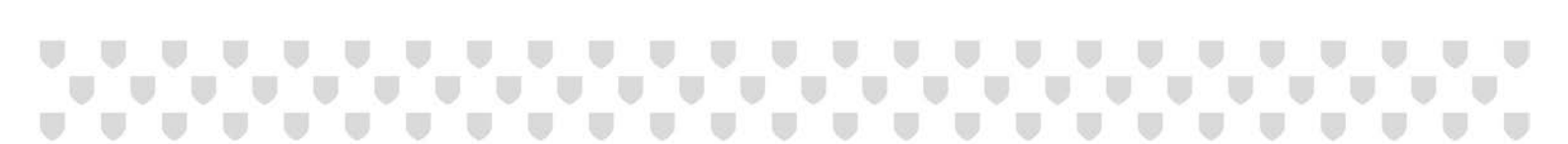


Rothenburg
ob der Tauber

2.2 Towers and gates of the fortifications

Visitors walking along the surrounding ramparts enjoy a wonderful view over the historic town, nestled into its fortification. A fascinating idea: Many generations, long since gone, held watch, looking out through the same crenels – at the time to protect their town from attackers. As many as up to seven staggered gates were supposed to keep unwanted “guests” from intruding the Imperial Town. 42 towers and belfries aided the Rothenburg defense to keep the surrounding area under surveillance and to spot attackers immediately. Get the brochure “Tower Trail” edited by Rick Steves to experience the town fortification in a self-guided tower. The brochure is available at the tourist office at Market Square. For videos of the Rothenburg Tower Trail please go to: www.turmweg.info





The first perimeter fortification had a small circumference only; it ran along “Judengasse”, “Pfarrgasse” and the old moat. During the 14th Century the former surroundings were integrated into the town with a new ring of walls. One can still walk on the crest of the northern and eastern part of the town wall.

An - at the time - rather unfortunate condition helped to preserve the town's fortification in its original condition: During the Thirty-Years' War, Rothenburg was so poor and lost in its insignificance that no one bothered to attack the former imperial town, hence it survived unscathed.

The Castle Gate “Burgtor”: In 1356 an earthquake leveled the Rothenburg castle, all the more an incentive to construct even mightier and stronger defenses. The so-called “Burgtor” was intended to protect the town's western approaches. By the way – citizens were authorized to leave the town at night only with prior permission of the council – so when necessary, a very narrow passage in the gate was used – the so-called needle eye. Yet, the Castle Gate served another purpose as well: Attackers were “welcome” with hot pitch, poured over the unfortunates through a special outlet in gate, shaped like a mask. Today Castle Gate's purpose is more peaceful – it is the entry to the enchanting Castle Garden “Burggarten”.

The Gallow's Gate “Galgentor”. Till the 19th Century the so-called “Köpfenwieslein” was “home” of the gallow – transferring its macabre name to the neighboring gate. Being the highest point in town it was prone to attacks: In 1631, Field Marshall Tilly successfully started the invasion of the town from this very spot. But times are different today: Now the area serves as kids' playground.



“Klingentor”. The gate’s 30m steeple served quite a practical purpose in the 16th Century. Way up, the citizens installed a big copper kettle – and so the gate was a water tower as well. Adjacent to the gate: “St. Wolfgang’s” Church; the two buildings share a common wall. The gate’s tower was also accessible from the church, quite helpful in a defense situation.

Kobollzell Gate “Kobollzeller Tor”. It is said, that in times long gone by, visitors had to pass a staggered array of up to four gates on their way from Tauber valley, along the “Alte Steige” all the way up to Rothenburg. Countless guests still find their way to the Devils Pulpit “Teufelskanzel” to enjoy the view from the pinnacle adorned walls.



Marcus-Tower “Markusturm”. The Marcus-Tower and romantic Röder-Fountain, together with the backdrop of stately houses, certainly are amongst the most favored motifs of any photographer. Adjacent Röder-Arch (not to be confused with



Röder-Gate) with its clock tower, by the way was part of the town's first fortification, dating all the way back to the 12th Century.

Town Hall Spire "Rathausturm". The Town Hall's steeple is the town's highest elevation, and visitors are encouraged to go through the effort of climbing 52 meters and 220 stairs, all the way up to the sightseeing platform. The reward: A stunning view all over the town and picturesque meandering Tauber-Valley.



Röder-Gate “Rödertor”. Two small sentry boxes adorn Rödertor’s outer gateway on the left and right, followed by the bailey. Oldest part of the whole assembly: Röder-Tower originating from the 13th Century. As times are peaceful today: A playground with a big climbing structure invites children to play.



Hospice-Gate “Spitaltor”: The gate is both, youngest and most sturdy bulwark of the town wall. Seven gates, a portcullis, a tow bridge and a parapet were supposed to provide Rothenburg’s defense from this side.

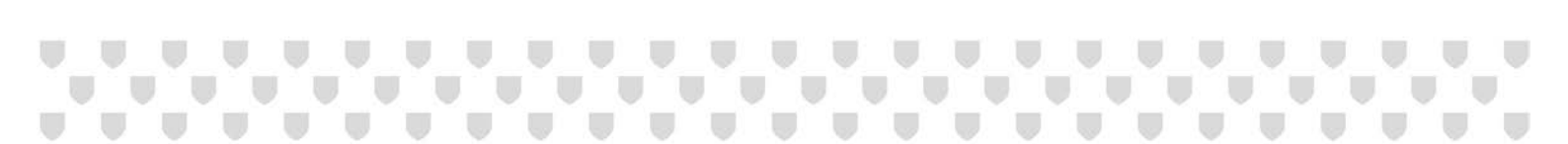


2.3 Parks and gardens

Lush green retreats invite to enjoy a short time-out when it's getting too busy. Castle-Garden "Burggarten" and Convent's Garden "Klostergarten" provide the perfect setting to restore energy for more cultural discoveries. The more exotic minded visitor may find just the right atmosphere in the Lotos-Garden.



Castle-Garden "Burggarten". The most romantic time of the day to visit to Castle-Garden – the evening hours at the onset of dusk, when the Tauber-Valley slowly disappears in the darkness and the illuminated Castle Gate lights up the town's silhouette. The term Castle-Garden is somewhat misleading, because the castles of the time did not have gardens. But, the green retreat is at the very location, where the Hohenstaufen Dynasty built the Imperial Castle in 1142 – today commemorated by a stela in honor of the Hohenstaufen. The town started to spread out over the hill from this very position – only to be destroyed by an



earthquake. Nonetheless – only a short time later, Rothenburg revived and grew to become one of the biggest towns of the Holy Roman Empire, counting more than 6000 inhabitants. A geometrically designed court adorned with eight sandstone sculptures, dating back to the 17th and 18th Century marks the center of Castle Garden. The statues symbolize the four seasons and the four elements. The far end of the park offers a stunning view down into Tauber Valley and the little Toppler Chateau, former residence of the famous Mayor of Rothenburg, Heinrich Toppler.

Convent's Garden "Klostergarten": The Convent's Garden once belonged to the former Dominican Convent, today's home of the Imperial Museum. The garden itself is a mirror image of monastic virtues: Clarity, harmony and tranquility. Visitors enjoy the feeling to be immersed into a different world, where time seems to have come to a stand-still. Historians assume that the garden for herbs was once used in accordance with the doctrines of Hildegard of Bingen. Today, Rothenburg citizens still maintain a large bed of herbs, the variety of different herbs evaporating the most captivating fragrances. During the festival celebrating the Imperial Town the Convent's Garden serves as a theatre for the troupe "Chevalier de Ville".

Lotos-Garden. A "green" attraction, adding to the town since 2012. The Asian water-garden covers more than 5000 square meters, one third of it being expanses of water. Hidden little corners, the Tea-Pavilion or the Pagoda invite visitors to calm down, to relax, to listen to the gentle splashing sound of little creeks. Gravel paths, foot bridges, meandering creeks and little waterfalls invite to a charming discovery tour. Worth more than just a short glance: The entrance to the Cafe: A 200 year old portico of an Indian house – decorated with crafted ornaments.

www.lotos-garten.de



2.4 Museums

A day won't suffice to explore all of Rothenburg's museums. The little town gives quite a few perfect examples, how a museum's visit can be turned from a dreary matter into an exciting experience. Everybody will find just the right entertainment. A nostalgic travel into the past for the whole family: the Christmas Museum. Scientific – yet scary – the Medieval Criminal Museum, which documents a thousand years of history of law. Interesting from both, a historical and an arts' point of view: The Museum of the Imperial Town. Yet another approach to the imperial past, visitors may find in the Old-Rothenburg Craftsmen House, the historical vaults with the state's dungeon, and last but not least Toppler-Castle.

Old-Rothenburg Craftsmen House “Alt-Rothenburger Handwerkerhaus”

Anyone interested in a less glamorous side of the past ought to visit the Old-Rothenburg Craftsmen House – the museum in its historical building is certainly second to none in Franconia. More than seven centuries the little structure served various craftsmen as both, workshop and dwelling. From 1300 onwards it was home to barrel-makers, followed by dyers from 1510 till 1680. Eleven rooms are dedicated to illustrate the life, work, daily routines and chores of an ordinary craftsman and his big family.

www.alt-rothenburger-handwerkerhaus.de

German Christmas Museum “Deutsches Weihnachtsmuseum“ Christmas tree decoration twinkles, Christmas Pyramids rotate, above all the gentle jingle of bells: Rothenburg celebrates Christmas throughout the whole year. Where? In the German Christmas Museum. In 1981, Käthe Wohlfahrt opened her „Christmas Village“, today well known all over the world. Harald Wohlfahrt added to that the traditional Christmas customs of times long gone by – the results may be admired in the Museum. Not only antique Christmas tree decoration is on display, but also the history of the various worldly customs and habits of Christmas are explained.

www.weihnachtsmuseum.de



Historical Vaults and State's Dungeon “Historiengewölbe mit Staatsverlies“.

The Historical Vaults bring back the times of the Thirty-Years-War. The various exhibits include, amongst others, military equipment of the time, weapons, uniforms, but also the legendary tankard known from the Master Draught “Meistertrunk” saga. Underneath the Historic Vaults: The notorious State Dungeon, where powerful Mayor Toppler met his end in the year 1408.

www.meistertrunk.de



The Medieval Criminal Museum “Kriminalmuseum” is considered the most important museum of “History of Law” in Germany. Housed in the former Commandery of the Knights of St. John, it covers the vast history of a thousand years of European history of law, for example the history of legislation till the 19th Century, the criminal proceedings in the medieval era, all backed up and supported by important official documents of the time. Instruments of torture and

 **Rothenburg**
ob der Tauber

“tools” for capital punishment still make one shiver – but there are also quite “comical” devices, for example special pillories for those who used to bad-mouth about their fellow citizens and neighbors.

www.kriminalmuseum.eu

RothenburgMuseum. The museum is located in the former Dominican nuns' convent – residents from 1258 till the Protestant Reformation. An exhibit completely preserved from former times: the convent kitchen. The museum's collections display pieces of art and culture, collected from over eight centuries, amongst others the “Rothenburg Passion”, the gallery with paintings of 19th Century artists and an important department covering Jewish culture. The Baumann Collection – integrated into the museum ever since 1999 – displays weapons, knights armors, but also faience ware and pewter. Special topic exhibitions enhance the regular exhibition.

www.rothenburgmuseum.de



Rothenburg
ob der Tauber



Toppler Castle “Topplerschlösschen”. Rothenburg Mayor Heinrich Toppler had the miniature version of a castle built in 1388, placed amidst a garden that could be flooded for defense. Serving Toppler as a retreat, it saw politics nonetheless, being a meeting place with King Wenzel. Today the matchbox castle is decorated with furniture ranging from 16th to 19th century and gives visitors an insight of the late medieval way of living.



2. Art and culture

3.1 The town of theatres

Theatre – a tradition in Rothenburg – even if one will first be impressed by historic fortifications and medieval scenery, Franconian half-timbered houses, charming vineyards and “Christmas Magic throughout the Year”. Proof of Rothenburg’s theatre past can be found in the baroque stair case of the Vienna “Burgtheater”. A fresco by painter Ernst Klimt (1864-1892) shows theatre scenes with “Hanswurst” (a traditional, folklike clown), all happening around Rothenburg’s St. Georg’s fountain. The artist depicted the little Franconian town amongst other cities with a significant theatre tradition. The citizens cope with this reputation in their own special way. Every year, at Whitsun, the spectacle “The Master Draught” attracts visitors from all over the world, the Hans-Sachs-Plays and historical “Shepherds Dance” complete the historical trilogy of RothenburgMuseum. But – Rothenburg is also rapidly gaining reputation as a town supporting a vivid open-air-theatre. Ever since its foundation in 2008, Toppler Theatre in the Northern Courtyard of the RothenburgMuseum has developed into a highly regarded stage, both with actors and spectators. But, not only splendid little Toppler Theatre adds to the tradition, culture stretches way beyond that – events in the Korn-Hall-of-Culture, sophisticated sacred music, as well as offers of the local cultural society augment the wide variety of cultural life. Yet another prospective interesting stage, even though still under construction: The Theatre at the “Stöberleins”-Tower.

The Hans-Sachs-Plays: The Nuremberg-born singer, poet and playwright was already a highly-regarded person in his own lifetime. In 1921 Theodor Schletterer initiated the Hans-Sachs-Plays in Rothenburg – and till this date, the whole town dedicates itself to the music and comedies of the son of a tailor. Every year Renaissance comes alive with humor and wit during the Hans-Sachs-Plays in Rothenburg.

<http://www.hans-sachs-rothenburg.de>



The Master Draught saga “Der Meistertrunk”: Always on Friday before Whitsun General Tilly yet again invades Rothenburg. For four days, the town above river Tauber celebrates the miraculous rescue from his henchmen during the Thirty Years’ War. The legend has it, that Tilly had decided to burn down the Protestant town in 1631, but refrained from it, all because of hard drinking former Mayor Nusch. Why: When the General marched into the town, the official cellar master welcomed him with a tankard of wine, a full three liter and a quarter. The general promised mercy, if any of the councilors would succeed in downing the tankard in one single gulp. During the festival “Der Meistertrunk”, amateur actors relive the scene on stage, whilst – quite authentically - the hostile armies “rage” in the town’s streets. Every year, the festival’s highlight is the army’s triumphant march on Sunday.

<http://www.meistertrunk.de>

Imperial City Days: Preserve history, relive it – that is loosely translated the motto of the “Imperial Town” celebrations. A thousand players bring the town’s historic past back to life. It all starts out on Friday night when the historic groups parade towards the market place in a torch-lit procession. Saturday and Sunday is dedicated to a medieval market of craftsmen - add to it jugglers and wrestlers and magicians..... Eventually the whole old center turns into one grand stage for historic scenes; Horseback riders, the “Meistertrunk” spectacle, the “Hans-Sachs” play, music and historic dances attract innumerable visitors. The highlight: Saturday night, the grand fireworks: “Rothenburg Skies ablaze”.

The Historical Shepherds Dance: Ever since 1517 the Rothenburg Shepherds Guild has been enjoying the privilege of an own special holiday, to be celebrated with lots of music, wine and selected foods, and dancing. The tradition was eventually restored in 1911. Every Easter, for Whitsun and also during the Imperial Town celebrations, the colorful spectacle is staged on the historic Market Place.

www.schaefertanzrothenburg.de



Toppler Theatre: Ever since 2008, the small, professionally run, open air theatre in the Northern Court of the Imperial Museum, thrills its audience with both, own and adapted productions. The repertoire includes modern light comedies, music, cabaret and the by now well established Hans-Sachs-Plays.

<http://www.toppler-theater.de>



Rothenburg
ob der Tauber

3.2 Music and art

A visit to Rothenburg – a feast for connoisseurs of art. The little town enjoys a longstanding tradition of music appreciation. It keeps old arts alive, yet it is open to the change of times. The same location that was home to composers and musicians, like Baroque Master Erasmus Widmann or Franz Vollrath Butstett, today opens up to the Tauber-Valley-Festival with Pop, Rock and alternative sounds. Ever since the era of the Romantic period, painters and poets have perceived the little Franconian town as the epitome of “the German Medieval Era”. They eternalized the town in a multitude of paintings and literary works, thus giving art a central and prominent position in the town’s life. When strolling along the cobblestoned lanes, visitors may discover a great variety of arts & crafts shops and galleries.

Music, the big events – an overview:

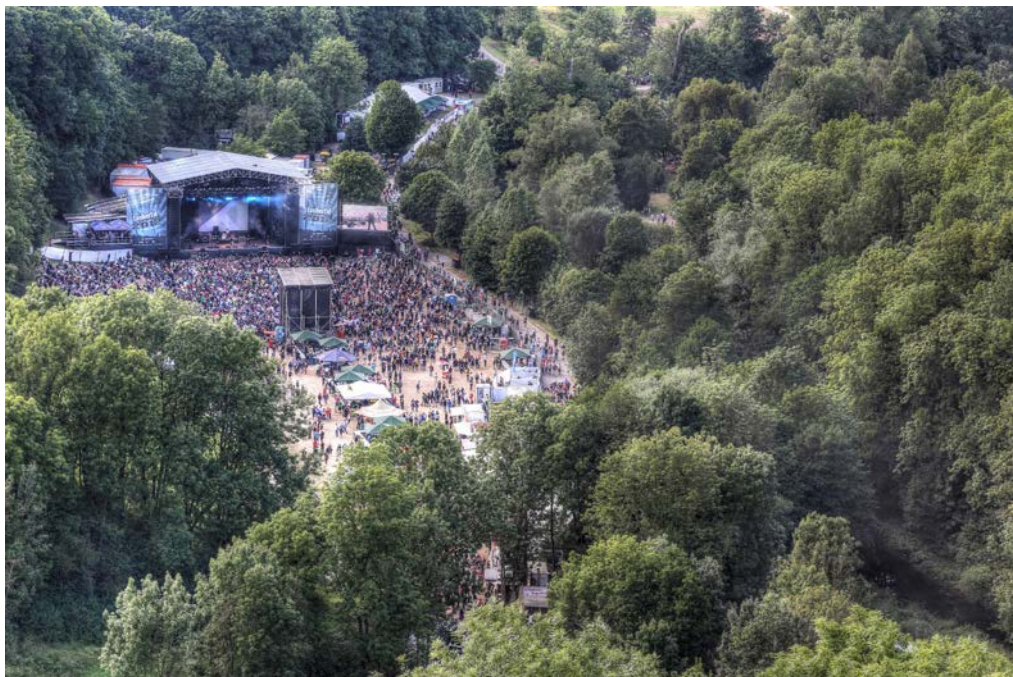
Sacred music Church Concerts: The history of Sacred Music in Rothenburg goes all the way back to the Protestant Reformation. Several of St. Jacob’s Church cantors were well regarded as composers and musicians far beyond the town’s boundaries. Till today the impressive church is the focal point of sacred music in Rothenburg. Ever since 1968 the warm sound of the grand Rieger-Organ fills the Gothic church – and not just during services. Almost one hundred concerts with top-class soloists and ensembles, both from Germany and abroad will be played every year. The Franciscan Church – the oldest of Rothenburg’s churches – hosts church concerts as well, but also organ recitals and the program “30 minutes of organ music”.

By now fully integrated into the Rothenburg Summer Program: The concerts of the **“Ambassadors of Music”**. Every year young musicians from the United States travel to Franconia to please an attentive audience with their concerts. Yet another highlight: The Show: “Sound of America”. Students of Music from various US states meet for a concert stopover in Rothenburg during their European Tour.



Tauber-Valley Festival: The medieval backdrop makes up the special appeal of the Taubertal-Festival, well known way beyond Rothenburg. Thousands of fans celebrate a huge open-air party on Eiswiese in the valley just underneath the town – the festival has seen well renowned bands, both, of local and international reputation.

<http://www.taubertal-festival.de>



Rothenburg's "Master Concert". A highlight in the annual course of music events is the so-called Meisterkonzert. Ever since 1988, in November or December the "Nürnberger Symphoniker" perform great works of music in the Reichsstadthalle.

Kunst Kultur Korn – The event series Art, Culture, Korn sets its own mark in cultural life: „Kunst Kultur Korn“, a privately sponsored venture, comprises a colorful mixture of music, cabaret, classic concerts, jazz, café house music....



3.3 Tradition and customs

Hardly any other town lives its traditions and old customs like Rothenburg. The Imperial past is well articulated throughout the year, nonetheless finding its peak between May and autumn. In a credible and authentic manner, the citizens re-live their history and bring back to memory famous historic events, like the Master-Draught-Saga “Meistertrunk”, the Imperial Town Festival or the Shepherds Dance “Schäfertanz” – all staged on the original grounds, rather than merely a facade – and all with full enthusiasm. All Rothenburg generations are united in their affection and identification with their hometown. Hundreds of citizens, young and old, women and men, participate with great fervor in the festival of the “Imperial Town”. A charming habit left from times gone by: Every evening, a real night-watchman starts his patrol along the alleys and lanes. Nowadays though not so much to look after the town's security, but to guide visitors, to show the town's gems and to chat about the old, and sometimes quite dismal times.

The Master Draught “Meistertrunk” Saga and Imperial Town Festival. The historical spectacle is certainly amongst the most popular ones in Germany. An ornate tankard, an unusual deal and a brave deed turn the town's fate from threatening destruction to rescue. Since 1881 the town's citizens have been performing the play in Town Hall's Kaisersaal. With a bit of luck, one may meet them at breakfast in Master Builders House “Baumeisterhaus” before the spectacle commences – of course fully capped and gowned.

Every year, first weekend in September, Rothenburg celebrates the reception of the “Imperial Privileges of 1274”. These privileges boosted the town's importance immensely during the late medieval era. Today, this golden era has a redundant meaning – as hundreds of citizens engage in historic societies to revive certain epochs or professions of the time.





Shepherd's Dance "Schäfertanz". Its origins are dating far back into the past. Ever since 1472 the Shepherds Fraternity gathers around the time of "St. Bartholomew" to celebrate their fraternity. Once, the day began with a church service, to be followed by lots of cheerful music, wine and selected foods – and the young shepherds invited the citizens' daughters to dance. Ever since 1517 the Rothenburg Shepherds Guild has been enjoying the privilege of an own special holiday. The tradition was eventually restored in 1911. Every Easter, and also during the Imperial Town celebrations, the colorful spectacle is staged on the historic Market Place.

www.schaefertanzrothenburg.de

Nocturnal Rothenburg: An exploration with the night watchman may very well leave mixed feelings – on one side the view over charming Tauber-Valley in the dusk – on the other side the description of the fears and hardships of the inhabitants, of the medieval times that were frequently perceived as cold, bleak and backwardly minded. The term Torschlusspanik, literally translated the "panic of being locked out after gate closure" has its roots in these times – people panicking because they couldn't get back into the safety of the town. A tiny gap for emergencies, taking care of the "panic cases" is still to be found at the big castle gate.



3. Sports and activities in Rothenburg

Activity in and around Rothenburg – its very position in the center of nature park “Frankenhöhe”, as well as its prominent location above Tauber-Valley make it an ideal starting point for all sorts of outdoor activities. Picturesque valleys, little creeks, hill crests, lakes, forests and peaceful villages, in the typical Franconian style with half-timbered houses, invite to discover the environs – walking, bicycling – or, certainly the most exiting version – with a hot air balloon, which will dwarf the landscape to a small fairy tale land. Golfing, tennis courts and a brand new climbing facility attract the sportive, dynamic visitor. The clean waters of Tauber-Valley make it a little paradise for anglers. A day in the open air pools, or a day of “well-being” in the pool and sauna area “Franken-Freizeit” promises even more relaxation. By the way – relaxation and water have been enjoying a long tradition in Rothenburg, going all the way back to the 14th Century. The earth quake gave way to a mineral spring, which was the beginning of “Wildbad”, – the baths, today home of a convention center.



4.1 Hiking

A tight network of distinctive hiking trails surrounds Rothenburg. 13 trails, all carefully marked, will guide hikers through a romantic, sometimes dramatic landscape and the medieval town. A unique setting of both, nature and landmarks wait to be discovered. No less than 16 former watermills wait to be explored along the so-called watermill trail. Pilgrims may re-discover the special atmosphere of hiking along one of the various pilgrimage routes crossing the area - an experience way out of the ordinary?

Hiking trails: A map detailing the hiking trails may be obtained from the local hotels and the Rothenburg Tourist Information. The choice of trails includes, for example, "Panorama-Trail" or "Nature Trail" in the Schandtaubertal. The area covers the hills of Nature Park Frankenhöhe all the way from the town of Ansbach to Schnelldorf. Impressive from both, a cultural point of view as well as the surrounding landscape – and a land mark of the region in its own special way: The Rothenburg Watermill Trail.

Hiking weeks: Twice a year, in spring and in autumn, hikers meet to enjoy active recuperation amidst nature. All tours emphasize one particular subject, special to the very tour. The tour guides may give away a lot of insider knowledge pertaining to the region and its characteristics. Both, locals and guests immensely enjoy these tours. Traditional Franconian hospitality in the local inns and plenty of time for a casual talking and chatting create the right atmosphere for a relaxed time. During the hiking weeks, guests will easily find arrangements with selected hotels that include a great many guided tours to cater for all tastes.

Guided hiking tours: A favorite amongst Rothenburg's guests are guided hiking tours – crisscrossing the town and its surrounds. Every Wednesday at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, guests and locals casually meet at the Marketplace Fountain to gather their personal impressions of the town's highlights. Visitors may take the opportunity to listen to first-hand information about Rothenburg stories and history.



“About water mills and millers”, a trail that leads away from the town center, towards the Tauber-Valley – certainly a region rich with watermills. The tour guides do not only touch the town’s history, but also expand on the hard work of the former millers, the sophisticated technology that stands behind these early technical achievements and its influence on medieval society, and last but not least the use of water power as a source of energy, from the past till today.



4.2 Biking

Discover Rothenburg by Bicycle.

No matter whether a short weekend trip or a serious trekking tour – Rothenburg is the ideal starting point for bicycle tours of any degree of difficulty – beautiful landscape added for free. Mountain bike or racing bicycle – no matter, the 2300 kilometer grid of bicycle tracks will provide just the right route, and certainly not only for the sports enthusiasts. Families, wine connoisseurs, or discoverers of the regional culture – they will all find their perfect personal route. Rothenburg tourism supplies comprehensive information and maps. Favorites (amongst the long distance routes) are: “Charming Tauber-Valley” from Rothenburg to Wertheim, the “Altmühl”-Tour, along river Altmühl all the way to Kehlheim, the “Butterfly” that links four individual trails and, last but not least, the trail along river “Bibert” to the town of Fürth near Nuremberg. Always a perfect match: An enchanting countryside and a great many cultural points of interest, and important for both, comfort and safety: The majority of the trails are devoid of cars. For the longer trips: “B&B...bed and bicycle” is to be found everywhere along the routes.

Rent-a-bike and repair shops: Bicycles may be rented directly in Rothenburg, e.g. “Rad und Tat”, Bensenstrasse 17 (www.mietraeder.de). A work shop, if so required, can be found in „Fahrradhaus Krauß” in Ansbacherstrasse 85 (www.fahrradhaus-krauss.de)

E-bikes: Quite popular by now: “The bicycle with the built-in tail wind”. The electric bicycle, which should not to be dismissed too easily. Franconia’s romantic vineyards sometimes await the bicyclist with quite challenging inclines – only to reward with a relaxing coasting downhill into the next picturesque valley.



4.3 Tree top adventure course

“Test your own limits” – climb the highest trees. The installation to test one's very limits, and possibly fight one's own anxieties, is to be found in the so-called “American Forest” just outside the town. 110 elements in nine circles provide action and fun for all who dare. From one tree to the next, up to 17 meters high, crossing shaky Burma bridges, or swinging on a rope like Tarzan in the jungle: Everybody can meet the ultimate personal challenge. Nonetheless, of course safety is paramount. A new safety system prevents inadvertent un-hooking of both snap hooks simultaneously. The safety system is fool proof, making the installation particularly attractive for families with little children. Six of the circles are suitable for children as young as five years, of course if accompanied by an adult. Typical time en-route, including initial instruction, approximately 2.5 hours.

Team events and incentives: A special offer for corporations, clubs, groups... the so-called team-training. Aimed at boosting team spirit, the outdoor event's special tasks require the individuals in the group literally to do “team-work”. The events, with or without coach, are geared towards an integrated and solution-oriented way of thinking, emphasizing situational awareness, learning by doing, time management, motivation and implementation of assets available. In addition to challenging climbing tasks other elements may be integrated, e.g. games improving co-operation like building a float.

Opening times: End of March till November – daily, or depending on season Friday through Monday. Special arrangements for groups may be made any time.

www.kletterwald-rothenburg.de



4.4 From golfing via Sauna to Ballooning

Active holidays balance body and soul. Thanks to a great variety of leisure activities guests may “refuel” in a very organized way to regain their strength. Apart from bicycling and hiking, guests are invited to test out activities like a vigorous tennis match, or a relaxing fishing trip, or an exciting ascent in a hot-air-balloon. Afterwards, relaxation and well-being is awarded during a visit in the combined indoor and outdoor pool “Franken Freizeit”

Fishing: Clean waters and idyllic hideaways create perfect conditions for the passionate angler. Anglers’ first choice to go for local trout, pike-perch, eel and carp might very well be Detwang, just outside Rothenburg. Also very popular amongst anglers: The fishing ponds of Windelsbach and Neusitz. Requirements: A valid fishing license and a daily permission slip.

www.fischereiverein-rothenburg.de

Hot-Air-Ballooning: A quiet travel aloft opens up new perspectives of Rothenburg and picturesque Tauber-Valley. If the weather is fine, the balloons take to the air from Tauberwiesen near Detwang. Once airborne, it is up to the wind to decide the further course of the trip. By the way – those travelling in a hot-air-balloon for the first time will receive the “balloonist baptizing” after landing, to be followed by the “ceremonial balloonists’ ennoblement”.

www.happy-ballooning.de

Golfing: 180 acres waiting for golfers. The 18-hole green around Schönbrunn estate is just a few kilometers away from Rothenburg, landscaped to preserve the nature of surrounding Frankenhöhe. Even in winter time, golf enthusiasts may indulge in their hobby – special winter greens support their ambition. The challenging areal of rolling hills contains several bunkers and water hazards. Beginners may just give it a try and book a day of guided golfing.

www.gp-rbg.de





Sauna and indoor / outdoor-pool: The swimming pools of “Franken-Freizeit”, offering a water area of 2500 square-meters is open throughout the year. From May till September “water bugs” may enjoy the out-door pools above Tauber-Valley. The area comprises a 50 – meter-sports-pool, a diving platform, a basin for non-swimmers, water slides and paddling pool for the kids, sunbathing lawns (including a separate nudists’ area), playgrounds and kiosks. The in-door pool is open throughout the cool season. Several pools cater for both, the ambitious swimmer and families. Particularly attractive when the weather is nasty: A visit to the Sauna-World with a Finnish sauna, immersion basins, foot basins and a special Infrared cabin. A special favorite: Midnight sauna illuminated by the soft light of candles.

Tennis: Right amidst a greenbelt – the Rothenburg Tennis Club with its eight courts. Not only club members, but also guests are welcome any time. Each Thursday at 6 p.m. the Club offers a free beginners training. By the way – Tennis enjoys a long-standing tradition in Rothenburg. The Club was founded as early as 1927, and Hans Nüsslein, the first German Tennis World-champion used to train in the Club.

www.tc-rothenburg.de



4. Topics of special interest

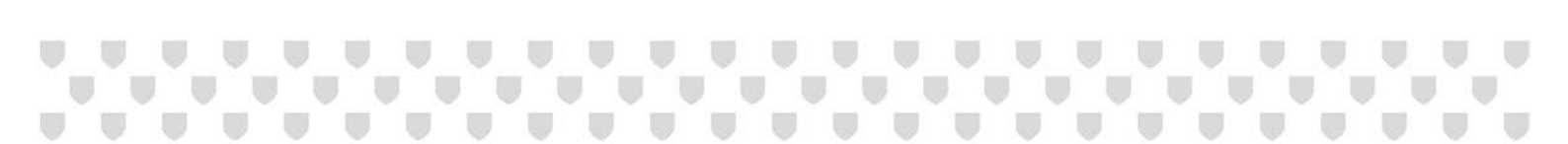
5.1 Romantics

...and they lived happily ever after, and most likely right in the middle of Rothenburg; that is at least what a great many film adaptations of the Brothers Grimm Fairy Tales suggest. Even though the Grimm Brothers had little to do with Rothenburg, the town is the epitome of Fairy Tales and romanticism. Hence, over the decades Rothenburg was backdrop to a great number of fairy tale films. Rothenburg enjoys a reputation as Germany's number one example of a medieval town. Strolling through the towns cobblestoned lanes inevitably creates the feeling of traveling back in time and people just fall for the romantic charm of the medieval era. At every turn, sheltered inside the fortification, people experience this very special sensation of a secure, secluded little world. Maybe, that is the very attraction of Rothenburg. The romantic ambiance of a little town, well-guarded by strong fortifications, may just feed the desire for seclusion and protection in an otherwise limitless and ever demanding world.

Romantic Road “Romantische Straße” Not for no reason Rothenburg is one of the top destinations along Romantic Road. The road extends from Würzburg in Lower Franconia all the way up to Füssen near the Alps, on its way it connects more than two dozens of particularly charming towns – and is certainly amongst the top attractions for visitors from all over the world. Near Rothenburg, visitors may discover steep vineyards, tranquil little Franconian villages and towns, old water mills and extensive untouched stretches of river valley. A visit to Rothenburg and its fascinating testimony of the medieval era may complete the tour with a long lasting impression.

The magic of Fairy Tales: Which other town seems more appropriate than Rothenburg to make fairy tales come true – and so, each year in November – the famous words “...once upon a time” set the scene for “Rothenburg – the magic of fairy tales”. A diverse program for children and adults presents fairy tales, myths, legends. Old lore will be interpreted in a new fashion, the world of dreams will be





explored, but also the scientific research and historical background of fairy tales will be highlighted. Several hotels offer specials and many shops in the town have their windows lovingly decorated with fairy tale topics. A dream for children of all ages.

Christmas Market “Reiterlesmarkt”. During the cold season medieval Rothenburg transforms into a romantic winter dream. The spicy smells of sugar-roasted almonds mingle with the fragrance of Franconian cookies; the lights of Advent illuminate the surrounding house fronts, towers, lanes..... and hot Franconian spiced wine chases away cold December air. The Reiterlesmarkt is one of the very few Christmas markets with a tradition that goes back several centuries. Ever since the 15th Century the festive time of Advent has been accompanied by a Christmas market. In former times the “Reiterle” was a rather frightening figure. However, over the centuries the once so scary spook turned into the friendly guy that brings good luck to the people. Rumors have it, that Reiterle walks all streets and lanes to look after the people and to bring them peace. A nice custom: Reiterle opens the Christmas Market every year. Just another tradition: On Fridays and Saturdays the Town hall steeple is open for public till 8 p.m. to enjoy the Christmas atmosphere just underneath on Marketplace.

A tour with the Night watchman: The nocturnal tours with the Night watchman – yet another tradition. Night Watchman Hans Georg Baumgartner was the first of his kind in Germany to bring back to life the long obsolete tradition. From March till Christmas, every night at 8 p.m. he starts for his nightly patrol through the town, sometimes accompanied by as many as 200 guests. During the tour he illustrates Rothenburg’s rise from a small fortified village to the important Imperial town, followed by decline and insignificance after the Thirty-year-war, to the yet again important position as one of the best known medieval towns in Germany and the epitome of the medieval era in Germany.

www.nightwatchman.de



5.2 Wine culture

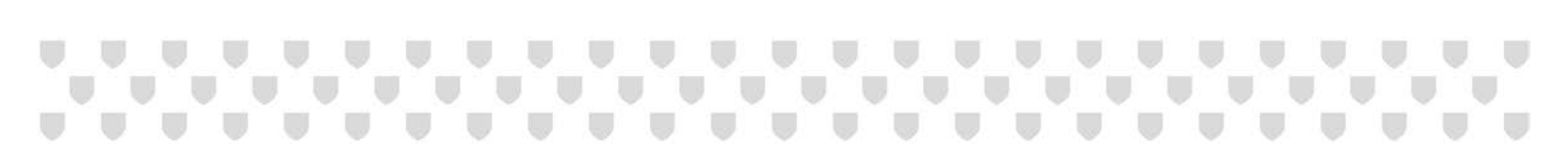
In 1631 General Tilly and his army of 60000 soldiers were ready to besiege Rothenburg – but the legend has it, that a tankard of Franconian Wine saved the town. Tilly's announcement to spare the town from destruction, should any of its citizens find the nerve to down the tankard in one gulp, was courageously accepted by former Mayor Nusch. He emptied the tankard in one draught, and thus rescued his beloved Rothenburg from extinction. Maybe this is the very reason that wine plays a vital role in Rothenburg till today.

Located in the southernmost part of Franconia, the Tauber-Valley vineyards are home to the Müller-Thurgau grape, Silvaner, Bacchus, Pinot Gris, Riesling and Gewurztraminer. Lately, the Franconian wine growers have been re-discovering red wines, like Rotling, Pinot Noir and the tangy Domina. A visit of the “Rothenburg Wine Trail” may help to appreciate the varieties of grapes and vines. The wanderer will find out about historical background, geological requirements, climate, the whole story behind. The Rothenburg vineyard, by the way, was cultivated by wine grower Johann Ploß till 1923, thereafter it was dis-used and grew over with shrubs. Only in 1999 an established wine grower family started to cultivate the vineyard again. It took a lot of determination to restore the vineyard to today's character – now well-known under the name “Rothenburger Eich”. It is now home to rare grapes like “Johanniter” and “Regent” – and the wine trail presents no less than 160 different kinds of grape. Today the Rothenburg family Thürauf rules the fates of the vineyards in Rothenburg and adjacent Taubertzell, Ippesheim and Sulzfeld.

Nonetheless, the history of Rothenburg reaches much further into the past than Johan Ploß and General Tilly:

As early as 912, wine growing is documented in files, listing the location “Steinach”. In particular the monasteries were supposed to boost wine growing during the high medieval era. Also well documented: In 1487, following the Nuremberg Reichstag, the councilors of the wine-growing regions met in Rothenburg to pass a bill, a so-called





“Reichsabschied” to set forth rules of how to deal with wine and wine growing. Also a documented fact: Even in the very early modern times, consideration was given to protection of species in the local vineyards: 1584, the grape “Gänsfüßer”, considered the most precious of red grapes, was placed under protection.

Thanks to wine growing, today medieval times meet Mediterranean charm in the streets of the little town high above Tauber-Valley. It's easily felt at a stopover in any of the traditional wine inns, where one might enjoy just a glass of the excellent local wine. An insider's tip for the connoisseurs of good wines – “Glockenwirts” wine tutorials. Each Thursday the visitor will learn interesting facts about the local wines, of course augmented by the real thing: wine tasting. No reservation required.

Vineyard trail and wine tasting: More material to be obtained from Tourist Information – there is plenty of opportunity to learn about history - and to appreciate the special taste and flavor – of Franconian wines.

A highlight of the annual wine agenda, the Rothenburg “Wine Village” i.e. wine festival, ever since 2009 to be held in mid-August. For four and a half days the “Green Market” – “Grüner Markt” and Church-Place “Kirchplatz” are dominated by wine, from tangy “Silvaner” to dry “Domina”. Of course, add delicious food specialties, and Rothenburg develops an almost Mediterranean atmosphere, amidst Tauber-Valley. The perfect setting for casual get-togethers on warm summer nights and a journey through the world of wines.



5.3 Cuisine

Authentic wine taverns, traditional Franconian inns, international and star-adorned “Haute Cuisine” – No matter whether one decides for the rustic, the traditional, the romantic or the upscale version: A visit to Rothenburg is the equivalent to honest and most cordial hospitality.

Rothenburg puts quality on top - numerous inns are members of the initiative „Regional Buffet“, a group of local inns, farmers and merchants, which aims to boost the typical Franconian kitchen and to use only local foods. Guests can easily recognize the source of foods, the local ones highlighted by a special logo. This way, „Regional Buffet“ combines ecological aspects - like adequate stock breeding, preservation of a unique landscape and a short chain of transportation - with highest standards of quality and taste.

www.regionalbuffet.de

Diversity and quality – the very ingredients of Franconian cuisine. The menu may suggest Franconian fried sausages, “Sour” beef, a vinegar and wine marinated roast, a true traditional just like carp, accompanied by potatoes or potato dumplings and any version of Sauerkraut and cabbage. Asparagus – one of the favorites! A very special side order: “Kren”, the local version of horseradish, particularly tasty with boiled beef. A recommendation at any time: Cold platters – the variety of bread alone is legendary.

The perfect selection of beverages – a task not to be dismissed easily in culinary-minded Rothenburg! Connoisseurs of wines may particularly enjoy the rich selection of local red wines. A digestive after a rich meal? Peach Liquor made from local peaches may be first choice.





A very special treat that is a “must” on any local menu: Rothenburg snow balls. The favored dessert has been around for more than 300 years, and - contrary to its name - the short crust pastry may be enjoyed throughout the whole year. Bakeries, pastry shops and cafes offer permanent supply. The snow balls’ rich ingredients comprise flour, eggs, sugar, butter, cream and Franconian plum liquor. A special tool, the snow ball iron is used to deep-fry the spherical creation in hot oil. The name is owed to last step – powdered sugar takes care of the “snow” and the Rothenburg Snowball is ready to be relished!

An insiders’ tip for culinary Rothenburg: Christian Mittermeier, Chef of the restaurant “Die blaue Sau” (The Blue Hog) creates an unpretentious cuisine of yet highest quality. The motto, very loosely translated: Quality – no frills! The focus is directed towards the essentials, paired with finest quality. Selected wines round off an ambitious cuisine.



5.4 Cooperations

The prominent location in Central Franconia boosts Rothenburg's position as an important partner of several tourism destinations. The town perceives itself as part of Franconia as well as part of lovely Tauber-Valley. Located at the crossroads of the Romantic Road and Castle Road, it is the hub of two of the most beautiful routes in Germany. "Rothenburg ob der Tauber" itself is a term with world-wide reputation – nonetheless the marketing concept emphasizes an active branding of the destination. The partners at a glance:

Tourismusverband Franken e.V. The Tourism Syndicate Franken issues a wide choice of publications pertaining to tourism, and it represents its members via "Destination Franken" on fairs and trade shows.

Romantic Road Tourism Cooperation GbR

The "Romantic Road" (Romantische Strasse), one of the oldest - and undeniably - one of the best known holiday & scenic routes in Germany. Connecting Lower Franconia with the foothills of the Alps, it stretches from Würzburg to Füssen in the Allgäu region. Charming and inviting stop-overs are - amongst others - Rothenburg ob der Tauber (...above River Tauber), Dinkelsbühl, Nördlingen, Donauwörth, Augsburg, Friedberg and Landsberg/Lech. The route connects more than two dozen towns, precious little gems are lined up like a string of pearls: Historical towns, world-famous castles like King Ludwig's fairy tale chateaus, romantic river valleys, rural countryside, dark forests and last but not least the jagged crests of the Ammergau Alps.

www.romantischestrasse.de

"Castle Road" (Burgenstrasse e.V.)

Stretching over a distance of almost 1000 kilometers, from Mannheim to the "Golden City" Prague - that is "Castle Road" (Burgenstrasse), winding alongside proud castles, impressive chateaus and picturesque country towns. Meandering through four German States it passes the German border and reaches all the way into the Czech





Republic. Rich in tradition, it is equally suited for travel by car or bicycle, but also perfect for a hiking tour.

www.burgenstrasse.de



5. Stories in and about Rothenburg

6.1 The Rothenburg Night Watchman

Every night at 8:00 p.m. and 09:30 p.m. the Night-Watchman's bugle sends out its signal: Time to join the Night-Watchman on his nocturnal walkabout through Rothenburg.

His nightly routine through Rothenburg's historical center, from Market Place down to Castle's Garden and back via Burggasse takes the visitors back into the past, and illustrates in a rather entertaining and amusing fashion a way of life in medieval times, which in reality may have been less romantic than gruesome. The Night-Watchman's mixture of stories, anecdotes and historical events is accentuated by the romantic mood of dusk settling over Rothenburg.

Rothenburg's Night-Watchman is almost something like an international celebrity by now – but only few know the person behind the mask. From April until December he dresses up with Night-Watchman's cloak and paraphernalia and brings the figure back to life. 58-years old Hans Georg Baumgartner has absorbed the character of the Night-Watchman since the late eighties – and credibly represents the profession: Necessary in medieval times, yet socially disregarded and stigmatised.

Rather accidentally Baumgartner picked up the “profession” of a night-watchman. From a newspaper clip Baumann learned, that Rothenburg was in need for a successor for the previous night-watchman. From several hundred applicants, four were called for an interview, amongst them also Baumgartner, till then working as an independent sales representative. Following the successful interview and an examination, he was rewarded the position of the new Rothenburg Night-Watchman, explaining his nightly patrols in German and English language.





Over the years perfected the role of the Night-Watchman, one might even say, Baumgartner lives it. Nowadays, the Rothenburg Night-Watchman is well known far beyond the limits of the city, Germany or even Europe – and most visitors of the town on the cliff above river Tauber enjoy a stroll under the guidance of the Night-Watchman as an integral part of their visit to Rothenburg.

Guided tour with the Night-Watchman:

English: 15th March till 30th December (except 24th December), daily at 08:00 p.m.

Meet at Market Place

Tour: approximately 60 minutes

For further information please contact:

Rothenburg Tourism Service

Marktplatz 2; 91541 Rothenburg ob der Tauber

Fone: +49 (0)9861-404-800; Fax +49 (0)9861- 404-529

www.rothenburg.de info@rothenburg.de

and

www.nightwatchman.de



6.2 A hidden World

New theme tours in Rothenburg explore a hidden world, the town's complex water supply system in the early modern times.

Easter – the perfect time to visit the Rothenburg's fountains

Water is vital! A commonplace – especially for those who do not have enough! Rothenburg, the Franconian town high above river Tauber has been fighting the lack of groundwater for centuries. However – necessity can be a virtue: In the 16th Century the town's Council had a water supply installed that was of highest technical standard at its time. Not only did the Council take care of the citizens, it also built up a monument for its own glory. Today, the community benefits from an ample number of beautiful Renaissance fountains, scattered throughout the town and adding to the charming townscape. As of this coming season, special guided tours will explore the complex technology of Rothenburg's water supply and its importance in the historical context.

As early as 1544, Sebastian Münster of Basel reported in his book „Cosmographia““(the town Rothenburg) is lacking drinking water because of its elevation high above the surrounding terrain”. However, this is only part of the problem. The real difficulty is: The rock formation, Rothenburg is built on, consists of a mixture of shell limestone and sandstone. Rain just drains away into the ground and only appears again way down in the valley. From today's perspective a minor problem only; since modern technology is readily available to pump the water back up onto the cliff. Much more of a problem though in times, when steam engines or electrical power supply were yet to be invented. Dr. Karl-Heinz Schneider, Chairman of the association Alt-Rothenburg (Ancient Rothenburg) has intensely studied the Rothenburg water supply system at the beginning of modern times. The principal aim of the association is to explore the town's history. Schneider also suggested taking the subject “water” on for touristic purposes – supported and augmented by guided tours to the historically important fountains, to the underground “water world” and to the old pumping station.

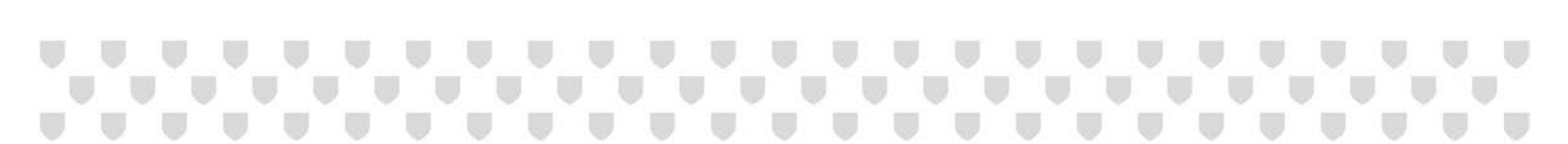




Now – what is the historical background of the Rothenburg water supply? A glance back into the 16th Century might help. Rothenburg had developed to an important Imperial town. Approximately as of the year 1550, intensive building activity started to change the then still medieval dominated face of the town – to a now bigger, more prestigious and harmonious appearance. Small walkways and foot paths were merged to create homogeneous streets; prominent buildings were reconstructed and decorated in the era's predominant style. Around 1560, the Town Council took a first approach towards a new water supply system. Dr. Schneider analysed the Councils correspondence with Georg Freymüller von Newstein from Munich – and concludes, that not isolated measures have been taken, but the whole system of fountains and wells was to be upgraded and expanded. A truly complex task – craftsmen from all the way up to Munich were consulted, but to no avail. The project was put on hold, reasons are yet unknown, says Dr. Schneider. Only around 1565/66 a new attempt was started. New springs were tapped and the water was piped into the town, fountains were constructed. Nonetheless, the reconstruction of the whole water system lasted till 1590. At the time, a Nuremberg well builder's plan was rejected – he had planned two big pump stations, near “Wildbad” and “Bronnenmühle”. Dr. Schneider reports, that in internal disputes the water quality of the Wildbad source was questioned, but also, that the millers raised concern, that their mill wheels might not run properly anymore because of the reduced water level caused by the pump stations.

Now a certain Hans Sommer from Kempten in the Allgäu region appears on the scene. He constructed a water reservoir on top of the “Klingenturm” in combination with a pump station in the Tauber-Valley, north of the town. The former plan, to collect the water from the “Wildbad” source, was now completely put aside. The new system, a technical highlight of its time, mastered the challenge to pump the water from the valley up into the town – covering a height of 80 meters. More fountains were constructed, all of them interconnected by underground led tubes. Some of the accesses into the complex underground water system still can be seen today, for example on the Market-Place near St. George's fountain. The town's archive holds a





list of the fountains around the years 1605/1607. No less than 25 groundwater and eight surface water fountains are listed. The concept with pump stations, piping and two fountains was not a cheap one! The Council spent 5000 Gulden for the project, quite a substantial sum. Just for comparison – the reconstruction of the town hall, the single most important municipal building cost about 20.000 Gulden. According to Dr. Schneider documents also prove, that some of the patrician houses had a functioning water supply by a pipe system early in the 16th Century. At the onset of modern times, tap water was no news for some of the Rothenburg citizens.

From today's point of view it was quite a lucky circumstance, that the town's water supply was such a prestigious project – casting much of its splendor back onto the originator – the City Council. Magnificence was the dominating and common factor during construction of the fountains, although the individual appearance may have changed from one to the next. Nevertheless, the fountains were basic commodities; hence they were in need of repair occasionally, says Dr. Schneider – and were then gladly adapted to the prevailing taste of the time. Unfortunately, the fountains are all exposed to the destructive effects of foul and cold weather, except for the historically important St. George's fountain, which is covered up during winter time. Located on Market Place since 1446, but with the decorative column with knight St. George and the dragon only added about 400 years ago. A fountain dating back to 1590 that survived the ups and downs of time nearly unchanged is Herrnbrunnen in the Herrngasse.

By the way: A guided tour along Rothenburg's various fountains is particularly rewarding during Easter time – although with the main emphasis not on technical issues or art history, but from a tradition's point of view. During Easter time, it is a good tradition in Franconia to decorate the fountains with green garlands, innumerable colorful Easter eggs and a magnificent crown on top. In Rothenburg, the fountains in Herrngasse, Rödergasse and lower Schmiedgasse transform into brightly colored messengers of Easter.



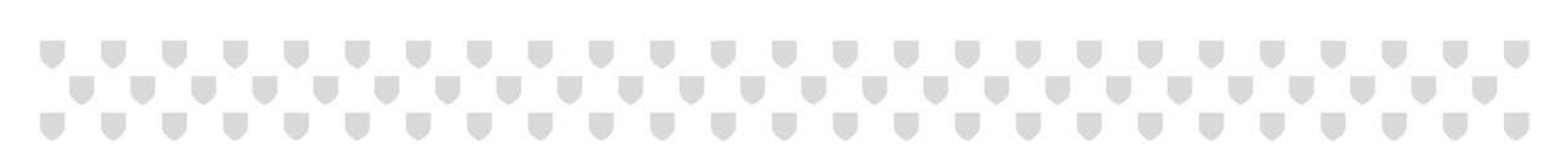
6.3 A walkabout through Jewish Rothenburg

Trying to ignore the omnipresent cars one may feel set back in time, thrown back into centuries long gone by: For good reason Rothenburg's Judengasse ("Jewish Lane") is considered one of the best preserved – and one of the very few left – medieval Jewish lanes in the German language area. Many of the buildings are dating back to the time around year 1400. More than mere reconstruction, memorial plaques or name plates – Jewish history itself comes alive when unraveling the town's past. Rothenburg, location of Jewish culture, tries to incorporate this heritage in an empathetic manner into its efforts to make Jewish history visible again. Reverend Dr. Oliver Gußmann not only published a compact guidebook of the Jewish Rothenburg, frequently he also personally presents historically significant Jewish locations on special theme tours.

Jewish roots in Rothenburg can be traced back as far as the 12th Century. Sources from Würzburg mention a certain Jew Samuel Biscoph in 1180. Jewish history – a constant change between ups and downs: A first zenith was the time of the then famous teacher of the Talmud, Rabbi Meir ben Baruch in the middle of the 13th Century. The Rabbi Meir ben Baruch Garden near the Jewish Dance-House still reminds of that period. Jewish citizens saw times of tolerance – and suffered times of brutal persecution and extinction. After the complete expulsion in year 1520, Jews were not allowed to settle down again in Rothenburg. Only in 1870, a new Jewish community emerged – only to be evicted again in 1938 during the National Socialist regime.

Visitors may follow up traces of the former Jewish Community in Rothenburg – either as a special guided tour (for details see <http://www.rothenburgtauber-evangelisch.de/tourismus>) or at one's own account. Reverend Dr. Oliver Gußmann has published the little booklet: "Invitation for a walkabout. Jewish Rothenburg ob der Tauber". It is available near St. Jacob's main entrance or in the Franciscan Church, alternatively it may be ordered in any bookstore: ISBN 978-3-933231-22-2.





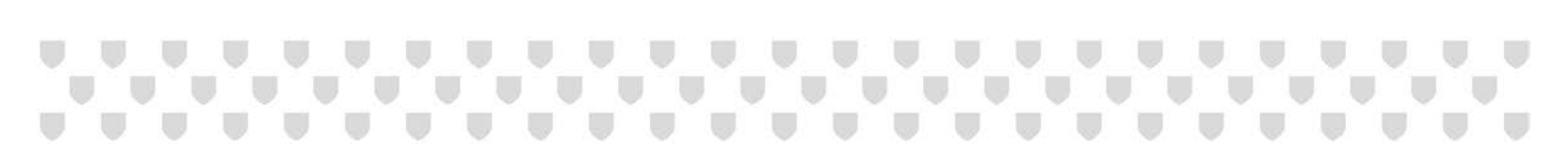
The tour passes eleven important locations and six memorial plaques around the town. Starting point is Kapellenplatz – the very location where the town's first Jewish quarter had its origin, a central position, completely with a Synagogue, a Talmud School, a dance hall and a Mikvah, the room for ritual baths. Already the first Jewish community had to suffer from several persecutions: the so-called Rintfleisch Pogrom in 1298, riots between 1336 and 1342 and the persecutions of 1348 and 1349, when the Jewish Community was held responsible for an outbreak of the Black Plague. Unfortunately, nowadays no original buildings are left at Kapellenplatz; they all were destroyed during the bomb raid of 31st March 1945. A memorial plaque reminds of Rothenburg's famous Rabbi Meir ben Baruch, right there on the original place of activity. In year 2010 The Rabbi Meir Garden was redesigned, its wall is adorned with ten Jewish tombstones, dating back to the 14th Century.

During the reign of Rothenburg's famous Mayor Heinrich Toppler, Jews were amongst the wealthiest citizens, paying substantial taxes to the town's treasury. Settling in the North of the town, the houses in today's Judengasse ("Jews Lane") still give an impressive testimony of the Jews social status at the time. Historians consider the street as the only preserved medieval Jewish street in the entire German language area, remarkable also because Jews and Christians were living together here in peace.

Several medieval buildings have been well preserved until today. A point of special interest: The doorway arches on house 15/17 look like Commandment Tablets. The cellar of house No. 10 shelters a little Mikvah – a model of the Ritual Bath can be seen in the Imperial Town Museum. A detour to the Imperial is almost mandatory anyway during the trip through Jewish Rothenburg. The Judaica department presents medieval Jewish tombstones, the official seal of the Jewish Community of 1410, an eight-armed Chanukka candle holder, and other memorabilia of the Jewish Community.

Only a short distance from "Jews Lane" there is the Schrankenplatz, former location of the new Synagogue of the second Jewish quarter (1407). This area was formerly





called Judenkirchhof ("Jewish Cemetery"), a clear indication of its original purpose. On 8th February 1520 the Synagogue was looted and the last Jewish families fled the town.

The eastern chorus of St. Jacob's Church might be the next short detour worth to be taken: The southern stained-glass-window, dating back to around 1390/1400 pictures the feeding of the Israelites with manna sent from heaven. Actually, five angels throw down typical Franconian bread roll and pretzels, throw them into the crowd of Israelites, characterised by the medieval Jews' hats and hooked noses. Castle garden follows next – "a place of bitter grief", as Reverend Gußmann calls it. A memorial on the outside of St. Blasius Chapel reminds of the pogrom, provoked by a nobleman called Rintfleisch from nearby Röttingen – all under the pretense of an alleged defilement of altar bread. Not only the brother of Rabbi Meir and his family were murdered in Rothenburg, but also 178 children. Almost 5000 Jews became victims of the cruel pogroms in Franconia at the time.

Finally a glance towards Herrngasse: As of 1861 all Jews in Bavaria were granted permission to settle wherever they desired – subsequently also in Rothenburg a new Jewish Community emerged. The number of Jewish citizens slowly increased to 100 around 1919. The new Synagogue was located on the corner of Herrngasse and Heringsbronnengässchen. A short blossoming only – Rothenburg's Jews suffered the first violent assaults of the Nazis already in 1933. The last 17 Jews were expelled from the town on 22nd October 1938 by the NSDAP county leader.

In 1947 the town was made responsible to restore the Jewish Cemetery near Wiesenstrasse. It had been defiled during Nazi times, tombstones had been thrown over. Today very few is known about the history of the last Jewish Community in Rothenburg – this Jewish history needs to be researched and kept alive, Reverend Dr. Oliver Gussmann tells us.



6.4 Rothenburg fights the Ravages of Time

Restoration of buildings around Market Place in excess of 1.3 Million Euro.

Also private business community invests in preservation of listed buildings

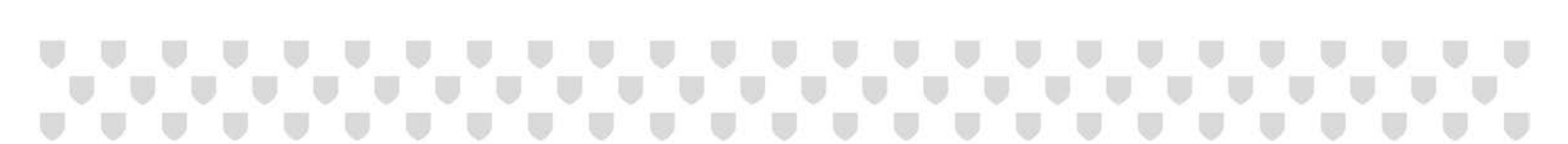
Rothenburg ob der Tauber: Lovingly restored house fronts, fountains and bays from times long gone by: Around two million visitors each year appreciate Rothenburg's unique atmosphere. History beaten in stone is both - the community's principal asset and a massive challenge: The town of 11.000 inhabitants accrues more buildings in need of restoration than capital cities like Munich or Berlin. As of early 2013 the community now meets the immense challenge: More than 1.3 million Euros will be spent for restoration work around Market Place. However, not only the town itself invests into the future of tourism – private business people invest substantial sums as well – combined with innovative ideas to survive in the highly competitive travel and tourism market – whilst maintaining a distinct own identity.

Preservation of historic buildings was not always a matter generally accepted and supported by the citizens of the small Franconian town. In the early 19th Century there was serious consideration amongst the City Council to have all old buildings knocked down to create space for a modern Rothenburg. The intrinsic charm of Rothenburg was recognized though in the second half of the 19th Century, when the first tourists discovered Rothenburg as an attractive destination – thus securing a new source of income for the town. The awareness for historic values grew and consequently Rothenburg was one of the very few towns that restored its medieval structure after the destruction of World War II. Today several concepts clearly prove that the preservation of historic architectural structures is absolutely up-to-date and rewarding – even if the saying still applies: “The stones gobble up money”.

“Fleischhaus” looks like a Christo-Installation

The amount of work and money that goes into the restoration of listed buildings can presently be seen around Market Place. Impressively framed by tall Patrician Palaces





on the eastern side, the Councils Tavern “Ratstrinkstube” with its decorative gable in the north, the Renaissance section of the Town hall in the west and finally the assembly of St. George’s Fountain and “Fleischhaus” to the south. However, for the time being scaffolded the gable of Fleischhaus (Meat-House) reminds more of a Christo-Installation than anything else. Costs for restoration of the timber framework: half a million Euro. The ravages of time did not leave Rothenburg’s landmark of 1240 unscathed: The Town Hall’s balcony (added 1681) will be dismantled and renovated for another 300.000 Euro. Scaffolding also adorns Councils Tavern “Ratstrinkstube” – following the significant building’s exterior renovation (clocks and carillon) for 550.000 Euro the interior will then follow in 2014. Prior to actual renovation, extensive inspections were completed, says Master Mason Michael Knappe. All renovation was intentionally concentrated in 2013, so that as of 2014 visitors may enjoy the view over Market Place unobstructed by scaffolding and construction works.

Even though Knappe points out, that a mile stone has been reached with the long overdue restoration work – the town will have to spend substantial sums for renovation in the future nonetheless. Routine work on the municipal fountains alone cost the community 700.000 Euro for the last 10 years. And there are more historical buildings awaiting their renovation – the fortification with no less than 40 towers and belfries, and sacral buildings like “Spitalkirche”.

Lodging in one of Germany’s oldest permanently inhabited houses.

The private business community spends substantial sums for renovation – appreciating the fact that much of the town’s romantic charm is owed to the large number of listed buildings. “Herrnschlösschen” for example, more than 1000 years old, is one of the oldest, still inhabited houses in Germany. Left unattended for more than 25 years, an innovative concept for a hotel brought new life back into the building. The success proved the idea right. In February 2013 “Tripadvisor” chose the most romantic hotels world-wide – Herrnschlösschen made it amongst the Top 25, as the one and only German hotel.



“Dedication to Cultural Assets”

“Live with the historical monument – benefit from the potentials and possibilities.” This is – loosely translated – the principle of 31 years old businessman Johannes Wittmann. In 2005 he inherited the traditional shop “Waffenkammer” (“Armory”) including the adjacent residential building. At the time, advisors recommended to refuse the heritage. The young man decided differently – well knowing that it would take years of time and a fortune of money to restore the decrepit building. “It is a piece of our culture, and one should commit oneself to it” Wittmann says. A combination of both, old building structure and modern shopping event, is the key. The “Armory’s” sales area with objects pertaining to “the life of the knights” was re-designed in a generous and open way; additionally the original 12th Century vault underneath the house has been opened for guests.

Further to „Waffenkammer“ Wittmann acquired another listed building in Rothenburg’s Judengasse (“Jews Lane”). After one and a half year of reconstruction, the 14th Century building re-emerged as the four-star luxury holiday home “710”. Guests will find a whirl pool in the luxurious bathroom, and a stylishly furnished living area, yet the feeling amongst timber framework, original ceiling beams and natural stone is decidedly “medieval”. The successful conversion was rewarded with Central Franconia’s award for “Preservation of Historic Buildings”

The 31-year-old concedes: Restoration of old buildings is a fight, it costs money and time, it is nerve-wrecking and it is a life-time job. On the other hand he emphasizes: To tear down old buildings or just to streamline them is like giving up your own identity – and medieval Rothenburg’s biggest potential right with it. So – rather go for it!

