



HEPPENHEIM

HISTORICAL CENTRE

About Heppenheim

- “Kreisstadt”, capital town of Hesse’s largest administrative district by area
- Wine and Theatre Festival town
- Located at the intersection of Bundesstraße 3 and 460
- Boundary Area 5214 ha, thereof 1630 ha forest
- Approx. 27,000 inhabitants (including the districts Erbach, Unter- and Ober-Hambach, Kirschhausen, Igelsbach, Mittershausen-Scheuerberg, Ober-Laudenbach, Sonderbach, Wald-Erlenbach)
- 122m above sea level (districts up to 365m above)
- **DB-Strecke, railroad connection:**
Frankfurt – Darmstadt – Mannheim – Heidelberg
- **OB-Linien, bus connection:**
Heppenheim – Jugenheim
Weinheim – Heidelberg / Weinheim – Mannheim
Grasellenbach / Odenwald
Neckartal
- **Autobahn connection:**
Frankfurt – Heidelberg (A5) direkt and
Frankfurt – Mannheim (A67) 5km away
- **Climate / Tourism:**
Favourable climatic conditions
Mediterranean vegetation
City of recreation and conferences
- **Sights of Interest:** Historical Market Place with Marienbrunnen, fountain, Medieval framework houses (i.e. Rathaus mit Glockenspiel, town hall with carillon; Liebig-Apotheke, Liebig Chemist’s Shop), St. Peter’s Church (“Bergstraße Cathedral”), Kurmainzer Amtshof, Mainz Electorate Court (with Museum of Local History and Folklore, East German “Culture and Local History Parlor”, “Schönbach Parlor”), Starkenburg castle ruin (youth hostel, café), “Adventure Trail Wine and Rocks” (“Wein und Stein Erlebnispfad”) Observatory (“Planetenweg”, experience path), Open Air Theatre, Bruchsee Recreation Area
- **Cultural Events:**
Bergstraße wine festival “Weinmarkt”, end of June
Street theatre festival “Gassensensationen”, end of July
Heppenheim theatre festival “Festspiele”, mid-July until beginning of September
Parish fair “Kerwe”, 1st weekend of August

10 Martin-Buber-Haus, The Martin Buber House



Residential house of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, who lived in Heppenheim from 1916 until he emigrated, during the Nazi dictatorship, in 1938. The Martin Buber House has been the seat of the International Council of Christians and Jews since 1978.

Freilichtbühne, Open Air Theatre



The open air theatre was built in 1955 to celebrate the 1200 year anniversary of the town. The terraced half round stage has a seating capacity of 2,500 people. The natural stage, which offers a delightful view of Starkenburg castle, has been the setting for a wide range of events i.e. concerts, theatre events, opera as well as operetta evenings. At times, 6,000 visitors came to the events that took place there. The amphitheatre can be reached, from the market place, within a few walking minutes.

About the town's history

Heppenheim's first documentary mention dates back to the Frankish era. It can be found in a deed of donation issued by a certain Macharius from Weinheim on 17th July 755. A short time later, Heppenheim got into the upcoming Lorsch Abbey's sphere of influence. In 773, Charlemagne endowed the march Heppenheim, a territory corresponding to today's Bergstrasse district, to Lorsch Abbey. For several centuries, Heppenheim remained under the rule of Lorsch Abbey. It was also the Imperial Abbey – under the direction of Abbot Udalrich – that had Starkenburg castle built, in 1065, above Heppenheim. Disputes with Archbishop Adalbert from Bremen, who wanted to get his hands on Lorsch Abbey, were the reason for the castle being built.

In 1232, Heppenheim and Starkenburg castle as well as the Lorsch Imperial Abbey came into possession of the Archbishopric of Mainz. As well as being a military stronghold, the castle now served as the administrative centre of the region, which was given the name "Amt Starkenburg" in 1265. As the archbishop's highest official, a burgrave resided at Starkenburg castle until the 17th century. From 1461–1623, the burgrave was the highest ranking official of the Elector Palatinate.

On the territorial lord's behalf, he was responsible for matters such as administration, high jurisdiction and territorial defence. His Bergstrasse subjects had to contribute to the maintenance of the castle and its garrison by doing compulsory labour. At the beginning of the 14th century Heppenheim received its town charter and, gradually, the town developed its townscape, which was dominated by framework houses. Heppenheim remained, until the 19th century, a small rural town, whose main source of income was, beside handcraft organised in guildes, agriculture, especially winegrowing.

With the Reichsdeputationshauptschluss, Principal Decree of the Imperial Deputation, of 1803, which abolished the Electorate of Mainz, Heppenheim became part of the Landgraviate (from 1806: Grand Duchy) of Hesse-Darmstadt. The process of industrialisation of the 19th century, reached Heppenheim only gradually. 1846 connection to

the Main-Neckar railway was effected. However, there was no noteworthy industrial settlement and, for this reason, the town retained its small trade and rural character. Nevertheless, a gradual change could be noticed. Heppenheim, since 1832 centre of an administrative district profited, during the imperial age, from the broadening of public sector projects and the resulting enhancement of the communal infrastructure. Between 1880 and 1914, administration buildings and schools were built. The exclusive residential area also developed during that time and the built-up area of the town multiplied in size, while its population grew from 4,500 to more than 7,000. But the time of upswing was suddenly interrupted during World War I. During the crisis-ridden years of the Weimar Republic, Heppenheim could only expand in a slow manner. The town experienced the dark era of Nazi dictatorship and World War II, by the end of which the town had suffered from numerous losses, including a great number of Jewish fellow citizens who did not survive the holocaust.

Only during the fifties, Heppenheim succeeded in overcoming the aftermath of the war and could participate in the general economic miracle. Initially, a number of new buildings arose in the then existing town area, after which, the west side of the town was developed for residential and industrial use, so that, for the first time, the town expanded to an appreciable degree into the flat area beyond the railroad line. The construction of the plant "Langnese", Europe's largest ice cream manufacturer, within the newly created industrial zone in 1960, was one of the highlights of urban expansion and marked the beginning of a new era concerning the urban economic life.

Due to the local government reform of 1972 Erbach, Hambach, Igelsbach, Kirschhausen, Mittershausen-Scheuerberg, Ober-Laudenbach, Sonderbach and Wald-Erlenbach have become districts of Heppenheim.

During the last two decades of the 20th century, the redevelopment of the historic centre of the town, which is dominated by framework, belonged to one of the town's greatest challenges.

2 Church

The Catholic parish church of St. Peter, often called "Dom der Bergstraße", Bergstrasse Cathedral, was built between 1900 and 1904. Its origin dates back to the year 755. The medieval tower situated left of the portal was integrated into the Neo-Gothic building. The Baroque crucifixion group dates back to 1755.



3 Schunkengasse

The street is dominated by houses built during the 17th and 18th century. In the middle, the church stairs, dating back to 1888, meet the street as a connection to the church. From the church you have a delightful view of the Schlossberg vineyards and Starkenburg castle, which was built in 1065.



4 The Kurmainzer Amtshof, Mainz Electorate Court

The Mainz Electorate Court was built in the 14th century as the administrative seat of the Mainz Archbishops. The Electorate Room, on the upper floor of the main building, is decorated with wall frescoes from the Gothic and Renaissance Periods. Today the Museum of Local History and Folklore as well as the so-called "Kultur- und Heimatstuben", "Culture and Local History Parlor" are located here. On the side of the main building is an oriel window housing a small chapel and a Gothic staircase tower with a Baroque dome, which served as the original entrance to the Electorate Room. Every year during the months of summer, the Heppheimer Festspiele, Heppenheim Theatre Festivals, take place in the court.



5 Kleine Bach

The name "Kleine Bach" was first mentioned in 1480, in reference to the former town brook. The houses number 12–16 are of particular significance. They had to be dismantled and moved while an underground car park was built. House number 14 was built around 1430. It is the oldest preserved half-timbered house in the town and therefore of special interest in terms of architectural history. The upper floor of house number 12, built around 1560, was lifted to a neighbouring site and relocated again due to redevelopment works which were carried out between 1994 and 1995. House number 3 was built by the Jewish community in 1791 and back then, the Jewish school and the teacher's flat could be found therein as well.



1 Marktplatz, Market Place

The market place, centre of the historical part of the town, is surrounded by two and three-storey houses, whose framework was constructed after a major fire in 1693. Their lower foundations date back to the 16th century. The town hall, built in 1551, was given a Baroque half-timbered structure. Counterpart is the former "Liebig-Apotheke", Chemist's Shop. Justus von Liebig served ten months of his time as an apprentice there between 1817 and 1818.



The guest house "Goldener Engel" with its portal dating back to 1782 used to be the guild lodge of the tailors. The house "Großer Markt No. 8" is the place, where Margarete Berg, maternal grandmother of the Princess Gracia Patricia of Monaco, was born. In the centre of the Market Place a fountain, with a statue of the Virgin Mary which dates back to the 18th century can be seen.

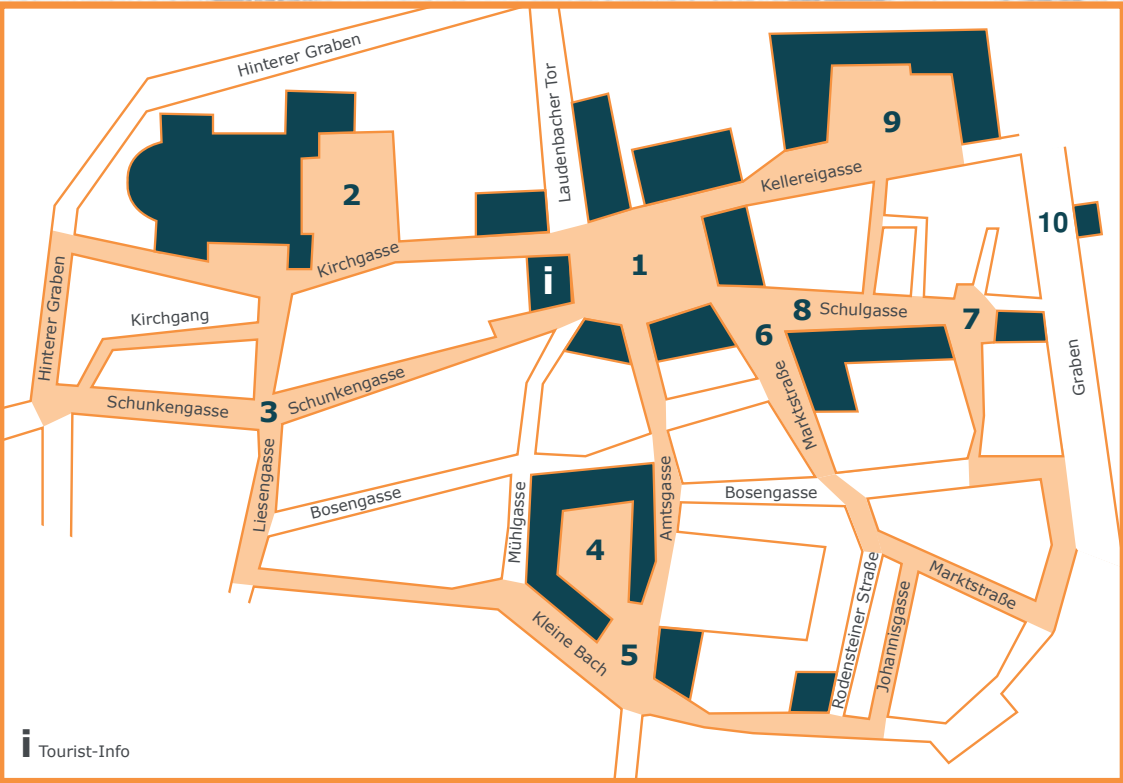


9 Landratsamt, District Administrator's Office

The former "Amtskellerei", a financial and administrative authority, was built at the beginning of the 16th century. From 1648, it was the seat of the financial administrator of the Mainz Electoral. Local authorities can be found there since 1821.



Tour of Heppenheim's Historical Centre



8 Schloßschule, Schloss-School

The last burgrave Freiherr, Baron, von und zu der Hees built this city palace around 1700 on the foundation walls of the "Rodensteiner Hof". Above the portal, the large combined coat-of-arms of the two families Hees/Holdinghausen can be seen. In 1824, the city purchased the building and established a hospital as well as a school therein. Today, it houses an elementary school.



7 Faules Viertel

The administrative seat of the reeve, who was the Lorsch Abbey custodian, was located in this quarter of town. The residential quarter "Fautsches Viertel", "Reeve's Quarter", was named after him. The name derived from the word Faut = Vogt, reeve. The so-called Stelzenhaus is one of the most significant houses dating back to the 17th century.



6 Marktstraße, Market Street

It connects the historic part of the town to the pedestrian zone via the "Wormser Tor", Worms Gate. The houses were built between the 16th and 18th century. In the court of house number 8–10 the remains of the so-called "Mönchsturm", an old residence tower dating back to the Lorsch era, still can be seen.



Booking and Information

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