



Old Main bridge



Saint Lawrence church



Saint Lawrence church, inside view



Old forge



Old townhall

Marktheidenfeld

Walking tour through the historic city

DA GEHT'S DIR GUT!
HISTORY | CULTURE | EXPERIENCE

5 The old Main bridge

The Marktheidenfeld Main bridge was the first stone bridge between Würzburg and Aschaffenburg that led over the river Main when it was opened for traffic on January 29, 1846. The imperial road 8 – today the federal highway 8 – a road which led across Germany, from Emmerich at the Lower Rhine to Passau in Lower Bavaria, crossed the river Main over this bridge. King Louis I. of Bavaria personally corrected and approved the plans. Because of its harmonic construction and the way it is integrated into the Main landscape the Main bridge in Marktheidenfeld has always attracted a great deal of interest and admiration since it was built. It also served as a construction model for other stone bridges.

On April 2, 1945, two of the bridge's arches were blown up in order to stop the approaching Americans. After the war, the bridge was repaired immediately and its former state was restored soon. Only the red sandstone balustrade was replaced by a metal railing. The bridge connects the Spessart Forest with the Franconian wine region. This is why Marktheidenfeld can consider itself „a bridge between forest and vines“.

On the bridgehead facing away from the city, the grateful inhabitants of Marktheidenfeld built a monument for King Louis I. About a kilometer north, and well to be seen from the end of the old Main bridge, a second Main bridge was built in 2001/02 in order to redirect traffic from the old Main Bridge.

6 Saint Lawrence church (St. Laurentius-Kirche)

Through the Herrngasse, one of the nine Main alleys, our walking tour leads us up to the catholic Saint Lawrence church with its magnificent facade from the mid 18th century. The church had been reconstructed again and again for over 700 years. This is why we can distinguish between 4 different building periods featuring the Romanesque, Gothic, Baroque and New Baroque building style. The building styles of the respective time period have always been integrated harmonically into the former building. Therefore it is justified to call Saint Lawrence church the history book of the city.

The former Romanesque building was constructed by the Monks from Holzkirchen. Under the leadership of the counts of Wertheim, Martin Luther's teachings had already been proclaimed in the 1520's in Heidenfeld. In 1612, after Heidenfeld again had become part of the archdiocese Würzburg, prince bishop Julius Echter of Mespelbrunn carried out the catholic reform and had a new church built in 1613/14 as a visible sign. The longhouse of the old Romanesque church was torn down. Only the choir, the lower part of the tower, is still intact and has been serving as sacristy ever since. The new parish church with only one nave was built in the so-called Echter style, a mix between the styles of the late Gothic and Renaissance period. Its pointed spire, the landmark of all Echter churches, was visible from a far distance. The tower burnt down in 1805 after it had been struck by lightning and then was replaced by the bulbous spire we see today.

The high altar painting from 1737 portrays the ordeal of the church's patron Saint Lawrence and was painted by Georg Sebastian Urlaub from Thüngersheim near Würzburg. The

altar painting includes the larger than life statues of Peter and Paul which, like the whole altar construction, were sculptured by Jakob van der Auvera, who was a sculptor that had settled in Würzburg. The patron Saint Lawrence can be found in form of a statue at the right column in the front as well as above the main church entrance on Obertorstraße, where he is typically portrayed holding a grate. According to legends, the deacon Lawrence died a martyr's death on a red-hot iron grate in the 3rd century.

During the renovation of Saint Lawrence church in 1982/83, late medieval frescos were found under the interior plaster of the sacristy. These were uncovered in 2003. Images of Christ as the judge of the world as well as symbols of the four evangelists appeared. It is assumed that these frescos date back to the early 16th century. Another historical finding was made in 2003. When renovating the sacristy, two historic grave covers were discovered which show William and Elisabeth of Krichingen (passed away in 1610/1612). William and Elisabeth of Krichingen were descendants of the old counts of Wertheim. The two grave covers, which unfortunately are damaged, are displayed in the back part of the church.

The fair in Marktheidenfeld is called Saint Lawrence Fair. Every year, around Assumption Day (August 15) Marktheidenfeld celebrates the Laurenzi Fair with visitors from near and far for 9 days.

A second Catholic church, today's parish church St. Josef, was built from 1965 to 1967 on Ludwigstraße and is a modern and humble building. The chapel (1890/90) which is located on top of the Kreuzberg is the destination for pilgrims

on religious journeys and is also used for weddings. The Protestant-Lutheran church, the „Friedenskirche“ (church of peace) was built in Würzburger Straße in 1896.

7 The old town hall and the old forge

The old town hall is next to Saint Lawrence church. In 1865, it replaced a smaller and dilapidated building as school and town hall. Above the entrance there is the coat of arms that Marktheidenfeld has born since 1883: the bridge with a star above it. If we take a closer look, we can also see the date 1846 (the year the bridge was opened), a crown and the letter L (a reference to Louis I., the builder of the bridge). Today the old town hall and the adjacent old forge from 1707, accommodate the community college of Marktheidenfeld.

We are back at where we started from. Our walking tour through the old city of Marktheidenfeld ends at the fishermen's fountain on the market square.

If you have a little more time, we would like to recommend a detour via Stiergasse and Würzburger Straße. On Stiergasse 20, a former barn, the Historischer Verein Marktheidenfeld und Umgebung e.V. (Historic Association Marktheidenfeld and Surroundings) established an **old forge workshop (8)** with the inventory from the old forge as a permanent exhibition. On Würzburger Straße, we do not only find the **Friedenskirche (9)** mentioned earlier, but also the **old prison (10)**, which was built in 1831/32 as the first official building in Marktheidenfeld as well as the former **district court building (11)**, built in 1886/87, which now is the police station.



HISTORIC CITY-TOUR





Market square



Franck House front



Franck House inside view



Main dockside (Mainkai)



It is inviting, this little town located at the river Main and in the Spessart Forest. And it is worth visiting with its charming half-timbered houses, the romantic alleys and the picturesque Main promenade. The settlement, which was originally named Heidenfeld, is more than over a thousand years old. Monks from the monastery Holzkirchen, located half way between Marktheidenfeld and Würzburg, influenced the town from the beginning; Holzkirchen in turn was part of the Benedictine Abbey Fulda. In 1948 Marktheidenfeld acquired the privileges of a town.

Today, Marktheidenfeld has a population of approx. 11,000 with about two thirds living in the central city and the other third in the 6 boroughs Altfeld, Glasofen, Marienbrunn, Michelrieth, Oberwittbach and Zimmern. Since the middle of the 20th century, the city literally experienced a population explosion: before World War II, only about 2,600 people lived in today's centre; whereas right after the war was over, there were already 4,300 inhabitants. Many refugees and expellees found a new home here and contributed to the progress of Marktheidenfeld.

Starting point for a walk tour through the historic center of Marktheidenfeld is the market square.



Fishermen's fountain on the market square

1 The fishermen's fountain on the market square

The stonemason Heinz Eschenbacher from Marktheidenfeld sculpted the octagonal fishermen's fountain on the market square. It portrays a fisherman at the river Main and is supposed to remind of Marktheidenfeld's past as a settlement of fishers and skippers. The town's coat of arms with the bridge, the lucky star (which is said to have risen over Marktheidenfeld during the building of the old Main bridge) and the coats of arms of the 6 boroughs as well as the coat of arms of the Breton partner city Montfort-sur-Meu are carved into the base of the fountain.

2 The Franck House

Our walking tour leads from the market square into Untertorstraße to the Franck House which already attracts attention from a far distance with its magnificent blue facade. In 1745, the vintner and merchant Franz Valentin Franck had this house built in the style of the late baroque. After changing ownership quite a few times – special mention should be made of the vintner Johann Georg Andreas Schulz (1735 - 1809) who is supposed to be the first person in Germany to have discovered how to produce sparkling wine in this house – in 1987 the Franck House eventually became the property of the town which from 1994 - 1998 renovated and restored the Franck House in the course of the urban renewal.

Especially worth seeing is the ball room on the upper floor with scenes from the Italian Commedia dell'arte, its ceiling

frescos portraying personifications of the continents and the elements as well as the dinner of Joseph with his brothers in the center. Today, the ball room is used for wedding ceremonies, receptions and concerts.

In the back part of the building, formerly used as agricultural outbuilding, as well as on the gallery on the first floor of the main building, changing exhibitions of regional and national artists are taking place on a regular basis. The vaulted cellar as the place where the sparkling wine was invented, the so-called „Sektwiege“, is used for cultural events. Since 1978, Marktheidenfeld has continued its tradition of vineyards with the „Marktheidenfelder Kreuzberg“ wine. This tradition had been interrupted by insects that had destroyed the vines at the beginning of the 20th century. The vineyards around Marktheidenfeld were once connected to the Franck House on a large scale.

3 The former city gates and the „Fleckenmauer“

The tour continues to the end of Untertorstraße where the buildings end and the lower gate (Untertor), facing Lengfurt, used to be. This gate is one of three city gates. In 1863, it was torn down because it wasn't modern anymore and an obstacle for the increasing traffic. The upper gate (Obertor) had already been torn down in 1845/46 and the middle gate (Mitteltor) in 1860. The three characteristics of a medieval town were jurisdiction, market rights and an encircling wall. At that time, Marktheidenfeld had two of these three characteristics: market rights and an encircling wall. Today, only parts of the former wall, the „Fleckenmauer“,

are still preserved. Visitors can get a good impression by stepping left into the small alley at the end of Untertorstraße and walking towards the old city's graveyard. Our actual walking tour, however, leads left towards the river Main, along the former „Fleckenmauer“ to the Main quay.

4 The Main quay – a cultural heritage

Originally, Marktheidenfeld was separated from the Main by a wall. In the course of a town expansion, a row of houses was built in front of the wall. This is why today Marktheidenfeld is facing the river. The walnut trees along the Main promenade used to belong to the houses behind them. Their residents took care of the trees and in turn harvested the walnuts. Individual houses as well as the Main quay are today listed as a heritage ensemble. This part of Marktheidenfeld looks especially beautiful from the other bank of the river Main and in the afternoon sun.

The Main has been Marktheidenfeld's lifeline over the course of centuries. The „Hädefelder“ (Franconian for the citizens of Marktheidenfeld) did not only earn their living as vintners, farmers or craftsmen but also as fishermen, skippers or sand scoopers (former profession). A ship's mast from 1955 reminds of these professions, just as the fishermen's fountain on the market square. Flood marks on the buildings prove that living near the river has not always been and still is not only idyllic.

Our walking tour leads us by the shipping jetty towards the old Main bridge.

Imprint

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