

Fortress Würzburg

Enjoy the magnificent view over Weissenburg and the surroundings from the bastions.

WEIßENBURG
in Bayern

From the 11th century onwards a Benedictine monastery stood here. During the Reformation it was dissolved, a provost was put in charge followed by a civil administration in 1537. In 1588 Margrave Georg Friedrich d. Ä. von Brandenburg-Ansbach erected a pentagonal fortress with the bastions "Jungfrau", "Krebs", "Roßmühle", "Kaltes Eck" and "Hauptwache" in what was then the modern Italian style of fortress building. The site was well chosen in the southern part of his territory, close to the Imperial city of Weissenburg, the Teutonic Order Palace in Ellingen, the territory of Count Pappenheim and that of the Prince-bishop of Eichstätt. (Amongst other architects Count Rochus Quirinus Linar should be mentioned, amongst master builders Blasius Berwart sen. and jun., as well as Gideon Bacher, amongst builders Caspar Schwabe and Thomas Martinatus). To the imperial citizens of Weissenburg the fortress always caused anxiety and posed a threat, especially during the Thirty Years War. In 1631 the fortress, into which the family of the Margrave had fled, was handed over to General Tilly (imperial side) without fighting. Until the end of the war it remained in the hands of the imperial troops or those in league with them. They survived all blockades and brought havoc to the town during periods, when it was held by the enemy. The original castle tract was destroyed by a great fire, "because the cook let the fat burn in the pan". It was reerected after the Thirty Years War. In 1791 the fortress passed into Prussian, in 1802 into Bavarian hands. In 1867 its status as fortress was cancelled and in 1882 the Bavarian king sold it- with the exception of the south wing – to Weissenburg. In the 19th and 20th century it served as prison and refugee camp, Charles de Gaulle being kept here in 1918. (A plaque inside the gateway commemorates his involuntary stay). After 1945 the castle was renovated and now houses a school.



The fortress Würzburg is situated on the highest point of the south Frankenalb, which rises to 630m. Surrounded by a dry moat hewn into the rock, it is an imposing and unique monument of a Renaissance fortress in Germany.



Important Sights

The five bastions (in part with protruding guard rooms) and the 7,5m deep and 23m wide moat (A-E).

The gateway with the arms of Margrave Georg Friedrich d. Ä. von Brandenburg-Ansbach and his second wife Sophia von Braunschweig- Lüneburg.

The arcades.

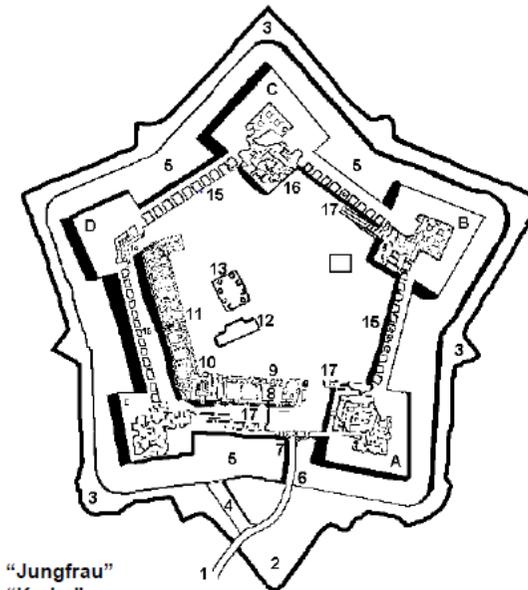
The magnificent Baroque entrance on the west side of the south wing with interior stairway for horses.

West wing with Renaissance gateway and deep-sunk well made by Saxon miners for use in those days. The well has a depth of 143m and is one of the deepest hand-dug wells found in European fortresses.

The cistern (called Ludwig cistern) in the west of the large courtyard, was built between 1827 – 31 under the Bavarian king Ludwig I. It has enough volume for over 1.35 Mio liter of rainwater.

The bastion on the north-west of the fortress is called

“Roßmühle” after a horse-drawn mill once housed in its interior. In the vaulted room not only wheat was ground but also gun powder which long storing had made clotty. Former vicarage (1814), now an inn.



- A. “Jungfrau”
- B. “Krebs”
- C. “Roßmühle”
- D. “Kaltes Eck“
- E. „Hauptwache“

- 1. Path leading to the fortress
- 2. Outer yard with car park
- 3. Remains of outer defences with weapon deposits
- 4. Path down into the moat
- 5. Moat
- 6. Damm leading to the entrance
- 7. Outside gateway
- 8. Passageway
- 9. South wing with arcades, chapel
- 10. Stairway for horse and rider
- 11. West wing with deep-sunk well and Renaissance gateway
- 12. Inn
- 13. Main cisterne
- 14. Cisterne for filtering water
- 15. Casemate, living quarters and storage places
- 16. Roßmühle (mill)
- 17. Gun platforms

more information:

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