



City walk: Romans, fools, prince-electors

Suitable for

everyone who wants to experience a large portion of Mainz within a few hours.

Accessibility

is not ensured.

Duration

approx. two to three hours

Start

Schillerplatz

Stops

1. Carnival Fountain – Osteiner Hof – Bassenheimer Hof
2. Kupferbergterrasse – Haus Kupferberg – Roman Gate
3. St. Stephan - Chagall Windows
4. Citadel – Drusus Stone
5. Roman Theatre
6. Museum of Ancient Seafaring
7. Rhine Waterfront - Fort Malakoff
8. St. Ignaz
9. Augustinerstraße - St. Augustine's Church
10. Old Town

Further information

can be found on the "Historical Mainz" slabs in front of the attractions



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Welcome to our virtual city walk

Are you just passing through Mainz or only staying for a little while and want to explore the capital of Rhineland Palatinate on your own and on foot? This virtual city walk will assist you with your historical journey through time.

The selected route leads you to Mainz attractions which are all close to the centre. Let yourself be captivated by the history of the Romans, fools and prince-electors in Mainz.

1. Carnival Fountain – Osteiner Hof – Bassenheimer Hof

Your tour begins at Schillerplatz in front of the **Fastnachtsbrunnen** (carnival fountain) - and thus with fool's Mainz. Because the fountain is vitally important to all real "Meenzer" (people from Mainz): Every year on 11/11, all people celebrating Carnival in Mainz (fools) gather here when the clock on the balcony of the facing Osteiner Hof (Court of Ostein) strikes 11 minutes past 11, which marks the "fifth season" of Carnival. The carnival is traditionally opened with the announcement of the 11 carnival laws.

The 8.50 metre-high carnival fountain, unveiled in 1967, designed by Blasius Spreng, is a comparatively young monument in Mainz. Nevertheless, you can't imagine it not being in the cityscape. With over 200 figures from carnival and mythology, it is a symbol of typical Mainz joie de vivre.

Look a little closer - which figures do you recognise? Father Rhine, the monk and the man with the blockhead, the cat, Till Eulenspiegel and the city goddess, Mogontia, the purse scrubber and the paragraph rider. They are all examples of the variety of fantasy motifs that populate the Carnival fountain.

You will encounter the route's first electorate relic directly opposite. The **Osteiner Hof** (Court of Ostein) was built in the mid-18th century as a family palace for the prince-elect, Johann Friedrich Karl von Ostein. When Napoleon's occupying forces and military authorities moved in, it was also commonly known as the "Gouvernement". From 1958 until 2014, the palace functioned as headquarters for the German armed forces.

Bassenheimer Hof (Bassenheimer Palace) extends from here to Schillerstraße. This palace was also built around 1750 for the prince-elect's widowed sister. Today, Bassenheimer Palace is the seat of the Ministry of the Interior.

***Detour:** Would you like to learn even more about fool's Mainz but are not a guest in the fifth season? Then pay a visit to the Carnival Museum at the end of Schillerplatz in the Proviant-Magazin!*

The recommended route continues with the Romans. Walk right past Bassenheimer Hof and then turn left onto Emmerich-Josef-Straße. At the end of the street you will find the main gate to the former Mainzer-Aktien-Bierbrauerei brewery. You will reach the Kupferbergterrasse via the steps opposite.



2. Kupferbergterrasse – Haus Kupferberg – Roman Gate

On **Kupferbergterrasse**, you have the wonderful opportunity to stop for while and enjoy the beautiful view of the city below. From here you can see the cathedral, the state theatre and even the Christuskirche church in Kaiserstraße.

At the end of the terrace is the former **Sektkellerei Kupferberg** sparkling wine cellars with its seven storey cellar facilities. A visit is definitely recommended, however it is only possible with a reservation (www.kupferbergterrasse.com).

You will find the remnants of one for the latest Roman city gates in Germany in the courtyard of the new housing forum (there are several entrances) which is located above the Kupferbergterrasse. The former **Roman gate** passage measured more than four metres wide. It was constructed around 360/370 AD from the stones of the demolished legion camp, which was located on the grounds of today's university clinics and on the Kästrich. Ruts of almost two metres wide are ground in to the gate's passage as a kind of ancient fingerprint.

Now walk back past the round fountain and straight ahead along Kästrichstraße. At the end of the street go left down Gaustraße - which lately is also humorously known as the "San Francisco of Mainz". Nevertheless, the Gaustraße tramway, opened in 1923, is the steepest in Germany, with an incline of up to nine percent. Cafés, restaurants, wine and cocktail bars and proprietor-run shops to the left and right of the tramway invite you to have a break or take a stroll.

After about 100 metres you will see St. Stephan's church on the right.

3. St. Stephan - Chagall Windows

The Gothic hall church was built between 1260 and 1340. Since it is the biggest church building in the city after the cathedral, and probably contains the mortal remains of Willigis, cathedral founder, it is also known as the "second Mainz cathedral". The famous windows by Marc Chagall make **St. Stephan's** a tourist attraction which attracts visitors from all over the world every year.

Colourful images from the Old Testament stand out from the dominating bright blue background. You will have to admit: a visual experience worth seeing. Incidentally, Marc Chagall was 98 years old when he created the last of these nine windows shortly before his death. St. Stephan's was almost completely destroyed by bombing raids in the Second World War. The octagonal tower in the cloister threatened to topple down due to a crack reaching from top to bottom. It ultimately owes its salvation to the rebellious character of Mainz spirit, which persistently and successfully opposed the planned demolition. Before you leave the church, don't miss out on a visit to the beautiful late-Gothic cloister. It is as if you're stepping into another world which doesn't exist in time. The peace and quiet that prevails here is almost palpable and has a relaxation spa-like effect.



But now it's time to head for our next destination, the citadel. Turn right when you leave the church and walk along Stephansstraße and cross Eisgrubweg. Now follow the street opposite, Am 87er Denkmal.

4. Citadel - Drusus Stone

After a few minutes you will reach the **citadel**, enthroned high above the old town on Jakobsberg hill. Its predecessor was the Schweickhardtsburg fortress which prince-electors Johann Schweickhardt von Kronberg had built in 1620. However in 1631, Mainz was already occupied by Sweden during the Thirty Years' War. The actual development of today's citadel, with its regular layout and the four bastions Alarm, Tacitus, Drusus and Germanikus, began in 1655 under prince-electors Johann Philipp von Schönborn. The fortress towering over Mainz did not serve its purpose for long, however, as the city did not have the money for a powerful garrison. French troops took the city in the Palatinate Succession War. Today, the citadel is home to different municipal offices. Furthermore, the structure serves as the location for the annual nationally renowned Open Ohr Festival.

In the south-west corner of the fortress, you can see the **Drususstein** (Drusus stone) - an original 30 metre tall Roman monument. It was erected in 9 AD by the Roman army in honour of the general and emperor's brother, Drusus. The general, who is considered the founder of the city of Mainz, had an accident on the way back from a military campaign on the Elbe. He succumbed to his serious injuries.

Go back from the Drusus stone, across the citadel courtyard and through the arched gates of the commandant's building beyond Zitadellenweg. Now, if you turn around, you will see the figure of St. Jakob keeping vigil on the gable above the gate.

5. Roman Theatre

Follow Zitadellenweg downhill and soon you will be standing in front of another reference to the Roman history: the ruins of the **Roman theatre**. Stop for a moment inside and you will appreciate that you are looking at 2,000 years of history exactly on this site. Just imagine: The largest theatre north of the Alps once stood here. The ancient theatre had an auditorium which was 116 metres wide. The stage measured 42 metres. The audience rows offered places for approximately ten thousand visitors - ten times more than will fit in Mainz state theatre's great hall today.

The remnants of the theatre were stumbled upon when building the railway in 1884. At the time, however, no one knew exactly what had been "discovered". Therefore, these findings became victims of the railway construction. It only became clear in 1916 what part of Mainz south station had been built on. The irony of fate: in the war years that followed, the historically significant location was forgotten and was even filled in again.

Excavation of the theatre ruins finally began in spring 1999. Since then, archaeologists and lots of other voluntary helpers from the Mainz general public, even school classes, have worked hard and dug so that this valuable testimony to the city history can be brought to light. The south train station adjacent to the archaeological site was renamed



in 2006. Since then, commuters and city visitors get on, off and change trains at "Mainz - Römisches Theater" station (Mainz Roman Theatre). A glass partition on the platform has now opened up the view to the Roman theatre. A real window to the past!

Your next destination, the Museum of Ancient Seafaring, is also devoted to objects discovered from the Roman Age. And it is very close by. The best way is to walk back up Zitadellenweg and right down Kiesweg, which leads to Albanstraße. Turn right again at the end of Albanstraße into Holzhofstraße. Alternatively, and more quickly, you can reach Holzhofstraße via some stairs next to the Roman theatre on the platform directly below in the station Mainz - Römisches Theater. Walk through the station underpass and along to the station exit on to Holzhofstraße.

6. Museum of Ancient Seafaring

The Museum of Ancient Seafaring is located directly on the Holzhofstraße/Neutorstraße intersection. The entrance is immediately on the right in Neutorstraße. The shiny building is flooded with light and once served as market hall. Today there are six ship parts from the Roman Age on display, which were unearthed in 1981/82 during construction works near to the Rhine waterfront. The artefacts owe their good condition to the high moisture content in the layers of earth in which they were encased for almost 2,000 years.

Particularly interesting: During the excavation, different types of ship were unearthed, including a passenger ship, a warship and two wide heavy load vessels. Visitors can discover how Roman ships actually looked by means of the museum reconstructions. The museum is open daily from 10 am until 6 pm, apart from Mondays. Entry is free.

Next, we will make a detour to the Rhine waterfront. When leaving the museum, turn right into Holzhofstraße. Cross the Holzhofstraße/Rheinstraße intersection and take Dagobertstraße between the DB Cargo building and Fort Malakoff Park.

7. Rhine waterfront/Fort Malakoff

Anyone feeling hungry or thirsty has the chance to satisfy both near to the Rhine waterfront. In addition to the food, drink and beautiful view over the Rhine, there is plenty of Mainz history to discover. For example, **Fort Malakoff**, built in 1873 and made of red sandstone cuboids, as a part of the Rhine waterfront fortification. The templar gate a couple of metres further is also part of the so-called "new Rheinkehl fortification". Behind it is the Fort Malakoff park. In addition to the gastronomic establishments, a shopping gallery, the Hyatt Regency Hotel, the "Mainzer Kammerspiele" theatre and several offices are housed here. After a stroll through the shopping passage, leave the Fort Malakoff complex through the revolving door to find yourself on Rheinstraße. On the other side of the street, the historical Mainz old town can be reached via Templergasse.

8. St. Ignaz

After a few metres, you come out into Kapuzinerstraße. You are now standing in front of **St. Ignaz's church**. Built between 1763 and 1774/75, it is built in a transitional



Rococo/Classical style. Since the parish was not very wealthy, building the church was only possible through great sacrifice and the financial support of three prince-electors. The figure of the church patron, St. Ignatius, who died a martyr's death in Rome in 107, keeps watch over the gateway. The absolute silence that awaits you inside the church is soothing and inviting for a short rest. You quickly forget the noisy bustle of the outside world. Since the façade was extensively renovated from 2009 until the beginning of 2015, it is now the interior's turn, which has been unchanged since its construction. Church services continue to take place and you can gladly take a look inside the church during your city tour.

Right next to the church, on Ignazplätzchen, you will see a crucifixion group (1518), donated by the most important late Gothic sculptor in the mid-Rhine region, Hans Backoffen, and his wife. When moving on, pay attention to the group of houses opposite from the 16th to 18th centuries for a moment. Incidentally, the street is named after the Capuchin monastery built in 1618 and abolished in 1802. Now keep right and continue onto Grabenstraße, past the ice cream parlour and to the left of the street, straight on to Augustinerstraße.

9. Augustinerstraße - Augustinerkirche

The picturesque **Augustinerstraße** is the vibrant heart of the old town. Until the 17th century, it was the city's main shopping street. Today it offers wide range of everything that the people of Mainz, and particularly visitors to Mainz, desire. You will find small shops and boutiques, cafés, wine bars and wine shops, pubs and restaurants with a typical Mainz atmosphere from one end to the other, as well as in the small branched off streets.

In the midst of the hustle and bustle is the magnificent **Augustinerkirche** (St. Augustine's Church (1768-1776)) with its Baroque façade incorporated into the row of houses. It was built between 1768 to 1776 for the adjacent former monastery of the Augustinian hermits and today it is a seminary church. Its interior is also impressively beautiful. The ceiling frescoes give an insight into the life of holy Augustine and the history of the Mendicant Order which has been located in Augustinerstraße since the 13th century. Unlike many other churches in Mainz, the St. Augustine's survived the Second World War unscathed. Now, quickly to Kirschgarten around the corner and your city tour is almost at an end.

10. Old town

Wander a few metres further along Augustinerstraße and on the left you will see the Kirschgarten with its romantic timbered houses and Marienbrunnen fountain. Incidentally, both the square and the street share the name "Kirschgarten". This is often mistakenly attributed to the tree stump which can be found by the bakery "Zum Beymberg" (house no. 19). This is actually an oak stump. However, in her dissertation "Names of Streets and Places in Mainz" (published in 2008 by Franz Steiner Verlag (publishers) Stuttgart), Dr Rita Häuser traces the name back to a large garden area with cherry trees that was located here in the Middle Ages. The "Kirschborn" (Cherry Spring) spring also has its source nearby.



Now take a small stroll through the old town's little streets: Pass through Kirschgarten Straße, then turn left into Schönbornstraße and left again into Badergasse. Have you noticed something about the street signs? Some are blue, some red. The streets with red signs lead to the Rhine and those with blue ones run parallel to the river. There are also several myths about this: These include the garrison soldiers finding a quicker way to their barracks. This feature is actually ascribed to a reform from the mid-19th century. At that time, the system for numbering houses and street markings was very complicated in Mainz. The reform provided a remedy.

Badergasse takes you directly back to Augustinerstraße, where you can finish your city tour with a well-deserved glass of wine. Whether you now turn left or right, Mainz old town presents you with an abundance of hospitable wine bars and other restaurants. The decision, dear visitor, we leave to you and your taste. Have fun!