

# HISTORICAL WALK



incl. map



## IN THE OLD TOWN

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## HISTORICAL WALK

### Explanations:

..... Historical Walk

..... Green belt walk

..... Course of the town wall

 Ring of parks around the old town

● Historical Walk (Stops: 1 - 51)

● On Goethe's trail

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 Cathedral   | 27 Engelsgasse 5                                |
| 2 Michaelskapelle   | 28 Engelsgasse 22                               |
| 3 Brodschirm 6  | 29 Jäcksburg 13                                 |
| 4 Brodschirm 2  | 30 Palais Papius,<br>Kornblumengasse 1          |
| 5 Fischmarkt 9  | 31 Museum of the imperial court,<br>Hofstatt 19 |
| 6 Fischmarkt 10   | 32 Zuckergasse 8                                |
| 7 Former residence of the Imperial<br>Chamber of Justice, Fischmarkt 13 | 33 Ludwig-Erk-Platz 4                           |
| 8 Schwarzadlergasse 2   | 34 Former Franciscan Church,<br>Schillerplatz   |
| 9 Domplatz 8  | 35 Jerusalemhaus, Schillerplatz 4               |
| 10 Domplatz 3   | 36 Jewish cemetery                              |
| 11 Domplatz 17  | 37 Synagogue memorial plaque                    |
| 12 Blaunonnengasse 1  | 38 Silhöfer Straße 22                           |
| 13 Lottehaus, city museum and<br>Viseum, Lottestraße 8 - 10             | 39 Silhöfer Straße 15 - 19                      |
| 14 Pariser Gasse 36   | 40 Eisenmarkt 9                                 |
| 15 Pariser Gasse 30   | 41 Eisenmarkt 7                                 |
| 16 Pariser Gasse 20 - 22  | 42 Lahnstraße 35                                |
| 17 Obertorstraße 21   | 43 Am Lahnpförtchen                             |
| 18 Town wall, Butzbacher Gasse  | 44 Old Lahn Brigde                              |
| 19 Lapidarium of boundary stones  | 45 Hospital Church                              |
| 20 Säuturm, Turmstraße  | 46 Eselsberg 1                                  |
| 21 Kornmarkt 5  | 47 Hauser Gasse 17                              |
| 22 Kornmarkt 7  | 48 Hauser Gasse 26                              |
| 23 Schmiedgasse 1   | 49 Town wall                                    |
| 24 Engelsgasse 2<br>(corner of Kornmarkt)                               | 50 Rose Garden                                  |
| 25 Engelsgasse 1  | 51 Goethe Well                                  |
| 26 Engelsgasse 3  |   |

● historic town gate (no longer existing)

- |                  |              |
|------------------|--------------|
| 1 Silhöfer Tor   | 4 Hauser Tor |
| 2 Obertor        | 5 Brückentor |
| 3 Wöllbacher Tor |              |

 Tourist-Information

 stairs

## HISTORY OF WETZLAR



Eisenmarkt

### A Walk through the Historical Old Town

The beginnings of the town of Wetzlar go back to the 8th century, although the town name is first documented in 1141. The old trade route from Frankfurt to Cologne and Antwerp, the *Hohe Strasse*, passed through what is now modern Wetzlar, fording the Lahn River where later, in the 13th century, a stone bridge was built. Numerous finds testify to settlements during the Carolingian period. In 897, the Conradian bishop Rudolf of Würzburg consecrated a church to the Divine Savior at the site of the present cathedral. Shortly thereafter the church was assigned to the *Marienstift*, a lay order. A town with craftsmen and merchants gradually grew up around the church complex. In April 1180, Emperor Frederick Barbarossa confirmed imperial privileges for "his" Wetzlar burghers, and the up-and-coming town assumed the status of an imperial free town. The town was administered by a reeve and a sheriff together with a mayor, aldermen, and a town council. Kalsmut, a Staufer period castle located high above the Lahn River valley, was once inhabited by families of vassals, but it had fallen into disrepair by the 16th century. The largely intact tower of the ancient Staufer castle is now used as a lookout tower.

To this day, the nomenclature of the streets and market places of Wetzlar reflect its topography and mediaeval structures.



# HISTORY OF WETZLAR



Cathedral

Names of former trades and professions, commodities, public services and institutions, and religious orders are to be found.

From the 13th century on, Wetzlar was protected by a city wall with five gates and at least nine towers, all of which had to be maintained by the guilds and burghers of the town. In the 19th and 20th centuries, all of the gates and towers were torn down, with the exception of one tower, the *Säuturm* and one gate, the *Karlsmunntor* in the suburb of Silhofen. Large original and restored sections of the original town wall still define the old town, beyond which today there is a green belt of urban parks.

Construction of the cathedral was never completed. From the mid-14th century onwards, the up-and-coming imperial free town of the early Middle Ages devolved into an impoverished town unable to fund further work on the church. Contrary to plans, parts of the earlier Romanesque church were not torn down, but left standing, as the north tower and the west facade could not be completed. The money for such a grand edifice just wasn't there.

When the people of Wetzlar converted to Protestantism, the nave was used for Protestant services while the choir was reserved for the use of the Catholic lay order



Fischmarkt

of the church. The cathedral today is history in stone, commanding the admiration of the modern-day observer.

The economic decline of the late Middle Ages affected the town's entire population, which withdrew into its walled enclave, allowing settlements outside the walls to deteriorate. During these times of extreme hardship, the town's citizens, mostly merchants and craftsmen, turned to farming the lands within the town's jurisdiction.

Sanctuary was given to Protestant Walloon refugees fleeing religious persecution in 1586. This did not, as hoped, bring an economic upturn, but it did encourage religious tolerance. The refugees were able to build new homes in Wetzlar, thus helping to close some of the gaps that had arisen in the economically depressed town. Theirs and the homes of more established families were often finely decorated half-timbered houses. Such houses, however, all too often fell victim to fire. Well up into the 18th century, entire streets were reduced to ashes by hard-to-contain fires.

It wasn't until 1690 that prosperity finally arrived when the Imperial Chamber of Justice, the supreme German legal court, made Wetzlar its seat. Lawyers and representatives of the nobility from the entire Holy Roman Empire of the

## HISTORY OF WETZLAR

German Nation were to be found in Wetzlar, some for short stays only, but others brought their families along and established themselves in the town. Newly built homes, beautiful mansions and other edifices including a Baroque church soon changed the face of the town. These were often ornamented with signs, symbols and other forms of decoration, giving the streets an added flair. The streets were full of people from far and near, and cultural life flourished. Today, the mostly fully stuccoed facades of the buildings of this period provide a charming contrast to the carefully restored half-timbered houses of five centuries.

When the empire was dissolved in 1806, so too was the court, and Wetzlar once again became just another unimportant small town. Only a short time earlier, in 1802/1803, Wetzlar had lost its status as an imperial free town. Now came the loss of its economic base. In 1815, Prussia assumed sovereignty over the town. In the second half of the 19th century, the optics and the iron-working industries established themselves in Wetzlar. This new, industrial Wetzlar expanded well beyond the boundaries of the old city wall, stretching far into the Lahn River valley and the surrounding hills.

The densely built, seemingly intertwined houses of the old town with their characteristic slate roofs, when viewed together with the 700-year-old stone bridge and the stylistically truly unique cathedral, form an unmistakable and unforgettable image.

### On the Path of Goethe

Numerous young lawyers were to be found at the Imperial Chamber of Justice, the supreme German court, that had its seat in Wetzlar from 1689/1690 to 1806. Here they were expected to complete their education and gain practical experience. One such budding young lawyer was Johann Wolfgang Goethe, who arrived in this "capital of jurisprudence" on May 10, 1772, which he found to lack the enticing flair of the university towns he had known up to then.



Jerusalemhaus at the Schillerplatz

He did manage to matriculate at the court, but he was unable to force himself to delve into the tediously dry realm of law. Instead, he busied himself socially with other young lawyers, also occupying himself with his early literary work, as well as developing a new sense of nature.

At a ball attended by the young people of Wetzlar in the hunting lodge in Volpertshausen, he met Charlotte Buff, the daughter of an official of the Teutonic Order. In the following weeks he spent a great deal of time at the local seat of the Teutonic Order, in the "paradisiacal area" and in the neighbouring town of Garbenheim. His love of Charlotte was in vain, as she was already engaged to legation secretary Johann Christian Kestner. On September 11, 1772, a few weeks after Charlotte made clear to Goethe that he "could hope for nothing other than friendship," he left Wetzlar, following the right bank of the Lahn River heading toward the Rhine.

Once back in Frankfurt, he received the news from Kestner that their common acquaintance, Karl Wilhelm Jerusalem, had taken his own life in his apartment in Wetzlar. Jerusalem's fate and Goethe's own experiences were the initial impulses leading to Goethe's epistolary novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, which was first published in September 1774. While following Goethe's trail through Wetzlar, it is easy to reconstruct the connections between Karl Wilhelm Jerusalem and Goethe's *Werther*.

## STOPS



Cathedral

### 1 Cathedral

The Cathedral, formerly the collegiate parish Church of Our Lady of Adoration, has remained unfinished. On the site of the current church once stood a 12th century Romanesque church which itself was preceded by two earlier churches. Construction of the choir of a new church began in 1230. The building plans were changed a number of times, as is apparent when observing the variety of styles from early to late Gothic. After only partial completion of the splendid south tower and west facade, construction came to a halt due to lack of funds. Of the many stone carvings and statues planned for the outside walls, only a modest portion was completed. The Romanesque west front and north tower, known as the Heidenturm or "Heathen Tower," were left standing and are an integral part of the current church structure.

Entrance to the church is through the early Gothic south portal. Very little of the original interior has survived other than the Romanesque font from the earlier church, a large, late 14th-century Pietá, two depictions of the Mother of God on a crescent moon and other figurines from the late Middle Ages. There are a number of interior details such as the pulpit and the Baroque tombstones which date from the time of the Imperial Chamber of Justice.

The church has been used concurrently by both Protestant and Catholic congregations since the Reformation.

### 2 Michaelskapelle (Chapel of the Archangel Michael)

A part of the former cemetery south of the cathedral had to make way for the expansion of the Gothic church. A chapel dedicated to the archangel Michael was then built as an ossuary. Bones exhumed from older graves to make room for newer burials were reinterred in the chapel which consisted of two sections, a lower chapel for the bones and an upper chapel dedicated to St. Lawrence. The building was later used as storage for Imperial Chamber of Justice archives. Since 1854 it has once again served as a place of worship. The door is assumed to be the original one. The stone carving of the crucifixion on the west facade dates from 1509.

### 3 Brodschirm 6

Wetzlar's oldest half-timbered structure, dating from 1356. It has three stories and is characterized by vertical beams spanning the entire height of the building and by the hanging trusses. The building was carefully restored in 1986, being exemplary of the style of half-timbered structures of the Middle Ages.

### 4 Brodschirm 2

August Bebel, one of the founders of the Social Democratic Party in Germany in 1869, lived in Wetzlar as a youth and did his apprenticeship here. His mother was a native of Wetzlar and his father was a non-commissioned officer in the Prussian army. After the death of his step-father in late 1846, the family moved from Cologne-Deutz to his mother's hometown. After her death in 1853, he and his brothers were supported by the Johann David Winkler Orphans' Fund. Bebel completed his apprenticeship as a lathe operator and subsequently left Wetzlar in 1858. He often returned to Wetzlar, his "second" hometown.

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### 5 Fischmarkt 9

Originally built as a stable in 1599, it was well-known in the 18th century as the inn "Zum Goldenen Löwen". The innkeepers were also postmasters for the Hesse-Kassel, the Electoral Palatinate and the Thurn and Taxis post-house.

### 6 Fischmarkt 10

Fischmarkt 9 and 10 were once one property and belonged to the noble postmaster family Emerich. Many members of the family pursued careers in law. Friedrich Joseph Emerich, son of an impoverished Imperial Chamber of Justice procurator, was born here in 1773. He championed the ideals of the French Revolution and maintained a friendship with the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin. He died mentally deranged in 1802.

### 7 Former residence of the Imperial Chamber of Justice, Fischmarkt 13

Originally the town hall, dating from the mid-14th century and fundamentally altered a number of times, it became the seat of the highest German court, the Imperial Chamber of Justice of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, in 1690 and was its registry from 1756 up to its dissolution in 1806. It was here, on May 25, 1772, that Goethe matriculated as an intern at the court.

### 8 Schwarzadlergasse 2

When the apothecary first opened in 1703, it bore the name "Zum Goldenen Haupt." In 1779, a fire destroyed almost the entire block of houses between the cathedral square and Schwarzadlergasse. After the fire, a new facade was built. Inside, one can admire the original Baroque apothecary's shop.



Domplatz

### 9 Domplatz 8

In the first half of the 14th century, a municipal customhouse was erected here in which all merchants who were passing through Wetzlar were required to have their wares weighed and taxed. Products of local craftsmen were also inspected and given seals of approval.

In 1690, the town hall moved here into a building which burnt to the ground in 1779. By 1790, the new town hall was completed. In 1911, the town hall relocated. The Tourist Information Office is now located here.

To the left of the main entry is a model of the Wetzlar *ell*, a unit of measure from the Middle Ages equalling 2 "shoes" or, in modern terms, 57.6 centimetres.

### 10 Domplatz 3

The Hauptwache, or the main guardhouse, was built in 1861, an example of late classical style from Wetzlar's Prussian period. From 1862 to 1877 it was used as a guardhouse by the 8th Rhine Infantry Battalion. Afterwards it housed a local police station until 1972.



## STOPS



Lottehaus

### 11 Domplatz 17

During his sojourn in the summer of 1772, Johann Wolfgang Goethe often lunched here in the inn "Zum Kronprinz." He belonged to a group of young lawyers who fancied themselves a *Rittertafel*, or Knights of the Table. Goethe himself bore the name Götze the Fair.

### 12 Blaunonnengasse 1

This is Wetzlar's oldest Gothic stone building. The street itself probably took its name from the house in which up to ten Beguines lived. The Beguines, the "blue nuns," were a lay order of unmarried or widowed women who lived together in pious communion.

### 13 Lottehaus, city museum (Stadtmuseum) and Viseum, Lottestraße 8 – 10

A branch of the Knights of the Teutonic Order was established in Wetzlar in 1285 to administer the order's local properties. The main building was used to accommodate knights of the order who were passing through the town on their travels. Today the municipal museum is housed in this building. There was once a small garden where one can now sit in the shade of chestnut trees.



Lottehof

The former tithe barn, built in 1530, was destroyed by bombs in 1944. Tithes in form of farm produce, especially grain, was stored here. It was rebuilt in 1976 and today houses a small industrial museum.

Charlotte Buff was born in 1753 in what was then the house of the administrator of the order's local affairs. She was the second oldest of 16 children. Twelve were living when Goethe first entered the house on June 9, 1772. As her mother had died, Charlotte ran the household and took care of her siblings. From the summer of 1772 on, she was bound in friendship with Goethe. In 1863, a Lotte Room was opened. Since 1922, the house has been dedicated to the memory of the encounter of the young lady from Wetzlar with Goethe. Her name gained worldwide recognition thanks to Goethe's epistolary novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther*.

The Viseum is housed in a restored 18th-century home. Local industries exhibit developments in optics as well as giving visitors a chance to experience optics firsthand.

### 14 Pariser Gasse 36

This was once the seat of the Prussian Mining Authority. Wilhelm Riemann (1827-1904), chief administrator of the authority and privy councillor of mining, lived here from 1859 to 1904.



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### 15 Pariser Gasse 30

Born in Wetzlar, the landscape painter Friedrich Christian Reinermann's (1764-1835) series of etchings titled "Views of the Lahn River" (1816/1817) introduced mid-Hesse landscapes as a subject of the visual arts.

### 16 Pariser Gasse 20 - 22

Two generations of the Barons of Zwierlein were prominent lawyers at the Imperial Chamber of Justice. In 1736 the family took up residence in this building. The ground floor rooms were used as a post house from 1818 to 1862. The rooms in the first floor have magnificent 18th-century stuccoed ceilings.

### 17 Obertorstraße 21

Prussian infantry general Sixt von Armin was born here on November 27, 1851. His mother was a native of Wetzlar and his father was an infantry officer with the 2nd Rhine Defence Division.

His advocacy ensured that a military officers' school was established in Wetzlar in 1914. He was made an honorary citizen of the town in 1926. He died in 1936.

### 18 Town wall, Butzbacher Gasse

A well preserved section of the original town wall is to be found between Obertor and Turmstrasse. This has been embellished with an authentically rebuilt parapet battlement. The wall was 1½ to 2 meters thick and up to ten meters high.



### 19 Lapidarium of boundary stones (near the Stadthalle)

When leaving Wetzlar in days gone by, there were numerous borders to be crossed. For centuries, stones marking boundary lines had an important function. The Lapidarium is a collection of boundary stones that have been found on the outskirts of Wetzlar, testimony of a time when the imperial free town was surrounded by numerous political entities.

### 20 Säuturm, Turmstraße

In the Middle Ages, the Säuturm, or sow tower, was known as the Schneiderturm, or tailors' tower. The tailors' guild was responsible for maintaining and manning this section of the town wall. To save money, the tower was left open on the side facing the town. In 1745, a gate was erected next to the tower to allow passage of pigs kept on the fields just outside the town wall. The current plain roof was added in 1914.

From here, one can see the ruins of Kalsmunt castle, which is within walking distance of the old town. The view of Wetzlar and the Lahn River valley from the former castle keep are well worth the walk. Built by the emperor Frederick Barbarossa, it was inhabited until about 1500, after which it fell into disrepair.

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Kornmarkt

### 21 Kornmarkt 5

The Baroque ballroom, theatre and inn *Zum Römischen Kaiser* was built here in 1767. The inn's sign depicts an emperor who may be the Emperor Franz I, the consort of Empress Maria Theresa. He was Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation from 1747 to 1765.

### 22 Kornmarkt 7

In the summer of 1772, Goethe lived in a small apartment in the house of the Imperial Chamber of Justice procurator Georg Wilhelm von Ludolf. Jakob Heinrich von Born (1750- 1782), an acquaintance of Goethe's from his student days in Leipzig, lived in the room next to his. As was family tradition, Goethe was expected to do his legal internship at the Imperial Chamber of Justice in Wetzlar.

### 23 Schmiedgasse 1

Goethe's maternal grandaunt Susanne Maria Cornelia Lange née Lindheimer, wife of a court councillor, lived in the house on the corner. She introduced her grandnephew to the family of Heinrich Adam Buff.

### 24 Engelsgasse 2 (On the corner of the Kornmarkt)

This half-timbered house dating from 1607 has distinctive jutting windows. According to the inscription to the left below the window, the house bore the name "Zur Sonne" ("To the Sun") up to the end of the 18th century. After that, it became known as "Zum Reichsapfel" (To the Imperial Apple) in reference to the carving of the imperial orb on the vertical beam below the windows. The inscriptions on the main vertical beams on both eave sides are taken from the Psalms.

### 25 Engelsgasse 1

Formerly a Protestant parsonage, this house was the birthplace of Gustav von Lauer, personal physician to Emperor Wilhelm I, born here in 1808. He was made an honorary citizen of Wetzlar in 1885 in recognition of his work to improve medical care in the military.

### 26 Engelsgasse 3

This house with several steps leading up to it was built in 1766. Above the doorway are the initials LDFH, standing for Licentiat Damian Ferdinand Haas, the procurator who built the house.

### 27 Engelsgasse 5

Johann Goy, an Imperial Chamber of Justice procurator, built this house at the beginning of the 18th century. Carl August von Abel, prime minister of Bavaria under King Ludwig I, was born here in 1788.

### 28 Engelsgasse 22

Junker Eberhard Stommel, Nassau deputy magistrate of Wetzlar, and his wife Lisa Schutzbar, known as Milchling, lived here around 1500. They had their coat of arms put

## STOPS

above the Gothic doorway. After their death, the property apparently went to Cloister Engelthal near Friedberg, as the street supposedly derived its name from the order. From 1542 to 1910 the house was one of three Protestant parsonages in Wetzlar.

### 29 Jäcksburg 13

The “Grey Nuns” were one of three Beguine orders in Wetzlar during the Middle Ages. In 1722, a half-timbered house with Baroque ornamentation and a striking doorway was built on the massive foundations. Heinrich von Hahn, chief revenue agent of the Imperial Chamber of Justice, lived here in the mid-18th century.

### 30 Palais Papius, Kornblumengasse 1

Wilhelm Heeser von Lilienthal, procurator at the Imperial Chamber of Justice, built this mansion in 1717/1718. The assessor Johann Hermann Franz von Pape, known as Papius (1717-1793), significantly expanded the house and elaborately redecored the interior. The results can still be seen today. In Goethe’s *Götz von Berlichingen*, Papius was the model for the character of Sapupi. During the second major inspection of the Imperial Court of Justice, the house was used as a residence by Prince Egon von Fürstenberg and his successor Prince Franz Gundacker von Colloredo-Mansfeld.

The property changed hands several times in the 19th century until it was finally bought by the municipality of Wetzlar in 1860, after which it served a variety of purposes. Since 1967 the building has housed the collection of Dr Irmgard von Lemmers-Danforth (1892-1984). An honorary citizen of Wetzlar, she collected domestic furnishings of the Renaissance and Baroque periods.



### 31 Museum of the imperial court (Reichskammergerichtsmuseum), Hofstatt 19

Known as the Avemann House, it was built in the mid-18th century by the assessor Baron Johann Hermann Franz von Pape, commonly known as Papius, and rented to members of the Imperial Chamber of Justice and their families. Lieutenant Colonel von Avemann owned this house in the early 19th century. A variety of schools used the building from 1836 to 1940. After that, it was first used as a residence, then for other municipal functions.

In 1987, the Imperial Chamber of Justice Museum was opened here. A facsimile of Goethe’s matriculation as an intern at the courts on May 25, 1772, in his own handwriting, is exhibited here.

### 32 Zuckergasse 8

Printer Georg Ernst Winckler opened Wetzlar’s first printer’s shop of note here in 1694. The shop remained in family hands for many generations. Wetzlar’s first newspaper, the *Wetzlarischen Anzeigen*, was printed here as of 1767.

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Former Franciscan Church

### 33 Ludwig-Erk-Platz

Ludwig Erk, born on January 6, 1807, spent five years of his childhood in Wetzlar. He created the largest and most thoroughly researched collection of German folk songs of his day. He moved to Berlin in 1837 and pursued a career there as a musicologist.

34

### Former Franciscan Church, Schillerplatz

The earliest document mentioning Franciscan monks in Wetzlar dates from 1248. The Gothic church, built around 1300, has 3 naves and a choir with three bays and a fivesided apse. The turret is typical of Gothic mendicant church structures. A stone relief above the Baroque northwest portal depicts the symbol of the Franciscans: a knotted frock rope belt surrounding a cross and two crossed arms, one sleeved, one bare, the palm of the hands displaying the wounds of crucifixion. After 1826, the monastery buildings and church were altered a number of times to adapt them to use as a prison, as a magazine, and as a barracks. The nave was enlarged in 1877 and has since then been used as a school. Today it is home to a music school.

The choir of the church is today the Protestant "Untere Stadtkirche," the church for this lower-lying part of the old town. In 1586, it was given as a place of worship to the 60

Protestant Walloon refugee families who had been settled in Jäcksburg/Jakobsburg. The steps between Jäcksburg Jakobsburg and Rosengasse which they used were known as the "Reformed Steps" since the parsonage and school of the reformed congregation were to be found here.

### 35 Jerusalemhaus, Schillerplatz 5

This house was built at the end of the 17th century. Wetzlar printer and publisher Georg Ernst Winckler and his family moved into this house in 1694. The simpler jutting window to the left was added on in 1742. It was in this house that the Brunswick legation secretary Karl Wilhelm Jerusalem (1747-1772) shot himself on October 30, 1772. Goethe, who spent the summer of 1772 in Wetzlar, intertwined his own experiences in Wetzlar with the tragic fate of Jerusalem to create his epistolary novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, first published in 1774. A small museum dedicated to Karl Wilhelm Jerusalem, Goethe's *Werther*, is located in the second floor of the building, which was renovated in 1986/1987.

### 36 Jewish cemetery

The old Jewish cemetery, located between the town wall and the Wetzbach embankment at the site of the earlier Silhof Gate, was used from the late 17th century up to the time of the new municipal cemetery, which was opened in 1881/1882. The last burial to be performed here was in 1900. There were about 300 gravestones, most of which were inscribed in Hebrew only. Only a few of those gravestones have been preserved. The gate to the cemetery is normally locked; however, a key can be borrowed from the Tourist Information Office for a refundable deposit fee.

### 37 Synagogue Memorial Plaque

A plaque marks the site of the synagogue of Wetzlar's Jewish community which stood here from 1756 to 1958.



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### 38 Silhöfer Straße 22

Above the Renaissance doorway there is the coat of arms of a married couple and a Latin inscription telling us that jurisconsult Siegfried Clotz, Chancellor of Upper Hesse, built this house in 1604 for the adornment of town of his birth and for the comfort of himself and his family.

### 39 Silhöfer Straße 15 - 19

First built in 1547, this was a Thurn and Taxis post-house as of 1785. The original doorway was used when the current edifice was erected in 1981.

### 40 Zur Alten Münz, Eisenmarkt 9

Called "Zur Alten Münz" or "To the Old Mint," this building dates from 1599 and was probably built on the site of a mediaeval mint. There is an inscription in French on the long side of the house, indicating that the person who built the house was likely one of the Protestant Walloon refugees granted asylum in Wetzlar in 1586.

### 41 Eisenmarkt 7

This late Gothic half-timbered house was built around 1500. The apothecary "Zum Goldenen Löwen" was here from 1690 to 1806.

### 42 Lahnstraße 35

The current building was erected in 1716. Before that, one of Wetzlar's five mediaeval breweries stood here, with a malt house behind it. Both buildings have gabled fronts facing west which were built directly on top of the town wall.



Hospital Church at the Old Lahn Bridge

### 43 Am Lahnpförtchen (The Small Gate to the Lahn River)

The "Lahnpförtchen" or small gate to the Lahn River, also known as the Tränkpforte or Trough Gate, was a small passageway through the mediaeval town wall which gave local craftsmen access to the water they needed, either from the mill stream or from the Lahn River. Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl's novel *Der stumme Ratsherr* was set here in mediaeval Wetzlar.

### 44 Old Lahn Bridge

The old bridge over the Lahn River was built in the second half of the 13th century and first documented in 1288. It was on the trade route from Frankfurt to Cologne in the Middle Ages. To increase its stability, the piers of the bridge were equipped with icebreakers. The bridge is supported by altogether seven arches. Gate towers once flanked both ends of the bridge, but these were torn down in the first half of the 19th century.

### 45 Hospital Church, Haarplatz

The hospital Church of the Holy Spirit was first documented in 1262. A public charity, it gave shelter to the poor and accommodated passing pilgrims. In later years it became a home for the elderly. In 1764, the Gothic chapel

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Wall at the Domtreppe

was replaced with a Lutheran church with a beautiful Rococo interior and a pulpit-altar designed to integrate pulpit and altar into one architectural element, giving equal emphasis to promulgation of the Word and the sacrament.

### 46 Eselsberg 1

A branch of the Altenberg convent was already in Wetzlar by the mid-12th century. It was, however, destroyed by the Great Fire of 1643. The existing building dates from 1669 and belonged to the convent up to its dissolution in 1803. The dates of renovation, 1755 and 1879, are engraved in the keystone of the Baroque stone portal.

### 47 Hauser Gasse 17

The cornerstone of the Imperial Chamber of Justice archives building was laid in 1782. The building had not yet been completed when the court was dissolved in 1806. In 1852 the county court, later the district court, moved into the building which had finally been completed. Wetzlar's town hall was here from 1911 to 1996. Today, the building houses the registrar's office, the office for patronage of eastern German songs, and the historical archives of Wetzlar.



Mühlgraben

### 48 Hauser Gasse 26

Assessor Dr Johann Kaspar Anton von Albini and his family made this house their home in 1760. His third wife, Maria Dorothea née von Requile left most of her sizable estate to the municipal assistance fund for the poor. The town had a stately gravestone erected in memory of Wetzlar's "Mother of the Poor" in what is now the Rosengärtchen.

### 49 Town wall

The mediaeval wall encircling Wetzlar was built section by section between 1250 and 1300. It was 1.7 kilometres long and reached a height of up to 11 meters. Built with shallow, earth-filled arches, the wall had parapets with battlements and loopholes. There were five main gates, none of which have survived, numerous smaller ones, and at least 9 towers. The low-lying land along the small stream called the Wetzbach was protected by a further wall of 350 meters. As the town expanded in the 19th century, much of the wall was torn down. Parallel to the original run of the wall is a string of parks bearing the names of Wetzlar's twinned towns: Avignon (France), Colchester (UK), Siena (Italy) and Schladming (Austria).

## STOPS



Town wall in the Rose Garden

### 50 Rose Garden

The Rosengärtchen, or Rose Garden, today a park with an open-air stage, was once a cemetery (1757-1881). Karl Wilhelm Jerusalem was buried here after his suicide. A memorial stone marks the approximate site of his grave, the exact site of which can no longer be determined. Another small monument is to the memory of Karl Kellner (1826- 1855), father of the optics industry in Wetzlar.

### 51 Goethe Well

In the 18th century, two springs fed two wells just beyond Wöllbach Gate, one for drinking water and the other for washing. Goethe was often at the Wildbach/Wollbach Well. In Goethe's epistolary novel, the well is mentioned in Werther's letters of May 12, May 15, and June 6. Today it is known as the Goethe Well and is located on Wahlheim Weg.

Also on Wahlheim Weg was once an English-style landscaped garden mentioned several times in *Werther*. The road passes through the hills along the Lahn River Valley on its way to Garbenheim, called Wahlheim in Goethe's *Werther*.

In Garbenheim there is a small monument in the square bearing Goethe's name, commemorating his frequent visits



Colchester-Park

there in 1772. Werther's letters of May 26, May 27, June 21 and July 8 testify to the deep impression the village and its people made on Goethe. The local history museum has a reconstruction of the old village square as it once was.

## Green Belt around the Old Town

The historical old town is encircled by five parks running parallel to the path of the old town wall, sections of which are still intact and visible today. This green belt is popular with residents and visitors alike. The parkland was once fields, meadows and gardens situated just outside the town wall in days gone by.

The walk through the parks is about 2 kilometres long. It takes about 1½ hours to complete the circle. The topography can be challenging, as there is a difference of 47 metres from the lowest to the highest point. There are many steps to climb in the Rose Park and Avignon Park, making the walk unsuitable for bicyclists and wheelchair users. Nowhere in the old town are you more than 300 metres from one of the parks.



STADT WETZLAR



DAS LAHNTAL  
Stadt Lerd. Fließ. Chancel

Wetzlar  
TIPPS

Deutsche  
Fachwerk  
Straße

## INFORMATION

### Tourist-Information

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  [wetzlartipps](#)

### OPENING HOURS

May – September

Mo – Fr 9am – 6pm

Sa 10am – 2pm

Su 11am – 3pm

October – April

Mo – Fr 9am – 5pm

Sa 10am – 12pm