

Press-Information

Following Goethe's footsteps through Frankfurt

“On the 28th of August 1749, as the midday bell struck twelve, I was born into Frankfurt by the Main. The stars were favourable...” This is how Johann Wolfgang von Goethe describes his own birth in “Poetry and Truth”. Although Goethe’s relationship to his city of birth was later ambivalent, it would always remain the place of his childhood and youth. Here he would roam the streets in the old part of the city, experiencing the excitement around and the preparations for royal elections and the crowning of emperors. These memories were to later resurface in his work. As a young man in Frankfurt he experienced the court case against Susanna Brandt, whose fate moved him deeply. Years later, he paid tribute to the young infant-murderer with the figure of Gretchen in the work that is arguably his most famous, “Faust”. The experiences he made in Frankfurt were to become the subject of his works time and time again. A walk through Frankfurt today still awakens a little of the atmosphere of this era.

The Goethe-House

Frankfurt’s prime destination for Goethe enthusiasts is the poet’s birthplace at Großer Hirschgraben 23-25. Around the age of five, Johann Wolfgang had the privilege of laying the foundation stone himself, when his father reconstructed the inherited buildings into an upper middle class estate. Today, a walk through the Goethe-House still gives a vivid image of life in Goethe’s time. For example, standing in front of the old range in the kitchen on the ground floor conjures up images of Goethe’s mother pottering around the kitchen. The house’s formal rooms for entertaining guests are located on the first floor. These rooms were given the name “Peking” because of the Chinese motifs on the wallpaper. During the occupation of Frankfurt by French troops between 1759 and 1761, Goethe’s father was forced to relinquish these rooms to the commandant Duke Thoranc. While Goethe’s father didn’t get along with the Duke, little Johann Wolfgang made friends with the French commandant. Thoranc not only taught rudimentary French to young Goethe, but also discovered his talent for drawing and painting. In other years, the three lounges of the “Peking” were used for family celebrations, such as Christmas,

or the wedding of Cornelia, Goethe's sister. Of particular interest are the portraits of Goethe's grandparents, Johann Wolfgang and Anna Margareta Textor, which can be found in the northern room. Works by artists held in high regard by Goethe's father can be found in the drawing room on the second floor. Among other things, the room of Goethe's mother features portraits of Goethe's parents, which vividly illustrate Goethe's characteristic personality:

*My father gave me my stature,
The gravity of living,
My mother gave me my merry nature,
And the joy of storytelling.*

Of greatest historical significance is the "Dichtezimmer" (poet's study) on the third floor, which is where Johann Wolfgang von Goethe lived during his childhood and youth. It is also where he wrote the two works that were to be his first claim to fame: "Goetz of Berlichingen" and "The Sorrows of Young Werther". A silhouette drawing of Charlotte Buff adorns the walls, as it did in Goethe's time. This was Goethe's first love, whom he immortalised in the character "Lotte" in "Werther".

The Goethe Museum

The Goethe Museum is directly connected to the Goethe House and contains an extensive collection of paintings and documents from Goethe's life and times. Works by contemporary artists who influenced Goethe are on display as well as manuscripts and portraits of the poet.

Address: Goethe House and Goethe Museum
Freies Deutsches Hochstift
Frankfurter Goethe-Museum
Großer Hirschgraben 23-25
60311 Frankfurt am Main
Germany
Phone: +49 (0)69 / 13 88 00
Fax: +49 (0)69 / 13 88 022
Internet: www.goethehaus-frankfurt.de

Opening times: Monday to Friday, Sunday, public holidays

10:00 – 17:30 h.
Saturday
10:00 – 18:00 h.
last Saturday of the month
10:00 – 20:00 h.

Ticket prices:	Adults	€ 5,-
	Concession (Disabled, Military and Community service)	€ 3,-
	School children	€ 1,5
	Students	€ 2,5
	Group fee (more than 20)	€ 3,- p.p.
	Family ticket	€ 8,-

Gerbermühle

Besides the Goethe House, the Gerbermühle (tanning mill) on the banks of the Main is the principal Frankfurt spot associated with Goethe. The Gerbermühle was once the summer residence of the banker Johann Jakob von Willemer, whom the poet visited there in 1815 for over four weeks. This is where Goethe, at the age of sixty-five, met young Marianne von Willemer and fell in love with her. A deep love developed from the initial fancy he took to her. Hatem and Suleika, as the two called themselves in their letters, were immortalised in Goethe's "West-Eastern Divan". This mature late work from Goethe also contains love poems by Marianne, which she had written to the poet upon his return to Weimar. Today, the Gerbermühle houses a small hotel and a restaurant. During the summer the large gardens provide a place to sit under the chestnut trees and enjoy the view over the Main.

Address: Hotel Gerbermühle
Deutschherrnufer 105
60594 Frankfurt am Main
Germany
www.gerbermuehle.de

Willemer-Häuschen

In 1810, the banker Johann Jakob von Willemer built himself a small tower-shaped garden house on Sachsenhausen's Mühlberg, now a well sought-after

and exclusive residential area. Exactly what happened here on the night of the 18th of October 1814, when Goethe and Marianne von Willemer were watching the many fires lit in annual celebration of the Battle of the Nations, is left up to our imaginations. In any case it seems that after this night, Marianne von Willemer became Goethe's muse and co-author. By now it has been academically proven that fifteen of the poems from the "West-Eastern Divan" were penned by Marianne von Willemer.

Address: Willemer-Häuschen

Hühnerweg 8
60599 Frankfurt am Main
Germany
Phone: +49 (0)69 / 21 23 39 52

Opening times: April through mid-October
Sundays, 11:00 – 16:00 h.

Free entry

The old town area of Frankfurt-Höchst

As a young man, Goethe often sailed to Höchst with his friends on the market boat in order to spend the evening at one of the many inns around Höchst's castle square, or to pay a visit to Höchst's porcelain manufactory. Höchst's old town hasn't changed much since Goethe's time: tradition-steeped inns around the main square, the fortifications on the Main bank, the 16th century castle, the Romanic St. Justinus Church from the 8th century and the porcelain manufactory all beckon for an idle stroll around this western part of Frankfurt.

Höchst's porcelain manufactory

The manufactory, founded in 1714, is one of Europe's seven remaining porcelain production sites. Just like 200 years ago, tea services and unique figurines such as the famous "Mohrenkapelle" (Moors' concert band) are modelled, painted and baked by hand, using bourgeois-classicist themes. Like his mother, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was a great admirer of the Höchst manufactory; in fact, so close was his friendship to the modelling master Johann Caspar Melchior that he was chosen to be the godfather of Melchior's son. To this day, the manufactory still produces the Goethe portrait first made by Melchior. Visitors are invited to tour the factory; attending the modellers' and porcelain painters' studio is the tour's undisputed highlight, as it is

possible to directly watch the artists at work, virtually looking over their shoulders. The prestigious porcelain collection on display in the factory's basement chambers features a selection of decorative porcelain pieces and tea services from the Rococo period as well as classicist pieces.

Address: Höchster Porzellan-Manufaktur GmbH
 Bolongarostraße 186
 65929 Frankfurt am Main
 Germany
 Phone: +49 (0)69 / 30 09 02 0
 Fax: +49 (0)69 / 30 09 02 24

Guided tours: Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 and 15:00 h.
Ticket prices: Adults 5 €
 Children under 17 years 2,5 €
 Children under 10 years free

Petersfriedhof

The Petersfriedhof (St. Peter's Cemetery) can be found in the inner city between Bleichstrasse and Stephanstrasse. It was used for burials until 1828. The graves of Goethe's father Johann Caspar von Goethe (1710-1782) and his grandfather can be found here. However, because the cemetery was downscaled, Goethe's mother (1731-1808) was buried in the Textors' family grave on the grounds of the neighbouring Liebfrauenschule, framed by a semi-circular hall of columns.

Goethestrasse

The Goethestrasse is the city's most exclusive shopping street. International fashion by Kenzo, Montana, Laura Ashley, van Laack, Jil Sander and other designers can be found here, as well as elegant leather goods by Louis Vuitton and precious jewellery by Cartier and Tiffany. Even exclusive baby and childrens' fashion is sold here. Nowhere else are there so many exclusive brand names represented in an area this small.

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