



BOOKABLE GUIDED TOURS

UNESCO World Heritage Site Lorsch Abbey

This comprehensive tour of the abbey grounds brings the history of the monastery to life through its surviving architecture, with particular emphasis on the famous Gate-house, also known as the King's Hall.

Duration approx. 90 minutes

Lauresham Open-Air Laboratory

The Lauresham Open-Air Laboratory takes visitors on a journey back in time to a manor farm as it might have belonged to the abbey in the 9th century. Experimental archaeology is used here to uncover the secrets of life in the past. **Duration approx. 90 minutes**

Exhibition Depot „Zehntscheune“

iThe exhibition houses a collection of some of the finest architectural fragments from 800 years of the abbey's history and illustrates the former splendour of this once royal abbey. **Duration approx. 90 minutes**

Sheep – Fabric – Clothing

A tour exploring early medieval textile crafts and the archaeological search for their traces, as well as what these findings can teach us today and contribute to a more sustainable future. **Duration approx. 90 minutes**

People and Their Livestock

A visit to Lauresham's farm animals. Discover how animals were used and kept in the Middle Ages and today and consider how different forms of animal husbandry can affect the environment, people and animals. **Duration approx. 90 minutes**

BOOKING & INFORMATION

UNESCO World Heritage Site Lorsch Abbey | Nibelungenstraße 32 | 64653 Lorsch | Tel.: +49 (0) 62 51-86 92 00 | buchung@kloster-lorsch.de

DISCOVER AND ENJOY LORSCH

FOOD & DRINK

Whether on the market square or in front of the King's Hall, in the shade of historic half-timbered houses or in atmospheric vaulted cellars: Lorsch offers a wide range of restaurants and cafés serving regional and seasonal delicacies. Lorsch even has its own locally brewed beer. Fine wines from the region and local specialties complete the culinary experience.

TIP Culinary recommendation: "Only the Finest" – premium chocolate and baked goods from Süße Werkstatt | Römerstraße 8 | www.suesse-werkstatt.de

SHOPPING

A stroll through Lorsch town centre reveals all kinds of regional specialties, locally made crafts and original souvenirs. Take your time to discover the wide variety of products Lorsch has to offer.

TIP Many of the small shops in the town centre offer high-quality products, often with a distinctly local character, in a friendly and welcoming atmosphere.

EVENING ENTERTAINMENT

Be sure to visit Theater Sapperlot. The artists who perform here today may well be winning Germany's prestigious Kleinkunstpreis tomorrow – and they still return even after making it onto the country's major stages.

TIP Be sure to book your tickets! | Tel. +49 (0) 62 51/97 05 38 | www.sapperlottheater.de

WHERE TO STAY

As far back as 1,250 years ago, emperors, kings, popes, pilgrims and beggars came and went here. They stayed with those who lived here – the monks. Today, you too can stay in private accommodation, guesthouses or small hotels. The surrounding towns offer hotels in all categories just a 10-minute drive away.

INFO Tourist-Information NibelungenLand
info@nibelungenland.net | Tel. +49 (0) 62 51/17 52 60 | www.nibelungenland.net

KAROLINGERSTADT (CAROLINGIAN TOWN)

The historic centre of this Carolingian town is characterised by half-timbered houses, churches and prestigious historic buildings. A guided tour of the town offers fascinating insights into its history.

INFO info@nibelungenland.net | Tel. +49 (0) 62 51/17 52 60

MONASTIC SITES & AUROCHS

Did you know that Lorsch has three monastic sites? Or that we are breeding back the large aurochs on extensive year-round pastures? Both can be explored along flat, paved paths. We have a cycling map available for you, featuring interesting details about the sights along the routes. Ask at the museum ticket desks or at the Tourist Information Centre!

INFO www.kloster-lorsch.de or www.megaherbivoren.de

PEONY GARDEN

This public educational and display garden is dedicated to the important medicinal plant featured in the Lorsch Pharmacopoeia, part of UNESCO's Memory of the World Register. From wild varieties to highly cultivated specimens from around the world, the "Queen of Herbs" can be admired here in all its diverse beauty – a must see in May.

TIP An expert guided tour provides fascinating insights into the history of this medicinal plant. Book at info@nibelungenland.net | Tel. +49 (0) 62 51/17 52 60

TOBACCO CURING SHED

Where tobacco was still being cured just 30 years ago, a museum dedicated to tobacco cultivation opened in 2017. Located next to Lorsch's only tobacco field to have been brought back into cultivation, the barn offers a fascinating insight into the history of tobacco growing, with numerous original tools and equipment, multimedia stations, historical photographs and, of course, tobacco itself. The museum can be visited on guided tours from March to October.

TIP At the Museum Centre, you can also visit the Museum of Tobacco Processing and Smoking Culture all year round. Together, these exhibitions make Lorsch home to one of Europe's largest tobacco museums. Be sure to ask about "Lorsa Brasil"!

TIP For information on guided tours and workshops relating to tobacco, contact info@nibelungenland.net | Tel. +49 (0) 62 51/17 52 60



YOUR DAY IN LORSCH

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE PAST AND PRESENT OF LORSCH ABBEY

After arriving in Lorsch, begin your visit by exploring the UNESCO World Heritage Site Lorsch Abbey. We recommend joining one of the regular guided tours of the abbey grounds. The Museum Centre provides an introduction to the origins and history of the abbey. After visiting the famous King's Hall, continue to the abbey hill, where the church fragment, the Exhibition depot „Zehntscheune“ (the barn) archaeological collection and the Herb Garden offer fascinating insights into this once important medieval imperial abbey.

LUNCH IN THE SHADOW OF THE WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Enjoy a leisurely lunch at one of the restaurants in the centre of Lorsch, many of which have outdoor terraces. Take in the view of the King's Hall while you dine.

VISIT TO THE LAURESHAM OPEN-AIR LABORATORY

In the afternoon, join a guided tour of the Lauresham Open-Air Laboratory. Here you can immerse yourself in the lives of people in the time of Charlemagne. Afterwards, continue along the World Heritage Trail, passing Altenmünster Abbey and the Tobacco Barn.

A SOUVENIR FROM LORSCH

Round off your day with a leisurely stroll through Lorsch and a taste of regional specialties, such as the delicious little and large works of art from Süße Werkstatt or traditional Lorsch pastry Welschbrot.



DISCOVER THE SURROUNDING

HEPPENHEIM

Medieval half-timbered houses, romantic lanes in the historic old town and idyllic squares shape the character of this wine-growing district capital and festival town. High above the town stands Starkenburg Castle.

INFO Tourist Information Heppenheim | Tel. +49 (0) 62 52/13 11 71
www.heppenheim.de

ROMAN TOWN OF LADENBURG

This ancient Roman town will surprise you with its almost completely preserved historic centre. Take a journey through two thousand years of living history, culture and romance.

INFO Tourist Information at the Town Library, Hauptstraße 8 | 68526 Ladenburg
Tel. +49 (0) 62 03/7 02 60 | www.ladenburg.de

FELSENMEER BENEATH THE BEECH TREES

Legend has it that two giants quarrelled and hurled huge granite boulders at one another. Today, these boulders form the Felsenmeer near Reichenbach, in the heart of the UNESCO Bergstraße-Odenwald Geo-Nature Park. This enchanting rocky landscape invites visitors of all ages to climb, explore and marvel.

INFO Felsenmeer Information Centre, Felsenmeer 3 | 64686 Lautertal
www.felsenmeer-zentrum.de

DISCOVER THE REGION BY BIKE

Several local and long-distance cycle routes meet in Lorsch. The Hessian long-distance cycle route R9, World Heritage Cycle Route 2 and the picturesque Bergstraße are ideal for longer cycling tours.

INFO NibelungenLand Tourist Information | info@nibelungenland.net
Tel. +49 (0) 62 51/17 52 60

Photos: Ludwig März, Stadt Lorsch, EGL, Andrea Zank, Back-und Brauhaus Drayß, Michael C. Thumm, Loic Lagarde, Carl Dewald, National Library of Romania – Batthyaneum Library, Frank Jäger, Florian Saum, Thomas Neu

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NibelungenLand
Bergstraße | Odenwald | Elz | Beckatal

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UNESCO-WELTERBE
Im Herzen unserer Stadt

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Stiftstraße 1 | 64653 Lorsch
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Fax +49 (0) 62 51/59 67-555
KULTour@lorsch.de
www.lorsch.de



PARTNERS IN THE REGION

Tourismus Service Bergstrasse e.V.
www.diebergstrasse.de



Odenwald Tourismus GmbH
www.odenwald.de

You can also find us on  



OPENING HOURS & TICKETS

The grounds of the UNESCO World Heritage Site Lorsch Abbey are accessible free of charge. Admission tickets are required for the individual attractions and activities.

Public guided tours in German of the UNESCO World Heritage Site Lorsch Abbey and the Lauresham Open-Air Laboratory take place regularly during opening periods.

Tours are available for two or more participants and last approximately 90 minutes. Groups of 10 or more must register in advance, including for public guided tours.

Guided tours in English are available on request only!



MORE GUIDED TOURS IN LORSCH

Town Tour | Duration approx. 60 minutes

Tobacco Tours | Duration approx. 60 minutes

BOOKING & INFORMATION

NibelungenLand Tourist Information | Old Town Hall | Marktplatz 1 | 64653 Lorsch | Tel.: +49 (0) 62 51-17 52 60 | info@nibelungenland.net

JOURNEY INTO THE CAROLINGIAN AGE





ABBEY GROUNDS (UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE)

Just a few years after the foundation of the early Altenmünster Abbey in 764, a new monastic complex was built on a neighboring Ice Age sand dune. Charlemagne, to whom the abbey had been entrusted, elevated it to one of his most important imperial abbeys. Charlemagne himself attended the consecration of the abbey church in 774, accompanied by his family and court. Three structures from the once extensive complex have survived: a fragment of the Basilica of St Nazarius, a section of the abbey wall and the famous King's Hall. Following the redesign of the Lorsch Abbey World Heritage Site in 2014, the two monastic sites – the earlier and later foundations – were connected through landscape architecture for the first time.

KING'S HALL (UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE)

The world-famous King's Hall in Lorsch is the architectural highlight of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. With its façade decoration inspired by classical antiquity and the early Middle Ages, the building is one of the very few almost completely preserved examples of Carolingian architecture. The original purpose of the building, which stood in the forecourt of the basilica, remains a mystery to this day. The upper floor, accessible only on a guided tour, features remarkably well-preserved wall paintings dating from the Carolingian period and subsequent centuries.

CHURCH FRAGMENT (UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE)

The church fragment formed part of the basilica dating from the early 12th century. It once comprised the three western bays of the central nave of the antechurch of the Basilica of St Nazarius, which was largely destroyed during the Thirty Years' War in 1621. It is likely that earlier structures once stood in the area of the surviving church fragment.

ABBEY WALL (UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE)

The abbey wall is one of the few surviving structures of the former monastic complex, and its southern section can still be seen today. Standing three to four meters high and extending for around 500 meters, it is the largest original structure of the abbey still preserved.

MUSEUMS CENTRE

The section of the Museum Centre devoted to the history of the abbey provides an introduction to the most important aspects of its past. Particular emphasis is placed on the significance of Lorsch Abbey's library and scriptorium, which played an important role in the Carolingian educational reforms. The Museum Centre also houses the town of Lorsch's Tobacco Museum, one of the largest museums of its kind in Germany.



EXHIBITION DEPOT „ZEHNTSCHAU“

Built in the 1590s, the building was originally used to store tithes and has undergone extensive renovation in recent years. Its modern exhibition presents artefacts and architectural remains documenting almost 200 years of archaeological excavations and architectural research at Lorsch Abbey. These include objects from the 2nd and 3rd centuries, Carolingian columns and capitals dating from the abbey's heyday, as well as impressive evidence of sophisticated architecture from later periods.

LORSCH PHARMACOPOEIA HERB GARDEN

The Lorsch Pharmacopoeia, inscribed on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register in 2013, marks the beginnings of modern medicine in the western world. The large, newly-landscaped herb garden is located behind the Zehntscheune. Around 200 different medicinal and healing plants mentioned in the Lorsch Pharmacopoeia can be found here.



UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE LORSCH ABBEY

RISE TO AN IMPERIAL ABBEY

Founded around 764 by the family of the Frankish Count Rupert, the abbey began its economic rise after the relics of St Nazarius were transferred from Rome to Lorsch Abbey in 765. Within just a few decades, donations made in honour of St Nazarius had given the abbey extensive landholdings stretching from the North Sea coast to Graubünden. In 772, the abbey was transferred to Charlemagne, who placed it under his protection and granted it immunity. Lorsch was now an imperial abbey, protected from the claims and interference of neighbouring bishops and counts. This privilege remained in place until 1232, when the abbey fell under the control of Mainz. The Benedictines were expelled and initially replaced by Cistercians, who in turn were replaced shortly afterwards by Premonstratensians.

AN EVENTFUL HISTORY

From its foundation in the Carolingian era well into the High Middle Ages, Lorsch Abbey was one of the most important cultural centres for disseminating the educational programmes developed at the royal court. The abbey became renowned for its scriptorium and extensive library, one of the largest and most important of the Middle Ages. Today, the surviving works are scattered across 54 locations in 17 countries around the world, including the famous Lorsch Gospels. The abbey was also an important pioneer in the field of medicine: the Lorsch Pharmacopoeia, dating from the late 8th century, is the oldest surviving medical and pharmaceutical manuscript of the Western Middle Ages. Lorsch Abbey is even mentioned in what is probably Germany's best-known epic, the Nibelungenlied, as the burial place of Siegfried. As noted, however, that is legend. What is certain is that the abbey served as the final resting place of the first East Frankish kings of the Carolingian dynasty.

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Until the first half of the 13th century, the imperial abbey repeatedly succeeded in defending its independence. In 1065, the abbey was forced to build a castle, Starkenburg Castle in neighbouring Heppenheim, to protect itself against hostile attacks. This marked the first time in its history that the abbey opposed the reigning king and compelled him to restore Lorsch's traditional rights. In 1461, Mainz pledged Lorsch Abbey to the Electoral Palatinate. Almost a century later, during the Reformation, the abbey was dissolved by Elector Ottheinrich of the Palatinate.



Lorsch silver penny, 2nd half of the 12th century



LAURESHAM OPEN-AIR LABORATORY

The Lauresham Open-Air Laboratory shows how people lived in the time of Charlemagne. Based on scientific research, this full-scale walk-through model of a Carolingian manor farm is the first idealised presentation of a large early medieval agricultural estate. Covering around four hectares, the site comprises a total of 21 agricultural buildings, houses and stables, as well as a chapel. Various breeds of livestock selected to resemble their early medieval counterparts as closely as possible, together with everyday work and field experiments, give visitors a vivid and scientifically grounded impression of daily life on an early medieval manor farm. Ongoing research at the site focuses on agriculture, animal husbandry and crafts.



THEME DAYS AT THE LAURESHAM OPEN-AIR LABORATORY

During an open day in May, visitors are invited to explore the Lauresham Open-Air Laboratory free of charge. This is the "Experimental Archaeology Day", held in May. In addition, a variety of theme days take place throughout the year. On these special days, visitors can experience demonstrations of traditional crafts, historic animal-harnessing and hunting techniques, as well as fieldwork using animals. Costumed reenactors bring the Carolingian manor farm to life, researchers present their projects, and hands-on museum activities combine learning and fun for the whole family. Regional specialities are also available, many of them produced using ingredients from Lauresham's meadows, fields, gardens and pastures.



ALTENMÜNSTER MONASTERY (UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE)

On the banks of the small River Weschnitz, the Rupertian family, who had close ties to the Carolingian ruling dynasty, established a private family monastery. This first abbey was documented for the first time in 764. Due to a lack of space, the site was soon abandoned. Today, the redesigned landscape traces the outlines of the former complex and gives visitors an impression of the scale of the abbey's original core area.

AWARD-WINNING MUSEUM EDUCATION

Lorsch Abbey received an award from the German UNESCO Commission for its outstanding museum education programme. A wide range of activities invites children and adults alike to discover what life was like in the Carolingian era, both inside and outside the monastery. Activities include writing with goose quills as the monks did in the middle ages and making a honey-and-herb-based remedy following the Lorsch Pharmacopoeia.

INFO www.kloster-lorsch.de | buchung@kloster-lorsch.de | Tel. +49 (0) 62 51/86 92 00

