

KOBLENZ

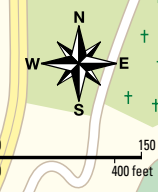
1. 'German Corner' (Deutsches Eck)
2. Church of St. Castor
3. Moselle Riverbank
4. Military Museum
5. Church of Our Lady
6. Old City Hall (Altes Rathaus)
7. Rhine Promenade and Electoral Palace
8. Ehrenbreitstein Fortress



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0 150 m
0 400 feet



KOBLENZ

GERMANY

Geographical position: 50° 22' N / 07° 36' E

Av. alt.: 213 feet (66 m)

Area of the city: 40.55 square-miles (105 km²)

Population: 108,000

Region: Rhineland-Palatinate

Rivers: Rhine, Moselle

Economy: Engineering, car components, software, light industry, transport, insurance, administration, river trade, higher education, tourism



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KOBLENZ – CITY WHERE THE RHINE AND MOSELLE MEET

It's at Koblenz that the 'queen' of German rivers, the lovely Moselle, joins her mightier consort, the Rhine, which now acquires majestic dimensions on its way toward Cologne and the Dutch border. This point has been of strategic importance since Roman times, and it was natural that Koblenz became an important center of trade during the Middle Ages. With its promenades and parks lining the banks of both rivers, Koblenz is now a great place to relax and take things easy. Although badly bombed during the Second World War, the downtown area has plenty of attractive streets and squares where a little window-shopping won't go amiss. And when refreshment is called for, countless bars and cafés offer a chance to take the weight off one's feet and enjoy the local wines and specialties. Also consider taking a trip up to the mighty fortress, Ehrenbreitstein, on the opposite riverbank to enjoy marvelous panoramas. A little upriver but still within the city limits, Stolzenfels Castle is one of the prettiest 19th-century recreations of medieval architecture along the Middle Rhine Valley.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT IN A NUTSHELL

It was in **9 BC** that the Romans established the settlement of Confluentes close to where the Moselle and Rhine meet. The legions left Germany soon after **400 AD**, but their town soon became a residence of the Frankish kings. A first fortress was constructed on the site of Ehrenbreitstein Castle in about **950**. In **1018**, Emperor Heinrich II granted Koblenz to the archbishop of Trier, who was to hold the city for over seven centuries until **1794**, when it came under French control. In the meantime, parts of the Old City had been damaged during assaults by Louis XIV's army in the **1680s**. Koblenz was the birthplace in **1773** of Klemens von Metternich, who later became the chancellor of Austria. At the Treaty of Vienna in **1815**, he ensured that Koblenz was handed over to Prussia. The city became a garrison town, and ruined Ehrenbreitstein Castle was rebuilt to become the second-strongest (after Gibraltar) fortress in Europe. Unfortunately, extensive Allied bombing destroyed much of Koblenz's Old City in **1944-45**.

MAIN POINTS OF INTEREST

1. 'German Corner' (Deutsches Eck): The point at the confluence of the Moselle and Rhine is dominated by the equestrian statue of Kaiser Wilhelm I (1797-1888). Modern art collections of the Ludwig Museum can be viewed in the former House of the Teutonic Knights.

2. Church of St. Castor: There has been a church on this site since the early 9th century, and the present basilica with its 'Rhenish helm' towers dates from the 12th century. The inside is peaceful and attractive.

3. Moselle Riverbank: Take a walk southward along the city side of the Moselle to see some fine historic buildings like the 16th-century Haus der Deutschen Kaiser, the former Customs House (1430) containing the Middle Rhine Museum and the other attractive houses around Florinsmarkt. Further along, the Alte Burg (Old Fortress) and parts of the Balduin Bridge date from medieval times.

4. Military Museum: On the opposite bank of the Moselle, this vast collection of weaponry, old and new, is a 'must' for military buffs.

5. Church of Our Lady: The Baroque towers of the Church are the city symbol, while the interior dates mainly from 1200-1500. The nearby square, Am Plan, is a good place to have something to eat or drink.

6. Old City Hall (Altes Rathaus): This is housed in a former Jesuit College originally constructed in about 1600. In the courtyard, beware of the fountain that may give you a sudden soaking.

7. Rhine Promenade and Electoral Palace: Koblenz's riverside parks make a pleasant prelude to a visit at the Weindorf, where local vintages can be tasted. En route, one should take a look at the pompous palace built by the archbishop of Trier in the 18th century.

8. Ehrenbreitstein Fortress: Over 380 feet (117 m) above the Rhine, this vast fortification was begun in 1817. Tremendous views and various museum collections await visitors.

ENJOYING THE LOCAL CULTURE AND LIFESTYLE

Koblenz is a great place to window-shop and stroll. A pleasant walk might begin at the Florinsmarkt and then take in Münzplatz on the way to Jesuitenplatz. Overlooked by the Baroque City Hall, this is one of the city's most attractive squares. One could also explore Koblenz's 'shopping mile' in the pedestrian section of Lohrstrasse, where there is a mixture of department stores and more specialized shops. Located at a pivotal point on the Moselle and Rhine, Koblenz has, naturally enough, become an important center of the wine trade. Its many cozy taverns and bars offer a broad range of solid Moselle and Rhine wines, but connoisseurs might like to keep an eye open for one or two lesser-known vintages. For example, the northerly section of the Middle Rhine Valley downstream from Koblenz has steep south-facing slopes that yield good Rieslings and Grauburgunders (Pinot Gris). For summer thirsts, though, Koblenz's Königsbacher brewery produces an excellent dry Pils.