

RÜDESHEIM

1. Drosselgasse
2. Wine Museum
3. Museum of Mechanical Musical Instruments
4. Church of St. James
5. Asbach Distillery
6. Niederwald Monument
7. Ehrenfels castle
8. Abbey of St. Hildegard



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7 Ehrenfels castle



- 1 Germaniastraße
- 2 Bergstraße
- 3 Kellerstraße
- 4 Krummstraße
- 5 Markt
- 6 Kleine Grabenstraße
- 7 Schifferstraße
- 8 Adolf-Kohl-Platz
- 9 Am Adlerturm
- 10 Klunghardshof



RÜDESHEIM

GERMANY

Geographical position: 49° 59' N / 07° 56' E

Av. alt.: 282 feet (86 m)

Area of the city: 19.6 square-miles (50.76 km²)

Population: 11,500

Region: Hesse

River: Rhine

Economy: Viniculture, brandy distillery, light industry, services, transport, tourism



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RÜDESHEIM - COZY BASTION OF RHENISH GOOD CHEER

After passing Mainz, the Rhine widens considerably before suddenly narrowing down just as it passes Bingen and Rüdesheim, which mark the beginning of the river's most scenic section. The so-called Middle Rhine Valley then extends as far as Koblenz, and all of it is classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The right bank of the Rhine above and below Rüdesheim also belongs to the renowned Rheingau wine region that produces some of Germany's very best vintages. Thus, it was almost inevitable that this pretty town would become a symbol of good cheer and hospitality. The town's long history of welcoming visitors stems from the fact that the river between Rüdesheim and Bingen used to be so shallow that larger boats had to line up to be pulled by up to 40 horses through its narrow navigable channel, the 'Binger Loch.' Widening of this bottleneck only reached completion in 1966-67, so that the 200 or so commercial barges that pass this section each day can now do so without difficulty.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT IN A NUTSHELL

The oldest building in Rüdesheim is Brömserburg Castle, a formidable residence of the archbishop of Mainz begun in the **10th century**. About a thousand years ago, the river between Rüdesheim and Bingen first became navigable. Up to this time, boats had to be unloaded here, and the goods carried downstream as far as Lorch. The pretty suburb of Assmannshausen was first mentioned in **1108**, not long before Hildegard of Bingen founded a Benedictine convent in Eibingen above Rüdesheim in **1165**. The Church of St. James was also begun at this time. In the **15th century**, the round Eagle Tower was added to the town's riverside defenses, while the **16th century** saw the erection of the Klunkhardshof, the finest half-timbered house in Rüdesheim. Just after Germany's Unification in **1871**, the 122-foot-tall (38 m) Niederwald Monument depicting 'Germania' was begun in the vineyards above Rüdesheim and completed in **1883**. The year 1892 saw the establishment of the Asbach brandy distillery in the town. In **1900-4**, the Abbey of St. Hildegard was reconstructed in the neo-Romanesque style.

MAIN POINTS OF INTEREST

1. Drosselgasse: Barely 10 feet (3 m) wide in places, this celebrated lane attracts nearly 3 million tourists a year eager to enjoy the joys of the grape.

2. Wine Museum in Brömserburg Castle: This ancient fortress houses fascinating collections relating to Rhenish wine traditions extending back to Roman times.

3. Museum of Mechanical Musical Instruments: Ranging from the quaint to the downright bizarre, this collection of musical oddities in the 16th-century Brömserhof is highly enjoyable.

4. Church of St. James: With parts dating back to the 12th century, this much-altered edifice still contains remnants reflecting its important role in Rüdesheim's history.

5. Asbach Distillery: Founded in 1892, this is the home of German brandy (Brandwein), and the distillery offers informative tours that include tasting the wares.

6. Niederwald Monument: Take a chair-lift up to this massive figure of Germania (1883), whose 32 tons of bronze reflect the national pride of the newly unified German state.

7. Ehrenfels castle: From the Niederwald Monument, it's an easy downhill stroll through vineyards to this romantic ruin that has fine views over the 'Mouse Tower' toward Bingen with its own fortress, Burg Klopp.

8. Abbey of St. Hildegard: Uphill from the Niederwald Monument, this active convent was founded by Hildegard von Bingen and now offers wine-tastings in attractive surroundings.

ENJOYING THE LOCAL CULTURE AND LIFESTYLE

Quality rather than quantity: this is the motto that has made the Rheingau region one of Europe's most renowned wine-growing areas. Accounting for a mere 2.5% of Germany's wine production, this provides an ideal micro-environment for the late-ripening and very fussy Riesling grape. This can give rise to superb fruity and acidic white vintages ideal for fish and light meats. Among the region's best vineyards are those around Rüdesheim, Schloss Vollrads, Kloster Eberbach, Oestrich, Kiedrich and Johannisberg. Incidentally, Hochheim on the Main is the source of the generic English word for German white wines, i.e., 'hock.' This town, along with Eltville, is also famous for its sparkling wines (Sekt). Those who prefer red vintages will be pleased to hear that Rüdesheim's suburb of Assmannshausen has soil with a high slate content, which means that Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir) grapes feel very much at home here. Pride of place goes to the Assmannshäuser Hollenberg vineyard (slopes with an inclination of up to 60%) that is one of the few German red wines of worldwide repute.