

German Architecture -- Beauty, Style, Versatility

German architecture is an illustrated chapter in the nation's history dating back from the [Aachen Chapel](#) from the time of Charlemagne in the 8th century to the [Neuschwanstein Castle](#) of the Middle Ages and the more modern Bauhaus style that epitomizes modern German architecture. Built to complement the spectacular natural beauty of the state, various architectural gems abound making it quite a difficult task to pick and choose a few.

Architecture in Germany is best show-cased with a trip down the ages. Though the Romans did leave their mark on the building landscape of Germany, not much remains of that period. Following that era various styles have left more lasting impressions on the landscape that leave visitors suitably impressed and compel many to return for a second look.

A decided Romanesque style is evident in the cathedral of [Mainz](#) as well as the Cathedral of [Worms](#) dating back to the 11th and 12th centuries. Perhaps more rampant would be the Gothic style that is easily distinguished in the many churches and cathedrals in [Bavaria](#).

The best example would certainly be the famed Cologne Cathedral of the 13th century which even today stands unrivaled in dimensions and sheer magnificence. Early French gothic influences later gave way to a style that became entirely German in execution and finesse.

Though not as ubiquitous, a Renaissance style did have strong proponents in the medieval years. Various town halls sport this elegant style throughout the [cities of Germany](#) as valiant testimonies to medieval German architecture.

Later on German architecture was influenced by nuances from Italy in the form of Baroque and Rococo. The [Zwinger Palace](#) of the early 18th century in [Dresden](#), the little gem of St. John Nepomuk in [Munich](#), and the [Würzburg Residence](#) would be excellent examples.

The extravagant luxuriousness embodied in the medieval architecture prompted a more stream lined neo-classicism in German architecture of the late 18th century. Neo-classical architecture abounds in [Berlin](#) and [Munich](#). A classy example would be Leo von Klenze's masterpiece, the *Alte Pinakothek*.

Architecture in Germany acquired more solidity and utility while displaying soaring heights of excellence in the 20th century with the Bauhaus style of architecture envisioned by Peter Behrens. The essence of this style is to be seen in [Dessau](#), which is where you'll find the semi-detached cubical houses built in 1925.

More impressive would be Behrens' Hoechst Chemical Company building in [Frankfurt](#). Walter Gropius was another noteworthy proponent of what came to be known as the International style. There was a notable lack of ornamentation and a leaning toward purpose. This soon won

international acclaim and was adopted elsewhere, most notably in the United States.

During the [WWII years](#), Nazi architect Albert Speer was able to carve a niche with his rather severe neo-classic style. The architecture of this period was meant to recreate a style in keeping with the ideologies of the [Third Reich](#). The Dresden Opera House was built in keeping with [Adolf Hitler's](#) penchant for the Baroque style, while the Werner March designed Berlin Olympic Stadium resembles the Coliseum.

Post war reconstruction saw a slew toward the sensible rather than the aesthetic. But not so in the beautiful city of Dresden where everything was recaptured as it was.

Modern German architecture evidences the use of reinforced concrete and steel to create daring ultramodern masterpieces such as the Sony Center and the Chancellery in Berlin. ;-)