

Burgkunstadt -- Former Shoe Metropolis On The Main River

On first sight Burgkunstadt has an alpine appearance. But no, this is a truly [Upper Franconian](#) town.

Sitting along the [Main River](#), any place with a castle is quite all-right in my book. And I don't care what anyone says that its castle is "in need of repair" or "all overgrown with trees." Tosh! Call me old-fashioned, but a medieval castle is supposed to look like it came out of Architectural Digest Magazine — it was supposed to instill fear and dread to anyone coming up on it. ;-)

Where was I? Yes, I was about to tell you about Burgkunstadt's half-timbered former brewery, its 18th century church that's really much older, its War Memorial, and its Outdoor Theater at the *Vogtei* or Bailiwick.

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Now that's a story... the old Bailiwick (which is like a 15th century farmstead) has all these underground passage ways from the Middle Ages. Sorry, most became inaccessible — but it's worth checking out what you still can.

What else would anyone need to know about Burgkunstadt? Yes, I know, there are some 60km of hiking trails through the town and environs. Most are marked, and range from a 40-minute 2km hike to more than 14km (3–4 hours).

That makes perfectly sense, because Burgkunstadt used to be a center of shoemaking and shoe trade. Then it makes also sense to find the *Deutsche Schustermuseum* or German Shoemaker Museum in town.

Whatever you've chosen to see, make sure you've added in a visit to the Fünf-Wunder Kapelle, a Renaissance chapel from 1666 and the gravestones of long-gone Frankish Knights. Wait, the old synagogue has an exhibit on Jewish life in the area; and the *Rathaus* is an interesting piece of late 17th century architecture.

Enough of this. It's time for some fun. What have we got? For starters, there's a Christmas Market in December, a horse jumping competition every May, a *Floh- und Trödelmarkt* (Flea Market) in early March and April, a *Brunnenfest* in July, and a Corpus Christi/Parish Festival in both May and June. Hey, with 8 districts, that's bound to happen.

The big event that everyone looks forward to is the *Altstadtfest* (Old Town Festival), which only happens every three years (2008, 2011,...), which is always a party of food, fun, dancing, and beer.

Start planning to get to Burgkunstadt now — you'll make it in time for the next one. I might be there too.