

Heidelberg Castle -- Glorious Royal Ruin Of Baden-Württemberg

Heidelberg Castle (*Heidelberger Schloss*) is a glorious ruin of an ancient culture.

The American writer Mark Twain (who spent some time in the city) evoked the tragic Shakespearean King when he described the castle as “the Lear of inanimate nature — deserted, discrowned, beaten by the storms, but royal still, and beautiful.”

About Heidelberg Castle And Its History

The origins of Heidelberg Castle go back to the year 1196. However, the entire structure was built over a period of 300 years. The building was damaged by storms, wars and fires. By 1838, the *Heidelberger Schloss* was already in a ruined state.

The original builders and architects are shrouded in the mystery of time. With historians unsure of the exact time of construction, its benefactors' names have also been lost to history. But we do know that Prince Elector Ruprecht III (who ruled from 1398 – 1410) was one of the first known inhabitants of the castle.

Heidelberg Castle was constructed in the Renaissance style, and is generally considered one of the finest examples of such work north of the [Alps](#). There are also elements of Gothic art.

The castle has a long history of calamitous events. Who says lightning doesn't strike the same place twice? Heidelberg Castle has in fact been hit twice by lightning strikes, both of which caused (along with the fires they created) extensive damage. Hopefully, you'll be protected while you're here. ;-)

Heidelberg Castle Highlights And Features

Palace Garden (Hortus Palatinus)

Built from 1614 to 1619, the *Hortus Palatinus* has been considered by many to be the eighth wonder of the world. This famed garden was built upon the mountainside, with elaborately designed terraces. The *Hortus Palatinus* was also home to box trees, herbs and bitter oranges. Patterns and designs can be seen in the arrangement of the garden.

The highlights are perhaps the grottoes that were built into the hillside as well as the many fountains. Sadly, the Palace Garden did not escape the calamities that befell the rest of the Castle. Although great care has been taken to reconstruct the *Hortus Palatinus*, evidence of the rebuilding can still be seen today.

Castle Restaurant

There are several restaurants within the palace grounds. The *Mövenpick Restaurants Schloss Heidelberg* is divided into four parts: the *Schlossweinstube*, the *Backhaus*, *Fasskeller* (Barrel Cellar), and the appointment-only *Ottoheinrichsbau*. Each place has different seating capacity, but all of them feature fine local specialties, such as sausages and of course, the best [beer](#) and [wine](#).

Heidelberg Castle Location And Opening Hours

The ruined castle of Heidelberg can be found in the city of the same name, [Heidelberg](#), in the [Baden-Württemberg](#) region of Germany.

If you're coming from another city, simply take the Autobahn A5, which is the main highway around the city of Heidelberg. Just follow the exits and signs to the city center. From there, follow the castle signs which are brown with the castle silhouette (in black) on top of a white rectangle.

You can also arrive via Germany's exceptional public transportation system. Direct trains from various [German cities](#) run to the Heidelberg train station every hour. From there, it is easy to connect to local transport. Bus numbers 11 and 33 link the station to the Heidelberg Castle stop of the *Bergbahn*.

Special Tip: If you'd like to do something for your fitness, there are approx. 300 stairs leading up to the castle! Where? Once you're at the *Bergbahn* station, pass the building on its left hand side and you'll find the stairs there. They are even numbered so you always know how many are left. And once you've reached the top, there's a small kiosk waiting for you with fresh drinks and snacks to recharge your batteries! ;-)

For GPS users, you should input *Heidelberg* for the city and *Schlosshof* for the street. You'll find the palace itself upon the Königstuhl hill, which is 80 m (260 ft) above the ground.

Heidelberg Castle Opening Hours

Heidelberg Castle is open daily from 8:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. There may be shortened hours on December 24 and 31, from 8:00 a.m. to just 1:00 p.m.

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Heidelberg Castle Web site: <http://www.schloss-heidelberg.de>