

Rheinstetten -- Three Villages, Thousands Of Years Of History

Rheinstetten sits in the [Upper Rhine Valley](#), just 10 km west of the majestic [Black Forest](#) on the eastern banks of the [Rhine River](#). Now a city of 20,000 people, Rheinstetten began life as three small villages.

Forchheim was deeded to the Bishop of Speyer in 1086 as a gift from Emperor Henry IV. A silver coin, dating to the 6th century, confirms that it was settled by the Franks early on. Originally a village of masons and blacksmiths, by the Middle Ages Forchheim was one of the courts of the Franconian kings.

At the center of the town is the *Rathausplatz*, or Town Hall. Built in the late Middle Ages, it is now used for festivals, markets, and art exhibitions. It also houses the mayor's office and the tourist information center.

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St. Martin's Church, located behind the *Rathausplatz*, was built in the 10th century. Almost constant renovations have left it with a unique blend of architectural styles. A Romanesque transept, Gothic choir and tower, Baroque interior, and Rococo touches make this church a textbook in varied architectural style.

The *Kaiserpfalz* and Maria's Chapel are connected by an underground tunnel. Built in the time of the Otto the Holy, between 1101 and 1139, the chapel is believed to have been built over the site of an ancient 7th century chapel. The *Kaiserpfalz* was originally built to be a palace for the Emperor as he traveled, but eventually it became the home of the Bishop of Bamberg.

The *Kaiserpfalz* now houses the *Pfalzmuseum Forchheim* (Palatinate museum). It was long rumored that it was built on the ruins of Charlemagne's palace but modern theory finds that unlikely.

The building dates to the 14th and 16th century and is entered by crossing over a moat that used to encircle the entire building. A main attraction is the 14th century wall drawings, among the most important wall paintings in all of [South Germany](#).

The Mörsch district of Rheinstetten was given to the Bishop of Speyer in 940 by Emperor Otto III and became part of the holdings of a monastery. Mörsch lends an ancient air to Rheinstetten because it was originally the site of a Roman well dedicated to Mercury, the God of travelers. In Roman times travelers routinely passed through to drink from the well and call on Mercury for safe passage.

Little is known of the history of Neuburgweier, the third village to make up Rheinstetten. However, it is known that it was named in a 1219 property division.