

Speyer Cathedral -- Romanesque Architecture Thanks Konrad

UNESCO added Speyer Cathedral (*Speyerer Dom*) to its World Heritage Sites in 1981, a long time to wait for recognition considering it was built in 1025, at the behest of King Konrad II.

What did it do to deserve the accolades from UNESCO? It met criteria #2 — it extolled the virtues of human vaues over a span of time. I'd say.

About Speyer Cathedral And Its History

The cathedral was also the final resting place for Germany's emperors for close to 300 years. In fact, Konrad himself had to be buried somewhere else for a while as his masterpiece wasn't completed by the time he died. It did take 81 years to build, so who didn't think that was gonna happen? ;-)

If you look around the Speyer Cathedral today you might notice that it has undergone some considerable renovations over the last millennia. A fire ravaged much of the cathedral in 1689 so it did get some Baroque accents over the original Romanesque design.

So impressive was that design, it's believed that just about every other Romanesque church followed its example (not all of them used red sandstone (from the [Palatinate Forest](#)) like this Speyer Cathedral). Yeah, seems like that's where Criteria #2 comes in, huh?

Speyer Cathedral Highlights And Features

If you want to see what has survived from the original floorplan, you'll have to go down into the crypts. For €3.50, it's worth it to see where Konrad, and other kings (one of the last was King Adolf of Nassau in the early 1300s), are buried.

Besides its crypts, the church also had a number of small side chapels added in its construction. When Henry IV fell out of favor with the Pope, he was buried in an unconsecrated chapel until his excommunication was lifted (posthumously, of course).

I know, doesn't sound like much today — but a very big deal back then.

Not even a hundred years after the church was built, it underwent an expansion — bringing it to the 134-meter length by 43-meter width of today. And that's not even including its 65-meter high west spires, and the 71-meter high east spires.

Architects that redesigned the cathedral after the Nine Years War (go figure, the church somehow

managed to survive the prior [Thirty Years' War](#) with almost no damage) keeps those early 12th century measurements.

Speyer Cathedral is also remarkable in that it was the 2nd largest vaulted building to the north of the Alps (only behind Aachen Cathedral), and its dwarf gallery (that ornamentation just below its roof outside) went on to become quite a popular architectural feature in Germany — and this church is where it all started.

One last thing you need to know about Speyer Cathedral lies outside its Romanesque walls; it's the font that can hold 1,560 liters (I wonder who had to count?) — and is a symbol between the city of Speyer and the diocese. And in the South Garden there's a 19th century replica of a 15th century original sculpture known as the Mount of Olives. Just beautiful.

Location And Opening Hours

Speyer Cathedral is located in the city center of [Speyer](#), right on its Domplatz (Cathedral Plaza); and open to guided tours — so long as you've prearranged them with the Diocese ahead of time.

If you're wantin' to see it all by yourself, you can do it from 9am-7pm Monday-Saturday and from 12pm-8pm on Sundays from April 1 to October 31. From November to March the church is open 9am-5pm Monday-Saturday and from 12pm-8pm on Sundays.

Services are held Sundays all-year round at 7:30am, 10am, and 6pm. Plus, a few times during the week in the Afra Kapelle (Afra Chapel), Mondays-Fridays at 7am, Tuesdays and Fridays at 6pm, and Saturdays at 7:30am. Noon Prayers (*Mittagsgebete*) are offered at 12:10pm on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Speyer Cathedral Website: <http://www.dom-zu-speyer.de/?L=1>