

Wetzlar Is A Little Gem Of A Town With Plenty Of History

Wetzlar is nestled in the low hills of the [Lahn](#) valley in [Hesse](#), and settled on the banks of the busy river.

Inhabited for the past 5000 years, this town is cram-packed with history, including ancient Roman ruins and medieval trading influences, and has 13th and 14th century fortifications still in place.

Thread your way through the steep, winding and almost claustrophobic alleys of this medieval town center — perched on a hillside. Half timbered houses line the streets, as well as older stone structures including the old Lahn stone bridge across the river, and the 12th century sandstone cathedral of St. Mary.

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Building started on the famous Wetzlar Dom over 800 years ago, and it has been added to time and time again over the years. However, it is still not actually finished! The plinth for the “missing” tower is planted to the right hand side of the facade on *Domplatz*, waiting for construction to be completed.

The trading origins are clear when you look at the street names: *Buttermarkt*, *Fischmarkt*, *Kornmarkt* and *Eisenmarkt* (iron market). This latter location has some of the greatest old houses — including the old mint house. A trek up to the highest point in town, Karlsmunt Castle, gives you a birds eye view of the town and some great ruins to explore.

Wetzlar, although quite small, was a very important part of the [Holy Roman Empire](#). The *Reichskammergericht* was built in town to deal justice. It can still be found. It has the symbol of a two headed black eagle on the front and is used as a restaurant today — so you can dine in style! ;-)

Its more modern claims to fame include its *Phantastische Bibliothek* — the wonderfully named Fantastic Library! It is the largest collection of *fantastic* literature in Europe!

There is also the Arena Wetzlar, where there are regular concerts, theater performances, and the National Handball League playing here through the year.

And there is always something going on in the *Freilichtbühne* during the month long summer Festival.

Wetzlar is also famous for a great German literary figure — Goethe. While working here, he wrote his best-selling work *The Sorrows of a Young Werther* and was acclaimed across Europe, unlike his friend Karl Wilhelm Jerusalem, whose tragic life was the basis for the famous storyline! There are museums dedicated to his life, loves and works; and in honor of his friend — the *Jerusalemhaus* museum.